



The United Nations and Africa

From a layered response to an interlocking system for conflict prevention, management and post conflict reconstruction in Africa*

Jakkie Cilliers, Institute for Security Studies

In 2003, at the AU Summit in Mozambique, a step change occurred in Africa's ability to contribute to peace and security on the continent. Following the establishment of the African Union and the Peace and Security Council the previous year, that year saw the establishment of the African Peace Facility that would, by 2006, have provided the African Union with almost □300 million for peacekeeping and related capacity building.¹ Those funds made a significant contribution to the ability of African peacekeeping in Darfur, CAR and the Comoros. In fact, without the Facility it is unlikely that the African Union would have been able to undertake any of these missions. Having exhausted the Peace Facility, the European Union is currently considering topping the fund up with an additional □300 million for 2008-2011 under the 10th Economic Development Fund (EDF). Eventually EU member states had, by March 2007, contributed □400 million for Darfur, the USA \$350 million and various donors such as the UK and Canada significant additional amounts through various arrangements. Beyond political leadership and troops, a not insignificant contribution, Africa's financial contribution is negligible.

While African peacekeeping is entirely funded by the international community, UN peacekeeping in Africa has become a Third World affair as far as troops and police are concerned. Traditional peacekeeping countries such as Canada and Sweden deploy the odd observer, but it is Central/South Asia and Africa that carry the major burden of keeping peace where the requirement outstrips Africa's capacity – contributing almost 70% of total UN military personnel. As the requirements of military deployments in Afghanistan and Iraq escalate Western soldiers have become an increasingly scarce, and expensive commodity only deployable where national interests are at stake and under own command. Today Africa seldom sees the deployment of P5 troops on any but the most modest scale – and never under UN command.

* Paper presented at an ISS seminar, Pretoria, 18 April 2007.

¹ Consisting of an initial amount of □250 m replenished with □50 in 2006

During August last year the UNSC mandated, within a matter of 20 days, the largest surge in peacekeeping since heydays of the early nineteen nineties. By October 2006 80,976 military and police personnel and some 15,000 civilians served in peace operations around the world – a figure that has remained relatively constant. The majority of these missions are in Africa where the downsizing of the largest UN mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUC, will be replaced by the steady scaling up of the UN mission in southern Sudan (UNMIS). Whilst the realization is slowly dawning that even once fully established the ASF would only be able to undertake relatively modest peace missions, With more than 75% of UN peacekeepers deployed in Africa, with Africa providing nearly 40% of the Organization's overall troop strength and with Africa dominating the agenda at the UN Security Council one would expect that the partnership between the AU and the UN would be closer and more intense than with any other regional organization.

On 28 March the UNSC debated the relationship between the UNSC and the PSC of the African Union. Two weeks prior to the debate South Africa circulated a concept paper on the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations that focussed on the potential of developing a framework for the relationship between the UN and the AU, suggesting that the debate include:

- Strengthening UN support to regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security;
- Forms of direct partnership between the UN regional organizations;
- The implementation of previous Council decisions and recommendations of the UN and regional organizations;
- The issue of direct resources;
- The possibility for the UNSC to incorporate outcomes of bodies such as the AU PSC in its own decisions.

The meeting was arranged and hosted by South Africa, chairperson of the UNSC for the month of March. In her remarks to the Council, South African Foreign Minister Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma noted " ... the need to articulate a clear form of burden sharing between the United Nations and regional organisations ... based on the understanding that the goals of the African Union and the UN in the maintenance of international peace and security are the same." She called for new approaches noting that "... circumstances have changed and therefore we need new solutions to address today's realities. The rigid doctrines of the past on how we supported peacekeeping missions can no longer hold."² :

² Statement to the United Nations Security Council by Minister Dlamini Zuma, President of the Security Council, on the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union, 28 March 2007, p 3

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Security Council requested Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to prepare a report with specific proposals on how the world body could foster collaboration and deepen partnership with other intergovernmental organizations and regional and sub-regional actors, the African Union in particular. Earlier, in 2005, the World Summit Outcomes Document had expressed support for the development and implementation of a 10-year capacity building plan to enhance Africa's peacekeeping capacity. In November 2006 UNSG Kofi Annan and AU Chairperson Alpha Konare signed a Declaration on Enhancing United Nations-African Union cooperation in the field of peace and security.

