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PEACE AND SECURITY DIMENSIONS OF THE AFRICAN UNION

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Background Paper for ADF III

PEACE AND SECURITY DIMENSIONS OF THE AFRICAN UNION

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Introduction

Peace and security is recognised as the absolute prerequisite for the establishment of an effective African Union and regional economic integration, alongside the attainment of good governance and economic development. In turn, developing the required doctrines, institutions, and processes to underpin regional peace and security is necessary for peace and security to be achieved.

Currently there is a multiplicity of initiatives for peace and security in Africa. They range from grassroots peacebuilding efforts, such as the 'People to People' reconciliation process in Southern Sudan and numerous peace education workshops, to issue-specific programmes such as measures to curtail the trade in small arms and prevent 'blood diamonds' from reaching the market. There are special peace initiatives such as the Burundi peace process, and subregional country-specific efforts such as the IGAD Sudan Peace Secretariat, as well as processes led by the OAU, such as the Ethio-Eritrean peace agreement. At a more general level there are subregional mechanisms to monitor indicators of insecurity, the OAU's Conflict Management Centre and the CSSDCA, and international efforts such as the African Crisis Response Initiative. There are military interventions and peacekeeping forces, such as those in Sierra Leone and DRC. There are livelihoods initiatives to rehabilitate war-affected communities, efforts to demobilise child soldiers, and World Bank-sponsored post-conflict reconstruction programmes. What do these efforts have in common? It seems that all are ad hoc responses to specific pressing problems. All are worthwhile. Some are well-coordinated—while in other cases there are poorly-managed or poorly-coordinated initiatives that cover the same ground. Overall, it is striking how conflict-related initiatives in Africa lack a theoretical blueprint for how to move Africa from its current state in which armed conflict is widespread, to a condition of prevailing peace and security. There are good reasons for this absence of an overall framework: conflicts are diverse, and the measures to combat them are equally diverse. Any attempt to straight-jacket conflict resolution and peace-building into a single framework runs the risk of sacrificing effectiveness to the intellectual fads of the day.

The current regional climate, including the decision to establish the African Union and the momentum underpinning NEPAD, indicate that the moment is mature for integrating existing peace and security issues within a unifying framework, in such a way that they retain their essential autonomy and dynamism, but complement one another more effective. The combination of the AU and NEPAD provides a framework for bringing peace and security issues together with the question of governance and constitutionalism (the core of the AU) and economic development and international partnership (the core of NEPAD).

The overwhelming majority of Africans seek to live their lives in peace and security. Hence, the more they can be involved in specifying what peace and security is, and what can be done to promote it, the better. Essentially this entails a programme of democratising the entire agenda of peace and security, starting with the basic structures of government, and working outwards from there. This paper begins with an overview of the constraints on achieving peace and security in Africa, before turning to how this 'democratisation of the security agenda' strategy might be implemented.

How to Create a 'Security Community' in Africa

The establishment of the African Union reflects a global trend away from treating security issues as the sole preserve of governments, in favour of ideas common security based upon an international or cosmopolitan community of citizens, bound together by multiple ties of common interest and a commitment to basic values. For decades, the study of international relations and security was dominated by 'realist' thinking that identified communities as existing only at the national level or below, with there being no such thing as an 'international community' in anything other than the Utopian dreams of idealistic thinkers. This has now changed, with the establishment of transnational unions such as the European Union. War between members of the EU is now unthinkable, and although citizens of member states still identify themselves by their nationality, they also have a deepening sense of common identity as Europeans. This is reflected in the ever-deepening ties between the institutions of different countries and the emergence of what might be called a 'transnational constitutionalism'.

The concept of a 'security community' reflects this thinking. A security community does not need to be as deep or closely-knit as the European Union, but it is essentially a community that transcends international boundaries in which the settlement of disputes by anything other than peaceful means is unthinkable. It is more than an inter-state order that formally outlaws aggression and other forms of conflict, and amounts to a complex inter-relationship between all branches of governments, civil society, the private sector, and citizens themselves. A robust security community will consist of countries tied together in a far-ranging set of rule-bound relationships covering the common rights of citizens, trade, social and cultural exchanges, communication, and a shared set of values based on constitutional rule.

The states that are members of a security community are engaged in a strategic long term common partnership, in which they are prepared to forego many of the traditional privileges of sovereign power, and share many governmental activities with their neighbours. The militarised, secretive oligarchic governmental systems that prevailed in Europe in the 19th and early 20th centuries were the antithesis of security communities. They were mutually suspicious and appealed to exclusivist nationalistic sentiments.

