A Report on the Second Session of the Nairobi International Political Forum

EASTERN AFRICA & CENTRAL EASTERN EUROPEAN RELATIONS

22nd November 2017
Nairobi, Kenya
CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL & SECURITY AFFAIRS

CISA is a think tank and research organisation, which contributes to the discourses in international studies, with the diverse interests among its members as well as affiliates.

CISA provides independent research, and aids in policy formulation and development.

Our Mission
To harness knowledge and wisdom to influence global affairs and relations

Our Vision
A stable global order

Our Objectives
To provide a platform to complement academia and practice in International Studies and its ecosystem
To engage in informal reflections on matters affecting global public interests
To poke forethought to the expected challenges and recommendations to relevant institutions to secure futures within the scope of the agenda

THE NAIROBI INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL FORUM

The Nairobi International Political Forum (NIPFO) is a platform of the Centre for International and Security Affairs. With an outlook from the African perspective, NIPFO seeks to strengthen dialogues on international political issues, while exploring the future of the continent on identified thematic areas.

The selection of the participants - global in nature - is due to the intrinsic nature of our shared global futures, cognizant of the fact that problems or successes in a remote village anywhere in the world affect directly or indirectly the problems or successes in another part of the world. The forum’s exclusivity will be enhanced by the suspended formalities to ensure new ideas are tried out in complete freedom, focussed on important issues away from the everyday official pressures and conventional paths. The freedom of speech is protected, with stringent adherence to the Chatham House Rule.

Our Ambitions
Develop a contextual and conceptual framework to inform global order
Influence thought-leadership in Africa’s International Relations and Foreign Policy
Harness the goodwill of the members and participants to translate recommendations to revised policies
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Central and Eastern European countries are beginning to rediscover their old relations with Africa. Over the last few years, CEE countries have established embassies and consulates here in Africa, an indicator of closer ties. But while recent developments show growing mutual interests between CEEs and East African countries, it is true that a stronger path to re-engagement will require a strategic approach on both sides, for sustainability and mutual benefit.

Motivations for re-engagement need to exist between the two regions. A key interest should be on diversifying economic relations and increasing trade and investment. However, this will require time, considering the need to convince and agree on the framework of relations, but, first, it will be important to have high-level dialogues and visits.

The first High-level visit from CEE to East Africa region happened recently. The visit by President of Slovakia H.E. Andrej Kiska to Kenya focussed on economic cooperation ICT, Energy and Agriculture. On the February 13, 2017, it was also pronounced that Slovakia was welcomed into the Tripartite agreement that brought together COMESA, EAC and SADC to create larger markets.

On May 18, 2017, former Senate Speaker Hon Ekwe Ethuro visited Ukraine to attend the Global Legislative Openness Conference, where he held the First High-Level bilateral meeting with Chairperson of the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament) of Ukraine H.E. Andriy Parubii. This indicated a growing interest in improved diplomatic relations.

Serbia has not been left behind, and is reinvigorating relations with Kenya. This follows an official visit by a delegation from Serbia during the Inauguration of H.E President Uhuru Kenyatta and Deputy President William Ruto. Ukraine State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine H.E. Andriy Zeyats also attended. Ukraine’s delegation was even of a higher level, which was highly appreciated by the Kenyan side.

The delegation from Serbia proposed stronger cooperation in agriculture, agro-processing and education, training of diplomats, inter-university collaboration and scholarships and ICT, among others. This interest is growing and should continue as a way of building mutual trust, and a basis for expanding niche areas for cooperation.

