ASWAN FORUM
FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT
مـنتدى اسـوان لـلـسـلام و الـتنمية الـمستدامين

THE ASWAN
PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT

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DISCLAIMER

This report represents the collation of non-attributable opinions and recommendations shared by official and expert participants during five preparatory workshops for the Aswan Forum, organized by the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding (CCCPA)–in cooperation with the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and partners–between August and November 2019.

The workshops brought together more than 300 experts from national governments, regional and international organizations, civil society and think tanks to (1) take stock of current opportunities and challenges to peace, security and development in Africa, and (2) develop context specific and action-oriented recommendations to advance the implementation of "sustainable development" and "sustaining peace" agendas in Africa.

Issued before the Forum, this report is intended as a forward-looking, action-oriented and thought-provoking conversation starter. The opinions and recommendations included in this report do not necessarily represent the views of the Forum's organizers, strategic partners, the African Union, or the Government of Egypt.

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ACRONYMS

A4P	Action for Peacekeeping
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AfDB	African Development Bank Group
AfHA	African Humanitarian Agency
AGA	African Governance Architecture
AHA	African Humanitarian Architecture
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
AU	African Union
AUC-PCRD	African Union Center for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development
CCCPA	The Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding
CEWS	Continental Early Warning System
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CSVMSs	Country Structural Vulnerability Mitigation Strategies
CSVRAs	Country Structural Vulnerability and Resilience Assessments
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FCV	Fragility, Conflict and Violence
FemWise-Africa	Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GTI	Global Terrorism Index
HDPN	Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus
HIPPO	High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IIAG	Ibrahim Index of African Governance
NAP	National Action Plan
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OGNs	Operational Guidance Notes
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
P/CERLT	Preventing/Countering Radicalization and Extremism Leading to Terrorism
PCRD	Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development
PSC	Peace and Security Council
PSOs	Peace Support Operations
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
RMs	Regional Mechanisms
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPRR	Screening, Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNOCI	United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WB	World Bank
WPS	Women, Peace and Security
WTO	World Trade Organization

THE ASWAN FORUM

Acting in its capacity as the Chairman of the African Union (AU) and the Champion of Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) in Africa, Egypt launched the **Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development.**

Owned by Africa, and supported by international and regional partners, the Forum–to be held annually in December–is a high-level, multi-stakeholder platform that brings heads of states, leaders from national governments, international and regional organizations, financial institutions, private sector, and civil society, together with visionaries, scholars, and prominent experts, for a context-specific, action-oriented, and forward-looking discussion on the opportunities, as well as the threats and challenges, facing the continent.

It provides the first-of-its-kind platform in Africa that seeks to operationalize the "peace-development nexus", by championing African solutions to African problems, including through strengthening the links between policy and practice.

https://www.aswanforum.org/

THE CAIRO INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION, PEACEKEEPING AND PEACEBUILDING (CCCPA)

Founded in 1994, **CCCPA** is an Egyptian public agency; an AU Center of Excellence in training, capacity building and research; and the Arab world's leading civilian training center on issues of peace and security. It is a major voice of the Global South on a wide range of topics, including conflict prevention and resolution, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, preventing radicalization and extremism leading to terrorism, combating transnational threats, and the implementation of the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda.

https://www.cairopeacekeeping.org/

FOREWORD
An Agenda for Sustainable Peace and Development in Africa

Dear Reader,

Africa is rich in human and natural resources, with enormous political and economic potential.

Today, the continent is home to at least half of the fastest growing economies of the world. Its importance in the global economy is rising, both as a market and as an engine of global growth. Moreover, the continent is the youngest region of the world. By 2030, one in every five people in the world will live in Africa.[1]

To unleash its enormous potential, Africa is determined to overcome the complex developmental, political, and peace and security challenges that obstruct its path towards progress and prosperity.

On 10 February 2019, H.E. Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt and Chairperson of the AU, announced the launch of the **"Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development"**. Premised on Egypt's firm belief that no stakeholder alone can address the challenges of a rapidly changing continent, the Forum serves an important convening role. It offers an international platform for dialogue and exchange of views between Africa and its partners.

To start this important conversation, the Inaugural Meeting of the Aswan Forum is titled **"An Agenda for Sustainable Peace, Security and Development in Africa".** Grounded in Agenda 2063 and the search for *"African Solutions to African Problems"*, it will bring together peace, security, development and humanitarian actors for a forward-looking and action-oriented discussion. It will develop initiatives that should help translate the solid normative and policy frameworks that we have for peace and development into action.

We look forward to the discussions and the concrete recommendations that we hope will usher in a new phase of Africa's ownership of its future.

Sameh Shoukry
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Arab Republic of Egypt

On the Road to Aswan

Dear Reader,

As we approach 2020, reasons for optimism about the future of Africa abound. Today, Africa is driving its own agenda, with immense untapped potential and endless opportunities for its people.

