

'Participation, Rules and Responsibility - Three pillars to strengthen peace, security and welfare'

"Participation, Rules and Responsibility - Three pillars to strengthen peace, security and welfare" - Rede von Außenminister Frank-Walter Steinmeier bei der University of the Witwatersrand in Pretoria, Südafrika am 20. November 2014
 es gilt das gesprochene Wort
 This year we Europeans spent a lot of time remembering the centennial of the First World War. We live in an age - a very fortunate age! - where most young people in the European Union have never experienced war. However, it is extremely important to remind ourselves and to remind young people especially that peace cannot be taken for granted. We have to value it and work for it. Unfortunately, Europeans spent very little time remembering the suffering the First World War brought to Non-Europeans. Millions of Africans were dragged into a conflict which was not theirs to begin with. I spoke about the African victims of this War during my travel to Tanzania in March. South African soldiers were also involved in the fighting and an estimated 10 000 of them lost their lives in Europe, Asia and Africa. Yet there is something else, something fundamental which Europeans ignore when talking about the First World War. Countless articles and speeches deplore 1914 as a watershed that marked the end of European civilization. The war with all its industrialized brutality is described as a betrayal of European values. This reveals a very selective memory! Europeans had long been ignoring exactly those "European values" of humanity, respect and freedom when it came to their interactions with Africans. Africans were not granted the same rights, even long after the formal abolition of slavery. They were denied basic human rights, justice and equality. We Europeans have to face this bitter fact in order to overcome it and build a new relationship with Africa. The system of double standards was most obvious in this country, South Africa. It even had its own name: Apartheid. Long after other nations of the continent had achieved their independence, the struggle for freedom in your country still had to go on. Nelson Mandela said in his historic speech in Tunis in 1994 that Africa's liberation was only complete with the liberation of South Africa. So here is another important anniversary for the continent and the whole world: 20 years of the New South Africa. Congratulations! As we speak, West Africa is in the grip of a dangerous and often deadly virus: Ebola. It has travelled to Europe and the United States. It is a global challenge which has to be dealt with globally. Germany takes part in this fight with financial and scientific assistance as well as staff on the ground. But there is an even more dangerous phenomenon which resembles a virus. It can appear anywhere, anytime. It is destructive and also often deadly. It is the virus of violence. Violence has been with humanity from the beginning. Cain slew his own brother. And this is not the only hint in the bible. The potential for violence is in every human being, in every society. Estimates say that every minute one human being is killed violently. So, since I started my speech that makes about six killings. Yet, whenever we are faced with the images of mass violence we struggle for the right words - be it facing the Holocaust, the Killing Fields of Cambodia or the genocide in Ruanda - which was also exactly 20 years ago. And whoever thought that in Europe the virus of violence was forever banned to the history books, had to learn a tough lesson this year in the Ukraine crisis, which has cost more than 3000 lives already. This should not belittle the achievements of peace in the last decades. Europe has been quite successful in containing inter-state violence. In Africa, the end of the cold war also brought an end to many long-lasting civil wars. So there is hope for all of us. Just like medicine has found many different remedies against deadly viruses, society has found different ways of reducing violence - within countries but also on the international scene. In my speech, I want to talk about three remedies - three factors in our common struggle against violence and for peace. The first factor is participation. People want to have their voices heard. In societies with political participation the individual does not need to resort to violence in order to make himself heard. Frustrations do not bottle up and erupt in violent conflict, as they recently did in the streets of Ouagadougou. I continue to be a firm believer in open, democratic societies that not only allow, but encourage their citizens to participate. Democratic decision-making might sometimes take a little longer than the top-down approach, but it certainly brings better and more lasting solutions. That's why, in my travels to Africa and other continents, I meet with governments - of course - but I also meet with representatives of civil society and of the democratic opposition. South Africans struggled for the right to shape their own destiny. And they won it! Your democracy was hard fought for. Now, South Africa's separation of powers with a strong judiciary stands as an example for many countries on this continent. But beyond that, you need a political culture. Madiba himself set a shining example by not running for a second term as a President in 1998 despite his immense popularity. Today, the young people of Africa are much better informed and will demand the right to have their voices heard. My advice to governments in this matter is simple: Listen to the people! And listen to Madiba, the most famous alumnus of this university! By participation, I mean more than political participation. I mean economic and social participation - I mean every man and woman's right to improve their own lives. Democracy without prosperity will run into trouble. People need access to basic services such as health or education. Germany continues to share her experience in this field, not only with South Africa, but also with other countries on the continent. In Africa, I often see two things: one that makes me hopeful and one that needs work. On the one hand, I often see a great deal of solidarity among groups of the population - may they be from the same family, local community or ethnic group. On the other hand, I see relatively weak state structures and institutions of social welfare in many African countries. So my question is: What can be done to extend the strong African solidarity to cover all citizens of a state? This is much more than a technical question. Maybe South Africa and Germany can find ways to work together in that direction. Maybe we can encourage a culture as well as institutions of solidarity. Of course, in our efforts to expand economic participation, we need businesses, too. I am happy to have a delegation of German business with me. German companies, especially small and medium-sized companies, have learned to operate in a way that values long-term relationships and a fair sharing of gains. They have learned to balance the interests of management and workers in a cooperative way. And German companies and the state have created a system of vocational training that is the envy of the world. I just went to visit a vocational training center here in South Africa, the Commercial Advancement Training Scheme in Bramfontein, an example of our bilateral cooperation. We are very happy to share our experiences to give young people a perspective. Our Bi-National Commission will bring experts together to discuss all the issues of the implementation of vocational training. Infrastructure is another factor of participation. Because how can people participate in the economy when they're not well-connected by road or rail? How can governments provide goods and services if they cannot even reach parts of the country? Infrastructure is crucial especially when economies grow quickly, as many economies in Africa. Take a country like Angola, which I visited in March: They do not make steps in economic development, they make jumps! That's why they quickly need basic infrastructures: from roads to electricity to waste disposal. German companies have a lot of infrastructure expertise. That is why Germany works on infrastructure projects all across this continent. For example, the German government has financed the renovation of the Goma airport in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This will improve access to this rich but very troubled region. What does all this have to do with violence? I think being excluded from prosperity leads to frustration. Frustration leads to violence. That's why prosperity and participation need to go together! And that is a two-way street. Only a strong, growing economy can create prosperity for everyone. And only a society where everyone is given the chance to participate, where young people find jobs, can grow its economy in a stable and sustainable way. That is the two-way logic of participation! My second factor against violence is: rules. Now, that might sound very German to you. Germans love rules, don't they? I think this is more than a national preference. Everywhere, people and businesses need to rely on clear and fair rules. If the individual feels safe and minorities are protected, there is much less reason for violence to erupt. That is why states need the monopoly of exercising violence - simply to enforce the rules that apply to everyone, including the state itself. But such a set-up requires a state which functions well and controls its territory. In many parts of Africa, this is simply not the case. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, armed groups have taken the law in their own hands in some areas. The suffering of civilians is immense. In Nigeria, which I visited just a few weeks ago with my French colleague, Laurent Fabius, the fundamentalist group Boko Haram continues to terrorize the population. In other parts of the country, armed gangs challenge the authority of the state. What can be done about this? We need to strengthen the immune system of these states! The first thing are the rule-enforcers: police and, sorry to say, the military. They need to be strong, well-trained and accepted by society! That is why Germany is participating in five UN and nine European missions all over Africa to train police officers and also to teach police that it needs acceptance. It continues with the military. German forces have been cooperating with their counterparts in Africa for a long time. In recent years, a lot of this cooperation has taken place in European missions to rebuild African military forces to enable them to establish control of their states territory.

