

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT BY THE AU IN THE REGION

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Abstract

The concept of globalization in its scholarly definitions implies that the world has shifted from the era of bipolarity in which the world was sliced up into two by the major powers (US and USSR) and their allies and another group who stood neutral against them 'the Non Aligned Movement' to a new era of globalization since the fall of the Berlin wall in about 1889. The preachers of the gospel of Globalization since then have made it extremely enticing to their benefit and the detriment of the developing states. As such, one may want to revisit the conceptual meaning of globalization and its implications on African crises in order to evaluate western attitudes to the developing world's conflicts, particularly Africa, in order to draw a conclusion on the interest shown by the North in terms of the dialogue of resolution of conflicts with the south as it affects Africa in particular. This paper would help to strengthen the efforts of the African Union in conflict management in this epoch of globalization. In order to conduct this analysis, the study would also, scrutinize some of the efforts made by the AU in the management of conflicts in Africa, the contributions of both the UN and western countries will not be left out of this didactic analysis. This paper will examine these AU peace keeping operation (PKO) shortcomings in detail. As the case may be, the paper will also conduct a thorough analysis of the AU's efforts in managing Africa's conflict. It will also cover the challenges to conflict management and resolution in Africa and suggest ways to ameliorate these challenges. It will finally predict the security dispositions of the AU i.e. the future of conflict management in Africa.

Keywords: African Union, conflict management, globalization, crisis

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Introduction

Africa is endowed with a wealth of resources; both human and natural. Without peace, these resources cannot be fully and optimally harnessed to ensure the much needed development on the continent. Indeed, the scourge of conflicts in Africa constitutes a major impediment to the socio-economic development of the continent. “Without peace, development is not possible”, and also true, is the maxim that “Without development, peace is not durable”. No wonder, the spirited efforts to achieve peace and development by regional and sub-regional mechanisms including the United Nations (UN).

In this epoch of globalised world, it is a truism that many African countries are small and uncompetitive. The most important agenda of the African Union, and indeed, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), is therefore, promotion of regional and continental integration. This position is also inspired by much richer nations in the world which have found it necessary to embrace integration for bigger markets and production lines as well as social and political stability.

Ridding the continent of the lingering conflicts would, therefore, provide a conducive environment for faster integration, stability and development. Peaceful conditions in Africa, brought about by Africa in collaboration with the international community, would ensure a quality population which has been estimated to rise from 750 million to about 1 billion in a decade.

This in turn would increase global demand critical for international trade and an expanded world economy. This would benefit not only Africa but the entire humanity. The benefits would be much higher than under the current status quo where Africa’s contribution to international trade is a paltry 2% and where the current development assistance to Africa has not created the necessary effect. Moreover, peace all over the world is not only the expressed desire but also commitment by all member states of the United Nations.

Regional Efforts

There is a desire and commitment, on the part of Africa and the international community, to resolve conflicts on the continent. This desire and commitment are well expressed in the Constitutive Act of the African Union and in the current collaborative efforts with the international community. Ultimately, though, Africa (with the support of the international

community) is primarily responsible for shaping its destiny. An examination of regional efforts towards long lasting peace in Africa reveals that there has been mixed success where they have occurred. Where the conflicts have persisted, the problem has been lack of implementation of agreed positions because of various reasons, including external interference, and internal constraints.

The Democratic Republic of Congo

To recall the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 1998 sucked in neighboring countries of Rwanda, Uganda and Angola as well as Zimbabwe and Namibia. There were outcries of invasion of the DRC by the neighboring countries and rebellion by the Congolese rebel groups. Ultimately, all the parties sat together in a regional effort and considered all internal and external dimensions to the conflict. The resultant Lusaka Peace Agreement addressed the concerns of the rebel armed groups and those of the neighboring countries. Consequently, forces of neighboring countries withdrew and eventually, elections were held in the DRC. However, whereas the internal concerns were addressed leading to elections, addressing the external concerns of neighboring countries remained on paper. Rwanda, in particular, was concerned about the DRC's continued harboring and supporting, on its territory, of Ex-FAR/Interahamwe who committed genocide in Rwanda in 1994.

This omission or commission, to a large extent, explains why Africa is still grappling with the conflict in the Great Lakes Region. Indeed, it is only recently that Congo decided to do what it should have done in 1998 that progress on that front has been witnessed. The DRC and Rwanda agreed and undertook joint operations against the Ex-FAR/Interahamwe in February/March 2009. The same applies to the DRC and Uganda, with the participation of Sudan, in the joint operations against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in the DRC in February/March 2009.