This document, the inaugural edition of the **Aswan Peace and Development Report,** is the culmination of a serious and multi-layered preparation process that started months ago. Working with 18 global and regional partners, the process included 5 workshops, held between Cairo and Addis Ababa, which brought together more than 300 leading experts and practitioners from across the continent and around the globe, representing governments, international and regional organizations, civil society and think tanks, to discuss peace, security and development issues, critical to the future of Africa and its people.

Whether the conversation on the need to create truly durable solutions for Africa's forcibly displaced; the urgency of advancing the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda; the imperative of shifting away from crisis management to conflict prevention and resolution; the challenges arising from a new typology of armed conflicts and groups; or the discussion on the shifting peacebuilding landscape in Africa–**all workshops echoed five consistent messages:**

First, providing "African solutions to African problems" starts with "African ownership". Preventing conflict, sustaining peace and achieving sustainable development are–first and foremost–political, not technical, issues that require African states' leadership on the national level, and as members of the AU. Related, the AU is as strong as its members allow it to be.

Second, the current responses to the continent's problems are becoming increasingly overstretched, unsustainably costly and out of sync with the complexity and interconnectedness of today's challenges.

Third, there is no lack of normative frameworks or policy and operational guidance in Africa. In fact, and as this report will clearly demonstrate, there is a wealth of frameworks and tools at the disposal of African states and organizations. What is lacking is context-specific operationalization, in a manner that embraces complexity, not simplifies it.

Fourth, to enhance effectiveness, there is a need for a paradigm shift from "crisis management" to "conflict prevention", anchored in a national and continental vision of sustaining peace and sustainable development.

Fifth, to advance this shift, new and innovative partnerships are needed to enhance integration and coherence between different actors, on the local, national, regional and continental levels, both strategically and operationally, and to leverage the complementary mandates, expertise and resources across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus (HDPN).

This report does not claim to introduce magic formulas or novel recipes for success. It is, nevertheless, the outcome of a rigorous, multi-stakeholder, consultation process that focuses on implementation and action-oriented recommendations. It is meant as a forward-looking, action-oriented, and thought-provoking conversation starter for the Forum. **Let the conversation start.**

Ashraf Swelam
Head of the Executive Secretariat, The Aswan Forum
Director General, CCCPA

Africa: A Land of Opportunities

Africa's potential is immense, but not fully realized. Today, the continent is home to at least half of the fastest growing economies of the world. Twenty of its economies are expected to grow at an average rate of 5% or higher over the next five years, faster than the 3.6% rate for the global economy.[2] It is rich in resources, and is riding a wave of urbanization, industrialization and economic diversification. Its importance in the global economy is rising, both as a market and as an engine of global growth.

The African Continental Free Trade Area is projected to be the largest free trade area in the world since the founding of the World Trade Organization, with over a billion consumers and a total gross domestic product (GDP) of over USD 3 trillion. It aims to remove tariffs on 90% of goods, progressively liberalize trade in services, and address a host of other non-tariff barriers. When successfully implemented, the agreement will be a game-changer in Africa's economic diversification and integration in global value chains.[3]

Africa is also the youngest region of the world. African youth population is expected to exceed 830 million by 2050, with 10 to 12 million young people entering the workforce every year.[4] By 2030, one in every five people in the world will live in Africa. This demographic dividend provides unparalleled economic potential.

The continent has also been making some progress on climate action. It is the best performer on attaining Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 12 and 13, on responsible consumption and production and climate action, respectively, according to the 2019 Africa SDG Index and Dashboards Report. Shifting to green economies can increase African countries' GDP by 5% by 2030.[5]

The last decade has also seen the end of several conflicts in Africa. In March 2018, the UN mission in Liberia (UNMIL)[6] exited after successfully accomplishing its mandate. One year earlier, Liberia witnessed a peaceful transfer of power through free and fair presidential elections, and successfully, and hopefully irreversibly, rebounded from a brutal civil war that left roughly 250,000 people dead.[7] In May 2017, the Security Council ended the mandate of the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI), with demonstrable progress towards sustainable peace and development.

The number of peace settlements has also been on the rise. In April 2019, six armed groups in the Central African Republic signed a peace agreement that ended more than six years of armed conflict in the country.[8] Sudan's peaceful political transition, marked by the signing of the agreement on transitional government, paves the way for ending conflicts affecting several regions of the country.[9] In 2018, Ethiopia and Eretria signed a much-celebrated peace agreement, putting an end to two decades of an intractable border dispute.

Africa has also seen the consolidation of democratic gains. Since 2015, the continent has experienced more than 27 leadership changes, highlighting a continent-wide push for peaceful rotation of power. According to the Ibrahim Index of African Governance, African governance has continued to follow an upward trajectory over the decade from 2008 to 2017. Roughly 72% of Africa's citizens live in one of the thirty-four countries where governance performance has improved over the last decade.[10]

However, the great promise that is Africa, is under threat–undermined by a myriad of crises, challenges and risks to peace, security and development.

