# CONTINENTAL AND REGIONAL FRAMEWORKS FOR CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA

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## INTRODUCTION

Africa has the most developed regional organisation in the developing world for conflict resolution and peace-keeping (Gambari, 2013). This is because of efforts at tackling the myriad of security challenges that have been critical concerns for development in Africa since the emergence of the continent from colonial rule from the late 1950s. In the preamble of the protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union adopted in 2002, the Heads of State and Government (HSG) of the Member States identified the scourge of conflicts between and within States of Africa as the single internal factor that has contributed most to the socio-economic decline of the continent (AU Protocol, 2002). Conflicts over resources, identity crisis (with political and economic dimensions) as well as international and intrastate boundary disputes that stemmed from poor governance and colonial legacies have worsened the poverty level of several states as resources are sunk into the conflicts. According to David Francis,

Contemporary Africa is portrayed as synonymous with perennial wars and armed conflicts, political instability, criminal violence, in a state of permanent humanitarian emergency due to forced migration, massive refugee flows and internally displaced persons, at the mercy of natural catastrophes such as famine, drought and floods and ravaged by the

HIV/AIDS pandemic with over 40% of the population living below the poverty line or less than US$1 per day (Francis, 2006:1).

Francis concluded that this state of affairs, according to socioeconomic and development indicators, has moved the continent from the periphery to the periphery of the periphery in the international division of labour and the international division of power. This has implications for not only Africa but the international community in a globalised world where events in any part of the world have a tendency of affecting other parts of the system. It was observed as at 2008 that of the 19 major wars in Africa between 1990 and 2001, only four remain, in addition to the more recent conflict in Darfur. This reflects an impressive 79 percent conflict-resolution rate, or nearly double the 40 percent global reduction figure for the same period. This has most probably been because of the renewed emphasis on building a continental security regime that is capable of managing and resolving African conflicts in the continent (Mwencha, 2008). This chapter will discuss the various frameworks and mechanisms that have been evolved at the continental and regional levels for the management of conflicts in Africa in order to enhance peace and security and create the needed atmosphere for development that has eluded the continent over the years.

## THE EVOLUTION OF AFRICA'S CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

The OAU from inception (and as clearly stated in Article 1 of the Charter) was guided by the principles of "The Sovereign Equality of all Member States" and "Non Interference in the Internal Affairs of Member States" (OAU Charter, 1963). Moreover it unreservedly condemned political assassination and subversion in Article 3. It also upheld the inherited colonial boundaries of member states. Although these provisions served the positive purpose of inhibiting relatively powerful states with expansionist tendencies from encroaching into the territories of weaker neighbouring states in the decolonisation and Cold War era, it tended to shield despots from sanctions by the organisation against the exploitation of their own citizens in cases of gross human rights abuses and graft.

It thus merely adopted mechanisms that preferred the use of soft power where resolutions tended only to "urge' or "deplore" members even in clear cases of brazen abuse of power instead of demanding and taking

drastic decisions.

The OAU established a Commission for Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration (CMCA) in 1964 for optional jurisdiction and mediation that was limited only to interstate disputes and conflicts. The Commission however became ineffective as it was difficult to situate its role in the face of the principles of Sovereign Equality and Non Interference.

The OAU summit of Heads of State and Government (HSG) therefore became the only body with the responsibility for mediation and conciliation, acting through a number of mechanisms that included ad-hoc commissions, regional neighbours or simply on the basis of personal relationships. This rather less than institutional mechanism did not make for assertive actions and the successes were also temporary. Thus William Zartman observed that The OAU found itself in a dilemma: "The primary principles that it defends minimally well keep it from moving on to other almost equally primary principles that it cannot implement because in the process of upholding some primary principles for its membership, it hampered its ability to manage conflict in other ways" (Zartman, 1996: 62).

In the mid 1970s and 1980s, attempts were made at reviving the CMCA due to repeated calls by some members for reforms but it did not yield meaningful results because it was not in the primary interest of most of its members who would prefer the status quo. In 1991, as a result of the rising intrastate conflicts that followed the end of the Cold War era, the Secretary General of the OAU, Salim Ahmed Salim, proposed the removal of the non interference clause from the Charter. Even though this was not done, the move paved the way for the establishment of a Conflict Management Mechanism to help the Secretary General provide rapid response to crises situations. As a follow up, a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (MCPMR) was created in 1993 within the OAU secretariat with responsibility for implementation and development of capacity for effective management of conflicts.

