



International Peace Academy

**35th IPA Vienna Seminar on
Peacemaking and Peacekeeping**

DEVELOPING PEACE PARTNERSHIPS IN AFRICA

FINAL REPORT

**by Cyrus SAMII
International Peace Academy, New York**

1. Introduction

The 2005 Vienna Seminar aimed to give tangible meaning to the notion of “peace partnerships” in Africa by identifying specific projects for assisting the African Union in realizing its Peace and Security agenda. The theme was inspired by African-led initiatives to construct a framework for promoting peace, security, and prosperity on the continent. Seminar participants sought to contribute to policy development processes associated with the African Union (AU), the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), and African sub-regional economic communities (RECs) such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD, in East Africa). These processes have become the focal points for support by the G8, the European Union (EU), and bilateral development partners to promote peace and prosperity in Africa. The 2005 Seminar, which built upon the 2004 Vienna Seminar on *Peace Operations in Africa*, was also a response to United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s call for institutionalizing partnerships to promote peace in Africa, rather than continuing to rely on ad hoc approaches. (See Background Paper.) Bringing together diplomats, military officers, officials, researchers, and civil society representatives from Africa, Europe, and the US, as well as from the UN bodies, the Seminar was co-hosted by the International Peace Academy (New York), the Austrian National Defence Academy, the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, and the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Peace partnerships in Africa were high on international agendas in 2005, making the Seminar especially timely. The Seminar took place on the heels of the 2005 G8 Summit in Gleneagles, Scotland/UK, and the AU Summit in Tripoli, Libya. Presided over by the UK and driven by the recommendations of the Commission for Africa, the G8 Summit resulted in initiatives to combat poverty and support the development of peace operations capabilities in Africa. The AU Summit resulted in an improved financing arrangement for the AU, an AU position on UN Security Council reform, and a welcoming of the G8’s proposal for debt cancellation. Seminar participants had the opportunity to discuss these developments. Participants also looked

ahead to the September 2005 Millennium Review Summit at the UN, the agenda for which was to build on the UN SG Annan's March 2005 report, *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All*. The SG's report confirms that peace and sustainable development in Africa are at the heart of the UN's mission. Finally, with Austria assuming the EU Presidency in January 2006, members of the Austrian foreign policy establishment were given the chance to consider new ideas for the EU-Africa agenda.

Discussions at the seminar addressed a number of core issues, including the paradigm shift embodied in the AU's agenda; principles to guide new partnerships; the state of play in operationalizing the AU's Peace and Security Architecture; and priorities for developing African post-conflict peacebuilding capacity.

2. Paradigm Shift

Peace and security challenges in Africa have necessitated a “paradigm shift” from the “non-interference” of the now defunct Organization of African Unity (OAU) to “non-indifference” of the AU. A new generation of African leaders and civil society organizations has taken notice of the international community's negligence in dealing with crises in Liberia (1990), Somalia (1993), and Rwanda (1994) and of the fact that intra-state conflicts can have devastating regional consequences. The new thinking triggered by these experiences, along with recognition of the need to revitalize economic development in Africa, led to the establishment of the AU in July 2002. The AU has a mandate to address all peace, security, and humanitarian problems, including intra-state conflict, at any time. The body executing this mandate, the Peace and Security Council (PSC), is composed of 15 elected members having to be in good standing with the organization and its principles. Given the expansiveness of the mandate and the selection criteria, the PSC may be institutionally more response-ready than the UN Security Council.¹ The challenge remains to translate this into an operational reality. Nonetheless,

¹ As evidence of this response-readiness, the PSC suspended Mauritania's AU membership the day after the military coup d'état on August 3, 2005.

changes are well perceivable. A contrast was noted between the AU's deployments to Burundi and Sudan and the OAU's non-interference in the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict in the 1990s, despite the OAU's headquarters being in Addis Ababa.

The paradigm shift has important implications for realizing peace partnerships in Africa. Meaningful peace partnerships depend on African leaders' commitment to intra-state peace and justice on the continent. The AU now institutionalizes that commitment, providing a coordination hub for external partners to engage.

