



Report of the ISS Seminar: “Operationalising the African Peace and Security Architecture: Challenges and Opportunities”

*Friday March 20, 2009, 9.00 am- 12.30 pm
Millennium UN Plaza Hotel, One UN Plaza, 44th Street, New York, USA*

I. Background

The Conflict Prevention Programme (CPP) ISS Addis Ababa organized the above seminar with a view to examine challenges and opportunities of operationalizing African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) since the restructuring of the continental body in July 2002. Taking appreciative inquiry as its point of departure, the seminar interrogated the strategies for building synergy between the African Union’s (AU’s) Peace and Security Council (PSC) and other international organizations, think-tanks and other institutions; highlighted progress, strategies and opportunities to operationalize the various components of APSA.

The speakers at the seminar included: H.E. Ambassador Eduardo Aho-Glele, Ambassador of the Republic of Benin and the Chair of the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC); H.E. Ambassador Ramatane Lamamra, AU Commissioner for Peace and Security; H.E. Ambassador Colin Keating, Executive Director, Security Council Report; Mr. Roba D. Sharamo, Programme Head, Conflict Prevention Programme, ISS Addis Ababa. Mr. Kenneth Mpyisi, Director, ISS Addis Ababa gave a keynote speech and chaired the sessions.

II. Presentations, Discussions and Deliberations

The seminar benefited from rich and constructive interactive discussions and experience sharing by participants from the United Nations (UN), AU member states and permanent mission to UN, representatives of the civil society organizations to the UN, members of the diplomatic community, think-tanks and civil society organizations. Although the timing coincided with a UN Meeting on Somalia, the seminar was well attended by about 35 participants drawn from the UN Department of Political Affairs; representatives from Embassies (Norway, Netherlands, Finland, Sweden, Denmark) and several African Missions to the UN; H.E. Mrs Lila Hanira Ratsifandrihamanana, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the AU Permanent Observer Mission to the UN; International Criminal Court, think-tanks and civil society organizations (CSOs) including Open Society Institute, Security Council Report, Oxfam International, International Crisis Group and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) among others.

The seminar began with welcoming remarks and keynote address by Mr Kenneth Mpyisi, Director ISS Addis Ababa. In his presentations, Mr. Mpyisi gave an overview of the ISS, background,

mission, visions, values and progress and the nature of our activities—which are geared to promote and stimulate debates to enhance human security in Africa.

Second, H.E. Ambassador Aho-Glele, the Chair of the AU PSC presented on ***Strengthening the PSC as a Pillar of APSA*** and made the following key remarks/observations:

- Briefly revisited the transformation of the OAU into AU and the PSC protocol and the activities and operational procedures of the PSC—entrusted by the AU as the lead decision-making organ of the AU with regard to the maintenance of regional and continental peace and security in Africa. Particularly, the Ambassador expressed satisfaction that unlike the UN Security Council (UNSC) which comprises of powerful Permanent Members (P5) with veto powers, the AU's PSC has no veto powers. Hence such a structural provision allows the larger continental values and interests to prevail over narrow nationalistic interests which often bog down the UNSC.
- Elaborated on Article 7 of the PSC Protocol which binds the AU Member States to collaborate with the PSC in implementing and enforcing Council Decisions. In this regard, the Ambassador noted that the PSC members represent their sub-regional member states' interests and concerns as it pertains to peace and security issues. pertaining to discussions of various peace and security issues in the continent. Further, the Ambassador reviewed progress in strengthening the various component of the APSA such as the Panel of the Wise (POW), African Standby Force (ASF), Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) and Peace Fund.
- Importantly also informed that during the March 13, 2009 meeting the PSC took a serious decision and formed a sub-committee on sanctions—which will become AU's comprehensive sanctions regime structure.
- Further informed that as provided for by Article 20 of the PSC Protocol, the PSC has taken practical steps (including this seminar) to work closely with think-tanks and CSOs to enhance the pursuit and realization of peace and security in Africa.

Third, Ambassador Lamamra, Commissioner for Peace and Security delivered a speech on ***Building Synergy Between the PSC and International Organizations/Institutions (copy of speech uploaded to the Intranet)***. Commissioner Lamamra expressed satisfaction and pleasure participating in this important seminar and thanked ISS for the invitation. In his speech, the Commissioner made the following key remarks/observations:

- The AU's is unwaveringly committed to build a more peaceful and stable continent and emphasized that APSA is the base and framework of an African collective security system as encapsulated in Article 2 of the PSC protocol.
- Referring to the UN as the global body entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security, Ambassador Lamamra emphasized that the AU PSC acts on behalf on the UN and should be provided with adequate resource to do so. Thus, there is need for greater collaboration and coordination between the UN and AU to promote collective security.
- Noting key decisions taken by the AU PSC with regards to Somalia and reflecting on the joint meeting of the PSC and UNSC in Addis Ababa (June 2006), the Commissioner called for greater interaction and exchange of views and information on particular conflict situations for effective implementation of PSC's decisions.
- Acknowledged the much-appreciated European Union's support through the Africa Peace Facility to the AU with a view to strengthen Africa's peace support operations/interventions.
- Highlighted that funding and logistical challenges have had corrosive effects on the operationalization of APSA.