As highlighted by the AU Constitutive Act, "the scourge of conflict in Africa is a major impediment to the socio-economic development of the continent." Promoting peace, security and stability is a prerequisite for the "implementation of Africa's development and integration agenda."[11]

Over the course of the last two decades, the nature of conflict has significantly changed. Today's conflicts are deadlier, costlier and more protracted, with civilians–especially women and children– bearing the brunt of the suffering. And while mostly intrastate, today's conflicts are either regionalized or internationalized, and involve a wide array of non-state actors, both conventional and hybrid.

The menace of terrorism is also on the rise. According to the 2018 Global Terrorism Index, Africa is home to two[12] of the deadliest terrorist organizations in the world. Eight of the twenty most fatal terrorist attacks in 2017 took place in Africa.[13] A growing nexus between conflict and terrorism is becoming a major source of concern. According to the 2017 Global Terrorism Index, much of the growth of the global terrorist threat in the last decade has been inspired by, or a direct outgrowth of, ongoing large-scale and protracted armed conflicts.[14] Equally alarming is the convergence of terrorist and criminal organizations into a new and hybrid threat that recognizes no borders.

The emergence of terrorist-governed local (dis)orders is another major source of concern. Through a mix of coercion, provision of public services and appeals to ideology or religion, some terrorist organizations in Africa are now capable of controlling territory, exercising governance functions and providing services that are normally the remit of state institutions. Combined with the transnational nature of the terrorist threat and the unamenability of ideologically framed conflicts to political solutions, the evolution of this new typology of armed conflicts and groups presents Africa – and the world– with formidable strategic, political, operational, and legal challenges.

Moreover, while forced displacement is a global phenomenon,[15] Africa continues to be disproportionately impacted. The continent accounts for one-third of refugees globally (5 million), and about 15 million internally displaced

persons (IDPs). The bulk of African refugee movements is currently happening within Africa. According to the Global Trends Report, five of the ten countries with the highest refugee population relative to national population are in Sub-Saharan Africa.[16] Conflict, and most recently terrorism, continue to be the leading drivers of forced displacement. The protracted nature of today's conflicts and the resulting uncertainty, insecurity and instability have led to prolonged displacement experiences that not only affect the forcibly displaced and the communities they leave behind, but also have devastating impacts on host communities and countries.[17]

Reform that Advances a Paradigm Shift

Despite similarities with problems the continent has faced in the past, today's threats, challenges and risks to peace, security and development are more profound. Their concurrence, frequency and sheer size are unprecedented. Moreover, they are happening at a time when multilateralism is under severe pressure, exposing serious weaknesses and vulnerabilities in the continental and global governance structures and mechanisms. As a result, the tools at Africa's disposal – and indeed the international community – to address the outbreak of conflicts and crises are becoming increasingly outdated, overstretched and unsustainably costly.

In addressing these problems, the AU [and its predecessor, the Organization of African Unity (OAU)] has demonstrated true leadership and ability to generate homegrown solutions to some of Africa's problems. The establishment of the AU itself was born out of the realization of the need to strengthen the continental organization, and "to make it more effective so as to keep pace with the political, economic and social developments taking place within and outside our continent.[18]" In its almost two decades of existence, the AU has made meaningful strides towards responding to the complex nature of the continent's challenges.

The AU laid down a transformative vision in Agenda 2063. The Agenda is Africa's blueprint and master plan for transforming the continent into a global powerhouse, and the strategic framework for achieving people-centered, inclusive and sustainable development, continental and regional integration, democratic governance, peace and security, as well as gender equality and youth empowerment within a 50-year period. Not only does it encapsulate Africa's aspirations for the future (with 10-year implementation plans), but also identifies key flagship programs to achieve this transformational agenda.

"To ensure that Africa, through the African Union, plays a central role in bringing about peace, security and stability on the continent", the AU developed an elaborate African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). It created institutional mechanisms; developed normative, legal and policy frameworks; and devised tools, to prevent and manage conflicts, rebuild post-conflict societies, respond to forced displacement and terrorism, and advance women empowerment. The result is an impressive body of normative frameworks and institutional arrangements and mechanisms.

"Silencing the Guns", one of the flagship programs of Agenda 2063, recognizes conflict as the biggest challenge facing the continent. It highlights the need to end all wars, civil conflicts, gender-based violence, and prevent genocide. To translate this vision into practical steps, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) adopted a "Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns by 2020". However, with only a year remaining for its implementation, the Roadmap continues to be hindered by complex political, institutional, and operational obstacles.