The joint operations signified a new spirit of regional commitment and cooperation which is being built on. The Tripartite plus Joint Commission involving Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda and DRC played a key role in building confidence and trust among these countries and paved the way for these bold measures.

Burundi

In Burundi, regional efforts, under the chairmanship of President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, delivered the Arusha Peace Agreement of 2000, facilitated by the late President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and later former President Nelson Mandela of South Africa, and then South African Vice President Jacob Zuma. The consistent regional efforts eventually brought on board the two remaining armed groups; namely the CNDD and the FNL/Palipehutu. Burundi has been a classic example of the success of regional efforts, and also an example that incremental progress can build into a concrete solution. Burundi is now enjoying relative peace, but grappling with challenges of post-conflict reconstruction. Burundi has even contributed peacekeepers towards the Africa Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), using their experience to drive the point home for peace. The Great Lakes Region, as earlier alluded to with regard to the conflict in the DRC, has exhibited one of the most complicated situations in the history of conflicts in Africa.

None of the conflicts in the region could be resolved without reference to the other(s). Indeed, it is because of the intertwined nature of the conflicts in the region that the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region was launched in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2004. The Conference, supported by the international community, developed a master plan for lasting peace in the region. It did not only come up with regional mechanisms addressing every body's concerns but also plans to address post-conflict reconstruction and development needs in conflict areas.

The letter and spirit expressed in the final document of this Conference confer obligations on the regional countries and demonstrate a model partnership with the international community during and after conflicts. The challenge is to deliver on the commitments, taking into account that conflicts can re occur if the post conflict phase is not handled effectively and efficiently.

The Conflict in Sudan

This conflict concerned the marginalization of Southern Sudan and had for long eluded the region. Yet, it was no longer an internal matter for Sudan; as it became an example of conflict export. Neighboring countries, including Uganda, became adversely affected. The heinous crimes committed by the LRA in Northern Uganda, in Southern Sudan and in Eastern DRC were as a result of the support the LRA were receiving from the Government of Sudan. The internal conflict had to be resolved; and the region stood its ground.

Under the auspices of the regional organization, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Government of Sudan (GOS) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) negotiated and concluded the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). The CPA resolved the internal differences in Sudan; and it also brought to an end, hopefully, the external dimensions.

Current efforts are devoted to its post-conflict reconstruction and development. However, the challenge now is for the Sudanese parties to fully implement all the provisions of the CPA, especially those related to border demarcation, sharing of oil revenue, the status of Abyei, operationalization of the Joint Integrated Units, elections and the referendum (to decide whether Southern Sudan remains part of Sudan or secedes).

As a result of its regional implications, the CPA remains one of the most watched over agreements in the region. All the countries in the region, including Uganda, are rendering unreserved support to the parties concerned to ensure the implementation of the letter and spirit of the CPA.

Darfur

Besides South Sudan, there is another conflict in Darfur which remains protracted. Peace efforts jointly spearheaded by the United Nations and the African Union have not yet yielded a resolution to the conflict. It is possible that the design of the mediation remains wanting; but also, many other issues have come in to make the Sudanese parties cling to their hard positions. These include the International Criminal Court (ICC) indictment of President Bashir, who is required to account for alleged human rights violations in Darfur. The position of the African Union on the ICC indictment is not to condone impunity; but also to strike a balance between accountability and reconciliation in Sudan, in general.

Somalia

Somalia is another conflict that the region has been handling. Under the auspices of IGAD, the warring Somali parties negotiated and signed a Charter in Nairobi in 2006, for power sharing. This brought in the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and other Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs) including the Transitional Federal Parliament (TFP). Another agreement signed in August 2008, the Djibouti Agreement, brought in a new opposition armed group (The

Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia) and establishment of a new Government. The change of Government in the circumstances was democratically done.

The new President in Somalia, Sheikh Sherif Sheikh Ahmed, has committed himself to the promotion of dialogue with the insurgent groups still outside the peace process and fighting the government. The main challenge in Somalia is that of a weak government with weak institutions. Like the DRC, Somalia needs urgent assistance to strengthen its state institutions, especially those in the security sector. This can be done alongside humanitarian assistance being provided to the victims of the conflict.

