

Report of

The Ukumbi Policy Forum on:

***The African Peace and Security Architecture: Progress Made
and Way Forward***

AU-NEPAD Programme, SaferAfrica

Tuesday, 19th July 2005

Sheraton Hotel, Pretoria

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I Introduction

On 19th of July, 2005, Ambassador Said Djinnit, the African Union's Commissioner for Peace and Security addressed SaferAfrica's Ukumbi Partners forum. Entitled *African Peace and Security Architecture: Progress made and way forward*, the forum reviewed progress made in the realisation of the AU Peace and Security Agenda (APSA) in the last 12 months, considered decisions relating to peace and security, emerging out of the AU Summit in Sirte (2005) and discussed the way forward in terms of modalities for achieving the priorities identified for the coming year. In attendance were members of the diplomatic corps and government officials who contributed to a rich discussion session following the Ambassador's presentation.

A new era in Africa's development

The African Union's peace and security agenda is underpinned by the transformation that accompanied the transition from the OAU to the AU. Characterized by a shift from the principle of non-interference to one of non-indifference, this transition was marked by great hopes and expectations for the future of the continent. It was also manifest in the emergence of a crop of leadership that committed itself to finding African solutions to African problems. In other words, Africa is moving beyond words and is taking action. Key in this move is the recognition of the importance of African leadership and ownership as well as the vital role of the support of Africa's development partners in the achievement of peace and security. Initially this shift was viewed with skepticism which has over time been replaced by a growing commitment on the part of partners to support the African agenda. From the initial support to the tune of 250 million euros for the African Peace Support Facility from the EU, other development partners such as the G8, Japan and the USA have come on board. Clearly, there is a realization that this is the time for Africa and while this opportunity should not be lost, it increases the responsibility for all the actors involved.

African Common Defense and Security Policy

There is a realisation that commitment to peace, by itself, is necessary but not sufficient to deliver sustainable peace. What is needed are institutions and structures to guarantee peace. The global umbrella for all efforts to build the peace and security agenda is the African Common Defense and Security Policy (ACDSP). The ACDSP places human security (rather than state security) at the core of the security agenda. The aim of this policy is to secure a peaceful Africa within a peaceful world and to provide for a unified African position with regards to African peace and security.

II AU areas of focus

The work of the AU and its Peace and Security Council is largely focused on two broad areas. One is the defense and security cluster, where two issues take prominence: disarmament and terrorism. As far as disarmament is concerned, Africa has a number of instruments that propound common positions such as the Bamako declaration on small arms and light weapons, signed in 1997, which became instrumental in shaping international declarations against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The

Pelindaba Treaty on nuclear weapons also provides Africa with a common position against nuclear weapons. Recently, the programme to create a nuclear-free Africa has been re-activated. Another element of the disarmament agenda is anti-personnel landmines, which are a scourge in Africa. In 1997, Africa adopted a common declaration against anti-personnel mines, which is being implemented. In the area of terrorism, Africa has led the rest of the world in adopting a common position. In 1992, Africa was already talking about the threat of extremism. Recognising that terrorism poses a serious threat to the stability and security of states and their national institutions as well as to international peace and security, Africa adopted the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in 1999, and called for collective efforts to address terrorism. Africa's long-term approach to addressing terrorism is to understand it from security, legal and human rights perspectives and to consider the effects of marginalization on the growth of terrorist activity. The AU has adopted a plan of action and a centre for the study of terrorism in Algiers, which is fully operational and positioning itself to assist member states domesticate their international commitments.

The second broad area of activity for the AU is the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts. It was under the OAU that the Mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution was established in 1993. Although this was a great improvement on the working mechanisms of the OAU then, it had limited success in dealing with conflicts in Africa conclusively. The AU has drawn critical lessons from that mechanism. For example, because the mechanism of the OAU met in the presence of the parties to conflicts it was inhibited from taking bold decisions. In addition, the mechanism lacked structures to implement decisions.

III Peace and Security Council

Unlike the OAU Mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution that lacked the necessary capacity to act decisively, the Peace and Security Council has a mandate to deal decisively with any peace and security matter. It meets regularly and as a matter of procedure makes decisions without the parties to the conflict in question. The PSC is composed of 15 members, five of which are elected for a three year term (renewable) and ten of which are elected for a two year term (renewable). Countries are required to seek election to the PSC, and will only qualify when they meet criteria that include demonstration of political will and accountability on their part. The selection of members is democratic and places the most committed, not necessarily the wealthiest members, in leadership roles in the PSC. This is a source of strength for this institution. The PSC convenes at any of three levels, the Summit, Ministerial or Ambassadorial levels, depending on the gravity of the situation being addressed. Owing to these characteristics, the PSC has been able to make bold, objective and decisive decisions on conflicts in Somalia, Sudan and Togo, among others.

