

Background Information Paper

Expert Group Meeting on “Bridging the peace and development nexus, the role and capacities of African regional and subregional organizations”¹

The Expert Group Meeting rationale

Peace, security and development are interlinked. Good governance, conflict resolution, political freedom and economic and social progress are mutually reinforcing efforts. The United Nations and its partners need to address the twin imperatives for security and development in Africa in a comprehensive manner, especially in a continent where strengthening governance and reducing poverty are priorities as pressing for most governments and their citizens as reducing conflict. Conflict prevention, resolution and management efforts need to address the root causes of armed conflict and political and social crises in an all-inclusive approach, including by promoting sustainable development, post conflict peace building, poverty eradication, good governance and the rule of law.

The rapidly changing and increasingly interlinked peace and security environment in Africa calls for effective and mutually reinforcing global, regional, and subregional partnerships that are flexible and responsive to the complex realities on the ground. African subregional organizations are often better placed than global bodies to successfully undertake conflict prevention, mediation and resolution activities and to face non-traditional security threats in their areas.

With the capacity shortcomings and vulnerabilities in many African countries and organizations, nearly every part of the UN system has an important role to play in promoting, supporting and strengthening the continent’s preparedness to address the causes of conflict, prevent and resolve violent conflict and promote sustainable peace and development. A coordinated, strategic, and sustained engagement by different parts of the UN system as well as the international community with States, the African Union, Regional Economic Communities and other subregional bodies is therefore critical.

To date, the United Nations support to the African Union, and the AU itself have so far devoted much of their attention and resources towards implementing the peace and security side of the AU’s mandate, largely in trying to contribute to resolving the military and political conflicts on the continent. It is however equally important to focus on the social and economic development pillar of the Union’s mandate, which includes reinforcing and promoting more cooperation among AU institutions (the Pan African parliament, NEPAD, the Economic, Social and

¹ For the purpose of the paper, the term “subregional organizations” refers to the RECs (Regional Economic Communities) recognized by the African Union

Cultural Council...) and subregional organizations in order to advance and develop the peace and security as well as the social, economic and political agendas of the continent.

The current distribution of global resources for peace and security on the one hand, and for socio-economic development on the other, reflects a clear priority in favor of military and security expenditures and assistance. If conflict prevention and peacebuilding are to address the deep-rooted structural problems that fuel violent conflicts, new and creative ways must be found for generating human, financial and technical resources and effective partnerships to ensure that the link between peace and development is appropriately addressed in all stages and activities related to conflict prevention, conflict management and post-conflict reconstruction.

Successful improvement of Africa's new security, economic and social development mechanisms depends on the political will of its member states to strengthen the capacities of its regional and subregional organizations. It is thus critical to strengthen the role, meet the capacity constraints and foster the effectiveness of subregional organizations to support peace and security efforts, promote sustainable development, protect the right of the citizens and the environment and foster closer ties with the rest of the world.

The Peace and Development nexus in Africa

The 37th Summit of the OAU held in July 2001 formally adopted the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) strategic framework document to develop an integrated socio-economic development framework that would guarantee Africa's renewal. Among its priorities, NEPAD aimed at establishing the conditions for sustainable development by ensuring peace and security; democracy and good, political, economic and corporate governance; regional co-operation and integration, and capacity building. The NEPAD founding document makes it very clear that it is national governments and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) that must drive the socio-economic renewal agenda.

NEPAD embodied the principle of "no peace without development, and no development without peace" and its development strategy already made security a priority. NEPAD's subsequent evolution however has revealed a serious disconnect between its focus on development and its peace and security goals.

General Assembly Resolutions 57/2 and 57/7 of 16 September and 4 November 2002 adopted the position that NEPAD should be the framework within which the international community, including the United Nations system, should concentrate its efforts for Africa's development². The Security Council has also

² NEPAD shared, endorsed and advanced most of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In the year 2000, the United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/Res/52/2) had already considered the special needs of

considered NEPAD to be the blueprint of UN's cooperation and engagement in Africa, even in the area of peace and security. In its resolution 1625 (2005), the Council encouraged "(...) African countries to continue to work closely with the United Nations secretariat and United Nations regional offices in the implementation of measures aimed at securing peace, security, stability, democracy and sustainable development consistent with the objectives of the New Partnership's for Africa's Development".