The debate at the UNSC occurs against the backdrop of significant efforts by Africa, supported by development partners, to develop a sequential model of peacemaking through the AU's Peace and Security Council. This provides for the establishment of a continental early warning system to warn of impending conflicts and a 15-country Peace and Security Council that is to act on the associated threats and that could use the offices of a newly appointed Panel of the Wise as one of a number of instruments for mediation, support and advice. Depending upon the advice of its Military Staff Committee, the PSC could authorize the deployment of components of the African Standby Force to separate warring parties, build stability and generally keep the peace. For its part the ASF would be developed to full capacity by 2010 by which time, according to its foundational documentation, Africa would have the capacity to manage complex emergencies.

At its infancy the development of the ASF has been severely affected and dealt an almost devastating blow by the tragic developments in Darfur that forced Africa, in the face of an impasse in the UNSC, to deploy a limited number of troops and equipment to western Sudan. Ironically, Darfur has become a litmus test of African solutions to African problems. Today AMIS serves as a fig-leave for the inability of the Africa and the international community to get the government of Sudan to agree to protect its citizens and to fulfil its duty - as a government and in terms of the numerous undertakings to fulfil its international and African obligations to guarantee the human rights and livelihood of its citizenry. Refusing to accept the transition from an AU led mission to a UN mission, protracted and tortuous negotiations saw the government of President Omar Al Bashir eventually agree to limited stepped up support to AMIS. Three phases would see the UN provide first a light then a heavy support package until, eventually, deploy a substantial peacekeeping mission under AU command, but containing substantial UN components. Once fully deployed this hybrid mission would have to be 'logistically and financially sustainable'. Whilst maintaining a 'predominantly African character', '[b]ackstopping and command and control structures will be provided by the UN.'³

Sudan has placed numerous spurious obstacles in the way of both the AU and the UN to effect this agreement. In the process the overstretched African Union mission and indeed the concept of the ASF has suffered considerable collateral damage as

³ Conclusions of UN-AU meeting on Darfur crisis, Saturday 16 November 2006, Addis Ababa

commentators lament the apparent inability of the AU to sustain AMIS. In fact, AMIS was mandated at a time when the ASF only existed on paper and was, from the start, conceived as a bridge to a UN mission – to fill the gap until such time as negotiations could produce a binding ceasefire in Darfur and enable a more comprehensive peace mission under UN mandate. Months of negotiation in Abuja passed before the warring parties would agree to what was eventually only a partial ceasefire following which Sudan reneged on its commitment to allow a peacekeeping force of sufficient size to monitor the Darfur Peace Agreement. Certain that the AU cannot itself mount such an operation and aware of the fact that the transition to a full UN mission would expose its own complicity in the violence, the Government of Sudan has effectively trapped the African Union in a lose-lose situation. With inadequate funds, soldiers and resources, the continued deployment of AMIS serves only to discredit the AU, delegitimise the concept of an ASF and reward the government of Sudan for its intransigence. Most important of all, it serves as political cover for the unwillingness of the UNSC to live up to its mandate.

Today events in Darfur serve to damage to the credibility of both the AU and the UNSC, despite the recent hard won agreement by Sudan to allow additional components of the support package. The task of managing a mission as complex as AMIS has absorbed the entire Peace Support Division within the Commission, distracting attention from the need to build its capacity in general that would allow for more modest future missions – a situation compounded by the decision to undertake yet another mission to Somalia in the form of AMISOM. For its part the UN is equally under duress. Having suffered a precipitous decline in its influence and impact under the policies of the Bush administration, the UN has indeed come to a fork in the road as Kofi Annan predicted when launching the report 'In Larger Freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all' in March 2005. Yet Africa needs and looks towards the UN more than any other region for support, engagement and legitimacy. Different to most Asian members of the Non-Aligned Movement, whom expressed their discomfort at any increased engagement of the UNSC with regional organizations in their part of the world during the March discussions led by Minister Zuma, Africa desires UN engagement in a much more sustained manner than has been the case in the past. In effect, the degree of support and succour that the UN has provided to the AU has been a severe disappointment.

