SESSION 1: ETHNICITY, GOVERNANCE AND STABILITY IN EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

Objectives:
- Examine the regional geopolitical dynamics that have shaped (are shaping) the relationship between the various actors, i.e., states, ethnic groups, international organizations, multinationals, and militias.
- Understand the ethnic dimension of violent conflict in the Horn of Africa, both as a factor that frames politics but also in the context of security discourses.
- Analyze the factors that undermine good governance and the rule of law in the Horn of Africa.

Background:

East and Central Africa continue to make headlines for what now appears to be chronic instability. Over the last five decades, this region has seen genocides, ethnic violence, land disputes, civil war, cross-border conflict and a multi-national war. This is particularly true of Somalia, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, countries that have been affected by one or many of these destabilizing factors. Angola, Congo-Brazzaville, Chad, Central African Republic and South Sudan have not fared better. This session introduces participants to the main issues affecting peace, stability and development in the region with emphasis on the Great Lakes sub-region.

The region's security challenges flow from the failure by respective governments to embrace good governance and democratic practices, and from their inability to effectively manage ethnic diversity. As a confluence of cultures represented by the major African linguistic groups – Nilo-Saharan, Bantu and Afro-Asiatic (Cushitic/Hamitic) – this region is rich in ethnic diversity. The colonial encounter forged multiethnic states, with some ethnic groups straddling international borders. The embrace by the Organization of African (AU's predecessor) of the doctrine of *uti possidetis,* which was driven by the need to avoid chaos and anarchy legitimized these borders with restless communities on either side. These borders define states that slid into authoritarianism under one one-party rule, armed conflict, impunity and prolonged instability soon after decolonization in the 1960s, only to reluctantly rejoin the democratization track with the wave of democratization that followed the fall of the Berlin Wall. The institutionalization of these norms has proceeded at a slow pace, with regressions marking the process of democratization. Ultimately, 'Big Man' politics have been difficult to erase.

On Ethnicity and Security:
How ethnicity is understood?
- Ethnicity and identity
- Why ethnicity matters; political mobilization; access to social goods and social exclusion and marginalization;
- Linkages between failure to manage ethnic dynamics and insecurity
- Institutional mechanisms for managing ethnicity: ethnic federalism (Ethiopia); devolution and mandated diversity in the public service (the Kenyan paradox); limited autonomy (Somalia, South Sudan and the emasculated states), sanctioned forgetting and erasure (Rwanda).

Important considerations:
- Why does understanding ethnicity matter in a modern state?
- To what extend do ethnic dynamics underpin instability in the Horn of Africa?
- How can we intervene to facilitate better management of ethnic diversity?
- How 'negative ethnicity' amplifies the effects of poor governance.

The region faces multiple security challenges – armed conflict or insurgency (in Sudan, South Sudan, Burundi, DRC, Somalia), electoral/political violence (Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia, Tanzania, DRC), terrorism and violent extremism, trafficking (human and drugs) and international crimes (piracy, war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide). Many of these challenges can be directly attributed in large part to poor governance practices and suppression of free democratic expression through the imposition of ethnic hegemonies, sometimes by minority groups. The geo-strategic importance of this region is driven by external security and economic interests. This dynamic has, at times, strengthened the hand of hegemonic ethnic elites who reject an all-embracing citizen-centric security framework in favor of a regime- or ethnic-centric security prism. To be effective, external interventions must grapple with an offer and adequate response to these two major factors, which also play out in the security sectors in these countries.

Discussion Questions:
1. Is ethnic diversity an asset or liability?
2. How does ethnicity shape governance?
3. What are the drivers of good governance and stability in ethnically-diverse countries?

Required Readings:

Kidane Mengistu, 'Critical factors in the Horn of Africa's raging conflicts' available at http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/6670~v~Critical_Factors_in_the_Horn_of_Africa_s_Raging_Conflicts.pdf

Robert A. Dowd and Michael Driessen. "Ethnically Dominated Party Systems And The Quality Of Democracy: Evidence From Sub-Saharan Africa," Afrobarometer Working Paper No. 92, 2008, at:
http://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/publications/Working%20paper/AfropaperNo92.pdf

Recommended Readings:

George Mukundi, ICJ-Kenya, Ethnicity, Human Rights and Constitutionalism in Africa Nairobi, ICJ-Kenya, 2008 available at http://www.icj-kenya.org/jdownloads/Publications/Ethnicity_Book.pdf

Ali, Mohammed Hassen and Selassie, Bereket Hebete and Samatar, Ahmed and Metaferia, Getachew, 'Beyond Chronic Wretchedness in the Horn of Africa: New Perspective?'(April 8, 2013). Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=2247148

Handrahan, Lori. "Conflict, gender, ethnicity and post-conflict reconstruction." Security Dialogue 35.4 (2004): 429-445.
http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0967010604049521

James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," The American Political Science Review, Vol. 97, No. 1 (Feb., 2003), pp. 75-90.
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Reyntjens, Filip, The privatisation and criminalisation of public space in the geopolitics of the Great Lakes region, Journal of Modern African Studies, 43, 4 (2005), pp. 587–607.
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