**Peace as a Vehicle for Unity and Development**

**Introduction**

Peace as a vehicle for unity and Development Conflict is not necessarily a negative or destructive phenomenon. Unity is a condition of being one that is the state or condition of being one. While development is a process of change; the process of changing and becoming large, stronger, or more impressive, successful, advanced or of causing somebody or country to change in this way. In essence, unity and development in this context is inevitably conflictual, destabilizing and subversive because it challenges established economic, social or political power structures which inhibit individuals and groups from pursuing their full potential. Hence there is a need to maintain a clear distinction between violent and nonviolent conflict although our concern focuses more on non-violent change. Conflicts have the capacity to severely constrain unity and development endeavours by destroying infrastructures, interrupting the production process and diverting resources away from productive uses. In Africa, for example, civil wars in the 1980s and 1990s hindered developments by affecting not only state structures but also other sectors. In three decades life expectancy went down by 10-20 years; per capita income decreased by 50 percent; famine became endemic and other welfare indicators such as health and education were worsened, (Adetula 2007). According to World Bank report, resources diverted by conflict away from development use are estimated at $1 billion a year in central Africa and more than $800 million in West Africa. Donors and development agencies have argued that development assistance projects have suffered in many African countries due to incessant conflicts. The concern is that resources that are originally planned for the funding of development projects are increasingly diverted to conflict management and peace-keeping activities, (Adetula (2007). Therefore, there is a need to approach the subject of peace from a fresh angle to transform the mind-set of individuals from imbibing values of violence to those of peace. The transformation from a culture of peace requires the imbibing of values, attitudes and behaviours that reflect and inspire social interaction and sharing based on the principles of freedom, justice, and democracy, all human rights, tolerance and solidarity that reject violence and endeavour to prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation that guarantee the full exercise of all right and the means to participate fully in the development process of their society.

**Conclusion** Peace is a precondition for national development; hence it is difficult for a nation to develop at the peak of violence and war, in the same way the imperative of unity for national development cannot be over emphasized. Hence peace and unity are good ingredients of national development