The NIIFO II forum was facilitated by the existing gap in the relations between Africa and CEEs. It was imperative to understand the history of the two regions and make necessary contributions that would lead to the building of current and future relations. The existing gap is based on the following observations:

➢ Low awareness of current realities in the two regions
➢ Lack of sufficient institutional and organisation mechanisms to advance bilateral trade and investment
➢ Certain positioning of the CEEs in the European Union and their relations with western countries in Africa
➢ Hesitation of the European commission to facilitate CEEs in the EU-African development policies.
BACKGROUND

History of relations between Eastern African Countries and Central Eastern European Countries

The Central and Eastern Europe countries have engaged substantively with many African countries in economic, political and ideological purposes during the Cold War. The CEEs engaged freely with newly independent states in Africa to strengthen their own position in the Communist world and their domestic prestige. The most active CEE countries in Africa in the 1950’s and early 1960’s were East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. At this time, anti-colonisation struggle among African countries was underway and relations with the Soviet Union/Republics was premised on the desire of attaining Independence.

In Eastern Africa, the story was not different. Relations with Eastern Europe were rooted in either religious affiliation - Orthodox Christian (East) and Catholic/Protestant Christianity (West) - or in military assistance and bonds during the liberation struggle. In recent history, there have been economic relations in trade and tourism, which have sprung up, webbed by the development agenda of the two regions. Africa is on the path to achieving the 2030 agenda, and exploring its potential.

The genesis of Kenya and Africa’s relations with CEEs can be traced back to the African liberation struggle, which coincided with Cold War period. CEEs’ interests were conditioned by the Cold War and decolonisation. They offered large amounts of technical assistance and loans to African countries. Kenyan political parties such as KANU received immense financial support from the Soviet Union. African countries also aligned themselves with the Non-Aligned Movement, and, therefore, both Western and Eastern European countries engaged in diplomatic relations.

The first efforts to establish connections between Kenya and Eastern European countries began with the visit of Kenya’s Vice President Jaramogi Oginga Odinga and Foreign Affairs Minister Joseph Murumbi. The purpose of the visit was to understand Eastern European countries and to seek economic and military aid, and scholarships for Kenyan students. Scholarships commitments were granted as well as weapons that were sourced from the former Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria.

There was also a High-level visit made by Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia to Kenya. At the time, trade links weren’t as important since trade was at its very low. The visit was more of building a political relationship overshadowed by the Cold War and external realities. At this time, Kenya was in the Non-Aligned Movement, and Tito devoted a huge amount of time and resources to the newly independent African states. This was a way of strengthening their own position in the Communist world and their domestic prestige.

In the immediate post-Independence period, African countries leaned towards African Socialism - a blend of Western Capitalism and the Communism - to fit the African way of life. Kenya also adopted a non-alliance programmatic and African socialism approach but within the framework of pragmatic approach within its own national interest.
Despite some similarities and complementary interests, relations between Eastern Europe and those in the Eastern Africa over the years have not been very close. It is through these lenses that CISA organised NIPFO to identify the perspectives in the regions’ diplomatic relations.

**Similarities between CEEs and African Countries**
Both regions have had anti-colonial struggles, and have had to face different group of actors whose striving has been for geopolitical domination in their regions. In Eastern Europe, Moscow has tried to dominate CEEs for a long period of time. This can be seen in the recent Moscow action of illegal annexation of Ukraine's Crimea in 2014, and also previously, altercations with Georgia, in 2008.

In the past, Ukraine suffered one of the major casualties of the catastrophic events of 1917-45: it is estimated around four million Ukrainians lost their lives in the politically inspired famine of the 1930s, during Stalin's forced collectivisation of agriculture, and then up to a further million in the carnage of the Second World War (frequently referred to in Ukraine as the Great Patriotic War).

---

**These events form an important part of Ukraine’s collective memory and identity.**
**In similar ways, African countries also had to fight colonialism**

**Common issues between East Africa and Central Eastern Europe have been on safety and security problems caused by terrorist attacks, illegal trafficking, foreign policy issues, peacekeeping, and a non-permanent seat in the United Security Council, development policy issues, decentralisation/devolution, trade, fight against corruption and integration. Integration plays a vital goal for both the two regions.**

**The two regions are absorbed by their efforts to further their interests and pursue more objectives through integration. However, the two regions have different integration formats and provide room to learn from each other. The East African region has, for example, the African Union, East African Community, and the Common Market for East and Southern European countries. There have been interesting and impressive agreements from such frameworks/integration entities. This provides a platform to cope with similar challenges posed by fundamental transitions, as well as with the impact of globalization on their economies and in promoting the cause of people of the respective regions globally.**

