

## **DECENTRALISE PLANNING FOR PRE-CONFLICT AND POST-CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, BAWKU MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY, GHANA**

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### **Abstract**

Decentralized governance in Ghana is aimed at spreading development. Such intention to some extent is marred by communal conflicts. A case studied is the Bawku conflict. The Municipal Assembly over the years has put in measures to prevent and mediate the conflict against further violence. The study therefore seeks to find out whether the Municipal Assembly which is the planning authority uses that function to plan to overcome conflict. It is a case study. Purposive and random sampling techniques were used to select institutions and respondents for interview. The study revealed that the Assembly has not been able to implement its Development Plans. The dynamics of the conflict also indicate that the factions have maintained their opposing positions. Besides, the Assembly has never prepared any conflict management plan to address recurrent conflicts. The study concludes that collaborative approach though difficult, is a better option for conflict management between factions. There will also be the need for the Assembly to be interested in designing conflict management plans, strengthening capacity of the Municipal Planning and Coordinating Unit, capitalization of conflict planned program and adoption of decentralized institutional arrangement for conflict monitoring and evaluation. Such processes are ‘sine qua non’ to pre-conflict and post-conflict prevention.

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**Keywords:** Decentralization, Conflict, Pre-conflict, Post-conflict, Planning, Management

## **Background**

It has been observed that after achieving political independence, many governments in sub-Saharan Africa were faced with numerous development challenges, hence, their attention was on nation building and they invested heavily in programs that were centrally managed around the 1950s and 1960s. To address the shortcomings of the centrally managed programs in the 1970s and early 1980s some of the countries especially Ghana, opted for public sector reforms, hence introduced decentralized governance to facilitate development at the grassroots level as a vehicle to ‘distribute the benefits of economic growth more equitably to increase the productivity and income of all segments of society and to raise the living standards of the poor...’ (Akuoko-Frimpong, 1994: 1). However, the very best reform effort to some extent has not yielded much result in some districts and regions in Ghana due to the emergence of conflicts and hostilities.

Contextualizing the Bawku Municipality in particular, it has experienced numerous inter-ethnic conflicts since the 1930s due to chieftaincy succession as the root cause. Indeed, the consequences of conflicts on the people of Bawku are enormous. Referring to the subject-matter, Harris (1999:15) in a study of “The Cost of Armed Conflicts in Developing Countries,” indicated that violence had several economic implications including: closed health post, absence of teachers, empty shops and markets. It also means food shortages due to the disruption of farming, transportation and trade. Presently, the Bawku Municipality and its environs is likened to the above description. This development has created a new dimension of social life where children (potential marriage partners) are discouraged from engaging in any affair with the “enemy” ethnic group. For over a decade now public sector workers have left the Municipality and farming activities are often disrupted as a result of the denial of some ethnic minorities to have access to farmlands.

The Bawku Municipality which was created by Legislative Instrument (LI) 1439 in 1989 and charged with the responsibility of ensuring the overall development of the place has not been able to find any lasting solution to the problem of violent conflicts. Article 240 (2) (b) of the 1992 Fourth Republican Constitution of Ghana stipulates among others that measures should be taken to enhance the capacities of local authorities to plan, initiate, coordinate, manage and execute policies in respect of matters affecting the local people. The Local Government Act, 1993, Act 462 also emphasizes the important role District Assemblies (DAs) can play in the New Planning System. More importantly section 46 (1) and (2) of the Act, which establishes them as District Planning Authorities with planning

functions provided in section (2) of the National Development Planning (System) Act, 1994, Act 480. This therefore means that planning is an important component in the success of all development initiatives, which implicitly includes conflict management. Due to the enormous powers at the disposal of the DAs, it was the expectation that the Bawku Municipal Assembly would have been in a position to explore the dictates of the Acts to come out with strategic plan(s) to deal with the conflict situations but this is not the case. Several Plans have been formulated over the years by the Municipal Assembly but the prevalence of conflicts has remained high. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have for some time now, devoted considerable amounts of resources in support of the Bawku Peace Initiative (BPI) efforts aimed at bringing lasting peace and order to the place but the conflict still looms in the area. The above state of affairs leaves much to be desired. Thus divergent actors have capitalized on the above weaknesses to perpetuate conflict in order to enforce their positions. In the midst of this, two main questions could also be asked thus: 1) Does the Municipal Assembly consider conflict resolution and management mechanism as an important ingredient in program/project success and therefore requiring mainstreaming? 2) Also in the wake of the prolonged conflict, how is conflict managed through district development planning in the Bawku Municipal Assembly? It is in this respect that the study seeks to examine how conflict is viewed as a development problem requiring special attention to be addressed through district planning. It also looks at systems put in place within the context of development planning to optimize the achievement of development goals and especially poverty reduction in Bawku.

