



LECTURE SERIES ON AFRICAN SECURITY

2008:3

The African Union's Peace and Security Architecture: Defining an emerging response mechanism

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Introduction:

There is no doubt that since the transformation of the Organisation of Africa Unity (OAU) into the African Union (AU), this new institution is demonstrating an encouraging pro-activeness in terms of its preparedness to tackle the continent's peace and security challenges, and generally contributing to issues relating to the attainment of international peace and security. This has resulted in the establishment of new institutional frameworks. This is best exemplified by the increasing number of resolutions and presidential statements adopted by the UN Security Council (UNSC) and the frequency and regularity of matters considered by the African Union's Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) that are subsequently referred to the UNSC. These frequent communications between these two bodies, the mentioning and discussion of Africa-specific security matters and the deference of Africa-related security issues by the UNSC to the AUPSC signals not only a deepening recognition of the role that regional organizations and especially the African

The *Lecture Series on African Security* is a joint collaboration between the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI) and the Nordic Africa Institute (NAI). The first round of lectures was conducted in 2008. The lectures revolve around core themes in African security studies and case studies from contemporary Africa, and they are presented by highly renowned international and national experts on Africa. While the primary audience is the analysts and researchers at FOI and NAI, a select number of participants are also invited from the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), the Ministries for Foreign Affairs and Defence, the Swedish Rescue Services Agency (MSB), the Swedish Armed Forces (SwAF), the National Defence College (FHS), and the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA).

Union can play, but also its growing influence and potential role in contributing to the attainment of international peace and security¹.

But the AU's most promising achievements are usually attained when together with the UN, both engage in collaborative ventures that have interesting perspectives and yield fruitful outcomes. While these are encouraging, one must, however, accept that there are still serious challenges and bottlenecks in designing an effective peace and security architecture that can respond rapidly to the multiple security challenges faced by Africa. Although this paper is not about the AU's partnership arrangements, it is important that in the discussion one fully explores the multiple interfaces where such collaborative ventures best complement each other.

This paper explores the deepening efficacy of the AU especially in matters relating to peace and security and in that respect focuses especially on its peace and security architecture. Also of note is its broader relationship to the international mechanisms for attaining peace and stability. Furthermore, it also explores how the UN can contribute to improving its partnership with the AU and offers a tentative explanatory framework for some of the difficulties that bedevil this relationship. In this paper, I argue that collaborative ventures between the African Union (at the regional level), the regional economic communities (RECs) at the (sub-regional level) and the UN (at the global level) are the best options for resolving some of the continent's most challenging human security dilemmas. The world is experiencing a unique moment of opportunity in the relations between the United Nations and (sub)regional organizations broadly and the AU specifically. In my view, it is also imperative that (sub)regional organizations in areas of proximity to conflicts should be empowered and supported to take necessary actions to restore peace and security. However, in defining how such cooperative and collaborative relationships should be established, it is imperative that regional organizations broadly and, the African Union especially should not be viewed in isolation: namely that its supporting mechanisms and infrastructure of the RECs all have roles to play in attaining overall global security.

Towards the African Union's peace and security architecture

In this section, I describe how the African Union has established institutional mechanisms to support its role in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts, particularly through the establishment of its Peace and Security Council (PSC) in March 2004. This is the most critical institutional component of the African Union's peace and security architecture. More importantly is that the AU's new security regime is premised on several norms which are both old (based on the Charter of the OAU) and new ones emanating from the Constitutive Act. These

¹ A/47/277-S/24111, para. 64

core norms, which I argue form the central planks of the AU's security regime, are:

- Sovereign equality of member states (Article 4a)
- Non-intervention by member states (Article 4g)
- African solutions to African problems
- *Uti possidetis* (Article 4b)
- Non-use of force/peaceful settlement of disputes (Articles 4e, 4f, 4i)
- Condemnation of unconstitutional changes of government (Article 4p)
- The AU's right to intervene in a member state in grave circumstances (Article 4h)

A combination of these values and norms plus the institutional mechanisms has given the AU an institutional vibrancy that creates opportunities for proactive responses to some of the continent's security challenges.

A core document that defines the principles and objectives of the AU's security policy is the Constitutive Act of July 2002. In its preamble, it states that member states are:

Conscious of the fact that the scourge of conflicts in Africa constitutes a major impediment to the socio-economic development of the continent, and [recognises] the need to promote peace, security and stability as a prerequisite for the implementation of our development and integration agenda.

