

African Peace and Security Architecture: a Strategic Analysis

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Resumo

Arquitetura de Paz e Segurança em África: Uma Análise Estratégica

Este é um estudo descritivo no campo dos estudos estratégicos, centrado numa abordagem holística dos diversos mecanismos e objetivos da Arquitetura de Paz e Segurança Africana (APSA). A intenção é analisar os mecanismos desenvolvidos (ou em fase de desenvolvimento) pela UA e pelas organizações regionais africanas para abordar questões de paz e segurança em África, com o objetivo último de contribuir para uma melhor compreensão do contexto de segurança africano ao nível estratégico. Ao utilizar o modelo estratégico Ends-Ways-Means, este estudo conclui que a APSA é uma estratégia de segurança viável para lidar com as principais ameaças em África.

No entanto, há ainda lacunas importantes e sua eficácia depende de três ingredientes fundamentais: a vontade política dos Estados membros da UA, os desenvolvimentos ao nível regional, e do tratamento das ameaças externas de uma forma muito mais consistente, abrangendo a dimensão “de segurança” da APSA na mesma extensão que a sua dimensão “de paz”.

Abstract

This is a descriptive study in the realm of strategy, focused on creating a holistic and meaningful picture about the mechanisms and purpose of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The overall intent is to analyze the mechanisms developed, or in a developing stage, by the African Union (AU) and regional organizations to address peace and security issues in Africa, with the ultimate goal of contributing to a better understanding of African security context at the strategic level. By using the strategic model of Ends-Ways-Means, this study concluded that the APSA is a viable security strategy to deal with the principal threats in Africa. However, there are still important shortcomings and its effectiveness is dependent upon three critical ingredients: political will of AU Member States, developments at the regional level, and by addressing the external threats much more consistently, covering the security dimension of the APSA in the same extent of its peace dimension.

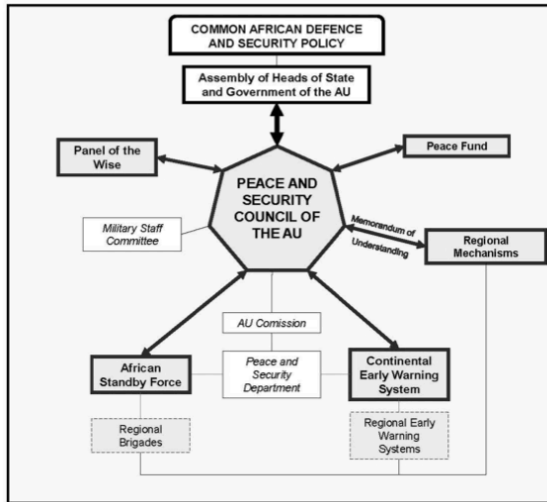
Introduction

The security architecture in Africa has evolved considerably over the past forty years. In the past, regional and sub-regional African organizations expended most of their time dealing with the aftermath of conflicts instead of prevention and early resolution. The creation of the African Union (AU) in 2002 was the most significant step towards achieving a continental collective security system, enabling African countries to unite in seeking and developing collective solutions to prevent and mitigate conflicts. The AU rejected the approach of its predecessor (Organization of African Unity – OAU) – of absolute respect for national sovereignty – and adopted a new policy in which the responsibility to protect human and people’s rights, and the right to intervene in a Member State are enshrined in the Constitutive Act, the basis of the new security architecture¹ (Vines and Middleton, 2008: 8).

The Constitutive Act established provisions for intervention in the internal affairs of a Member State through military force, if necessary, to protect vulnerable populations from human rights abuses. Implicit in these provisions is the concept of human security and the understanding that sovereignty is conditional and defined in terms of a State’s capacity and willingness to protect its citizens (Powell, 2005: 1). In order to provide an operational dimension to the security provisions of the Constitutive Act, the AU developed capacities for early warning, quick reaction, conflict prevention, management and resolution. At the same time, it placed “itself within a robust security system that builds on the strengths of African regional organizations and the United Nations (UN), and that draws on extensive support from other international actors” (Powell, 2005: 1).

1 The first reference to this concept is in the Protocol that established the Peace and Security Council of the AU, in 2002, in his Article 16, naming it the “overall security architecture of the Union”.

Figure 1 – The African Peace and Security Architecture



Source: Created by the author.

This new African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) pursues African solutions to African problems. The APSA is grounded on two pillars: the Common African Defense and Security Policy (CADSP)² and the Peace and Security Council (PSC)³ (see figure 1). To fulfill its tasks, the PSC has three primary instruments at its disposal: the Panel of the Wise (PW), the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) and the African Standby Force (ASF). These three instruments, together with a special fund for financing missions and activities related to peace and security (the Peace Fund) and the Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, round out the elements of the APSA.