The OAU – MCPMR was established with a Central Organ to provide direction for the coordination of efforts toward the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts that included close cooperation with the UN and other sub regional organisations. An OAU Peace Fund was also established with 5% of the organisation's annual budget for the mechanism. The mechanism was specifically charged with the

responsibility of:

i) Anticipating and preventing situations of potential conflicts from developing into full blown conflicts.

ii) Undertaking peacemaking and peace-building efforts if full-blown conflicts should arise

iii) Undertaking peacemaking and peace-building activities in post-conflict situations (Powell, K, 2005).

Resource deficiencies in both human and material terms, lack of proper coordination between the continental body and regional security mechanisms coupled with the want of political will on the part of the Organisation however, limited the achievement of the mechanism. Moreover, the end of the Cold War that shifted the attention of the world away from Africa (with all its implications) leading to a change in the international security and conflict environment combined to render the OAU peace and security mechanisms ineffective in dealing with the magnitude of crises and conflicts that plagued Africa. This scenario forced a re-evaluation of the Organisations conflict management mechanism (Juma, 2006)

Although the Mechanism failed in its primary objective, Franke sees this development as a turning point for conflict management in Africa when he states that "Over the next seven years, the Mechanism's activism was to transform the OAU into a more credible organization with an increased visibility and an elevated profile in the conflict management arena" (Franke, 2007:5). The mechanism was the first attempt to move conflict management from an ad hoc approach to a more systematic and institutionalised method. It is the forerunner of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), the continental framework for conflict management.

## TRANSITION FROM OAU TO AU

The OAU Heads of States and Government meeting in Sirte, Libya in 1999 decided to revitalise the organisation to enable it play a role that is more active and relevant to the needs of the African people and to the demands of the prevailing circumstances. Following this, at its 36th summit in Lome, July 2000, the AU Constitutive Act was signed and two years later it was launched in Durban, South Africa (Engel and Gomes,

twentieth century. And by the eve of World War I agriculture account for only 12% of Britain labour forces; while manufacturing and construction accounted for 38%, and distribution, and services for 32%; This suggested an economy more advanced, more industrialized\, and more richer. Britain was by far the must advanced and industrialized of the world's economies.

In other economics outside of Britain, agriculture was still a very substantial share of GDP in late 10th and early 20th century. Farmers were not only rich but also powerful in those economies. The eve of World War I still saw more than one out of three Americans at work in agriculture, and one in thirty at work in mining. This situation applied to most European countries outside of Britain.

Therefore, many of the processes that have blossomed since to shape the post World War II industrial economy were clearly underway by the start of the twentieth century. But they were most part only seedlings.

However, things take a new turn in the economy of the world in the aftermath of World I between 1918 to 1939. This was a tumultuous period, as the unresolved tensions from the First World War led to economic catastrophe in the Great Depression. The interwar period was also characterized by slow economic growth, slow down international trade, massive unemployment, and uneasy international relations made economic cooperation difficult.

From the financial angle, the period was marred by problems of inflation and hyper-inflation which almost all the European economies, and the instability of many of their banking systems. There was also currency and exchange which precede the period. This attempt at currency stabilization also failed to provide the benefits in international trade an growth its advocates had anticipated. I the 1920's, international capital movements, in the form of investment and loans, thrives among the main economics which help to promote the measure of stability achieved in the mid 1020's. However, shortly after the stability of the mid 1920's, crisis erupted again in the financial sector of the world economy following what experts described as major errors in the economic policy of the main economies. This financial crisis consequent upon the policy error ushered in the period of the Great Depression of the 1930's and the abandonment of the gold standard especially in Europe.

The onset of the Great Depression disintegrated the international economy i.e. de-globalization. Cooperation was desperately needed to mitigate the effects of the slump, but it was not forthcoming. The United States and Europe Nations displayed disharmony and rivalry at the World economic Conference of 1933. Each country had its own agenda and priorities; the world Economic take up into separate trading areas- the sterling area (which fared the best due to Britain's devaluation) and the gold standard area or bloc (which fared the worst), and protectionism in trade relations was overt. This situation persists in the world economy until the dawn of the second World War.

World economy (1945 upward): the main characteristics

The period following World War II ushered in several changes in the world economy. The most obvious change is the dissolution of the protectionist regime and the evolution of the multilateral trade regime which evolved under the auspices of the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT, now WTO). NEXT, is the intensification of global financial transaction and exchange spearheaded by the Brettonwoods institutions (IMF/World Bank). There was also a tremendous change in the direction of international capital flow and foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) championed especially by the activities of the Multinational Corporations (MNCs), a visible transformation can also be seen in the political economy of the trading system which also brought forth the ideological rivalries between the Occident and Orient industrialized powers especially for economic dominance, etc, Finally, the recent global economic meltdown will be encapsulated as one of these characteristics.