Prior to the adoption of the Constitutive Act, several processes had been initiated towards establishing a collective African security regime. There was the establishment of a Peace and Security Council in July 2002 as a standing decision-making organ of the Union. Subsequently, the Protocol establishing the PSC became effective in December 2003 after the required ratification by 27 member states.

The PSC, which comprises 15 member states of the AU, is 'a collective security and early-warning arrangement to facilitate timely and efficient response to conflict and crisis situations in Africa'². Furthermore, the PSC is the single most powerful institution within the peace architecture of the AU. In consultation with the Chairperson of the AU, the PSC can:

- Undertake peacemaking and peacebuilding functions to resolve conflicts where they have occurred;

² Aning, Emmanuel Kwesi, 'The UN and the African Union's Security Architecture: defining an emerging relationship?' *Critical Currents*, N° 5, October 2008, pp 9-25. Also see, Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, www.africa-union.org.

- Authorise the mounting and deployment of peace support missions;
- Recommend to the Assembly of Heads of State and Government intervention within a member state in respect of severe circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity;
- Institute sanctions whenever an unconstitutional change of government takes place in a member state;
- Implement the common defence policy of the AU;
- Follow-up the progress towards the promotion of democratic practices, good governance, the rule of law, protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect of the sanctity of human life and international humanitarian law by member states, and
- Support and facilitate humanitarian action in situations of armed conflicts or major natural disasters.³

As part of the broader framework for establishing security architecture, the PSC is supported by a host of institutional arrangements, including:

- The **Commission of the African Union** through the Chairperson and the Commissioner for Peace and Security and the Directorate for Peace and Security. This Department, in terms of Africa's peace and security issues is the most critical. The core divisions are: (a) Conflict Management, (b) Peace Support Operations, (c) Defence and Security, (d) Darfur Integrated Task Force (DITF), and (e) the Secretariat to the Peace and Security Council;
- A 5-member **Panel of the Wise** consisting of 'highly respected African personalities' selected on the basis of regional representation and appointed for three years to serve as a proactive conflict prevention team;
- The **Continental Early Warning System (CEWS)** is to 'facilitate the anticipation and prevention of conflicts' on the continent. It is made up of a Situation Room at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and linked into the early warning mechanisms of the five regional economic communities (RECs), namely the Economic Community of West African States, (ECOWAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) (which has established its own conflict early warning and response mechanism – CEWARN – which primarily focuses on small scale pastoral conflicts); the Southern African Development Community (SADC).
- An **African Standby Force (ASF)** made up of five regional brigades. The ASF has the technical support and backing of a Military Staff Committee (MSC) whose role is to provide technical suggestions and solutions to issues relating to military issues and to pro-

³ Art. 3 of the Protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.

vide their expert opinions to the PSC before military decisions are made; and

- A Special Peace Fund

Due to this recognition of the challenges posed to the attainment of the integration agenda by conflicts, there was the recognition of the need for the establishment of a common defence and security policy for the continent.⁴ Towards this end, at a meeting of Heads of State and Government in Sirte, Libya in February 2004 the Solemn Declaration on the Common African Defence and Security Policy (CADSP) was adopted. The fundamental philosophical idea underlying this document was that of human security.⁵ It went further to identify twenty three different categories of threats to Africa. Furthermore it stated the objectives and goals of the policy, the principles and values underlying this policy and according to Golaszinski 'provides a framework for a regular review and close monitoring of the implementation of all instruments relevant to Africa's efforts to promote peace and security'.⁶

From rhetoric to reality: normative commitments and political issues

While regional economic communities (RECs), which are the building blocks upon which the AU is established, civil society groups and other organizations are working hard to stymie conflicts, the AU as the principal regional organization has undergone a normative shift from its earlier position under the OAU by positing that non-interference does not mean indifference.⁷ On this basis, the AU has moved towards a more preventive, principled and coercive role. The complexity of challenges faced by the African continent has contributed to the 'novel idea that,

The notion of non-interference must be revised because it must be *never* associated with *indifference*. And this non-indifference must lead to *coercive measures*, to well-adapted and active policies.⁸

In whatever sense one examines this statement, this is a radical departure from the nature of traditional African international relations since 1963. It is important to appreciate the context within which the African Union is developing such specific 'principles' and norms to guide community action. What can be deduced is that by emphasizing issues of security (among a panoply of other issue-areas), the African Union is developing into a regime with specific *rules*, *norms* and *principles* as enunciated in Article 4 of the Protocol relating to the establishment of the PSC. Its functions are spelt out in Article 6 and the powers of execu-

⁴ See Constitutive Act, Articles 3 (a) to (h) and 4 (d).