A Strategic Analysis

The APSA is a very complex security system, relying on regional and continental intergovernmental organizations, on the will of African peoples and on the support of a countless number of partners. Covering all processes that are underway in the APSA with the appropriate level of depth is a colossal task. The strategic

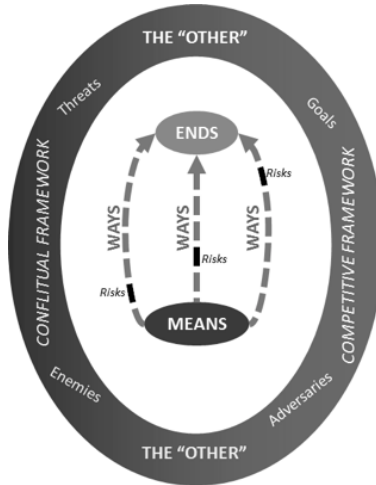
2 AU’s central policy document on security, signed in 2004.

3 AU’s most important organ on security issues.

model *Ends-Ways-Means* provides the adequate paradigm to analyze the strategic importance of the APSA. It allow to describe and analyze the suitability of the Ends established for the APSA, particularly the extent of its contribution for the accomplishment of the desired effect of promoting and consolidating peace and security on the African continent.

In addition, it describes and analyzes the application of the four classic strategic *Ways* – diplomatic, military, informational and economic – to the particular case of the APSA, as well as its respective *Means*. *Ways* and respective *Means* are analyzed together to scrutinize its overall feasibility (e. g. the extent in which the *Ways* can be accomplished by its *Means*). In order to do that it is indispensable to analyze the development stage of each of the *Means*: Diplomatic (PSC, Commission and PW), Military (ASF), Informational (CEWS) and Economic (Peace Fund).

Figure 2 – The Ends-Ways-Means Strategic Model



Source: Created by the author.

The Ends of the APSA

In the realm of strategy, Ends are objectives or goals that answer the question of “what” one is trying to achieve. The CADSP, signed in 2004, is essentially a strategy based on a set of principles, objectives and instruments with the overall desired effect of promoting and consolidating peace and security on the continent (Touray, 2005: 636). The CADSP establishes the security strategic goals for the APSA (AU,

2004: 8). They are “essentially to respond to both internal and external threats effectively” (Touray 2005: 643). The CADSP classifies internal and external threats as dangers to the common defense and security interests of the continent, undermining the maintenance and promotion of peace, security and stability (AU, 2004: 3).

Table 1 – Main African Common Security Threats

Internal Threats	External Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-state conflicts/tensions (including situations that undermine the sovereignty and territorial integrity); • Intra-state conflicts/tensions (including war crimes, genocides, and coup d'états); • Unstable post-conflict situations; • Grave humanitarian situations, as well as other circumstances (including violent and other crimes, including organized and cross border crimes). <p><i>(Note: Twenty-two (22) different threats are labeled as Internal Threats in the CADSP)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External aggression, including the invasion of an African country; • International conflicts and crises with adverse effects on African regional security; • Mercenaries; • International terrorism and terrorist activities; • The adverse effect of globalization and unfair international political and economic policies, practices and regimes; • The accumulation, stockpiling, proliferation and manufacturing of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, chemical and biological weapons, unconventional long-range and ballistic missiles; • Cross-border crimes such as drug and human trafficking (which may constitute a threat at the regional and national levels); • Unilateral policies aimed at isolating African countries; • Dumping of chemical and nuclear wastes in Africa.

Source: African Union (2004).

Analyzing these threats, some inferences can be drawn. First, the internal threats are related to the peace dimension of the APSA (addressing conflicts) and the external threats are related with to the security dimension (addressing other security threats). Second, the number of threats identified in the CADSP is very high. The document identifies thirty-one different threats to the common defense and security interests of the continent. Although these threats are grouped into internal⁴ and external to the African continent, they are extremely diverse (in its nature, capabilities or intentions) making it very complex and challenging to find balanced Ways and Means to mitigate all of these threats.

Third, most of these threats are interconnected and affect the development and security of the continent. In today’s strategic context, in Africa or elsewhere, situations and problems such as terrorism, civil wars, organized crime or extreme

⁴ The internal threats are organized in four clusters: inter-state conflicts/tensions; intra-state conflicts/tensions; unstable post-conflict situations; and grave humanitarian situations, as well as other circumstances.

poverty, are interrelated and cannot be addressed separately. In order to mitigate all these threats, comprehensive approaches are required, overcoming narrow pre-occupations and working across the whole range of issues, in a coordinated and integrated way.