On 9 July 2002 the African Union was established, succeeding the OAU, to accelerate the political and socio-economic integration of the continent; to promote and defend African common positions on issues of interest to the continent and its peoples; to achieve peace and security in Africa; and to promote democratic institutions, good governance and human rights. RECs were established to foster mutual economic development and cooperation and to gradually lead the way towards the attainment of the African Economic Community. Within the spectrum of subregional arrangements in Africa, Regional Economic Communities form the building block of the future African economic and political integration. Economic integration however can not be achieved without the political and security environment which enables prosperity, investment and respect for human rights³.

Thus far, the United Nations has assisted regional and subregional organizations in implementing some of the conflict management mechanisms, from conflict prevention to peacekeeping, on an ad hoc basis and primarily considering the capacities and mandates of the UN and the degree of regional integration rather than the establishment of workable and effective partnerships for sustained local and regional interventions.

In 2006, the UN undertook a significant effort to improve cooperation with the AU through signing the "Declaration on enhancing UN-AU cooperation; framework for the ten-year capacity building programme for the African Union⁴" and a declaration to increase cooperation between the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council. The signatories of the declaration reiterated that the evolving framework should be conceived as the UN overall strategic framework for cooperation with the AU, and whose main objective should be to enhance the capacity of the AU Commission and African subregional organizations to act as effective UN partners in addressing the challenges to human security in Africa. The declaration focused on the areas

Africa and committed to support the consolidation of democracy in Africa and assist Africans in their struggle for lasting peace, poverty eradication and sustainable development (...) and to encourage and sustain regional and subregional mechanisms for preventing conflict and promoting political stability.

³ A Protocol on Relations between the AU and the RECs was adopted at the July 2007 Accra summit. The Protocol calls for cooperation and coordination of the policies and programmes of the RECs with those of the Union and the promotion of inter-regional projects in all fields including coordination and harmonization of macroeconomic policies, peace and security policies and other policies and activities of the RECs

⁴ A/61/630

described in its paragraph 6, which includes cooperation in the areas of a) institution-building, human resources development and financial management; b) peace and security; c) human rights; d) political, legal and electoral matters; e) social, economic, cultural and human development; and f) food security and environmental protection.

Even though the Framework covers all aspects of existing and future United Nations assistance to the African Union, both organizations agreed that the implementation of the Programme should start with a focus, at least in the first three years, on peace and security. Paragraph 5 of the Declaration on enhancing UN-AU cooperation clearly notes however, that both the United Nations and the African Union “agree to align the support of the organizations of the UN system for New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) with the evolving Framework”.

In 2008, the General Assembly adopted the Political declaration on Africa’s development needs⁵. The UN membership reaffirmed the special needs of Africa as contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the Declaration on the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (...) and the 2005 World Summit Outcome. The Assembly underlined that development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing and stressed that conflict prevention, resolution and management and post-conflict consolidation are essential for the achievement of the objectives of the special needs of Africa. It also called for intensified efforts and a coordinated approach between national Governments, the African Union, subregional organizations, the United Nations system and partners with a view to achieving further progress towards the goal of a conflict-free Africa.

Finally, in its strategic plan 2009-2012, the African Union specifically notes that ensuring sufficient peace, security and stability are essential to create conditions for development and integration. The plan notes that specific threats to social development can be mitigated by planned activities in social development within the ambit of peace and security. This, it follows, requires comprehensive, integrated and sustained interventions, including international assistance in peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts where necessary, tailored to the particular context. The RECs and the AU Commission provide regional and continental leverage to aid in meeting existing and emerging peace and security challenges.

Within the “Development, Integration and Cooperation” pillar, the AU strategy notes that on the whole, a renewed focus on this strategic issue is imperative in synergy with programmes under the peace and security pillar and taking into consideration the principle of subsidiarity in which RECs provide important vehicles for economies of scale or regional leverages in particular for the

⁵ A/63/L.1

promotion and coordination of the accelerated implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

In fact, the first two strategic objectives AU's strategic plan are;

- 1- Reduce conflicts to facilitate development and integration
- 2- Achieve necessary continental stability and security for the requisite development and integration of Africa

The strategy notes that the AU Commission will develop the internal mechanisms required to strengthen its coordinating and harmonizing role among the RECs, implement the AUC/REC protocol and fully integrate NEPAD into the African Union.