Ethiopia and Eritrea

Two other conflicts in the Horn of Africa are unique in the sense that they are purely inter-state. But they have other ramifications. The conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea is in a stalemate; but has the potential to re-erupt violently, though it is solvable provided good will emerges.

The conflict between Eritrea and Djibouti has other ramifications of a possible proxy war between Eritrea and Ethiopia on Djiboutian soil. The proxy war is also threatening the peace process in Somalia, as there is now evidence that Eritrea is actively supporting the insurgents in Somalia on the pretext that the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) is there on behalf of Ethiopia.

Some countries in the region have not been supportive of the regional and international efforts to stabilize Somalia. In fact the AU has requested the UN Security Council to impose sanctions on these countries for undermining the regional efforts aimed at stabilizing Somalia. It is hoped this will bring pressure to bear on them to embrace regional peaceful processes.

African Union Deployment

The first deployment was to Burundi, following the Arusha peace agreement of August 2000. The operation became two-tiered, with South Africa starting it by providing a VIP protection contingent, while in 2003 the AU deployed a peace support mission (AMIB), mandated to consist of up to 3,500 soldiers for an initial period of one year. AMIB was placed under South African leadership and South Africa was expected to contribute the bulk of the force itself, the other troop contributors being Ethiopia and Mozambique.

AMIB has been described as a model for future ASF operations, as it took place under African leadership, consisted of African troops and had the primary objective of preparing for a future UN peace support operation. The mission's primary task was to oversee the implementation of the ceasefire agreement and to support the DDR (disarmament, demobilization and reintegration) process, as well as to create favorable conditions for the deployment of a UN mission. There was considerable prestige tied to the operation, it being the first such operation launched by the new AU. In June 2004, AMIB was thus turned into a UN mission under the French acronym ONUB. The operation in Burundi showed the importance of having the requisite finance in place before deployment, since Ethiopia and Mozambique refused to deploy before South Africa had promised to cover their expenses. The lesson of this led the AU to establish a so-called 'peace fund.' When civil war broke out in Darfur (Sudan) in 2003, the AU quickly became involved, initially in the role of mediator. Following the signing of a very fragile and contested 'humanitarian ceasefire' agreement between the government and some of the Darfuran rebel groups in April 2004, the AU accepted the task of monitoring its observance and dispatched observers and a small troop contingent of around 300 men to protect them – sometimes referred to as AMIS-1. By October of the same year, however, this had to be expanded into a fully-fledged peacekeeping mission, AMIS-2, first mandated to number around 3,000 troops, but subsequently expanded (as of January 2007) to 596 military observers, 5,210 troops and 1,425 police officers.

Whereas the peacekeepers were unable to stop all the killings or the forced displacement of civilians, the AU probably did as well as anybody else would have done under almost impossible conditions and with a casualty toll of almost sixty troops killed. The operation was hampered by the fact that the AU was pressured to undertake it before its security architecture was in place. Hence, the deployment took place outside institutions that were still under construction, the troops being provided by willing states. The operation experienced mission creep, a lack of capacity, and a serious discrepancy between its mandate and the means available to it. South Africa was the only participant to provide its own military equipment, while the other troop contributors depended on equipment provided and financed by international donors. Moreover, AMIS never reached its planned 8,000 troop strength because the AU found it difficult to get its members to provide the troops. Part of the problem was, and still is, that

reimbursement to states from UN missions is higher than from equivalent AU missions, making it economically more attractive for states to provide forces to the UN.