All of above development had greatly increased as well as revealed the extent of economic linkages in the international arena. I will, therefore, discuss these post war transformations in the world economy elaborately.

Trade

It is quite obvious that cross-border exchanges of good and services has increased greatly since World War II. It is on record that the industrialized countries reduced their average tariffs in trading among themselves, after the war from about 40% in 1946 to about 5% at the end of the 19906: an act which helped to spur a boom in world exports by roughly 14 times more than what obtain in the 1950s solely to the advantage of these economics. As a result, over the past decades more

Article 7 of the Protocol spells out the powers of the Council which it shall exercise in conjunction with the Chairperson of the Commission. These include among other things the anticipation and prevention of disputes and conflicts as well as policies that may lead to genocide and crimes against humanity; undertaking peace-making and peace-building functions to resolve conflicts where they have occurred and authorizing the mounting and deployment of peace support missions. It also has the power, pursuant to Article 4(h) of the Constitutive Act, to recommend intervention in a Member State to the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity. Article 4(j) extends the right to Member States to request the Union to intervene to restore peace and security. The Council is also to institute sanctions whenever an unconstitutional change of Government takes place in a Member State; implement the common defence policy of the Union and ensure the implementation of the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism. The promotion of close harmonisation, co-ordination and co-operation between Regional Mechanisms and the Union to promote and maintain peace, security and stability in Africa also lie within the power of the PSC (ibid).

The Protocol provides for fifteen members drawn from the five recognised regions of the continent viz North Africa, West Africa, Central Africa, East Africa and Southern Africa. Ten of the members are to serve two year terms while, for the purpose of continuity, five are to serve three year terms. To ensure equal representation of the regions, three members will be drawn from each of the regions: two for the two year term and one for the three year term. Unlike the UN Security Council, all members serving on the PSC have equal voting rights and there are no veto rights or permanent membership (Powell, 2005). The Council convenes at the levels of Heads of States (summit), Ministers and Ambassadors.

Apart from the principle of equitable regional representation and rotation, the protocol listed ten essential criteria that prospective members to the Council should meet. These include contribution to the promotion and maintenance of peace and security in Africa, capacity and commitment to shoulder the responsibilities entailed in membership, contribution to the Peace Fund and/or Special Fund created for specific

purposes, respect for constitutional governance, as well as the rule of law and human rights and commitment to honour financial obligations to the Union (AU PSC Protocol, 2002). In summary, those aspiring for membership must demonstrate both political will and accountability.

The setting of criteria for qualification into the PSC is a welcome innovation. This makes it distinct from its predecessor, the Central Organ of the OAU that operated on the principle of rotation where countries in each region succeeded one another in automatic alphabetical order with the tendency that states that were neither capable nor suitable could take turns on the sit therefore rendering it weak.

## THE CONTINENTAL EARLY WARNING SYSTEM (CEWS)

The PSC Protocol places particular emphasis on conflict prevention. Article 12 of the Protocol provides for the establishment of a Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), in order to facilitate the anticipation and prevention of conflicts in Africa. It states in Article 12 (2) that the CEWS shall consist of:

(i) an observation and monitoring centre, to be known as "the Situation Room", which is located at the Conflict Management Division of the African Union and is responsible for data collection and analysis; and

(ii) the observation and monitoring units of the Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, which shall be linked directly through appropriate means of communication to the Situation Room and which shall collect and process data at their level and transmit the same to the Situation Room (AU PSC Protocol, 2002).

Article 12(3) mandates the Commission to collaborate with the United Nations, its agencies, other relevant international organizations, research centres, academic institutions and NGOs, to facilitate the effective functioning of the Early Warning System, while Article 12(4) provides for the development of an early warning module based on clearly defined and accepted political, economic, social, military and humanitarian indicators, which shall be used to analyze developments within the continent and to recommend the best course of action (ibid). A Roadmap for the Operationalisation of the CEWS has been developed, and the Framework agreed to by the representatives of the Member States in

December 2006 on the basis of which the implementation began in the first quarter of 2007.

According to Ambassador Saïd Djinnit (Commissioner for Peace and Security of the AU), the CEWS is core to the fulfilment of the Union's conflict prevention, management and resolution mandate because without the capacity to monitor, analyse and develop tailored and timely responses and policy options to threats to peace and security on the Continent, the AU would be severely limited in its ability to address these appropriately (AU Commisson, 2008). The role of the CEWS is therefore critical as regards the ability of key institutions of the Union and other pillars of the peace and security architecture to perform their responsibilities, especially the Panel of the Wise.