Recently the two organizations have agreed on the most timid of mutual support measures despite the recognition that “an operational ASF will have implications for future UN peacekeeping”⁴ concluding that “[i]t is too soon to make any recommendations in this respect and it is proposed that the question be the subject of a joint DPKO/AU study.” The 33 paragraphs of the joint AU/UN action plan for UN assistance to AU peacekeeping capacity building admits that “The discussions between the AUPSOD and the UNDPKO revealed major challenges in the AU’s

⁴ A/59/2005, par 22.b

capacity to tackle issues of strategic management”⁵ but does little to acknowledge or even address the structural deficiencies that underpin this situation such as sustainable funding, management capacity and logistics for AU peacekeeping. Drafted as an effort to provide the AU with advice and limited support, the authors are at pains to “avoid raising expectations that are not met” and the focus of the UN effort is premised on the expectation that advice will be effective once the AU improves its strategic management capacity.

The UN already has a small liaison office in Addis Ababa and the UN General Assembly has now approved the establishment of the DPKO AU Peace Support Team (AU-PST) as a dedicated capacity for technical assistance to the AU. One part of the team is based in New York within the UNDPKO Office of Operations and responsible for providing overall direction and coordination, and the second and larger element based in Addis Ababa - responsible for implementing the assistance programme. In effect, developments seem to be moving at snails pace if one recognizes that the ASF project is several years into the making. The requirement is not for an AU-PST that offers yet more advice (the AU receives an oversupply of that already), but for the secondment of substantial UNDPKO staff to the PSOD, the Darfur Integrated Task Force and the field operations headquarters in Fashir to provide significantly more capacity. This will provide the AU with the required capacity to enable it to effectively manage, account for and benefit from the substantial assistance that is available from the EU, G8++, NATO and various international partners, many of whom stand ready to support the AU, but cannot do so in the absence of appropriate assistance frameworks, agreements, accountability and reporting systems.

The views of Africa’s key partners, the so-called P3 in particular (USA, France and the UK) look towards what could best be described as a layered response to conflict prevention and management in Africa. According to this view, the AU would undertake peacekeeping missions on behalf of the UN, largely assuming an own responsibility and relieving the international community of that role. Peacekeeping in Africa will not only relieve the UN of a massive burden, but do so cheaply – for example the UN mission in Burundi spent about \$322 million a year while AU force spent about a third of that amount. Cost considerations are central to this approach since the current budget of the UNDPKO runs at \$5,28 bn for the year ending in June 2007. The extent of savings that African missions could realize for the UNSC where the USA and Japan alone cover the costs of 27% and 19% of all UN peacekeeping missions has therefore become a key consideration in the push for a layered response.

The drive to build African peacekeeping capacity is informed by the belief that investment in the ASF will not only reduce the demand for UN peace missions and hence for troop contributions from those countries with the largest defence budgets,

⁵ A Joint African Union (AU)/United Nations (UN) Action Plan for UN Assistance to AU Peacekeeping Capacity Building, undated. Par 3

but in fact that Africa could largely fulfil that demand and do so at a reduced cost.⁶ According to this view, the international community could source out its peace and security obligations to Africans – but without an accompanying funding obligation. The mature stage of this process would see the UNSC dust off and start to use Chapter VIII of the UN Charter that speaks, in articles 52 to 54 of the scope that regional organizations had to contribute to the settlement of disputes.