Another problem was the very restrictive mandate, which placed rigid constraints on the ability to use force to protect vulnerable groups. By the end of 2007, AMIS had partly been merged with the UN's mission in Sudan, creating an unprecedented hybrid mission, UNAMID (UN-African Union Hybrid Mission in Darfur). As of February 2009 UNAMID included 12,421 troops and 2,510 police officers plus civilian staff, of whom the overwhelming majority were Africans. The African Union: A Common Security Structure in the Making? The fourth AU deployment was to Somalia (African Union Mission to Somalia, AMISOM). It was deployed in 2007 following the Ethiopian invasion of the country and was intended to replace the Ethiopian troops in protecting the Transitional Federal Government (TNG). By the end of 2008, only Uganda and Burundi had deployed troops, and the future of the mission appeared very uncertain. In early 2009 negotiations between the AU and UN were ongoing regarding how to strengthen the operation. The AU expected that the UN would replace the AU mission, but it seemed very unlikely that this was going to happen. AMISOM has to a large extent been affected by the reluctance of AU members to commit the required troops, and the limited size of the operation meant that AMISOM initially had a quite limited capacity to do anything apart from protecting itself, and therefore focused on the protection of selected official buildings and installations in Mogadishu. The fifth AU mission was to the Comoros, where in October 2005 the government requested the AU to monitor the upcoming election, which was eventually held in May 2006. The AU established an AU Mission to Support the Elections in the Comoros (AMISEC) composed of military and civilian officers, predominantly from South Africa. The election resulted in a constitutional crisis, which in March 2008 had escalated to such a disturbing level that the AU launched an offensive operation led by 1,300 troops from Tanzania and Sudan (supported by France and Libya) joined by 400 Comoron forces who were responding to a request from the national government to quell the rebellion. It was the first time the AU took offensive military action in support of the government of a member state. The military side of the operation was a success, but the mission itself was controversial, as some African leaders would have preferred a political solution to the problem. All the examined efforts of the African Union and its attempts to curb political crisis in this age of globalization has had several challenges which a few were overcame and others left in controversy and the rest in failures.

Challenges Facing the AU's Conflict Management

Delay in Intervention

The delay in intervention by the AU and UN has contributed to the metamorphosis of African crisis to complex conflict situations. For example after the break out of the Rwandan conflict in October 1990, it took one year before the OAU deployed the NMOG, and three years for the UN to set up the UNAMIR. In the same way when the Security Council adopted the resolution to deploy UNAMIR II, after the world expressed its indignation at the attitude of the UN in Rwanda, it took more than 3 months to have the first batch of troops on the ground. The delay in decision-making and implementation of the decision are mostly responsible for the escalation of violence. Let us note that the Brahimi Report observed the need for rapid deployment and capability. In line with this the UN introduced several initiatives to enhance rapid deployment and intervention. These include some improvement in its standby Arrangement System, the formation of multinational brigade sized force by member states, the development of on-call list and Strategic Development Stocks as well as programs to assess the readiness of troops pledged to the UN prior to their deployment. However, most of these initiatives are still not developed and are not operational in the African region with the AU. Thus the UN would need to assist the AU and other regional organizations to develop these initiatives.

Weak Structure of AU Mechanism.

The OAU mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (MC PMR) like its previous mechanisms has not improved the organization's capacity in handling conflicts. This in effect has a negative influence on intervention in African societies. Some scholars have argued that a stronger AU would easily influence and lobby the UN to intervene in African conflicts before the situation becomes complex. The apparent lack of capability to manage conflicts by the AU is due to lack of funds and other inherent weaknesses. As Dede, O. observed the OAU now AU mechanism was a victim of caution, compromise and conservatism that have too often become part and parcel of the decision-making process within the AU.

The other weakness is that financially, the AU mechanism has to rely on the UN or donor nations, because very few nations pay their contribution to the peace fund. This critical area of funding would need to be revisited by AU member states in view of the current trend of regionalization of Peace Keeping Operations (PKO). Furthermore, the UN would need to consider increased

funding to the AU organization in order to empower the AU's conflict resolution mechanism which will ultimately enhance the maintenance of international security order. The truth is, in the era of globalization which we live in, any conflict prone or ridden society in one part of the world would affect the peace of those living in other parts of the world since the shift into globalization. For Instance, the recent Japanese tsunami though a natural disaster, yet it has to a large extent affected the entire world especially those that have relations be it social, cultural, political, diplomatic, economic etc. with Japan. Thus the UN and the AU would need to cooperate in the area of funding for conflict resolution and peacekeeping efforts in Africa, to enhance the peaceful environment of not only the African continent, but the entire world.

The Poor Attitude from the West.

This is perhaps another core area of this study as it sees the attitude of the west to African conflict as complete politics of interest i.e. the west only show concern to African conflicts in societies with gains. So many evidences have proven this selfish, inhuman and business-like interventionist exercise of the West towards African conflicts. Drawing examples from historical evidences and recent ones, It is clear that western attitude to African conflicts has diminished to a very large extent since the Rwandan genocide. It is recorded that it took the west about four years to show intervene in Rwanda while so many people were being annihilated by genocide in Rwanda. We may want to ask why? This work supposes that the lukewarm attitude was because there was no business to do in Rwanda there were no raw materials as gains of war. To support this opinion, the recent ongoing Libyan political unrest divulged how swiftly the west (British Government, NATO, and the US government) intervened because indulging in that business seems very lucrative due to the oil resources in Libya. President Obama of the US in a speech during the Egyptian crisis declared that 'the future of any state lies in the hands of the citizens to decide'. Yes this is of course true, but looking at the age where we live (Globalization), the Egyptian conflicts affected the whole world by socio-cultural economic, political and diplomatic relations it shares with the rest of the world, and therefore, this statement was a very well-articulated diplomatic statement with selfish notions. During that crisis, diplomatic relations of all countries in Egypt were temporally cut, Trade relations and tourism, political and economic relations all seized due to the level of interconnectedness that joins states together in this period of globalization. One may want to ask why this lukewarm attitude since after the Rwandan crisis?