3. Principles for Partnership

Seminar participants identified a few principles to guide the formation of partnerships between the AU, RECs, UN bodies, and other development partners including the G8, EU, IFIs, and bilateral partners. These guiding principles include the following:

- *Additionality, not burden-shifting:* The general approach should be to create partnerships to increase the overall capacity to promote peace and sustainable development on the continent. It is important that international support for the AU and RECs does not amount to an attempt to pass off international responsibility for peace and security in Africa. The UNSC has primary responsibility for ensuring peace and security in Africa and elsewhere. Indeed, most of the UNSC's deliberations are focused on addressing conflicts in Africa. Enhancement of AU and REC capability builds primarily upon the commitment by African leaders themselves to assume more responsibility for mediation and resolution of conflicts on the continent as a whole.
- *Comparative advantage:* Given the limitations on the resources of the AU, RECs, UN bodies, and development partners, comparative advantages should be used to maximize efficiency. In designing programs and policies, comparative advantages should be weighed

against other principles, such as “local ownership”. For example, post-conflict peacebuilding in Africa is likely to become the central security challenge on the continent for the next two decades. In developing African peacebuilding capacity, continental actors are at a comparative disadvantage relative to the World Bank and UN bodies in planning and financing post-conflict peacebuilding. At the same time, the AU and RECs may have an advantage in providing mediators, troops, and police. At least in the short run, rather than the AU duplicating what the World Bank and UN can already do well in planning and financing, it may make the most sense for the AU to concentrate on its strengths.

- *National and regional ownership:* Such ownership means bringing national and regional stakeholders into confidence early-on in policy development processes. A lesson on ownership was learned when the National Transition Government of Liberia (NTGL) and ECOWAS gave cold responses to the International Contact Group on the Mano River Basin’s proposal to establish a “Liberia Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program”. The Contact Group designed the assistance program to reduce corruption in Liberia, and the AU and UN supported the proposal. But the NTGL predictably saw the proposed program as a foreign imposition and resisted it, and ECOWAS was unwilling to put pressure on the NTGL to accept it. Although the issue was eventually worked out, the ill will that arose threatened the project. Seminar participants pointed out that had the NTGL and ECOWAS been taken into confidence early on, ECOWAS’s support could have been secured and the NTGL’s concerns assuaged. One participant suggested that in the future, the proposed UN Peacebuilding Commission could be the venue for such engagement.
- *Subsidiarity:* Subsidiarity helps to ensure that development assistance and resources committed to building peace operations capacity are properly matched to the variety of on-the-ground needs on the continent rather than being based on inapplicable generalizations. It also ensures that the capacity-building to address problems (the

“learning by doing”) happens in African locales well-positioned to respond to future challenges rather than in distant capitals.

- *Mutual learning*: It is important to recognize that continental actors and development partners have much to learn from each other. It is not a one-way street. Western armies, for example, could learn from the wealth of experience of African peacekeepers, particularly those who have been involved in peace operations for over a decade in West Africa. African armies could be brought up to speed on technological and organizational advances in Western armies.
- *No parallel tracks*: Development partners often work on tracks parallel to the AU-REC framework, with such tracks based on former colonial ties or strategic interests. Without sufficient internal capacity to make use of resources offered by development partners, the AU/RECs rely on implementation partners—NGOs and think-tanks, seconded officers and officials, etc. While such parallel tracks to some extent make up for the AU/RECs’ lack of internal capacity, they also mean that the AU/RECs loses control over implementation, strategic coordination is compromised, and capacity building (“learning-by-doing”) happens outside the AU/RECs rather than within them. Partners should coordinate closely with the AU. NGO and think-tank implementation partners could offer personnel to be made available eventually as AU staff. Development partners could adopt a rule in which capacity building funds are directed through the non-AU channels only if there are compelling reasons for doing so. Funds could also be placed into trust or committed over the long term to give the AU time to organize implementation programs.
- *Inseparability of security and development*: Integration of security and development programming in Africa is a necessary response to the inseparability of conflict, poverty, governance problems, and disease. The challenge is for security and development programs to work in tandem rather than in an overly compartmentalized fashion. Seminar

participants noted that in current UN peace operations in Africa, such integration is still obstructed by personal tensions between program heads; bureaucratic rigidity at headquarters that effectively bars joint efforts in the field; and little time or opportunity for information sharing and genuine consultation between security, development, and humanitarian officers across the different UN bodies.

