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The Role of Ecological Sanitation in Promoting Development, Peace and Health in the Great Lakes Region

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The Role of Ecological Sanitation in Promoting Development, Peace and Health in the Great Lakes Region

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The Great Lakes Region is very volatile with a history of animosity and conflict among communities within and countries in the region. During conflicts, communities rarely stay in homes and as such there are no proper and hygienic methods of handling and disposing human excreta. Ecological sanitation is therefore an alternative method for managing human excreta, which, can contribute greatly to improving sanitation and subsequently the health status. If the issues of sanitation are taken care, people, even displaced people, can try to recollect their lives to eke out a living, hopefully in an environment of peace and tranquility.

Ecological sanitation, which is a sustainable approach to human excreta management that prevents disease, conserves and protects water, and recovers and recycles nutrients, has a number of advantages. In the Great Lakes Region, Ecological sanitation is viable due mainly to its advantages to the users and to its ability to integrate development, peace and health needed by displaced persons.

Improved sanitation is closely associated with better health and improved sanitation. In that perspective, adoption of ecological sanitation to excreta management can be of great benefit to refugees and displaced persons. This can lead to improved food security among displaced persons and even among the hosting communities.

In addition, the usage of the sanitized human excreta for agricultural practices will take away idle time so that people can be engaged in small scale farming around their residencies to meet part of their food requirements, and some extra income from sales as well as reduce cases of mugging due to idleness. Thus development issues will be addressed.

Therefore, adoption of ecological sanitation should not be seen within the context of displaced people living in camps. Its benefits should also be seen within the light of people returning to their homes after normalcy and calm has returned.

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Nexus between Unity/Reconciliation and Security: The case of Rwanda **Mrs Fatuma NDANGIZA, Executive Secretary,** **National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (Rwanda)**

Reconciliation has become an important part of post-conflict peace building and a measure for preventing re-occurrence of conflict. In most post-conflict situations, former enemies, perpetrators and victims must continue to live, side by side after the war and genocide. Yet attitudes and behaviors do not change at the moment of stopping a war and/genocide or declaration of peace.

Since Reconciliation is understood as a societal process that involves mutual acknowledgement of past suffering and changing of destructive attitudes and behaviors into constructive relationships towards sustainable peace, one could therefore argue that there is no magic formula for reconciliation. Each reconciliation process needs to be redesigned according to the specific context.

Rwandan Vision for Unity and Reconciliation is given by President Paul KAGAME in these words: "My vision of Rwanda is a united country that feels itself as an integrated into the sub region Family of nations, a country that is developed and has eradicated poverty, a country that is democratic, and above all, a stable country at peace with itself as well as with its neighbors".

14 years after devastating genocide, the Government and the people of

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Therefore, adoption of ecological sanitation should not be seen within the context of displaced people living in camps. Its benefits should also be seen within the light of people returning to their homes after normalcy and calm has returned. Most of these returnees are poor and cannot afford elaborate toilets, including flush-and-discharge ones even where water may be plentiful.

As they settle down in their pieces of land, application of fertilizers in their farms will be something not even worth considering given the fact that they cannot afford.

In conclusion, among benefits of adopting ecological sanitation are people's health improvement due to reduced or no contamination of water for drinking and cooking, reduced cases of contamination of food since excreta will no longer be left to attract flies and other disease carrying vectors and development in terms of improved livelihoods since people are able to use sanitized excreta for growing crops and improving their nutritional levels.

Ecological sanitation is the way forward for Conflict torn Great Lakes Region, enhancing peace and security and promote health and development for the good of the local people.

It holds the key to the future of sanitation, peace, security, development and health in the Great Lakes Region. All what is required is sound policy framework and facilitation of community adoption of this system at the grassroots level.

Rwanda are committed to the process of national unity and reconciliation as a pre-requisite for lasting peace, security and development. Reconciliation means finding a way to balance truth, justice, peace and development. The issue of security therefore becomes pertinent in creating an enabling environment for reconciliation. On the other hand, reconciliation whether at political or interpersonal level contribute to security or could become a security challenge.

Rwandan Model of unity and reconciliation includes therefore reconstructing the Rwandan identity and building a shared sense of Rwandanness is at the centre of reconciliation in Rwanda; strengthening memory, truth, justice, confessions and forgiveness have been the core threads of reconciliation; understanding why the past led to genocide and taking measures, however, painful and slow, which will make our "never again" a reality.

Rwandan model for unity and reconciliation is also inspired by positive cultural values that were used in the past in conflict resolution, citizenship building, good governance and economic empowerment. Unity and Reconciliation process is in that perspective holistic and cross cutting.

