CHALLENGES TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELPOMENT IN AFRICA: HUMANITARIAN LAW DIMENSION*

Abstract

International Humanitarian Law and the concept of sustainable development coincide in their concern for the promotion of environmental protection. Under International Humanitarian Law, the requirement to protect the natural environment flows from the general protection accorded persons not taking active part in armed conflict. Africa has also keyed into this global concern through the ratification of a number of international agreements and Action Plans like the 2030 and 2063 Agenda. While International Humanitarian Law prohibits certain means and methods of warfare that are intended or may be expected to cause severe damage to the natural environment; the concept of sustainable development requires the maintenance of environmental balance that will serve the needs of both the present and future generations. Albeit, Africa has continued to grabble with incessant armed conflicts witnessing the employment of means and methods of warfare causing severe damage to the natural environment. The study examined, through the lens of International Humanitarian Law, the challenges to sustainable development in Africa. The study gave an insight into some civil wars raging in Africa; and their causes. The study revealed that armed conflicts impact negatively on Africa's sustainable development performance. It also identified bad governance and poverty, among other things as the root causes of armed conflicts in Africa. To address these challenges, the study recommended among other things, peacetime measures, such as good governance, respect for International Humanitarian Law and human capacity building as the solution.

Keywords: Sustainable Development, Sustainable Development Goals, Armed Conflict, International Humanitarian Law, Africa

1. Introduction

Fundamental to the protection of civilians (which is the mainstay of International Humanitarian Law), is the protection of the natural environment[1] supporting human life. To that effect, International Humanitarian Law prohibits certain types of attacks[2] that destroy, remove or render useless objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population;[3] and those that are intended or may be expected to cause severe damage to the natural environment.[4] The protection of the natural environment is also central to sustainable development.[5] This is reflected in the Montreal Protocol, 1987 which addresses the problem of ozone layer depletion; the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992 which aims at the conservation of biodiversity; the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), 1994 which seeks to combat dangerous human interference with the climate system through the stabilization of greenhouse gas (GHG) concentration; and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) 1996 which addresses the problem of land degradation in arid, semi-arid, and sub-humid areas. This effort also culminated in the 2023 and 2063 Agenda through which Africa expressed her commitment towards protecting the planet, and ensuring that all people enjoy peace and prosperity[6] by 2030 and 2063 respectively. However, this Article is informed by the incessant situations of armed conflicts across Africa, witnessing the employment of means and methods of warfare striking at the very root of this commitment.[7] This is made obvious in such civil wars in Cameroon, Ethiopia, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, to mention but a few. These acts cause more destruction to the already fragile natural

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[1] Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions 1949 and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflict of 8 June 1977, Articles 55; 35(3).
[2] Employment of Cluster munitions, Nuclear weapons, Chemical and Biological weapons, anti-personnel mines; starvation, perfidy, denial of quarter, misuse of the distinctive emblems, terror, reprisal and a host of others.
[3] *Op cit,* Article 55.
[4] *Op cit*, Articles 35(3); 55.
[5] Sustainable Development Goals 14, 15 & 17.
[6] < https://www.undp.org > Accessed 23 March 2022.
[7] 'Death by a Thousand cuts: Cameroon Struggles in Fight against Separatists'. African Arguments, 24 August 2021; 'Islamists Block First Mali Aid Convoy to Timbuktu'. Reuters, 15 May 2012. < www.bbcnews.com > Accessed 25 May 2022.

environment[8] and exposed the people to hunger;[9] and other humanitarian crisis.[10] It is against this background that this study examines the challenges to sustainable development in Africa from the perspective of International Humanitarian Law. The study reveals that the incessant armed conflicts in Africa characterized by the employment of prohibited means and methods of warfare pose serious challenge to the sustainable development performance of Africa. The study, among other things recommends peacetime measures (such as good governance) as a way of addressing the root causes of armed conflicts in Africa.

2. Concept of Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is a universal song which has in fact influenced the policies of many countries across the world.[11] It is a concept that first originated from the 1987 Brundland Report; the earlier ideas about sustainable forest management[12] and the 20th century environmental concerns all pertaining to ecology. The Report: *Our Common Future* popularly known as 1987 Brundland Report is a reactivation of the spirit of Stockholm Conference which conceives environmental concerns and political agenda as a unit.[13] The Report recognizes the importance of human resource development for environmental conservation; and the negative effect of poverty in reducing sustainability and facilitating environmental pressures.[14] The idea of sustainable development derived from Sustainable Forest Management which was first developed in Europe between 17th and 18th centuries in response to the growing awareness of the depletion of timber resources in England. The idea was formulated by John Evelyn in his work entitled: *Sylva*. This idea was later supported by such persons as Hans Carl von Carlowitz in his work entitled *Sylvicultura Economics*; Rachel Carson in his work entitled *Silent Spring;* Kenneth E Boulding in his work entitled: *The Economics of the Coming Spaceship Earth*; and many other authors like Garret Hardin; Alexander von Humboldt; Georg Ludwig Hartig; Gifford Pinchot; Aldo Leopold; Club of Rome; International Union for Conservation of Nature; World Charter for Nature; World Commission on Environment and Development and a host of others. However, the meaning and scope of sustainable development has since then shifted from the earlier ideas to a more modern day idea of sustainable development that cuts across economic development, social development and environmental protection for the future generations.[15] Thus, the essence of sustainable development is to facilitate economic growth, greater social equality and the reduction of negative environmental impacts.[16] The Brundland Report defines sustainable development as 'development that meets the needs of the present without comprising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs'.[17] Kahle and Gurel-Atay[18] defines it as 'the practice of maintaining productivity by replacing used resources with resources of equal or greater value without degrading or endangering natural biotic systems'. Jin *et. al.*[19] perceives sustainable development as coordinating economic, social, and environmental development so as to balance the intra-generational welfare, and then maximize the total welfare of generations. Furthermore, UNESCO defines sustainable development as a 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs'.[20] In essence, the general principles of sustainable development are: intergenerational equity; sustainable use of natural resources; equitable use of natural resource; integration of environmental protection; and economic development.

