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Sacramento

Making Peace

A Newsletter of the Center for African Peace and Conflict Resolution

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Director's Report



Ernest E. Uwazie

In our last newsletter of the 20th century, I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Millennium. **DON'T LET THE Y2K BUG GET YOU !**

CAPCR looks forward to continuing its work in promoting peace education in Africa and her diaspora as well as building the necessary linkages to sustain its conflict resolution programs.

In the future, we will strive to expand our youth peace and cultural education program between African and US students, while developing new projects on justice reform and sustainable peace throughout Africa.

As we enter the 21st century, there is need for hope and caution in Africa.

I pray for the successful implementation of the Peace Accords in Sierra Leone, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Eritrea/Ethiopia, as well as cheer the successful transition to civil rule in Nigeria and the second multiracial election in South Africa. The Accords, without ignoring the unfortunate costs and difficult choices, reflect the growing recognition of the inevitability of peaceful co-existence in complex Africa. The UN's Declaration 2000 as the year of Culture and Peace, and the Organization of African Unity's Resolution to dedicate 2000 as the Year of Peace & Security in Africa are encouraging developments; they reinforce the critical role of peace as a precondition to, and coterminous with, social development. CAPCR remains committed to playing a role in the realization of the UN and OAU 2000 peace mission, and assisting in the implementation of the various Peace Accords in Africa. I assure you that Africa (ns) will experience many challenges in the next millennium, both new and old. Despite it all, and with sustained efforts, I'm hopeful of the prospects of Africa rising again.

Thank you for your continued support. On behalf of CAPCR, I wish you a joyful holiday season.

Peace !

Ernest E. Uwazie



Students at the Youth Peace & Cultural Education Program in Ghana

Summer 1999 Youth Peace & Cultural Education Program in Ghana, West Africa

A Project Report Summary by Prof. Ernest E. Uwazie, Director

During summer 1999, the Center for African Peace & Conflict Resolution (CAPCR) at CSU, Sacramento organized a program on "Youth Peace & Cultural Education" in Ghana, West Africa as part of its program on conflict resolution. A total of fifteen (15) students participated in the program: 10 high school



students and 5 university student mentors. The program was designed to promote peace, cross-cultural understanding and international education, with extensive pre-trip lessons on African studies and human rights; peace education seminars, conflict resolution workshops, team building exercises, and peace project development by the

students. Much of the student pre-trip activities involved the use of information technology (e.g. web-based research, use of Internet to promote peace and role of media in conflict resolution). Some of the bi-weekly assignments included comparison of HIV, youth violence, education and environmental issues in US and Africa, the African family, US civil rights and UN human rights provisions, slavery, and biographies of notable African & American peacemakers. The 5-week (July 7 — August 12) study tour in Ghana served as culminating



► 'Summer Educational Program', continued



A program participant and her Ghanaian peers

experience for the students, part of which included their parents and guardians. Throughout their study in Ghana, the students were involved in many conflict resolution exercises with their peers; they studied several Ghanaian languages and cultural norms; attended seminars on Ghana politics and society;

lived with Ghanaian host families; interacted and worked with their peers on community service projects in orphanages, refugee communes, and rural school libraries. The students also met with top Ghanaian officials, traditional rulers or chiefs, and senior US diplomats in Ghana. Some of the major cultural and significant historical sites visited were the Kakum Nature Park, Cape Coast slave dungeon and Elmina castle, national gold mine, Kitampo waterfalls, W.E.B. Dubois museum, Kwame Nkrumah mausoleum, the Akosombo Dam, Volta Lake, Mole Game Reserve, etc. This life-long experience in Ghana took the students through a journey of self-discovery of ancestral roots, experiential learning, communal living, and peace and cultural education exchanges.

Since their return, the students have been excitedly sharing the positive experiences they had in Ghana at their schools, churches, and the Sacramento community. In sum, the program accomplished its main goals by exposing the students to a first-hand experience of an African culture, acquisition and application of conflict resolution skills, promotion of peace education and inter-cultural exchanges among the Sacramento

and Ghanaian youth, increasing their self-esteem and confidence as well as motivation and positive thinking. The program enhanced their leadership development and community service potentials, and created a positive experience in teamwork and social coping skills. It also introduced the students to opportunities for foreign service. Student plans are underway to form a "youth peace corps," as well as to demonstrate the lessons through slides, video, photos, and scrapbooks.