Fourth, The CADSP does not specifically addresses maritime or cyber security threats. These two types of threats pose dangers to the security interests of the African continent, undermining the promotion of security and stability. As one can see in the Gulf of Aden or in the Gulf of Guinea, issues like illegal fishing, piracy, arms and drugs trade, oil bunkering or sea pollution, are extremely dangerous threats that require strategic mitigation. Likewise, cyber security threats have an enormous destabilizing potential. The low cost and virtual nature of cyber space makes it an attractive domain for use by those who seek to use cyber space for malicious purposes. As Internet penetration rates increase across the African continent, so does the risk of cyber-attacks, which threatens the protection of financial information, personal data, and intellectual property.

The Ways and Respective Means

In the strategic model, *Ways* are courses of action that explain “how” the *Means* will be used, and *Means* are the resources or instruments that will be used to execute the strategic concept defined by the different *Ways*. The *Ways* and *Means* analyzed in this section are related by its nature: the diplomatic *Way* with the PSC, the Commission, and the PW; the military *Way* with the ASF; the informational *Way* with the CEWS; and the economic *Way* with the Peace Fund.

The Diplomatic Ways and Means

The Protocol that created the PSC establishes in its Article 6 two primary diplomatic *Ways* to achieve the strategic goals: preventive diplomacy and peacemaking, particularly by the “use of good offices, mediation, conciliation and enquiry” (AU, 2002: 8). Preventive diplomacy strives to resolve a dispute before it escalates into violence. Peacemaking, generally, seeks to promote a ceasefire and to negotiate an agreement.

The APSA is based on a paradigm that recognizes preventive diplomacy as central to address peace and security challenges in Africa. African Leaders consider that the comprehensive and coherent use of preventive diplomacy is important in creating the conditions for sustainable peace. According to South Africa President, Jacob Zuma, preventive diplomacy initiatives are more cost-effective than

the deployment of peacekeepers once a conflict has broken out. Therefore, it is essential that the “efforts of both the African Union and the numerous sub regional organizations across the continent working on preventive diplomacy be respected and supported by the UN and the international community as a whole” (Zuma, 2011: 6).

The other diplomatic Way established by the Protocol is based on the use of diplomatic methods, mainly mediation, good offices, conciliation and enquiry. All four methods are anchored in Article 33 of the Charter of the UN, under its Chapter VI, *Pacific Settlement of Disputes*. Mediation processes have often been employed in attempts to resolve conflicts on the African continent. In recent years, the AU and sub-regional organizations have played an important role in mediating hotspot issues in Africa, namely in the Sudan, Burundi and Madagascar. “Their success shows that regional and sub-regional organizations have unique political, moral and geographic advantages in preventing and resolving local conflicts” (Jiechi, 2011: 16).

However, the APSA still requires an institutionalization of mediation processes. In order to move from *ad hoc* mediation initiatives to more institutionalized and systematic ones the AU peace and security agenda needs to enhance its mediation mechanisms and processes. “Partnerships among African states; between the AU and regional organizations; the AU, EU and UN; and between AU and civil society organizations are important in order to ensure that there is cooperation, coordination, joint solutions and support among and within the actors in the field of conflict resolution and mediation” (ACCORD, 2009: 34).

The Peace and Security Council

The PSC is the central diplomatic instrument of the APSA. It is the point of contact with international organizations such as the UNSC and the Political and the Security Committee of the EU. The Protocol relating to its creation establishes that the PSC performs functions in the areas of preventive diplomacy and peace-making, including the use of good offices, mediation⁵, conciliation and enquiry (AU, 2002: 8). It is empowered to take diplomatic initiatives and action it deems appropriate with regard to situations of potential and actual conflicts. To that end, it uses its discretion to affect entry, whether through the collective intervention of the Council or through its Chairperson and/or the Chairperson of the Com-

5 An example of using mediation: through a PSC decision, the AU assumed the political responsibility of mediating between the government of Sudan and armed resistance movements the Justice and Equality Movement and the Sudan Liberation Army.

mission, the PW, and/or in collaboration with regional mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution (AU, 2002: 14). The PSC may establish subsidiary bodies that include *ad hoc* committees for mediation, conciliation or enquiry, consisting of an individual State or group of States (AU, 2002: 12).

The PSC has become a focus of “collective security decisions by African for Africans” (Sturman and Hayatou, 2010: 57). In response to urgent security issues, it has been able to act more decisively than the larger Assembly of 53 Member States of the AU and has shifted the AU from a tradition of non-interference in domestic affairs to a new approach, using sanctions and more assertive regional diplomacy (Sturman and Hayatou, 2010: 57). The focus of the decisions, so far, has been on conflict management and resolution, rather than conflict prevention⁶. This is due to capacity constraints and the intensity and complexity of conflicts, but also to a lack of political will, reflecting the power politics and interests in Africa (Sturman and Hayatou 2010, 69). Consensus⁷ has remained the norm by which all decisions have been reached. This mode of decision-making seems not only time-consuming, but by institutionalizing it, it allows Member States with a strategic interest in a particular conflict to block some kind of intervention (Sturman and Hayatou, 2010: 69).