### **Methodology**

A case study method was used in the study. This approach allowed the researchers to do a critical investigation and analysis about the kind of measures the Bawku Municipal Assembly and other institutions have put in place for prompting, preventing and managing conflicts. Data collection and presentation were more qualitative in nature and purposive sampling technique was equally used to select the Municipal Assembly, 5 Zonal Councils out of 12, settlement sections and 19 functional departments/organizations for interview. Besides random sampling technique was used to select 60 respondents each from both Kusasi and Mamprusi settlements and interviewed. An intensive desk study was done to review the literature. The six Sub-districts apart from the urban council were randomly selected for the study and they included: Bawku Urban Council, Mognori Zonal Council, Zawsi Zonal Council, Kuka-Zabugu Zonal Council and Binduri Area Council (now a District). Desk study

was also done to review Medium Term Development Plans (MTDPs), Kusasis and Mamprusis mediation reports and other relevant literature for the study

### **Conceptualizing Planning As A Tool For Conflict Management Conflict**

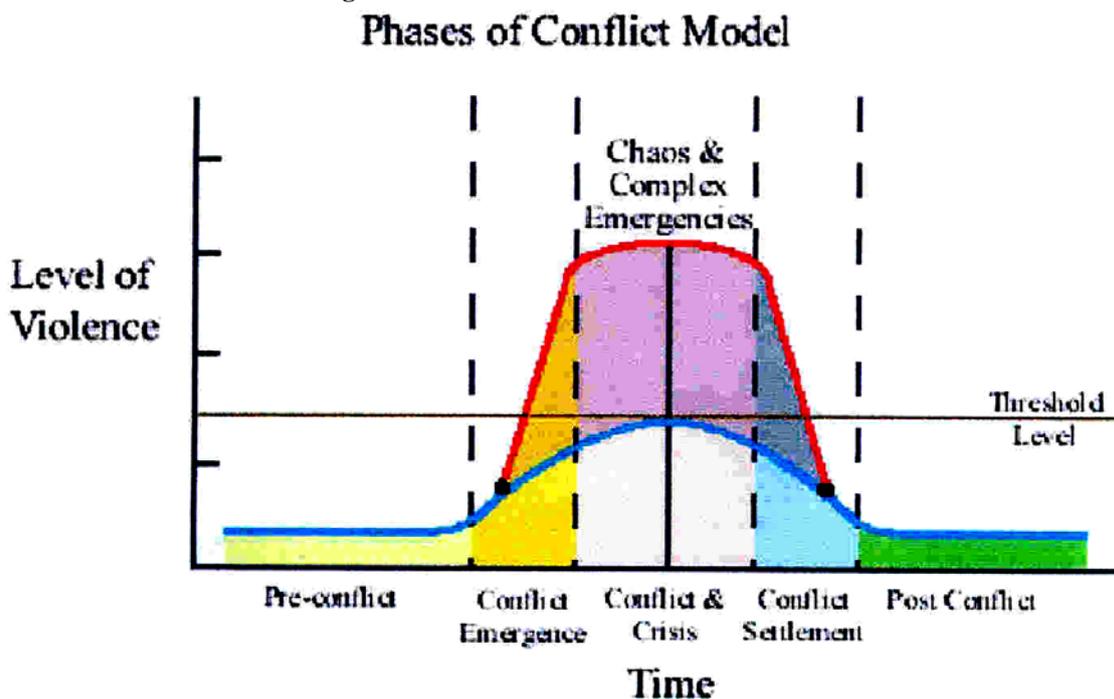
Conflict has been a difficult concept to define and authors on the subject have not been able to come out with a common definition. However, conflict generally can be defined as a natural disagreement resulting from individuals or groups that differ in attitudes, beliefs, values or needs. It can also originate from past rivalries and personality differences. It is also seen as a social phenomenon that can result from instantaneous or gradual changes that create diverging interests and needs. This means that conflicts are inevitable in man's environment and they do occur in situations where actors have 'incompatible goals'. Indeed, it is a purposeful behavior by protagonists in order to capture more of the scarce resources, and/or to overcome the strategies of other protagonists (Chris, 2004: 4) or otherwise to fight for what is due him or her. Also, Ninsin (1995) considered conflict as a struggle for access to opportunities, life chances-to the existing rights and privileges of society which define citizenship within the nation-state. Citizenship here refers to the rights and obligations associated with membership of the nation-state. Furthermore conflict is the means by which deprived groups seek to attain those rights and privileges which define one's opinion in the prevailing political order. Therefore, denial of these; what Darhrendorf (1990) calls "entitlements", is a denial of citizenship and an invitation to conflict.