At the operations level, the AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS) deployment to Darfur is an important test case for these partnership principles. Despite being a relatively small mission (deployment of up to 6,171 troops and 1,560 police), the mission involves complex coordination among an array of actors from the AU, African troop-contributing countries, UN bodies (which often act quite independently of each other), the EU, NATO, the United States, and the Sudanese government. Key issues are the reconciliation of different attitudes about priorities within these different organizations, maintaining the cooperation of the Sudanese government, and providing receiving points for the streams of support coming in from the international community. Also, language difficulties and insufficient training and experience with interoperability have created problems for military units and especially for civilian police units.

At the capacity-building level, EU, G8 and bilateral pledges to support the AU and NEPAD represent progress toward realizing these partnership principles. Participants generally agreed that the objective is for these institutional channels to take prominence over ad hoc and/or bilateral channels. Participants also discussed a number of bureaucratic concerns. The AU, with its severe staff limitations, struggles to meet the stringent reporting requirements of the EU and Japan; the US's approach with less complex reporting was taken to be much more efficient. The AU would thus welcome simplified and standardized G8 or OECD reporting formats.

4. Operationalizing the Peace and Security Architecture

The translation of “non-indifference” into an operational reality for the Africa Union has begun with the elaboration of a Peace and Security Architecture.

The Peace and Security Council is at the center of the architecture, with the implementation arms being the Military Staff Committee, the Panel of the Wise, the Continental Early Warning System, and the African Stand-by Force. Among these five elements, some are more advanced than others. At the Seminar, an update of the operationalization process was given and priorities for partnerships were highlighted.

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) has been active as the executive body overseeing the establishment of the architecture as well as the deployments to Burundi and Darfur. Nonetheless, much remains to be done in assessing and improving the PSC's working procedures. Without a dedicated Secretariat to support its work, the PSC relies on ad hoc reporting and implementation arrangements. Also, relations with the UN Security Council (UNSC) remain to be further clarified, requiring an "unpacking" of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. A specific issue pertains to the question of whether UNSC authorization of a PSC decision to deploy a peacekeeping operation entails any automatic implications for financing. The UN General Assembly and UNSC must also settle the issue of whether AU-mandated operations can be paid for with funds from UN assessed contributions.

The Military Staff Committee (MSC) has met regularly, serving as the technical body guiding the deployments in Sudan and Burundi and the implementation of the ASF agenda. Seminar participants made no mention of concerns with the MSC.

The Panel of the Wise (POW) composed of respected elders is intended to ensure that even if the PSC is unable to take action, the AU does not remain inert. Most of the members of the POW have been selected, but the body remains to be convened and given a support structure. Again, the main impediment has been AU headquarters staff limitations.

The Continental Early Warning System is intended to allow for the AU to take preventive action and to respond rapidly and most effectively. Progress on the System has been slow, mostly because of staffing constraints at the AU headquarters. Nonetheless, a Road Map was expected to be completed by the end of the Summer 2005. At the technical level, the System could draw from IGAD's Conflict Early Warning and Response (CEWARN) Mechanism, which was presented and discussed at the Seminar. The

CEWARN system systematically gathers and compiles information on conflict indicators and disseminates them into a network linking IGAD headquarters and member-state ministries. Some participants asked whether the AU's early-warning approach should be more deliberative and locally engaged. Rather than merely gathering information at the local level and only engaging capital city elites, the early warning system should involve the regular dispatching of AU representatives to actively engage local community leaders and discuss ways to bring about positive changes.

The African Stand-by Force seeks to harness continental readiness to respond in cases where the broader international community remains inert. Having approved an implementation Road Map in March 2005 and initiated systematic needs assessments, the Force is making steady progress, at least on paper.

5. Challenges to Implementation

Seminar participants noted that the most important constraints on operationalizing the Architecture are (i) human resource and staffing limitations at the AU and the RECs, (ii) skepticism both on the continent and in development partner governments, and (iii) the continuance of parallel capacity-building tracks based on former colonial ties or bilateral strategic interests. These constraints translate readily into priorities for partnerships. Human resource development for the AU must be supported. Development partners in the G8 and EU should heartily encourage and incentivize African leaders' implementation of AU decisions. Parallel tracks should be minimized to ensure the coherence of capacity-building on the continent.