Whilst the Charter is often cited as the basis for interaction between the UN and regional organizations, UNSC practice has not been consistent in citing Chapter VIII when recognizing or authorizing the actions of an organization to lead peace operations. In fact, P5 member countries have been quite candid in their views that the current case-by-case approach to conflict prevention and management in Africa and elsewhere is not to be replaced by one based on a common set of criteria and independent rigour where Israel, Iran, Zimbabwe, Sudan, Palestine, Myanmar, Russia, Iraq, China will be examined not on the threat that their internal situations present to the interests of the P5, but on a set of objective criteria that reflect common values within the international community.

The view in much of Africa and amongst a small number of multilateral donors – generally traditional middle powers such as Sweden, Netherlands and others is different. Aware of the capacity constraints that it faces, these views on peacekeeping remain that the exit strategy for AU peacekeeping missions are UN missions. This was the situation in Burundi where AMIB was re-hatted to become UNOB, and was the original intention in Darfur - was it not for the obstruction of the Government of Sudan. Hence the AMISOM concept of operations for Somalia calls for the transition from an AU to a UN mission after six months. In fact, even with substantial multilateral support (through the African Peace Facility) and bilateral assistance (from countries such as the USA, Canada, the UK and others) AMIS remains underfunded and its morale had almost collapsed at the time of the most recent and modest concession by the government in Khartoum to allow a limited amount of additional UN personnel to join AMIS. At that point key African troop contributing countries such as Rwanda and Senegal were reconsidering their support to AMIS.

This view would see ASF contingents serving as the early entry and rapid response capacity for modest peacekeeping missions, invariably under a robust mandate, sometimes deploying to support peacemaking processes where a few recalcitrant parties obstruct final comprehensive agreements, or where the nature of the task at hand is limited to the protection of selected politicians (as happened in Burundi) or the scope of the task is specific and constrained (as happened in the Comoros).

⁶ The current top ten financial contributors are: United States (27 per cent), Japan (19 per cent), Germany (9 per cent), United Kingdom (7 per cent), France (7 per cent), Italy (5 per cent), Canada (3 per cent), Spain (3 per cent), China (2 per cent) and the Netherlands (2 per cent).

Different to the complex and different arrangements through which AU missions are funded, UN peace missions are funded through a system of assessed contributions that see each country contribute to the funding of UNSC mandated peace missions on a centralized basis. The Council has, in the past, provided endorsement of African missions such as of AMIB and AMIS, but key member states are not prepared to contribute funds to African peace missions as part of this assessment system of contributions without detail oversight and indeed without the management of peacekeeping by the UNDPKO – an organization that has proven to be one of the most effective parts of the UN system. The UN has not even been prepared to call for the establishment of a UN trust fund for specific AU operations. The lack of capacity within the AU's Department of Peace and Security, poor management and lack of donor coordination have contributed to a situation where it is difficult to conceive that key UN member states would consider any reversal of their position on this matter.

At a time when the AU continues to expand its mandate on a variety of issues (from sport to climate change), also to include a very welcome focus on conflict prevention (amongst others through the finalization of the framework for the operationalization of the CEWS and the appointment of the Panel of the Wise) and post conflict reconstruction (through the finalization of a framework for post-conflict reconstruction), serious thought needs to be given to the issue of practicality. It is this requirement for a third step-change in peace and security on the continent and in the relations between the AU and the UN that precipitated the debate in New York that was addressed by Minister Dlamini Zuma. Yet rather than pursue the dead-end street of a layered response for the prevention, management and reconstruction of war-torn African countries, the international community needs to grasp the nettle of sustainability and predictability. That does not lie in African solutions to African problems, but in the vision of an interlocking system of conflict prevention and management between Africa and the international community, the AU and the UN in particular.