For the purpose of this work it can be stated that: conflict occurs when competing groups' goals, objectives, needs or values clash and hang unresolved, leading to the built up of frustration and aggression.

### **Conflict Management At The District Level**

"Management" in this context means the generation and implementation of tangible improvements in a conflict situation. Therefore, conflict management can be thought of as "making progress". As part of improving the situation, progress can include ideas for developing mutual gains, learning, resolving disputes, achieving agreement, and laying a foundation for future negotiations (Ramirez, 2002). This process can be facilitated through legitimate and democratic institutions. This definition could be extended to cover all the efforts that go into handling conflict with its intricacies as experienced in Bawku. Though the definitions are relevant to this work, they will be more effective in the management process if stages of conflict are defined using "levels of violence" as demonstrated by Samarasinghe (1999) in figure 1 where he has classified the stages into five levels.

**Figure 1: Levels and Phases of Conflict Model**



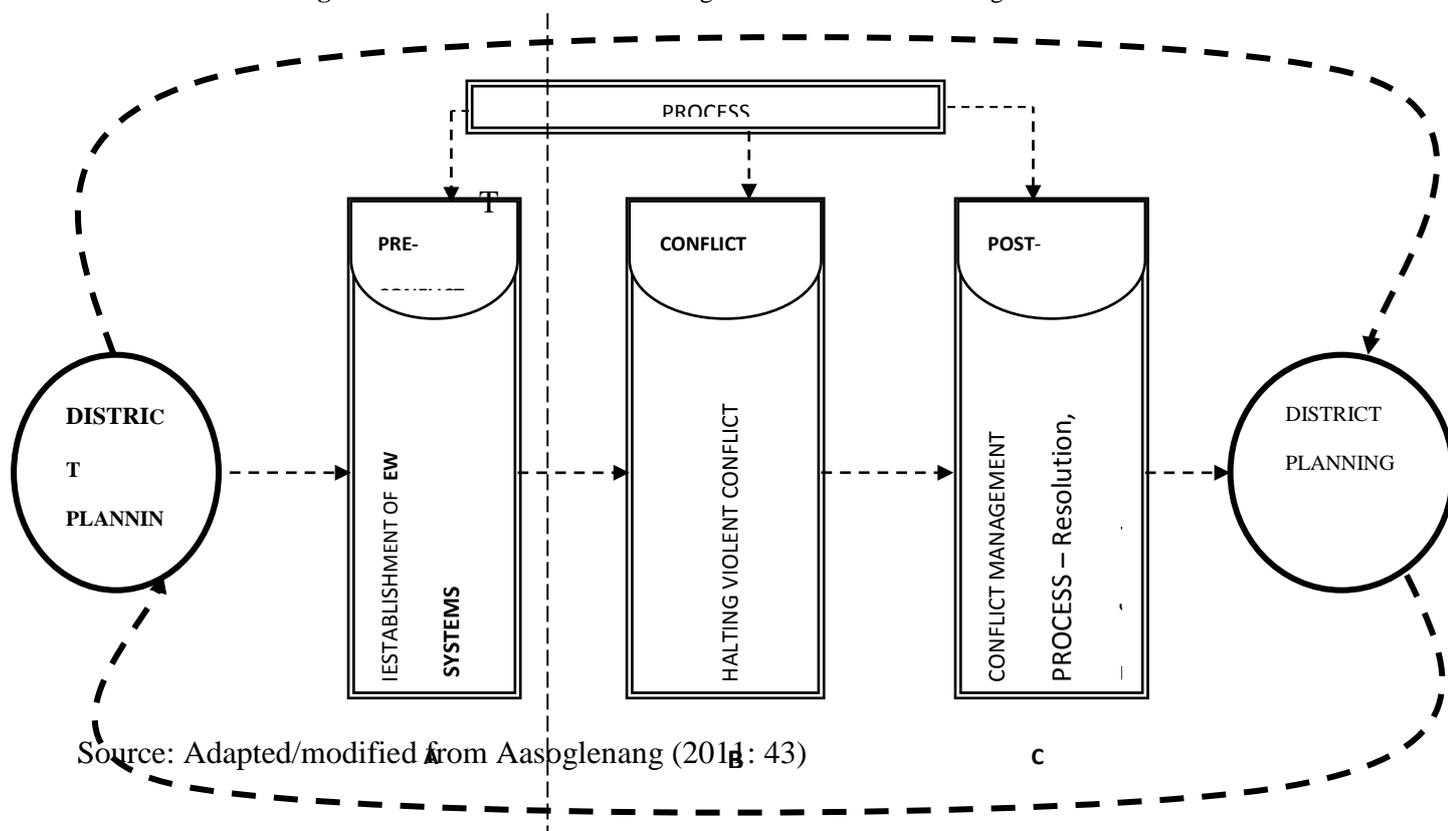
Source: Samarasinghe, S. W (1999).