As at January 2008, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in the Horn of Africa have already established observation and monitoring units while the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) are in the process of doing so. Once they are put in place, they are to collect and process data at their respective levels and to transmit the same to the continental Situation Room (AU Commission, 2008). The Commission's target to make the CEWS fully operational by the end of 2009 has come and gone, but this is yet to be attained.

## THE AFRICAN STANDBY FORCE (ASF) AND THE MILITARY STAFF COMMITTEE (MSC)

The African Standby Force (ASF) is the actualization of an African capability for peace support operations. The Force shall be composed of standby multidisciplinary contingents, with civilian and military components in their countries of origin and ready for rapid deployment at appropriate notice. The Member States shall take steps to establish standby contingents for participation in peace support missions decided on by the Peace and Security Council or intervention authorized by the Assembly and its operation shall be based on established African Union Peace Support Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

The ASF is supported by a Military Staff Committee (MSC) to advise and assist the Peace and Security Council in all questions relating to military and security requirements for the promotion and maintenance of peace

and security in Africa. It is to be composed of senior military officers of the members of the PSC and may meet as often as possible and may also meet at the level of chiefs of defence staff. The chairperson of the Commission has the responsibility of facilitating the meeting of the Military Staff Committee (MSC) and to carry out the necessary follow-up action. The Committee may also invite any state not represented on it to participate in its deliberations when it is so required for the efficient discharge of its responsibilities.

## THE MANDATE OF THE ASF

The mandate of the ASF includes observation and monitoring missions; other types of peace support missions; intervention in a Member State in respect of grave circumstances or at the request of a Member State in order to restore peace and security, in accordance with Article 4(h) and (j) of the Constitutive Act. It also includes preventive deployment in order to prevent:

1. A dispute or a conflict from escalating,
2. An ongoing violent conflict from spreading to neighbouring areas or States, and
3. The resurgence of violence after parties to a conflict have reached an agreement.

In addition, the force will be involved in peace-building including post-conflict disarmament and demobilisation as well as humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering of civilian population in conflict areas and support efforts to address major natural disasters.

## OPERATIONALISING THE ASF

The ASF is to operate within the context of the following conflict and mission scenarios according to the provisions of the policy framework for the establishment of the African standby force and the military staff committee of May 2003.

(I) Scenario 1 AU/Regional Military advice to a Political mission to deploy within 30 days from an AU mandate resolution.

(II) Scenario 2. AU/Regional observer mission co-deployed with UN mission to deploy within 30 days from an AU mandate resolution.

(III) Scenario 3. Stand alone AU/Regional observer mission to deploy within 30 days from an AU mandate resolution.

(IV) Scenario 4. AU/Regional peacekeeping force (PKF) for Chapter VI and preventive deployment missions to deploy within 30 days from an AU mandate resolution.
(V) Scenario 5. AU PKF for complex multidimensional PK mission-low level spoilers (a feature of many current conflicts) to deploy within 90 days from an AU mandate resolution, with the military component being able to deploy in 30 days
(VI) Scenario 6. AU intervention – e.g. genocide situations where international community does not act promptly to deploy a robust military force in 14 days.
Missions for Scenarios 1-3 should be self-sustainable for up to 30 days, while operations dealing with Scenarios 4-6 should be self-sustainable for up to 90 days (ASF Policy Framework Part I, 2003).
The African Standby Force (ASF) will consist of five regionally based brigades and a sixth continental contingent based at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa to be developed in two phases. Phase 1 to end in June 2005 was for the development of the capacity of the force for the management of scenarios 1-2 missions. Within the same period, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) were expected to establish regional forces up to brigade level grouping to achieve Scenario 4 capabilities as a compliment to the AU. Phase 2 (July 2005 – June 2010) envisions the development of a capacity by the AU to manage peacekeeping operations in scenario 5. RECs should try to develop capabilities up to that of a standby brigade while those with existing brigades are to increase their rapid deployment capability within this period (Golaszinski, 2004). Each of Africa's five regions are to set up a standard brigade to be composed of police units, civilian specialists, 300 – 500 military observers and 3,000 - 4000 troops providing the AU with a combined standby capacity of about 15,000-25,000 peacekeepers, trained and equipped to common standard and operating to common doctrine in line with the principle of inter-operability, to ensure that they can deploy under the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the AU or the UN, within and beyond their regions (Franke, 2007:7).
The development of the ASF has been slow. The projected period for its full realization (2010) has come and it is clear that it is far from being realised. As at 2008, only Western and Southern Africa had made substantial progress with Eastern Africa following. Several reasons may

account for this but it is pertinent to note that to establish and sustain the complete range of peace support operations capable of engaging in the scenarios outlined above, it will take time and considerable resources which Africa at the moment lacks. There is also the dearth of qualified personnel for undertaking peace support operations in Africa because peacekeeping interventions require strong command and control, communications, interoperability, logistics and equipment. The problem of logistics is not just the fact of outdated communication and operational equipment but also the ability to maintain modern ones. Another problem is that Member States' defence forces have divergent conditions and development processes making standardisation difficult. One way around this is to find common grounds among the various forces to establish a general standard so as to enhance interoperability.