It is important to highlight that in just eight years the PSC has made significant achievements in addressing the various conflict and crisis situations and has significantly improved its methods. However, the PSC faces still important challenges. PSC authorizations to deploy peacekeepers to Burundi (AMIB), Comoros (AMISEC), Sudan (AMIS) and more recently Somalia (AMISOM) exposed a major gap between the PSC’s willingness to authorize such missions and the AU’s ability to implement them. Shortage of resources--human and material--has emerged as a major shortfall. This mandate-resource gap may in the long run erode its credibility (AU, 2010a: 26). Additionally, there has been some lack of interaction between the PSC and other APSA components, primarily due to the fact some of the components are still being operationalized (AU, 2010a: 31). Institutionally, the PSC is mandated to work with the Chairperson of the Commission; a link between the PSC and the PW is missing (AU, 2010a: 28).

6 “Nor has the PSC devoted much attention to the nonmilitary dimensions of security, such as environmental degradation, organized crime, and disease. This limited focus is the result of analytical and operational capacity deficiencies, as well as the regularity of hot crises, which makes it difficult for the PSC to tackle the upstream and structural aspects of conflict mitigation” (Williams, 2011: 7).

7 The PSC decisions are generally based on the principle of consensus. However, in case of failure to reach a consensus, decisions on procedural matters are by a simple majority and substantive matters by a two-thirds majority of members eligible to vote (Sturman and Hayatou, 2010: 66).

The Diplomatic Role of the AU Commission

The AU Commission has a very important diplomatic role within the APSA. Under the authority of the PSC, and in consultation with all parties involved in a conflict, the Chairperson of the AU may deploy efforts and take all initiatives deemed appropriate to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts. Therefore, at his own initiative or when requested by the PSC, he may use his good offices, either personally or through special envoys, special representatives, the PW or the Regional Mechanisms, to exercise diplomatic efforts (AU, 2002: 15).

The principal operational mechanism of mediation at the AU is, in fact, the Commission. It implements mediation interventions and takes decisions regarding their composition and nature. The mediation efforts have so far taken the form of *ad hoc* deployment of special envoys in identified conflict areas on the continent, with the support from the Conflict Management Directorate of the Commission (ACCORD, 2009: 10).

The Panel of the Wise

The creation of the PW was motivated by the need for finding homegrown solutions to African challenges, and by the African cultural belief of the wisdom, discretion and trustworthiness of elders. Within this cultural framework, similar structures are being developed in the REC's.

The PW can diplomatically intervene in crises through several ways. It can be by facilitating the establishment of channels of communication between the AU and parties engaged in a dispute; by carrying out fact-finding missions; by conducting shuttle diplomacy between parties; by encouraging parties to engage in political dialogue; carrying out reconciliation processes; or by assisting and advising mediation processes. The PW selects up to three critical crisis situations per year, which it will monitor constantly (Abdellaoui, 2009: 6). It adopted five criteria for engaging in crisis situations.

The PW became operational in December 2007, and has met ten times since then. It is expected to meet at least three times a year, or more often if necessary. So far, its meetings have focused on three themes: election related conflicts; non-impunity, justice and national reconciliation; and women and children in armed conflicts in Africa (AU, 2010a: 56).

The PW has undertaken fruitful and important tasks in preventive diplomacy. Through confidence-building missions, the PW has engaged with several countries and regions affected by crisis or conflicts (AU, 2010a: 56). However, the PW faces some constraints. The PW does not appear in the structure of the Commis-

sion raising budgetary, ownership and sustainable issues; therefore, it does not receive any funding through the AU regular budget. All its activities and those of its Secretariat have been funded through partner support, which is an unsustainable situation and hampers its activities (AU, 2010a: 56). According to Murithi and Mwaura (2010: 82), the PW also needs staff complement,⁸ namely a robust mediation support unit within the Commission and significant input from qualified political officers who have experience in bilateral and multilateral negotiation settings.

The PW faces also some challenges. First, the importance of ensuring buy-in from the rest of the APSA mechanisms as well as AU Member States; this is vital for recognizing the importance of its role and therefore for its efficacy. Second, the importance of ensuring comprehensive coordination; without it there is a danger that the activities of the PW will be routinely undermined. Third, the clarification of which stage of the diplomatic process it intervenes and whether the PW will be empowered and appropriately staffed by the AU and its partners to fulfill its mandate effectively. “A pragmatic appreciation of the nexus between preventing conflicts, making peace once conflicts have escalated, and keeping peace following agreements will determine how effective the PW will be” (Murithi and Mwaura, 2010: 90).

