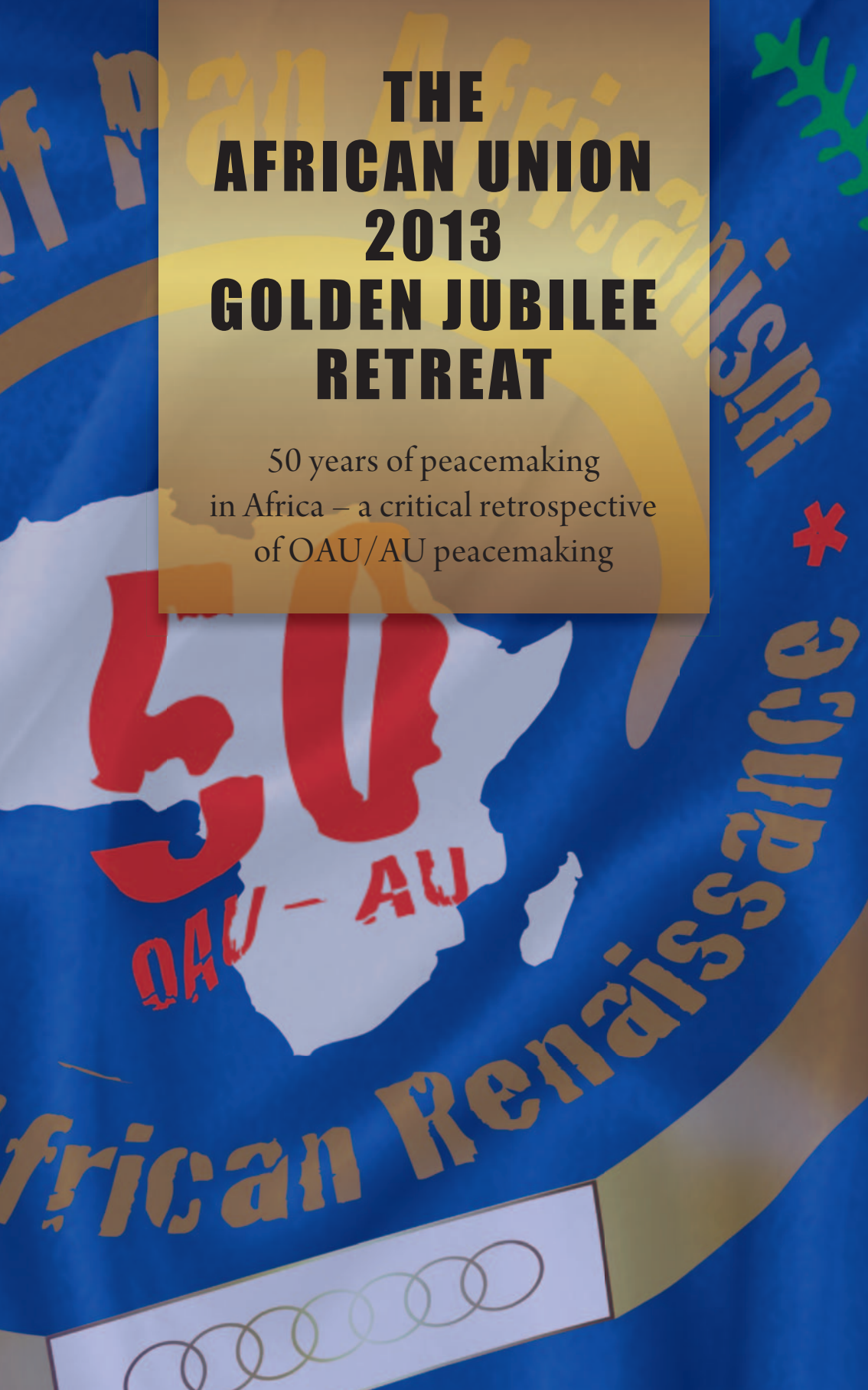


THE AFRICAN UNION 2013 GOLDEN JUBILEE RETREAT

50 years of peacemaking
in Africa – a critical retrospective
of OAU/AU peacemaking



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A report on the proceedings of the Fourth African Union High-Level
Retreat on the Promotion of Peace, Security and Stability in Africa
held on 29 and 30 October 2013 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.



ACCORD

The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) is a non-governmental organisation working throughout Africa to bring creative solutions to the challenges posed by conflict on the continent. ACCORD's primary aim is to influence political developments by bringing conflict resolution, dialogue and institutional development to the forefront as alternatives to armed violence and protracted conflict.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ACCORD	African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes
AGA	African Governance Architecture
ACJHR	African Court of Justice and Human Rights
AOMA	African Ombudsman and Mediators Association
APF	Africa Peace Fund
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
ASF	African Standby Force
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
AUHIP	African Union High-Level Implementation Panel on Sudan
AU PW	African Union Panel of the Wise
CAR	Central African Republic
CEWS	Continental Early Warning System
CMD	Conflict Management Division
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
ICC	International Criminal Court
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
KMF	Knowledge Management Framework
MNLA	<i>Mouvement National pour la liberation de l'Azawad</i> (National Movement for the Independence of Azawad)
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
Pan-Wise	Pan-African Network of the Wise
PCRD	Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development
PSC	Peace and Security Council
PSD	Peace and Security Department
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
RMs	Regional Mechanisms
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSC	United Nations Security Council

Executive summary

The Fourth African Union (AU) High-Level Retreat on the Promotion of Peace, Security and Stability in Africa was held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire on 29 and 30 October 2013 under the theme '50 Years of peacemaking in Africa: A critical retrospective of OAU/AU peacemaking'. The objective of hosting the retreat was to provide a platform through which to foster greater understanding among stakeholders of the dynamics of mediation and conflict transformation in Africa, and to reflect on the AU's Agenda 2063 and other related peace and security priorities.

Presentations and discussions covered a number of issues which are pertinent to peace and security in Africa, and specific to mediation. Delegates accessed lessons learnt from 50 years of peacemaking in Africa and had opportunities to examine the linkages between African and international mediation. Of notable interest was the question of how to enhance coordination and harmonisation of African and international peacemaking approaches.

The retreat delved into discussions on mediation with a gender lens, given that women and children suffer the most during conflicts. They therefore need adequate representation in mediation processes, in line with the letter and spirit of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325 of 31 October 2000.

Heralded as a roadmap to move Africa to its intended destiny, Agenda 2063 was discussed and its components distilled, with the aim of laying the groundwork for the development of strategies towards realising this vision. In the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration, AU heads of state and government, while acknowledging past successes and challenges, rededicated themselves to ensuring accelerated development and technological progress on the continent. They laid down a common vision and eight ideals to serve as pillars for the continent in the foreseeable future. Agenda 2063 will translate these into concrete objectives, milestones, goals, targets and actions/measures. It aims to enable Africa to remain focused and committed to these ideals, in the context of a rapidly changing world.

Conflict transformation and its relation to preventive mechanisms was debated, with specific focus on issues of youth participation, democratisation, radicalisation and militancy.

Several issues and trends were highlighted during the discussions and merit further reflection. These include:

- transnational concerns
- institutionalisation of post-conflict reconstruction within the AU
- national, continental and global mechanisms for managing natural resources
- the nexus between good governance and democracy

- the role of religion in mediation
- the amplified role of regional economic communities (RECs) and regional mechanisms (RMs) in preventive diplomacy.

This report aims to provide an entry point through which practitioners can further delve into peacemaking trends in Africa, based on past interventions, best practices, experiences shared, lessons learnt and future projections. Accordingly, it highlights the role of the AU in conflict prevention, management and resolution, while touching on its pertinent operational instruments and frameworks which are being implemented to enhance the body's mediation capacity. These include the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Mediation Support and the Knowledge Management Framework (KMF) for Mediation Processes. Ultimately, this report refocuses discussions on the bigger picture painted by the AU's quest to realise a war-free Africa by the year 2020.

Context

On the initiative of the AU, and within the framework of 'The year of peace and security', a High-Level Retreat on the Promotion of Peace, Security and Stability in Africa was launched and hosted in Cairo, Egypt, from 26 to 28 August 2010. The first ever event of its kind, the retreat brought together international mediators working in Africa and a wide range of actors involved in peacemaking.

The 2010 forum was the first in a series of annual retreats aimed at giving further impetus to efforts to end armed conflicts and political crises on the African continent and to consolidate peace where it has been achieved. The inaugural retreat was energised by delegates' commitment to 'Make peace happen' throughout Africa and without delay. Specifically, representatives of AU member states, international and regional organisations, as well as African and international academics and researchers, among others, were motivated by calls for peace emanating from African peoples across the continent. They were also spurred on by the pledge made in Tripoli, Libya, the year before by the continent's leaders to deal, once and for all, with the scourge of conflict and violence.

The Second AU High-Level Retreat on the Promotion of Peace, Security and Stability in Africa subsequently took place in Cairo, Egypt, from 4 to 6 September 2011 under the theme 'Strengthening political governance for peace, security and stability in Africa'. The retreat provided opportunities for mediators and experts to discuss:

- their views on trends, challenges and prospects for political governance in Africa
- the role of governance in preventing conflicts with focus on leadership and accountability
- the roles of public opinion and civil society, and the modalities through which the private sector can support good governance

- the restoration of peace when governance breaks down, with focus on election-related conflicts, constitutional crises, security sector reform and management of natural resources.

The third AU high-level retreat, held on 5 and 6 November 2012 in Cairo, Egypt, coincided with the 10th anniversary of the AU, offering a timely opportunity for the continental body to look back and reflect on achievements made in the area of peace and security during its first decade of existence. The event also focused on exploring key emerging challenges requiring vigilance by the AU and its partners if they are to achieve a conflict-free continent. The retreat provided space for stakeholders to acknowledge progress made since the establishment of the AU in 2000, and to reflect on challenges facing the continent, while facilitating the development of strategies to address threats to peace and security. The timing of the retreat, a year before the 50th anniversary of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 2013, ensured that participants generated the necessary momentum for reflective analysis of the continent's history and its envisaged direction and future, as well as the role of continental and regional organisations in preventing, managing and resolving conflicts; promoting peace and development; and meeting the needs of African citizens.

The fourth retreat, themed '50 years of peacemaking in Africa: A critical retrospective of OAU/AU peacemaking' was held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, on 29 and 30 October 2013. This retreat had as its main objective reviewing 50 years of mediation experience in Africa, while analysing and recommending ways to support collaborative and preventive conflict resolution efforts. This report is based on the proceedings of this retreat and captures the content, insights and experiences generated through discussions and debates that occurred during the two days.



AU Peace and Security Department

Some of the delegates at the 2013 High-Level Retreat on the Promotion of Peace, Security and Stability gather for a group photo.

Introduction: 50 years of peacemaking

The year 2013 marked a key moment in the history of the AU as the continental organisation celebrated its 50th anniversary. The OAU/AU Golden Jubilee celebrations launched on 25 May 2013 were dedicated to the themes of Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance. A key element of these celebrations was the adoption of the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration, which calls for greater emphasis on addressing the root causes of conflict, including economic and social inequalities, and the need to strengthen efforts towards structural conflict prevention, peacemaking, peace support, national reconciliation, as well as post-conflict reconstruction and development (PCRD). Vital to these efforts is the promotion of conflict transformation – which is geared towards ensuring meaningful and sustainable peace through improvement of social, economic and political conditions and enhanced structural stability and security. Understood in this way, conflict transformation becomes an imperative – indeed a core strategic paradigm with significant operational dimensions – in collective efforts to engage, interact with, support and nurture the long-term, gradual and complex processes of transitioning from war to sustainable and meaningful peace.

The first decade of the AU's existence has demonstrated a growing activism by the continental body in responding to conflict situations across Africa. At a time when conflict and crisis situations in Africa continue to test existing response paradigms, Africa, and the international community, must continually strengthen their collaboration towards more innovative and sustainable solutions. With the Golden Jubilee spirit, Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance, as well as the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration in mind, the 50th year of the OAU/AU provided an important opportunity for the AU to project its conflict management and resolution approaches to stakeholders.

Rationale of the retreat

In the context of reflections on half a century characterised by decolonisation, continental organisation and transformation, the Fourth AU High-Level Retreat on the Promotion of Peace, Security and Stability in Africa sought to provide a unique platform to foster greater understanding of mediation and conflict transformation efforts in Africa among peace and security stakeholders. Towards this end, the event was designed in a way which prioritised engaging participants – scholars, practitioners, as well as decision-makers – on critical issues pertaining to trends and opportunities identified as being crucial to fulfilling commitments in the AU's Agenda 2063. It further provided space to explore progress and challenges faced in operationalising the peacemaking pillars of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).

The collective need to strengthen African conflict transformation efforts and recommend ways to support collaborative and preventive initiatives which address conflict cannot be exhaustively underscored. Responding to this requirement,

the retreat allowed practitioners, policymakers and opinion-formers to reflect on the exemplary peacemaking initiatives that have improved the peace and security landscape of the continent in the last half century. This approach is expected to support and inform the trajectory of conflict prevention and peacemaking initiatives in Africa, and includes assessing past mediation efforts in order to draw lessons for application in ongoing peace processes.

Proceedings of the retreat

The retreat's agenda utilised plenary and parallel sessions arranged by theme or topic. This section offers information on key topics, issues and/or themes around which discussions in the respective sessions were arranged, as well as providing information on event proceedings.

Summary of proceedings: Day one

Opening ceremony

The introductory session, comprising opening remarks from eminent guests, set the stage for the retreat through concise overviews detailing the current peace and security environment on the African continent and unpacking major mediation successes and challenges over the 50 years of the OAU's existence and the 10 years of its successor, the AU. Speakers also touched on opportunities to achieve the goal of a peaceful Africa as expressed in the AU's Agenda 2063 and 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration. They noted that the causes and manifestations of, as well as responses to, conflicts on the African continent have undergone fundamental transformations since 1963, and recognised the importance and primacy of the AU in responding to these challenges. Presenters acknowledged that conflicts stem from crises in governance and the rule of law, social injustices, exclusion of identity groups, and poverty and that, therefore, long-term solutions are required to address these deep-rooted challenges. The speeches referred to the institutionalisation of the APSA and its foundational role in fostering Africa-driven responses to these conflicts. Noting the need for greater long-term engagement in conflict environments, orators called for strengthened efforts towards preventive responses to conflicts, as well as increased resources and capacities in order to achieve the full operationalisation of the APSA.