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[8]Farouk Chothia, 'Ethiopia's Tigray Conflict: How the TPLF has outflanked the Army'. *BBC News* Available at < https://www-bbc-com.cdn.ampproject.com >

[9]*United Nations Meetings Coverage and Press Release*, 'Humanitarian Catastrophe Unfolding before our Eyes, Secretary-General Tells Security Council, Warning Ethiopia's Youth will be Ultimate Casualties', DG/SM/20866, August 2021. Available at https://www.on.org/press/en/2021/sgsm20866.doc.htm Accessed 13 March 2022.

[10] *Ibid.*

[11]D Li, G He, H Jin, and F Tsai, 'Sustainable Development of African Countries: Minding Public Life, Education, and Welfare', (2011) 11, *Front. Public Health.*

[12]U Grober: Deep Roots-A Conceptual History of 'Sustainable Development' (Nachhaltigkeit), Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin fur Sozialforschung, 2007; Blewitt, John (2015). Understanding Sustainable Development (2nd ed.) London: Routledge. ISBN 9780415707824.

[13]Pyla, Panayiota (2012). 'Beyond Smooth Talk'. Design and Culture. 4 (3): 273-278. doi:10.2752/175470812X13361292229032.

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] R Goodland, H Daly, 'Environmental Sustainability: Universal and Non-negotiable. *Ecol Appl.* (1996) 6 1002.

[16]S Kwatra, P Sharma, A Kumar, 'A Critical Review of Studies related to Construction and Computation of Sustainable Development Indices. (2020) *Ecol Indic.*112106061.

[17]Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future. United Nations, 16.

[18]Lynn R. Kahle & Eda Gurel-Atay, Eds (2014). Communicating Sustainability for the Green Economy. New York: M.E.Sharpe.ISBN 978-0-7656-3680-5.

[19]H Jin, X Qian, T Chin & H Zhang, 'Global Assessment of Sustainable Development: Based on the Modification of Human Development Index with Entropy Method' *Sustainability.* (2020) 12:1-20.doi:10.3390/su12083251.

[20]'Sustainable Development'. UNESCO. 22 February, 2022.

3. Sustainable Development Goals (Global Goals)

On the other hand, the Sustainable Development Goals (also known as the Global Goals) are 17 key inter-connected areas adopted by the United Nations Organization in 2015 to be achieved by the year 2030. It is the successor of the Millennium Development Goals. The idea of the Global Goals is to provide a roadmap for governments and policy makers towards addressing global challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice. The 17 Goals include: No Poverty; Zero Hunger; Good Health; Quality Education; Gender Equality; Clean Water and Sanitation; Affordable and Clean Energy; Decent Work and Economic Growth; Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure; Reduced Inequalities; Sustainable Cities and Communities; Responsible Consumption and Production; Climate Action; Life below Water; Life on Land; Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions; and Partnerships for the Goals.

4. Legal Frame work for Sustainable Development

Montreal Protocol, 1987

The Montreal Protocol is an international treaty that came into force in 1989. It is one of the successful international agreements[21] with 46 signatories. The Montreal Protocol seeks to address the issue of ozone layer depletion by phasing out the production of such substances as chlorofluorocarbons, halons, and methyl bromide that cause ozone layer depletion. The Protocol sets a time frame within which developing countries must phase out the production of ozone depletion substances.

United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD):

The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity also known as Biodiversity Convention entered into force in 1993. Its aims are: the conservation of biological diversity; the sustainable use of its components; and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources. The Convention requires all signatories to monitor diversity of species in their country and implement a strategy to maintain it. Funding for developing countries and countries in transition is also available through the Global Environment Facility (GEF).[22]

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 1994:

The Convention entered into force in 1994 with 165 signatories. The overall aim of the Convention is to combat dangerous human interference with the climate system by among other things stabilizing greenhouse gas concentration in the atmosphere.

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) 1996:

This came into effect in 1996 with 197 signatories. The objective of the Convention is to address the problem of desertification and drought in those countries (particularly Africa) experiencing desertification. This goal is to be realized through national action programs that incorporate long-term strategies by international cooperation and partnership arrangements.

5. Action Plans and Initiatives for achieving Sustainable Development in Africa

Agenda 21

The Agenda 21 is the program of action adopted at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. Although not legally binding, it has strong political backing. It is made up of 40 chapters dealing on all subject matters of sustainable development including the protection of the natural environment.[23]

Agenda 2030

The 2030 Agenda is a UN Action Plan or universal agenda adopted by resolution A/RES/70/ 1(guided by the purpose and principles of the United Nations Charter, including full respect for international law)[24] on sustainable development for the transformation of the world. It is rooted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international human rights treaties, the Millennium Declaration and the outcome of the 2005 World Summit and other instruments such as Declaration on the Right to Development.[25]It is an action plan made up of 17 sustainable development goals and 169 targets that all stakeholders will focus on in the next 15 years (with effect from 2015). These Goals and Targets are geared towards stimulating areas of critical importance such as people, planet,

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[21]'Background for International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer-16 September.<un.org >Accessed 26 April 2022.

[22]J C Nwafor, Environmental Impact Assessment for Sustainable Development: The Nigeria Perspective (EDPCA Publishers, 1st ed. 2006), 433

[23]J C Nwafor, *op. cit,* 433.

[24] United Nations, Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, A/RES/70/1, 10.

[25] *Ibid.*

prosperity, peace and partnership over the next 15 years. The Agenda 2030 is an extension of the Millennium Development Goals which targets the three important dimensions of sustainable development namely, economic, social and environmental. The Agenda 2030 was adopted by 193 members of the UN inclusive of Africa. The vision of the Agenda is transformational as it is geared towards eradicating poverty, hunger, disease and want, globally.[26] The 2030 Agenda is to be implemented through a revitalized Global Partnership in a spirit of global solidarity[27]involving governments as well as parliaments, the United Nations systems and other international institutions, local authorities, indigenous peoples, civil society, business and the private sector, the scientific and academic community and all the people.[28] The UN does not neglect the fact that each country has the primary responsibility for its own economic and social development.[29] Hence, the Agenda only deals with the means required for the implementation of the global goals and targets. Africa is both a member of the United Nations and has subscribed to the 2030 Agenda. To that effect it is a stakeholder and a partner to this noble Action Plan.