PSC Organs

The Peace and Security Council relies upon four main organs to make and implement its decisions, viz. the military staff committee, the Panel of the Wise, the Continental Early Warning System and the African Standby Force.

First is the Military Staff Committee (MSC) which acts as a technical advisory committee to the PSC. The MSC is composed of the technical officers from Members that form the PSC and advises on all matters pertaining to peace keeping and deployment. This Committee has advised on the deployment of forces in the Sudan as well as in other countries.

Second is the Panel of the Wise, which is an independent and non-governmental panel of five eminent personalities, including at least two women, whose role is critical to diffusing tensions and dealing with sensitive issues. The panel is mandated to advise the Commission, the PSC or to pronounce itself on any peace and security matter. This Panel is a very good complement to the PSC because it is independent from member states that comprise the PSC and that may work to support each other's interests. Although not yet formed, the groundwork for the creation of Panel of the Wise is finalized. Members of the Panel of the Wise will be selected on the basis of their contribution to peace and security. States will make proposals, on which the Chairman will consult and submit the final list to the AU Assembly for confirmation. The panel will be serviced by the AU secretariat and commission.

The third organ is the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), which is in the process of becoming operational. An early warning situation room, which will be allied to the regional early warning systems as well as certain NGO's and other civil society organs, has been established in Addis Ababa. Regionally, ECOWAS and IGAD have established situation rooms, and SADC is working on one.

The fourth organ is the African Standby Force (ASF) which is the actualization of an African capability for peace support operations. The goal is to establish five regional brigades that make up the African Standby Force by 2010. These brigades will be trained, under 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. The African Union is working closely with the G8 to establish a strategic headquarter planning element in Addis Ababa. Although there are challenges pertaining to the relationships between RECs, and between RECs and the AU, the principle is that together the standby brigades make up AU's ASF. The PSC provides for a Memorandum of Understanding between the AU and RECs to ensure cohesion. Although some countries belong to multiple REC's and are allowed participate in other regional brigades, a country's commitment is to the brigade in its region as defined within the AU structures.

The AU has, together with the RECs, charted a roadmap, which has been endorsed by African development partners, for the establishment of the ASF. It includes the organization of five key workshops, one in each region, to unpack the technical aspects of operationalising the ASF, such as development of doctrine, command and control, interoperability, standard operating procedures etc. These workshops will be co-facilitated with Africa's partners, including the EU's SHIRBRIG and G-8 members.

Operationalisation of the regional brigades has commenced in all the five regions of Africa. In Eastern Africa, the IGAD's Standby Force is almost ready, SADC has

established the necessary institutions for its regional brigade, ECOWAS has made good progress towards its brigade as has the Central African Region. North Africa is scheduled to hold its first meeting co-facilitated by the AU to commence the process.

IV Current crises in Africa

The formation of the Peace and Security architecture of the PSC might have been faster if there had not been ongoing crises that required the AU's attention. Today, for example, there is an impasse in the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea as well as in Western Sahara, where there is no progress toward implementation of the UN plan for self-determination. In Somalia, the peace is fragile. The African Union's position is to support the Somalis, and to seize any opportunity to support progress toward sustainable peace. IGAD has taken the initiative to deploy a peace support operation to Somalia, but this decision is not supported by all partners, some of whom seek greater consensus on issues relating to the UN arms embargo, holding back the deployment. The forthcoming meeting on Somalia between the AU, EU and other partners, scheduled for 28th and 29th July 2005, will provide a forum to try and build a consensus on the way forward.

Although some of the crises on the continent are currently difficult to resolve, a great deal of progress has been made. Sierra Leone is now no longer a crisis. Liberia is moving toward elections in October, as is the DRC. Progress has also been made in Burundi, where elections have gone well. In Cote d'Ivoire, decisions have been taken by the president, which pave the way toward elections. Although all of these situations are fraught with difficulties, these countries are making progress and moving towards democratic elections.

The AU's vision of Africa's future is an optimistic one and is informed by an awareness of the fragility of the various peace processes on the continent. The AU also takes cognisance of the regional character of conflicts and is moving towards regional frameworks and approaches for addressing conflicts. The Great Lakes region is preparing for the second Great Lakes Region conference to map out a regional security pact. This initiative could be replicated in other regions such as the Mano River Union and the Horn of Africa. Cooperation between the RECs, the AU and the UN is guided by the principles of complementarity, comparative advantage and subsidiarity that would enable the best placed actor(s) to engage and/or cooperate as they respond to a crisis situation.