Speakers also emphasised the growing importance of regional and international partnerships, noting the roles that African RECs, United Nations (UN) agencies, and bilateral and multilateral partners can play in supporting the AU's responses to conflict on the continent. The opening ceremony concluded with reflections on opportunities for the AU to achieve its vision of a peaceful Africa by 2063 through enhanced mobilisation of African resources and creation of constructive international partnerships.



Mr Smail Chergui, AU Commissioner for Peace and Security (left), is greeted by the Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, Mr Daniel Kablan Duncan (right), at the opening ceremony of the Fourth AU High-Level Retreat.

Plenary session one: Africa's peace, security and development challenges – the role of African leadership

This interactive session provided an opportunity for participants to reflect on the role of African leadership in promoting solutions to Africa's peace, security and development challenges. Following remarks by each speaker, delegates had opportunities to directly engage the speakers on the content of their presentations. Key issues explored during this session include the nexus between security and development, the roles of the AU and RECs in promoting good governance throughout Africa, challenges in implementing and funding the APSA, and the role of identity-driven diversity and migration in both exacerbating conflict and promoting inclusive and sustainable economic development. A number of emerging trends were highlighted by the discussions. These are outlined below.

Natural resource management

Natural resource management entails the use of natural resources for overall development, as opposed to their exploitation and misuse. Noteworthy mechanisms that cut across national, continental and global mechanisms for managing natural resources are the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) and the Kimberley Process.

The EITI is an initiative launched in 2002 to improve transparency and accountability in countries with rich oil, gas, and mineral (extractive) resources (World Bank 2008). It involves the participation of different countries to adopt regulations for the prudent use and management of natural resource wealth, as well as setting high standards for transparency and accountability. This is done through providing detailed information relevant to the use and management of resources and allowing civil society and

international bodies to monitor and evaluate processes. In terms of mediation, the EITI enables the assessment of governments' commitment to good governance and their willingness to prevent insecurities as a result of lack of transparency and accountability.

The Kimberley Process is a global regulatory framework, supported by stringent national legislation, governing the export and import of rough diamonds (Grant 2012). The system ensures that member states abide by strong regulations, rules, procedures and practices to control the production and trade of rough diamonds. Beyond making certain that a government manages its resources efficiently, the process helps to avert conflict that could result from lack of regulations in the production and trade of diamonds.

Good governance and democracy

The AU emphasises its commitment to promoting democracy and good governance in member states, as evident from Article 3(g) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union (2000) and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, which was adopted on 30 January 2007 and entered into force in February 2012. The AU underscores that good governance is anchored on the principles of democracy. Hence, every state should ensure that it adopts and promotes measures aimed at enhancing democratic principles. States are also expected to guard against zero-sum approaches to democracy and elections, where the majority party or individual winner, in parliamentary and presidential elections respectively, assumes absolute power.

Faith-based mediation

Bercovitch (2009) and others have observed that even though religion can contribute to or cause conflict or the mobilisation of parties to a conflict, it can also be useful in mediation. Through faith-based mediation, religious leaders can help to mediate an end to conflict as a result of their charismatic authority in society.

The African Peer Review Mechanism

One of the pioneering instruments developed by the AU to encourage conformity to political, economic and corporate governance values, codes and standards amongst its member states is the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). Established through adoption of a memorandum of understanding in 2003, within the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the APRM is a voluntary self-monitoring mechanism which is open to any member state of the AU. It assesses compliance of states on an array of continental and international standards and treaties in terms of democracy and political governance, economic governance and management, corporate governance, and socio-economic development. Over 30 states have acceded to the review processes of the mechanism, which progresses through four distinct, though interrelated, stages in terms of base reviews, periodic reviews, requested reviews and reviews during times of crisis (African Peer Review Mechanism 2014).

The role of internally displaced persons, refugees and migrants

There is need to acknowledge and tap into the significant roles which internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees and migrants play in both peacemaking and peacebuilding. Mediation attempts are expected to not only attend to the needs and rights of these people, but to also involve them in conciliation and peace processes.

Plenary session two: 50 years of peacemaking in Africa (1963–2013) – assessment and lessons learnt

This session situated the AU's peacemaking experiences from 1963 to 2013, with participants analysing how lessons gathered over the years could be used to inform future peacemaking initiatives. The session allowed for reflection on the founding principles of the institution, as discussants examined key moments that redefined peacemaking priorities on the continent.

It was noted that issues of non-intervention, colonial boundaries and self-determination, among others, influenced African states' responses to conflict, especially during the time of the OAU. After the Cold War the nature of conflicts changed, with intra-state conflicts becoming more predominant. As the OAU transformed into the AU, principles that emphasised non-indifference as well as the non-recognition of *coups d'état* and other forms of unconstitutional changes of government as ways of accessing power were introduced. This ultimately led to the formation and strengthening of the APSA and the African Governance Architecture (AGA) as well as recognition of the important role that RECs can play in sustaining peace, security and good governance.

With implementation of the APSA, the peacemaking field also experienced some innovations; among them the introduction of reconciliation as an important tool in the consolidation of peace. This was witnessed through different attempts to include truth and reconciliation mechanisms into peace agreements, but also via hybrid forms of restorative justice, such as Rwanda's *gacaca* courts.

Another breakthrough was the introduction of an innovative approach to mediation practice. The AU High-Level Implementation Panel on Sudan (AUHIP) was created and mandated by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) to facilitate negotiations relating to South Sudan's independence from Sudan and assist the parties in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The AUHIP was subsequently tasked with facilitating the Sudanese parties' negotiation of post-referendum arrangements and post-secession relations. The panel's mandate allowed members to focus more systematically on the root causes of the conflict and strengthen and foster confidence in the case of the two Sudans. The work of the AUHIP culminated in the signing of agreements covering security arrangements, oil and transitional financial arrangements, the status of nationals of one country resident in the other, post-service benefits, trade, banking, and border issues.

Rwanda's *gacaca* courts

Traditional community courts, known as '*gacaca*', were formally established in Rwanda in 2001 as a means to expeditiously provide justice in the wake of the 1994 genocide in that country. Given the vast range of crimes committed during the genocide, the country's legal system was considerably overstretched in terms of capacity, as well as the time needed to follow due process under formal legal structures. The *gacaca* courts thus arose as a necessary response to these challenges, by providing an existing community-based, quasi-legal format for the dispensation of transitional justice – which was envisioned as promoting truth, justice and reconciliation. The *gacaca* system allowed for communities to elect judges from among eminent persons within their own communities, to preside over the trials of suspected *génocidaires*, and to hear testimonies at community-level. From a reconciliation perspective, the *gacaca* system were instrumental in providing a means for victims to learn the truth about massacred family members and friends, whilst perpetrators had the opportunity to confess, show remorse and seek forgiveness. At their height, there were 8 000 *gacaca* courts which stretched to all corners of the country. The system was concluded in early 2012 (Clark 2012).

Processes of democratising the continent brought new challenges, among them election-related violence. Electoral observation in Africa remains a short-term exercise which, for the most part, does not provide elements of prevention as advocated for in peacemaking. It was affirmed that there is a need for election observation to be undertaken as long-term engagements that could continue even after the election period. Elections were noted as triggers of violence. It is thus necessary for practitioners and mediators to focus on the root causes of violence, while mitigating potential volatile atmospheres around elections. In Sudan, the AUHIP consistently engaged with different players, such as non-state actors, traditional leaders and the government, ahead of the national elections in 2010. Members also supported the 2011 referendum for South Sudan's independence.

The High-Level Implementation Panel on Sudan

Prior to southern Sudan's secession from Sudan in 2011, Sudan had been embroiled in conflict between its northern and southern regions for decades. The conflict revolved around political, social and economic issues. The second civil war between the northern and southern parts, which began in 1983, was temporarily resolved in 2005 with the signing of Comprehensive Peace Agreement on 9 January 2005. In March 2009, the AU established a high-level panel on Darfur, headed by three former African presidents: Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Abdulsalami Abubaker of Nigeria and Pierre Buyoya of Burundi. The AUHIP played a crucial role in facilitating the negotiations and processes that led to the resolution of the disputes between northern and southern Sudan, and South Sudan's eventual independence from Sudan in 2011 (African Union Peace and Security Council 2013).

Overall, an important aspect of the operations of the OAU/AU pertains to the availability of resources. Delegates considered it noteworthy that most AU member states had not lived up to their responsibility to fund the union sufficiently. This results in insufficient time, reflection and resources being made available for mediation, in comparison to other forms of conflict resolution, such as peacekeeping. Therefore, there is still heavy reliance on external assistance, which attracts different mediation agendas than those of the AU. Putting in place a comprehensive strategy on how African resources can be tapped to fund peacemaking in Africa and to better implement African agendas is key in this regard.

Furthermore, although conceptualisation of the norms and processes employed in mediation on the continent has evolved, more still needs to be done. Initiatives such as high-level panels and special envoys of the AU are, therefore, implemented as attempts to appeal to conflict stakeholders, rather than as efforts to address the root causes of a conflict. The recent launch of the Pan-African Network of the Wise (Pan-Wise) attests to this need and seeks to expand the AU Panel of the Wise (AU PW) by utilising a bottom-up approach to mediation aimed at addressing the root causes of conflict. The Pan-Wise provides opportunities for consolidating peacemaking frameworks by establishing a continental network of panels and councils of the wise. This approach allows for a decentralised approach to mediation on the continent by encouraging greater engagement of national and regional actors.

Plenary session three: African and international mediation at work – looking at specific cases

In this session, panellists were invited to examine specific cases of mediation across the continent. Prominent examples that emerged include broader peacemaking processes in the Sahel region, which was noted as being particularly unstable and of concern, given the relatively recent experiences of Mali – in relation to the lasting legacy of the Libyan crisis. Discussants highlighted the lead role played by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in mediation in the wake of the *coup d'état* and the challenges of coordinating the ensuing array of international interventions. In addition, recent attempts to de-escalate the conflict in the Central African Republic (CAR) were also considered in a similar manner, with panellists evaluating the initiative shown by the AU, the UN and the international community in attempting to quickly arrest the violence.

The case of Egypt was also critically considered within the context of the principles applied by the PSC in the post-Morsi era, while the AUHIP was referred to as an exemplary case of effective African mediation in practice. Panellists noted that numerous public lectures were conducted in Khartoum and Darfur, Sudan. These led to a rich consultation process that included the public at large and which resulted in agreement on a comprehensive definition of the problem at hand, leading to better understanding of the root causes of the conflict. Efforts to clarify the division of labour between the work of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)

and the AUHIP were helpful in enhancing coordination of the peace process. It was further noted that the relationship which developed between the AU and the UNSC during that time was extremely constructive – which ultimately led to the UNSC’s acceptance of the roadmap provided by the AU.

With reference to these specific cases, panellists explained the conditions necessary for successful mediation to take place and underscored the need for processes to be underpinned by principled and strategic agendas which are supported by all stakeholders. Effective resource mobilisation – including mediation capacity – was another factor highlighted in this regard. Lastly, a number of panellists opined that the strict absence of parallel peacemaking processes (or alternative options offered to belligerents) by external actors was a definitive variable in ensuring the efficacy, confidence and buy-in of all actors necessary to move any mediation process forward.

Political crisis and insurgency in Mali

In January 2012, a number of insurgent groups waged a violent independence campaign for the Azawad region in northern Mali, against the government in Bamako. Spearheaded by the Tuareg-led *Mouvement National pour la liberation de l’Azawad* (National Movement for the Independence of Azawad (MNLA)), insurgent groups wrested Azawad from the government by April of that year. The influx of light and heavy weaponry into the region following the 2011 military intervention in Libya is also attributed as having contributed to the arming of Tuareg fighters in northern Mali, which had a considerably damaging effect on the country’s overall security and stability. Compounding the crisis was the ousting of President Amadou Toumani Touré in a *coup d’état* just a month before presidential elections were scheduled to take place. In the wake of these developments, a mutiny ensued and the constitution of the country was suspended, whilst the MNLA advanced in the north to seize control of three major cities (Bakrania 2013).



President Pierre Buyoya, AU High Representative for Mali and the Sahel (left), and Mr Dileita Mohamed Dileita, former member of the AU High Level Panel on Egypt (right), share their mediation experiences.

The AU High-Level Panel for Egypt

The AU High-Level Panel for Egypt was established on 8 July 2013 by the Chairperson of the AU Commission (AUC), Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, following a communiqué on the situation in Egypt adopted by the PSC on 5 July 2013. The panel is led by former President Alpha Oumar Konaré of Mali and comprises former President Festus Gontebanye Mogae of Botswana and former Prime Minister Dileita Mohamed Dileita of Djibouti. The panel initially faced considerable challenges insofar as divergent views were held on whether developments in Egypt that led to the removal of Hosni Mubarak from the position of president, constituted a *coup d'état* or a 'popular uprising'. In light of this, and the subsequent marginalisation of the panel by the Muslim Brotherhood – in part due to sanctions imposed by the AU on the government – the panel consistently advanced an agenda which was based on inclusivity and ensuring that all relevant stakeholders were engaged (African Union 2014).

Plenary session four: Enhancing coordination and harmonisation among African stakeholders and with international partners

Noting that one of the objectives of the retreat was to enable participants to discuss and share their views on shared responsibilities and coordination between African regional and sub-regional, as well as international organisations in addressing complex issues and conflicts through mediation, participants used this session to reflect on lessons learnt from recent mediation cases.

Participants shared experiences of mediating in African sub-regions from different perspectives in order to explore and contribute to the development and use of results-oriented approaches which reflect on the principles of subsidiarity, comparative advantage, and complementarity, using examples of different approaches to mediation.

