

Policy Brief

Reforming the African Peace and Security Architecture: Options for Effective Clarity of Roles between the African Union and Sub-regional Organizations

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Executive Summary

The uncertainties relating to the specific roles of the African Union (AU) and sub-regional organizations have raised debates on how to effectively delimit the responsibilities of African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) institutions in the context of the ongoing AU Reform. Hence, this policy brief examines

the viability of a clear division of labour within APSA as well as the options available to maximise the effectiveness of APSA. The policy brief draws on in-depth analysis of current APSA trends and the perspectives of key stakeholders working within the APSA context.

Key Findings

1. The policy brief underlines that a clear-cut division of labour between the AU and sub-regions is untenable at this stage in APSA trajectory because roles within APSA are determined by multi-factors such as capabilities of affected sub-regions, cross-regional dimensions of conflicts and interests of member states. These factors have led to the following 3 key trends.
 - a. The increasing quest for self-reliance within relatively strong Regional Economic Communities (RECs) like ECOWAS, SADC and IGAD.
 - b. The AU's comparative advantage in the contexts of weak RECs.
 - c. Lastly, due to the multiplicity of RECs, state regimes pick and choose APSA interveners that are favourable to their cause and in some cases form ad hoc coalitions to circumvent both the indecision of the AU and multiple sub-regions to address cross-RECs challenges as shown by the formation of G5 Sahel Joint Force in 2017.
2. Although clear-cut defined roles within APSA may not be feasible, the AU and sub-regions should develop a sequential framework for their working modalities and enhance their coordination mechanisms to reduce tensions and attain efficiency.¹

Key Recommendations

1. The AU and RECs should elaborate the concept of subsidiarity and comparative advantage to show that sub-regional arrangements are the ideal first responders in their affected member states. The clarification should also explain the circumstances and processes of escalating a crisis to the AU level.
2. In contexts where RECs are unable, unwilling and reluctant to intervene, the AU and RECs should specifically agree that the AU should exercise its comparative advantage by playing more proactive role including coordinating relevant actors for peace.
3. The AU and sub-regions should enhance their liaison offices and create permanent representations to play significant roles in agenda-setting and coordination especially in the area of peace and security.
4. Sub-regional organisations should establish liaison offices amongst themselves to enhance coordination on common cross-RECs challenges in order to maximize capacities and reduce the emergencies of ad hoc coalitions.
5. To ensure a joint AU-REC approach, there is a need for a pre-defined high-level coordination structure between the AU and each REC to ensure joint rapid assessment and intervention when crises erupt in member states.
6. International partners have a critical role to play in ensuring the coherence between APSA institutions by maintaining inter-African cooperation through donor projects.

Introduction

This policy brief seeks to foster public discussion on the specific roles and responsibilities of the African Union (AU) and sub-regional organisations in matters of peace and security in view of the ongoing AU Reform. In January 2017, the AU reform process was officially rolled out after President Paul Kagame's recommendations were adopted during the 28th AU Summit. The central aim of the reform is to ensure reliability and efficiency of the AU in view of misgivings amongst citizens as well as member states about the added value of the continental organization in addressing political and economic challenges in concert with sub-regional organisations.²

In peace and security contexts, an emerging dynamic within APSA is the decline in the direct interventions of the AU in crisis situations in the past five years compared to its roles in the first decade of its establishment. New trends show that sub-regional organizations and coalitions are increasingly relying on their capacities to lead peace initiatives in their respective regions. This is evident in the leading roles of sub-regions in the Lake Chad Basin, the Sahel, South Sudan, The Gambia, Lesotho and Guinea Bissau.³ The AU, which is now only leading in the military intervention in Somalia and cooperating with RECs in some mediatory efforts, mainly endorses sub-

regional decisions and initiatives. Increasingly, the AU's focus is inclined towards norm setting⁴ and grand plans such as the Silencing the Guns in Africa initiative and Agenda 2063.

While the proactive role of sub-regional organisation is central to pan-African ideals etched in the Treaty of the African Economic Community (AEC) in 1991 and the AU Constitutive Act, the challenge lies in streamlining and coordinating APSA interventions. The sticking point is that the legal documents between the AU and sub-regions place greater emphasis on 'working together'. While subsidiarity and comparative advantage were mentioned sparingly, most analysts agree that the predominance of joint cooperation wordings in the 2008 Protocol⁵ and MoU⁶ does not stipulate that the AU or a particular REC should play the initial role of addressing a conflict before escalating it to the AU level.⁷

Hence, in crises, the AU and RECs/RMs lay competing claims to primary roles in peace processes.⁸ This is compounded by the limitations of coordination platforms to maximize capacities for peace.⁹ Additionally, there is no clear policy direction on how to address situations where sub-regions face bottlenecks including how to ensure inbuilt checks and balances within APSA. Clarifying the roles of the AU and the sub-regions is integral not only to manage expectations about the AU but also to coordinate Africa's response to

avoid wastage of resources, duplication and half-hearted measures.