A number of questions were raised through the course of the Seminar, pointing out challenges for the implementation process to address:

- Could the AU headquarters staff and member states simultaneously manage AU deployments and capacity-building? Such multi-tasking inevitably forces compromises in capacity-building.
- Should the AU make the ASF available for deployment anywhere in the world and under UN political leadership? If the AU was to agree to this,

the ASF would complement the EU Battle Groups in adding to global capacities—a result that UNDPKO would welcome. It may also help to secure the international commitment to Africa. If an ASF brigade was committed to UNDPKO's proposed Strategic Reserve, then this ASF brigade could qualify for inclusion in special UN financing arrangements.

- Should the subregional ASF brigades be committed primarily to dealing with crises within their own subregions or not? The experience of the proposed IGAD peacekeeping deployment to Somalia, has been instructive. The operation faces problems given Ethiopia's tense relations with Somalia, Eritrea's poor relations with other IGAD states, and Sudan's own internal problems. This leaves Uganda as the only IGAD member with the needed capabilities and free of inhibiting political constraints. IGAD's problems are in contrast to ECOWAS's more positive experience in West Africa.

In addition to these questions, Seminar participants made specific recommendations for operationalizing the architecture:

- AU member states should be mindful of the difficulties that may arise if ASF units are composed of small contributions (e.g. at the company level) from different countries. An alternative would be for single-country battalions to be the smallest component units, unless multi-nation battalions had adequate inter-operability training.
- Development partners should channel initiatives like RECAMP and ACOTA through the AU, rather than through bilateral or independent tracks. If so, the training would reinforce, rather than undermine, the AU. Training should be offered to African units dedicated to the ASF.
- The ASF and composite REC units should fully harmonize doctrine and assessment methodologies to ensure continual operational improvement. Partnerships with NATO, the EU, SHIRBRIG, and UNDPKO could be useful in developing common assessment methodologies and sharing lessons learned.

- AU member states and development partners should stick with the rapid response timelines in the ASF Road Map's six deployment scenarios. The timelines are extremely ambitious even for an all-NATO deployment. But given the nature of the anticipated crises, they are necessary response times. Partnerships with NATO, the EU, SHIRBRIG, UNDPKO, among others, should focus on making these response timelines feasible.
- The AU should clarify the ASF's funding mechanisms. As part of this, the UN Security Council and General Assembly should clarify if and how ASF operations could be funded from the UN's assessed budget. It was noted that costs for the AU's AMIS deployment to Darfur have far exceeded the ASF assessed budget. (Figures of "at least US\$400 million" for AMIS and US\$63 million for the ASF assessed budget were mentioned, but these figures remain to be verified.)

Participants also discussed issues relating to AU-REC relations. The AU has drafted Memoranda of Understanding to clarify the relationships with the seven most prominent RECs. The MOUs are being circulated and reviewed by the RECs, although staffing shortages at the AU and RECs are slowing this process too. A key concern is over differing norms at the continental and subregional levels, evident in the different approaches of the AU and ECOWAS in responding to developments in Togo over the past year. Some participants, however, did not see a problem in ECOWAS and the AU having different reactions to Togo.

6. Post-conflict Peacebuilding as a Priority

Post-conflict peacebuilding has, as yet, not been specified as a pillar of the Peace and Security Architecture. But given the progress in many peace processes on the continent, it is reasonable to expect that post-conflict peacebuilding will be the security priority in Africa in the coming decades. Seminar participants discussed institutions and strategies that could be applied to address peacebuilding challenges in Africa. The situation in Sierra Leone typifies many of the challenges. The UN Mission in Sierra Leone

(UNAMSIL) has brought about a palpable improvement in the security situation and helped to re-energize the political landscape. However, beyond elections, the government is weak and unsure and corruption is still high. The consolidation of a more professional and rational security sector is hampered by the government's lack of confidence in being able to control the process. Limited economic development has prevented the absorption of an excess supply of young men in the country. It is unlikely that Sierra Leone will see the type of economic development that would lead to a significant reduction in poverty, exclusion, and thus vulnerability to conflict. These circumstances are not specific to Sierra Leone, as war recurrence has been a prevalent phenomenon on the continent. (See background paper.)