Other examples of 'security communities' in the modern world include North America, the majority of the countries of South East Asia and Australasia and the Pacific. We can identify emergent security communities in central America. These regional groupings achieved their common security by a number of different routes. For example, the European experience has been based on complex institutional linkages between states and between them and regional and subregional organisations, with a plethora of monitoring institutions, an explicit commitment to human rights and good governance, and a major role for civil society. In the countries of ASEAN, by comparison, the relationships have been at the level

of states and the private sector, with relatively little of the complex institutional architecture that characterises European integration.

In Africa today there is a strong popular and political impulse towards unification, and also the settlement of the wars that have plagued the continent. However, the establishment of a pan-African security community poses a number of theoretical and practical challenges about which model to pursue. While the formal structures of the African Union reflect those of the European Union, the conditions under which African countries are moving towards unity are very different to those prevailing in Europe. Hence, it is important to ask a number of questions about what is necessary to put in place to create an African 'security community' as a precondition for unity.

Internal Peace

To start with, what are the preconditions for a security community in terms of the internal peace within member states? Specifically, is prevailing internal peace an essential precondition for an inter-state security order? Or can internal conflicts be bypassed, and maybe settled later? Or perhaps internal peace and inter-state security should be developed simultaneously? And, secondly, should internal conflicts within states be regarded as solely a domestic issue or as a question of international concern and engagement?

In the African context, experience has shown that no civil conflict can be considered solely as an internal domestic affair. Most wars in Africa today are neither internal nor international: they are a combination of both. And most African governments, faced with a war in a neighbouring country, know that it is only a matter of time before they feel the consequence themselves, whether in terms of refugees, or destabilisation, or the inflow of armaments. Another consequence of war is that it incubates ethnic or religious extremism, which has a tendency to spill over boundaries. Africa's wars have also been magnets for criminality and corruption, and these plagues easily infect neighbours, whether directly involved or not. Any country faced with a potential threat from a neighbour also knows that if it should try to intervene pre-emptively, it may face 'blow-back' into its own society. In fact, such is the interconnectedness of the African continent, and such is the ease in which conflict and instability is transmitted from one country to the next, we should really be speaking of the 'blow-around' effect, as any military activity has multiple, widespread unforeseen effects around the continent.

In short, is essential to pursue peace simultaneously at the local, national and international levels. The combination of the 'blow-around' effect and the susceptibility of African societies to conflict means that all conflicts need to be addressed at once in a systematic inclusive fashion. There is no such thing as a containable conflict in Africa.

Regional Power Order

Second, what are the preconditions in terms of an inter-state power order for a stable security community? Specifically, does a security community require an established inter-state power hierarchy (which can take various forms), and what can be done in the absence of this? It is important to note that European security was driven by the concerns of two dominant European states—Germany and France—under the umbrella of NATO, led by the U.S. Do African countries recognise and accept a comparable role for hegemonic states?

The possibility of subregionally hegemonic powers is a highly contentious issue within Africa. There is no doubt that some states—particularly South Africa, Nigeria and

Egypt—have immense military and economic capacity as well as strategic location. The reality of any regional peace and security order is that a greater share of responsibility for the hard work of sustaining peace and intervening for political or humanitarian reasons will fall upon them. Nigeria has taken a lead in peacekeeping and peace-enforcement in Liberia and Sierra Leone. But smaller states, some of which may have a better record in terms of democracy and governance, may feel profoundly threatened if these larger states appear to have hegemonic ambitions. Some of these powerful countries do indeed have histories of seeking to dominate their neighbours.

Africa needs to find a way to a formula that balances the powers and duties of its largest states. There are a number of strategies that smaller countries can adopt in the face of a powerful neighbour: they can combine against it, join with it in the hope of gaining from its power and dynamism, or they can align with it in the hope of influencing its policies. In the context of the common African commitment to the AU and NEPAD, another strategy is also attractive, which is to combine smaller and larger countries together in a web of mutual obligations, shared tasks and common values, under the auspices of a regional organisation.

Democracy and its Relation to Peace and Security

Third, we must ask, what are the preconditions in terms of democracy, civil society and demilitarisation for establishing regional security? Can a security community be established between authoritarian governments, or does it require the engagement of an active, democratic civil society? Should we seek democracy country-by-country and then afterwards seek to build a regional security order?

In principle, authoritarian states can remain at peace with one another, in the absence of significant moves towards democratisation. This has happened at various times in the past in Europe and Asia, and indeed there have been times when much of west Africa was free from inter-state conflict, with most countries under authoritarian or military rulers. But it is increasingly evident that one of the enduring factors that contributes to conflict is the tendency of states to centralise security policy in a small group of officers, for whom national security is narrowly defined in terms of military threats. Such groups are trained to be suspicious, and their suspicions reinforce one another. Two neighbouring security-based states will always be in a state of security alert: if they do not distrust each other and plot against one another it will be because they have a common fear of a third country. The 'militarisation of governance' is one of the main enduring factors contributing to insecurity in Africa.