The success of the 1999 program has encouraged CSUS-CAPCR to conduct a similar one next year, also in Ghana, to gather more data, consolidate knowledge and devise a long-term project to promote youth violence prevention, peace education and cross-cultural understanding. The project was directed by Prof. Ernest Uwazie, with Prof. Cecil Canton as faculty adult guide with the assistance of Mrs. Patricia Holmes.

The program corporate sponsors included the CSUS Associated Students, Inc.; the College of Health & Human Services; California Wellness Foundation; Coca-Cola Company; and over 30 individual donors.

For more information about the 1999 or 2000 program:

Professor Ernest Uwazie: (916) 278-6282; (916) 278-7692 fax; eMail: uwaziee @ csus.edu

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO
CENTER FOR AFRICAN PEACE & CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Program Participants

Shanee Dewitt, Vanessa Fletcher, Bethlehem Gashaw, Dante Gray, Derik Green, Catherine Henry, Brandon Hicks, Tieska McDowell, Blessing Okorougo, Carroll Webb Jr., Patricia Holmes**, Maureen McGinnis*, Andrea Jennifer Porras*, Sulonda Smith*, Abdur Rahim Wasi*

Faculty Guide: Dr. Cecil Canton
**Assistant/Adult Guide *Mentor

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Lila Jacobs on “Wonders of the African World”



(Editor's note: The following commentary does not necessarily represent the views of CAPCR-CSUS. Prof. Lila Jacobs, Education Administration, serves on the CAPCR Board. The CAPCR African, Diaspora Conference on May 4-6, 2000, will feature a panel discussion on Prof. Ali A. Mazrui's acclaimed 1986 documentary "The Africans: A Triple Heritage" and Prof. Henry L. Gates' "Wonders of the African World." Prof. Mazrui will deliver a keynote address at the conference.)

We waited in anticipation for Professor “Skip” Gates to host his special TV series on Africa. Due to teaching evening classes at the university, I was only able to view one night of programming: his visit to Ghana and Ethiopia. As fate would have it, my son recently returned from a year of study in Ghana, and I had spent five weeks visiting him and traveling across the country.

I was excited to have the people I had come to love, appear on my TV screen—Ghanaian folk sharing their home and heritage with the visitor from Harvard. However, I was soon dismayed and upset. Why was this African American man being so rude to his hosts? In Ghana, I spent time with many young adults of the African Diaspora, and there were definitely some challenges that they faced. Some had difficulty with being seen as outsiders, others were trying to understand the role of Africans in the slave trade. But while they might have been challenged in making sense of the social/political construction of race and nationality, they were touched and changed by the authentic kindness, the human caring, and the dignity of the people of Ghana. They spoke to me with conviction of how they had come to understand that politeness and manners were acts of caring, and how their own behaviors had improved from the influence of Ghanaian culture.

Skip, however, was untouched by this awareness. He strutted through the country as if a superior being, due to his African American-ness or maybe his Harvard professor-ness. I have a list of complaints, including his inappropriate dress, snide comments, jokes at the expense of others, arrogance, sexist behavior, egocentricity and ethnocentricity.

Then, we had to endure his trip to Ethiopia. After insulting holy men with inappropriate and rude questions, Dr. Gates seemed to take great pleasure in his public disrespect. Standing outside the fence where the Holy Covenant is housed, he asked his host, “What would happen if I jumped over this fence?” giving no evidence of respect for other people’s religion or laws. For a final insult, he asked the Anglo Bishop of Canterbury to support his assertion of the in-authenticity of the Covenant.

The white Bishop turned out to be more respectful of Ethiopian religion and culture than Dr. Gates.

If any of the CAPCR Study Abroad students had behaved in this way, they would have been sent home. More importantly, none of them did act in this disrespectful manner. Even younger students from Sacramento high schools who visited Ghana last summer did not behave in this way. Why does Dr. Gates have no shame in showing the nation that information and status do not necessarily equate with respect, understanding, and cross-cultural skills. The holy men in Ethiopia told him directly that they were not impressed with his cleverness, and that he was greedy for fame. Skip appeared to patronizingly think their response was quaint, but he missed the point. These men pointed out the truth, which Dr. Gates was unable to hear. Students called me after the show, wondering how a renowned African-American scholar could turn out to be so culturally inept, so invested with privilege and superiority? In expressing his disappointment over the TV series, Ali Mazrui (Director of the Institute of Global Cultural Studies, SUNY Binghamton) stated, “I was so afraid that Gates’ fourth program would be insulting to Ethiopia that I was relieved that it was merely disrespectful.” While understanding the sentiment, I cannot be satisfied with this. I recommend that anyone who was offended by this TV series write or email Dr. Gates and/or PBS. ☘



SUMMER 2000 CONFLICT RESOLUTION WORKSHOP

The Fifth Annual Summer Workshop on Conflict Resolution is scheduled for June 19-23, 2000 on the CSUS campus.