⁵ Aning, Emmanuel Kwesi, Op. Cit.

⁶ Golaszinski, Ulrich. 2004. 'Africa's evolving security architecture', mimeo, October

⁷ Alpha Oumar Konare, "Security is the African Union's priority," *African Geopolitics*, No. 13, winter 2004.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 2, emphasis added.

tion in Article 7. The collective impact of these institutional mechanisms is to give operational expression to the 'new culture of peace'.

Rules in this sense '...relate to the written rules and guidelines within the specific issue area that the signatory states essentially have voluntarily accepted to uphold'. Furthermore, and in the same vein, 'principles are the results of the development of a common understanding and collective interpretation of reality of individual incidents ... that affect member states'.⁹ To that end, several questions arise of which they will need to be disaggregated and examined. First, what explains this radical shift in approach and methodology? Secondly, what is the level of bindingness; understood as the level of political willingness of structural commitments that member states have made to employ such coercive measures? What role, if any, have epistemic communities played in bringing about this critical change in policy? Finally, what set of occurrences will elicit such responses which demonstrate the characterization of the African Union as 'exist[ing] and keep[ing] its promises of rebirth'¹⁰ which are issues of security, defence and economic development?

It is important to understand the normative framework within which the AU's peace and security regime is situated. A series of incidents are identified as potentially warranting coercive measures. These are:

- cases where there has been constitutional illegalities or changes of government;¹¹
- The demarcation of boundaries;
- Genocide, gross human rights abuses; and
- The issue of the fairness of elections.¹²

In the Constitutive Act, the AU has 'the right to intervene in a Member State pursuant to decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances: namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity'¹³ These principles were given further acceptance with the adoption of the 'Ezulwini Consensus', which is presented by the AU as Africa's en-

⁹ For further exposition, see Aning, K. 1998 *Security in the West African Sub-region: An Analysis of ECOWAS's Policies in Liberia*. (Copenhagen: Reprocentre) pp. 48ff

¹⁰ *ibid*, p. 1

¹¹ See Decisions AHG/Dec.141 (XXXV) and AHG/Dec.142 (XXXV) on Unconstitutional Changes of Government adopted by the 35 Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU held in Algiers, Algeria from 12 – 14 July 1999, and Declaration AHG/Decl.5 (XXXVI) on the Framework for an OAU Response to Unconstitutional Changes of Government, adopted by the 36 Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU, held in Lome, Togo from 10 to 12 July 2000

¹² Konare, *op cit*, p.3

¹³ See also Article 23 (2) of the Constitutive Act. A further addition to Article 4(h) gives the AU the right of intervention in cases where 'a serious threat to legitimate order to restore peace and stability in the Member State of the Union upon the recommendation of the Peace and Security Council'

dorsement and incorporation of the responsibility to protect principle.¹⁴

The foregoing, therefore, is the extent to which the idea of non-intervention but responsiveness should be seen. Although the concept, as has been enunciated, will be challenging in praxis, it is not impossible to implement. However, what is critical in this discussion is the political will to apply coercive measures when it becomes imperative. Not only that, there might arise a situation where there is the need to disaggregate the type of coercive measures that are anticipated in terms of state size. Although this issue has not yet arisen, it is critical that there is thinking about how best to respond to any challenge that arises from having to respond coercively to a large state.

Although the concept, as has been enunciated, will be challenging to implement, it is not impossible. However, what is critical in this discussion is the political will to apply coercive measures when this becomes imperative. Situations may also arise where there is a need to disaggregate the type of coercive measures that are anticipated in terms of state size, influence and power. Although this issue has not yet arisen, it is critical that there be advanced thinking about how best to respond coercively to a large powerful state.