It seems that the PW has the potential to be the most innovative and effective diplomatic Means of the APSA. Not only because was conceived within the cultural framework of the African continent, but also because it is not (or should not be) constrained by the political considerations of the Commission or the PSC.

The Military Ways and Means

The Protocol that created the PSC establishes in Article 13 two primary generic military ways to achieve the strategic security goals: peace support missions and military intervention. These two primary ways are divided in seven possible methods (AU, 2020: 19).

Both ways are primarily focused on the internal threats. It is important to note that in any relevant strategic document of the APSA⁹ are defined military ways of dealing with external threats, such as terrorism or cross-border crimes. This is corroborated by the existing scenarios for employing the ASF, ranging from small-scale

8 The Panel’s Secretariat has only two professional staff and an administrative assistant for its eleven core functions (AU, 2010: 57).

9 Such as the Protocol that creates the PSC or the *Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defense and Security Policy*.

observation missions to forcible military intervention. These scenarios focus on peace support operations and do not authorize the ASF to engage with external threats or other security challenges, such as those associated with antipiracy and maritime security. This land-focused approach can be too narrow for addressing all the dimensions of a complex peace-support operation, as the case of Libya demonstrated.

In addition, the participation in humanitarian assistance or in efforts to address major natural disasters is not envisioned in the scenarios for the employment of the ASF. Generally, military organizations possess important capabilities--such as transport, logistics and the ability to deploy rapidly--to participate in disaster relief operations. The CADSP mentions that the ASF "shall provide humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering of the civilian population in conflict areas (as well as support efforts to address major natural disasters)" (AU, 2004: 18). However, this intention was not translated into the existing scenarios of the ASF.

So far, the AU has tended to concentrate its military responses on conflict management, rather conflict prevention, through peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations. The AU authorized military missions in Burundi, Sudan/Darfur, Somalia and Comoros. Military operations have been deployed to "supervise, observe, monitor, and verify the implementation of ceasefire agreements or to help broke cease-fires between government and rebel groups" (Söderbaum and Hettne, 2010: 22).

Military intervention is a critical issue that is addressed in the APSA. According to its Constitutive Act, the AU has "the right to intervene in a Member State pursuant to decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances: namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity" (AU, 2002a). Scenario 6 for the employment of the ASF addresses these situations, namely "*in genocide situations where the international community does not act promptly*" (AU, 2005: 3). Despite some legal doubts about this *right to intervene* (beyond the scope of this essay) what is critical in this issue is the political will to apply this very coercive military measure when it becomes imperative. This is true for the AU and for all other organizations, like the UNSC, that need to deal with similar, and always sensitive, situations of intervention.

The African Standby Force

The African Standby Force is the primary military instrument for implementing the decisions of the PSC. It is based on standby arrangements with the continent's five sub-regions, each providing a brigade-sized contribution, supported by civilian police and other capacities. According to a recent assessment report of the AU, released in 2010, "there is no doubt that efforts to operationalize the ASF have

registered good progress although, the degree of progress varies from region to regions” (2010a: 51). Despite achieving major progress developing the ASF, there are still significant shortcomings.

Bachmann analyzed and summarized some of these shortcomings: the AU and the regions lack mission planning capacity; the police and civilian components of the ASF remain significantly weaker than their military counterparts; communications and interoperability between military, police, and civilians in the field remain low; administrative, financial and human resources management capacity remain too weak compared to the task at hand; African missions remain heavily dependent on external support for the entire range of their logistics needs, from strategic deployment to field logistics, as well as for their CIS (communications and information systems) needs. “Financial dependence on external donors characterizes African capacity-building efforts as well as operations” (Bachmann, 2011: 13).

The AU and the sub-regions have made significant progress towards establishing a viable regional peace support capability. However, the progress and status of readiness of each of the regional brigades is different. It seems that the NASBRIG is lagging in the operationalization of the standby arrangement, despite NARC’s economic and military potential of its members. This is due to the fact there was no prior collaboration among the North African States at this level. Hence, they had to create all these structures to meet the requirements of the ASF (Alghali and Mbaye, 2008: 38). In addition, the progress has been hampered by a “lack of multilateral cooperation in the region, exemplified by the Algerian-Moroccan standoff over Western Sahara” (Burgess, 2009: 3) and by the recent events in Libya.

