

PREFACE

This special issue is unique in the sense that it sets out to engage on issues within the gambit of African diplomacy, a theme that deserves constant focus given its centrality in Africa's quest for influence in global affairs. Against a backdrop of Africa's marginalisation in knowledge production and dissemination in what appears to be an increasingly unilateralist world, this issue is topical and timely. This is the gap in the conversation on diplomacy that the SARChI Chair in African Diplomacy and Foreign Policy at the University of Johannesburg seeks to fill in supporting this special issue, and it is the context in which the authors of the articles were invited to contribute their analyses in taking the discussion on African diplomacy forward.

While the articles all hinge on the theme of diplomacy, questions of governance, democracy, mediation, epistemology, international criminal justice and foreign policy are also raised. Africa's endeavour to provide home grown solutions in conflict resolution, institutional renewal and the politics of knowledge generation feature in the articles, as well as issues of impunity, ethnic politics and the rule of law. These topics are woven into a narrative about Africa's quest for recognition as an indispensable member of the international community, contesting the tendency to be regarded as an appendage of the globe. Critically, one of the salient arguments in this issue is that Africa has to "get its act together" through coherent, well thought out, and implementable programmes under the African Union (AU) aegis. By so doing, Africa will be able to assert itself diplomatically in the resolution of the myriad conflicts on the continent, thus eliminating the need for intervention by the international community; a byword for the most industrialised and powerful nations of the world. It will also ensure that Africa firmly engages in multilateral institutions.

This issue makes a case for Africa to seize its place in the global epistemological arena. The tendency to borrow and lean extensively on paradigms developed within other contexts in the realm of knowledge contributes to Africa's inability to exercise its agency in shaping its cause and destiny. It leaves room for external actors – often inspired by self-interest – to meddle in Africa's affairs, with deleterious effects to Africa's peace, security and stability.

The issue begins by looking at the broad debates in thinking around African diplomacy. John Akokpari argues that one of the reasons for the failure of Africa's diplomacy, and therefore its inability to address its own affairs, is Africa's propensity to treat errant rulers who pose a threat to peace, security and good governance with kid gloves. The article criticises the AU's failure to enforce norms and values enshrined in its instruments.

In challenging current diplomatic thinking Siphamandla Zondi's article argues for recognition of the contribution of Africa and the larger global South towards knowledge production and dissemination in diplomatic thinking. The article is located within the ambit of the decolonisation of knowledge as a first step towards addressing injustices attendant to the relationship between the West and the global South.

In considering Africa's role internationally, Yolanda K Spies discusses the continent's attempt to reshape international politics as constituted after the World War II, where the world's affairs were reduced to an exclusive affair of a few influential Western nations (unilateral). Africa has been at the receiving end of this power imbalance and therefore has attempted to shift the global geopolitics from unilateralism to multilateralism, or what Spies refers to as collective diplomacy in her article.

Continuing with the focus on agency, Jo-Ansie van Wyk considers the role of the AU's Panel of the Wise. The article considers this as one of the AU's innovations through which it engages in diplomacy across Africa in the promotion of good governance, security, peace and reduction of conflicts across the continent.

The issue also includes a number of articles that give attention to the practice of diplomacy. Looking broadly at South-South relations and the engagement between African and the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China), Mills Soko and Mzukisi Qobo bring to the fore questions of national interest. The authors point out that, while rhetoric may be on supporting Africa's development, a closer look at the engagement of the BRIC countries on the continent is revealing of the commercial and diplomatic strategies used as an "avenue for shoring up their international legitimacy and credibility".

Considering elements shaping the conduct of Kenya's international relations in light of the terminated cases at the International Criminal Court (ICC), Westen K Shilaho assesses the role of ethnicity as it shapes that country's politics, and subsequently international relations and diplomacy. This follows the indictment of prominent Kenyans as suspected masterminds of crimes against humanity, following the disputed 2007 elections. He argues that Kenya has battled to maintain a coherent approach to foreign policy throughout its postcolonial period owing to the balkanisation of the country along tribal fault lines. After all, foreign policy is an extension of the domestic policy.

Chris Landsberg focuses on South Africa's "quiet diplomacy" strategy as a means of bringing resolution to Zimbabwe's protracted political crisis. He observes that this strategy defined Pretoria's engagement with Harare under Thabo Mbeki and, then later, Jacob Zuma. He argues that the strategy is illustrative of Africa's search for African solutions to its own problems, thus minimising, and hopefully eliminating altogether, interference by external actors.