- Espoused the need to revisit the UNSC's composition, work and interactions with regional organization and also with the larger UN General Assembly Members.
- Stressed the importance of structural prevention of conflicts and cited the AU Border Management programme and work on elections and conflicts as APSA's key mechanisms. He informed that the Panel of the Wise is working on a report on elections and conflicts which will be launched soon and will become a doctrine of peace and security for the continent.
- The Commissioner revisited and praised interesting and informative research done by the ISS on the *implication of the African Standby Force (ASF)* and emphasized that it is relieving to see African militaries which previously fiercely fought each other now become one—determined to promote Africa's collective security. Ambassador Lamamra also noted that professionalization of African Armed Forces is critical and reported that some forces are proactively taking French and English languages as they prepare to become part of the ASF. The harmonization of the forces—what he called expansion of professional horizons will in future enhance and strengthen rapid deployment capability of ASF.

Finally, from the view points of African Research Institutions/CSOs, Ambassador Colin Keating of the Security Council Report and Mr. Roba Sharamo of the ISS Addis Ababa examined the challenges of implementing APSA. In his presentation, Ambassador Keating made the following remarks/observations:

- Emphasized the need for greater cooperation and partnerships between the AU and UNSC. He observed that although this issue has been on the agenda of the UNSC for over 6 years we are still at the conceptual level and much needs to be done. Recently, this weakness became visible in the apparent divisions of the UNSC members over the Prodi Report (due to this division the UNSC directed the UN Secretary General to produce his own report in September 2009).
- Noted that the UN is—and—can be a source of capacity to help the PSC and thus there is need to put a good working relationship in place.
- Referring to the notable UN-AU collaborations in Liberia and Sudan, it was noted that a reservoir of knowledge, lessons learned and best practices exists to build effective partnerships.
- Further noted that the UN Peacebuilding Commission is quite an innovative undertaking and with its growing capacity could assist the PSC.
- Observed that in this collaborative partnership debates—we should shift from assertions of *division of labor* to *sharing of labor* to enter into mutually beneficial and productive engagements.
- Critiqued the UNSC for the failure to invest in conflict prevention programmes most times blinded by narrow national interests of the P5—which tends to politicize intervention issues. He concurred with Ambassador Aho-Glele that the PSC's membership structure (no veto powers) enables it to be less politicized.

Similarly, Mr. Sharamo gave a brief overview of the progress in implementing the various components of APSA such as the functioning of the PSC, operationalization of POW, CEWS and ASF as mechanisms for effective prevention and management of conflicts in the continent. Using the AU Audit Report (2008) and brief overview of the implementation status of the various components of APSA as points of departure, Mr. Sharamo identified three levels of challenges faced in the implementation of APSA:

- a) *Inherent external challenges*—the enduring and excruciating conflicts on the continent perpetuated by bad governance, state fragility and underdevelopment; and dominance of

state security over realization of human-centered security among others. These external environments confronted the AU's evolving institutions at infancy.

- b) *Internal operational challenges*—these included the fact that the AU institutions are not yet seasoned enough and that structures such as sanctions regime are still been worked out; need to have predictable and flexible funding to support the implementation of APSA; in line with the provisions of Article 20 of the PSC, the need for greater synergy between the AU and think-tanks, CSOs and Regional Economic Communities (RECs)—with a view to popularize APSA at sub-regional and national levels; and greater AU investment in post-conflict reconstruction efforts in order to support fragile and recovering states. This seminar's notable achievements notwithstanding, Mr. Sharamo praised the PSC for their constructive engagements with the CSOs as shown during the PSC-CSO retreat in Zambia last December which developed the Livingstone Formula—which defined and mapped areas for engagements and collaborations.
- c) *International dimensions*—observed that since decisions to deploy a UN peacekeeping force to troubled spots are political in nature, it is imperative that the AU Member States demand effective representation at the UNSC level. Although noting that Prodi Report has come up with useful findings and recommendations, Mr. Sharamo took issue with the unrealistic 6-months transitional rule advanced; the need to highlight areas of contradictions and strengthen collaboration between the UN Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the AU in order to build effective strategic partnerships. He also advanced the argument that there is need for the AU and UN to marshal sufficient political will and resources for sustained long-term commitments in rebuilding nations emerging from war.

Rich interactive discussions centring on the following issues followed the presentations:

- The PSC is empowered by the PSC Protocol and the various Articles of the AU Constitutive Act and committed and positioned as a pillar for the operationalization of APSA.
- The need to work out both formal and informal mechanisms for the think-tanks and CSOs to engage with the AU/PSC
- Build effective networks between AU's Department of Political Affairs and UN's Department of Political Affairs
- Enhance modalities for harmonized peacekeeping engagements or withdrawal in situations such as Somalia and Liberia
- The need for greater coordination between the AU PSC, Member States (particularly those serving on the UNSC) and the AU Permanent Mission to the UN
- The need to address terrorism and root causes of conflicts in the continent. In this regard, Ambassador Lamamra informed that currently 48 African countries are connected and collaborating and working together in counterterrorism efforts. Roba also emphasized that to deal with root causes of conflicts, complex cycles of deprivation such as underdevelopment, unemployment and negative ethnicity need to be confronted. Regarding terrorism, he gave brief overview of IGAD's progress in combating terrorism and strengthening institutions and legislations in IGAD region through the activities of ICPAT.
- The fact that land and border issues are sources of conflicts in Africa is appreciated and as Ambassador Lamamra informed the AU Border Management Programme is taking the issue quite seriously.
- Regarding AU's resource utilization concern it was emphasized that donors need to harmonize their accounting requirements and develop common reporting formats for the diverse AU-externally funded programs. This will give relief to overburdened AU officials.