Trainers for the workshop are Prof. Ernest Uwazie, Director of CAPCR, mediator/trainer since 1988; Attorney Daniel Yamshon, who has over a decade of experience in both domestic and international mediation, arbitration and conciliation training and practice; and Mrs. Thelma Johnson, highly acclaimed community and youth mediation and trainer, with more than 26 years of experience in management and supervisory position in government/public agencies. Workshop participants will earn a certificate upon completion of their training. Tuition of US \$485.00 includes workshop registration, materials, and three meals.

For application/registration form, contact CAPCR by phone (916) 278-6282, (916) 278-7692 fax, or eMail: uwaziee@csus.edu

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Human Rights and the Transition to Democracy in Nigeria

Joy Ngozi Ezeilo
Faculty of Law, University of Nigeria, Enugu.

(Editor's note: The following is the text of a lecture delivered by Professor Ezeilo on December 2 for CAPCR's Fall 1999 Guest Lecture Series. Her views do not necessarily represent those of CAPCR-CSUS.)

On May 29, 1999, Nigeria completed the transition to democracy and an elected civilian government assumed office. This, of course, is the third civilian government since Nigeria's independence in 1960, where military governments have ruled for 29 years out of the 39 years that Nigeria has been independent. Achieving that transition was a long, arduous, often truncated process. The general Nigerian populace was excited to end decades of repressive, authoritarian military regimes with their attendant consequences of extreme human rights abuses and complete state failure.

This paper discusses the human rights situation in Nigeria prior to the transition to civilian rule. Would revisiting these massive violations under a democratically constituted government bring about the long-lasting peace needed to sustain the newfound democracy? A glimpse into the work of the Human Rights Violation Investigation Panel may provide a clue on the possible impact of these attempts on our fragile democracy. The recent events in Nigeria—riots, uprisings, and even wars going on in various parts of Nigeria, particularly the oil-rich Niger Delta—are a serious threat to peace, and if not properly managed may overturn the gains of the transition and make reconciliation very difficult if not impossible.

In June 1999, after barely one month in office, the new civilian President Olusegun Obasanjo set up the Human Rights Violation Investigation Panel to inquire into the causes, nature, and extent of human rights abuses committed in the last fifteen years of military rule in Nigeria. This decision was tremendously accepted by Nigerians. At last it appears Nigerians are prepared to visit their past and forge new paths that will open new opportunities for reconciliation, justice, and equity in a politically charged complex ethno-regional society.

The panel comprised of eight members and chaired by a well-known activist retired Justice of the Supreme Court of Nigeria, the Hon. Justice Chukwudifu Oputa, swung into action to meet the challenges before it. The preponderant views of Nigerians seem to be articulated by the Constitutional Rights Project, a Non Governmental Organization (NGO), in its memorandum to the panel:

The challenge before the panel is not only to suggest punitive measures to the government, but understandably, to reconcile the bruised and abused.

Therefore, it will be the duty of the panel to suggest and recommend any measure such as retribution, restitution, reconciliation and the rebirth of our country in the spirit of reconciliation. In the same vein, Nigerians would expect your

panel to suggest and recommend to the government the necessary machinery to be set up for the immediate prosecution of those found to have perpetrated various human rights violations and abuses.

During the period under review, particularly the Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha regimes (this is not to exclude the Buhari/Idiagbon regime), Nigerians and the entire world witnessed with shock and disbelief the atrocities committed by the military government and their agents. These regimes were excessively repressive-authoritarianism par excellence. Violence became institutionalized, arbitrary execution, extra-judicial killings, torture, and disappearances were the order of the day. Mostly affected were the vocal civil society and its members, in particular, the media and trade unions espousing human rights for the citizenry. The Political terrain became very repressive during the 1980s as the struggle for democracy gained ground. Media houses were clamped down and journalists incarcerated under the obnoxious Decrees No. 2 of 1984 (State Security & Detention of Persons) and The Public Officers (Protection against False Accusations) Decree No. 4 of 1984. Professional associations like the Nigerian Bar Association, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), and the National Association of Nigerian Students, to mention but a few, were banned and their leaders were arrested and detained without trials. Political oppositions and opponents questioning its legitimacy/constitutionality were not spared from state harassment and incarceration. The killing of such notable Human Rights teachers as Ken Saro-Wiwa, Alhaja Kudirat Abiola, and Pa Alfred (an octogenarian and strong supporter of the Democracy movement), and the death of Major General Yar' Adua in prison amongst others shocked the senses of many Nigerians.