Building on the 2004 Report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel of Threats, Challenges and Change 'A more secure world: Our shared responsibility', the subsequent 2005 report of the Secretary-General 'In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all' included the following:

I appeal to Member States to do more to ensure that the United Nations has effective capacities for peacekeeping, commensurate with the demands that they place upon it. In particular, I urge them to improve our deployment options by creating strategic reserves that can be deployed rapidly, within the framework of United Nations arrangements. United Nations capacity should not be developed in competition with the admirable efforts now being made by many regional organizations but in cooperation with them. Decisions by the European Union to create standby battle groups, for instance, and by the African Union to create African reserve capacities, are a very valuable complement to our own efforts. **Indeed, I believe the time is now ripe for a decisive move forward: the establishment of an interlocking system of peacekeeping capacities that will enable the**

United Nations to work with relevant regional organizations in predictable and reliable partnerships.⁷

Ironically, the two volumes that inform the establishment of the ASF (completed in 2003) approved by African Heads of State the following year went a long way to realizing the peacekeeping component of such an interlocked system. An interlocking system for peacekeeping would mean that the various AU logistic bases being established within each of the continents five regions would become UN or at least shared AU/UN logistic bases – even available to support UN missions if and when required – and that the AU would eventually be supported from the UN logistic base in Brindisi, Italy. It would imply that the troops on standby for the ASF in various African countries would be included within the UNSAS system (once operational) and that the command and control system envisioned in Africa would at least be compatible to that used by the UN system. It would also mean that key UN command, control, logistics, communications and other staff would become part of AU staff at every level, from strategic to operational, both in Addis Ababa and in field mission headquarters. Most important, it would imply and require that that AU could call upon UN assistance in the establishment of its Planning Element and the Directorate for Peace Support Operations – currently woefully understaffed and with very limited capacity.

The process with the establishment of the ASF has effectively nullified the best of intentions. Instead of the completion of planning at the continental level for the entire ASF, including the establishment of a 15 person AU PLANELM that would be able to coordinate and oversee subsequent ASF development at sub-regional level, ASF development has occurred in a hap hazardous manner with RECs seizing the initiative from the AU Commission (where little happened for several crucial months) to develop their own planning guidelines at the sub-regional level. The result is an uncoordinated mixture where the various ASF components at sub-regional level are not entirely compatible with one another (compare the arrangements of the ECOWAS standby force, ESF, with that of the SADC standby force, SSF, for example), different command and control systems (of which that in Eastern Africa is clearly the most tortuous with the recent establishment of EASBRIGCOM), decisions on logistic bases informed by politics and not practicality, etc. The development of policy for the ASF was delayed and eventually driven by donors keen to help develop policy and to provide their own experts, but less desirous to build AU capacity to undertake its own planning. In traditional AU style, we have a surfeit of policy and an absence of capacity. And the list keeps on growing. During 2006 the AU conducted or directed a total of 16 workshops doctrine, Standard Operating Procedures, logistics, training and evaluation and C3IS (command, control, communications and information systems) apart from a workshop on civilian dimensions of peacekeeping (September), legal issues (July), medical issues (September), harmonization (September-October) and others. Donor support, massive to begin with, has dropped off when it comes to the key military

⁷ par 112

requirements, with a number of traditional donors conjugating on the civilian dimensions of peacekeeping in Africa despite the much larger and key requirement to sort out the core military capacity as the first priority.

Friends of the AU and its Commission in Africa have been watching developments in Addis Ababa with increased levels of concern in recent years. Rather than expand its capacity in line with the dramatic increases in its budget, the Commission appears to be increasingly overwhelmed by the tasks at hand. On the one side the Commission does not have control over external developments in Darfur and Somalia that have seen an unprecedented and very welcome commitment and engagement in conflict management. Each of these crises have elicited a truly remarkable and impressive response from the AU and its international partners alike, while the Commission has also engaged proactively and with various levels of success in numerous other crises, including Cote d'Ivoire, Burundi, Comoros and the like. On the other hand the expansion of the vision and mission of the Commission, the move to two regular Summits per year and an influx of additional staff that have not been accompanied by the modernization of the AU systems and management, have distracted the Commission from realizing the full benefits of the new systems that are being established to prevent, manage and ameliorate the effects of insecurity and conflict. Internally the anachronistic recruitment practices of the AU Commission have inhibited the rapid recruitment of capable staff for various divisions, including the PSOD.