From theory to praxis: Togo, Mauritania and Darfur

However, since 2004 these norms, values and principles have been unevenly applied to states that have fallen foul of them. In the case of *Togo* for example, it took the combined leadership of ECOWAS and the AU to bring about a reversal of the palace *coup d'état* that took place after the death of the President in February 2005. In *Mauritania*, the blanket application of sanctions after the *coup d'état* did not bring the desired change and a reversal of the military take-over, despite the suspension of its membership by the AU and broader international efforts to encourage a return to democratic government. *Darfur* presents a particularly tough and unique challenge about how such developing norms and principles should be applied. Here, it is obvious that both the AU and the wider international community have so far failed to change Sudan's behaviour.

This is the framework within which the AU seeks to deepen its partnership with the UN, particularly in peace and security issues. The AU recognises that its peace and security actions on the continent will be effective if it cooperates with the UN. To that end, the African Union, at its Summit meeting held on 22-30 January 2007 entreated the UN to examine within the context of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, the possibility of funding, through assessed contributions, peacekeeping

¹⁴ Although Articles 4 (h) and (j) exist, there are as yet no specific operational mechanisms for guiding decision-making apart from the ones taken by the PSC.

operations undertaken by the African Union or under its authority and with the consent of the UN.

The AU and the UN: an emerging partnership?

Can one say that there is an emerging relationship between the AU and the UN? There is no doubt that in the last decade, there has been a growing recognition by the UNSC on the need to cooperate more closely with regional organizations, particularly the AU under Chapter 8 of the Charter. For example in 1989, there were no references in Security Council resolutions to regional organizations, and in 1990, there was only one such reference. From 1991 however, references to regional organizations' engagement in conflict became common. The period between 1989 and 1992 saw resolutions expressly recalling Chapter VIII of the UN Charter; conveying appreciation of regional efforts aimed at the settlement of a conflict; supporting cooperation between the UN and regional organizations; or endorsing regional efforts.¹⁵ While most of the references concerned attempts at peaceful settlement of disputes, this period also saw the first authorization by the Security Council of the use of force by a regional organization¹⁶. It is clear that since 1989, and especially after 2004, the Council's practice with respect to approving actions undertaken by regional organizations has increased.

Early initiatives along these lines were welcomed by the General Assembly.¹⁷ As a follow-up to GA Res 48/42, in 1994 there was a Declaration of the General Assembly that regional organizations in peace and security should be encouraged and where appropriate, supported by the Security Council.¹⁸ In spite of what can be seen as a significant effort to collaborate with other organizations, such cooperation does not come easily to the UN which is structured and funded to focus on its own operations rather than those led by other groups even when such missions are authorized or supported by the Security Council.

In seeking to improve the cooperation and coordination between the UN and regional organizations especially the African Union, there are several issues that should be resolved concerning how to interpret Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. Part of this deals with the discussion of the role of regional organisations broadly, but the AU specifically in international peace and security. But more importantly, it is also about the *type, nature and division of responsibilities*. There is no doubt that any endeavour to resolve and understand the nature of the relationship between the United Nations and the African Union under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter will need to come to terms with some of the definitional and conceptual issues inherent in any such a relationship and partnership. This is critical because it is becoming obvious that while both the

¹⁵ S/25184

¹⁶ S/25567; S/PV.3191

¹⁷ General Assembly resolution 48/42, para. 63

¹⁸ General Assembly resolution 49/57, annex, para. 5

UN and the African Union talk about *partnership(s)*, there is a fundamental misconception, misunderstanding and misperception of what such partnerships entail, and what should be the guiding principles of this relationship.

Over the years, there has been a deepening of the relationships and interfaces between the UN and regional organizations generally in the areas of international peace and security. And there is no single organization in which this deepening relationship is more practically demonstrated than with the African Union. Responding to, and collaborating with the AU on different forms of crises demonstrated beyond doubt to us that when collaboration between the UN and regional organizations is implemented correctly, it goes a long way to bring about success as exemplified in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Burundi. Understanding and appreciating how such partnerships should be couched is primary to determining the outlines of this relationship.