The shock provoked by the images of western bodies dragged on the streets of Mogadishu badly affected the perception of the western public in the involvement of their troops in peacekeeping operation in Africa. Consequently the west is reluctant to be involved in the continent as confirmed by former US Secretary of Defence William Cohen, who declared that no American soldier will be involved in peacekeeping operations in Africa. Some Western countries have also towed this line unofficially as they limit their involvement to PKO in Africa to the provision of funds while some provide medical and logistic support. This contradicts the great western interest and presence in the conflict in the former Yugoslavia.

Therefore, since globalization in its original sense denotes the integration of virtually everything for instance African raw materials and the technology of the west, this interaction should not be limited to only the period of peace, but also inclusive in the period of crisis with the full attention of the west both making provision for financial and human resources. The western world would have to abandon their recent indifferent spirit and treat the mission in Africa like those in Europe in order to achieve the desired result.

Credible Public Information Capability

In some parts of the developing world today, illiteracy rate is high. Therefore, in conflict areas where the dominant population is illiterate and rumor mongering is rife, opposing factions usually exploit this situation and tend to wage campaigns of misinformation in order to perpetrate strife and violence, or to cause fear and panic among the civil population. In the conflict in Rwanda for example, the Hutu-dominated government was reported to have peddled rumors and so widely misinformed the civil communities that mass exodus of refugees to neighboring countries ensured. The challenge of the AU is that of building a credible public information capability so that in such circumstances peacekeeping forces could quickly neutralize any adverse effects. AU Peace keeping missions need to be proactive and develop effective public information systems which could regularly broadcast to the local people and inform them of what is going on.

How can the AU Effectively Manage Conflicts in Africa without Violating the Principles OF State's Sovereignty and Non Interference?

This is perhaps the most pertinent part of this study as it addresses the lacunas that have not been tackled by scholars in available literatures. It is germane to state that the principle of non-interference of state's sovereignty has been the Achilles Hills that propels the lukewarm attitude of the AU in most of the crisis bedeviling the African states. The principle of non-interference implies that States have the jurisdictional right to maintain law and order within its territory without the interference of other states or organization. As we would note, this possess a big problem to the organizations such as the UN and AU who now can be compared to a David in front of a Goliath having the theoretical adumbration of to box out of the wring, the forces of conflicts in the continent, but not having the right sharp stones and revitalizing energy to hit the forehead of Goliath (conflicts) to break the camel's back.

It is equally germane to state that International organizations such as the UN, EU, AU have come to understand this problem, and attempts have been made to readjust the principle though not well spelt out, but the concept of 'The Responsibility to Protect has come to reduce the power of state's sovereignty. The study therefore, proposes this concept as the most pertinent measure that would to a reasonable extent diminish the power of States Sovereignty since it cannot be absolute and open doors for AU quick intervention in crisis perceived states. It is pertinent therefore, to clearly state and explain this concept in detail.

The Responsibility to Protect

The phenomenon of 'Responsibility to Protect' states that Sovereign States have the obligation to protect their citizens during crisis situations such as war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity, but however, if they fail to satisfy the conscience of the International Community with regards to this obligation, then International political organizations such as the UN, AU, EU etc. now has the moral duty to intervene in such a situation. This phenomenon has already been adopted by some of these International organizations such as the UN, and EU but it is still underdeveloped within some other organizations like the AU in view of some short comings encountered by the organization in some situation that would be sited down. 5

The question may be asked what is the best way to develop 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P) norms in Africa? Collaborative ventures between the African Union (AU) at the continental level,

the regional economic communities (RECs) at the sub-regional level and the UN at the global level are the best options for deepening R2P norms. The AU's attempt to solve the continent's problems will continue to be thwarted by its lack of political will and the weakening of its norms and principles by some member states.