In this context we should examine the 'over-determination of conflict' in Africa. There are many possible reasons for conflict including poverty, too-rapid economic growth, ethnic tension, misgovernment, lack of natural resources, excess of natural resources, flow of armaments, failure of previous peace agreements, one-party states, competition between parties and disputed election outcomes. The list is long and some of the factors seem contradictory, but a list of case studies will quickly show that all of the above are features in one or more countries. In fact, Africa's conflicts are over-determined: there are multiple reasons for conflict. This implies that as well as addressing the underlying causes of conflict, we must also attend to the tendency to the use of force among those in power or aspiring to power. In different circumstances, all these underlying problems could be resolved by non-violent political means. Why is the resort to violence so often the first course of action rather than the last? The most probable reason lies once again with the militarisation of governance: decision-makers resort to force because it is quick and, they hope, decisive, and because they do not have the patience or skill for other means of resolving their problems. They also resort

to force because they have little faith in international or regional organisations to resolve the problems in a rapid, fair and lasting manner.

This is not an argument for ignoring the root causes of conflict and the weakness of international organisations. But we should be aware that it is possible that various programmes and policies could address all the supposed underlying causes of conflict, and yet wars will still break out—because some new dispute will inevitably arise, and decision makers with a militarised mindset will use force. The argument leads us to focus on a component of conflict that is often neglected, which is the readiness of those in power to resort to force. This reflects a culture of militarism at the highest levels of government.

However, democracy is not a fail-safe inoculation against the use of force. Transitional democracies have been shown to be vulnerable to conflict, as they seek to establish their legitimacy, and as populist politicians mobilise constituencies on the basis of appeal to exclusive agendas. Disputed election results are a common cause of violence and even civil wars. But, in the long run, transparent and democratic governments are more likely to invest in non-violent processes of civil problem solving, and hence avoid violent conflict. Many of the elements of democracy including free expression, transparency and accountability, religious tolerance, rule of law, constitutional change in government, and peaceful cooperation with neighbours, are essential components of security communities.

How to Go About Establishing a Security Community

Lastly, what is the sequencing of establishing a security community? Specifically, if the above preconditions are not fully met, is it possible for international organisations to take the lead in establishing a security community? In short, can the African Union and its related institutions press for a security community to be established from above? This is a strategy that has never been tried before. Critics of the African Union note that the basic governance and economic preconditions for unity are weak in comparison to other cases. In fact, the African Union is an 'aspirational union', reflecting the faith of Africans in their common identity and common destiny, rather than a process driven by hard economic and political interests.

The process of creating the African Union cannot be separated from the myriad processes of establishing democracy, good governance, institutional capacity and peace across the continent. Making the existing institutions work, including governments, is part of the wider African Union agenda. The process of reviving Africa's prospects for economic development, as envisioned in NEPAD, similarly rest on a foundation of good governance. Where do these initiatives and processes overlap with the agenda of building security communities? The answer lies at two levels. At a high level, any processes of peaceful interaction between states, cooperation in economic development and international partnership, will promote common understanding, shared values and hence a security community. At a specific level, the different agendas coincide in the issue of constitutionalism. Constitutional rule at a national level is one of the elements guarding against the unlawful use of force in international relations. A regional culture of respect for constitutionalism, as manifest in the AU's commitment to only respect governments that have come to power through constitutional means, is a solid foundation for promoting democratic constitutionalism across the African continent.

Strategic Approaches to National Security

Specialists define 'national security' is many different ways. There are many overlapping issues subsumed under the heading of national security including the relationship between a country's armed forces and the territory it seeks to defend, deterrence against military threats, arms availability and proliferation, nature of governance, contested control of economic and natural resources, actual and potential disputes over borders, conflicting ideologies, ethnic divisions, etc. Currently, it is difficult to determine exactly how most African governments define their security, because most of them do not make their doctrines and calculations public. Instead, it is usually the head of state, the chief of security, army generals, and a small number of fellow officers who make their calculations and take whatever actions they consider necessary. This usually implies a rather narrow definition of security, based on considerations of military defence and regime stability. In addition, a few governments go even further. The readiness of some governments to hastily label any political opponents as 'terrorists', even when they are only advocating legal and non-violent action, suggests that some leaders confuse 'national security' with government survival, or even personal power.

Leaving aside the extreme cases, we can confidently assert that the dominant model of national security in Africa is one defined by the military and security forces, based on immediate military or physical threats to territorial integrity or regime stability.