Fritz Nganje's article focuses on the role of sub-state diplomacy with reference to South Africa. He highlights the dominance of national government in South Africa's foreign policy making process, and the continued exclusion of provincial and local government. The resultant effect is that these actors look to by-pass central government as they engage in their own international affairs.

In the final chapter Lesley Masters considers the impact of South Africa's position as an emerging country on its approach towards science diplomacy. Pretoria looks to pursue a role similar to that of developed countries as a knowledge "producer", although, as the article goes on to argue, it is increasingly adopting a role as a knowledge "consumer", as is the case with most countries in the global South.

It is hoped that these contributions will provide a platform for further discussion and debate on African diplomacy and its practice across the continent.

Lesley Masters and Westen K Shilaho (Guest Editors)

VOORWOORD

Hierdie spesiale uitgawe van die Joernaal is uniek, aangesien daar beoog word om vraagstukke binne die raamwerk van Afrika-diplomasie aan te spreek; 'n tema wat volgehoue aandag vereis in die lig van Afrika se soeke na seggenskap in universele aangeleenthede. Gesien teen die agtergrond van Afrika se marginalisering van kennis en die verspreiding daarvan in 'n toenemende eensydige wêreld, is hierdie onderwerp aktueel en relevant. Dit is die leemte in die gesprek oor diplomatie wat die SARCHi Chair in African Diplomacy and Foreign Policy aan die Universiteit van Johannesburg wil oorbrug by wyse van hierdie spesiale uitgawe; vandaar die uitnodiging aan die outeurs om deur hulle ontleding die bespreking van Afrika-diplomasie verder te voer.

Hoewel al die artikels in verband staan met diplomatie, word vraagstukke wat betref bestuur, demokrasie, bemiddeling, teorie, internasionale kriminele geregtigheid en buitelandse beleid ook aangespreek. Afrika se poging om plaaslike oplossings te vind vir konflik, institusionele vernuwing en die politiek van kennisontwikkeling kom in die artikels voor, sowel as sake soos straffeloosheid, etniese politiek en regssoewereiniteit. Hierdie onderwerpe is verweef in 'n relaas van Afrika se soeke na erkenning as 'n onvervangbare lid van die internasionale gemeenskap, die betwisting van die neiging om beskou te word as 'n aanhangsel van die wêreld. Dit is belangrik dat een van die opvallende argumente in dié spesiale uitgawe is dat Afrika sy planne agtermekaar moet kry deur duidelike, goed deurdagte en uitvoerbare programme onder beskerming van die Afrika-Unie (AU).

Sodoende sal Afrika in staat wees om homself op politieke vlak te laat geld wat betref talle konflikte, om sodoende die behoefte van die internasionale gemeenskap om in te meng, uit te skakel, ’n bedekte sinspeling op die mees geïndustrialiseerde en magtigste nasies ter wêreld. Dit sal ook verseker dat Afrika sterk betrokke is by multilaterale instellings.

Hierdie vraagstuk gee vir Afrika ’n rede om sy plek in die universele teoretiese arena te verseker. Die neiging om te steun op paradigmas wat ontwikkel het in die raamwerk van die kennisbasis, dra by tot Afrika se onvermoë om sy doel en bestemming te bepaal. Dit laat ruimte vir eksterne faktore, dikwels geïnspireer deur eie belang, om in Afrika se sake in te meng, met nadelige gevolge vir Afrika se vrede, sekuriteit en stabiliteit.

Die probleem begin deur die soeklig te plaas op die wye debatte wanneer daar oor Afrika se diplomاسie besin word. John Akokpari beweer dat een van die redes vir die mislukking van Afrika se diplomاسie, en dus die onvermoë om sy eie sake te hanteer, Afrika se neiging is om geslepe leiers, wat ’n gevaar vir vrede inhou, sagkens te hanteer. Samevattend kan gesê word dat die artikel die AU se onvermoë om bestaande norme en waardes toe te pas, kritiseer.