Logistics depots are important and a basic mission capability needed for the ASF. Recently, the AU and RECs launched projects focused on improving the shortcomings of logistics depots. This effort, however, “does not seem to have gone much beyond studies to identify the appropriate locations of the depots and initial drafts of their contents and costs”¹⁰ (Bachmann, 2011: 13).

The civilian components (including police) are still underdeveloped in all sub-regions. The civilian components are essential for addressing multidimensional peacekeeping and peace-building operations. Still, according to the AU, “these components have been put in place in all sub-regions but there are still some crucial gaps” (AU, 2010b: 51).

To date, none of the RECs and Regional Mechanisms (RMs) has signed a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with their Members for the deployment of their troops. This aspect is fundamental for the operationalization and employ-

10 Following protracted studies and political discussions, the decision to create a continental depot in Douala, Cameroon, was finally approved by the defense and security ministers in December 2010 (Bachmann, 2011: 40).

ment of the ASF, requiring that the AU, RECs and RMs adopt binding legal documents with Member States for the employment of pledged troops.

The gap between aspiration and implementation remains wide. Protocols and framework documents are in place, and institutional structures are being built; but despite recent developments, operational capacity remains limited in the face of rising demands and expectations (Cilliers, 2005: 16). In December 2010, a third roadmap was proposed by an AU specialized technical committee to focus on the steps needed to reach Full Operating Capability (FOC) for a limited Rapid Deployment Capability (RDC) by 2012, and FOC for the ASF as a whole by 2015 (AU, 2010b: 1). These are ambitious objectives. In order to achieve them, the AU and the ASF need to overcome important shortfalls and vital challenges. There are shortfalls in the areas of coordination, force composition; planning; doctrine, procedures and training; interoperability and communications; and logistics (AU, 2010b: 1). Some of these deficiencies will need better management of administrative and human resources to improve; however, the greatest resource shortfall remains internal financial contributions and dependence on external donors.

Therefore, two big challenges emerge: the first one is related to balance. Military operations, equipment and logistics are expensive. African leaders need to find a balance between investing in this continental and regional security mechanism and in the immediate challenges of governance, poverty, and development. Both dimensions are not mutually exclusive as there is no development without security.

The biggest challenge is African will and ownership. If the AU Member States really want to develop African solutions for African security problems, they need to be more pro-active and innovative. The cultural paradigm, *we do it this way, because that's the way we do it*, often inhibits appropriate and effective responses to challenges. As Cilliers pointed out, sometimes Africans “deliberately take a back seat, engaging in an old game of extracting the maximum benefit from their benefactors” (Cilliers, 2008: 18). This logically will lead to more external engagement and to less African commitment, hindering African progress and development, and therefore, African solutions. Undoubtedly, African need vast financial and technical support from donors and partners; but it is vital that the “AU and the various regions ensure that they assume ownership and drive donor support and not the other way around” (Cilliers, 2008: 18).

The Informational Ways and Means

Generally, the purposes of the informational Ways are disseminating and collecting information in order to achieve strategic objectives (Worley, 2008: 4). The protocol that created the PSC establishes that, in order to facilitate timely and ef-

ficient response to conflict and crisis situations in Africa, the information gathered through the CEWS shall be used by the Chairperson of the Commission to “advise the PSC on potential conflicts and threats to peace and security in Africa and recommend the best course of action” (AU, 2002b: 17).

The AU Informational Way – materialized by the CEWS – to achieve the AU Ends is focused on the internal threats, at least theoretically, namely on inter-state conflicts/tensions and intra-state conflicts/tensions. The Indicators Module of the CEWS, which trigger the early warning cycle (and provides the information for the strategic analysis and the engagement with decision-makers), is based on a framework of generic indicators derived *ex negativo* from documents adopted by the African Heads of State and Government (AU, 2008: 6). All those documents are directly related with conflict prevention, human rights, good governance and democracy. No indicators were developed for external threats, such as terrorism or cross-border crimes.

Despite the nature and purpose of the CEWS, there are always sensitive issues when using information related with events that occurred inside a Member State. The former Director of Peace and Security at the AU, Ambassador Sam Ibok, mentioned some of them, including: the barrier of national sovereignty, which often hampered efforts to collect reliable data and information, as well as timely intervention; the issue of data ownership, which often created problems on the flexibility of the use and dissemination of data collected; and the lack of political will on the part of Member States (Cilliers, 2005: 19). These issues are critical and must be openly addressed by the AU, if the goal is effectively mitigate internal and external threats.

The Continental Early Warning System

The CEWS is one of the key instruments of the APSA. A recent assessment report indicated that significant progress has been achieved in the operationalization of the CEWS, and the system has been able to “provide reliable and up-to-date information on potential, actual and post-conflict situations” (AU, 2010b: 32).