But there are other factors, too. Let me give you just two examples: First, Armed groups need money. They are desperate for profits. Often these come from the exploitation of natural resources. Germany has invested much in certification of mines and minerals in the DRC. Once we know whether some material comes from a mine outside the rule based framework, we can make it more difficult for these products to enter the international markets and thus deprive armed criminals of their profits. The same goes for international efforts to stop poaching. Germany and Gabon started an initiative including the countries of destination and co-sponsored a resolution against poaching in the United Nations. Second, armed groups need arms. If the international community stands firm and enforces its rules against the sale and distribution of small arms, we stand a much better chance to succeed. Unfortunately, there are cases where all rules fail and all efforts to resolve a crisis fall on deaf ears. In the Great Lakes region, people have been suffering from violence of all forms. In these cases, the international community needs to step in and help to end the violence. Recently, the United Nations largest Peace Keeping Mission, MONUSCO achieved some well noted successes in the fight against armed groups in the East of the DRC. It had the support of the Congolese armed forces and of the newly created MONUSCO Force Intervention Brigade. Your country, South Africa has really played a vital role in this. This example takes me to my third factor: responsibility. It will hardly come as a surprise when I tell you that rules and international order wont just fall into our lap. We need countries that are willing to step up and take on responsibility, also beyond their own front garden; countries that are willing to protect rules and create elements of international order. South Africa is one of these countries. South Africa takes on responsibility for its continent. I think that, when it comes to systems of rules and order, Africa is ahead of many other regions. The African Union and the respective regional organizations have a vision for peace and security and prosperity, and this vision is embodied in the African Peace and Security Architecture and the African Governance Architecture. African Regional Organizations have made it clear that military coups will not stand! The latest example is Burkina Faso. They have also made it clear that they will not let a terrible civil war, as in South Sudan, develop into a devastating regional conflict. South Africa takes part in these efforts. It stepped in during the recent crisis in Lesotho. South Africa is one of the key actors in the DRC, where one armed group, the FDLR, faces a deadline to disarm and disband by January or face military action. Maintaining this deadline, decided by the Security Council and supported by the African institutions, is a matter of international and African credibility. Of course, my own region, Europe, has its own crises to deal with, too. We are still dealing with the aftermath of the most severe economic crisis that ever happened in our Union. And in Ukraine, we are faced with the biggest threat to peace and stability on our continent since the end of the Cold War. In the face of all these crises, Germany, just like South Africa, will take on her share of responsibility and get involved to protect and promote the vision we share: a world run by rules and not by violence. Our support for the United Nations is well-known - we are the fourth largest financial contributor to its Peace Keeping Operations. But we are equally proud of our support for the African Union, including the African Peace and Security architecture, as our second largest partner after the EU. I look forward to my discussions in Pretoria, to learn more about how South Africa is working for elements of international order - both as a strong member of the AU, and globally, as a member of the BRICS states. The virus of violence is the oldest and the most dangerous threat to mankind. I have talked about three different types of remedy - but looking at the world outside with its many conflicts, we all see how powerful this virus still is. You, the young students in this room - you are the first generation that grew up in the new South Africa. I am aware that there are still many deep divisions in your country. But your country has set a strong example how violence and hatred can be overcome. You set up a Rainbow-Nation, not a Revenge-Nation! Now, in the 21st century, when the world is growing ever closer together, the virus of violence is also becoming more global - It transcends borders and spreads around much more easily. So all the more, we have to work hard and we have to work together to find remedies against it. If the African youth, with all its energy and enthusiasm, joins the global struggle, the virus of violence will have a very difficult 21st century. Thank you very much. Auswärtiges Amt
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