For the purpose of the study, the phases of conflict are re-classified into three instead. These include Pre-conflict, Conflict and Post conflict phases as a requirement for strategic planning and management of conflict through district development planning. These phases are interconnected and re-enforce each other (Figure 2). The study in this regard considers pre-conflict and post-conflict phases as critical to be planned for to avert violent conflicts.

In order for the District Assemblies to sustainably manage conflict situations, there should be the need to devise the most effective operational procedures based on the nature of the conflict. Besides, for the operational mechanism so designed to be effective, it will have to be “institutionalized in such a way as to commit politicians and governments to certain responses that become part of the routine” (SAIS 2004). Figure 2 is a three-phase conflict planning model that should be institutionalized and this phase function of planning to respond to conflict emergence before they become violent or otherwise. The process however ignores the second phase (violent conflict) because it is assumed that effective operational planning procedures should be capable of detecting Early Warning indicators (as in phase one) for prevention to avoid violent conflict. However, if a conflict occurs, the crucial issue will be to handle it in such a manner that the situation does not repeat itself. In this regard, the post-conflict management process would have to be evaluated by the Planning Unit of the Assembly with support from other decentralize departments on the ground and action

oriented recommendations made for re-planning to re-enforce the containment of pre-conflict, especially early warning systems.

**Figure 2: Three Dimensional Planning Model for Conflict Management**



Source: Adapted/modified from Aasoglenang (2011): 43

### Basic Approach towards Pre-conflict Management Planning

The nature of violence in conflict situations can take many forms. However, destruction may not take place until conflict reaches a mature stage (conflict and crisis). In view of this, “Conflict Prevention Mechanisms must be established at the institutional level to deal with grievances before they develop into a hydra-headed conflicts” (Aye, 1995).

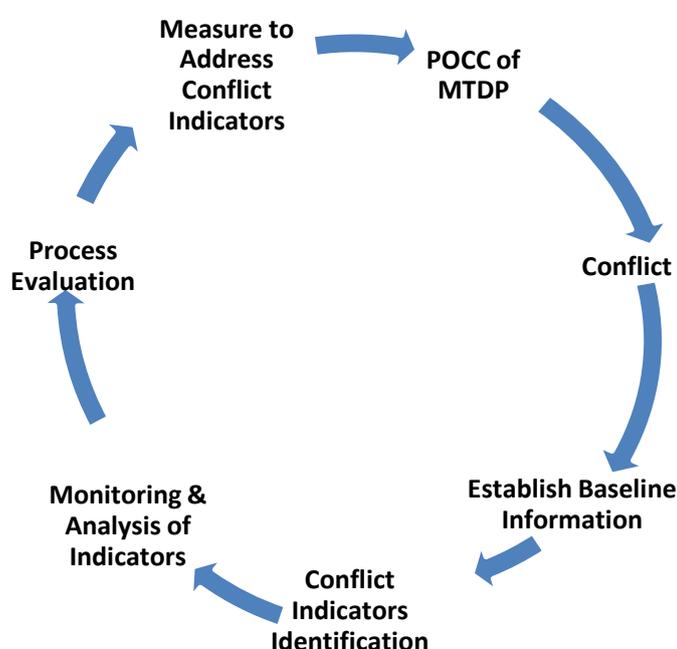
Though Samarasinghe’s (1999) model is relevant to this work he has not developed any comprehensive system for overcoming the conflict in phases. This study therefore, focuses on developing a planning framework for Early Warning (EW) System that can predict conflict and devise the most effective operating procedures for managing conflicts.