Some lessons emanated from this session. Firstly, the UN, the AU and RECs should be mutually supportive of each other with respect to their engagement in conflict situations. A case in point was the AU-led mediation in Kenya in the violent aftermath of the 2007 presidential and parliamentary elections. Secondly, when the UN, the AU and RECs compete, mediation is undermined, resulting in lack of confidence in African mediation efforts. The situations in Côte d'Ivoire, Libya, Madagascar and the Darfur region of Sudan were highlighted as cases. Thirdly, there was consensus that AU mediation can be successful when sustained and supported with the right resources. This is illustrated by the case of the AUHIP in Sudan and South Sudan. Finally, mediation in Africa, it was agreed, continues to face challenges and shortcomings due to lack of expertise, limited resources, and the inconsistent grasping of 'windows of opportunity' where mediation could have mitigated violence. To overcome these deficiencies, there were suggestions that enhanced efforts to develop leadership in mandated mediations should be prioritised.

Post-election violence in Kenya

Violence erupted in Kenya after the 27 December 2007 elections which led to the declaration of the then incumbent president, Mwai Kibaki, as the winner of the election, to the dismay of the supporters of Kibaki's opponent, Raila Odinga of the Orange Democratic Movement. Odinga's supporters alleged that the election was rigged by Kibaki's government. After staging several non-violent protests, opposition supporters resorted to violence and the killing of Kikuyus – Kibaki's ethnic group. The police attempted to reign in the violent outbursts. Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan was instrumental in bringing the two sides to the negotiation table, with the support of IGAD and the AU. The joint mediation efforts of the UN, IGAD and the AU led to the signing of a power-sharing deal called the National Accord and Reconciliation Act on 28 February 2008, which effectively brought to an end the 2007/08 post-election violence in the country (Langer 2011).

Summary of proceedings: Day two

Plenary session one: Harnessing mediation capacities to address humanitarian, gender and inclusiveness dimensions in peace processes

This session explored current approaches employed to promote the inclusion of humanitarian and gender issues in peacemaking. Participants identified best practices in prioritising humanitarian dimensions in mediation processes. Various speakers examined strategies employed and lessons learnt in promoting the inclusion of women and youth as stakeholders in peace negotiations.

Although some progress has been made by the OAU/AU in fulfilling its peace and security mandate in the last 50 years, it is clear that women have continued to suffer the most during conflicts and that they must, therefore, be involved in efforts aimed at resolving conflict, as intended by UNSC Resolution 1325 (African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes 2011). The international and continental normative frameworks that define inclusivity in conflict resolution are also fully integrated into the APSA, which is critical to the prevention of conflict. However, discussants argued that it is imperative to progress from discourses on early warning initiatives to early action efforts.

As Africa grapples with the different schools of thought that promote retributive as opposed to restorative justice in post-conflict recovery, the issue of accountability came up for discussion. In the wake of recent debates about the cases of the International Criminal Court (ICC) against certain African leaders, with particular reference to President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya and President Omar al-Bashir of Sudan, there was convergence of opinions about the level of accountability that politicians should

assume for gross violations of human rights. Within this context, blanket amnesty for perpetrators of serious abuses was discussed in light of impunity, which sends wrong messages to both perpetrators and victims. There remains a huge challenge in promoting reconciliation through mediation and, at the same time, addressing issues of justice. Africa has developed a continental judicial mechanism, through the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights and, subsequently, the African Court of Justice and Human Rights (ACJHR). In February 2009, the AU summit added what would be a criminal division to the ACJHR. This framework, it was argued, could be strengthened to handle cases such as those of the Kenyan and Sudanese presidents. This situation led, in January 2014, to the AU summit calling on its member states to speak with one voice against criminal proceedings at the ICC against sitting presidents, following a UNSC decision in November 2013 to reject an AU demand to suspend the ICC trial of the two leaders.

Retributive and restorative justice

Retributive justice focuses on ensuring that perpetrators are punished before reconciliation can take place and peace can take root. Practitioners in the field argue that there is no peace and no reconciliation without punitive justice. Restorative justice, on the other hand, is more concerned about mending relations between victim and offender and the broader community to which they belong. Rather than punishing perpetrators, as retributive justice seeks to do, restorative justice pursues ways of reintegrating offenders back into their societies through truth-telling and repentance on the part of offenders and forgiveness on the part of victims (Institute for Democratic and Electoral Assistance 2003).

AU Peace and Security Department



Panelists presenting at the retreat. From left to right: Mr Hervé Ludovic de Lys, then UNICEF representative in Côte d'Ivoire, Ms Leila Zerrougui, UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Mr Moussa Faki Mahamat, former Prime Minister of Chad, and Mr Adama Dieng, UN Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide.

Countries in the Great Lakes region created committees which focused on the prevention of genocide and crimes against humanity. It is important to support and enhance the capacity of such institutions to earnestly pursue justice and support peace processes in societies in conflict. This will help to guarantee that parties to a conflict are conscious of their humanitarian obligations. In this regard, humanitarian issues should also be considered during mediation processes, hence the need for mediators to be empowered with regard to negotiating an end to conflict and still attending to humanitarian concerns. Mediation processes can provide vital political will for justice and reconciliation to take place, particularly if practitioners adopt the principle that peace and justice are essential to end violence and prevent its recurrence. Thus, mediators need to address the root causes and underlying factors of violent conflict if they are to contribute to building durable peace. Additionally, there were observations that actors supporting justice, truth and reconciliation initiatives should be carefully considered. It was commented that the state should take a supporting, rather than leading role, and that civil society is expected to be at the forefront of efforts to achieve justice and reconciliation to ensure that the results are owned by all stakeholders, especially those at grass-roots level.

Plenary session two: Rethinking African paradigms of conflict resolution and peacemaking

This session reflected on the philosophical, conceptual and practical dimensions of Pan-African paradigms and approaches to peacemaking. The panel reviewed and reflected on theory and practice at regional and local level to stimulate discussion aimed at uncovering recommended African approaches to conflict resolution which could be integrated into the AU's mediation agenda.

Transitional issues of peace vis-à-vis justice were discussed at length, using South Africa as a reference point. It was noted that the AU needs to sharpen its principles to achieve more coherence between peace and justice. Another example was Darfur, where the AUHIP interrogated the system of international law and the AU mandate before crafting a strategy of intervention that is enunciated in the Doha Agreement. Delegates argued that the paramount consideration is to encourage communitarian values by adopting a Pan-Africanist vision in the adaptation of paradigms of mediation. Other views emphasised the need to move from individualistic mediation to insider mediation, which is fast gaining prominence for its effectiveness.

Insider mediation

Insider mediation entails the use of respected and trusted individuals who have deep knowledge of the dynamics and context of a conflict and can contribute to finding sensitive conflict resolution solutions which are recognised and valued by all parties to the conflict (Hislaire 2011).

Mediation efforts need to be based on social reconstruction approaches. In this case, insider mediation would not replace individual mediation, but rather reinforce its sustainability. To this end, the implementation of peace agreements needs to be supported by insider mediation. Having said that, there is no universal framework in place for peacemaking, and the call for additional efforts to collate and document experiences of insider mediation is an emerging trend in Africa.

Gender dynamics were also examined. In the discussions, it was affirmed that there is need to increase training opportunities for women, as both insider and external mediators. Conceptual issues and differences were interrogated as well. Notable in the deliberations was the necessity to clarify concepts of 'African mediation', 'African solutions' and 'African paradigms'. It was not lost on the discussants that for reference purposes, experts need to look into traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution in Europe, where the focus is on the cultural contexts of mediation. Therefore, in rethinking mediation paradigms, more emphasis should be placed on structural prevention which could integrate policies pertaining to politics and peace and security. In a bid to contextualise this line of thought within the African context, discussions revolved around the need to rethink national dialogues in order to provide platforms that inform citizens on the process of implementing peace agreements through reform mechanisms.

Plenary session three: Reinforcing institutional foundations for a peaceful, united and prosperous Africa

This session primarily focused on developing greater understanding of the AU's Agenda 2063 and how it relates to mediation, preventive diplomacy and conflict transformation in Africa. In addition, panellists considered the necessary steps which ought to be taken to achieve complete operationalisation of certain AU frameworks and instruments in support of the vision. Agenda 2063 is a strategy which outlines how Africa should learn from the past, build on progress currently being made, and strategically exploit all opportunities available in the immediate and medium term to ensure positive socio-economic transformation within the next 50 years (African Union 2013a).

The majority of views expressed underscored that the 50th anniversary of the OAU/AU provides an ideal opportunity to plan for the future, by reflecting on lessons from the past. A number of speakers pointed to the need for a more integrated approach to development in Africa, one which is fundamentally informed by a holistic examination of conflict through consultative processes, and based on the notion that development and peace have a mutually reinforcing symbiotic relationship. An astute position put forward was that despite consensus that Africa is at a decisive moment in its development aspirations, the continent is not yet at the tipping point, considering that most of the continent's gains over the past 50 years are not necessarily irreversible.

It emerged through discussion of a number of interventions that Africa is indeed at an advantageous position – should it fully capitalise on progress made so far – given that

many of the essential institutional frameworks for development are already in place. Viewed in conjunction with the assertion that the continent by no means lacks a ‘grand narrative’ (with reference to Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance), the session concluded that Africa does not need to ‘reinvent the wheel’, but should rather focus on consolidating and capacitating the plethora of mechanisms and frameworks already in place to advance peace, security and good governance.

Concerns were nonetheless expressed about the continent’s changing demographic landscape, the slow pace and skewed distribution of economic opportunities and technological innovation, as well as the challenges of translating economic growth into meaningful development and improved security and stability. Lastly, it was noted that Agenda 2063 rightly operates with the assumption that there is a direct relationship between development and peace, and that the APSA should be more meaningfully consolidated with national and continental development pillars. The question of implementing the strategy, however, remained largely open for debate.

Parallel sessions: The Africa I want to see: Conflict transformation in Africa

I. Development, prevention and structural transformation

This parallel session explored the ways in which development policies can be used to support and enhance conflict prevention, management and mitigation, as well as post-conflict reconstruction. The speaker shared a globalised development context in which all violence occurs, quantifying the devastating impact of conflict on countries’ economic health and outlooks. The session then sought to explain how conflict prevention can be addressed through development. It highlighted the importance of considering an approach that would put more emphasis on the link between structural and operational conflict prevention schemes in which all actors (from local through to international levels) would be engaged.

Critical issues highlighted during the session

- There is a need to more effectively link structural and operational conflict prevention across the continent. In this regard, all actors (from local through to international level players) have a responsibility – one which must be clearly articulated and put into practice.
- African governance institutions must play more substantial roles in working with the AU and its partners to leverage capacities and effect a paradigm shift towards conflict prevention.
- Emphasis must be placed on advancing social cohesion as an underpinning feature of effective peacemaking.

- Greater value must be attached to inclusivity in mediation practices, for instance by identifying and nominating women as lead mediators in high-level international and local mediation teams, and by involving young people in mediation practices to enable them to gain experience in the field
- Specialised media should be trained on mediation practices and peacebuilding to disseminate good practices more effectively.

To achieve such an integrated approach to prevention, it was argued that development initiatives must be led by the state, which would work with bilateral and international partners to leverage capacities and effect paradigm shifts. Furthermore, on interrogating the security–development nexus, emphasis was placed on the necessity of improving the quality of national institutions and increasing the inclusiveness of national governments in order to significantly reduce the likelihood of violent conflict within a given country. As such, the notion of social cohesion was suggested as an underpinning feature of effective peacemaking efforts.

II. Conflict transformation, participation and inclusivity: Women, children and youth

This session introduced recommendations contained in the declarations of the intergenerational dialogue/youth summit and the women’s conference, both of which took place before the AU’s Golden Jubilee Summit in May 2013. The platform enabled delegates to explore and offer practical strategies for the integration of proposed recommendations in the AU’s development, peace and security agendas. In particular, the session discussed various ways in which the continental organisation could actively promote the inclusion of women and children as strategic stakeholders for sustaining and consolidating peace efforts.

Information on the case of Côte d’Ivoire came out of the efforts of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) to develop a country-specific strategy. It started with the design and implementation of a country-level conflict scan. Through its research, UNICEF discovered that the conflict had resulted in a situation that was particularly dangerous for women and youth. Even schools were no longer safe due to indoctrination taking place there. However, there were indications that young people wanted to be agents of change. Another finding was that alternative education (especially in Islamic schools) was rapidly developing. Based on these findings, UNICEF focused on education in peacebuilding. This included efforts to engage the national commission on education to include youth issues in their programme. For Islamic schools, efforts were made to ensure that their curricula were recognised by Côte d’Ivoire’s ministry of education. UNICEF also deemed it important to fund psychosocial support for women and youth affected by conflict.

It was posited that demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration processes should also include issues of women and youth. To this end, it is necessary to look at best practices on this topic and share/implement them where and when applicable. Noting that education can be harmful when mismanaged, it was argued that education schemes should look at national priorities for both girls and boys. It remains important to find the nexus between mediation practices and modern social development. This link, it was concluded, was either missing or underdeveloped in most cases in Africa.

The AU Gender Architecture

The AU has three structures in place: the APSA, AGA and the AU Gender Architecture. The latter rests on six policy pillars (Martin 2013):

- Constitutive Act of the AU, which explicitly recognises the importance of human rights and shows a strong commitment to gender equality
- African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which declares gender equality as a principle within all AU instruments
- Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol)
- Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (which is a reporting framework)
- African Women's Decade, which is an implementation framework for the creation of a methodology that ensures that within 10 years (2010–20), member states implement gender equality measures contained in other binding documents
- Fund for African Women, which sets aside one per cent of the overall AU budget every year.

Critical issues highlighted during the session

- There is a disjuncture between the effectiveness of top-down versus bottom-up approaches, with particular reference to the AU's Gender directorate.
- Ownership of conflict transformation processes is a key factor of success but there are often challenges on the ground amongst stakeholders who clash with methodologies imposed from 'the top'. Against this background, there should be a stronger push to ensure prior scoping of activities.
- Building the capacities of national institutions within AU member states needs to be better prioritised to ensure that work done is effective.