The AU also established elaborate structures and processes for preventive diplomacy and conflict management, including the preventive diplomacy function of the Panel of the Wise, the special envoys and good offices of the AU Commission Chairperson, as well as AU Peace Support Operations (PSOs). Nevertheless, AU policy organs continue to be slow in responding to early warnings, making it difficult to take timely and informed policy decisions, and to respond to escalating tensions. Furthermore, and despite efforts by AU Member States and the Commission, as well as partners, serious capacity gaps persist–especially in the Continental Early Warning Systems (CEWS) and PSOs–undermining the AU's abilities for conflict prevention and management.

AU conflict prevention involves a direct, operational focus of intervening during the escalation phase of a conflict, as well as a systematic, strategic focus on addressing the root, proximate, and structural causes of conflict. Over the years, commendable efforts have gone into developing early warning systems on the continental and regional levels [Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs)].

To complement its operational toolbox of conflict prevention with a suite of tools for "structural prevention", the AU launched its Continental Structural Conflict Prevention Framework, encompassing Country Structural Vulnerability and Resilience Assessments (CSVRAs) and Country Structural Vulnerability Mitigation Strategies (CSVMSs). The Continental Structural Conflict Prevention Framework aims at facilitating a Commission-wide coordinated approach to structural conflict prevention and to address the root causes of conflict, by 1) supporting member states preventive efforts, and 2) informing the design and implementation of all the programs and activities of the AU itself.

Despite the above, progress in structural prevention continues to be limited. To date, Ghana remains the only country that has put the framework to use.

Another important normative framework is the AU Policy for PCRD. Launched 13 years ago, it provides a comprehensive framework to guide the efforts of the AU Member States, the Commission and RECs/RMs in addressing the needs of countries emerging from conflict. Nevertheless, the policy remains largely underutilized and underfunded, receiving only 6% of the AU budget.

The establishment of the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation (FemWise-Africa) represented another major breakthrough. As an organ of APSA, FemWise enjoys a unique position compared with similar networks. Despite its broad conflict prevention and peacebuilding mandate, FemWise-Africa continues to focus on building its members' capacity in mediation, while its potential to act as a locomotive for the full and meaningful implementation of the WPS agenda is yet to be realized.

Recognizing the transnational nature of the terrorist threat and the imperative for international cooperation, the AU (and its predecessor, the OAU) has similarly developed a comprehensive counterterrorism normative framework. It authorized and deployed counterterrorism operations in Somalia, and in support of the Regional Coordination Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army, the Multinational Joint Task Force, and the G5 Sahel Joint Force. Conditions on the ground have forced these missions, however, to operate for long periods of time in high-risk and ever-evolving threat environments, with unsustainably high human and financial costs, and no end in sight.

More recently, the AU developed its Operational Guidance Notes (OGNs) on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and related issues, including on the link between DDR and efforts of preventing and countering radicalization and extremism leading to terrorism (P/CERLT)[19]. The note provides guidance on planning, designing and implementing a comprehensive approach for screening, prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration (SPRR) of individuals formerly associated with terrorist organizations, that countries can use in accordance with their national laws and in compliance with their international and regional obligations. While a work in progress, the OGN represents a significant step forward in the development of international standards for dealing with the complex legal and operational challenges of managing "journeys out of extremism."

Africa's response to forced displacement has been equally deliberate and principled. Since 1969, the continent has pioneered global efforts. The OAU Convention[20] has been instrumental to the evolution of the continent's refugee policy. It provided the basis for the "open door policy" adopted by many African countries. It also broke new ground by broadening the definition of "refugee" and provided a template for the principle of "burden and responsibility sharing", which was adopted 50 years later by the Global Compact for Refugees. For its part, the Kampala Convention is the first legally binding instrument of international law to address the issue of internal displacement. Thanks to the Convention,[21] several countries have passed legislation and created institutions and mechanisms to protect the rights of IDPs. While both conventions continue to provide an adequate basis for dealing with forced displacement in Africa, their national implementation faces numerous challenges.

All the above are examples of problems and challenges facing Africa for which frameworks, structures, mechanisms and tools do exist, thanks in no small part to the efforts of African countries, the AU and RECs/RMs. Lacking in many instances, however, is the operationalization of these frameworks or what the 2017 Report on the Proposed Recommendations for the Institutional Reform of the AU,[22] describes as a "crisis of implementation". More important, however, is implementation in a holistic manner that addresses the root causes of problems and lays the foundations for durable peace and sustainable development.

For this to be achieved, there is an urgent need for a paradigm shift from "crisis management" to "conflict prevention", anchored in a vision of sustainable development and peace. This would unleash the full potential of existing frameworks and leverage the complementary mandates, resources and expertise of available institutional structures and mechanisms. It would ensure that operationalization (1) is proactive, rather than reactive; (2) breaks silos and achieves integration, coherence and coordination of actions of various actors on the national, regional and international levels across the HDPN; and (3) embraces complexity, rather than simplifies it, in the planning, design, and implementation of operational engagements, programs and projects.