### Early Warning System Approach

The purpose of EW system is to identify and track indicators of emerging conflict(s). The system is more effective when a district is in the web of “crisis life cycle,” whereby it has experienced all the phases of conflict. In order to gather information on EW signs to manage conflict before they become violent, Samarasinghe (1999) proposes that the system should incorporate an assessment of structural variables to help do risk analysis and also

factor in an evaluation of perception variables that help understand why individuals and groups take action against the state and resort to violence. In the light of this, Anthony (1988) identified the economic, political and social-cultural sub-systems of society as the point of origin of the crisis which in some circumstances, lead to the de - legitimization of the state and political eruption. These sub-systems should therefore be the areas of monitoring and assessment of EW indicators and signs (see fig 3). Within the scope of planning districts can achieve the above by developing appropriate mechanisms for information collection and analysis on issues of conflicts. Indicators of conflicts must be identified, then monitored and evaluated by an impartial and multi-disciplinary team for the purpose of taking appropriate measures to deal with all forms of conflicts identified.

**Figure 3:** EW Model – Process Assessment Cycle



Source: Adopted from Aasoglenang (2011. P. 38)

It is apparent from the above discourse that violent conflict will not occur if pre-conflict preventive plan is effectively in place because ‘the earlier the reaction to an incipient conflict, the greater the opportunity of reversing a deteriorating situation. We can be forewarned of impending crisis through early warning indicators or signs’ (SAIS, 2004). Early Warning therefore enhances basically three goals: prevention, mitigation and preparedness.

### **Conflict Analysis**

It is important to note that management procedures put in place to overcome conflict will not achieve the desired results without analyzing it. In view of this it is crucial to examine and understand it from various standpoints. That is, the first step in conflict management is to analyze the conflict situation. This should “generally be done first in non-intrusive ways in order to avoid making the situation worse...” (Huggins, 2004). Therefore, this should be taken into consideration when doing desktop analysis of conflict, which generally addresses three interrelated aspects: the nature of the conflict, its boundaries (geographical, temporal, and socio-cultural) and finally the actors directly or indirectly involved in the conflict. For this aspect to be achieved, it will require some fundamental conflict analysis tools for the planning process. Lewer and Freyer (2004) identified the tools to include conflict mapping, the onion, conflict tree, the ABC-triangle, force field analysis, pillars and the pyramid. It is only through such multi-dimensional approach to conflict analysis that can diagnose the dimensions of conflict and help inform the Assembly about the choice of conflict management method/style to adopt.

### **Post-Conflict Management Planning**

Post conflict management is vital to providing a stable and sustainable environment for development to thrive. Therefore, “no price should be too high to pay in the quest for peace” and “no sacrifice should also be regarded to be too much to arrive at permanent and lasting peace” (Daily Graphic, 16.2.2005: 13). In this regard, it is important to note that conflict, be it violent or non-violent requires stable institutions and stakeholders to transform it positively to an appreciable level, for it is believed that it was “better for Government to negotiate with internal dissidents earlier rather than waiting until it gets worse” (Zartman, 1995). Hence, the need for appropriate tools and approaches to manage conflicts. Against this backdrop, two basic approaches have been suggested. These are either the Integrative or Distributive approaches (Brilhart and Galanes, 1995). The distributive approach suggests that what one person gains is at the expense of another. The integrative approach is a win-win situation which also assumes that conflict can be managed in such a manner that all aggrieved parties end up being winners. While opting for the best approach; it should be so done within the context of planning because post-conflict warning signals need to be contained to prevent subsequent escalation.

## Discussion Of Results

### Dynamics of the Conflict

To assess the impact made so far by the Bawku Municipal Assembly and partners in the mediation process, aspects of the study was conducted solely among households of the main actors, that is, the Kusasi and Mamprusis about their perception of the conflict within the Municipality. The data generated and presented in table 1 shows mixed feelings among the respondents from both tribes. For instance, 23.5% of the Kusasis and 30% of the Mamprusis were of the view that the conflict should continue. With regard to the effort made by the Assembly in the management of the conflict, 48.3% of the Mamprusi were of the opinion that the Assembly did not do well as against 36.7% of the Kusasis. The reasons were that the Assembly has also contributed to the conflict since some staff had not lived above reproach in terms of equitable distribution of resources and Assembly Members deeply polarized on ethnic and party lines. Also 61.7% of the Kusasis had the suspicion that the Mamprusi could fight back at any moment and 70% of the Mamprusis had the same impression. It is obvious that the suspicion held by each of the ethnic groups against the other means there is a breach of trust. The Municipal Assembly which is the Planning Authority must therefore take precaution against any possible escalation