III. Democratisation, elections and conflict transformation: Perspectives from African scholars

In recent years, countries such as Côte d'Ivoire (2010), Kenya (2007) and Zimbabwe (2008) experienced contested electoral processes, which were often accompanied by lethal violence and had disastrous political and socio-economic consequences. Building

on existing international, and in particular AU instruments on elections such as the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and related practices, this session assessed the opportunities and challenges in efforts to achieve violence- and dispute-free electoral processes in Africa. The overall record of post-conflict elections in Africa is a mixed bag, with some processes resulting in transitions to democracy and peace, while others fail to achieve the desired result, particularly when the timing, funding and electoral systems are inadequate.

The 2010 electoral crisis in Côte d'Ivoire

Côte d'Ivoire's late 2010 presidential elections led to the contested outcome of both the incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo and opposition leader Alassane Ouattara claiming victory, and taking the presidential oath of office. This subsequently precipitated the 2010–11 Ivorian crisis and the country's second civil war.

Numerous international actors including the AU affirmed their support for Ouattara who was acknowledged to have legitimately defeated Gbagbo at the ballot box, despite the country's constitutional court having declared Gbagbo as the winner. Armed conflict ensued between supporters of both sides and led to the intervention of a UN peacekeeping force and the French military. Gbagbo was ultimately captured by Ouattara's forces who were assisted by French troops, placed under the guard of the UN and later extradited to the ICC (Cook 2011).

Participants questioned the notion of and relationship between democracy and elections. There was agreement that they do not equate. The speakers alluded to what they referred to as the 'fallacy of electoralism' which is thinking that elections equal democracy and that democracy equals elections (Osaghae 2004). They noted that in reality, however, there can be elections without democracy but there cannot be democracy without elections. In essence, the speakers drew attention to the fact that elections are not an end in themselves, but rather a necessary mechanism to achieve the broader objective of a vibrant and functional democracy. Thus, regularly holding elections should not be necessarily understood as a true indicator of a healthy democracy. That said, there is need to deepen democracy between elections, and to strengthen institutions and democratic culture.

Participants agreed that there is no need to invent an 'African democracy' and that democracy is a universal system that should be applied to different contexts all over the world. In conclusion, participants put forward that democracy needs to be commensurate to the socio-economic and political context of a country, and have a symbiotic relationship with elections, which are not a panacea but an ingredient in the democratic process.

Given that in many countries elections are sometimes considered to be 'war by other means', delegates recommended close interrogation of the environment of elections, particularly the pre-election phase, so as to employ preventive diplomacy and early

warning tools. Emphasis was put on political actors, who are as important as, if not more important than, the electoral architecture. Political parties, it was emphasised, have a major role to play and are ill-placed if they entered elections with the idea of going to war. Yet, it was acknowledged that in some instances where a few elections have taken place since the gaining of independence, political actors, as much as voters, seem to lack the necessary experience.

The session was concluded by the delegates agreeing that political parties need to be democratic in order to operate well in a democratic system. Here, the ‘grooming’ of politicians towards respecting the modus operandi of elections was found to be a key determinant in efforts to inculcate peaceful electoral processes.

Critical issues highlighted during the session

- It is important to acknowledge that whereas peace agreements almost invariably entail provisions for post-conflict electoral processes, this practice has contributed to relapses of conflict in a number of countries: Angola, Liberia and Côte d’Ivoire for instance.
- Election management bodies should ideally work in tandem with independent bodies and government ministries in managing elections.
- Much work remains to be done to change perceptions which might lead to high potential for conflict around elections.
- It is necessary to foster broader understanding that elections are but one aspect of a functioning democracy.
- Existing African frameworks which cover elections, among them the African Charter on Elections and Governance, must be more uniformly adhered to.
- Although democracy is a universal concept, countries do, and should, adapt democratic principles in accordance with their own cultural contexts.

IV. Radicalisation, militancy, piracy, violence, natural resources and mediation

This session allowed delegates to unpack the phenomena of popular uprisings, extremism, radicalisation and terrorism within the context of conflicts in Africa. Participants explored the practical roles of mediation and negotiation in the resolution of situations caused by these occurrences in Africa. They reflected on approaches that can be used within the African context to prevent and manage these phenomena.

The speaker noted that little time has been invested in understanding radicalisation. There are simplifications that have made it difficult to fully comprehend this phenomenon, as there is overwhelming focus on the latter stages of radicalisation, with little focus on the conditions that give rise to it. Radicalisation is a process that begins with a grievance, progresses to the adoption of an extremist narrative and matures with the involvement of social and group dynamics (Schmid 2013).

There are fallacies that are associated with radicalisation. Firstly, there is an assumption that radicalisation is a recent phenomenon. Some of the strategies adopted by early radical groups, such as the *Lehi* group in the British Mandate of Palestine which for example conducted assassinations, are the same ones being used today. The second fallacy is that radicalisation is linked to poverty. This, too, is not the case. Radical movements are actually not very poor in light of the sophisticated weapons and means with which they express their views and ideologies. These weapons cost a lot of money and resources to obtain. Participants, however, noted that economic deprivation plays a part in radicalisation, especially in the recruitment of followers. Nevertheless, caution must be encouraged when lending credence to this assumption. The third misconception is that illiteracy is linked to radicalisation. A pertinent question was asked in this regard: 'how come radicalisation did not happen immediately after independence when illiteracy levels were higher?' There is also an assumption that the Islamic faith is what contributes to radicalisation. The speaker and participants affirmed that Islam is a way of life, much more than a religion, and thus it is not appropriate to link religion and radicalisation.

The speaker explained that radicalisation is not a problem that is likely to disappear soon. Radicalised groups have realised the strength of their weapons. Furthermore, radicalisation pits the rich against the poor and as long as the grievances that come with this social structure exist, radicalised groups will use them to their advantage.

This session also examined the links between natural resources and conflicts and how mediation can be successfully used to bring peace to such contexts. Participants affirmed that natural resources do not cause conflicts, but that it is the management of these resources that does. Poor management was blamed for the multiple natural resource-based conflicts in Africa. Moreover, while there has been a lot of attention on trendy resources, like oil and diamonds, much more focus should be placed on land, which harbours these resources. It is also noteworthy that every community in Africa places high premium on land.

How, then, does mediation fit in? Mediation is bound to take a different form, since the issues that will arise from radicalisation and contestations over ownership and management of natural resources are bound to be more sophisticated than before. To begin with, a mediator can, for instance, mediate with people she or he can see. Radicalised groups rarely come out and are, more often than not, only known by name. Even those that reveal themselves, for example the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda, have proved difficult to negotiate with. Groups such as this present enormous challenges for mediators, trials which should engage mediators in reflection on what and how best to mediate. Mediators can play a vital role in breaking barriers to negotiation and presenting incentives for radicalised groups and conflict parties to negotiate an end to crisis.

Critical issues highlighted during the session

- With regard to radicalisation, it was noted that there are large knowledge gaps, insufficient research and, subsequently ill-informed policy on the matter. It is important to foster greater understanding of the various factors that contribute to and result in radicalisation.
- A number of fallacies concerning radicalisation exist, which must be addressed through appropriate research and policy: that radicalisation is a recent phenomenon, that it is always linked to poverty and illiteracy, and that it is always associated with one particular religion, Islam.
- Making the link between natural resources and conflict, it was noted that there is an unreasonable proportion of international attention on commodities in Africa, which ignores land as the most critical natural resource. There is need to devote greater time and effort to understanding pastoral issues, as well as the ways in which policies around such matters are crafted.

Plenary session four: The Africa I want to see and the role of international partners – prospects and challenges

This session highlighted the diverse and mutually beneficial relationships between the AU and its bilateral and multilateral partners in the field of peace and security. Central to these discussions were acknowledgments of the various opportunities and methods through which the highlighted partners can effectively support Africa-driven solutions to conflicts on the continent. In interrogating the various partnerships, these discussions emphasised the partners' continued support for the implementation and financing of the APSA, the development of national and multilateral technical capacities, and the increased primacy and comparative advantage of African institutions in leading interventions. Furthermore, the international partners emphasised the importance of improving women's active participation in national economies, increasing regional economic integration throughout Africa, and enhancing partnerships between African private sector corporations and their counterparts from other countries. The panellists concluded that African member states should augment their financial contributions to African multilateral organisations to ensure these institutions' future sustainability, as well as to further capitalise on African countries and institutions' comparative advantages in driving long-term and sustainable solutions to conflicts on the continent.

Recommendations and best practices

Fifty-year review

The OAU had some achievements in conflict resolution, particularly in mediating border disputes; the major reason for interstate conflict in Africa during the early years of decolonisation. However, most of the armed conflicts in the 1990s were internal

(Cusimano 2000). As a Pan-African organisation, the OAU had an obligation to address such conflicts, inasmuch as they involved gross violations of human rights, including genocide, and had a humanitarian dimension to them due to the large numbers of refugees and IDP they created (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2013). The OAU's mediation efforts were fraught with challenges due to the non-interventionist grounding of the continental body, as endorsed by Article II of the OAU Charter which highlighted the sovereignty and territorial integrity of member states. The OAU's principle of 'non-interference' in the internal affairs of member states restricted its mediation efforts on both interstate and intrastate conflicts. As a consequence, the OAU failed to fully establish and activate the Commission of Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration as provided for by the OAU Charter. In addition, the OAU did not have adequate resources, and there was no cooperation at political level between the OAU and the regional economic groupings of the time (now known as RECs), even on issues of resolving and managing conflicts in their respective member states (Williams 2011).

In 1993, in an attempt to improve the OAU's performance, the Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution was established to replace the Commission of Mediation. The organ had a broader mandate that led to the creation of the Conflict Management Centre within the OAU Secretariat and the deployment of civilian and military missions, although of small numbers and limited sizes. However, its performance was characterised by difficulties and ineffectiveness and ultimately, it was transformed into the PSD's Conflict Management Division (CMD) following the transformation of the OAU into the AU.



Former Secretary-General of the OAU (1989–2001) Dr Salim Ahmed Salim speaks on the evolution of OAU/AU conflict management efforts. Dr Salim is now a member of the AU Friends of the Panel of the Wise.

The OAU's Central Organ of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution was affected by the same restrictive measures in the OAU Charter and further hampered by limited resources and ineffective policies, strategies and institutional capacity. African leaders began to reflect on new strategies, even as the 20th century came to a close. From the late 1990s to the early 2000s, many African scholars and leaders engaged in and reflected on the need to transform the OAU into an organisation that would be empowered to play a major role in resolving Africa's armed conflicts and be able to move the continent towards sustainable peace and development.

Since its formation the AU, in line with its aims, has tried to operate differently in many respects, not only to overcome previous challenges experienced by the OAU, but also to effectively handle and address the changing nature of conflicts that now includes a wide range of insecurities that transcend interstate conflicts and civil war to regional conflicts, terrorism, organised criminal activities, and others. This the continental body has tried to do by drafting new legal instruments, policies and strategies, structures, and general systems of operation. The AU's mediation mandate has a wider role placed on it by AU organs, particularly the PSC, the AUC and the RECs. It is worth noting that the PSC is complemented by other pillars of the APSA: the AUC, Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), African Standby Force (ASF), the AU PW and the Africa Peace Fund (APF). In the case of violent conflict, the AU has been able to activate its mediatory instruments by deploying the AU PW, as well as special envoys and high-level panels to mediate an end to conflict. Mediation remains a significant medium used by the AU, to not only contain ongoing conflicts but to also focus on preventive measures, rather than reactive approaches to conflict management in Africa. This is manifested through, among others, the 2006 signing of the UN-AU Ten-Year Capacity Building Programme Framework, which sought to develop a specific plan to enhance mediation capacities within the AU. The programme has received remarkable support in different aspects from other partners.

A major challenge confronting the AU is resources. Delegates at the retreat noted how African states provide a smaller percentage of the APF, while international donors provided the bulk of resources. With so much dependency on external funding, participants raised concerns about ownership and sustainability of peace and security initiatives on the continent by Africans. This incapacity has also been attributed to the multiple regional subscriptions of AU member states. Nzongola-Ntalaja (2013) posits that by spreading themselves thin, countries deprive institutions of the skills and money they need. This raises the question of how strongly committed Africa's leaders are to economic and political integration.

Emerging trends

From discussions at the retreat, there are a number of issues and themes that cut across most, if not all, of the parallel and plenary sessions. When further distilled, these cross-cutting themes show emerging trends in the field of mediation in Africa, as highlighted below.

Transnational issues and impacts on conflict

On a continent that is increasingly interconnected, intrastate conflicts have gradually transformed into transnational problems. A closer examination of the types of conflicts taking place demonstrates that, in fact, even purely internal conflicts occur in an international setting in such a way that belligerents battle not only for political power, but also for recognition by the international community, access to international markets, and trade in natural resources. Some conflicts that would be deemed purely internal have become transnational as they involve increasingly larger groups of fighters from abroad, financial and military backing from foreign governments, or incursions into and even occupation of foreign territory. Thus, internal armed conflicts tend to be mixed conflicts; that is, they take place largely within the territory of one state, but occur in an internationalised setting as they impact on the outside world and are also influenced by external forces. Odermatt (2009) contends that it is becoming increasingly difficult to categorise conflicts as either international or non-international, based on the high level of external factors that cause or sustain internal conflicts.

Institutionalisation of post-conflict reconstruction within the AU

With the reconstitution of the OAU into a more versatile and forward-looking AU, post-crisis recovery has taken a more pragmatic outlook as the organisation seeks to move away from reactive interventions and adopt more proactive ones. To this end, there is increasing political will on the part of the AU to not only fully operationalise the APSA, but to also creatively institute structures that could complement it. A case in point is the launching of the Pan-Wise in April 2013, a body which is anchored on the AU PW and seeks to assist the latter in filling its operational deficits.

National, continental and global mechanisms for natural resource management

Due to increasing global realisation of the implications of illegal trade in natural resources and, by extension, the role this trade plays in fanning civil conflicts as exemplified by the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, there is a trend towards the establishment of legal and technical frameworks which aim to ensure conflict-sensitive exploitation and management of natural resources. These frameworks include the EITI and the Kimberly Process, among others, which seek to reduce the occurrence of natural resource-related violence.

The nexus between good governance and democracy

Debates among peacebuilding practitioners and academics have converged on the notion that the level of good governance in a country is directly proportional to levels of democratisation of its institutions. It is also contended by proponents of democratic peace theory that democracies are unlikely to engage in any kind of militarised disputes

with other identified democracies, or to let any such disputes escalate into war (Kitamura 2008). This school of thought has influenced the way major funders of crisis prevention and recovery interventions have operated in recent times.