Deur die heersende diplomatieke beskouing uit te daag, pleit Siphamandla Zondi in sy artikel vir die erkenning van die bydrae van Afrika en die globale suide wat betref die toename in kennis en die uitbreiding van diplomatieke denke. Die artikel handel oor die omvang van die dekolonisering van kennis as ’n eerste stap om die onregverdigheid in die verhouding tussen die Weste en die globale suide aan te spreek.

Afrika se internasionale rol in ag genome, bespreek Yolanda K Spies die kontinent se poging om die internasionale politiek, soos gekonstitueer na die Tweede Wêreldoorlog, te verander. Internasionale aangeleenthede is destyds beperk tot die belange van slegs ’n paar invloedryke Westerse nasies. Afrika was aan die ontvangkant van hierdie magswanbalans en het dus gepoog om die globale geopolitiek van eensydigheid na veelsydigheid te verskuif, of soos Spies daarna in haar artikel verwys, na “kollektiewe diplomاسie”.

Met die klem steeds op bemiddeling oordink Jo-Ansie van Wyk die rol van die AU se “Paneel van Wysies”. In die artikel word dit beskou as een van die AU se vernuwings waardeur die organisasie betrokke raak by diplomاسie in Afrika wat betref goeie bestuur, vrede en die beperking van konflik.

Hierdie uitgawe sluit ook ’n paar artikels in wat aandag skenk aan die beoefening van diplomاسie. Daar word in die breë na Suid-Afrikaanse verhoudings en die verbintenis tussen Afrika en die BRIC-lande (Brasilië, Rusland, Indië en Sjina) gekyk. Mills Soko en Mzukisi Qobo bespreek vraagstukke van nasionale belang. Die outeurs dui aan dat, terwyl die retoriek moontlik Suid-Afrika se ontwikkeling mag steun, ’n nadere ondersoek na die betrokkenheid van die BRIC-lande by die

kontinent kommersiële en diplomatieke strategieë onthul wat gebruik word as “an avenue for showing up their international legitimacy and credibility”.

Met die oorweging van elemente wat Kenia se internasionale verhoudings bepaal, asook in die lig van die voortslepende hoë profiel saak in die Internasionale Kriminele Hof (IKH), beoordeel Westen K Shilaho die rol wat etnisiteit in die land se politiek speel, asook die invloed van internasionale verhoudings en diplomatie. Dit volg op die beskuldiging van bekende Keniane as verdagte meesterbreine in misdade teen die mensdom na die omstrede 2007-verkieping. Hy voer aan dat Kenia hom beywer het om ’n samehorigheidsgevoel te handhaaf wat betref buitelandse beleid tydens die postkoloniale periode as gevolg van die balkanisering van die land volgens foutiewe stamgebonde grense.

Chris Landsberg fokus op Suid-Afrika se “stille diplomatie” strategie om ’n oplossing te vind vir Zimbabwe se uitgerekte politieke krisis. Hy dui aan dat hierdie strategie Suid-Afrika se ooreenkoms met Harare onder leiding van Thabo Mbeki en later Jacob Zuma bepaal het. Volgens Landsberg is hierdie strategie kenmerkend van Afrika se soeke na oplossings vir sy eie probleme om sodoende inmenging deur eksterne rolspelers te minimaliseer en hopelik uit te skakel.

Fritz Nganje se artikel fokus op die rol van sub-staatsdiplomatie met verwysing na Suid-Afrika. Hy beklemtoon die oorheersing van die nasionale regering in Suid-Afrika se formulering van sy buitelandse beleid en die voortgesette marginalisering van provinsiale en plaaslike regerings. Die gevolg is dat hierdie rolspelers poog om die sentrale regering uit te skakel in hulle betrokkenheid by hulle eie internasionale aangeleenthede.

In die finale hoofstuk ondersoek Lesley Masters die impak van Suid-Afrika se posisie as ’n ontwikkelende staat op sy benadering van wetenskaplike diplomatie. Dit lyk asof Pretoria dieselfde rol nastreef as ontwikkelde lande as ’n kennis-“vervaardiger”, hoewel die outeur van mening is dat dit in ’n toenemende mate die rol vervul van ’n kennis-“verbruiker”, soos wat die geval is met die meeste lande in globale Afrika.

Daar word gehoop dat hierdie bydraes ’n platform sal skep vir verdere besprekings en voortgesette debat oor Afrika-diplomatie, asook die toepassing daarvan op die kontinent.

Lesley Masters en Westen K Shilaho (Gasredakteurs)