Unfortunately there are many strategic and institutional gaps in meeting these challenges. In Africa, the NEPAD secretariat in Pretoria has released a policy framework document for "post-conflict reconstruction". But as yet this policy framework has not been linked to any formal policy-development processes, whether in the AU or in the UN system, and thus remains a disembodied conceptual exercise. It is nonetheless useful insofar as it helps to concentrate minds on the peacebuilding challenges on the continent. Otherwise, as Seminar participants noted, the AU has yet to activate a policy process for developing its post-conflict peacebuilding capabilities. At the UN, it is widely expected that the September Summit will result in the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission and Peacebuilding Support Office, although here too much uncertainty and ambiguity remains about the roles of these new entities. An important role for these new entities would be to link strategic-level integrated planning with financing for peacebuilding.

7. Toward a Post-conflict Peacebuilding Agenda

Participants noted ways in which the strategic and institutional gaps could be filled. As described at the beginning of this report, comparative advantages should be seized upon. The AU's and RECs' mediation, peacekeeping, and policing capabilities could be strengthened as complements to the financing and planning capabilities of the UN and IFIs. The AU and RECs could also do more to link their security initiatives with economic development initiatives.

The compartmentalization of security, development, and humanitarian offices in national capitals impedes desirable integration in the field. The G8 and EU could make bureaucratic reforms to allow for integrated security, development, and humanitarian programs. The compartmentalization of security, development, and humanitarian offices in national capitals impedes desirable integration in the field. Donor guidelines, such as the OECD Official Development Assistance (ODA) guidelines, have also been a constraint, because they have excluded much security programming crucial to peacebuilding. Peacekeeping budgets are also not often available for programming such as security sector reform. Thus, ad hoc financing arrangements have had to be created for much security sector reform programming. This has complicated the coordination of peacekeeping, security sector reform, and development assistance programs. Some positive steps have been taken, as in the OECD's creation of new ODA definitions that allow for certain types of "security system" reform programming. But development partners, the UN, and World Bank should still conduct assessments on the "impediments to integrating security and development programming for peacebuilding" and develop a shared agenda for improving integrated programming.

Participants noted also that African trade is mostly with external markets rather than between countries on the continent, and that the continent has been vulnerable to regionalized civil wars. Overcoming this appalling lack of regional cooperation should be a priority for the AU and RECs, with the support of development partners. Incentives for regional economic cooperation through cross-border infrastructure projects would help to create peace-supporting neighborhoods.

Development partners have other roles to play in helping to build sustainable peace in Africa's conflict-ridden zones. Helping to control the flow of small arms and light weapons (SALWs) outside of Africa would lessen the opportunities for would-be militants to re-ignite civil war within Africa. In cases where the inflow of SALWs aggravates a conflict situation, SALW control regimes should trigger international sanctions on supplier countries and companies, most of which are outside Africa. The illegal exploitation of natural resources continues to undermine stability in Central and West Africa.

Development partners should be more proactive in sanctioning the countries and companies engaged in these practices and in establishing and enforcing certification regimes, such as the Kimberley Process. Finally, the further removal of trade barriers between African countries and the EU and US would have positive consequences for peace in Africa by creating the economic opportunities necessary to sustain peace. Many of these points should be taken into consideration as the EU develops its comprehensive strategy for relations with Africa.

8. Conclusion

Security cooperation among Africa leaders and their external partners has come mostly in response to crises. By establishing a Peace and Security Architecture, the AU has created a focal point for sustained and rational cooperation in promoting peace and sustainable development on the continent. The challenges are many, and peace partnerships will be essential in addressing them. But with a number of forward-looking plans on the table—including those of the AU, NEPAD, UN Secretary General, Commission for Africa, and G8—many of the specific steps have already been identified. The summits of 2005 have also resulted in many important pledges. What remains is for national government, international organizations, NGOs, and think-tanks to vigilantly monitor whether pledges are being fulfilled and whether unity of purpose is being sustained. The EU under the Austrian Presidency in the first half of 2006 has a unique opportunity to strengthen EU cooperation in the implementation of these pledges for increased assistance, including direct support to the AU's evolving Peace and Security Architecture.