The independence of the judiciary and the judges was sacrificed, and in most cases the powers of the judiciary to question actions of the military government were ousted by decrees and edicts. Religious and ethnic difference also became a handy manipulative tool to perpetuate authoritarian rule and fragment the struggle to end military rule.

The Human Rights Investigation Panel (otherwise called the Oputa panel) presents an ideal opportunity for justice and has an enormous challenge within its time frame to address human rights abuses that spanned over twenty years. The panel has up to the end of the year to submit its recommendation; in the interim, the panel's mandate has been extended to include violations committed since 1966 (when the Biafra war broke-out). So far, the panel since it started sitting in July has received over



ten thousand petitions, eight thousand of them coming from Ogoni land in Southern Nigeria alone. Many Civil Rights NGOs have sent memos. The panel recently began public hearings following visits by the members of the panel to South Africa, which it is believed, will better inform them on how to go about their job. Whether the Panel will follow the South African example of Truth and Reconciliation remains to be seen. Divergent opinions are expressed with regards to this. For some there is no basis for comparison between Nigeria and South Africa or even Argentina. According to one commentator, Desmond Diaku (Guardian, Nov. 2nd 1999), "Ours is a different society and the political situation that prevailed in these countries differ...". Although the political and cultural contexts may differ, it is arguable whether the consequences are not the same—gross violations of rights and freedom of men and women citizens of these countries. Undoubtedly, lessons learnt from truth commissions in Latin America or South Africa will be a good resource for the Oputa Panel and the Nigerian people—victims and families seeking redress for past abuses of human rights.

The major challenge for the panel seems to be the unenviable environment it is working on right now. Nigeria is as tense as ever—ethnic violence in Kano and Lagos this July and recently this November have left nearly 150 persons dead. This November again violence broke out in one of the States of Niger Delta area causing the death of 12 policemen and about 100 ethnic Ijaw people from Odi town. The president in reactions to these events gave an order to the police to shoot at sight any member of the hard-line ethnic nationalist group –Odua peoples congress believed to be responsible for the eruption of violence in Lagos between the Hausa and the Yoruba ethnic groups. The core Niger Delta area has been embroiled in crisis for sometime and the most recent of killing of 12 police officers of various ranks in Odi town of Kolokuma/opokuma local government council area of Bayelsa state by Ijaw youths. In reaction to this incident, 50 truckloads of soldiers were dispatched to the area November 20, 1999. Since the soldiers entered the area, more than 43 people have been killed and the number is increasing daily. A state of emergency has been declared by the president on Bayelsa State. The latest eruption of violence continues a pattern of bloodshed since Obasanjo took office in May this year. The president in defense of his actions, which have come under heavy criticism, said, "It is an unacceptable issue of criminality, lawlessness, murder, arson that no government can tolerate." No doubt decades of marginalisation and oppression of the Niger-delta people particularly, the malicious execution of renowned writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other environmental activists from Ogoni-land in 1994, culminated to the recent crisis/war in the area.

The bulging question is what is the possibility of peace building and reconciliation in midst of these crises? What does this signify for the Oputa panel investigation and how would that impact on their work? How do we reconcile the past abuses and the current violations going on? Somehow Obasanjo's order to shoot at sight, questions his moral right in constituting this panel. This appears to recuperate old issues, which made civil



left to right: Dean Michael Harter, College of Health and Human Services, guest lecturer Joy Ezelio, and CAPCR Director Ernest Uwazie

rights activist resentful of his candidature. Are people's expectations about the transition being dashed?