Unfortunately, such narrow definitions of security can help to promote long-term insecurity. Responding to short-term threats in ad hoc military ways can exacerbate long-term threats such as poverty and weak governance structures. An emergency mentality in government stands in the way of effective long term planning. The use of military force can create grievances among those who see themselves as victims of abuses, and frustrations among those who seek to exercise their civil and political rights in a democratic way, but feel they are marginalised or excluded from a militarised form of governance. Heavy spending on the military diverts resources, both financial and human, that could be used for economic and social development.

In addition, one of the contributory causes of insecurity is the fact that governments in Africa are unpredictable. A destabilising action can come about through calculable 'raison d'etat' such as the presence of an insurgent force on a country's border. Or the spark for an outbreak of war can be something wholly unexpected, such as the personal whim of a leader. For the powerful security officers in charge of the state, national security is not something to be discussed in the public arena. This secrecy contributes to insecurity in the long term, by making governments less predictable and making decision-making more centralised and militarised. The most extreme manifestation is 'garrison governance', in which all governmental decisions are taken on the basis of a presumption of external threat and conspiracy.

Longer term underlying reasons for insecurity include poverty, and thus conflict over scarce resources, vulnerability to external economic shocks, weak institutions (further weakened by HIV/AIDS), and poor governance. However, under militarised governance and with mostly short-term thinking, these are often not seen as 'national security' issues at all and are considered a lower priority than military and security affairs. Or if they are considered national security issues, the response is to prepare for any military threats that may transpire, rather than addressing the underlying causes themselves. Some national security issues, such as the level of HIV/AIDS in the officer corps of the army, may simply remain secret.

Underpinning these weaknesses is the absence of a clear strategy for promoting long-term national security in most countries. Countries that have identified their national security threats, and developed clear and transparent mechanisms for responding to them, are more

stable and predictable. In addition, as countries move towards a correct identification of their national security challenges, they identify a wider range of threats, many of them longer-term ones that need to be dealt with by non-military means. Threats to national security, real and potential, include, among others:

1. Actual and potential external threats of force projection (invasion);
2. External threats of destabilisation and terrorism;
3. Potential sources of conflict with neighbours such as undemarcated borders, contested natural resource control;
4. Violent crime and banditry associated with proliferation of light weapons;
5. Potential social unrest associated with economic recession;
6. Ethnic, religious and regional cleavages and the incapacity of governance structures to manage disputes peacefully;
7. Insufficiently institutionalised constitutional order;
8. Weak governance institutions and corruption;
9. Mass distress migration due to natural and man-made calamities;
10. HIV/AIDS and its impact on institutions and capacities including security services.

As we move down this list we shift from immediate military threats to structural problems confronting African governments. In the longer term, it is these structural problems that are most likely to cause major problems. Addressing these requires an agenda that overlaps with establishing the AU and promoting good governance and economic development as envisioned by NEPAD.

There are sceptics who argue that African governments are incapable of defining their national security interests in anything other than a short-term militarised manner. It is for African governments to prove them wrong. One way in which they could do so is by establishing transparent and inclusive processes for establishing national security doctrines. Such a process would involve an ongoing national debate, conducted in public, in which senior members of the government and the security forces, parliamentarians, specialists and civil society organisations would present views on the nature of the threats facing the country, and how best to respond to these threats. The premise of such a process for national security promotion is that a country with a clear and well-understood doctrine of national security is an intrinsic component of good governance, and will contribute to confidence among neighbours. Some elements of national security will always remain secret, and rightly so, and the reality of short term military threats means that African governments will need to retain their armed forces. Africa's agenda should be to find a balance between the meeting the immediate needs and addressing the long term strategic priorities. A better and more inclusive understanding of national security should help move countries towards addressing the latter. Meanwhile, the development of a clear national security doctrine can become a central plank of good governance, as important as a national poverty reduction strategy and a public expenditure framework.

In the long term, security is best guaranteed by democratic, accountable and stable governments presiding over sustainable development. A far-reaching agenda of security sector reform, ensuring civilian control of the military, and similar measures, will help to deliver these gains. A highly significant start has been made with a succession of resolutions by the OAU and AU to refuse to recognise forcible and unconstitutional transfers of power. The fact that the Constitutive Act of the AU precludes as a member any government that takes power by unconstitutional means is a powerful signal. The next stage in this process is deepening constitutionalism in member states, adopting common and ever-higher standards for democracy and the rule of law for African countries.

A Peace and Security Architecture

More than any other continent, Africa needs a workable and coherent peace and security architecture. Existing institutions are weak and in response to that, there are a number of ongoing plans to strengthen them and create new ones. Currently, the process of creating the African Union involves a number of intergovernmental initiatives, including (at a regional level) the OAU Conflict Management Centre, the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA), and the peace and security component of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). At a subregional level, subregional organisations, also known as Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have taken the de facto lead in promoting peace and security.