In recognition of these limitations, the AU reform process seeks to, among other goals, enhance clarity of roles between the AU and sub-regions as part of the overall aim of ‘restructuring the AU to focus on key priorities with continental scope’.¹⁰ A declaration adopted during the first mid-year coordination meeting held between the AU and RECs in Niamey in July 2019 requires the parties to rapidly develop a plan of action on an effective division of labour including a call to review the AU-RECs Protocol of 2008.¹¹

Hence this policy brief complements the ongoing reform process by examining the viability of having a clear division of labour within APSA as well as the options available for effective relations between the AU and RECs. In doing so, the policy brief uses a mix of desktop and field research to answer questions such as: What are the key trends and gaps in the relationship between APSA institutions? Is a clear division of labour viable within APSA in view of current dynamics? What evidence-based options are crucial to ensure effective working relations within APSA? The researcher used purposive sampling to conduct interviews with thirty key decision and policy makers in the AU, ECOWAS, SADC and IGAD as well as the Training for Peace in Africa Programme

(TfP) which works closely with APSA institutions. Based on the findings, the policy brief argues that a clear-cut division of labour may be untenable at this stage in APSA trajectory. However, there is a critical need to elaborate the concepts of subsidiarity and comparative advantage in order to ensure a sequential framework in APSA’s working modalities. It is also imperative to develop new coordination mechanisms within APSA and enhance existing ones so as to reduce tensions and attain efficiency. To delineate these thoughts, the policy brief outlines the cooperation framework of APSA followed by the three major determinants of APSA interventions. The policy brief goes further to examine the dominant stakeholder perspectives on ways to achieve effective APSA relationship, and culminates with recommendations on policy and coordination options.

Cooperation Framework within APSA

APSA is a remarkable expression of Pan-African cooperation in matters of peace and security through complementary use of interrelated mechanisms at the continental, regional and national levels. APSA itself is composed of various independent African institutions with Pan-African orientation but at different capacity levels and

sometimes with overlapping mandates and interests. While APSA is managed on a day-to-day basis by the AU and its Peace and Security Council (PSC), it encompasses sub-regional organisations and their mechanisms as outlined in Article 16 of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of Peace and Security Council of the AU (PSC Protocol). Article 3(l) of the Constitutive Act also recognizes other sub-regional mechanisms at an informal level by noting the need to ‘coordinate and harmonize the policies between the existing and future RECs for the gradual attainment of the objectives of the Union’.

The integral role of sub-regional organisations in pan-African unity has been encouraged since the 1960s as a pathway to gradual integration from the sub-regional level to a continent-wide integration. Sub-regional organisations have since broadened their priorities to include peace and security mandates in view of the nexus between development and peace. The interconnection of sub-regional organisations to the AU is reflective of the Africa-wide grand alliance for peace and security. This is in line with key legal frameworks that call for joint African responses as articulated in Article 4(h and J) of the Constitutive Act and the PSC Protocol of 2004 which formalized a continent-wide non-indifference to instability.

While sub-regional organisations developed

independently outside of AU commissioning, the AU, as a continental body, is expected to have primacy on the continent in line with Article 16 of the PSC Protocol and the AU-RECs MoU. This entails that RECs/RMs are accountable to the AU in peace and security initiatives as much as the AU is accountable to the UN which has the primary responsibility for international peace and security. During the interview, some respondents mentioned that because the legal documents of the sub-regions are independent, sub-regions do not necessarily need to subscribe to an AU oversight. They highlighted that RECs like ECOWAS and SADC have played significant roles in addressing peace and security challenges in their regions even before the AU was formed in 2001 to proactively address the continent’s peace and development challenges.

However, while sub-regions are independent, most of their treaties and core legal documents allude to the primacy of the continental body. Moreover, most of the RECs were established in line with the OAU’s discussions on gradualist integration from the 1960s until the creation of the AEC in 1991 which enjoined OAU member states to enhance their existing RECs and create new ones if need be. One of the key dimensions brought in by the AU was that it set the tone for a more robust and intentional African interventions unlike the ad hoc posture of past interventions

by sub-regional organisations. The AU adopted several norms to guide an Africa-wide cooperation in matters of peace and security.