If adopted, this approach would tie-in well with a growing recognition among policymakers, both in Africa and globally, of the need for change. The last few years have seen a renewed focus on "conflict prevention" and "sustaining peace and development," including at the United Nations (UN). The 2015 report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations highlighted the need for conflict prevention to be "brought back to the fore", and called on the UN system to pull together in a more "integrated manner" in the service of conflict prevention, including by addressing root causes. Pathways for Peace, the first ever joint study between the UN and the World Bank Group, proved that prevention is not only cost-effective, but that it also works.[23]

Moreover, the 2015 Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture, and the subsequent twin resolutions of 2016 (UN Security Council Resolution 2282 and General Assembly Resolution 70/262), coined the term "sustaining peace", as both a goal and a process, to "prevent the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of violence." The resolutions also recognized that "an integrated and coherent approach among relevant political, security and development actors...is critical to sustaining peace, eradicating poverty, and advancing economic development in conflict-affected countries."

International and regional organizations, as well as financial institutions, are already advancing this paradigm shift. In addition to management reform, the UN is introducing sweeping reforms to its development system and integrating its peace and security pillar in a manner that prioritizes prevention and sustaining peace. The World Bank Group is developing a strategy for engaging with fragility, conflict and violence settings (the FCV Strategy).[24] The African Development Bank's (AfDB) Strategy for Addressing Fragility and Building Resilience is contributing to strengthening African states' capacity, supporting effective institutions, and promoting resilient societies.[25] The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has for long recognized the importance of strong crisis prevention mechanisms. One of the six signature solutions of its 2018-2022 Strategic Plan is to "enhance national prevention and recovery capacities for resilient societies" focusing on conflict prevention, peacebuilding, crisis response and mitigation, so as to help countries avoid crises and return quickly to stable development after crises occur.

It is in this context that the ongoing reform efforts at the AU offer a once-in-a-generation opportunity to introduce this paradigm shift. For this to materialize, AU reform must be seen as a chance for strategic reflection and organizational renewal, not merely as an exercise of redrawing departmental fault lines. Coupled with the ongoing reforms at the UN, AU reform also presents an unmatched opportunity to advance a stronger partnership between the two organizations.

The Paradigm Shift in Practice

The five preparatory workshops for the Aswan Forum focused on advancing this paradigm shift to conflict prevention, and operationalizing the nexus between sustaining peace and sustainable development in Africa. The workshops examined the nexus approach from various angles. This included finding truly durable solutions for Africa's forcibly displaced; the urgency of advancing the WPS agenda; the practical entry points and investments necessary for shifting away from crisis management to conflict prevention and resolution; dealing with challenges arising from a new typology of armed conflicts and groups; and the shifting peacebuilding landscape in Africa. Below are some of the key messages and recommendations that emerged:

The Centrality of an Inclusive, Viable & Legitimate State

Introducing a paradigm shift from crisis management to conflict prevention, anchored in a vision of sustainable development, is not a technical fix, it is–first and foremost–a political process. Conflict prevention is a state responsibility. It requires political leadership and commitment on the national level, before the continental one. If owned by the state, conflict prevention becomes a sovereignty enhancer.

To prevent societies from descending into conflict, the prevention agenda must be integrated into national policies and efforts, with the SDGs at the core of this approach. National development plans should be the basis of long-term investments in sustainable and inclusive development. And while economic growth and poverty alleviation are necessary, they are insufficient for preventing conflict and sustaining peace. Distributive policies and targeted investments that address inequalities and marginalization are equally important.

Planning for conflict prevention requires an investment in the state's capacity to identify and address structural vulnerabilities at an early stage. National policies should contribute to building institutions, structures and synergies that create incentives for peace. Coupled with the legislative and policy reforms, these policies provide governments with a shared vision around which the actions of various actors, on both the central and local levels, can converge. They also provide a basis for national resource allocation, establishing institutional mechanisms and structures, building requisite capacities, and engaging external actors–all in a sustainable manner. In countries emerging from conflicts, comprehensive peace agreements play a similar role, and are a key enabler of an HDPN approach. The way peace agreements frame the conflict and address its root causes determines how political priorities are set, and which principles will guide its implementation.

Conflict prevention requires a whole-of-government approach. Coordination mechanisms–with the mandate, powers and resources to take up the task of preventing, responding and resolving crises–are essential. Assuming the willingness and ability of various actors, an HDPN approach can help achieve comprehensiveness, complementarity and coherence across the spectrum of responses, by leveraging the complementary mandates, expertise and resources of various actors in pursuit of collective outcomes.

While the role of the central government is crucial, the role of local authorities, as first responders and the interface for delivering integrated solutions, is equally critical. In this regard, delegating responsibility should go hand-in-hand with bringing authority and resources to the local level, where both problems and opportunities exist. Preventive efforts at the local level need to focus on strengthening community cohesion, the social contract, and creating an intergenerational compact.