At present, the main question is, can Africa's existing intergovernmental institutions play a leading role in promoting a security community (or communities) in the continent? The obstacles they face are formidable. For a start, not only are the problems severe and complex, but the institutions are weak. While ASEAN benefited from strong, stable states, and Europe had both capable states and strong inter-governmental institutions, Africa has neither. Moreover, while Europe and south-east Asia benefited from states with strong political interests in making regional institutions work, the same does not necessarily hold in Africa. Across the continent, states retain vested interests in international organisations not developing sufficient autonomy to exercise real influence. Many governments, both African and non-African, prefer to bypass regional and subregional organisations, and even sometimes undermine their efforts. Most African governments are also possessive of their sovereign privileges, and are thus averse both to surrendering any powers and to the implications of 'variable geometry' approaches to inter-state activities.

The African Union and other Institutions

A complex set of problems arises concerning the relationship between the African Union and other pre-existing peace and security institutions, especially the subregional organisations (otherwise known as regional economic communities or RECs). For historical reasons, there has been no form structural relationship between the OAU and RECs, and there appears to be no clear plan to resolve this problem in the process of establishing the AU. The lack of any such formal interface has been problematic given the peace and security mandate of the OAU, alongside the fact that the principal responsibilities for enforcing peace and security has been assumed by the RECs. An immediate question is, what kind of interface is required between the AU and the RECs? Should this be several structures specific to the functions of RECs (e.g. one for peace and security, one for economic integration, etc) or is one single interface required? A longer term, strategic question also arises, which is whether the AU proposes to absorb RECs into its continent-wide structure, or to cooperate with them as independent entities? And if the cooperation scenario is followed, how will their respective roles and mandates evolve? In the latter case, mechanisms will be required to promote and monitor consistency between RECs' policies and their compatibility with the long-term aim of regional convergence.

Another set of issues arises with relation to the AU's own security organs. As outlined in the Constitutive Act, the institutions of the African Union do not provide for a 'security council' or similar. This reflects the set-up of the EU, within which armed conflict is

unthinkable, and which delegates external security affairs to the OSCE and NATO. Given the importance of peace and security issues in Africa, it seems unlikely that the existing Conflict Management Centre at the OAU will be disbanded and the security functions of the Central Organ will be discontinued. But this raises the question of how the AU will relate to the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA) and NEPAD, both of which have peace and security mandates at a regional level. To avoid competing or contradictory regional security authorities, it is important that there should be a single 'African security council', whether located at the AU, CSSDCA or NEPAD, with ancillary specific peace and security functions delegated to RECs and other regional security bodies.

A persisting issue is that the formal mandates of Africa's organisations, and decisions taken by their highest bodies, are not matched by genuine collective commitments and capacities for monitoring or implementing these resolutions. There is an imbalance between form and substance. This is not a problem if the realities are regularly catching up with the aspirations after a time lag, but in the case of Africa, this is often not the case. There is tremendous backlog of unfulfilled commitments, which only serve to discredit multilateralism within Africa.

Partly in response to weak African capacities, most enforcement capacities remain based outside the continent. For mediating the most difficult problems and implementing peace agreements, Africa still usually looks to Europe and the U.S. (sometimes bilaterally, sometimes under a UN umbrella). To date, this has been done largely on an ad hoc basis, without a coordinated analysis of how the relations between African intergovernmental organisations and the UN relate to one another. If there is to be greater coherence of peace and security activities within Africa, a clearer mechanism for co-ordinating with the UN will be required.

The Economic Component

Promoting peace and security has a major economic component. The most common reason for a country suffering a war is the failure to recover properly from a previous conflict. The management of post-conflict transitions is one of the most complex challenges for contemporary Africa. It is compounded by the fact that most post-conflict countries are expected to undertake several transitions at the same time, including some or all of the following: from war to peace, from authoritarianism to democracy, from subjugation to self-determination, from command economies to free markets, and from relief to development. Some transitions have been successful, but most have been fraught with problems, and some have collapsed back into war and even genocide.

International organisations and donors have usually sought to handle transitions on a case-by-case basis, in two respects: one country at a time; and each element of a multiple transition without full reference to the others. This approach has shortcomings, and a strong case can be made that transitions require support in a much more strategic, patient and regional manner. Many countries have been called upon to make transitions to peace and democracy in a regional context that is unfavourable. This underlines the importance of an integrated political-military-economic approach to post-conflict transitions, with the institutional complexities this entails. In addition it underlines the need for regional approaches, notably embedding the design, implementation and monitoring of post-conflict reconstruction in subregional and regional contexts.