Of all the challenges encountered by the ASF, however, none is as serious and as disturbing as the problem of funding. All the other issues seem to revolve around it. Member states of the AU are either unable or unwilling to foot the bill for the establishment and operationalisation of the ASF. The Chairperson of the Commission lamented the gravity of the situation showing how the mounting arrears of Members' contributions amounted to US$ 57,549,907.04 by 2007 with 24 of the 53 members owing (African Union Executive Council 2007: iii). The implication of this is that the PSC, and by extension, the ASF which also draws its funding from the AU budget is seriously affected. This is especially so when one considers the huge expenses that the AU is expected to shoulder in peace support operations.

## THE PANEL OF THE WISE

The Panel of the Wise, another organ of the Peace and Security Council, is particularly concerned with conflict prevention and management. Article 11(3) states that its role is to "advise the Peace and Security Council and the Chairperson of the Commission on all issues pertaining to the promotion, and maintenance of peace, security and stability in Africa" (PSC Protocol). The panel which is to be composed of five highly respected African personalities from various segments of society who have made outstanding contributions to the cause of peace, security and development on the continent are to serve for a period of three years. In January 2007, the AU Assembly appointed the first members of the panel

from the five geo-political regions of the continent among whom are the former OAU Secretary General Salim Ahmed Salim, and two former presidents (Murithi, 2008).

At its 100th meeting on 12th November 2007, the PSC adopted the modalities for the functioning of the Panel of the Wise. Article V111 of the document states that "The Commission shall provide administrative, technical and logistical support as may be required by the Panel to facilitate its work" (Modalities for the Functioning of the Panel of the Wise, 2007).

Murithhi has made an important observation that it is necessary to ensure "political buy-in" from the rest of the AU peace and security architecture as well as AU member states to enhance the efficacy of the panel. He states further that:

In the absence of system-wide coordination, there is a very real danger that the activities of the Panel will be routinely undermined. In particular, a pragmatic appreciation of the nexus between preventing conflicts, making peace once conflicts have escalated, and keeping peace following agreements will determine how effective the Panel of the Wise will be (Murithi, 2008:1).

Paying attention to this important arm of the PSC to make it successful is not only far less expensive than military peace operations but preventing violent conflicts by means of mediation is certainly more desirable than attempting to resolve it.

## THE PEACE FUND

The protocol establishing the PSC provides for a Peace Fund to meet the necessary financial resources for peace support missions and other operational activities related to peace and security. The main objectives of the PF will be to:

(i) promote African solutions to African crises by providing the AU with the 'financial muscle' to back up its political resolve with concrete acts;

(ii) encourage African solidarity through financial contributions from all African countries; and

(iii) create the necessary conditions for development (Golaszinski, 2004:8).

The operations of the Peace Fund are to be governed by the relevant Financial Rules and Regulations of the Union. The Fund shall be financed from 6% (which has been increased to 12%) of the regular budget of the Union as well as voluntary contributions from state and non state actors within and outside Africa. It was the funding component of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (MCPR) of the OAU established in 1993 which the PSC incorporated into its framework.

The then Chairperson of the Commission of the AU, H.E. Alpha Oumar Konare noted, while presenting a report on the establishment of a continental peace and security architecture that "Peace, as a prerequisite for the development and consolidation of democratic processes, entails the mobilisation of vast resources". He however lamented that "despite repeated appeals made by the competent organs of the AU, virtually no Member State has contributed to financing AMIB. The only contributions received were from the AU's partners, and due to their inadequacy, the troop contributing countries, namely South Africa, Ethiopia and Mozambique, were forced to bear the greater part of the burden for the deployment of the Mission" (Konare,2004).

The PSC is only an aspect of a generally underfunded institution. Paul Williams noted in 2008 that only a few of the members are committed to their financial obligations to the Union. Since 1 January 2006, 75% of the Union's regular budget has been paid for by just five countries: Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Nigeria and South Africa and in early 2008, the Executive Council noted that only 29 of the Union's 53 members were up to date with the payment of their contributions to the regular budget. Since the budget is one of the sources of the Fund, it has implications for the operations of the PSC. Williams is therefore stating the obvious when he concluded that African states have not provided the PSC with enough funds to fully-equip the Commission in Addis Ababa, let alone active peace operations in the field (Williams, 2008).