However, the same report mentioned before identifies important shortfalls. The level of development of each of the sub-regional early warning systems is different, hindering higher level operation. Data collection and reporting are relatively advanced at the continental level, in ECOWAS and in IGAD, but not yet effective in CEN-SAD, EAC and COMESA; in most other RECs, progress has been achieved in establishing policy frameworks, specific concepts and approaches to early warning (AU, 2010b: 33). Conflict analysis and development of response options are just beginning in some regions; only IGAD is building up an integrated response mechanism at this stage (AU, 2010b: 33). There are still technical and

financial constraints to directly link each of the RECs monitoring and observation centers to the AU Situation Room (AU, 2010b: 34). There is a shortage of staff in the AU Situation room¹¹ and within the early warning systems of the REC's. It is also necessary to enhance the analytic capacity of staff. "Without substantial staff reinforcement it is questionable whether the monitoring units in certain RECs will be established" (AU, 2010b: 34).

Efforts to strengthen engagement with senior management and political decision makers in some of the RECs remain embryonic (AU, 2010b: 35). Coordination and collaboration with relevant international organizations to build functional and result-oriented partnerships is needed. The AU has not been able to engage with civil society organizations (CSO) because of the diversity of civil society and the very different level of development in different States and regions (AU, 2010b: 36). Different kinds of support for the CEWS were drawn from a relatively small number of donors¹². In general, donor support has been forthcoming with adequate timing and at sufficient levels. However, "most partners tend to prioritize one or two organizations rather than continent-wide CEWS support based on a pragmatic approach which match the advancement of the individual organizations" (AU, 2010b: 36).

All these issues are important and need to be adequately addressed. Some of them are structural, such as the liaison and coordination between the AU and the RECs, and the human, technical and financial sustainability of the system. The ability of the CEWS to engage AU decision-makers appropriately and influence decision-making is the most critical issue. This is also its central role, which ultimately will enable the development of appropriate response strategies by the AU. Also imperative, however, is the capability to develop effective outreach strategies to engage other stakeholders outside the AU. The CEWS is an open source system and, by its nature, it is desirable to remain as such. Without this vital link with civil society – including non-governmental organizations, media, academia and think tanks – the flow of information will be limited and partial, hindering its primary purpose of facilitating timely and efficient response to conflict and crisis situations in Africa.

The Economic Ways and Means

Usually, in the realm of strategic theory, the economic ways are associated with

11 There are ten Situation Room assistants working on a 24/7 shift basis (AU, 2010b: 34).

12 "Programmed/budget funding is provided by EU, UNDP, GTZ and DANIDA. Flexible, ad-hoc funding is also provided by UNDP, UK, GTZ and USAID" (AU, 2010b: 35).

tariffs and quotas, economic sanctions, incentives and foreign economic aid, with the purposes of protection or coercion, but also providing a basis for developing other instruments of power or influence (Worley, 2008: 6).

The AU can impose economic sanctions under certain conditions. Article 23 of the AU Constitutive Act establishes that any Member State that fails to comply with the decisions and policies of the AU may be subjected to sanctions, “such as the denial of transport and communications links with other Member States, and other measures of a political and economic nature to be determined by the Assembly” (AU, 2002a: 12). Rule 37 of the *Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of the Union* add that economic sanctions may be applied against regimes that refuse to restore constitutional order, such as trade restrictions and any additional sanction as may be recommended by the PSC (AU, 2002c).

The AU sanctions regime addresses three main types of situations: nonpayment of membership contributions (arrears), non-compliance with the decisions and policies of the AU, and unconstitutional changes of government (AU, 2002c). All these situations include economic sanctions ranging from provision, by the AU, of funds for new projects in Member States to trade restrictions. In the last few years, the AU applied sanctions to some Member States. The AU PSC has issued a series of sanctions against Togo, the Comoros, Mauritania, and recently on Guinea, Niger and Madagascar,¹³ however with mixed results in terms oversight, monitoring and the verification of implementation (Lulie, 2010).

In order to enhance AU capacity to ensure Member States implement what they bargained for, the AU decided to create a *Sanctions Committee* within the PSC. The committee will have an important role in recommending to the PSC, AU and other legitimate bodies the actions deemed appropriate in response to violations, and in lifting or hardening sanctions (Lulie, 2010).

Economic sanctions may have an important role in addressing some of internal threats to Africa. However, it is questionable if the AU has the full capacity to effectively impose these sanctions. As mentioned in a recent report of the Chairperson of Commission “over and above the suspension measure, international partners, particularly the UNSC, should lend more effective support to the sanctions decided by the AU” (AU, 2010: 6). This international support is a fundamental condition. Still, two other conditions are needed. “The first one is technical which includes the design and the infrastructure of the management of implementation. The second is political or related to the will to act quickly, evenhandedly and consistently” (ISS, 2009: 2).