Local actors, including civil society, are the first line of defense, especially in border areas and places where the state is weak or nonexistent. A whole-of-government approach must therefore be accompanied by a whole-of-society approach that leverages local pillars of peace and resilience. Inclusive politics, policies and decision-making processes are critical to addressing grievances, real and perceived, and preventing their mobilization to violence. In this regard, inclusivity must not be regarded as a box-checking exercise, where local actors are invited to participate in consultations, but their inputs are hardly ever translated into policies or programs. In other words, local actors should not be dealt with as a means of legitimizing processes, but rather as agents of change.

National ownership is also key to advancing the full and meaningful implementation of the WPS agenda. Enhancing women's contribution to peace and security should be part of a larger strategy that aims at women empowerment and gender equality at-large. African states should, therefore, not view National Action Plans (NAPs) as ends, but rather as means to unlock the WPS agenda's transformative impact. They should pass the necessary legislation that supports the implementation of NAPs, and make sure that NAPs are aligned with other national strategies and plans, and developed around a clear theory of change. NAPs should also have predictable and adequate financing from national budgets, as well as effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Stronger engagements with the private sector are required; ones that extend beyond corporate social responsibility. The private sector is well-positioned to provide goods and services where state structures are weak. Priority should be given to mobilizing investment in the socio-economic development of border areas, which have historically been under-developed and marginalized. African governments should provide an enabling business environment that helps catalyze private sector investment, especially in fragile contexts. The experience of AfDB's Private Sector Credit Enhancement Facility provides lessons in addressing this challenge. Financial guarantees are also important for ensuring that financial flows from member states and the private sector are geared towards conflict-sensitive development projects that empower local actors. Good examples in this context are the Partial Risk Guarantees and Partial Credit Guarantees offered by the AfDB.

From Crisis Management to Sustaining Peace: The Role of the AU

Advancing the paradigm shift to conflict prevention at the AU also starts with member states, through their ratification, domestication and implementation of African legal frameworks, including the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance. Following Ghana's lead, African governments should also avail themselves of the suite of instruments that the AU Continental Structural Conflict Prevention Framework makes available, including CSVRAs/CSVMSs, which help member states identify and address root causes and structural drivers of conflict and violence.

To enhance the effectiveness of the AU's prevention efforts, operational prevention must go hand-in-hand with structural prevention. For operational prevention to be effective, translating early warning to early response is key. The AU policy organs, most notably the AU PSC, as well as the Chairperson and the Commission, should focus on the timely utilization of the existing suite of preventive diplomacy and mediation tools. The PSC should explore options for holding informal discussions about specific situations where tensions are on the rise, similar to the important role currently played by the UN Peacebuilding Commission, in support of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The AU and its partners should also work together to enhance the capacity of the CEWS, which currently functions with less than 50% of its planned capacity.

With regards to structural prevention, and in addition to disseminating and popularizing the CSVRAs and CSVMSs, including through RECs/RMs, the various architectures and pillars of the AU [APSA, African Governance Architecture (AGA), etc.] must pull together in a coordinated, coherent and integrated manner. The AGA, through the African Governance Platform[26] makes an important contribution to prevention of conflict through the promotion of good governance, democracy, human and people's rights, decentralization, and fighting corruption. Therefore, the AGA's contribution to institutional capacity building, at both the national and local levels, should be further supported.

The AU Border Programme should receive stronger support. Mindful of the transnational nature of many of today's threats, challenges and risks to peace, security and development, the Programme helps prevent conflicts and disputes from erupting, and ensures that in cases where they do erupt, that they do not turn violent. It also provides an important instrument to develop border institutions and areas through effective border governance, based on the principle of cross-border cooperation.

African-led PSOs must be part of a larger political engagement where the role of the military operations is to contain violence and generate stability, so that political solutions can be pursued. Operational and political

engagements need to be complemented and reinforced by long-term PCRD efforts. There is also a need to continue developing the planning and operational capacity of the AU's and RECs/RMs to deploy and conduct PSOs, as well as strengthen their capacity to design and undertake peacebuilding and sustaining peace related components of the operations, including DDR of former combatants.

In this regard, the AU should continue to adapt its PSO doctrine, as well as the African Standby Force concept, in a manner that is mindful of the nature of the operations that both the AU and RECs have undertaken over the past decade and are likely to undertake in the future. African countries and the AU should continue to pursue predictable financing for operations mandated by the UNSC under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. The AU Peace Fund can play a critical role in strengthening Africa's ownership of its peace and security agenda, including PSOs.

African states and the AU also need to be proactively engaged in the ongoing implementation of the UN Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative, in order to ensure that the interests of Member States contributing police and military personnel to UN peacekeeping operations, as well as African host countries of these operations, are preserved. It is important to ensure that African positions, guided by the "Cairo Roadmap on Enhancing the Performance of Peacekeeping Operations from Mandate to Exit," are duly integrated in the implementation of the A4P, including advancing the UN-AU partnership, especially on the operational level.