Agenda 2063
The Agenda 2063 was adopted by African Heads of state and government during the Golden jubilee celebrations of the formation of OAU/AU in May 2013. Like the 2030 Agenda which is the world's or UN blueprint for transforming the world, the 'Agenda 2063 is Africa's blueprint and master plan for transforming Africa into the global powerhouse of the future'.[30] It is an affirmation of Africa's resolve to support a new path for attaining inclusive and sustainable economic growth and development. It represents the re-dedication of Africa towards the attainment of the Pan African Vision of 'an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens, representing a dynamic force in the international arena, within a period of 50 years, with effect from 2013. The Agenda 2063 also ear marked key activities to be undertaken in its 10 years implementation plans geared towards achieving both quantitative and qualitative Transformational Outcomes for Africa's people.

Silencing the Gun by 2020 (Silencing the Gun Initiative)
The campaign for 'Silencing the Gun' was launched in 2020 in Addis Ababa during the African Union Summit with the theme: 'Silencing the Gun'. 'Silencing the Gun' Initiative is a project aimed at silencing all illegal weapons in the African continent by 2020. It is aimed at ending all wars, civil conflicts, gender-based violence, violent conflicts, human rights violations, humanitarian disasters and preventing genocide in the continent by 2020. The main targets of this initiative are member states. This is because the primary responsibility of maintaining peace and security lies on the shoulders of states.

6. International Humanitarian Law and the Regulation of Means and Methods of Warfare
The protection of the natural environment[31] supporting human life is an important aspect of the general protection accorded persons not taking active part in armed conflicts. To that effect, International Humanitarian Law prohibits certain means and methods of warfare that are intended or may be expected to cause severe damage to the natural environment.[32] Hence, the right of the parties to the conflict to use means and methods of warfare is not unlimited'.[33]This prohibition is hinged on the principles of humanity and military necessity which must guide the conduct of every warfare. [34] Also important to this restriction is the obligation placed on States to ensure that the developments and the acquisition of new weapons comply with the rule of International Humanitarian Law in that regard and of international law binding on them.[35]

Means and Methods of Warfare
Means of warfare refers to the weapons or weapon system employed during armed conflicts such as nuclear weapons, cluster munitions, chemical, biological, anti-personnel mines and other explosives. On the other hand, methods of warfare refers to the tactics or strategy employed in armed conflicts such as giving no quarter;[36]

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[26] *Ibid.*

[27] United Nations, Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, A/RES/70/1, 39.

[28] *Op cit,* 52

[29] *Op cit,* 41.

[30] Agenda 2063: The Africa we want. <https://au.int/en/agenda2063/overview >. Accessed 14 March 2022.

[31]Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions 1949 and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflict of 8 June 1977, Articles 55; 35(3).

[32] Protocol I, o*p cit*, Articles 35(3); 55.

[33] *Op cit,* Article 35(1).

[34] Protocol I, o*p cit*, Articles 35; Hague Conventions, 1907, Article 22; St Petersburg Declaration

[35] *Op cit,* Article 36.

[36] *Op cit,* Articles 40 & 41*;* Hague Convention, *op cit,* 3; Rule 46 Customary International Humanitarian Law.

perfidy;[37] terror,[38] starvation of the civilian population;[39] reprisals;[40] attack against protected persons and objects and indiscriminate attacks;[41] attack causing damage to the natural environment;[42] pillage;[43] hostage taking;[44] human shielding; and so on.

Prohibited Means of Warfare

Nuclear weapons
The use of nuclear weapons is not expressly prohibited under International Humanitarian Law. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty[45] rather aims at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and advancing the goal of nuclear disarmament. However, the International Court of Justice[46] in its advisory opinion held that 'the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict.' Additionally, the Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement made a landmark pronouncement on nuclear weapons in 2011, to the effect that nuclear weapons are clearly incompatible with the fundamental principles of International Humanitarian Law.[47]

Cluster Munitions
The Convention on Cluster Munitions[48] prohibits the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of cluster munitions such as bombs, shell, rockets or missiles that release large number of small explosives sub-munitions. It also requires States in possession of these munitions to destroy their stockpiles and to clear land contaminated by remnant of cluster munitions. States are also under obligation to assist victims of cluster munitions.

Chemical and Biological Weapons
The use of chemical and biological weapons is also prohibited.[49] The prohibition is further strengthened by the adoption of Biological Weapons Conventions.[50] The Chemical Weapons Convention[51] was further adopted in 1993 to prohibit the use, development, stockpiling and transfer of these weapons, and requires that stockpiles be destroyed. It also forbids the use of riot control agents like tear gas. Employing the above means of warfare is a war crime.[52]

Anti-Personnel Mines
The use, development, production, stockpiling or transfer of anti-personnel mines are outlawed.[53] States are also bound to destroy all existing stockpiles of anti-personnel mines and to clear the land where the said mines have been laid within a fixed period of time.

Other Conventional Weapons
Again, the use of other conventional weapons is further forbidden.[54] Protocol I of the CCW forbids the employment of any means of warfare the primary effect of which is to injure by fragments not detectable in the human body by

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[37] Protocol I, *op cit,* Articles 37-39; Customary International Humanitarian Law, Rule 57-65.

[38] Protocol I, *op cit,* Article 51; Protocol II, *op cit,* Article 13; Customary International Humanitarian Law, Rule 2.

[39] Protocol I, *op cit,* Article 54; Protocol II, *op cit,* Article 14; Customary International Humanitarian Law, Rule 53.

[40] Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Wounded and Sick of the Armies in the Field, 1949, Article 46; Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked of the Armed Forces at Sea, 1949, Article 47; Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, 1949, Article 13; Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilians Persons in Time of War, 1949, Article 33; Protocol I, *op cit,* Article 20, 51-56; and Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property, 1954, Article 46.

[41] Protocol I, *op cit,* Articles 48, 51; and Customary International Humanitarian Law, Rule 1 & 6.

[42] Protocol I, *op cit,* Articles 35, 52, and 55; Customary International Humanitarian Law, Rules 43-45.