Division of Responsibilities

There is no doubt that the best way to prevent conflicts is when the United Nations partners with regional organizations in cases where the parameters of such partnerships are well-defined and well-coordinated. Establishing support arrangements for such cooperation and coordination will not be achieved easily. Such a division of labour will not be entirely devoid of political implications. However, the AU's active engagement with peace and security issues on the African continent is also fraught with challenges and difficulties among its member states, but also in terms of its relations with the UN. There are several provisions in both the Constitutive Act and the Protocol establishing the AU PSC that on the surface appear to be contradictory. A cursory glance at the two documents shows a level of uncertainty relating to the issue of the AU PSC's role as the primary organ responsible for peace and security in Africa. Furthermore, nothing in both the Constitutive Act and the Protocol establishing the PSC openly requires the AU to seek prior consent from the UNSC. But there are potential difficulties and conflicts on this point between the two organisations. The AU PSC has arrogated to itself the 'primary responsibility for promoting peace, security and stability in Africa'¹⁹. However, further on in the Protocol, it pledges to 'cooperate and work closely' with the UNSC²⁰. For clarity, the PSC protocol states that:

Where necessary, recourse will be made to the United Nations to provide the necessary financial, logistical, and military support for the African Union's activities in the promotion and maintenance of peace and stability in Africa, in keeping with the provisions of Chapter VIII of the UN charter.²¹

¹⁹ Protocol Establishing the AU Peace and Security Council, see Art 16 (1)

²⁰ *ibid*, Art. 17

²¹ See *ibid* Art. 17 (2)

While the UN Charter stipulates that it can authorize a regional organization to undertake enforcement action under its authority, it also asserts that, 'no enforcement action shall be taken under regional arrangements ... without the authorization of the Security Council'.²² It is clear from the cumulative proactive interventionist language in both the Constitutive Act and the PSC protocol that, while the UN's primacy in maintaining international peace and security is recognised, the AU has also reserved for itself an interventionist role that only reverts to the UN *where necessary*.²³

But herein lies the possible conceptual, legal, political and operational pitfalls of the AU's provisions. To what extent must the UN support the AU when the PSC takes unilateral decisions like authorising its member states to contribute troops to form the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)? While such decisions create difficulties for both organisations, there is no doubt that Africa, for example, has come a long way in defining and refining its peace and security architecture since the end of the Cold War. However, Africa's experiences in the peace and security field, especially its relationship with the UNSC has contributed to undermining the notions that the Security Council is the only organization that does peacekeeping. It is fair to conclude that this assumption is outmoded.

Although these difficulties exist, there are several reasons why the role of regional organizations in peacekeeping should be encouraged and supported. These include their proximity to the crisis, their familiarity with the actors and issues involved in a particular crisis, but more importantly, there is the perception and recognition that a regional organization has an interest in resolving a crisis that has erupted in its background.

Chapter VIII of the UN Charter underlines the roles that regional organizations can play as partners of the UN in maintaining international peace and security. This is the reason why when the African Union undertakes peace and security interventions, it perceives its actions as a contribution to the UN and the general international community and therefore expects to be supported. However, Security Council's responses to decisions made by regional organizations are at best *ad hoc*. There is certainly the need to discuss what exactly the term *partnership* means. It also raises several issues about the nature of such relationships. For example, how far can the UN go to support decisions taken by regional organizations outside the remit of the Security Council. What does the delegation of authority mean?

²² UN Charter Art. 53 (1)

²³ A combination of the Constitutive Act (Articles 4 (h) and (j)) and the PSC protocol articles 4 (j) and (k), Art. 6 (d0, 7 © - (g), Art 16 (10 and 17 (1) and (2) am[ply demonstrate this cumulative desire to initiate intervention schemes

There is an apparent schism in understanding the relationship between the UN and regional organizations when the functions of the UN can be seen as being 'delegated' to regional organizations. There is the need to bridge this apparent gap and define the conditions under which there can be more scope for partnerships in the UN and how it will assume a larger role in operations managed by regional organizations either through co-deployment, co-financing or hybrid forces. Such an approach requires that the UN decides whether it can afford to have *ad hoc* approaches and delegate what it considers as non-core missions to regional organizations.

With the increase in the interfaces and synergies between the UN and regional organizations particularly the African Union, there appears to be recognition that regionalism as a component of multilateralism is desirable, feasible and necessary. There is now the possibility of a global-regional mechanism for maintaining international peace and security. This is based on the recognition of the need for greater involvement by regional agencies in conflict prevention and management in all regions, in cooperation with the United Nations. It is this rise that underpins the vision of a 'mutually-reinforcing regional-global mechanism' for peace and security²⁴. This mechanism can be effective if there is a combination of flexibility with impartiality, and pragmatism with consistency. Such an approach will reduce the endemic uncertainties and occasional tensions between the UN – responsible for international peace and security and regional agencies that are meant to play a supporting role.