Ongoing AU institutional reforms, including improving the coordination between the AU and RECs/RMs, and the selection of 'Silencing the Guns' as the AU's theme for 2020, present an opportunity to develop a realistic roadmap for conflict prevention in Africa beyond 2020. The reform process should also pay more attention to enhancing the role of the AU Peace Fund, including by providing targeted and catalytic investments in conflict prevention.

AU reforms also offer a unique opportunity for advancing the implementation of the WPS agenda. The AU should ensure that FemWise-Africa realizes its full potential in a manner that leverages its unique position within APSA. Acting within its current mandate, FemWise-Africa's role should go well beyond just mediation to include conflict prevention and sustaining peace. It should be an important locomotive for advocating and facilitating the implementation of the WPS agenda, across the spectrum of peace engagements. The network should also, and more actively, broaden and diversify its activities from a regional focus towards more engagement at the national and local levels.

The AU should encourage women's participation in its PSOs, including by developing and implementing an equivalent to the UN Gender Parity Strategy, and making the necessary investments to facilitate their deployment. African Training Centers of Excellence should ensure that women have equal training opportunities to perform all roles, in preparation for future deployments in AU PSOs, including in leadership positions. They should work with partners to provide technical assistance and support to capacity development that would help African countries overcome structural barriers impeding the comprehensive and meaningful implementation of the WPS agenda. The Elsie initiative is a good model in that regard.[27]

Reinvigorating the AU-PCRD Policy and Toolbox

The complexity of armed conflicts makes it imperative to ensure that the international and regional responses are aligned across the "peace continuum", with the humanitarian, security and development tools applied in a holistic, coherent and complementary manner. The AU-PCRD presents an important policy tool that would help countries affected by or emerging from conflict apply a peacebuilding and sustaining peace approach to meeting the multidimensional challenges facing these countries.

The AU should consider adopting the "peace continuum" approach across its engagement in PCRD efforts. In this context, the AU-PCRD Policy can act as a catalyst of AU reform and transformation of the APSA and other impending AU reform and restructuring efforts. The operationalization of the AU PCRD should aim at prioritizing human and institutional capacity development, reconciliation, reintegration and generation of livelihood opportunities based on context-specific, nationally led and locally consulted, needs assessment.

The establishment of the AU Centre for Post-conflict Reconstruction and Development (AUC-PCRD), to be hosted in Cairo, represents a major step towards effective continental ownership of the sustaining peace agenda, as well as an opportunity to advance the AU-UN partnership at the operational level. Operationalization of the AUC-PCRD will allow the AU to engage with African countries, RECs/RMs, as well as partners, including the UN, and international and regional financial institutions. Such engagements would facilitate vulnerability and needs analysis and assessments leading to more informed program design and implementation. The Center should pilot its engagement in a specific sub-region in order to demonstrate its potential added value and comparative advantage. Women and youth empowerment should be mainstreamed in the AUC-PCRD's planning and program design and implementation processes.

The upcoming 2020 review of the UN peacebuilding architecture should further examine practical ways to advance synergies and complementarities between different financial mechanisms of the UN and the AU, most notably the Peacebuilding Fund and the AU Peace Fund.

Managing Journeys out of Extremism and Building Post-Terrorism Local Orders

To defeat terrorism in Africa (and elsewhere), security measures are necessary but insufficient. They must be complemented with other efforts aimed at building post-terrorism local orders, while preventing/countering radicalization and extremism leading to terrorism, including through addressing grievances and the root causes of extremism, as well as managing the "journeys out of extremism" of individuals formerly associated with terrorist organizations.

Following the defeat of terrorist groups, the bigger challenge is sustaining peace and development. An important first step in this regard is to support the extension of state authority to areas liberated from terrorist organizations. This should not be limited to the provision of goods and basic services, but also includes building viable and legitimate governance structures and establishing a new social contract with society. In this regard, building state capacities on both the central and local levels is imperative. This approach should also inform the design and implementation of the mandates of current AU PSOs, most notably AMISOM, as well as future similar missions.

While not necessarily legally binding, the SPRR framework included in UNSC resolution 2396 provides states and the AU commission with a comprehensive approach to handling individuals formerly associated with terrorist groups and managing journeys out of extremism. African states should operationalize, as relevant and in accordance with their national laws and international and regional obligations, the OGNs on DDR. The AU Commission should support building national capacities for the implementation of these frameworks and guidelines.

A Nexus Approach to Ending the Need of Africa's Forcibly Displaced

Current approaches to dealing with forced displacement fall short of providing solutions, let alone durable ones, for the millions of forcibly displaced people and hosting communities in Africa. Despite some progress in enhancing displaced persons' self-reliance through expansion of their socioeconomic opportunities, other "durable solutions" continue to be elusive. "Return"–which is often considered the preferred solution–continues to be blocked by the protracted nature of conflicts and crises. Local integration is hampered by lack of political will, weak economic development, or resource and capacity constraints–a problem that is further exacerbated by perceptions of refugees as a security concern and an economic burden. Third-country solutions are available to no more than one percent of the forcibly displaced, a figure that is unlikely to increase in the current political and economic environment.