**Table 1: Dynamics of the Conflict**

ISSUE	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES									
	KUSASI					MAMPRUSI				
	YES	%	NO	%	Total Responses	YES	%	NO	%	Total Responses
Necessary to continue With the conflict	14	23.3	46	76.7	60	18	30	42	70	60
Conflict managed well by Assembly	38	63.3	22	36.7	60	31	51.7	29	48.3	60
Children with knowledge about the conflict	43	71.7	17	28.3	60	41	68	19	32	60
Suspicion of each other	37	61.7	23	38.3	60	42	70	18	30	60
Conflict externally influenced	27	45	33	55	60	36	60	24	40	60
Agreed to terms of BPI mediation process	44	73.3	16	26.7	60	26	43.3	34	56.7	60

Source: Adapted from Aasoglenang (2011. P. 62)

### **Mechanisms For Conflict Management**

For sustained peace to prevail in conflict districts there should be the need for the Assemblies come out with plans that prevent pre-conflicts and also manage end-results of it as illustrated in the conflict planning model (figure 2).

### **Pre-Conflict Experience**

A study of past plans revealed that conflict was not a major issue to be concerned with by the Bawku Municipal Assembly. But for the 2002-2004 Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP) there was an acknowledgement of conflict in it as a major constraint to the implementation of development plans. However, the content of the plan had no deliberate designed strategies and programs that explicitly focus on considering conflict as a development challenge requiring pragmatic management. Consequently there was no single budget line created as is always the case for all identified key development challenges in the MTDP to address the issues of conflict in Bawku. Two way implications can be derived from the findings: firstly that the issue of conflict has been trivialized and secondly the planning functions of the Assembly have not been interpreted to include the powers or mandate to plan towards the prevention, resolution and management of the numerous and hydra-headed conflicts in the Municipality.

Currently it is the Air Borne Force (ABF) stationed in Bawku, the Municipal Security Committee (MUSEC) and other security agencies that have taken over to prevent conflicts and maintain peace. But are they capable of undertaking pre-conflict management responsibilities as they relate to the development of the Municipality? Certainly they will not be able. Though the security forces have been managing the conflict through peace enforcement, there is unlikely to be true conflict prevention and transformation without the active involvement and commitment of the local actors. The Assembly and other third force conflict mediators to the Bawku conflicts should in this wise take a cue that conflicts are caused by human actions and they will only be properly managed by the same human actions.

### **Post-Conflict Experience**

Analyzed data also show that management of post-conflict has the same outlook as the pre-conflict management process. For example, there are no institutional arrangements put in place to handle the end-results of the conflict in a sustained manner. However, further findings indicated that after the 2000/2001 deadly conflict the Assembly supported the Bawku Peace Initiative to start a mediation forum between the Mamprisis and Kusasis. As part of the outcome of the mediation process, both the Mamprisis and Kusasis spelt out five point resolutions each to be observed and respected by all for peace to prevail in the Municipality. But for about a decade now the respective resolutions have not been observed

(Text Box 1 contains the respective resolutions). It is evident from the analysis that farmlands confiscated from the Mamprusis have not been returned and intermarriages were still not encouraged. The Bawku Naba, though recognized and given all the courtesies he deserves by his kinsmen and visitors to the Municipality, not the Mamprusis and other individuals from other minor tribes recognizes him as the Bawku Naba. This state of affair indicates that the conflict management approach adopted in 2001 during the mediation forum and thereafter was more ‘distributive’ and did not address the fundamental issues(s) probably due to the complex nature of the disagreement.