**Eastern Europe integration formats include the Visegrad four, made up of Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. The Visegrad is an unofficial name given to Central Eastern European countries and was established to foster closer ties between the four countries. Three of these countries are also pursuing to join the European Union. There is also the Council of Baltic states, Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation, Central European Initiative, and Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova, also known as GUAM. The idea of integration by Eastern European countries is to protect their choices of interest and drive development.**
**Perspectives of cooperation between Central Eastern European Countries and East Africa**

Rebuilding relations could provide economic, security and political benefits, given the structure of their economies and the resources of the two regions. Mechanisms that enable stronger people-to-people relations should focus on areas such as education, research and culture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Trade</th>
<th>Security</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education in the two regions is of high quality but at a much lower cost compared to United Kingdom and the United States. CEEs have sought to provide scholarships to students of East Africa.</td>
<td>There is an improvement in bilateral and multilateral agreements between CEEs and East African countries in trade in the agricultural sector and import/export of machinery, metals etc. However, there is room for improvement to enhance trade relations. Central Eastern European countries will decisively start thinking about investments in Kenya and in East Africa.</td>
<td>Exchange of information on security. There is need for stronger cooperation in this area, and Ukraine is proposing to sign an agreement on International Financing on Terrorism, in countering violent extremism. There are also calls for stronger relations with the African group at the United Nations and adopt common positions on resolutions that are of interest to CEE countries as well as those in Africa i.e. change of players in the United Nations Security Council.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DISCUSSIONS & COMMENTS

What went wrong after the cold war that disrupted the furthering of engagement between CEE and Eastern Africa Countries?

There was a pointer that nothing went wrong after the cold war, between CEE and East African countries. This is because Eastern European countries until now have never recovered from the effects of Iron Curtain, which involved gutting of local institutions and systems of control by Moscow. CEEs have had to deal with the aftermath of revolutions and killings in the struggle for self-determination. In this regard, they had to take time by themselves to reinvent their histories and work on their own new identities. Therefore, relationships with other parts of the world were not a priority.

EAC was also reorganising and regional integration was the priority. More focus was on developing stronger relations with the immediate neighbours.

African Perspective

Most African countries didn't take time to develop priorities around important issues that would form the basis of establishing original foreign policies and not the ones dictated on them by foreign countries.

Lastly, lower level of understanding of CEEs amongst the people of East Africa, because of their education curriculum being Western-oriented, contributed to their inability to explore relations with CEE countries.
Most African countries can learn a lot from Eastern European countries.

Eastern European countries were able to grow by harnessing agriculture (exporting grain) as opposed to infrastructural-based investment as a driver of development, of which Kenya’s economy is oriented. This makes it difficult to sustain due to lack of capital. Africa is a blessed continent but 68 per cent of arable land is unutilized. This is an area that can be used to reduce unemployment. There is also the need to teach farmers on value addition, as the Eastern European countries have done.

In terms of the rule of law democracy and governance, Kenya borrows a lot from the West and, yet, we do not share the same socioeconomic and cultural characteristics. Kenya has borrowed a lot of liberal democracy. Authors such as Francis Fukuyama have said liberal democracy is not the perfect system of democracy for a society such as Kenya’s, which is agrarian. It will take longer to realise the development that we aspire. Therefore, African countries have a lot to learn and borrow from the CEE’s.
Eastern European countries can also learn from East Africa. Eastern Europe borrowed a lot from western countries, because they wanted to catch up with the West, and ended up being successful. In the same way, there is more to learn for CEEs. For example, Kenya’s constitution-making process was very much inclusive, and contains more solutions to Kenya’s political and cultural-related issues.