[43] GC IV, *op cit,* Article 33; Convention on Cultural Property, *op cit,* Article 4; Protocol II, *op cit,* Article 4; Customary International Humanitarian Law, Rule 38-41 & 52.

[44] GCI-IV, *op cit,* Article 3; Protocol I, *op cit,* Article 75.

[45] 1968.

[46] ICJ *Nuclear Weapon* Advisory Opinion.

[47] International Committee of the Red Cross. 'Working Towards the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons'. https://www.icrc.org . 26 November 2011, CD/11/4.1. Accessed 267 March 2022.

[48] 2008.

[49] Protocol on the Prohibition of the Use of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, 1925.

[50] 1972.

[51] 1993.

[52] Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, 1998, Article 8(b)(xix).

[53] Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production, and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines, and on their Destruction, 1997.

[54] Convention on the Prohibition or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, 1980.

X-rays. Protocol II of the CCW which was further amended in 1996 prohibits the use of mines, anti-personnel and anti-vehicle alike, booby-traps and other similar devices. Protocol III prohibits the use of incendiary weapons or other weapons primarily designed to set fire to objects or to burn persons through the action of flame throwers. Protocol IV prohibits the use and transfer of laser weapons design to cause permanent blindness. Protocol IV obligates parties to take measures to reduce the dangers posed by unexploded and abandoned ordnance.

Prohibited Methods of Warfare

Terror
Terror is any method of warfare with the primary purpose of spreading fear among the civilian population such as indiscriminate bombing or bombshell. 'Acts or threats of violence the primary purpose of which is to spread terror among the civilian population are forbidden'.[55]

Starvation
Starvation as a method of warfare is prohibited.[56] Attacking, destroying, removing or rendering useless objects indispensable to the survival of civilian population such as foodstuff, livestock, drinking water installations and supplies and irrigation works for the specific purpose of denying them their means of livelihood, is forbidden[57]

Reprisal
Reprisal is a breach of International Humanitarian Law which would otherwise be unlawful but in exceptional cases is considered lawful as an enforcement measure in response to a previous breach of International Humanitarian Law by the enemy, with the purpose of terminating the enemy's violation. Reprisals are only permitted under very strict conditions. 'Attacks against the civilian population or civilians by way of reprisals' is forbidden.[58]

No Quarter
It is forbidden to declare that there will be no quarter. This is against the backdrop that the only objective which the parties to the conflict should aim at is to subdue the armed forces of the adverse party. It is in fact a war crime to declare that there will be no quarter.[59]

Indiscriminate Attacks
Indiscriminate attacks are attacks that are of a nature to strike military objectives and civilians or civilian objects without distinction, for example, attack by bombardment.[60] They are attacks not directed at specific military objectives;[61] those which employ methods or means of warfare which cannot be directed at a specific military objective;[62] or those which employ methods or means of combat the effect of which cannot be limited as required by international humanitarian law.[63] Indiscriminate attacks are also forbidden[64] against the backdrop that it strike at the very root of the fundamental principle of International Humanitarian Law- the principle of distinction.

Damage to the Natural Environment
The natural environment is the physical, chemical and biological conditions that support human existence. It is therefore forbidden to use means or methods of warfare which are intended or may be expected to cause widespread, long term and severe damage to the natural environment thereby threatening the health and survival of the population.[65] Attack on the natural environment by way of reprisal is also forbidden.[66]

Human Shielding Tactics
It is prohibited to seize or to use the presence of persons protected by the Geneva Conventions as human shield to render military sites immune from attacks or to prevent reprisals during an offensive.[67]

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[55] Protocol I, *op cit,* Article 51(2).
[56] Protocol I, *op cit,* Article 54(1).
[57] *Op. cit,* Article 54(2).
[58] *Op cit,* Article 51(6).
[59] Rome Statute, *op cit*, Article 8(b)(xii).
[60] Protocol I, *op cit,* Article 51(4)(a)(b)(c).
[61] *Op cit,* Article 51(4)(a).
[62] *Op cit,* Article 51(4)(b).
[63] *Op cit,* Article 51(4)(c).
[64] *Op cit,* Article 51(4).
[65] Protocol I, *op cit,* Article 55(1).
[66] *Op cit,* Article 55(2).
[67] GC I, *op cit,* Articles 28, 49: Protocol I, *op cit,* Article 51(7); Protocol II, *op cit,* Article 5(2)(c).

Rape

Committing, rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution and other related acts are prohibited and in fact a war crime.[68] The above means and methods of warfare are all forbidden under International Humanitarian Law against the backdrop that they pose serious danger to both persons and the natural environment supporting human sustenance. They in fact constitute war crime.[69]

7. Armed Conflicts in Africa and the Employment of prohibited Means and Methods of Warfare

Africa is the world's second largest and second most populous continent after Asia;[70] and a continent that is richly blessed with both human and natural resources. However, despite these, the continent is grabbling with the issue of incessant armed conflicts.[71] The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project, which monitors incidents of conflict around the world observes that there were 21,600 incidents of armed conflicts in Africa in 2019 alone. This is against the 15,000 incidents in 2018. Allison[72] particularly noted that despite the 'Silencing the Gun' Initiative aimed at reducing the situations of armed conflict in Africa, 'the guns are getting louder'.[73] This has invariably destabilized many economies in Africa[74] and by implication frustrates sustainable development. In Ethiopia, a civil war erupted in the Tigray region in November 2020 following an offensive launched by the Tigray People's Liberation Front against the federal military bases. This is amidst the rising protest against the political reforms of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed.[75] The civil war has been characterized by the use of prohibited means and methods of warfare such as the obstruction of humanitarian access; killings;[76] systematic raping;[77] internal displacement;[78] burning of farmlands,[79] use of ballistic missiles, cluster munitions and other explosives with indiscriminate effects.[80]

In Cameroon, the Ambazonia civil war which started in 2017 in the Southern region of Cameroun has also affected the country dramatically. The Ambazonia civil war resulted from a protest championed by Cameroon Anglophone minority that agitated for greater autonomy, better representation and an end to cultural marginalization by the central government.[81] However, the protest took a different shape when government security forces killed, tortured, torched villages, and detained many civilians. The civil war witnessed the use of IEDs and burning of farmlands.[82] So far, the civil war has recorded the internal displacement of at least 700,000 people; the killing of not less than 4,000 people;[83] and the attack of 42 schools.[84] South Sudan is by no means different as a civil war with multi-dimensional causes erupted following the political rivalry between President Kirr and his deputy Riek Machar. The rivalry led to the formation of an opposition party by Riek Machar known as Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM).[85] Following the civil war, thousands of people have been reportedly killed,[86] more than 4 million people

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[68] Rome Statute, *op cit,* Article 8(b)(xxii).