**Text Box 1: Agreed Resolutions between the Mamprusis and Kusasis**

<b><i>Mamprusis</i></b>	<b><i>Kusasis</i></b>
1. <i>Use the patronage of the Bawku market as a unifying force for the people</i>	1. <i>The Bawku Naba should be recognized and given respect by all official guests to the town</i>
2. <i>Use intermarriages between the Kusasis and Mamprusis as unifying force</i>	2. <i>The present political authority (Assembly) be recognized and respected by all</i>
3. <i>Stop land confiscation especially among farmers</i>	3. <i>All should do away with violence for peace</i>
4. <i>Confirm president nominee as MCE</i>	4. <i>All should respect and patronize each other’s socio-cultural practices.</i>
5. <i>Allow all people especially council workers to go back to their work places.</i>	5. <i>Groups should use dialogue as a means of resolving all disputes</i>

Source: Adapted from Aasoglenang (2011. P. 60)

### **Conflict Management and its Implications on the MTDP of the Assembly**

The MTDP of the Assembly is the main development policy framework shaping the development path of the district. Therefore, for any development policy objective to be achieved it must be operated in an environment devoid of violence. The study indicated that due to intermittent conflicts, successive MTDPs of the Municipality over the years have not been successfully implemented. This implies that the development projects expected to spread and reduce poverty did not all come to pass. The current conflict management strategy adopted by the assembly to entirely rely on the security agencies and occasional educational campaigns offer no convincing hope for the future. It is therefore likely that future MTDPs will continue not to see the light of the day so far as the conflict was not handled as a development challenge requiring rigorous planning but rather a constraint outside the capability of the Assembly.

### **Identification and Management of Conflict Signals**

The findings show that currently there are conflicting indicators in the Municipality that have one point in time generated into violent and nonviolent conflicts. The study further revealed that some of the indicators especially those related to land were seriously looming

and there was the need to be properly managed before they turned violent. These signals include;

- Periods of party politics ;
- Display of party posters at will;
- Destruction of party posters;
- Period for election/confirmation of Presiding Members and Municipal Chief Executives;
- Anonymous letter writing pointing at one tribe or the other;
- Hyped media reportage on the conflict;
- Wearing of provocative traditional dresses with ‘talismans’;
- Ownership and leadership of lorry park at Gingande;
- Land disputes especially at Zabugu;

To the extent that no conflict management plan was available to continuously track and address the identified signals, the study noted the lack of initiative in integrating conflict management in the planning process in the Municipality. There is the need for a functional conflict management framework capable of addressing issues of conflicts. The absence of such an arrangement in the Municipality means that the Assembly has not optimized the planning powers invested in it to deal with the situation. More importantly the Sub-Districts that are an extension of the Assembly have not been empowered to monitor and report on possible conflict escalations. It is however likely that the Assembly cannot solve the problem alone but has the responsibility to define the way forward and then constitute an impartial and multi-disciplinary team to assist. Such a team should involve representatives of stakeholders of the conflict, selected institutions and organizations working in the field, faith based organizations, youth and women representatives among others. It is expected that such a team will broaden the scope of monitoring events and getting vital information across to deal with conflict related problems in good time. Though the relevance of such a team cannot be underestimated, the individual persons’ neutral and objective views to the entire process cannot however be guaranteed.

Management of deep-rooted conflict entails huge capital outlay. A suggestion for financial support for any operational conflict management plan received positive responses from development partners especially Non-Governmental Organizations who are actively operating in and out of the Municipality. These organizations, especially those that started the Bawku Peace Initiative (BPI), have demonstrated their readiness to support any Municipal wide conflict management plan that is capable of stopping conflicts. But this opportunity will

come to naught if the Assembly does not treat the conflict as a major development challenge requiring a project and designing fund raising proposals to source for the development and implementation of the plans. This step is necessary because public sector budget will not be enough to sustain the implementation of such plans.

### **Inputs for Designing Effective Conflict Management Plans**

An interview with 20 institutions, organizations including the Assembly revealed that there was the need to get all the stakeholders to the conflicts together to identify potential conflict indicators to be incorporated into the MTDP of the Assembly and developed into a strategic plan to guide in the management of the conflict in a more pragmatic way. The data revealed that their inclusion will generate important information needed for the exercise and also support the initiative. On the part of committing resources into designing conflict plans the Assembly indicated its preparedness to fund such a project. Further interview with 6 out of the 11 Organizations that supported the Bawku Peace Initiative (BPI) in 2001 also suggested that they were prepared to provide funds and or other resources to support the implementation of any conflict management plan for the area.

### **Conflict Monitoring Team**

The study indicated that an effective team constituted to routinely monitor issues of conflict in the field for timely responses was absent in the district. Some interest groups that could be part of the planned monitoring team were however identified by respondents to include; Civil Society Organizations involved in peace and justice related projects, Faith based organizations (FBO), Representatives of traditional leaders from all the ethnic groups, the Assembly including Municipal Security Committee (MUSEC), youth and women leaders etc. A team with such a composition will spread the representation; build trust and confidence among stakeholders and lead to effective and objective evaluation of information gathered by the team. Such monitoring assignments could inform the authority early enough about the underlying conditions that promote conflict and inform the appropriate institution of any looming danger for decisive action to be taken to avoid any future confrontation or violence.