In terms of cooperation, the main platform for coordination on peace and security matters is at the level of the PSC. The members of sub-regional organisations are represented through the AU PSC's 15 member states that represent the 5 regions of Africa. The PSC has often cooperated directly with sub-regional organisations for its interventions in Somalia, Sudan, CAR, Mali, etc as will be elaborated below. Through the PSC and the AUC Chairperson, sub-regional organizations have also been consistent in reporting the progress of their interventions to the AU. In turn, the AU supports and endorses the decisions made by the sub-regions including authorizing military deployments.

However, the limited delineation of the entailments of subsidiarity, complementarity, and comparative advantage has created a number of confusions and competition in African responses. The following sections investigate the political undercurrents of intervention within APSA which portray the fluid and uncertain application of subsidiarity and comparative advantage on the continent.

Dynamics of Intervention within APSA

To assess the tenability of having a clear division of labour within APSA, it is crucial to examine the current factors that determine which African actor intervenes in a conflict situation. APSA interventions could be specifically categorised into three key trends namely, the increasing quest for self-reliance within certain RECs, the AU's comparative advantage in the contexts of weak RECs and the uncertainties created by the multiplicity of RECs on the continent.

Self-Reliance within Certain Sub-regions

While the AU has set the standards for deliberate African intervention in the last two decades, African states are increasingly finding it rather convenient to pursue solutions at the sub-regional level where their interests are better articulated than in the broader AU platform which has multiple players and priorities. The major driver for this self-reliance has to do partly with the existence of some sub-regional organisations like ECOWAS and the SADC that are self-sufficient in ways that they do not necessarily need the AU for political and economic influence as it does not have economic leverage. For instance, the

situations in Guinea Bissau, The Gambia and Mali are closely understood and mediated by ECOWAS. A similar role is played by SADC in Lesotho. Moreover, AU deliberations and efforts rely largely on the inputs from actors in the sub-region.

Furthermore, the comparative advantage of sub-regions is in the nature of their response to crisis situations. Notably, the AU discussion on peace and security is often at the level of the AU Commission Chairperson and the PSC which is often at the ambassadorial level. Indeed, most PSC summits at the level of Heads of State often occur once a year at the side-line of an AU Assembly. However, at the sub-regional level, Heads of State, with support from the relevant technical committees, often lead emerging peace and security interventions. At the AU level, however, getting respective Heads of State of the PSC to act takes a longer process.

There have been a number of tensions between the AU and RECs during crises. For instance, the post-elections crisis in Côte d'Ivoire and the crisis in Mali show how ECOWAS sought paramount control of interventionist attempts¹². This is reflective of the 2010 assessment of APSA which shows that some RECs/RMs are of the view that the AU should not consider itself as an implementing agency; it should rather play more of a coordination role,¹³ but especially in norm setting while RECs do the

actual interventions. A critical question is how the AU can make meaningful impact as a primary reference body for peace and security in Africa if its role is relegated to coordination and norm setting.¹⁴ Moreover, where strong RECs exist, there is a significant push back against AU's attempt to coordinate or have oversight especially when its role is of minimal relevance on the ground.

The tensions between the AU and RECs are subtle, but they reflect the inherent struggle around the extent to which sub-regions should be autonomous as well as the extent of AU's supranational capacity in line with the pan-African ideals. While intervention requires a huge responsibility on the part of African interveners, a pattern of unwillingness/inability to intervene in situations of crisis could create the impression that the organization is redundant and inefficient. For the AU and sub-regional organizations, the consequence is the potential of loss of local and international support including a diminished credibility in terms of external resource mobilisation which they rely on for their day-to-day operations. Hence, the limited normative clarity and eagerness to be relevant when conflict erupts tends to drive duplicity, lack of commitment and sometimes friction.

Arguably, the friction around who intervenes directly is driven by the quest to gain funds and

resources from external donors as well as the need to bolster institutional capacity and experience during interventions. Although sub-regional missions often seek authorization from AU, it is arguable that the AU authorization is merely a ‘technicality’ to successfully request and obtain external funding. For instance, RECs/RMs required AU endorsement to access the European Union’s (EU) African Peace Facility (APF)¹⁵. However, the EU’s new European Peace Facility (EPF) enables the EU to fund any African actor without an AU endorsement. Hence, a pertinent question is whether sub-regions will seek the approval of the AU prior to undertaking peace initiatives if the quest to access donor funds is not on the table.¹⁶ These funding dynamics shed some light on the impact of external actors on the cohesiveness of APSA.