The implication of this is that the financial costs of AU-led peace support operations have largely been funded by Africa's foreign development partners while Africa has provided troops and substantial political leadership in the management and resolution of conflict. Prominent among the mechanisms for support by the international community is the EU Africa Peace facility that advanced the sum of €250 million in

December 2003 and another €300 million to replenish the facility for the period of 2008 – 2010. This provision has covered some specific costs of Peace Support Operations (PSOs) of the Union for some period (Africa Partnership Forum, 2007).

Three major problems have been associated with such dependence on these sources of funding. One is that they are hardly adequate for the needs on ground. Secondly, the ad hoc nature of some of the funding makes planning difficult because the flow cannot be predicted. Thirdly, the multiplicity of the different funding channels mean that much time is spent in sorting out administrative procedures with the various institutions so that adequate attention is not devoted to crucial issues when needed. A clear example of the difficulty in predicting funds is the case of the budget for the African Mission in Sudan for January to June 2007 which stood at US$297.6 million. By the end of April, only US$137.9 million had been pledged. Meanwhile the budget for African Mission in Somalia was put at US$394 million. This prompted the AU Commission to request development partners to establish a complementary Peace Facility that could potentially also cover the non-eligible costs under the EU's Peace Facility (ibid).

The EU Peace Facility therefore, seem to have substituted for the AU Peace Fund because African states have not provided the PSC with sufficient funds to properly equip the Commission for Peace in Addis Ababa much less undertake peace operations.

## REGIONAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT MECHANISMS

Regional economic organisations in Africa were originally created with economic integration and development mandates but the failure of the OAU to respond to conflict situations in Africa especially in the post-Cold War era provided the opportunity for these organisations to fill the security and defence gap. They therefore had to adapt their mandates and institutions to suit the new security and peace functions. However their advent into the conflict management arena led to friction with the OAU's peace and security efforts (Franke, 2007). This situation has since changed under the AU where the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are not seen as competitors with the continental body but as essential building blocks and implementation agencies. Its devolved approach to work through the sub-regional economic communities

allows it to respond quickly and effectively to conflict while maintaining regional sensitivity (Masabo, 2013)

The Role of Regional Organizations: the Building Blocks of the AUPSA

The PSC Protocol recognises that the Regional Mechanisms are part of the overall security architecture of the Union. The primacy of responsibility for promoting peace, security and stability in Africa, however, rests with the AU. In this regard therefore, the Peace and Security Council and the Chairperson of the Commission, shall harmonize and coordinate the activities of Regional Mechanisms to ensure effective partnership between them and the Peace and Security Council in the promotion and maintenance of peace, security and stability. This is to ensure that their activities are consistent with the objectives and principles of the Union (AU PSC Protocol, 2002).

The AU recognises the Arab Magreb Union (AMU); the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD); the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA); the East African Community (EAC); the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS); the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); the Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The RECs in West, Central and Southern Africa have regional standby brigades because most of the members belong to the same organisation. However because of the complexity and diversity of membership to a variety of regional groups in North and East Africa, the AU had to form Regional Mechanisms (RMs): Northern Africa Regional Capacity (NARC) and the Eastern Africa Standby Brigade Command Mechanism (EASBRICOM) (MOU, AU& RECs,2008).

On the basis of this, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cooperation in the area of peace and security between the African Union, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the coordinating mechanisms of the regional standby brigades of Eastern Africa and Northern Africa was established in June, 2008 in order to, among other things, contribute to the full operationalisation and effective functioning of the African Union Peace and Security Architecture. In order to optimise the partnership between the Union, the RECs and the Coordinating Mechanisms in the promotion and maintenance of peace, security and stability, the memorandum specified adherence to the

principles of subsidiarity, complementarity and comparative advantage. Benedikt Franke describes this feature as a "multi-layered and symbiotic approach to security cooperation" where the RECs among themselves and between them and the AU are supportive of and also depending on one another to deliver on their responsibility for peace and security on the continent (Franke, 2007). Thus the continental structure rests on the existing security mechanisms which serve as its pillars as well as its implementing agencies thereby providing for an interdependence that contrasts with the OAU's often uneasy relationship with the continent's regional organizations.

The RECs (especially in the case of the Eastern, Western and Southern Africa) have been building up capacities in the field of conflict prevention, management and resolution and this arrangement allows the AU to profit from their comparative advantage in military and security matters and their experience in peace support operations. Moreover, their proximity to the conflict provide them with a better understanding of its dynamics and the key players making them better suited to utilise early warning systems and proffer context-specific management and resolution options. The cost of deployment of troops is also relatively less expensive. RECs also have a propensity to quickly intervene because their security is at stake due to spill over effects for which reason they are also willing to endure casualties to their personnel which are factors that can ensure success.

