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Developing Skills and Building Capacities in Conflict Mitigation and Peace Education in Africa: the role of the University for Peace (UPEACE)

Dr. Jean-Bosco Butera
Director of Africa Program, UPEACE

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Presentations and Discussions

THEME 1 : PEACE AND SECURITY

Developing skills and building capacities in conflict mitigation and peace education in Africa: the role of the University for Peace (UPEACE) Dr Jean-Bosco BUTERA, Director of Africa Program, UPEACE

Centre for Conflict Management (CCM)



UPEACE is a United Nations affiliated Institution of Higher Education established in 1980 by a resolution of the UN General Assembly. Its mandate is to Provide humanity with an international institution of higher education with the aim of promoting among all human beings a spirit of understanding, tolerance and peaceful coexistence and to stimulate cooperation among peoples.

Currently, UPEACE works within 5 countries : United States of America, Canada, Ethiopia and Swetzerland. It intends to open programs in four other Countries : Sweden, Korea, Brazil and Jordan. UPEACE Teaching Campus in Costa Rica focuses on followings programs : International Peace studies, Gender and Peace building International law and Human rights, International Law and settlement of disputes, Peace education, Environmental security and Peace, Natural Ressources and sustainable development, Media and Peace.

The Africa Programme was launched in 2002 with Consultative missions in 10 Countries (Ethiopia, Liberia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan and Uganda). The first objective of the UPEACE African program is to stimulate and support the strengthening of capacities in Africa for education, research and training on peace and conflict related issues in order to better understand dynamics of conflicts and improve prospects for a successful prevention.

The second objective is to enhance the participation of African experts, scholars and policy makers in the international analysis of conflicts and search for solutions.

African program's strategies to reach the objectives are based on collaboration with the existing universities and research centres, curriculum Development Workshops.

Including its achievements, UPEACE african program has organized three Regional Curriculum Development Workshops to develop specific teaching materials in the field of peace and conflict studies. The first one on Non-Violent Transformation of Conflict was held in October 2003 in Durban, South Africa. The second conference was held on Justice, Human Rights, and Peace in December 2003 in Kampala, Uganda. The third conference on Peace and Conflict Resolution was organized in March 2004 in Abuja, Nigeria.

UPEACE Africa Program is also undertaking some special programs such as Developing Master's Programm with Partner Universities with a view to having regional hubs and Building Peace and Peace research Capacity. However, these undertakings are facing great challenges : lack of quality assessment of impact of the capacity building undertakings, lack of a long term and sustainable ownership by partners and searching for a strong and sustainable funding.

Despite the challenges, considering the fact « Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world » (Nelson Mandela), UPEACE believes that it can contribute significantly to the efforts of building a sustainable peace in Africa through education, research and training. A strong and vivid network is determinant in the endeavor to build and maintain Peace in Africa, a sine qua non for sustainable development.