My response as a Nigerian and participant in the struggle that brought about transition to democracy is that these are danger signals for democracy and the democratization process. The recent happenings call for caution, refrain and importantly positive actions that will guide jealously our newly found democracy. We must learn from the South African experience and make necessary sacrifice in the interests of peace and reconciliation. Punishing perpetrators of these crimes and human rights abuses may not be the answer. We have to go beyond punitive/redistributive justice, exercise proportionality in search for a just and free society where democratic principle will thrive. The Oputa Panel should be supported as it carries on this arduous task in a highly volatile environment. The government must forge new alliances with members of the civil society in order to change the political landscape that will move Nigeria from transition to transformation. ✕



A USIP Project on “ADR Curriculum Development & Training in Liberia,” SG-2-98

A Final Project Summary Report October 1999
Ernest Uwazie, Project Director
Center for African Peace & Conflict Resolution

The ADR (*alternative dispute resolution*) project in Liberia was designed to:

1) provide training workshops on ADR to target audiences from the university and government institutions, and non-governmental organizations in Liberia; **2)** develop curricular materials for designing and teaching ADR in educational institutions; **3)** produce a training guide for teaching ADR; and **4)** assist the collaborating institutions in Liberia in establishing indigenous ADR support and networking. The overall goal of the project was to assist with current efforts on developing internal capacity for conflict management and reconciliation in post-civil war Liberia.

Three ADR workshops were conducted at the University of Liberia in Monrovia for diverse groups from universities and colleges, government agencies, and civil society organizations. The first workshop, scheduled for 5 days, focused on ADR theory and practice and was followed by a 3-day workshop on ADR awareness. The final 3-day workshop, for selected participants from the first workshop, emphasized ADR curriculum development and teaching, and developed strategies for creating support network. A total of 53 people from 15 educational institutions, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations participated in the workshops. In addition, the project produced an ADR curriculum/resource manual and initiated a Liberian ADR network that will promote post-training activities.

In sum, the project was a success based on the outcomes and survey results of the participants. It is recommended that future training programs on ADR and conflict resolution be supported to aid the country's on-going reconciliation plan and legal system reform. In this regard, an appropriate center or institute should be established by the government, in collaboration with the educational and civil society sectors. Further, the interest of the University of Liberia in Monrovia toward creating ADR/conflict resolution curriculum should be sustained through additional support for training and resources.

The ADR project was funded by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), Washington, DC, in collaboration with the Center for African Peace & Conflict Resolution (CAPCR) at California State University, Sacramento (CSUS), and the University of Liberia, Monrovia. Project planning and activities occurred between June 1998 and July 1999. Total project cost was approximately \$54,000. A grant of \$38,000 was awarded by the USIP, while the balance of \$16,000 was provided as cost share by CSUS-CAPCR project personnel and the University of Liberia. The project personnel were Professors Ernest Uwazie

(Director & Trainer) and Donald Taylor (External Evaluator); Mr. Daniel Yamshon, Esquire (Trainer), Mr. David Kangah of Ghana (Assistant Trainer), and Mrs. Patricia Malberg and Ms. Thelma Johnson (who led in ADR curriculum development). The University of Liberia, Monrovia team included Dr. Al-Hassan Conteh (Leader), Dr. Edward Grant, and Ms. Magdaline Wilson.

The ADR project in Liberia was successful in carrying out the set objectives and tasks. The participants expressed satisfaction with the quality of instruction and personnel. The survey results reveal that over 90% of the participants would recommend the workshop to others, and almost all rated the workshops “Above Average to Excellent.” With additional funding (as originally proposed), the project would have had more impact if the US training experience would have occurred; this aspect would have reduced the usual distractions and maximized full attention of the participants, as well as exposed

The survey results reveal that over 90% of the participants would recommend the workshop to others, and almost all rated the workshops “Above Average to Excellent.”

the Liberians to ADR programs in US. It is strongly suggested that such US ADR experience and training be seriously considered in future/related programs, to ensure more impact and effectiveness of post-training activities. Further, follow-up activities to sustain the cultivated interest and network should be supported. The ultimate goal should be to assist or develop a plan for institutionalization of ADR through careful establishment of a relevant center and introduction of ADR into the education curriculum. The University of Liberia, Monrovia is in a viable position to provide the leadership.

USIP support is highly appreciated for its wise decision and foresight to fund the project, despite the security and political concerns in the country. The success of the project was also based on the commitment and sacrifices of the US team, invaluable cooperation of the Liberian partners, and strong institutional support from CSUS-CAPCR and the University of Liberia, Monrovia. ❖



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MAY 6

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JUNE 19-23

5th Summer Institute for Conflict Resolution

JULY 6-AUGUST 7

2nd Youth Peace and Cultural Education Program in Ghana

Making Peace

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