The AU’s Comparative Advantage in the Contexts of Weak RECs

While some sub-regions are self-sufficient and active, the AU has significant comparative advantage in situations where weaker RECS exist. Most RECs have peace and security mandates, but their capacity to make meaningful impact

depends on their level of development and integration. In central Africa, for instance, ECCAS, which was established in 1983, has been one of the weakest RECs along with the AMU of northern Africa which is virtually non-existent. However, the challenge is that if RECs are unable and unwilling to resolve crises, the AU tends to make minimal impact as evident from the situation in Libya.¹⁷ This is because the AU relies significantly on the influence and interests of member states of sub-regions to seek solutions both within their RECs and the AU PSC level.

Yet, in this weak context, the AU has a comparative advantage of bringing together the different actors to initiate a coordinated intervention. In CAR, for instance, the AU and ECCAS have been cooperating closely to address the crisis. Currently, the AU is leading the African mediation effort in the country along with ECCAS, ICGLR and other partners within a framework known as the AU-led African Initiative.

Consequences of Multiple RECs in Africa

The creation of sub-regional organisations is part of the grand African plan for development and gradual continent-wide integration as outlined in

the AEC Treaty and the AU Constitutive Act. These documents go on to call for the establishment of sub-regional organisations where they do not exist. Through time, however, it dawned on the continental body that the call for the creation of additional RECs was a policy imperative gone too far. In 2006, the AU Assembly placed moratorium on the recognition of additional RECs that were mushrooming across the continent.¹⁸ While having multiple RECs creates various options for African intervention, it has led to two major situations, namely, the rise of ad hoc coalitions and the penchant for state regimes to pick and choose who intervenes favourably for their cause.

The Rise of Ad Hoc Coalitions

Due to the multiplicity of RECs and the absence of inter-REC coordination mechanisms, ad hoc regional arrangements have become critical enforcement mechanisms. Notably, conflicts which occur across the borders of sub-regional organizations often raise concerns around which sub-region should intervene. The lack of coordination arrangements between two or more RECs also makes it difficult for two RECs to intervene jointly. Although the AU has the advantage to coordinate interventions in such

contexts, ad hoc arrangements have proven to be more proactive as reflected by the case of the recently established G5 Sahel Joint Force.

In terms of the G5 Sahel Joint Force, the AU PSC had initially planned to establish an African force to undertake offensive actions against the terror groups operating in Mali and the borders of the Sahel region as part of its Sahel Strategy¹⁹. However, the AU's delays led the affected countries of the G5 Sahel – Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger – to establish in February 2017 the Joint Force of the G5 Sahel comprising up to 5,000 personnel to address the terror threats. The situation is similar with the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) fighting Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin where concerned member states that fall between two main sub-regional organization (ECOWAS and ECCAS), decided to lead a coalition against Boko Haram through the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC).

Picking and Choosing Who Intervenes

Due to various options of RECs, autocratic state regimes often pick and choose interventions from RECs that are more favourable to their interests. For instance, when violence and protests resurged in Burundi in 2015 following President

Nkurunziza's bid for a 'third term', the government preferred the mediatory role of the East African Community (EAC) which was led by President Museveni of Uganda. Museveni himself has been in power for about 29 years at the time thereby raising concerns about his role in a presidential term issue from the start. Under Museveni, Uganda had scrapped presidential term limits in 2005 and subsequently scrapped age limits in 2018. Accordingly, the EAC has been criticized for failing to consider concerns of the opposition.

The Burundian government also mobilized support to reject AU PSC's attempt to send an African Prevention and Protection Mission in Burundi (MAPROBU) to protect civilians. Although the AU sent a high-level delegation to Burundi with members coming from the five regions of Africa, the delegation did not make any meaningful impact on the ground. It rather relied on the EAC-led mediation, which maintained the status quo, and former Burundian president Nkurunziza remained in power until his demise in 2020. As such, the limited checks and balances in the APSA framework make it hard for the AU to take a decisive step when RECs are unable to attain peace.

Stakeholder Perspectives and Recommendations on Reforming and Enhancing the Effectiveness of APSA

In view of the status quo elaborated above, a survey of 30 respondents at the AU, ECOWAS, IGAD, SADC and the TfP reveals 3 major perspectives on the way forward.