While these characteristics of regional organisations appear to be assets that the APSA can exploit to enhance its development and operation, they also pose significant challenges to its success. This is because, although proximity may have its advantages, it makes impartiality among close neighbours difficult.

## CHALLENGES FACING RECS – AU CONFLICT MANAGEMENT RELATIONSHIP

There is no doubt that Partnership between the AU, and the RECs/RMs (and external multilateral and bilateral Actors) has emerged as a major feature of efforts to operationalize the APSA. The relationship between however is still experiencing hiccups. The RECs have a general feeling that the APSA is not coherent or comprehensive enough in its current configuration. While they recognise and accept the principle of

subsidiarity in their relationship with the AU, there is less clarity on its application. Some RECs/RMs are of the view that, the AU Commission should not view itself as an implementing agency; it should rather play more of a coordination role (APSA Assessment Study, 2010).

At the horizontal level, the differences in political leanings, security agendas and visions of the various regions as well as the uneven development of African states are also an impediment to regional cooperation. The broad differences in the peace and security mandates of regional organisations like ECOWAS tradition of intervention versus the non-interventionist norms in East Africa may be a limitation to the drive for a pan African conflict management strategy. This is evident in the pace at which ECOWAS has advanced in the development of its regional brigade. The arbitrary support given by donors to preferred regions has also contributed to the uneven development of regional organisations making it difficult for the AU to properly integrate the RECs into the peace and security architecture. The MoU has given the regional organisations a significant stake and central role under the decentralised collective security system of the AU but it still maintains the primary responsibility for peace and security on the continent and serves as a clearing house and framework for all initiatives. If this provision is properly maintained, it will, in the long run streamline the security agenda of the various regional security organisations to fit into the overall security architecture of the AU.

## REGIONAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

### WEST AFRICA

ECOWAS is the most developed conflict management REC in the African continent. It is the main hub for conflict management in the West African region. It was formed in 1975 and it is made up of 15 countries: Ghana, Nigeria, Benin, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Mali, Senegal, Niger, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Cape Verde and Guinea. However, there also exist the Accord de Non Aggression et d' Assistance en matiere de Defense (ANAD) which is a francophone security arrangement formed in 1977 after the border war between Burkina Faso and Mali in 1974. ANAD has not made any significant impact being tied exclusively to linguistic identity in a multi-lingual sub-

region which also means that a prominent nation like Nigeria that has the capacity to project power in the region is left out. ECOWAS established the Protocol on Non-Aggression 1978 and the Protocol Relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence 1981 (MAD) as measures of resolving disputes between member states that could escalate into armed conflicts (Adeniji, 1997).

The ECOWAS Summit of December 1999 agreed on a Protocol for the Establishment of a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Peace and Security (MCPMRPS) as a replacement for MAD. This was followed by the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, which addresses root causes of conflict, such as corruption and instability as a supplement to MCPMRPS. The highest decision-making body of the Mechanism is 'the Authority' which is the assembly of Heads of State and Government of Member States but which has delegated its powers to the Mediation and Security Council. Other components of the Mechanism include the Defence and Security Commission, Executive Secretary, and Council of the Wise (Elders). ECOWAS has established an early warning mechanism, ECOWARN, for early detection and prevention of conflicts in the region. It has also developed a regional conflict prevention framework to guide the conceptualisation, implementation and evaluation of conflict prevention initiatives in the Commission and Member States. This framework aims at actualising the prevention of conflicts as an integral foundation for regional integration and development. (ECPF, 2008)

The organisation has also adopted the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) it established to restore peace in Liberia internal conflict (1990) and subsequently in Sierra Leone (1991), and Guinea Bissau (1999) as the regional intervention force (ECOWAS Profile).

Thus, even before the establishment of the ASF, it had a security mechanism in place which became a ready capacity for its establishment of ECOBRIG. By 2008, ECOBRIG had managed to designate the 2 requisite number of 5,000 troops as standing by and has developed command and control mechanisms and a planning element (PLANELM). It has formed a high readiness component that can deploy within 30 days under Nigerian leadership (Stephen Burgess, 2008).

## SOUTHERN AFRICA

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) was founded in 1992. The membership includes Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Swaziland, Lesotho, Botswana, South Africa, Madagascar, Mauritius, Angola and Mozambique. The Declaration and Treaty of the SADC, expressed hope that it "... will take the region out of an era of conflict and confrontation, to one of co-operation; in a climate of peace, security and stability. These are prerequisites for development ..." (Cilliers, 1996:6).