13 In the case of Madagascar the economic sanctions included: the freezing of funds, other financial assets and economic resources (AU, 2010c: 2).

The Peace Fund

It is imperative to stress that the Peace Fund is not an economic instrument to be used on realm of economic sanctions or other punitive measures. Its role is to provide the necessary financial resources for peace support missions and other operational activities related to peace and security in Africa. However, it has an economic¹⁴ (financial) nature and, above all, is one of the instruments of the APSA, contributing for achieving its peace and security objectives.

The Peace Fund is the continental mechanism created by the AU to financially support the APSA. It is made up of financial appropriations from four sources: regular budget of the AU, voluntary contributions by Member States, non-Member States contributions and miscellaneous receipts (AU, 2007: 102). With regard to the contribution from the AU Member States, only twelve percent¹⁵ of its annual budget is allocated to the fund (AU, 2010b: 60).

However, the Peace Fund is virtually empty and “there is cause for concern regarding the funding of peace operations in Africa” (AU, 2007: 102). Some Member States have difficulties in honoring their financial obligations, and by 2009 the AU’s Peace Fund had a negative balance (AU, 2010b: 60). Between 2004 and 2007, only 1.9% of the total resources channeled through the Peace Fund came from African Member States; the rest was provided by external partners (AU, 2010b: 59). The EU is so far the largest funding partner of the AU (Gänzle and Grimm, 2010: 75).

A high-level audit of the African Union in 2007 recommended that the Commission Chairperson should intensify his efforts at mobilizing funds and resources for AU peacekeeping operations from within the Continent and the Diaspora. In addition, the report stressed the need of the African countries to contribute substantially to AU peace operations and to pay regularly their respective contributions (AU, 2007: 172). If the Member States meet their financial obligations, the AU’s dependency on external aid will be reduced, and that sustainability and ownership of the APSA will be guaranteed (AU, 2010b: 60).

Conclusions

Military operations, equipment and logistics are expensive. African leaders need to find a balance between investing in this continental and regional security mechanism and in the immediate challenges of governance, poverty, and devel-

14 This is the reason why it is methodologically analyzed under the economic ways.

15 In 2010, a UN report mentioned that these contributions would not be sufficient to deploy and sustain the current peace support operations, and proposed its enhancement (UN, 2010: 14).

opment. Both dimensions are not mutually exclusive as there is no development without security. This represents an enormous challenge to Africa requiring courage, will, wisdom and trust. As previously mentioned, the *Ends* of the APSA are essentially to respond to both internal and external threats effectively. All these threats are often interrelated and cannot be addressed separately. In order to mitigate all these threats, comprehensive and integrated approaches are required, overcoming narrow preoccupations and working across the whole range of issues. Only by this way will the APSA be a viable security strategy to deal with the principal threats in Africa.

Some recommendations can be suggested. These recommendations are based on three major potential gaps in the APSA, beside the lack of human, technical and financial resources: political will of AU Member States to implement the strategy; the discrepancies between the regional level and the continental level; and the lack of *Ways* to address adequately the security dimension of the APSA (*i.e.* the external threats).

Political will is absolutely vital to operationalize all mechanisms of the APSA. Very sensitive issues such as military intervention in a Member State with regards to grave circumstances, information sharing, implementing sanctions or addressing transnational threats, require strong political commitment and will of AU Member States in order to be effective. Otherwise, the lack of political will can be exploited by the threats - internal or external - to discredit the AU and its Member States, thus hindering obtaining its strategic goals.

Another gap is the discrepancy between the regional and continental levels. The APSA is a very complex security system, relying on regional and continental intergovernmental organizations. At the continental level, there has been significant progress in the development of the AU organizational structures. However, most of the mechanisms of the APSA are completely dependent on the RECs and RMs, such as the regional brigades or the regional warning systems. Without the proper development and operationalization of these regional instruments, there will be no success for the APSA.

The other gap is the lack of *Ways* to address adequately the security dimension of the APSA. The African Peace and Security Architecture has, according to its name, two dimensions: peace and security. However, most of the *Ways* and *Means* of the APSA are primarily focused on the peace dimension of the APSA, not addressing effectively, or simply not addressing, the security dimension. Threats such as terrorism, mercenaries, cross-border crimes, cyber threats, or piracy require effective response strategies, both at the regional and continental levels. This will require cooperation between military, security forces (*i.e.* police), civil society and external partners, but also the development of certain capabilities such as such as air, naval, Special Forces and cyber protection components, not present in the current structure.

These three issues are critical and will require African leaders' focus and also support and contribution of external partners.

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