UN-AU-REC cooperation in the area of peace and development; the ten-year capacity-building programme for the African Union

The commitments of the United Nations system to support NEPAD are currently being enhanced through the Regional Coordination Mechanism, a framework for collaboration aiming to expand joint programming efforts of the UN system. The RCM has established nine thematic clusters⁶ around the priority areas of NEPAD, to serve as an operational framework for expanded UN system support for NEPAD and as a reporting mechanism to the General Assembly. The Peace and Security Cluster⁷ led by the Department of Political Affairs through the United Nations Liaison Office to the African Union, also serves to follow-up on the UN-AU cooperation within the Ten Year Capacity-Building Framework

The UN has already implemented a series of initiatives and programmes to operationalize the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme, in concrete;

- Cooperation in peacekeeping

Peacekeeping, perhaps the most visible of the international peace efforts, remains a key challenge in the relationship between the UN and regional organizations, in particular the African Union. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations has established the African Union Peacekeeping Support Team to provide expert support to the African Union Peace and Security Department in the areas of training, mission planning, military, police, logistics, information technology/communications and finances. In particular, the support focuses on

⁶ Infrastructure Development; Governance; Human Resources Development, Employment and HIV/AIDS; Environment, Population and Urbanization; Agriculture, Food Security and Rural Development; Science and Technology; Advocacy and Communications; Peace and Security; Industry, Trade and Market Access

⁷ The cluster, established in November 2006, has three sub-clusters: Peace and Security Architecture of the African Union (Convener: DPKO); Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (Convener: UNHCR); and Human Rights, Justice and Reconciliation (Convener: OHCHR).

the development of the AU Peace Support Operations Division and the RECs capacity to operationalize the African Standby Force and provide them with the tools to plan, deploy and manage peacekeeping operations, through the facilitation of institutional capacity building.

In an added effort to clarify the modalities and ways to support the peace efforts of regional organizations, the Secretary-General requested a high-level African Union-United Nations Panel to consider the modalities of how to support African Union peacekeeping operations established under a United Nations mandate. In its report (A/63/666-S/2008/813), the panel highlighted the need for Africa to develop the capacity for a comprehensive approach that contains the ability to respond and proposed a series of peacekeeping funding mechanisms (through the establishment of a trust fund or assessed contributions) for further discussion.

Although the panel considered the relation between the UN and the AU, the further consideration of its recommendations will undoubtedly have implications when drawing a comprehensive framework for cooperation between the UN, the AU, donors, subregional organizations, governments and other partners.

- Cooperation in conflict prevention

The Department of Political Affairs has been providing support to regional and sub-regional organizations in the areas of conflict prevention, crisis management and resolution of ongoing conflict as well as mediation, electoral assistance and the support to the AU Policy Organs (Peace and Security Council). Following a series of consultations, DPA and the African Union agreed in 2008 to hold regular (twice a year) consultations aimed at strengthening cooperation in the areas of prevention and management of conflict, including increased cooperation and flow of information between UN, AU and the RECs at Headquarters and in the field.

Regional groups have recently boosted their capacity to conduct joint conflict prevention programmes with the assistance of bilateral partners⁸ and have set up institutions that contribute to conflict prevention and resolution (community courts, human rights commissions, parliaments, development/economic organs, etc...) even though they often receive little attention and very limited funding from the United Nations.

- Cooperation in the area of peacebuilding

Cooperation in this area has been enhanced since the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Fund and the Peacebuilding

⁸ E.g. the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership. In 2009, the total allocation for the Africa Peace Facility reached Euro 440 million.

Support Office.⁹ The emerging collaboration is witness to the engagement of the Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development sub-cluster with the PBSO on the development of a UN Practical Guidance Note on Peacebuilding to take into consideration the AU's Continental PCRDR policy and its work in Burundi, Sierra Leone, Central African Republic and Guinea Bissau – which are also on the agenda of the Peace Building Commission.