[69] *Op cit*, Article 8(b).

[70] 'Overall Total Population;-World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision'. < https://www.population.un.org >

[71] N Annan, 'Violent Conflicts and Civil Strife in West Africa: Causes, Challenges and Prospects', (2014) (3) 1 *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, 1-16, 3.

[72] S Allison, 'Conflict is Still Africa's Biggest Challenge in 2022. < https://www.reliefweb.int/report/world > Accessed 21 March 2022.

[73] S Allison, 'Conflict is Still Africa's Biggest Challenge in 2022. < https://www.reliefweb.int/report/world > Accessed 21 March 2022.

[74] *Ibid.*

[75] D Walsh and A Latif Dahir, The New York Times, https://www-nytimes-com.cdn.ampproject.org Accessed 16 March, 2022; Vivienne Nunis, 'Ethiopia's Economy Battered by Tigray War'.< https://www-bbc-com.cdn.ampproject.org > Accessed 21 March 2022.

[76] Vivienne Nunis, 'Ethiopia's Economy Battered by Tigray War'.< https://www-bbc-com.cdn.ampproject.org > Accessed 21 March 2022.

[77] Sebastien Roblin, 'Ethiopia's Civil War in Tigray Saw the Use of Chinese and Iranian Weapons', *The National Interest.* Available at < https://nationalinterest.org > Accessed 24 March 2022.

[78] *Ibid.*

[79] *Ibid.*

[80] Farouk Chothia, 'Ethiopia's Tigray Conflict: How the TPLF has outflanked the Army'. *BBC News* Available at < https://www-bbc-com.cdn.ampproject.com >

[81] Human Rights Watch (HRW): World Report 2020. https://www.hrw/world-report/2020/country-chapters/cameroon. Accessed 17 March 2022.

[82] 'Death by a Thousand cuts: Cameroon Struggles in Fight against Separatists'. African Arguments, 24 August 2021.

[83] 'Violence in in Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis takes High Civilian Toll. *Al Jazeera,* 1 April 2021. Accessed 24 March 2022.

[84] Emmanuel Freudenthal, 'Cameroon's Anglophone War, Part 1: A Rifle as the Only Way Out'. *The New Humanitarian.* < https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org >Accessed 24 March 2022.

[85] 'South Sudan Opposition head Riek Machar Denies Coup Bid'. *BBC News*. < www.bbcnews.com > 18 December 2013.

[86] 'Studies Estimates 190,000 people Killed in South Sudan's Civil War'. Reuters. 26 September 2018.

displaced,[87] and 6 million suffering starvation,[88] and even famine in some areas.[89] In fact, Amnesty International reported that weapons have been used to commit horrific human rights violations and war crimes throughout the conflict in South Sudan despite the UN Arms Embargo.[90] In Somalia, in February 2021, there was also an outbreak of civil war as a result of the failure of President Mohammed Abdullahi Mohamed to organize an election after the expiration of his tenure. According to records, about 500,000 people have lost their lives since the beginning of the civil war in 1991.[91] The damage caused by this situation is also evident in Somalia's healthcare system, and weak provision. In Mali, the civil war which began in 2012 between the northern and southern regions of Mali following a crisis which started as a Tuareg rebellion by the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) against Malian government, has further been marked by internal displacement of about 600,000 people;[92] killing of about 465 civilians[93] including children; recruitment of child soldiers; attacks on schools; attacks against humanitarian groups; enforced disappearance; kidnapping of civilians including aid workers;[94] blocking of humanitarian access; and the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs);[95] all against the clear provisions of International Humanitarian Law.[96] The Central African Republic is also being ravaged by civil war between the government, rebels from the Seleke coalition and anti-balaka militias.[97] This is as a result of the failure of the government to respect the peace agreement of 2007 entered into between the government and the rebels. Following the conflict, at least 2.9 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, and 581, 362 people internally displaced.[98] In Libya too, was a multi-sided civil war fought between different armed groups from 2014-2020.[99] This was as a result of the rejection of the outcome of the 2014 election by the General National Congress. The civil war was also characterized by increasing use of landmines and other explosives causing the loss of about 5,700 lives by 2016 alone. The Chadian civil war is also worthy of note. The religious rivalry between Muslims and Christians had seen Chad being moved by civil war between the Arab-Muslims of the north and the Sub-Saharan-Christians of the south. This has also affected leadership and Presidency in Chad. Following the civil war, at least 7,000 people have been killed and 200,000 made refugees.[100]

8. Causes of Armed Conflicts in Africa
The major causes of armed conflicts in Africa have been linked to several complex factors which have been found to be rooted in, among other things, the interplay of historical factors, socio-economic crisis, and legacies of authoritarianism, international forces and local struggles.[101] These complex factors, according to Annan[102] and as evident from the above, include bad governance and corruption; human rights violations; poverty; ethnic marginalization, and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, among other things

Bad Governance and Corruption: Bad governance and corruption are twin evil and in fact one of the major factors that trigger incessant armed conflicts and agitations in Africa.[103] This is true of Nigeria where corruption and bad governance have resulted in the Niger-Delta crisis and Boko Haram insurgency.[104] Corruption has limited the accessibility of the dividend of democracy to only the privileged and persons in positions of authority whereas

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[87]'A New Report Estimates that more than 380,000 People have Died in South Sudan's Civil War'. *Washington Post*. 26 September 2918.

[88] 'Starvation threat numbers soars in South Sudan'. Al Jazeera. 25 November 2016.

[89] 'South Sudan Declares Famine in Unity State. *BBC News*. 20 February 2017.