Since its birth in 2000, the AU has been taking steps to do things differently from its predecessor, the Organization of African Unity (OAU). It has established a set of norms and principles that mirror the tenets of the 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P) concept as agreed by the Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit. These norms and principles coupled with the AU's peace and security architecture make it proactive in conflict prevention and the management of crisis situations on the continent. The world is experiencing a unique moment of opportunity in the relations between the UN and (sub) regional organizations broadly and the AU specifically.

- The inclusion of Article 4(h) in the AU Constitutive Act gives the clearest indication that the organization is prepared to protect the population of Africa against war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity.
- The AU security architecture is a further demonstration of the organization's commitment to create solid institutional backing to the Constitutive Act.
- The Continental Early Warning Systems and the African Standby Force are among the institutions or organs that will enhance the AU's capacity to prevent conflict and deal with humanitarian crises on its own, or with minimal support. It is now clear that Sovereignty of states cannot be absolute hence; this study proposes the 'Responsibility to Protect' as the nail that will penetrate the hardwood of state's sovereignty in order for the AU to effectively manage conflicts in Africa.

Has any African Organization Made any Impact in Conflict Management?

The stress on conflict management is a reflection of a major weakness in the AU's approach to peace and security in Africa. A more proactive approach would focus on conflict prevention rather than conflict management. The latter is more expensive to manage, but has less guarantee of positive outcome(s). On the other hand, conflict prevention, while much less costly (in terms of both resources and loss of lives and livelihood, necessarily requires vigilance, constant monitoring and, above all, in-depth understanding of the dynamics of conflict (including identifying potential conflict spots and preventing the possibility of relapse into conflict after an

initial settlement. Several of these functions are better performed by Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). CSOs can thus assist in redressing the balance between conflict prevention and management in the activities of the AU. These gaps could easily be filled if the AU were to utilize more fully the resources available to it through CSOs (in both Africa and the diaspora) active in the area of peace and security.

Civil Society, Peace and Security in Africa

Civil society involvement in peace and security in Africa currently occurs at two levels:

(a) Conceptual and analytical work: A number of African CSOs are active in analysis, research, publication and advocacy, in the process contributing substantially to conceptualization and design of new security architecture for Africa. Analyses of conflict issuing from such indigenous sources have tended to have a different thrust from those of foreign scholars and think-tanks. Several of these think-tanks have also made positive and practical contributions to policy development at both the regional and sub-regional levels, through active collaboration with the AU (and OAU before it) and other sub-regional bodies. The formulation of the Common African Defense and Security Policy (CADSP), policy on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), Early Warning System and terrorism among others were executed with the active support of a number of African CSOs. Security sector reform (SSR) is emerging as a key focus of peace building and good public expenditure management. Several African CSOs and think-tanks are building considerable capacity in this area. Such think tanks can be mobilized to conduct research for, and on behalf of the AU in current and potential conflict zones. As important, they can help to disseminate the work of the AU among key constituencies through their publications and other outreach activities.

(b) Practical peace building activists: a number of African civil society organizations, in particular grassroots organizations, continue to play various important roles in promoting peace. In Angola (and Mozambique even earlier), churches spearheaded calls for peace and national reconciliation, and helped to create the bridges upon which peace was eventually constructed. In Sudan, civil society groups have spearheaded some of the most significant advances towards peace, in particular at the local level. In Sierra Leone CSOs have also been important in the peace process and the formulation of the country's security sector policies. One can also cite the

role of CSOs in the negotiations leading to the transitional government in the DRC, as well as in the peace negotiations in Somalia. The role of women's groups in conflict mediation in South Africa, Somalia, Mozambique and the Mano River Union (where the Mano River Women's Network has played a pivotal role in spearheading peace efforts) deserves particular mention. CSOs have also played more diffuse roles in peace education, curriculum development, early warning, delivery of relief, and disarmament activities.

What is the Future of Conflict Management in Africa?