The AU policy on postconflict reconstruction and development (PCRDR) has been identified as a way forward to enhance coherence and combine strategic objectives with local ownership and legitimacy¹⁰. Many challenges remain however, in order to translate the PCRDR into deliverables on the ground, chief among which is a clear definition of roles and comparative advantages among all stakeholders. The Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development sub-cluster is also facilitating and supporting the AU in the development of an AU humanitarian policy framework on the participation of conflict affected and displaced civilian populations in conflict resolution processes and implementation of peace agreements.

Enhancing cooperation for peace and development

Although other entities of the United Nations Secretariat are planning to establish AU Liaison Offices in Addis Ababa, implementation and coordination in areas other than peace and security of the Ten Year Capacity-building Programme remain weak, with Regional Economic Communities and other subregional arrangements needing to be further involved in the process of implementation of the programme.

A key question now is how synergies and cooperation could be achieved, especially in ensuring that programmes and initiatives consider the long-term development impact of the short-term peace and security priorities, and how to engage with the RECs on a regular basis on the implementation of the Ten Year Capacity-Building Programme.

NEPAD has engaged the RECs more forthrightly than the AU and has stressed the need to address their capacity constraints, particularly in the context of implementing key NEPAD projects. RECs are, by nature and mandate, best placed to ensure that policies and mechanisms consider both the short term strategic needs and the long-term development priorities of their regions. The RECs, however, vary widely in their capacity and the political relationships underpinning them, and they face broader institutional challenges beyond capacity constraints. These include the degree of harmony between RECs and the AU in the substance of their policies, frameworks, and programs; the

⁹ General Assembly, resolution 60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645 (2005)

¹⁰ Executive Council of the African Union, Decision on the AU Policy Framework on Postconflict Reconstruction and Development, Doc. EX.CL/274 (IX), June 2006.

complexity of developing continent-wide strategies, mobilizing resources for them and ensuring implementation; developing modalities for inter-REC cooperation; and the basic challenge of financing their own work.

It is important to identify the capacity-building needs of the RECs, the existing areas and mechanisms of cooperation with the AU and other partners to avoid duplication of efforts, and also to determine how to enhance and improve internal REC systems necessary to ensure appropriate links between their peace efforts and their development mandates.

Despite some notable efforts, the RCM and its cluster system needs to be further refined and aligned with AU (and NEPAD) programmes and priorities. It is also important to identify the priorities of the UN Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the AU to make its implementation more effective in focusing on conflict triggers in Africa. Coordination between the AU and the RECs is critical to ensure that participation in synergies among the many different programmes is achieved and, possibly, to make the clusters become vehicles for addressing AU's and the RECs capacity needs. This capacity should be concerned not only with peace and security but also with filling the gap between peace and development.

The RCM has reiterated its commitment to the effective implementation of the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the African Union and recognized the need to address priority needs of the AU Commission within the AU-UN cooperation framework (including NEPAD) and to enhance AU internal capacity to coordinate support being provided under the programme. Based on current experiences by the AU, the RECs and the UN system, this Expert Group Meeting will contribute to a better understanding of the current coordination mechanism between the AU, the RECs and the UN and will seek to respond to a number of the following questions most relevant for the subregional partners

- What opportunities does the Ten-Year Capacity Building Programme provide to the RECs and other subregional arrangements? What is the role of the RECs and how can they benefit from the programme?
- Is the assistance provided by the United Nations appropriately addressing the peace and development gap?
- What can we learn from the NEPAD-forged partnerships with the RECs? How can we apply this to the Ten-Year Capacity Building Programme and other assistance and capacity-building programmes?
- Are the current coordination mechanisms between the AU and the RECs considering the peace and development nexus? Is this a priority for the RECs and the AU?

- How can we improve the synergies and apply the lessons learned from the RCM? Could the RECs participation in the RCM be improved?
- What kind of expertise / assistance do RECs need to address the link between peace and development?
- What information / resources do subregional organizations need? Are these needs covered by the facilitation / information mechanisms currently in place? (e.g. DPA desk-to-desk) or should it be expanded?
- Given the shortage of funds and competing demands, what is the value added and the advantages of addressing the peace and development nexus?