[90] Amnesty International, 'South Sudan: Evidence of Violations and Illicit Concealment of Arms must Spur UN to Renew Arms Embargo'. 30 April 2020. <https://www.amnesty.org> Accessed 24 March 2022.

[91]'Twentieth Century Atlas-Death Tolls and Casualty Statistics for Wars, Dictatorships and Genocide.

[92]Giannanga, Marco, 'Britain 'Sleepwaking' into Deadly Conflict in War-torn West Africa'. Express.co.uk. Accessed 25 March 2022.

[93] Human Rights Watch. 'How much more Blood must be spilled. 10 February 2020.

[94] Human Right Watch (hrw) '*Mali Events of 2020'.* < https://www.hrw.org > Accessed 25 March 2022.

[95]'Islamists Block First Mali Aid Convoy to Timbuktu'. Reuters, 15 May 2012. < www.bbcnews.com > Accessed 25 May 2022.

[96] Protocol I, *op cit,* Articles 51, 54, and 55; Rome Statute, *op cit*, Article 8(b)(xxvi).

[97] Uppsala Conflict Data Program Conflict Encyclopedia, Central African Republic, In depth: The Seleke Rebellion

[98] Global Conflict Tracker. 'Violence in the Central African Republic'. < https://www.cfr.org > Accessed 25 March 2022.

[99] 'Libya's Second Civil War: How did it come to this? *Conflict News.*

[100] 'Chaldian Rebel Groups and Coalitions. Sudan Issue Brief. Ginebra: Small Arms Survey. No. 9, 8de feberero de 2008.

[101]C Obi, 'Conflict and Peace in West Africa' Uppsala, Sweden: The Nordic Africa Institute. Available at < https://www.nai.uu.se/publications/nes/archives/051obi. >; 'Armed Conflict and Peace Processes in Sub-Saharan Africa'. SIPRI Year Book 2020. <https://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2020/07 >; N Annan, *op cit*, 1.

[102] N Annan, *op cit*, 5.

[103] *Ibid.*

[104]HT Ejibunu, 'Nigeria's Niger-Delta Crisis: Root Causes of Peacelessness. Tuschl, RH (ed.),*EPU Research paper* (2007) 7(7) cited in N Annan, *op cit,* 5-6.

the poor masses live in penury. The situation is also true of Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cote d'lvoire and a host of others[105] where bad governance and corruption are at work.

Massive Human Rights Violations: Human rights violations such as extra-judicial killings, torture, human trafficking, rape, gender-based violence, marginalization, discrimination and much more, have been responsible for incessant armed conflicts and civil strife in Africa.[106] For instance, in Nigeria, the Niger-delta crisis was triggered by the killing of some Ogoni youths agitating against environmental degradation by some oil companies operating in the Niger-Delta regions.[107] In Guinea Bissau too, human rights violations such as oppression of the citizens gave rise to violent conflict which destabilized the country in 1998.[108] The effect of the said conflict has remained till date.[109]

Poverty: Poverty also constitutes one of the causes of incessant armed conflicts in Africa. Annan[110] rightly stated that hunger, starvation lack of economic growth and development create likelihood of violent conflicts and strife. Record also shows that 'African countries typically have some of the lowest GDP per capita in the world, compared to countries like Luxembourg, Switzerland and Norway…'[111] with well over 60% of the citizens living below the poverty line of US $1 per day.[112] These situations result in agitations and protests which more often culminate in armed conflicts. This is true of Liberia[113] and Guinea Bissau.[114]

Proliferation of small arms and light weapons: Proliferation of small arms and light weapons is a serious factor that triggers incessant armed conflicts in Africa.[115] In fact, Edeko opined that Africa hosts about 100 million illegal arms and light weapons circulating in the world;[116] and that a greater percentage of these arms and light weapons are in the control of insurgent groups.[117] This is owing to their accessibility, affordability, availability, porous borders, and ineffective regulation of their use.[118] The illegal circulation of small arms and light weapons has facilitated *coups d'etat*, inter-ethnic crisis, more often culminating in full fledge wars resulting in the destruction of lives, internal displacements and destruction of properties.[119] This is true of Mali;[120] Libya;[121] and Somalia.[122]

Ethnic Marginalization/ Political Rivalry: Ethnic marginalization and political rivalry is another cause of armed conflict in Africa, Fearon and Laitin[123] noted that ethnicity in itself is not violent and a direct cause of armed conflict but that the concept has been misused in societies polarized into two imbalanced divides with one side feeling marginalized. This is true of a heterogeneous society like Africa where divides are made along ethnic lines.[124] Ethiopia, Liberia, Cameroun, Nigeria, Guinea Bissau, to mention but a few, are illustrative.[125] For example, in Liberia, under the tenure of Samuel Doe, the Krahn and Mandingo ethnic groups were more favoured. This ignited ethnic tensions leading to a violent war in Liberia. This is also the case in Cameroun where the divide between Francophone and Anglophone is currently causing violent conflict. In Nigeria, divides along ethnic

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[105]Annan, N, *op cit,* 5.

[106]Human Rights Watch (HRW) 2003, *The Regional Crisis and Human Rights Abuses in West Africa{ Briefing paper to the UN Security Council.* New York: HRW.

[107]AA Brisibe, 'The Identity of a People: With Special focus on Globalization and its impact on Niger Delta in African Tradition, C.O.O.L Conference, Boston, MA on 18 March 2001.

[108] Voz di Paz and Interpeace 2010 *Root Causes of Conflict in Guinea Bissau,* cited in N Annan, *op cit,* 7.

[109] *Ibid.*

[110] N Annan, *op cit,* 8.

[111]<https://africa-businessinsider-com.cdn.ampproject.org/v/s/Africa.businessinsider.com/local/markets/10-african-countries-with-t > Accessed 13 March 2022.

[112] United Nations Development Program (UNDP) 2012UNDP Human Development Report, 2012. New York, UNDP

[113]P Vinck, *et. al.,* 'Talking Peace: A Population-based survey on Attitudes about Security, Dispute Resolution, and Post-conflict Reconstruction in Liberia. Berkeley, CA: Human Rights Centre, University of California, Berkeley.