A number of organisations are taking an increasing interest in modalities for post-conflict transitions, with an especial focus on the measures needed for economic

rehabilitation and the various requirements of demilitarisation (demobilisation, disarmament, demining, reintegration of former combatants into civilian life). The World Bank is prominent among these. We are witnessing a greater readiness to treat post-conflict countries with special measures, exempting them from macro-economic conditionalities until they have achieved a certain level of rehabilitation. If this approach is to succeed, however, it is best done in close coordination with institutions engaged in democratisation and peace and security, including the OAU/AU and sub-regional organisations. This in turn calls for an institutional interface between Africa's peace and security mechanisms and international financial institutions designing and overseeing post-conflict transitions. Africa's leading regional economic institutions, notably the ECA and ADB, could play a prominent role in this interface.

In turn, a similar rationale applies to dealing with the long-term causes of countries' economic vulnerability to conflict, and the need to prevent conflicts becoming profitable or self-sustaining.

Developing Doctrines

This is a formidable list of objective constraints on Africa's capacity for creating a workable peace and security architecture. There are also subjective constraints: the organisations do not command respect or credibility. That is partly because little is known about them and there has been little participation in establishing them or setting their terms of reference and doctrines. In fact, there has not been systematic learning within Africa of experiences in peace and security. There are many ad hoc reviews at national, subregional and regional levels, but these have not been integrated into a common exercise of building consensus. Moreover, a doctrine of military intervention does not yet exist at a continental level. Africa has experience of regional enforcement, notably by ECOWAS and SADC, but their interventions have encountered serious political problems as well as difficulties in seeing operations through to a successful conclusion. Both doctrine and capacities for this kind of intervention need attention. A doctrine will need to address the questions of what kinds of situation warrant intervention, plus the roles and mandates of different subregional, regional and international organisations.

What we see is not planned architecture but an amalgam of ad hoc initiatives, and stand alone institutions. Some work, others do not. Institutional coherence, coordination and learning is poor.

However, the very multiplicity of institutions and initiatives indicates the high degree of concern about the issue of peace and security in Africa. The resolutions of these organisations, the direction in which they are evolving, and even their very existence, marks an emergent consensus about the importance of containing and resolving armed conflict across Africa. One of the priorities for the objective preconditions for security in Africa is creating a synergy between the existing institutions, enabling them to complement and support one another.

Given the lack of real power in regional and subregional organisations, much of the focus must be on developing the subjective conditions for security cooperation, namely developing common understandings of security and enriching the moral consensus against armed conflict and unconstitutional means of acquiring power. This should be done simultaneously at the national, subregional and regional levels. This exercise should involve setting continental standards for security cooperation. The process of national security promotion through national dialogue can be extended to subregional and regional level, once all countries concerned have completed at least the first stage of their national consultations.

This can help deepen ownership of security doctrines and thereby help put in place the subjective conditions for peace and security.

Meanwhile, there are also some specific measures that can assist making this institutional architecture into an operational reality. One of these is building the capacities for understanding, analysing and warning of conflicts among African institutions (governmental, intergovernmental and civil society). Part of this agenda is 'seminar diplomacy', focussing on building and disseminating a body of knowledge about conflict, conflict resolution, democratisation, etc., among key players. A second is monitoring and following up commitments made, and at the minimum, documenting those who have failed to live up to their promises. The establishment and reassertion of moral norms can (slowly) contribute to changes in state behaviour. Thirdly it is important to study relationships between the UN, OAU/AU, regional and subregional organisations and initiatives, so that they work in complementary ways. Much can be done in terms of mutual learning, and formal and informal networking and information sharing. Lastly, it is important to find means of engaging with civil society initiatives, so that they complement and augment inter-state processes.

Given the absence of real mechanisms for enforcement in the hands of African institutions, much of the work for the foreseeable future must consist in developing consensus, thereby promoting the subjective conditions for a possible peace and security order. Once again we converge on the overlap issue that binds together the AU, NEPAD and peace and security: constitutionalism and its underpinning, consensus on the core values of rule-bound behaviour. The multiplicity of institutions and initiatives runs the risk that they may fail to coordinate, or they may promote different values, or they may even run into conflict with one another. These problems can be minimised by establishing consensus on core values. These core values can start simple, as with the AU commitment to only respect constitutional transfers of power. But over time, the values can become more complex and substantial, reaching agreement on the requirements for military intervention, the definition of a fair electoral system, the powers of the African Court of Human Rights, and similar.