### **Conclusions**

From the beginning, the study set out to assess whether the Municipal Assembly considered the recurrent conflicts in the district as a development problem that contributes to poverty spread and in that light whether planning as a tool is being used to manage the conflict. At the end of the study it was revealed that conflict was duly acknowledged in the MTDPs of the Assembly but no institutional arrangement was put in place to develop relevant long-term plans to address it. Also in so far as the Assembly has never planned to

manage the conflict, no budget has ever been prepared purposely to support conflict management. Besides, though the conflict over the years has been mediated, the dynamics of it suggest that both Kusasis and Mamprusis were still holding onto entrenched positions.

Based on the fact that the re-occurrence of the conflict was eminent the responsibility rests on the Assembly to identify all early warning signals to be monitored against any possible escalation. The point of origin of the signals cut across the economic, political and social-cultural sub-system of the people. In this case a plan that involved objective minded persons to monitor and gather information on them on the ground would be crucial to managing the conflict in a sustained manner.

### **Recommendations For Strategic Institutional Action**

Within the context of National Development Policy directives, Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies with powers conferred on them are responsible for the promotion of development. However, development in its true sense cannot be achieved in a conflict environment and hence the responsibility lies with the MMDAs in Ghana to manage all conflicts when they erupt. Issues emerging from the study however show that the Bawku Municipal Assembly conflict management processes were based on ad hoc measures and not guided by any institutionalized plan. The needed Strategic Institutional Actions to be adopted in this regard is aimed at guiding the Municipal Assembly and other development organizations interested in managing the conflict in the Municipality and elsewhere to integrate conflict management processes in their MTDP framework. These include the following;

#### **Conflict Management Plan**

It is important for the Assembly to seriously mainstream conflict in the MTDP of the Assembly detailing the processes and indicators that should go into it. It should also be guided by an activity plan and a monitoring and evaluation framework. More importantly, a budget line should be created for it to support annual action plans. Besides, the Bawku conflict has passed through all the stages of conflicts and in this respect it will be appropriate to tailor the plan to cater for both pre-conflict and post-conflict phases as depicted in figure 2. Post-conflict phase in particular is the most fragile phase/period where the risk of a resumption of conflict is high. There is therefore the need to continuously plan to cater for risk monitoring and assessment.

### **Strengthening the Capacity of Municipal Planning and Coordinating Unit (MPCU)**

For any pragmatic conflict management plan to be developed it will certainly be the responsibility of the MPCU to facilitate the process. In so far as the Unit is not familiar with what it takes to come out with conflict prevention, resolution and management plan(s) and their implementation, it is necessary to strengthen its capacity in critical aspects of conflict planning. This attempt will enable the MPCU stay focused and position itself better in the identification of all necessary indicators that should go into the preparation and implementation of conflict plans.

### **Decentralized Institutional Arrangement for Conflict Management**

The fact that the conflict affects everybody in all parts of the Municipality gives room to believe that its re-generation could start from any corner of the Municipality. Following from this it is relevant to position the Municipal Assembly and the sub-structures in a manner that will enable them to play more active roles in conflict management. This arrangement will involve developing appropriate mechanisms for information collection and analysis on issues of early warning signals at the grass roots. This will have to be done through a local network of relevant stakeholders who are familiar with the area and the context of the conflict to carry out the day-to-day monitoring of changing variables.

### **Conflict Monitoring and Evaluation Team**

There is the need to form a functional, impartial and multi-disciplinary monitoring team to routinely track conflict related issues along the lines of the decentralized structures.

### **Capitalization of Conflict Management Programs**

The preparation and implementation of conflict management program(s) involve a huge capital outlay. The Assembly on its own will find it difficult to support such a program. In this respect, it has to raise funds externally to complement internal mobilized ones in view of the fact that organizations and donors may be willing to support peace initiatives in the area. However, before such organizations could respond, the challenge will be on the MPCU to develop convincing fund raising proposals to get them committed to support any conflict management activities.

### **Need for Synergy Building in Conflict Prevention and Management**

There is the need for an effective synergy building between the government and traditional political authorities to find a holistic and sustained solution to the impasse.

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