V Post-Conflict Reconstruction

As many countries move beyond conflicts, post-conflict reconstruction will be at the core of the AU's efforts. Realising this, the AU has initiated work towards a framework for post conflict reconstruction and development in Africa. In 2003, in Maputo an AU ministerial conference addressed the AU's capacity for post-conflict reconstruction and created a committee for the post conflict reconstruction of Sudan. Currently, the AU is unpacking the mandate of the PSC for post-conflict reconstruction. This is key, because the stabilization of countries that form the backbone of their regions, such as Angola, the DRC and Sudan, could trigger the development of the entire continent.

Sudan: test case for the AU

Africa's commitment to the Sudan illustrates its ownership of the problems on the continent as well as the commitment of Africa's partners to assist Africa in its efforts. When the PSC was launched on Africa day, 25 May 2004, the conflict in Darfur was at its height and was seen as a test case for the AU. Taking up this challenge, the AU with the support of its partners deployed an initial 60 military observers and a protection force of 300. The AU force has since been augmented to more than 3000, and is set to increase to approximately 8000 troops, by September 2005. The first battalion of the Nigerian forces to bolster the capacity of the mission was deployed on schedule, thanks to the logistical support of partners. In support of the deployment and to keep the pressure on the parties to the conflict, the AU has appointed Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim as its special envoy on peace talks for Darfur. So far, progress has been made with the adoption of the declaration of principles.

VI Looking Forward

At the AU Summit in Sirte, there was a bold decision regarding arrears. It was decided that five countries will pay 15% of the AU budget. These countries were chosen because they have shown the capacity to pay on time. As a result of this decision, the AU is assured to have 75% of its budget and will be better able to address conflicts on the continent.

The first priority of the AU, at this time, is to finalise the peace support operation in the Sudan so that the commitment of Africa is not in doubt and the AU's subscription to the principle of non-indifference is made clear. The AU does, however, have financial and logistical limitations to its peace support capability and is not equipped for a long-term peacekeeping operation, only the UN can do that. Secondly, the AU's responsibilities in the upcoming months are to Somalia and DRC. In Somalia, the AU has taken the decision to deploy a peace support operation once certain conditions are in place. The AU has also decided to undertake a peace intervention mission in the DRC, to disarm the Interahamwe/ex-FAR. As all other approaches to bring the parties to the table didn't work, there is now agreement that forceful disarmament is the only way out. It is a difficult and sensitive job, and there is a need for countries to commit troops.

While the launch of the mission to Sudan (AMIS) was challenging due to a lack of staff, experience and structures of implementation, the mission has provided the AU with a chance to build its capacity, with the support of the EU and other partners. In addition, with more resources, the AU will implement the roadmap of the ASF, which will enable significant progress by 2006. The Planning element is already established in Addis. In addition, by the end of 2006, there should be significant progress in the implementation of Continental Early Warning System and the Panel of the Wise. There will also be progress on the disarmament and terrorism agendas, including preparations for a model to combat terrorism and a training curriculum for magistrates.

Zimbabwe

With regard to Zimbabwe, the responsibility of the AU is to stand by its principles of good governance and to remind African countries of values such as power-sharing and alternation of power. This however, has to be balanced by an awareness of the issues facing Zimbabwe that do not directly relate to poor governance, such as land redistribution, and to ensure that these issues are understood by the international community. The AU's role is therefore to bring to the world the legitimate concerns of Africa, including poverty, debt, agricultural subsidies and HIV/AIDS, as well as to bring to the continent the legitimate concerns of the larger international community. The AU's immediate focus is on peace and security but as its capacity increases and its institutions evolve it will be in a position to deal with the issues of governance, such as those in Zimbabwe.

UN reform

In Sirte, the AU Summit deliberated on and made proposals on the way forward regarding the proposed changes to the UN System and the UN Security Council (UNSC) in particular. The AU supports the UN reform agenda (not just UN Security Council but all of the UN) because its Members believe in the UN and want it to be made relevant. However, the AU's position is that the UN structures need to be representative, so it can assume its role of having primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security. If the UN is not representative, continental bodies, such as the AU will assume that responsibility and will undermine the UN. In terms of its proposal, the AU has called for two permanent seats with all of the rights, including veto, on the UN Security Council, and five non permanent seats. The summit also created a 15 member ministerial task force and mandated it to present and negotiate for the African position with other regions and table a draft resolution on this position that will be submitted to the UN general assembly in September 2005.

For any information concerning SaferAfrica's Ukumbi Policy Forums or material relating to the African Peace and Security Agenda, contact either Kate Roseboom at kate@saferfrica.org or Brittany Kesselman at brittany@saferfrica.org