Towards a Comprehensive Strategy

There is no single strategy that can provide peace and security to Africa. Strategies should focus on the different stages of conflict, namely conflict prevention and peace-building, conflict resolution and containment, and post-conflict reconstruction. Strategies also need to be undertaken simultaneously at local, civil society, national and regional levels, in the social, political, military and economic spheres. Strategies need to be simultaneously 'objective', dealing with the substantive issues and the institutional mechanisms for responding, and 'subjective', in developing the awareness, understanding and expectations of leaders at all levels. They need to move beyond purely military definitions of security to more comprehensive and strategic visions.

The following three tables summarise some of the kinds of activities that can be undertaken, with potential institutions suggested for each.

Conflict prevention and peace-building

	Military	*Political*	*Economic*
Community	* Teaching of non-military values in schools. * Promoting inter-communal dialogue. * Small arms control. * **Schools, religious institutions, military colleges**	* Maintenance of effective dispute resolution mechanisms. * Empowerment of women and youth. * **Local government, CSOs, religious organisations**	* Management of common resources in a way so as to minimise conflict potential. * Provision of work, education opportunities for youth. * **Governmental services, NGOs, private sector.**
Civil society/ private sector	* Engagement of civil society stakeholders in public debate on security issues. * **CSOs, universities, military colleges, media**	* Promotion of civil and political rights, transparency and good governance. * Inclusion of all constituencies, promotion of gender equity. * **CSOs, media**	* NGO/CBO promotion of service provision, sustainable development. * Good corporate citizenship. * **Private sector, CSOs**
National political	* Limited use of emergency measures. * No proliferation of special forces or militias. * Transparency about military spending. * Civilian control of the military and security services. * **Armies, political parties**	* Equitable represen-tation of different ethnic/religious/social groups in government. * Devolution of powers. * Freedom of movement and regional citizenship. * Respect for constitut-ionalism. * **Courts, political parties, CSOs**	* Adequate remuneration for soldiers, including health care and pensions. * Limitations on military spending. * Controls on military and security involvement in commerce *** Ministries of Finance and Defence, int. partners, pol. parties**.
Regional	* Confidence-building measures between countries such as publishing national military budgets and troop levels. * Creation of regional intervention forces. * Development of national and regional security doctrines to promote predictability and transparency in inter-state relations. * **National govts, RECs, CSSDCA**	* Promotion of norms of good governance, utilising peer pressure. * Establishment and development of regional fora for dialogue and dispute management. * **Regional CSOs, religious organisations, universities**, **RECs, CSSDCA**	* Functioning of regional mechanisms and institutions for e.g. management of shared riperine resources, cross-border pastures. * Promotion of intra-regional trade *** Private sector, RECs, international partners, NEPAD**
International	* Development of credible international intervention forces. * Training for military, police, security services. *** AU, NEPAD, international partners**	* Enhancement of conflict early-warning and timely intervention systems. * Promoting common values. * **Governments, RECs, CSSDCA, AU, NEPAD**	* Increased predictability, mutual accountability in aid relations. * Increased support to key social sectors. *** International Partners, NEPAD**

Conflict resolution and containment

	Military	*Political*	*Economic*
Community	* For local conflicts, traditional moral restraints on conflict can be invoked. * For national conflicts, less is possible. *** CSOs**	* For local conflicts communities can invoke adapted traditional dispute resolution mechanisms. * For national conflicts, little can be done. *** CSOs, media, religious organisations**	* Promotion of fair and equitable access to and control over local resources. *** NGOs, government departments**
Civil society/ private sector	* For local conflicts, civil society initiatives are possible. * For national conflicts, very little is possible. *** CSOs, ICRC**	* Human rights monitoring. * Advocacy for peace (where possible). * Promotion of dialogue across conflict lines, e.g. contact with counterpart groups on the 'other side.' * Promotion of dialogue on post-conflict issues. *** CSOs, Human rights organisations, religious organisations, UN**	* Provision of assistance to people affected by war. * Observance of business codes of conduct, especially regarding human rights. *** NGOs, ICRC, UN, private sector**
National political	* Measures to ensure respect for the Geneva Conventions and provide humanitarian access to war-affected populations. * Ceasefire, augmented by mechanisms for monitoring. * Mechanisms for separation of forces, creation of security zones, encampment, etc. *** RECs, AU, UN**	* Proximity talks; preparatory talks, high-level talks, adoption of common values and principles: all the modalities for mediation available, either bilateral, facilitated or mediated. * Political liberalisation, opening up space for civil society. * Increased respect for human rights and humanitarian principles/ promotion of culture of peace. *** AU, UN etc**	* Avoidance or minimisation of military and security involvement in commerce. *** E.g. 'blood diamonds' campaign**
Regional	* Restrictions on arms flows, prohibition on use of military bases in neighbouring countries. *** RECs, AU, UN**	* Measures to contain the conflict and prevent its spreading to neighbour-ing countries. * In regional conflicts, the range of peace initiatives outlined above. * Facilitation or mediation of peace talks of various kinds. *** RECs, UN, Regional CSOs**.	* Monitoring and controlling illegal export of commodities from the affected country. * Assistance to refugees, combined with protection, demilitar-isation of refugee camps etc. *** CSOs, UN**
International	* Monitoring adherence to IHL. * Arms embargoes.	* Carrots and sticks to encourage the parties towards negotiation.	* Humanitarian assistance. * Monitoring and