It created the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation on 28th June 1996 to promote peace and security in the Region by specifically, among other objectives, protecting the people and safeguarding the development of the region against instability arising from the breakdown of law and order, intra-state conflict, inter-state conflict and aggression. It's Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security was adopted in 2001. In principle the Protocol appears to affirm a conflict management regime that favours political, rather than military solutions (Schalkwyk, 2005). It includes committees and sub-committees and in particular, a department of politics and security at the SADC Secretariat and a conflict management unit including an early warning system and training capacity (ibid). This was followed by the Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation in 2008 to ensure close cooperation on matters of politics, defence and security at all times to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes by negotiation, conciliation, mediation or arbitration. It has recently launched a conflict management centre at its headquarters in Gaborone, Botswana. The centre will study early indications of crises, conflicts and natural disasters and link national crisis management centres of SADC member countries and also use internal centres within the organisation (SADC, 2010-07-14)

SADC's brigade for the ASF is SADCBRIG which was officially launched on 17 August 2007 in Lusaka, Zambia. The Brigade planning element is located in the SADC Secretariat.

## EAST AFRICA

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) began the process of establishing the Eastern Africa Standby Brigade (EASBRIG) in 2004 to encompass 13 East African countries while the EASBRICOM

(Eastern African Standby Brigade Coordination Mechanism) became operational by 2007. Its mission and objectives among other things were to:

1. Provide an enabling environment for attaining the objectives of the Constitutive Act;
2. Work towards Regional collective response to both internal and external threats;
3. Work towards elimination of suspicions and rivalry through cooperation in security and defense;
4. Provide framework for effective and coordinated humanitarian action, effective participation of women in conflict management (EASBRICOM, 2010).

Lack of an encompassing regional organisation in the East African region has, however, hampered the development of a common framework for conflict management in the region unlike in the West and Southern Africa previously discussed. Some members of the East African region belong to SADC while others are in IGAD. The East African Standby Brigade had to be formed independent of the RECs for the ASF. Even then, Tanzania and Mauritius rather chose to contribute to SADC. As a result of this, EASBRICOM is governed by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the coordination of the various structures of the organ. For the same reason, IGAD's Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) is independent from the EASBRIG framework. However, it appears to be the most advanced regional early warning system. The seemingly intractable conflicts in Sudan and Somalia are in Eastern African and have also posed daunting challenges to the development of the regions conflict management mechanism.

## CENTRALAFRICA

The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) was formed in 1983 and comprises of São Tomé and Príncipe, Cameroon, Gabon, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Congo (Brazzaville), Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic and Democratic Republic of the Congo. These countries are among the poorest in the world which has also affected their input into peace and security measures on the continent. Moreover, three of its members: the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic and Chad have been embroiled in conflicts making it difficult

for them to make inputs to peace and security arrangements. The French-led peace and stability operation in Central African Republic (CAR) in the late 1990s became the basis for the formation of the Multinational Forces of Central Africa, Force Multinationale de l'Afrique Centrale (FOMAC), which basically functions as the standby brigade for the sub-region. It lacks internally generated resources as it is mainly driven by France (Burgess, 2008).

## NORTH AFRICA

The Treaty establishing the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) was signed in 1989 by the five members: Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. The North African region is the most backward in terms of established conflict management structures due to the disagreement of some of the members over Western Sahara and also because Egypt, a prominent actor in the region is not a member (Jakkie Cilliers, 2008). It is to be noted that the North Africa Regional Capability (NARC) only signed the Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the area of peace and security between the African Union, the Regional Economic Communities and the Regional Standby Brigades of Eastern Africa and Northern Africa on 28 May 2010 (NARC, 2010).The brigade headquarters and PLANELM are to be located in Libya and Egypt respectively.

## CONCLUSION

For the attainment of an effective regional integration for development in Africa, peace and security is an absolute prerequisite and this can only be achieved by the establishment of an efficient framework for conflict management that has been on the agenda of the continent for the past five decades. The success of the APSA cannot but be a collaborative work by all the organs, institutions and stakeholders in the pursuit of peace and security for the continent. The activities of the regional mechanisms and the AU for conflict management in Africa must be harmonized and properly coordinated toward this end.

In the final analysis, the evolution of a conflict management mechanism, however well conceived and articulated will be meaningful only in its implementation. African leaders must show confidence in these structures at the regional and sub-regional levels and demonstrate strong

political will and readiness to commit themselves to their success if the continent is to come out of its quagmire and join other regions of the world in seeking and providing a higher quality of life for its people.

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