[114] Voz di Paz and Interpeace , *ibid*; HT Ejibunu, *ibid.*

[115] N Annan, *op cit,* 9.

[116]SE Edeko, 'The Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Africa: A Case study of Niger Delta in Nigeria. Tuschl, RH(ed), *EPU Research Papers* 7(7).

[117]A Ebo and L Mazal, 'Small Armed Control in West Africa, Monitoring the Implementation of Small Arms Control (MISCAC), West Africa Series No.1, London: International Alert.

[118] N Annan, *op cit,* 8 .

[119] FL Keili, 'Small Arms and Light Weapons Transfer in West Africa: A Stock taking'. *Disarmament Forum,* 4.

[120] < https://www.sipri.org/research/conflict-peace-and-security/africa/mali> Accessed 19 March 2022. N Annan, *op cit*, 9.

[121]'Libya's Second Civil War: How did it come to this? *Conflict News.*

[122] Central Intelligence Agency (2011). The World Factbook. Langgley, Virginia: Central Intelligence.

[123]J Fearon and D Laitan, 'Ethnicity, Insurgency and Civil War', (2003) 97(1) *American Political Science Review,* 75-90. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S003055403000534

[124] *Ibid.*

[125] HT Ejibunu, *op cit.*

groups is so entrenched that even at the national levels this is obvious. For instance, the divide between the north and south led to the Nigeria-Biafra civil war in1969. In Ghana, the ethnic divide between the Andanis and Abudus was responsible for a violent inter-ethnic crisis which threaten the peace and security for which Ghana was known for.[126] More illustrative and recent is the on-going armed conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray region- an armed conflict which started as a result of marginalization of the Tigrayan ethnic group (which make up just 6-7 per cent of Ethiopia's population) by the Oromo and the Amhara (constituting the central administration).[127]

9. Impact of Armed Conflicts on Sustainable Development of Africa

The sustainable development performance of African countries have been studied on the basis of such factors as governance,[128] economy,[129] resources, and environment,[130] and records show that African countries have the lowest level of sustainable development performance in the world.[131] Armed conflicts among other things have been identified as one of the key factors for this poor performance.[132]Armed conflict strikes at the very root of sustainable development as it affects the three key areas (social, economic, and environment) of sustainable development.

Economic Impact

For instance, prior to the Ethiopia's Tigray civil war, 'Ethiopia's economy was one of the fastest growing in the region, expanding by an average of 10% a year in the decade to 2019'.[133] However, following the Tigray civil war, Ethiopia is suffering enormous economic consequences.[134] According to Antonio Guterres-the UN Secretary-General, war had drained over a billion dollars from the country's coffers'.[135] This is supposed to be part of the fund that would have been used to improve the lives of Ethiopians. As for South Sudan, in the civil conflict that lasted from 2013-2018, about 82% of the population lived in poverty between 2009 and 2016 (as against 51%) as a result of large scale conflict which interrupted business activities with the attendant fall in oil revenues.[136] The real income of the country dropped by half since 2013 and inflation rose to more than 300 per cent per annum.[137] To that effect, the majority of the populace lived below the international poverty line of $1.90 per day in 2016.[138] In Libya, the civil war has also affected all sectors of its economy -macroeconomic, productive sectors including the hydrocarbons, construction and agricultural sectors.[139] The loss of economic potential estimate stands at 783.2 billion Libya dinars from 2011 to the present day.[140] There is also reduction in labour force and a loss in revenue from the Libyan oil by 90% as a result of the blockade on Libya's major oil fields.[141] In Cameroon, the Ambazonian civil war has had a devastating impact thereby shutting down key elements of the Cameroonian economy.[142] This is all against the overall aim of the Sustainable Development Goals and in particular Goal 1 which commits all countries of the world to end poverty in all its forms everywhere.

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[126] N Annan, *op cit,* 8.

[127] D Walsh and A Latif Dahir, *ibid.*

[128]G Atisa, A Zemrani, M Weiss, 'Decentralized Governments: Local Empowerment and Sustainable Development Challenges in Africa. (2021) *Environ Dev Sustain.* 23: 3349-67. 23: 3349-67

[129]OM Mutiiria, Q Ju, Dumor, 'Sustainable Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Impact of Infrastructure on Wealth per capita. (2020), *Int Soc Sci J.* 69: 1-14*;* S Asongu, J Nnanna, 'Inclusive Human Development in Sub-Saharan Africa. (20202) *J EnterpCmmunities.*14:183-200; S Liyanage, FG Netswere, A Motsumi, Insights from EU Policy Framework in Aligning Sustainable Finance for Sustainable Development…….

[130]WT Selmier, A Newenham-Kahindi , ' Communities of Place, Mining Multinationals and Sustainable Development in Africa.(2020) *J Clean Prod.* 292.

[131]D Li, G He, H Jin, and F Tsai, 'Sustainable Development of African Countries: Minding Public Life, Education, and Welfare', (2011) 11, *Front. Public Health.*

[132] *Ibid.*

[133]Vivienne Nunis, 'Ethiopia's Economy Battered by Tigray War'.< https://www-bbc-com.cdn.ampproject.org > Accessed 21 March 2022.

[134] < https://www-bbc-com.cdn.ampproject.org > Accessed 21 March 2022.

[135] *Ibid.*

[136]Utz Pape & Arden Finn, World Bank. 'How Conflict and Economic Crises Exacerbate Poverty in South Sudan'. <https://blogs.worlbank.org>. Accessed 28 March 2022.

[137] 'As South Sudan Implodes, America Reconsiders its Support for the Regime'. *The Economist.*

[138]Utz Pape & Arden Finn, World Bank. 'How Conflict and Economic Crises Exacerbate Poverty in South Sudan'. <https://blogs.worlbank.org> . Accessed 28 March 2022.

[139] 'The Economic Cost of the Libyan Conflict'. September (2021) (EN/AR). <https://reliefweb.int >.Accessed 29 March 2022.

[140] 'Six Days of Oil Blockade have cost Libya $255million, NOC says. *Libya Express.* 25 January 2020.

[141] *Ibid.*

[142] 'Cameroon Country Report 2022'. Available at < https://bti-project.org >. Accessed 29 March 2022.

