



CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL COHESION IN AFRICA

Presentation by Milly Lwanga Odongo
in

Rabat, Morocco, 13 April 2011



CENTRE DE DEVELOPMENT
DEVELOPPEMENT CENTRE



Scope Of The Presentation

The presentation is largely designed to

Cover the following questions:

- (i) Should social cohesion be set as a policy objective?
- (ii) Is it just a matter of social policy?
- (iii) Which reforms for better social cohesion?

The answers are provided using Kenya as a

case study

HOW KENYA HAS ADDRESSED

BULLET ONE (POLICY OBJECTIVE)



The need to address social cohesion as a policy issue is recognized and there are pressing reasons for adopting this approach as shown in the next couple of slides



For a country that seeks to fast track its development agenda and incorporate a rights based approach to development social cohesion must guide policy

Kenya's Development Agenda

- The Kenya Government made its commitment to the Millennium Declaration through the personal participation in the Summit by the Head of State
- Vision 2030 is Kenya's development blueprint covering the period 2008 to 2030.
- It aims at making Kenya a newly industrializing, "middle income country providing high quality life for all its citizens by the year 2030".

Kenya's Vision 2030

Vision 2030 focuses on 3 main areas or pillars, namely

the economic, social and political pillars.

- The economic pillar aims at ensuring prosperity for all Kenyans' by 2030 aiming to achieve a growth rate of 10% per year.
- The social pillar seeks to build “a just and cohesive society with social equity in a clean and secure environment”.
- The political pillar aims at realising a democratic political system founded on issue-based politics that respects the rule of law, and protects the rights and freedoms of every individual in the Kenyan society.

Kenya's Cohesion Agenda

- Following the widespread 2002 violence the government stepped up its social cohesion agenda and established- by Acts of Parliament, the Interim Independent Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission and the National Cohesion and Integration Commission.
- A new Constitution was promulgated in 2010. The overarching theme being cohesion.
- An aggressive process of public sector reform was stepped up

Unpacking Cohesion

- Despite the fact that the importance of “social cohesion” has been recognized by a growing number of states worldwide, as well as nationally in Kenya, there is still difficulty in reaching consensus on how “social cohesion” should be defined.
- Even when there is an agreement of the definition of “social cohesion”, problems remain in agreeing on ways to promote “social cohesion” because of the tensions between the promotion of social cohesion and the quest for economic competitiveness in the global market place.



The National Cohesion and Integration Act recognizes that for social cohesion to subsist the policies must cut across all sectors.

The reasons as to why cohesion is found to be missing, many a time include feelings (real or perceived) of economic and or political exclusion.

The Local (NCIC) Interpretation-I

- Social cohesion as provided in the National Cohesion and Integration Act, can, on the one hand be defined as an “affective bond - feelings of solidarity between citizens.”
 - (this is taking into account the immediate background that led to the passing of the Act and the recognized need to forge national unity).

The Local (NCIC) Interpretation- 2

- Features of social organization such as norms and social trust ... facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. Hence emphasis on multi-culturism as a positive in both the Constitution and the NCI Act.
- Social cohesion is essential to the making of a good social life, thereby offering a footstool to national development and sustained peaceful co-existence. (Loss of billions during the 2008 post election violence)



Some examples of reform agendas initiated by NCIC as a push to better social cohesion

Education

NCIC together with the Ministry of Education and other Partners:

- curriculum that promotes value based education (both for students and teachers)
- Student selection and teacher deployment systems that counter exclusion

Public Service

- Together with the key officials in charge of the various Ministries and in line with the provisions of the NCI Act, NCIC has initiated a process of auditing and periodically evaluating the civil service to assess ethnic balance in employee representation.
 - Taking past circumstances that affect education levels into account
 - Looking at all tiers (top, middle and bottom) of the workforce
 - Remuneration package for civil servants in the Remunerations Act

Political Participation

- ‘Professionalizing’ politics so that values are taken into account in selection of leaders (both at county and national level)
- Applying caveats to full social and political participation for politicians found to be hindering cohesion such as through travel bans
- Developing a name and shame criterion that is credible and effective

Individual Responsibility

- Working with CSOs to foster a culture of responsibility by the citizenry. Through for example, recognition of the existence and strength of multiculturalism even within their social settings and nationally. And by reminding them of the very personal and direct effect that lack of cohesion has on their lives and that of the coming generations

“Speech Guards”

- One of the biggest threats to social cohesion which to a large extent incorporates the individuals perception is hate speech.
- The Cohesion Commission has taken this agenda to the national level- to some extent- as far as awareness is concerned.

NCIC Commissioners and the Principals, VP and Minister





**Asanteni! (Thank You!)
For your attention!**