Presently it would be fair to comment that even under current conditions of concern about the ability of the AU to execute and implement its stated peace and security undertakings, the availability of financial support to the AU exceeds the absorption capacity of the Commission and its various missions. This despite the fact that poor capacity has led to poor management which has undermined the confidence that international partners have in the AU, and in the process significantly reducing the potential funds available to the Union. So the Commission is caught between a rock and a hard place. Since it cannot effectively and transparently manage the resources that have been placed at its disposal, less is being made available. In the process any suggestion to move AU missions onto assessed contributions in terms of Chapter VIII, is not currently politically feasible.

The development of an interlocking system of peacekeeping would see UN member states mandate and resource the UNDPKO to second sufficient staff to the PSO division in Addis Ababa and to AU field missions to assist with the administration, management and accounting of donor funds, to undertake and assist with logistic planning, legal support, operational planning and the like. It would see a significant strengthening of the AU mission and engagement with the UN in New York and vice versa. In the process the woefully inadequate current arrangements whereby the UN has an ineffective UNDPKO AU Peace Support Team in Addis Ababa, will be replaced by the provision of capacity that will provide the AU with the step change required for effective conflict management on the continent. To do this UN member countries will have to provide the UNDPKO with additional staff and resources to allow them to deploy significant amounts of civilian and military staff within the PSOD in Addis Ababa as well as in field missions. As the demonstrated

competence of the AU to manage the complicated funding arrangements from multilateral and bilateral partners increases, so will funding and eventually the confidence of the UNSC to partner with greater confidence with the AU and the PSC.

Such support would also enable the establishment, under the management of the AU, of basket funding arrangements to which international partners would contribute through a pledging process to particular missions - secure in the knowledge that appropriate accountability measures are in place and that the AU is able, through the assistance provided, to manage and account for the funds thus received. And the AU would have the ability to ensure that the pledges repeatedly made for missions such as Darfur are actually implemented. It would enable the AU to manage the complex financial, legal and logistic arrangements where organizations such as the EU provide significant draw-down funding, but that can only useable for specific budget lines (as is the case with the Africa Peace Facility), as well as in-kind support (such as provision of fuel or airlift) or commitments to support particular contingents (as happened during the AMIB mission in Burundi and is foreseen in Somalia).⁸

Such a requirement is both a matter of principle, according to which the UNSC does not abrogate its primary responsibility for international peace and security, but adopts, in practice, a partnership approach to Africa. Contrast this to the envisioned arrangements, or lack thereof, in Somalia. In the absence of Commission-level capacity or a capable lead/framework nation that could provide operational command and control capacity in the field, the AU has adopted an approach similar to that in Burundi (AMIB) for AMISOM in Somalia. This requires that troop contributing countries partner with specific international partners to sustain their force preparation, transport and operations in Somalia. Together with restrictive conditions and different reporting requirements the sum impact will inevitably be a complicated, sometimes overlapping and incomplete system that complicates and detracts from effective operations. Without a capable centre, AMISOM will not hold and, in time will inevitably suffer the same challenges as AMIS with donors providing sufficient support to get the AU into Somalia, but insufficient support to keep them there on a sustainable and effective basis in the face of the inability of the AU to plan and manage its finances, logistics and operations. Nor will support be comprehensive, covering all aspects of AU requirements, but inevitably cherry-pick that which is eligible within the DAC guidelines to qualify as development assistance, or what national interests deem most appropriate. In this process the international community is sufficiently absolved from its direct responsibility in Somalia for the short term but with self-defeating effect.

There is, of course, much more that can and should be done as part of an interlocking system of peace and security between the AU and the UN systems. Where appropriate the UNSC may endorse AU PSC decisions, include components

⁸ Some thinking along these lines is already in circulation in the form of a proposed AU Complementary Peace Fund to the existing Peace Fund.

in its own decisions but always consult and seek comparative advantage where possible and appropriate.

Actually the true benefit of such an approach will not be realized as part of peacekeeping, but in the implementation of a meaningful and appropriate role for the AU in post-conflict reconstruction.