	* UN, AU	* Support to community-based and civil society initiatives. * Facilitation or mediation of peace talks. *** UN, AU, RECs, NEPAD**	controlling illegal export of commodities from the affected country. * Advance planning for post-conflict economic rehabilitation and recovery. *** AU, NEPAD, UN, ECA, World Bank etc**

15

Management of post-conflict transition

	Military	*Political*	*Economic*
Community	* Rehabilitation and reintegration of former combatants. * Local control of small arms supplies. * Humanitarian mine action. *** NGOs, Local Govt**	* Reconciliation between formerly hostile communities. * Rebuilding of judicial institutions. *** CSOs, religious organisations, media**	* Rehabilitation of essential services. *** NGOs, Local Govt, private sector**
Civil society/ private sector	* Assistance to veterans' associations to become articulate and responsible members of civil society. *** CSOs, veterans assocns**	* Promotion of democracy, human rights etc., including active participation in rebuilding institutions. * Promotion of reconciliation. *** CSOs, media**	* Support to social service provision, income-generating projects, micro-credit etc. * Engagement in policy debate and monitoring of post-conflict rehabilit-ation programmes. *** CSOs, Private sector**
National political	* Creation of a national army and security forces committed to democratic sovereignty. * Establishment of a comprehensive nationwide programme for disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants and security officers. *** Ministries, UN**	* Establishment of democratic procedures and institutions. * Civilianisation of national political life. * Rebuilding national institutions. *** Government, CSOs**	* Development of plans for rehabilitation of war-stricken areas, return and resettlement of refugees and IDPs, economic reintegration of demobilised former combatants, and relaunching the economy. * Financing schemes for rehabilitation. *** UN, donors, World Bank, private sector, etc**
Regional	* Provision of peace-keeping forces as appropriate. * Monitoring adherence to military protocols in peace agreements. *** Ministries, RECs, AU, CSSDCA, UN**	* Supporting and monitoring implementation of peace agreements. * Promotion of regional civil society initiatives and networks. *** CSOs, RECs, AU, CSSDCA, UN**	* Assistance for refugees to return. * Promotion of regional integration, cross-border trade and other measures. *** NEPAD, AU, ECA, UN, World Bank, etc**
International	* Provision of peace-keeping forces as appropriate. * Monitoring adherence to military protocols in peace agreements. * Support (financial and technical) to military reform and demobilisation. *** UN, AU,**	* Institutional support to key ministries, departments for reconstruction. * Engagement in policy dialogue to promote democratisation and reconciliation plans over a realistic time frame * Support to civil society initiatives. *** AU, CSSDCA, NEPAD**	* Sequenced economic assistance to support transition from conflict through rehabilitation to growth/development. * Providing conditionality-free assistance to rehabilitation and recovery plans through trust funds and similar initiatives. * Accelerated debt relief. *** NEPAD, donors, ECA, World Bank**

Conclusion

Developing a robust framework for regional peace and security in Africa is a major challenge. Many of the basic preconditions for establishing security communities have not been met. Africa can neither emulate the European experience nor reconstruct the south-east Asian experiment. However, an African path towards common security can be developed that reflects the unique problems, challenges and opportunities in Africa. More than anything else, this entails linking regional peace and security to internal conflict resolution and governance in African states, utilising the existing architecture of regional and subregional organisations as a key component. The inter-linking of African conflicts mean that no one 'internal' conflict can be considered as purely the domestic concern of that country.

Addressing the objective preconditions for peace is a demanding agenda, involving complex institutional processes and linkages. There is a pressing need for a roadmap that links the OAU/AU, RECs, other regional initiatives, and economic institutions including the ECA, ADB, World Bank and international donors.

Any comprehensive strategy for peace and security is based on the precept that national security is far too important to be left to the military. Countries need to identify their strategy national security interests in a way that involves all stakeholders. The model of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers for each country, developed by participatory processes, can also be applied to the promotion of comprehensive national security doctrines. Having been concluded at national level, these can be used as the stepping stones towards subregional and regional consensus on the foundations of common security. This can be a modest but significant first step on the road towards the emergent of a common constitutional order in Africa.