Eastern European countries do not also know much about each other, which means it is not only a challenge for East Africa. East Africa is not fully integrated because of unsolved and emerging issues and differences between and among the member states. Kenya has had issues with Tanzania, particularly on migration and other competing interests. These problems have been there and are what led to the breakup of the community in the first instance. Kenya has had its liberal-African socialism, which is almost Capitalism and Tanzania is for African socialism.

The imbalance in economic development has changed the attitudes of Tanzania, making them less accommodating. Therefore, to build relations, the two regions first need to know about each other before progressing to trust each other, and building stronger and more meaningful bilateral relations. For example, Korea uses cultural diplomacy to achieve this with other countries. There is limited presence on the ground on both sides and this has implications on the bilateral relations.

The immigration status between CEEs and East Africa is at a lower level, and could be attributed to centralised decision-making processes and highly bureaucratic procedures among CEEs diplomatic missions. The immigration status between countries in Eastern Europe and East Africa is not known. Locally, it is difficult to identify who are Eastern Europeans. There is need to have more action in terms of relations between the two regions.
RECOMMENDATIONS & THE WAY FORWARD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shared Interests</th>
<th>Free Trade</th>
<th>Culture Exchange</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEEs and East Africa countries should not look at the possibilities of developing their links at the expense of other interests. The productive and progressive way is to look at the niche areas that would form the basis of relations between the two regions. Each Eastern European countries has its niche. Hungary, for example, is focusing on improving relations with Uganda by building hospitals and helping with refugees. Poland has also established a Polish centre in Kenya, which has had about 40 business visits enquiring about business in the country.</td>
<td>There is need to open a window of opportunity in Eastern Europe. Real engagement can only be sustained through long-term investment in education and research infrastructure between Eastern Europe and Eastern African countries. Priority should be in education and later focus on trade i.e. developing an export strategy targeting removal of trade barriers, allowing trade to take place between both regions. There is also need for East African countries to establish economic and trade attachés in CEEs to improve partnerships between the two regions.</td>
<td>Establishing relations through art would be essential since it helps in finding points of commonalities between different cultures, especially by having cultural ambassadors to spearhead this. Cultural Exchange in Kenya is already being implemented by the Embassy of Poland and the Embassy of Ukraine. The Ukrainian Embassy is planning to bring more Ukrainian artists in Kenya to help in educating and publicizing the Ukrainian culture. There are also volunteers from Ukraine, who have been involved in establishing orphanages in different parts of the country.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INSTITUTIONS PRESENT

Amref Health Africa  Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies
British Institute in Eastern Africa  Kenya Private Sector Alliance
Embassy of Algeria  Kenyatta University
Embassy of Egypt  Raphmery Limited
Embassy of Ethiopia  Research Institute of Peace, Policy and International Affairs
Embassy of Poland  Samuel Hall
Embassy of Serbia  Technical University of Kenya
Embassy of Sudan  The Nairobi Law Monthly
Embassy of Turkey  United Nations Office in Nairobi
Embassy of Ukraine  University of Nairobi
Executive Office of the President  Women Education Research Kenya
Franklin Management Consultants  Youth Enterprise Development Fund
High Commission of Sri Lanka
CISA welcomes you to collaborate as a stakeholder and/or a shareholder in partnering or joining its membership to realize its vision.

TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP

- Strategic Partner
- Corporate Member
- Diplomatic Mission Member
- Non-Governmental Organization Member
- Academic Institution Member
- Individual Member

KYWI
Know Your World Initiative

Know Your World Initiative seeks to advance the global peace and security agenda through enhancing people-to-people relations. The platform, engages with high school and university students, enabling them to understand current global trends and the peoples of the world, through an all-inclusive scope covering political, social and economic sectors.

TEAM NIPFO II

Organisation Joel Okwemba
Rapporteur Albert Mbaka
Logistics Samvel Arustamian, Vincent Mirang’a, Vania Wanjiru
Master of Cerimony Areba Omwoyo
Moderator Monica Ng’ang’a
Editor Elud Kibii
Design & Layout Sammy Mwirigi
Images Gerald Anderson Photography

CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL AND SECURITY AFFAIRS © 2017