Whilst the development, by the AU, of a framework to guide its work on post-conflict reconstruction gained its impetus from the rivalry between the Commission and NEPAD (with the former galvanized to develop its own framework shortly after that completed by the latter), Heads of State have recently approved an expansive mandate and role for the AU in post-conflict reconstruction. At the same time the resources and capacity to impact upon post-conflict is largely outside the control of the AU, residing in institutions such as the UNDP, UNOCHA, WB and even the IMF, as well as with bilateral donors. The challenge of donor and inter-agency cooperation and collaboration have probably been epitomised in MONUC in the DR Congo where competing visions, concepts and therefore funding on security sector reform initiatives have significantly detracted from practical efforts in this regard, contributing to the recent violent clashes in Kinshasa between the presidential guard under the control of President Laurent Kabila and the militia of the leader of the opposition, Jean Pierre Bemba, neither of whom had integrated their substantial personal protection forces into the national army. The key contribution that the AU could make in post-conflict reconstruction is indeed not in aiming to contribute substantial resources in its own right, but rather to collaborate with the UN in the establishment of a single vision, agency and plan at national level that guides and coordinates all efforts at post-conflict reconstruction between and within the UN system and from international partners. Working with the Peacebuilding Commission, the UNDP and other agencies, the AU can play a modest coordinating and visioning role in post-conflict reconstruction and perhaps contribute to the conceptualization of the subsidiary implementation of security sector reform, but the continent has limited means for much beyond that.

The area of conflict prevention is potentially the most sensitive and difficult for the implementation of an interlocking system as propounded in this paper. It is, however, the most important and one where the AU should expend the largest part of its effort. The current arrangements of an unlinked layered response, where the AU and the UN are sometimes at odds in how to deal with matters relating to events such as the abuse of power in Zimbabwe and escalating turmoil in Somalia. In the case of the latter the AU called for the deployment of a peacekeeping mission some years ago to enable the Transitional Federal Government to return to Mogadishu. At the time the US vetoed such support in the UNSC, only to completely reverse its position after the situation in southern and central Somalia had been complicated severely by US engagement in support of various warlords against the Union of Islamic Courts. In the case of Zimbabwe the two organizations have demonstrated the absence of a common approach, each launching its own initiatives or measures, deferring in some instances to the other, but not consulting and certainly not acting in consortium with one another. Central to both problems is the absence of a lead/point

agency and the absence of a common understanding of the challenges faced in both instances.

Conclusion

Recent years have seen important improvements in African and international responses to peace and security challenges on the continent. With an expected growth rate of 5,8% for 2007, increased numbers of elected democrats as leaders and a substantial reduction in the number of wars on the continent, the prospects for Africa are decidedly brighter than a few years earlier. At the same time Africa is the poorest continent and more people are being killed in sub-Saharan Africa from armed conflict than in the entire rest of the world. Obviously much more needs to be done. Welcome as the deployment of a team of technical experts to help with the planning for AMISOM and the establishment of a multidisciplinary African Union Peacekeeping Support Team within UNDPKO, the UN and AU need much closer collaboration and mutual support.

Thus far the discussions regarding the future way in which the UN can respond to the challenges of peace and security on the African continent have revolved around the expanded use of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. In Articles 52 to 54 the drafters provided for the complementary role of regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security provided that such arrangements and activities are consistent with the purposes and principles of the UN, that the UNSC is kept fully informed of such activities and with the clear proviso that enforcement action requires the (prior) authorization of the UNSC. At its most recent Summit in Addis Ababa, the African Union recalled that “the maintenance of international peace and security is the primary responsibility of the United Nations Security Council and called upon the United Nations to examine, within the context of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, the possibility of funding, through assessed contributions, peacekeeping operations undertaken by the African Union or under its authority and with the consent of the United Nations.” The annex to the subsequent letter from the Permanent Representative of South Africa in his capacity as chairman of the UNSC dated 14 March 2007 called for the UNSC to develop a framework for further engagement in this regard.⁹

Security Council Report Update noted the following key issues in its report circulated prior to the debate in the UNSC on the UN and regional issues:¹⁰