The role of religion in mediation

Religion and faith-based institutions have, over time, shown their invaluable role in the prevention and de-escalation of violent conflicts. Haynes (2009) postulates that religion can both encourage conflict and build peace, reflecting growing evidence that religious forces can play a constructive role in helping to resolve conflicts. Religious individuals and faith-based organisations, as carriers of religious ideas, can play important parts, not only as sources of conflict, but also as agents for conflict resolution and peacebuilding, providing early warnings of conflict, being good offices once conflict has erupted, and contributing to advocacy, mediation and reconciliation. Motivated by religious goals of seeking peace, religious leaders and faith-based non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have frequently played prominent roles as mediators or intervening in other ways in violent conflicts. Some religious figures have been able to use their positions of authority to work towards peace and to forward the cause of justice.

Zero-sum approaches to democracy and elections

For a myriad of reasons (including structural, institutional, legal and organisational causes), election-related conflicts and political violence have been on the increase since the end of the Cold War, in spite of the spread of democratisation across the continent (African Union Panel of the Wise 2010). The links between elections, peace and security, and democratisation are not automatic. They are contingent upon many factors. In some cases, elections build and enhance democracy and its institutions while, in others, elections lead to contested results and violence. The most publicised cases of electoral violence in Africa entailed elites from different ethnic groups appealing to sectarian and partisan interests and transforming elections into zero-sum contests. In some cases, for instance in Kenya, these patterns of mobilisation, in turn, invited violent reactions from competing ethnic and regional groups, igniting violence during and after elections.

Increased role of regional economic communities and regional mechanisms

In recent conflict situations, since the transformation of the OAU to the AU, the important role of RECs and RMs in preventive diplomacy has been underscored. This has been buoyed by the 2008 Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Area of Peace and Security between the African Union, Regional Economic Communities and the Coordinating Mechanisms of the Regional Standby Brigades of Eastern Africa and North Africa (African Union 2008). There is realisation that for the APSA to be fully operationalised, RECs and RMs need to play a more prominent role in preventive diplomacy and post-crisis recovery efforts.

The African Union in conflict prevention, management and resolution

Review of African Union operational instruments

The AU has committed itself to the prevention, management and resolution of conflict on the continent since its establishment in 2000. The body has managed to set up a truly comprehensive and reflective peace and security framework – and associated organs and practices – which collectively seek to address the continent’s peace and security challenges. Arguably, it is this normative institutional structure which has firmly established the basis for the robust re-emergence of African agency over the continent’s own peace and security agenda. This is significantly expressed in the creation and implementation of the APSA, which involves the joint and complementary efforts of continental, regional and national peace and security institutions and mechanisms. The APSA is a forward-looking and proactive continent-wide security infrastructure which leverages the strengths of the RECs to foster greater continental integration, with particular regard to peace and security.

At the heart of the APSA is the PSC, which is mandated with overseeing conflict prevention, management and resolution efforts on the continent. The PSC, whose powers are defined under Article 7 of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (African Union 2003), is composed of 15 members at any given time. Of the PSC’s 15 members, ten are elected for two-year terms, with five being elected for a period of three years. The PSC serves as a collective security decision-making authority, which facilitates timely and efficient responses to conflict and crisis situations on the continent (Dersso 2014). The council has been increasingly successful in terms of its growing involvement in the continent’s overarching peace and security concerns. Its decisions have thus far addressed a wide range of issues, including unconstitutional changes of government and the deployment of peacekeeping operations, most notably to Sudan and Somalia.

The ASF was created in May 2003 in accordance with Article 13 of the PSC Protocol, to carry out peace support operations for the AU. The force shall be deployed to crisis regions across the continent. It is specifically designed to lead in instances where peacemaking efforts have failed and a peace operation is required – through a PSC-mandated peace support intervention – to contain armed conflict, enforce decisions of the PSC, support peacebuilding efforts and provide humanitarian relief and disaster management support (Dersso 2014). The ASF is expected to be fully operational by 2015 and is structured along five standby brigades from each of the continent’s five regions. The ASF will, furthermore, serve as a multidimensional peace support force with distinct military, police and civilian components.

A vital part of the APSA, with its conflict prevention and mediation outlook, is the AU PW, which was officially inaugurated in December 2007 under Article 11 of the PSC Protocol. The panel is made up of five members, representing Africa’s five

regions. Members are appointed by the AU Assembly and are selected based on their outstanding past contributions to peace, security, and development. They are expected to use their expert knowledge and moral influence to resolve conflicts peacefully, via diplomacy and mediation, as well as provide advice to the PSC. Members of the panel whose terms have expired have been retained as Friends of the Panel, and continue to support the AU PW, especially in light of the increasing scope of work of the body.

The CEWS was established with the aim of developing an early warning module based on clearly defined and accepted political, economic, social, military and humanitarian indicators, which are used to analyse developments within the continent and to recommend the best courses of action. This helps the PSC to make informed decisions and to deploy the AU PW and ASF as necessary.

The AU's PCRD framework was developed at the 7th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council in Libya in July 2005 to drive the organisation's responsibility to rebuild. It is envisioned that the policy will establish conflict management mechanisms and reliable institutions based on democratic principles and that it will strengthen institutions so they are more capable of addressing conflicts to avoid their resurgence. Moreover, the APF was established to ensure that ample resources are available to drive APSA initiatives. Within the framework of the APSA, the role of the AUC cannot be understated. Given the fact that the commission serves as the secretariat of the AU, and that it provides the necessary links between the chairperson, the assembly and the PSC, the AUC can arguably be called the prime implementing agent in many peace and security processes (Williams 2011).



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The retreat provided a platform for delegates to revisit the current state of peace and security on the continent.

Cumulatively, the APSA provides a sturdy and robust policy framework (with regard to norms, principles and approaches) as well as a responsive institutional structure which, on paper at the very least, appears to not only be ambitious in terms of its scale and scope, but malleable and adaptive to the dynamic continental peace and security landscape. The AU has, to date, made considerable inroads in further developing its conflict prevention, management and resolution capacities – particularly since the establishment of the PSC, and with regard to the organisation’s adherence to (and most distinct break with its former incarnation) the principle of non-indifference (Møller 2009). Most notably, the PSC has mandated and executed peacekeeping missions in Burundi, Sudan, Somalia and, most recently, in Mali and the CAR – all of which entailed a significant degree of international cooperation with the UN and a range of other actors.

The AU’s considerable ‘track record’ in the field of conflict prevention, management and resolution, across all corners of the continent, relative to the OAU’s record, is indeed encouraging – and provides for a great degree of optimism moving forward. This optimism must, however, be tempered by deeper appreciation of the gradual pace of development of the organisation as a whole, the prevailing international political and economic environment in which it operates, and the historic context from which it emerged. It must not be forgotten that the AU, relative to other, more established intergovernmental organisations, is considerably young – with many of its constituent organs and initiatives in an understandably nascent phase of development. This allows the organisation a great deal of flexibility in responding to Africa’s various peace and security challenges.

While the APSA remains the broad institutional framework under which these efforts are executed, the prevailing conflict environment in Africa has proved to be particularly difficult to forecast and act on to prevent conflict. This has necessitated a series of high-level post-conflict political engagements, as well as greater demand for peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts. Nonetheless, despite the relative youth of the organisation, the AU has effectively taken charge of numerous conflict situations across the continent and initiated and engaged in multiple peace and security missions and processes since its establishment. Most significantly, however, the PSC is now regarded as the primary actor responsible for the maintenance of peace and security in Africa. The council has developed extensive working relations with a range of external actors and partners to increase impacts in this area (Dersso 2014).

Challenges to the mandate of the PSC, however, persist – as do general complications with conflict forecasting and subsequent prevention, management and resolution efforts. The overriding issues limiting progress in this regard can largely be attributed to lack of resources and, consequently, insufficient capacity (Vines 2013). Given the scale and scope of the APSA, limited progress in its implementation may prove particularly damaging for the AU, and to the generation of perceptions among both ordinary Africans and international actors that it is ineffective. Only enhanced political will can ensure the changes envisioned in the framework’s founding documents.

Arguably, challenges emanating from lack of resources and capacity may have the additional effect of marginalising Africa and African countries at international level (Rupiya 2012). Indeed, there still exists considerable unease between the organisation and Africa's former colonial powers – especially in matters of peace and security on the continent. This therefore remains a fundamental challenge that directly stands in the way of a more assertive and pragmatic approach by the AU to challenges of conflict on the continent.

Relevant African Union instruments for peacemaking

The AU's emphasis on enhancing institutionalisation of conflict prevention, management and resolution has led to peacemaking being acknowledged within the ambit of the APSA. Thus, all relevant peacemaking instruments may be understood within these parameters, and may be further defined alongside the architecture's constituent institutional components, including the PSC, ASF, CEWS and AU PW.

In his examination of the APSA, Dersso (2014) explains that the architecture is essentially comprised of two key components: the normative and policy framework and what he refers to as the institutional dimension. The former deals with the AU's institutionalisation of norms and development of policy frameworks related to conflict prevention, management and resolution. Dersso (2014) groups these along three pillars:

1. human-centred socio-economic development based on social justice
2. human rights, democracy, good governance and related values
3. peace and security in a narrow sense.

The Constitutive Act of the AU is considered to be the foundation of the APSA's components, with Dersso's three pillars elaborating on the values and principles which underpin the framework's legal and policy instruments.

The latter component refers to the sub-set of institutional structures, noted above, which fall within the ambit of the APSA and which were specifically established under Article 2 of the PSC Protocol. Chief amongst these institutions is the PSC itself which oversees the day-to-day conflict prevention, management and resolution efforts on the continent. Relevant to peacemaking, the CEWS is envisioned as serving as a central institutional node of the APSA, with the mandate to aid efforts to effectively prevent conflict through the collection and analysis of emerging security threats across Africa.

The CEWS operates out of an observation and monitoring centre known as the Situation Room (located within the CMD). It is operational, but faces challenges in terms of resources and capacity. The CEWS, regional early warning systems and other independent bodies play the crucial role of providing early warning in support of early action. The institutional structure of the CEWS gives it direct links to the chairperson of the AUC and to the PSC, to allow for informed actions and timely responses to African security concerns (Williams 2011).



Delegates at the retreat deliberate on the best practices of 50 years of OAU/AU peacemaking.

The key peacemaking institution of the APSA, the AU PW, is specifically mandated to support the efforts of the PSC – and the chairperson of the AUC – in terms of peacemaking and conflict prevention. For members of the panel to achieve the necessary gravitas to be effective mediators, facilitators, negotiators and peacemakers, they are barred from holding active political office whilst serving on the panel. The AU PW is widely regarded as an innovative mechanism that reconciles traditional African peacemaking approaches with contemporary practice of preventive diplomacy and peacemaking in general (African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes 2013). The Pan-Wise, which involves institutions and individuals engaged in mediation activities, was also established to support and enhance the efficiency of mediation efforts in Africa. The AU has deployed members of the AU PW, special envoys and high-level implementation panels made up of respected African dignitaries to crisis regions. These AU diplomats have been very instrumental in preventing and mediating an end to conflict.

The considerable scope of the founding vision of the APSA underscores the collective will and vision of African leaders to address security challenges on the continent. The APSA is informed by the understanding and acknowledgement, on the part of African leaders, that Africa's peace and security are intimately intertwined with those of a range of actors, and that they are impacted on by issues and challenges vis-à-vis good governance, economic growth and sustainable development (Makinda and Okumu 2008). Coupled with the fact that security is understood and defined within the context of human security, Makinda and Okumu (2008) add that the architecture stresses the importance of conflict prevention, as opposed to more reactionary responses to conflict incidences. It is therefore explicitly clear that conflict prevention must be

prioritised as the most effective means of addressing the full spectrum of challenges on the continent which are the result of, among others, legacies of colonialism, bad governance, corruption, fundamentalism and chronic underdevelopment. Thus, to engage earnestly with efforts to prevent conflict, the root causes of discontent and armed confrontation should be addressed.

The AU's major obstacle in carrying out conflict prevention, management and resolution activities cannot be found in inherent policy flaws and lack of normative and prescriptive frameworks, or institutional deficiencies – as those of its predecessor, the OAU. Rather, the body faces challenges in ensuring optimal realisation and operationalisation of what it has already laid the basis for. Issues surrounding capacity and resources are critical in this regard, especially when it comes to maintaining and surpassing the level and pace of progress made thus far.

Most encouragingly, however, has been the development achieved by the AU vis-à-vis the institutionalisation of the policy and practice of conflict prevention, management and resolution when contrasted with similar progress made by the OAU. While the OAU engaged extensively with peacemaking efforts across the continent, the organisation was largely constrained in terms of taking meaningful and effective action due, in large part, to the adherence of its member states to the dual principles of non-interference and the sovereign equality of all states. This context has often been blamed for instilling an institutional culture characterised by passiveness, inaction and impunity in the face of grave human rights abuses, and had the effect of undermining the legitimacy and authority of the organisation on multiple fronts (Gomes 2008).

Indeed, on closer inspection of the OAU's interventions aimed at maintaining international peace and security, it can be argued that the organisation paid particular attention to territorial and irredentist disputes, and that these were mostly addressed through the efforts of ad hoc committees and by remaining heavily dependent on moral authority to resolve disputes and conflict. Thus, according to Gomes (2008), there existed a critical – and largely ineffectual – reliance on ad hoc political approaches as the primary mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution and the belief that most, if not all, disputes could be settled through direct diplomatic and political engagements and appeals. Perhaps unsurprisingly, and remaining cognisant of constraints imposed by the principle of non-interference, the net result was a general non-implementation of the conflict resolution normative and institutional framework.

There were efforts made, however, to bolster the agency of the organisation's peacemaking endeavours. Among these was the signing of the 1993 OAU–UN supplementary agreement, which specifically underscored peacemaking as a new area of inter-organisational cooperation between the two bodies, as well as the establishment of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. These developments rose out of growing recognition of the changing dynamics of the international system, with particular regard to the maintenance of peace and security. Specifically, growing awareness of the shortcomings of peacemaking approaches

executed by the OAU, the UN and other global actors – in the context of conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone, the collapse of the Somali state and the 1994 Rwandan genocide – precipitated an urgent need for the revision of existing practices.

The OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, whilst well intentioned as a response to this changing environment, was established within a continental landscape characterised by already long-standing and ongoing major armed conflicts – which required immediate redress via reactive measures. Although the mechanism operated on an ad hoc basis, it was quite effective in its responses to crises in Burundi, the Comoros, as well as in the Ethiopia–Eritrea war of the 1990s. However, the OAU Charter, which stressed non-intervention, constrained the continental body's mediation efforts, a situation which was worsened by resource constraints (Muyangwa and Vogt 2000). As a consequence, the number of diplomats deployed and the impact of sanctions and other measures adopted by the OAU to resolve conflicts were inadequate.

It is important to note that while the OAU, from the outset, was engaged in considerable peacemaking efforts, these were not effectively institutionalised to allow for a robust normative framework and institutional structure to be identified and subsequently built up. The AU, conscious of these lessons has, to its credit, developed a remarkable normative framework and institutional structure which is intended to be much more pragmatic and responsive to challenges.

The PSC has rightly played a leading role in the institutionalisation of processes and procedures for the management and resolution of conflict on the continent as indicated by the APSA and its constituent institutional components. This has been achieved by simultaneously engaging with implementation in the field to the extent that policy and practice are subjected to the necessary dynamics which allow for improvement of both. Indeed, there have been increased efforts in AU peacemaking engagements, in Côte d'Ivoire and Togo for instance; and huge advances made in the Darfur region of Sudan, where the AU has taken a lead role and, *inter alia*, assumed responsibility for mediating between the Sudanese government and rebel groups, deployed peacekeeping troops to maintain peace and security, and established the basis for the subsequent UN–AU hybrid peacekeeping mission (Gomes 2008).

Achieving commitments

The complex nature and increasing incidence of conflict has required regional organisations to engage in conflict prevention, management and resolution. The AU routinely works to open paths of dialogue among conflict parties; devise confidence-building measures; mediate once conflicts have broken out; and assist in crafting and implementing peace agreements. According to the former Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra, the AUC is making progress in the establishment of a more systematic mediation approach (African Union 2012b).

He adds that it has become evident that some pillars must be developed vis-à-vis substantial support, including clear decision-making and coordination structures; administrative and funding mechanisms; access to expert networks; well-trained staff; well-briefed mediation teams; and reference material to be used by mediators and their teams. The key framework which guides the AU's quest to bolster its mediation capacity is the 2009 Plan of Action to Build the AU's Mediation Capacity. The strategy is executed through the AU SOPs for Mediation Support.

From coherent policies to sustainable actions

The AU recognises the importance of building on past peacemaking experiences and implementing a more systematic approach to mediation. This is to enable envoys and special representatives and those who support mediation efforts to function at the highest and most efficient levels. The AU also recognises the key partnership developed with RECs through a 2008 memorandum of understanding on peace and security cooperation which acknowledges the RECs as crucial pillars in planning and implementing AU mediation processes.

The 2009 Plan of Action to Build the AU's Mediation Capacity

The Plan of Action to Build the AU's Mediation Capacity (2009) recommended ways of strengthening the mediation efforts of the continental body. It begins with a conceptual and strategic discussion on mediation and then presents practical proposals aimed at building the union's ability to undertake and support mediation in major conflicts on the continent. The plan was commissioned by the UN Department of Political Affairs as a key component of the 2008–10 programme of work to enhance the AU's mediation capacity. The programme forms part of the UN–AU Ten-Year Capacity Building Programme for the AU. The tenets of the plan are outlined below.

Mediation relationship between the African Union, the United Nations and sub-regional organisations

Most of the conflicts in Africa fall within the peacemaking mandates of the UN, AU and one of the RECs. The relationship between these bodies is sometimes characterised by tensions and when conflicts break out there is uncertainty over which organisation will take the lead in responding. The plan proposes key steps to take to improve coordination and cooperation.

Mediation plans

Two kinds of plans are required: a strategic plan should provide overall direction and focus; indicate the mediator's mandate; contain clearly formulated goals, objectives and strategies and identify key partners and allies; and an operational plan should translate the strategic plan into activities and tasks; assign responsibility for action; and identify what is required in terms of posts, expertise, logistics and funds. The plans must be reviewed and adapted regularly.

Establishing a mediation unit and mediation posts in the African Union

It is necessary to create and maintain a mediation unit in the AUC. The unit would be responsible for providing and coordinating mediation support to AU officials and envoys, as well as mediation capacity-building activities.

Establishing rosters of African Union envoys and technical mediation experts

The AU should establish a roster of envoys and another of technical experts in mediation. Individuals on the roster will be deployed by the chairperson of the AUC in situations of actual and potential conflict. The envoys would make recommendations on peacemaking to the chairperson, and the PSC would undertake mediation, facilitate dialogue and conduct shuttle diplomacy. The technical experts would provide analytical and peacemaking support to the envoys.

Supporting envoys and mediators in the field

AU mediators are usually deployed in conflicts that are highly complex and volatile. They therefore require considerable support, including:

- mediation expertise
- country and regional knowledge
- monitoring and analytical skills
- thematic expertise
- communication skills
- management, administrative and financial expertise.

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Ambassador Nyonsaba Ambroise, AU Special Representative for Côte d'Ivoire, follows the deliberations on operational instruments and frameworks to enhance the AU's mediation capacity.

Review and evaluation

Two kinds of assessment are required. Firstly, it is important to have periodic reviews of active mediations, to assess the evolving dynamics of specific conflicts, evaluate strengths and weaknesses of mediation strategies and decide whether adjustments should be made. Secondly, evaluations should be done at the conclusion of all mediations to identify lessons for application in future cases. For the reviews and evaluations to be useful, the results must lead to timely and relevant changes in systems and methods used.

Research and Analysis

Mediation cannot be effective in the absence of sound and comprehensive understanding of the conflict at hand. Research and analysis should therefore be considered an intrinsic component of peacemaking at all stages of the process.

Training

Four types of training related to mediation are required. First, AU officers should go through an orientation course to ensure that they are familiar with the dynamics of mediation, even though they will not be deployed as mediators. Second, intensive workshops and courses aimed at deepening the knowledge and skills of AU mediators and building the pool of high-level mediators on the continent should continue to be offered. Third, negotiation skills training is sometimes required for delegates who participate in multi-party negotiations since individuals who lack experience and confidence in negotiations tend to be inflexible. Fourth, numerous civil society and government bodies are involved in peacemaking at national and local levels and would benefit from being trained and sharing experiences with their counterparts from other countries.

NGO support for AU mediation and capacity building

Throughout the continent there are civil society leaders and organisations that play worthwhile peacemaking roles. There have been many cases where NGOs have provided valuable assistance of various kinds to AU and UN mediators. The AU should continue to utilise the services of credible organisations but should not be afraid to criticise NGOs publicly if they interfere with or undermine AU-led peace processes.

Funding

Consideration should be given to establishing a mediation fund, or creating a dedicated mediation component in the APF, which can be used for mediation activities in the field.

The Standard Operating Procedures for Mediation Support

The SOPs provide templates for implementation of many of the aforementioned tenets of the 2009 Plan of Action to Build the AU's Mediation Capacity. The SOPs also expand on recommendations in the Action Plan and incorporate feedback from

AU mediators, desk officers and other personnel from the PSD/CMD, as well as international mediation experts. The SOPs are primarily focused on situations in which special envoys or special representatives are appointed. This is in light of the fact that mediation conducted by the AU can occur in at least four different ways:

1. good offices role of the chairperson of the AUC or the commissioner for peace and security
2. appointment of a special envoy in crisis situations or when preventive diplomacy requires a high-level intervention
3. appointment of a special representative, to head an AU liaison office and run a complex country mission
4. ongoing management of a conflict by the head of a liaison office

The SOPs can, however, be easily adapted to suit all the aforementioned types of mediation when needed.

African Union Knowledge Management Framework for Mediation Processes

The AU has noted the importance of establishing appropriate arrangements to capture the knowledge and experiences accumulated through mediation processes (African Union 2012a). In essence, capturing lessons learnt is the foundation of any reflection on how to improve future interventions. It is on this basis that the AUC developed the KMF, which sets out guidelines on how to collect and share information on the AU's mediation interventions in order to strengthen its mediation practice. The KMF is a pillar of the process of implementing the 2009 Plan of Action to Build the AU's Mediation Capacity. The knowledge retained through application of the KMF will contribute to the identification and application of best practices and avoiding the replication of past mistakes.

Capacities: Funding and ownership

The current financing arrangements for the AU are dependent on the contributions of member states and partner funds which, when assessed, are no longer adequate, sustainable or reliable enough to meet the growing financial needs of the union (New Partnership for Africa's Development 2012). Delays in payment of contributions by member states, coupled with difficulties in accessing partner funds, for example, are increasingly impacting negatively on the pace of implementation of the AU's activities, projects and programmes. These are major challenges that deserve urgent attention and all the technical analyses conducted so far have confirmed that options identified as alternatives to the current system of financing will not only have a significant revenue impact for the union, but will also be equitable and efficient. It will be recalled that the Executive Council, at its Ordinary Session of January 2011,

endorsed the AUC's proposal to support consultations on alternative sources of funding through a high-level panel of eminent personalities with a view to engaging with member states and developing definitive proposals for this longstanding issue.

The nature of the foreign funding available to the AU has led many to feel that it prevents the continental body from acting independently and taking full responsibility for Africa's problems. Although most operational costs are covered by AU member states, the bill for more than 90 per cent of the larger, agenda-setting programme's budget is picked up by donors, officially termed 'partners' (Kotch 2014). Caught between member states who do not pay their dues – only 19 of 54 were up to date as of September 2013 – and donors whose administrative demands are exacting and divergent, the AU is in a permanent state of financial strain, even dipping into its reserves to pay essential bills. Delegates at the 2013 high-level retreat decried this type of imbalance, stating that it must be rectified for the sake of enhancing African pride and credibility.

While it is commendable that the operational costs are wholly covered by AU member states, Ncube and Akena (2012) posit that it is disturbing that the integration and development agenda for the continent is paid for by foreign resources. Who then, they ask, is really in charge at the AU? Who decides what initiatives and developmental projects are to be embarked on? If African continental institutions and even governments themselves obtain a majority of their funding from external donors, who really drives the African agenda? Who defends Africa's interests in the global arena where these donors have great influence? The answers to these questions are at the heart of finding sustainable funding for the AU and strengthening ownership and legitimacy of interventions in an increasingly globalising world.

At the heart of the APSA is the aspiration for enhanced African autonomy, often referred to as the 'African solutions to African problems' agenda. Gelot (2012), however, cautions that if the AU wants to secure increased ownership in the sense of legitimate power, it needs to foster international support and goodwill. For the foreseeable future, the AU will depend on international assistance to support its peace and security efforts. It therefore needs greater international engagement, constructive dialogue and partnerships. Finger-pointing and alleging double standards do not help to increase the credibility of the African solutions to African problems approach (Gelot 2012).

Towards an African Union mediation strategy contributing to end all wars in Africa by 2020

In the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration, the AU affirms that '... our determination to achieve the goal of a conflict-free Africa, to make peace a reality for all our people, and to rid the continent of wars, civil conflicts, human rights violations, humanitarian disasters, and violent conflicts, and to prevent genocide, we pledge not to bequeath the burden of conflicts to the next generation of Africans, and undertake to end all wars in Africa by 2020' (African Union 2013b:5). With the realisation that there has neither

been a structured plan of action nor well-defined strategy to ensure that Africa is rid of war by 2020, the AU has made efforts to foster consultation and deliberation among key stakeholders, with the aim of ensuring that this vision comes to fruition.

These efforts include a recent open session of the PSC of the AU which was aptly titled 'Silencing the guns: Pre-requisites for realising a conflict-free Africa by the year 2020'. The 24 April 2014 session laid the foundation for the formulation of a framework to guide the actions required to achieve the noble goal of bringing conflicts in Africa to an end. During the debate, views were exchanged on how to effectively address all the root causes of conflicts in Africa in their widest dimension. The debate focused attention on the challenges and opportunities of attaining a war-free Africa by the end of this decade.

In line with existing political will at the AU to develop a mediation strategy that would contribute to the 2020 vision, there are pertinent questions which, when answered, will play a fundamental role in obtaining a sturdy strategy. These include, but are not limited to:

1. How can Africa end its ongoing violent conflicts, prevent relapse into armed confrontations and ensure the sustenance of peace on the continent?
2. Can Africa, acting alone, address the internal and external factors that drive and sustain its violent conflicts?
3. What strategies are required to prevent relapses into cycles of violent conflict?
4. How can Africa sharpen its preventive tools in order to neutralise actions and events that often trigger violence and armed conflict?
5. To what extent, and with what effect, has the continent made use of its CEWS, AU PW and other RMs to serve its conflict prevention and management efforts?
6. Are all AU member states willing to sign, ratify and domesticate the existing normative frameworks on governance, peace and security? If not, then why?
7. In the six years that remain between now and 2020, what concrete steps are required to ensure that the objective of ending all wars on the continent does not remain a mirage?
8. Whose responsibility is it to bring about an Africa free of violent conflict?

These questions have guided, and will continue to guide, discussions on the aforesaid strategy in the foreseeable future.

Conclusion

With hindsight from the AU high-level retreat of 2013, it is clear that there is growing acknowledgement among conflict management practitioners and stakeholders that the AU has made considerable progress in terms of assuming ownership, and collectively addressing the continent's peace and security challenges. This progress is underpinned by a number of institutional and normative developments, including the transition from the OAU's principle of non-interference to the AU's commitment to non-indifference.

It is also noteworthy that the AU has made significant inroads in terms of the institutionalisation of conflict prevention, management and resolution – which stands in stark contrast to the favoured ad hoc political approaches of the OAU towards these issues. This has subsequently manifested in the further advancement of broad institutional and policy frameworks, particularly the APSA, SOPs, KMF and others, and allows for a much more meaningful and substantive response to the challenges facing the continent. This institutionalised approach is further based on a number of important affirmations, chief amongst them being that preventive mechanisms must be prioritised over reactive ones.