Ever since the founding of the AU, let alone its predecessor, there has been a wide gap between the solemn declarations of intent and actual activities and achievements. For instance, given that Africa remains the most conflict-ridden region of the world and that quite a few African governments have little control over their own territory, it strikes many observers as quite bizarre to contemplate and negotiate anything like a government for all of Africa. There seems to be a divide among African governments between 'realists' and 'idealists', quite similar to the divide between the Monrovia and the Casablanca groups at the founding of the OAU. Many of the actual disagreements are being concealed by the typical consensus agreements adopted by AU summit meetings. One possible reading is that the realists such as South Africa accept what they regard as utopian but harmless suggestions, in return for which they obtain the approval of the A for gradualist and pragmatic schemes such as NEPAD, while the idealists such as Libya accept the gradualist schemes only if they are packaged as contributions to, and steps towards, the higher goals. Some would argue that it is preferable to have very ambitious goals, manifested in detailed plans and an elaborate institutional structure, even though the available resources do not allow for all the institutions and offices to be properly staffed and equipped, thus enabling them actually to implement their mandates.

Having the 'blueprint' available may allow the blanks to be gradually filled in as resources become available. Others disagree with such a strategy, which almost inevitably leads to under-achievement, and would prefer the formulation of less ambitious, but actually achievable goals. Especially, severe problems may appear with regard to the envisaged role of the RECs within the overall African Security Architecture. While it seems entirely realistic that ECOWAS will be able to meet the demands placed on it in West Africa – assuming that Nigeria remains reasonably stable – it is less likely that the other RECs will be up to the task. Depending

on South Africa's continued willingness to take the lead and shoulder the main burden, SADC may be able to meet the demands placed on it, but whether the other members of the organization will accept South African leadership (or even hegemony) will depend, to a large extent, on how the Zimbabwean crisis unfolds. It seems more unlikely that IGAD will be able to meet the security challenges in East Africa or the 'Greater Horn of Africa', both because the crises in Somalia and Sudan are very demanding, and because of the lack of any state that could serve as a leader, let alone be accepted as such. In both Central and North Africa, the sub-regional organizations or RECs (ECCAS and the AMU, respectively) are obviously completely incapable of playing any significant role in the foreseeable future, which has resulted in the security structures being created outside the existing regional economic communities. What proves to be realistic in the future will depend to a large extent on the continued willingness of the rest of the world (e.g. the G8, the EU and the UN) to contribute financially and otherwise to AU initiatives and activities. It seems likely that they will continue funding AU peacekeeping missions such as those in Darfur and Somalia, as this is much cheaper than comparable UN missions and does not morally oblige countries from the West to contribute troops. Continued funding may, however, assume that the AU does not conspicuously fail with such missions as they are almost bound to do in Somalia – and, even more importantly, that the organization is not perceived by the West as supporting the 'wrong' side. For instance, the widespread opposition to the indictment by the International Criminal Court of the Sudanese president, Omar al-Bashir, is likely to make Europe somewhat less eager to support the AU.

Effective Ways to Resolve African Conflicts in the Present Globalized World?

It is pertinent to state that the benefits of globalization cannot be extracted in a conflict ridden environment. Globalization requires stability to work, and therefore African states would have to work hard to ensure a stable environment in order to maximize the gains of globalization. To achieve this, it is germane to state therefore, that the issue of good governance should rest at the core of the African Union. It is the lack of good governance or bad leadership that facilitates most of the conflicts that exist in Africa such as the recent Cote d'Ivoire crisis, Egyptian revolution, Tunisia and Libyan revolts. This study therefore suggests at the continental level, the NEPAD's African Peer Review Mechanism as a tool of conflict management in Africa in the following ways:

All members of the African Union should be compelled to be members of NEPAD. NEPAD should not be a voluntary exercise. It is a notorious fact that dictators always shun becoming voluntary members of any institution where the observance of basic and fundamental human rights is strictly enforced and monitored. Put bluntly, dictators thrive in an environment that is not transparent and also in an environment that does not have any serious punitive measures against public officials who abuse basic human rights. The crucial tool of NEPAD is the African Peer Review Mechanism. This tool should make African leaders commit themselves to behave responsibly when it comes to the observance of democratic values, sustainable economic management and conflict resolution. This study strongly advocates that NEPAD should make it compulsory for other African countries to interfere in undemocratic political systems.

Of course, dictators will always raise the argument of National Sovereignty. The view of this work is that national sovereignty is not and cannot be absolute. There are basic standards and norms of good governance to which every member of both the African Union and NEPAD should be made to adhere. Hence, the NEPAD should be made an integral part of the African Union. If a country is a member of the African Union, it should also become automatically a member of NEPAD and thus; submit itself to the African Peer Review Mechanism. Anything short of this will make NEPAD a complete white elephant. This procedure will help to intensively and extensively curb the problems associated with leadership and political crisis in Africa.

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