⁹ Annex to the letter dated 14 March 2007 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary General. Concept paper on the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union, in the maintenance of international peace and security (S/2007/148), p 2

¹⁰ Security Council Report, Update Report, 23 March 2007, no 3, page 5. Available at www.securitycouncilreport.org

- “There is a lack of a formal process for establishing working relationships with regional organisations. Currently existing mechanisms for collaboration are ad hoc. MOUs with regional, subregional and intergovernmental organisations would be helpful in defining the areas and scope of partnerships and allow for quicker action.
- A related issue is that the funding for regional peacekeeping is ad hoc and uncoordinated and depends on the vagaries of donor financing. There are likely to be political obstacles to getting regional peacekeeping operations financed by assessed UN budget contributions. Other possible funding options are voluntary contributions to a special fund, non-UN multilateral. Key characteristics of such an interlocking system of conflict management between the UNSC and the AU PSC would see support from organisations like the EU to the AU (e.g., EU support for the Peace Support Operation facility of the AU) and bilateral arrangements between specific countries and regional organisations (e.g., US support for ECOWAS to deploy in Liberia and the AU’s mission in Burundi.)
- The UN Secretariat is limited in its ability to offer longer-term substantive planning or logistical support to missions led by regional or subregional organisations. These restraints affect the UN’s ability to collaborate with organisations in developing their capacity. If the Council intends to seriously collaborate with regional organisations, the Secretariat needs to increase its capacity to play a bigger role in setting common standards and frameworks for cooperation for peacekeeping operations and facilitating partnerships with regional organisations.
- The lack of resources such as equipment, logistics and standards in regional organisations is a serious issue. Regionally led peacekeeping operations do not qualify for UN stocks. As a result regional organisations could become burdened with a problem beyond their capacity.
- The suggestion to have regional organisations place any peacekeeping capacity they have under UNSAS is not going to be easy to implement. At the moment UNSAS is still very much a concept rather than a reality. The EU has made a decision to have standby battle groups and the AU is working on developing an African Standby Force by 2010. None of the organisations involved in the high-level meetings or in the thematic debates seem ready to integrate their capacity under UNSAS.”

Little of this is new – it is indeed the vision to which UNSG Annan referred to in ‘In larger freedom’ as the key recommendations regarding regional organizations:

213. A considerable number of regional and subregional organizations are now active around the world, making important contributions to the stability and prosperity of their members, as well as of the broader international system. The United Nations and regional organizations should play complementary roles in facing the challenges to international peace and

security. **In this connection, donor countries should pay particular attention to the need for a 10-year plan for capacity-building with the African Union.** To improve coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations, within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations, I intend to introduce memoranda of understanding between the United Nations and individual organizations, governing the sharing of information, expertise and resources, as appropriate in each case. For regional organizations that have a conflict prevention or peacekeeping capacity, these memoranda of understanding could place those capacities within the framework of the United Nations Standby Arrangements System.

214. I also intend to invite regional organizations to participate in meetings of United Nations system coordinating bodies, when issues in which they have a particular interest are discussed.

215. The rules of the United Nations peacekeeping budget should be amended to give the United Nations the option, in very exceptional circumstances, to use assessed contributions to finance regional operations authorized by the Security Council, or the participation of regional organizations in multi-pillar peace operations under the overall United Nations umbrella.

The issue of increased African ownership in conflict prevention, management and resolution is beyond dispute. It is the EU acceptance of African leadership in the utilization of the resources placed at the disposal of the AU, that made the African Peace Facility a success. Nothing should be pursued in the proposed relationship set out between the AU and the UN that would undermine this critical success factor. Against this background, and despite all the problems associated with the proposed hybrid AU-UN mission in Darfur, the latter may well provide some components that could constitute an interesting model for future cooperation and more effective peacekeeping under UN or AU auspices.

Whilst other regions such as Asia may have different requirements and realities, peacekeeping and post conflict reconstruction are simply beyond Africa's sole means. Future progress is dependent upon the clear realization of this consideration and the establishment of an appropriate vision for the future.