However, much as there is a recognition of the potential for and sometimes the reality of greater involvement by regional agencies in conflict prevention and management in all regions, in cooperation with the UN, the real challenge is to replace the improvised, politically-selective, resource-skewed approach to regionalism with a more planned, consistent yet flexible, and resource-balanced style of regional and global governance on the part of the UNSC.

The trend in recent years has been moving away from the exclusive reliance on UN-mandated peace enforcement operations in favour of 'hybrid' operations in which the UN and other international organizations co-operate in various ways over the same mission.

Coordination and consultation mechanisms

Improved partnerships between the UN and regional organizations, by extension assume that there will be coordination and consultation mechanisms between the UN Security Council and Peace and Security organs of other Regional Organizations. In the case of the African Union in particular, the Peace and Security Council (AUPSC), was established as part of a new structure that provides a clear paradigm on security to

²⁴ A/61/204 - S/2006/590

construct a continental security architecture. In terms of coordination and consultation issues, there are close correlations between the objectives of the AUPSC and the UNSC which include the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa, the anticipation and prevention of conflicts and the promotion of peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction. Furthermore, it is established as a standing decision-making organ intended to function as a collective security and early warning arrangement to facilitate timely and efficient response conflict and crisis situations in Africa.

Following the establishment of the AUPSC in March 2004, the Security Council adopted two Presidential statements²⁵, which recognized the importance of strengthening cooperation with the African Union in order to help build its capacity to deal with security challenges. This cooperation has been epitomized in Security Council resolution 1625, expressing support for the establishment of a ten-year capacity building programme for the African Union.

As a result, several practical measures have been undertaken. For example, on 12 November 2006, the Department for Political Affairs received a request from the Commission of the African Union to train staff members of the Secretariat of the Peace and Security Council, on the work of the UN Security Council. To help improve the performance of the AU's PSC secretariat, the Security Council Affairs Bureau organized two training programmes focusing on the working methods of the Security Council and the activities of Security Council Affairs division (SCAD) in its various aspects. It aimed at strengthening the substantive and operational capabilities of the PSC secretariat for an effective functioning of the AU PSC for staff of the AU PSC secretariat visiting the UN Secretariat from 1 – 15 March and 2-13 April respectively. Further to these developments, on 16 November 2006, the Chairperson of the African Union and UN secretary General signed a Declaration on Enhancing UN-AU Cooperation²⁶.

More recently, the UNSC also issued a presidential statement which encouraged increased exchange of information and sharing of experiences, best practices and lessons learned between the Security Council and the AU.²⁷

Challenges

Typically, these early warning systems have not succeeded in the prevention of conflicts in any of the countries concerned. This could be for a variety of reasons. *Firstly*, the regional early warning systems are not yet sufficiently developed to enable the various countries to send reports back to the headquarters; thus the system has received little sup-

²⁵ S/PRST/2004/27 and S/PRST/2004/44

²⁶ A/61/630

²⁷ S/PRST/2007/7

port from the individual member countries. **Secondly**, these early warning systems seem to be more skewed towards detecting potential situations that may have political outcomes, ignoring local and small-scale conflicts, which although they have no immediate impact on the security of the country may have adverse effects on the local communities. The **third** issue is the lack of political will, which is also linked to the political sensitivity of early warning (unearthing things that states would rather keep hidden). Finally, there is the issue of capacity. Across Africa response capacities to early warning signals are at best weak, non-existent or subjected to political tinkering. Both the AU peace and security architecture with its Panel of the Wise (if and when established with clear operating modalities and mandates) and ECOWAS's Council of Elders are expected to visit and admonish states that are deemed to be heading towards some form of problem or crisis. However, the response to this preventive diplomatic framework has been weak either because leaders are unwilling or genuinely unable to respond or because these institutions do not have supporting structures to enable them to work effectively.

Concluding Thoughts

While these developments are encouraging, the opportunities and challenges that this paper identifies remain critical points for ensuring a more functional and effective cooperation and coordination with regional arrangements. Such cooperation and collaboration must be premised on a clear division of labour which recognizes the relative advantage of each organization.

To this end, more work needs to be done on how the United Nations can better support arrangements for further cooperation and coordination with the African Union on Chapter VIII arrangements to contribute to addressing common security challenges and deepen and broaden dialogue and cooperation between the UN Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.

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