Another key acknowledgement is that peace and security issues are intimately intertwined with issues surrounding good governance; robust and transparent institutions; and inclusive, equitable and sustainable economic growth and development. The persisting challenges of capacity and resources do, however, remain. This is of particular concern given the scale and scope of the APSA, and the increasingly pressing need to operationalise this framework, lest Africa's peace and security challenges continue unabated. Based on this situation, it is critical to evaluate sources of funding for AU interventions, and how these impact on the autonomy of the AU/RECs and their interventions.

Ultimately, the reflective space provided by the AU high-level retreats has and will continue to bolster steady movement towards a well thought-out policy-backed mediation strategy which, when well-resourced, financed and implemented, will lead to the achievement of an Africa that is free of wars by 2020.



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During the retreat Mr Ibn Chamas, former AU-UN Joint Special Representative for Darfur (left), and Mr El-Ghassim Wane, Director of the Peace and Security Department at the AU Commission (right) had an opportunity to discuss some of the security and development challenges facing the African continent.

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Annex I: Programme (as of 28 October 2013)



Fourth AU High-Level Retreat on the Promotion of Peace, Security and Stability in Africa

29–30 October 2013, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

THE AFRICAN UNION 2013 GOLDEN JUBILEE RETREAT

50 years of peacemaking in Africa –
a critical retrospective of OAU/AU peacemaking

PROGRAMME (as of 28 October 2013)

“ ... We are determined to deal once and for all with the scourge of conflicts and violence on our continent, acknowledging our shortcomings and errors, committing our resources and our best people, and missing no opportunity to push forward the agenda of conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction. We, as leaders, simply cannot bequeath the burden of conflicts to the next generation of Africans”.

Paragraph 9 of the Tripoli Declaration on the Consideration and Resolution of Conflicts in Africa, 31st August 2009

29 October 2013

09:00–10:00 OPENING CEREMONY

10:00–11:00 SESSION I: INTERACTIVE SESSION WITH PRIME MINISTER DANIEL KABLANDUNCAN: AFRICA'S PEACE, SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES – THE ROLE OF THE AFRICAN LEADERSHIP

11:00–11:30 Coffee Break and Group Photo

11:30–13:15 SESSION II: 50 YEARS OF PEACEMAKING IN AFRICA (1963–2013) – ASSESSMENT AND LESSONS LEARNED

In its 50 years of existence, the OAU/AU has made significant efforts to deal with highly complex violent conflicts on the continent. From the discreet dispatch of envoys to conduct good offices and facilitation, to the deployment of fact-finding missions; from the direct conduct of mediation processes to the appointment of Special Envoys and Special Representatives and the participation in International Contact Groups, the continental organisation has used many of the tools of diplomacy and peacemaking and has also demonstrated the capacity to innovate and be creative in the face of highly complex conflicts. Indeed, in many of these conflicts – whether primarily intra-state, inter-state or regionalised – the interaction of multiple causes at different levels, their impact upon civilian populations, their geographical spread and long protracted nature, have at times stretched the organisation's capacity, flexibility and creativity to the limit.

Indeed, many of these situations have at their heart issues of governance, state capacity or lack thereof, ideology, the instrumentalisation of ethnic identities, access to and control over scarce resources (such as land, water etc.), poverty and inequality, proliferation of armed groups willing to take up arms against the state, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and transnational organised criminality. In addition, a resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government have required the African Union to act, often in difficult circumstances, while the popular uprisings in North Africa also challenged previously-held conceptions of state stability.

The Golden Jubilee Retreat, offers a unique opportunity for the organisation to reflect on these experiences, as well as the challenges and opportunities of learning from past OAU/AU approaches to peacemaking and in particular mediation.

Guiding questions include:

- What are some of the key moments of peacemaking and in particular mediation by the continental organisation in the 50 years?
- What lessons can be learned from past cases of mediation that can inform current approaches?
- To what extent has the continental organisation developed, over the years, its own approach? And to what extent is this approach unique or does it merely follow best practice elsewhere?
- Themes which may be discussed in more detail may include the following: mediating inter-state conflicts (including border conflicts), overseeing self-determination referendums, facilitating the return to democratic rule following unconstitutional changes of government; ending political violence through coalition government; mediating with militias and criminal groups; constructing inclusive political arrangements.

13:15–14:30

Group Lunch

14:30

SESSION III: AFRICAN AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIATION AT WORK – LOOKING AT SPECIFIC CASES

While tremendous progress has been made over the past years, Africa continues to face serious peace and security challenges. The situations in the Horn of Africa, the Great Lakes, the Sahel, and the CAR, as well as the continued occurrence of unconstitutional changes of government, illustrate the complexity of the issues that need to be addressed to sustainably promote peace, security and stability. This plenary session will focus on challenges and dilemmas in mediation efforts in Africa today, both by African stakeholders (AU and RECs) and relevant institutional partners. The session will discuss a number of examples that required thinking outside AU tested norms and frameworks.

Guiding questions include:

- What have been some of the key issues that need to be addressed to promote lasting solutions to the issues at hand?
- How to promote regional approaches and what lessons could be drawn from the different processes currently underway?
- How to face political dilemmas regarding the application of AU, RECs rules and norms to conflict and crises situations?

- What lessons can be learned and what were the challenges experienced that may contribute to strengthening the AU's, RECs mediation capacity?
- Will African solutions to African problems be better accomplished with African money and resources?

16:30

PLENARY SESSION IV: ENHANCING COORDINATION AND HARMONISATION AMONG AFRICAN STAKEHOLDERS AND WITH INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

A key objective of this Retreat is to enable participants to discuss and share their views on the various dimensions of coordination, harmonisation and shared responsibility between African continental and regional organisations in addressing complex issues and conflicts through mediation. This reflection becomes ever more important when one of the most urgent and complex cluster of issues relates to cross-border issues. Furthermore, as is normally the case in the early stages of mediation entry, different actors approach conflict parties in an uncoordinated and often conflicting manner. In this plenary session, participants will address experiences of mediation in Africa's sub-regions in order to discuss, explore and contribute to result oriented approaches to the complexity of multi-party mediation, reflecting on the principle of subsidiarity, comparative advantage, and complementarity, using a series of examples of different approaches to mediation.

The guiding questions for this session are:

- What lessons can be learned from recent cases of AU-RECs and RECs-RECs mediation?
- What opportunities and challenges can one identify with regards to complementarity and coordination between different mediation actors at different levels? (AU and RECs; UN/AU/RECs/EU/Arab League/Francophonie and other stakeholders)
- How can one address the perceived differences between the AU and RECs, as perceived in some situations?
- How can multiparty mediation (planning, deployment, exit) involving AU and RECs be strengthened?

18:00

Closing

19.30

Group Dinner

30 October 2013

08:00–10:00 PLENARY SESSION V: HARNESSING MEDIATION CAPACITIES TO ADDRESSING HUMANITARIAN, GENDER AND INCLUSIVENESS DIMENSIONS IN PEACE PROCESSES

The severe humanitarian consequences of armed conflict are, unfortunately, well known to participants at this Retreat. It is very often the case that, in tandem with the need to move the parties towards initial agreement on a cease-fire and military disengagement, mediators must impart upon the process the urgency of addressing the humanitarian dimensions caused by armed conflict. Stabilising populations in acute distress, accessing previously inaccessible areas, prioritising the most vulnerable (children, women, the elderly), negotiating humanitarian corridors/access are thorny and difficult issues that require expertise. Likewise, mediators are in an ideal position to bring to the negotiating table issues of gender representation and stakeholder inclusiveness, as key ingredients in peace processes. This session will focus on these issues, continuing a debate that started in earlier Retreats, focused around the following questions:

- What best practices can be identified as regards the successful prioritisation of the humanitarian dimension in mediation processes?
- What strategies and lessons learned are there as regards the promotion of the inclusion of women and the youth as stakeholders in peace negotiations?
- How can we better support Track II stakeholders including religious leaders, community based organisations and solidarity movements, in supporting our mediation efforts?

10:00–12:00 PLENARY SESSION VI: RETHINKING AFRICAN PARADIGMS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PEACEMAKING

This plenary session will reflect on the philosophical, conceptual and practical dimensions of Pan-African paradigms and approaches to peacemaking and specifically mediation. The panel will review and reflect on both practice and theory at regional as well as local level to recommend ways in which African approaches to conflict resolution can be integrated in the AU's Mediation Agenda. Our aim here is to enable participants to contribute to a critical understanding of African approaches to conflict resolution and peacebuilding and their relevance to the African Union.

Guiding questions include:

- Is there a single African/non-African context of peacemaking or are there only specific contexts?
- What are the conceptual and practical characteristics of African approaches to conflict resolution?
- What lessons can we learn from traditional approaches at local level that can inform the work of regional and sub-regional organisations?
- Are we seeing the consolidation of an African paradigm of peacemaking?

12:00–13:30

PLENARY SESSION VII: REINFORCING INSTITUTIONAL FOUNDATIONS FOR A PEACEFUL, UNITED AND PROSPEROUS AFRICA

This session will also aim at fostering greater understanding among stakeholders of the African Union’s “Vision 2063”, with a particular focus on how it relates to mediation, preventive diplomacy and conflict transformation in Africa. The aim of the session is to reflect on how best these approaches and instruments of conflict resolution and transformation can address the challenges of governance, development, environment, peace infrastructure, gender and women’s empowerment, and other relevant cross-cutting issues. Panel member will also draw on the “Declaration of the Intergenerational Dialogue” and the “Declaration of the AU Consultative Conference of Women Stakeholders on Pan-Africanism, Renaissance and Africa 2063”. In addition, emphasis should also be placed on steps towards the full operationalisation of the various AU instruments, especially those relating to mediation, the African Standby Force (ASF) and its Rapid Deployment Capability (RDC), the African Governance Architecture, African human rights as well as the rights of women and children.

Guiding questions include:

- How is the vision of an “integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa” reflected in the 2063 Agenda?
- What strategies should be adopted in order to create and promote shared values and responsibilities and coordination mechanisms in achieving this Agenda?
- What are the key drivers of change and how will they impact peacemaking initiatives on the continent?
- In partnership, how can we achieve the balance between short-term needs in a conflict and long-term transformational goals?

13:30

Group Lunch

14:30–16:00

THE AFRICA I WANT TO SEE: CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION IN AFRICA (PARALLEL SESSIONS)

The celebrations launched in May 2013 are dedicated to the theme of Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance. A key outcome of the AU Golden Jubilee celebrations is the **50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration** which calls for greater emphasis on addressing the root causes of conflict, including economic and social disparities, and the need for strengthening our efforts towards conflict prevention, peacemaking, peace support, national reconciliation and post-conflict reconstruction and development. Vital to these efforts, is the promotion of **conflict transformation** – which is **geared towards ensuring meaningful and sustainable peace through the improvement of social, economic and political structures and improved structural stability and security.**

If conflict transformation is to become an imperative – indeed a core strategic paradigm with significant operational dimensions – how best can we design our efforts to engage, interact, support and nurture the long-term, gradual and complex processes of transitioning from war to sustainable and meaningful peace? “The Africa I Want to See: Conflict Transformation in Africa” is designed to provide a space for reflection on this overarching question. To that end, participants will be divided into four parallel groups which will discuss and reflect on the various dimensions of conflict transformation and contribute to the development of concrete strategic approaches. Parallel session discussions and recommendations will be captured by the meeting rapporteurs and included in the Retreat’s Report.

The following are guiding questions for all groups:

- What are the key drivers of change and how will they impact on peacemaking initiatives on the continent?
- What lessons have been learned as regards the transformation of conflicts where issues of development, environment, gender and empowerment are concerned?
- What peace and security trends, challenges and opportunities are there in achieving the African Union’s “Vision 2063”?
- How best to mainstream the “Declaration of the Intergenerational Dialogue” and the “Declaration of the AU Consultative Conference of Women Stakeholders on Pan-Africanism, Renaissance and Africa 2063”?

Parallel Session 1: DEVELOPMENT, PREVENTION AND STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION

In the spirit of the 2011 World Development Report, this parallel session will explore the many dimensions of “development as conflict prevention”. Our aim with this debate is to draw best practices and lessons learned that can inform the work of the African Union moving forward. How best can development efforts be deployed with preventive/transformation mind-set? What institutional mechanisms and instruments exist in this regard at the AU? What challenges and opportunities exist for a better integration of peace, security, development and post-conflict reconstruction efforts at the AU?

Parallel Session 2: CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION, PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSIVITY: WOMEN, CHILDREN AND THE YOUTH

This session will introduce the Declarations of the Intergenerational Dialogue/Youth Summit and the Women’s Conference, both of which took place prior to the African Union’s May 2013 Summit. The purpose is to enable delegates to explore and propose practical strategies for the integration of these declarations’ recommendations in the Union’s development, peace and security agendas. In particular, the session will discuss and propose the various ways the continental organisation can actively promote the inclusion of women and children as strategic stakeholders for sustaining and consolidating peace efforts. A case study will be used during the discussions to showcase the involvement of women in post-conflict reconstruction and their critical roles as drivers of conflict transformation.

Parallel Session 3: DEMOCRATISATION, ELECTIONS AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION: PERSPECTIVES FROM AFRICAN SCHOLARS

This session will attempt to build on existing international and AU doctrines on elections – in particular the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance – and related practices. It will assess the opportunities and challenges in the process of – achieving violence/disputes-free election processes in Africa. It will discuss whether there are specific Afro-centric – as opposed to universalistic – approaches which reflect African values and capacities for peace. The session will also assess the opportunities and challenges in the process of achieving democratic governance in Africa.

Parallel Session 4: RADICALISATION, MILITANCY, PIRACY AND TRANS-NATIONAL CRIME: WHAT ROLE FOR MEDIATION?

Following the example of earlier Retreats, this session will discuss radicalisation and militancy, piracy and transnational crime as threats to peace and security in Africa. This session will challenge participants to focus on the possible role (or not) of mediation/negotiation in cases of radicalisation/violent extremist militancy/terrorism, etc. (popular uprisings/protest). Our aim is to gain a better understanding of the complex web of factors that underlie terrorism, piracy and trans-national crime in Africa with a view to providing recommendations on mediation and other peacemaking approaches to these issues.