As a result, forced displacement can no longer be seen as merely a humanitarian issue–but also as a developmental, as well as peace and security challenge for which there are no stand-alone humanitarian solutions, but rather, a continuum of humanitarian, developmental, and peace and security responses. To progressively reduce the burden of forced displacement in Africa, a paradigm shift to prevention and to resolving–rather than managing–situations of forced displacement is imperative. Rather than merely coordinating efforts of various actors, the operationalization of the HDPN should, when possible, aim at achieving comprehensiveness, complementarity on the national, regional and international levels.

Preventing, responding and resolving situations of forced displacement is the responsibility of states, in accordance with their national laws, and international and regional obligations. Even in situations of protracted conflict and crises, where the state is incapable or unwilling to provide services, bridging the gap between meeting immediate needs and reducing long term vulnerability should give due attention to gradually building the state's capacity to carry out its roles and fulfill its international and regional obligations, which is crucial for ensuring sustainability.

The needs of refugees, IDPs, returnees and host communities, as they see them, should be the basis of interventions across the HDPN. Actions should be planned through a participatory process that engages all actors and relevant stakeholders, including most notably the displaced populations and host communities, civil society organizations, as well as the private sector. Context-specificity and customization are vital for ensuring high-impact and better outcomes. Interventions must be based on a context-specific analysis of the risks, needs, vulnerabilities, and root causes of forced displacement. A gender-sensitive approach must be adopted throughout the process, including analysis, planning, design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

In order of the operationalization of the AfHA to represent a major boost to the continental response to forced displacement, it must be closely coordinated with the ongoing reforms of other AU architectures, including most notably the APSA. African member states and the AU must operationalize the African Humanitarian Architecture (AHA), in a manner that is complementary to, and reinforcing of, the ongoing AU reform efforts, while avoiding the creation of unnecessary structures. In particular, this should include establishing synergies between the African Humanitarian Architecture and the elaborate operational and structural prevention toolbox developed by the APSA,

including, most notably, the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), the Structural Conflict Prevention Framework, and the AU Border Program.

Guided by an institutional paradigm shift from "conflict management" to "conflict prevention and sustaining peace", this should ensure making use of APSA's elaborate suite of tools. Equally important is ensuring that the creation and the modalities of funding of the African Humanitarian Agency is complementary to similar organs of the AU, including most notably the African Peace Fund.

Advancing the UN-AU Partnership

The UN-AU partnership in peace, security and development is indispensable. Over the years, their cooperation has continued to evolve, with two partnership frameworks: the Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security (2017), and the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2018). Such frameworks reflect the recognition of the intrinsic link between peace and development.

The partnership should strive to be impact-driven, with greater emphasis on coherent planning and operational complementarity at the country level. For that purpose, the UN and the AU should seek to act jointly or coherently in order to achieve their common peace and development objectives in Africa. Joint assessments and clarification of UN and AU context-specific roles based on comparative advantage, as well as clustering their respective efforts, is key for effective and results-oriented impact in the field. Recent successful UN-AU collaboration in the Central African Republic, Madagascar, Somalia, and Sudan are good examples from which to draw lessons learned for future joint engagements.

While enhancing synergies between the UN and AU remains an essential aspiration, the recent enhanced partnership framework recognized that shared understanding of the situation at hand may not lend itself to "full jointness" at the policy and operational levels. Libya is a case in point, where the two organizations are perceived to be competing for leadership. The Sahel is another example where UN and AU efforts are guided by different implementation strategies, reflecting lack of coherence and complementarity.

Moreover, the partnership remains disproportionately focused on traditional security and crisis management response. There is a need to enhance the sustaining peace lens within existing UN-AU cooperation frameworks, including through 1) the ongoing reform efforts at the AU, 2) the development and operationalization of the AU-PCRD, 3) the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, 4) the repositioning of the UN development system, and 5) the evolving discourse on the peace-development-humanitarian nexus.

Regular and institutionalized interaction through the annual consultative meetings of the UNSC and the AU PSC, and mid-level exchanges, remain vital for increasing mutual understanding of the opportunities and challenges for collaboration in a specific context. The UNSC Ad-hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention in Africa and the Joint UN-AU Task Force on Peace and Security are two underutilized mechanisms in this context. Leveraging the comparative advantages of both organizations should also recognize the mismatch in institutional capacity in favor of the UN. A critical dimension of the partnership between both organizations should therefore focus on bridging capacity gaps in the AU Commission.

The upcoming review of the UN-AU partnership framework and ongoing reforms within both organizations provide an unparalleled opportunity to generate practical recommendations aimed at enhancing the effectiveness in joint prevention and peacebuilding responses.[28]

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