Environmental Impact

Armed conflicts do not only affect civilians[143] and civilian objects;[144] but they also have negative environmental impacts such as soil degradation, air pollution, radioactive pollution, acid rain, and diminution of air quality.[145] The employment of Improvised Explosive Devices, [146] landmines;[147] torching of villages; and burning of farmlands[148] as witnessed in civil wars across Africa, cause ecosystem imbalance as they cause food insecurity; contaminate sources of drinking water; and render the natural environment uninhabitable. This is against the clear provisions of International Humanitarian Law;[149]the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 11 which commits countries to ensure that cities and settlements are safe.

Social Impact

Armed conflicts facilitate forced migration, refugee flow, destruction of societies' infrastructure and a lot more, thereby creating a developmental gap between warring countries on the one hand and countries not at war on the other hand.[150] This is true of the Ethiopian, Cameroonian, South Sudanese, Libyan, Somalian, and Central African Republic civil wars where the civil wars have rendered millions internally displaced;[151] millions migrants and refugees; many schools and hospitals have been the object of attack.[152] Again, the fall in government revenues in countries like South Sudan and Libya resulting from oil blockade, also had a corresponding social impact as government expenditures on infrastructural development has dropped significantly.[153]

Humanitarian Impact

Ending hunger, food security, improved nutrition,[154] and good health and well-being[155] are some of the important highlights of the Sustainable Development Goals. However, this is made difficult because of the humanitarian issues arising from the numerous armed conflicts across Africa. This is made obvious in the civil wars in Ethiopia's Tigray, Ambazonia, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Somalia and a host of others, where the civil wars have left thousands dead, millions forcefully displaced, starved and without access to basic healthcare. Tigray has for instance been described as an epicenter of a worsening humanitarian crisis.[156].

10. Conclusion and Recommendations

Peaceful and security are the seed ground for sustainable development. Therefore, addressing the root causes of armed conflicts is imperative to reducing the incidents of armed conflict in Africa. To achieve this, African Heads of state and government and other relevant stakeholders must put in place peace time measures geared towards addressing the triggers of armed conflict in the first instance. These will include:

Regulation of armed conflicts and effective sanctions for violation: Armed conflicts are inevitable. However, once armed conflict ensures parties to the conflict must respect the basic principles of International Humanitarian Law respecting the use of lawful means and method of warfare so as to ensure the protection of civilians, objects indispensable to civilians, and the natural environment. Effective sanctions must also be provided for the violation of same.

Effective dissemination of the rules of International Humanitarian Law: The International Committee of the Red Cross must raise up to its duty of educating the populace on the rules of International Humanitarian Law

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[143] Protocol I, *op cit,* Article 50(1).

[144] *Op cit,* Article 52.

[145] 'War and Conflict Related Environmental Destruction.' Available at < https://www.encyclopedia.com > Accessed 30 March 2022.

[146] 'Death by a Thousand cuts: Cameroon Struggles in Fight against Separatists'. African Arguments, 24 August 2021.

[147] 'Libya's Second Civil War: How did it come to this? *Conflict News.*

[148]'Cameroon's Anglophone War, Part 1: A Rifle as the only Way out.' <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org > Accessed 29 March 2022.

[149] Protocol I, *op cit,* Article 55.

[150] 'Development Consequences of Armed Conflict'. < https://gsdrc.org >. Accessed 29 March 2022.

[151]Sebastien Roblin, 'Ethiopia's Civil War in Tigray Saw the Use of Chinese and Iranian Weapons', *The National Interest.* Available at < https://nationalinterest.org > Accessed 24 March 2022.

[152]'Cameroon's Anglophone War, Part 1: A Rifle as the only Way out.' <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org > Accessed 29 March 2022.

[153] 'The Economic Cost of the Libyan Conflict'. September (2021) (EN/AR). <https://reliefweb.int> .Accessed 29 March 2022.

[154] Goal 2.

[155] Goal 3.

[156]Geneva Palais briefing note on the situation for Children in the North-west Regions of Cameroon, UNICEF, 21 June 2019. Accessed 29 March 2022.

regarding the means and methods of warfare. This can be by way of public campaign in schools, Churches, market places and in any other gatherings.

Good governance: Bad governance and corruption have been identified as key triggers of armed conflict and civil strife in Africa.[157] Hence, African leaders and all stakeholders must rise up to their duty of ensuring good and inclusive governance. It is also imperative to use public funds to better the lots and lives of their citizens in order to reduce animosity that often gives rise to armed conflicts and civil strife.

Investing on economic development: Economy is the bedrock of any country. However, records show that Africa has the lowest GDP in the world.[158] The effect is that the per capita income of her citizens is also the lowest. It is therefore important that African government and their relevant agencies invest on economic development such as creation of markets and business sectors to improve the state of their economy. African countries must in addition take advantage of their natural and human resources to improve their GDP and the per capita income of their citizens thereby alleviating poverty that gives room for animosity.[159]

Elimination of ethnic marginalization: Every hand must be on deck to check ethnic competition for resources, control, and power as these have the tendency of fanning the embers of disunity which often culminates in armed conflicts. The interest of the minority groups must be well taken care of; and the resources must be distributed fairly and equitably.

Empowerment and creation of job opportunities: An idle mind, it is said is the devil's workshop. African leaders must take proactive step to empower their teeming youths and also create job opportunities so that they could be gainfully engaged rather than being engaged in violent acts that are detrimental to the peace.

Effective regulation and management of small arms and light weapons through domestic legislations: The proliferation of small arms and light weapons must be regulated through effective domestic legislations. This will go a long way to reducing the accessibility and availability of these dangerous weapons. Illegal possession of small arms and light weapons must also be criminalized and effective sanctions stipulated.

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[157] N Annan, *op cit,* 5.

[158] <https://africa-businessinsider-com.cdn.ampproject.org/v/s/Africa.businessinsider.com/local/markets/10-african-countries-with-t > Accessed 13 March 2022.

[159] Utz Pape & Arden Finn, World Bank. 'How Conflict and Economic Crises Exacerbate Poverty in South Sudan'. https://blogs.worlbank.org . Accessed 28 March 2022.