16:00–16:45 **SESSION VIII: REPORTING BACK**

16:45–17:45 **PLENARY SESSION IX: THE AFRICA I WANT TO SEE AND THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS**

The last plenary session will examine the role that partnerships bring to the AU and the RECs mediation capacity. In particular this session will approach the topic through an assessment of AU's relations with the UN and RECs. The outcome will be a critical assessment of the challenges and opportunities that the creation of partnerships bring to Africa, and to provide recommendations on how to strengthen collaboration between different international, regional and sub-regional organisations.

18:30 **CLOSING SESSION: REFLECTIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND THE WAY FORWARD**

Presentation of the 2013 AU Declaration and the Action Plan by a Youth Representative from Côte d'Ivoire

Closing Statements

20:00 **Black Tie Gala Dinner (evening gown required)**

THE END

Annex II: Abidjan Declaration



Fourth AU High-Level Retreat on the Promotion of Peace, Security and Stability in Africa

29–30 October 2013, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

HL/Retreat/Decl. (IV)

ABIDJAN DECLARATION

THE AFRICAN UNION 2013 GOLDEN JUBILEE RETREAT

50 years of peacemaking in Africa –
a critical retrospective of OAU/AU peacemaking

ABIDJAN DECLARATION

1. The Fourth African Union (AU) High-Level Retreat of Special Envoys and Representatives on the Promotion of Peace, Security and Stability in Africa took place in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, from 29 to 30 October 2013, on the theme "The AU 2013 Golden Jubilee Retreat: 50 Years of Peace-making in Africa – A Critical Retrospective of OAU/AU Peace-making".
2. Organized in collaboration with the Government of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, and with the technical support of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), the Africa Leadership Centre (ALC), the Institute for Peace and Security Studies at Addis Ababa University (IPSS), the Fourth Retreat brought together the AU Commission and its Special Envoys and Representatives, members of the AU Panel of the Wise, as well as members of the Pan-African Network of the Wise (PanWise), representatives of the Chair of the Union and the Chair of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) for the month of October 2013, and several former African Heads of State and Government. Also in attendance were senior representatives of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs)/Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RMs), the United Nations Secretariat and Special Representatives in Africa, the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), other partner organizations, namely the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries, the European Union (EU), the League of Arab States, the International Organisation of *La Francophonie*, and the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation, as well as representatives of civil society organizations, think tanks and resource persons.
3. The opening session was marked by statements by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, the representative of the President of the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Chairperson of the PSC for the month of October 2013, and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for West Africa. The Retreat consisted of an interactive session with the Prime Minister of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, as well as plenary and working group sessions that covered a broad range of issues relating to AU's peace-making efforts over the past five decades, lessons learnt and good practices, and the way forward in order to achieve the AU's objective of a continent free of violent conflict.
4. The participants noted that the year 2013 marks a key moment in the life of the AU as the continental organisation celebrates its 50th anniversary under the theme of Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance. The Golden Jubilee provided opportunity for continent-wide reflection and learning lessons from the past, but more importantly to plan for the future. Participants welcomed the process to develop an Agenda 2063, which is informed by the key trends of demographic change, urbanization, technological development, management of natural resources, conflict and security, inequality, environment degradation, geopolitics

and globalization. These trends present both opportunities and challenges to the realization of the vision of an integrated, people-centered, prosperous and peaceful continent. The Retreat recognized the symbiotic link between development and peace and urged those working in the area of peace and human security to contribute to the vision of peace and Agenda 2063.

5. In the Solemn Declaration adopted on that occasion, the African Heads of State and Government have vowed “to end to all wars in Africa by 2020”. The Declaration calls for greater emphasis on addressing the root causes of conflict, including economic and social inequalities, and stresses the need to strengthen efforts towards conflict prevention, peace-making, peace support operations, national reconciliation as well as post-conflict reconstruction and development. Vital to these efforts is the promotion of conflict transformation, which is geared towards ensuring meaningful and sustainable peace through the improvement of social, economic and political structures and improved structural stability and security.
6. The Retreat allowed for a reflection on some of the most significant OAU/AU-led mediation processes (as well as associated forms of peace-making) of the past 50 years. More specifically, the Retreat:
 - i. provided a space for debate with outstanding African mediators and peacemakers with the aim of capturing lessons learned and good practices stemming from their personal experiences, contributions and legacies in mediation;
 - ii. discussed and assessed the most pressing challenges to peace and security on the continent and ways to address them more effectively, including strengthening the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA);
 - iii. analysed the parameters of conflict transformation and its relationship with mediation and other forms of peace-making to enable the AU and the RECs to enhance their efforts in this domain;
 - iv. reviewed the philosophical, conceptual and practical dimensions of Pan-African paradigms of peace-making and mediation and recommended ways in which African approaches to conflict resolution and transformation can be integrated in the AU’s mediation agenda;
 - v. reflected on the principle of subsidiarity, comparative advantage and complementarity, using a series of examples of different approaches to mediation; and
 - vi. enabled participants to share their views on the peace and security challenges, trends and opportunities in achieving the “African Union Vision 2063”.
7. Participants at the Retreat acknowledged that the AU and the RECs/RMs have come a long way in addressing peace and security challenges so critically important for the well-being and development of the African people. With the transformation of the OAU to the AU, and in particular through its 2000

Constitutive Act and the 2002 Peace and Security Council Protocol, has introduced the principle of non-indifference vis-à-vis gross human rights violations, crimes against humanity and unconstitutional changes of government as a core principle governing inter-state relations. The AU has also put in place an ambitious APSA, which is being operationalized with the support of international partners. In addition, and through the adoption of the 2000 Lome Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes of Government and other related documents the 2007 African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, as well as the 2011 Declaration on Shared Values, the AU has instituted a complementary African Governance Architecture (AGA), which is meant to actively promote the rule of law, respect for human rights, democracy and good governance. Furthermore, the AU is actively engaged in direct and structural prevention as well as in peace-making, peacekeeping and in post-conflict reconstruction efforts across the continent.

8. However, participants at the Retreat also noted that the challenges to peace and security remain real and serious and insufficient attention has been given to preventive action. Although significant progress has been achieved in the operationalization of the key APSA pillars, the full potential of this architecture is yet to be realised.
9. The continent continues to grapple with numerous conflict and crisis situations, with far reaching humanitarian, social, economic, environmental and cultural consequences, as well as with the fall-out of the 2011 popular uprisings in North Africa. The AU is faced with the task of consolidating peace where it has been achieved. Other challenges include the continued prevalence of election related conflicts and the resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government, border disputes as well as growing economic inequalities terrorism and radicalization, piracy, transnational crime and cyber-crime.
10. Against this background, the participants stressed the need to enhance Africa's capacity to prevent, manage and resolve violent conflicts. In this respect, they called for renewed efforts to:
 - i. expedite the operationalization of the African Standby Force (ASF), building on the recommendations that would emerge from the ongoing assessment of the ASF as directed by the AU Assembly Ordinary Session of May 2013;
 - ii. ensure the establishment of the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC), as decided by the AU Assembly Ordinary Session of May 2013, as a transitional arrangement pending the full operationalization of the ASF;
 - iii. enhance the effectiveness of the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), in order to facilitate early action and greater coherence among relevant AU and RECs/RMs organs;

- iv. fully operationalize the Pan-African Network of the Wise (PANWISE), as part of the efforts to enhance the effectiveness of Africa's operational prevention and mediation capacity; and
 - v. establish or strengthen national infrastructure for peace, including national early warning and response systems and national peace councils or commissions to work towards a timely identification of, and effective response to, potential violent conflicts.
11. The participants paid particular attention to the issue of funding Africa's peace and security efforts. While welcoming continued international support, based on international solidarity and the indivisibility of international peace and security, they underlined the imperative for African countries to contribute increased financial resources to ensure greater ownership and sustainability and enhance African leadership. Accordingly, participants:
- i. echoed the call made by the AU Assembly in May 2013 for Member States to make voluntary contributions to the AU Peace Fund;
 - ii. called for creative modalities to mobilize additional resources from within the continent, including contributions from the business community, African ordinary citizens and the Diaspora, including through an Africa Peace Bond - an endowment fund to enable citizens to invest in peace and security on the continent; and
 - iii. encouraged African civil society organizations and other stakeholders to launch sensitization campaigns aimed at highlighting the importance of greater African financial contribution as a prerequisite for true ownership and leadership.
12. Participants strongly emphasized that lasting peace and security is closely linked to the adherence to the rule of law, good governance, human rights and inclusive leadership. In this respect, the African Governance Agenda has to be at the heart of the efforts to address the continent's peace and security challenges.
13. Against this background, participants:
- i. reiterated the urgency for AU Member States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify relevant AU instruments relating to governance, democracy, elections and human rights;
 - ii. stressed the need for AU Member States that have not yet done so to join the African Peer Review Mechanism, which provides a unique platform to improve governance and create a solid foundation for sustainable peace;
 - iii. encouraged civil society organizations to popularize relevant AU instruments on governance, democracy and human rights to ensure ownership by the African people as well as to contribute to better compliance, through the establishment of compliance indexes and other relevant tools;
 - iv. further encouraged sustained outreach efforts to popularize good practices in governance and leadership;

- v. reiterated the continued relevance of the recommendations made by the Panel of the Wise in its 2009 report on election-related violence and disputes and the need for renewed efforts towards their implementation; and
 - vi. acknowledged the efforts by the AU Commission to develop a framework for Structural Vulnerability Assessments (SVA) to support Member States in addressing potential root causes of conflict in their countries and strengthen their capacity for long-term conflict prevention. Member States are encouraged to take advantage of this tool and voluntarily submit themselves to this process.
14. With a view to expanding ownership of the African peace and security agenda, and following the Cairo Plan of Action which was adopted at the Third Retreat in November 2012 as well as the Communiqué adopted at the inaugural meeting of the PanWise in April 2013, the Retreat stressed that multi-level approaches to conflict prevention, mediation and peace-making were needed in the promotion of peace, security and stability. In this regard, participants emphasized the need to establish systematic links and incorporate civil society actors, particularly individual mediators and institutions engaged in mediation activities at various levels (such as national ombudsmen, faith-based organisations, local councils of elders, pastoralist mediators, etc.).
15. In reviewing African experiences of mediation, participants emphasized the primacy of political solutions to African conflicts, while acknowledging the need, in certain circumstances, to resort to peace enforcement. Participants stressed that the resolution and transformation of conflict is eminently the responsibility of the local conflict parties and stakeholders. Sustaining peace efforts and avoid the recurrence of violence requires the joint efforts of political parties, the business community, faith-based organizations, civil society and individuals. Without these internal efforts, African mediation successes cannot be sustained. In this regard, participants highlighted the key role that the private sector has to play in the post-conflict reconstruction and development.
16. Participants noted the gradual emergence of an African model of mediation characterized by context specific processes. In this respect, they highlighted the importance of mediation undertakings to be based on the following elements:
- i. a correct definition of the problem at hand arising from an inclusive approach that goes beyond the belligerents, to include consultations with affected populations and other local stakeholders. This should inform the development of strategic and operational mediation plans;
 - ii. credibility and legitimacy of the mediation process by a careful consideration of stakeholders' understanding of their conflict situation;
 - iii. long-term mediation commitment, as there are no quick fixes to reach lasting solutions and requires, in addition to the parties, bringing on board their constituencies;

- iv. the need to build on local knowledge and to fully make use of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms;
 - v. the necessity to address in a creative way the relationship between peace, justice and reconciliation, building on existing African and international experiences; and
 - vi. promoting the involvement of women in peace processes, including as mediators.
17. Participants acknowledged that promoting peace and security in Africa is also an intellectual challenge. Thus, they recommended the strengthening of linkages between the AU and research institutions, universities and think tanks on African peace and security issues, in order to arrive at solutions that are informed by knowledge. In this respect, Participants encouraged civil society actors, African private entrepreneurs as well as international partners to support these research efforts.
18. Participants noted with satisfaction that, over the years, the AU has forged key strategic international partnerships, in particular with the United Nations and the European Union, in its efforts to achieve its vision of a free, peaceful and prosperous continent driven by its own people. In order to strengthen the common efforts in the promotion of peace, security and stability the Retreat stressed that these relations need to be further developed and better coordinated with a view to build systematic, innovative, flexible, action-oriented and balanced partnerships, and to ensure that Africa's concerns and positions are adequately taken into account by international partners when making decisions on matters of fundamental interest to Africa. Participants urged for issue-based coordination, consistent communication strategies and common roadmaps based on shared strategic visions.
19. Underlining the need for close coordination and partnership to achieve the objective to free the continent of armed conflicts by 2020, as articulated in the Golden Jubilee Solemn Declaration, participants recommended the following:
 - i. the development of joint roadmaps, strategic concept and other relating documents involving all international stakeholders in dealing with specific conflict situations;
 - ii. enhanced coordination at national and regional level among representatives of the international community working on a particular conflict, building on lessons learnt from the establishment of international contact groups, joint missions and other relevant tools; and
 - iii. convening by the AU PSC of special public hearings involving local and international stakeholders to facilitate shared assessment of progress made and challenges to be overcome.
20. The participants expressed their sincere appreciation to the Government of Côte d'Ivoire for having hosted the Retreat, as well as for the hospitality extended to them and the arrangements made for the success of the Retreat.

The Fourth African Union (AU) High-Level Retreat on the Promotion of Peace, Security and Stability in Africa was held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire on 29 and 30 October 2013 under the theme '50 Years of peacemaking in Africa: A critical retrospective of OAU/AU peacemaking'. The objective of hosting the retreat was to provide a platform that would foster greater understanding among stakeholders on the dynamics of mediation and conflict transformation in Africa and to reflect on the AU's Agenda 2063.

This report is based on the proceedings of the retreat and captures the content, insights and experiences generated through discussions and debates that occurred during the two days. It aims to provide an entry point through which practitioners can further delve into peacemaking trends in Africa, based on past interventions, best practices, experiences shared, lessons learnt and future projections.

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