- a) Some respondents are in favour of a revised MoU to streamline the roles and responsibilities of the AU and sub-regions. The following excerpts from respondents highlight this perspective.
- 'The 2008 MoU should be revised to ensure that RECs implement their mandate independently. The AU should not interfere in any peace and security matters in a sub-region unless requested to do so by a REC and when the REC is unable to intervene' (A respondent from ECOWAS).
 - 'The MoU is very broad and there is no clear agreement that the RECs will be the first responders and that only if they are not able to deal with a particular situation then it will be the

responsibility of the AU. However, in reality there is no easy answer and it is important to have some flexibility so that we can adapt to the changing circumstances' (A respondent from the TfP).

a) Other interviewees, however, are not in favour of having a revised MoU due to the fluid and uncertain nature of conflict dynamics and influences on the continent. Rather, they emphasized the need to enhance co-ordination. The following excerpts from respondents highlight this perspective.

- 'There is no need for division of labour as this will create a dangerous boss-subordinate relationship. Sub-regions may feel that they are being bossed around by the AU rather than acting in line with the partnership model in operation' (An analyst at the SADC).
- 'It is difficult to have fixed roles because we are dealing with human institutions. The AU and sub-regions can play roles in implementation and norm-setting depending on the situation. Pragmatism should guide us rather than the doctrines' (A respondent from the AU).
- 'The major challenge is how to enhance coordination between the AU and RECs. It is not a Protocol problem. There is power in joint and collective action as set out by the existing Protocol and MoU' (Another respondent from the AU).

a) A few other respondents prefer some form of guidelines to enhance understanding of what subsidiarity and comparative advantage mean at the level of APSA including a guideline on sequencing of intervention within APSA. The following excerpts from respondents highlight this perspective.

- 'What we have not articulated well is the whole concept of subsidiarity and what it means in practice. Perhaps what we need to do is to actually do a mapping of what subsidiarity means in practice and use that to inform clarity on AU-RECs relations' (A respondent from the TfP).

The responses above highlight the common and diverging perspectives among policy makers with regard to what needs to be done to enhance the functioning of APSA. Nevertheless, the responses are not exclusive; they provide a platform to extrapolate the following pertinent recommendations to guide APSA's working engagement.

Recommendations

1) To the AU and RECs: Options on Roles and Responsibilities

- The AU and RECs should elaborate the concept of subsidiarity. This can be done by either updating the existing AU-RECs MoU or developing a guiding note to show that sub-regional arrangements

are first responders in their affected member states in consultation with the AU. This will help to heighten the responsibility and preparedness of sub-regions to handle conflict situations. The note elaborating the principle of subsidiarity should clearly highlight the circumstances where crisis issues can be escalated to the AU level.

- More specifically, in contexts where RECs are unable, unwilling or reluctant to intervene, the AU and RECs should agree that the AU should exercise its comparative advantage by playing more proactive role in terms of intervening. This includes bringing together and coordinating relevant actors for peace through joint assessment and intervention. The joint approach will help to enhance credibility of the interveners and improve the capacity of the RECs involved.
- In contexts where sub-regions reach a deadlock in intervention, the AU should provide backstopping including stepping in to improve the peace process. This should form part of the document elaborating the principle of subsidiarity and comparative advantage.
- In cases of multiplicity of actors, the AU should coordinate the responses of the RECs in the affected country like in the case of the CAR where the AU is leading an African-led initiative.

- Regardless of who intervenes in a specific crisis, the AU and RECs should clarify the concept of complementarity by identifying what support could be provided to lead-interveners by all members of APSA.
- The AU and RECs should jointly develop and endorse African common position on norms, policies and practices relating to peace and security. This will play a key role in having a unified message to external players. As such, the AU and RECs could claim ownership and responsibility in the implementation.

1) To the AU and RECs: Options to Enhance Coordination Mechanisms

- **Enhancing the Roles of Liaison Offices and Permanent Representation:** The AU and sub-regions should enhance their liaison offices to play significant roles in agenda setting especially in the area of peace and security. This includes having permanent representations of the AU at the RECs and vice versa to give weight to their relations.
- **Establishing Liaison Offices between Sub-regions:** Sub-regions should establish liaison offices amongst themselves to enhance coordination on common cross-RECs challenges. This will help them to address cross-regional crises and reduce the emergencies of ad hoc

arrangements.

- **Creating High Level Coordination:** To ensure a joint approach, there is a need for a pre-defined high-level coordination structure between the AU and each of the various RECs to ensure joint rapid assessment and intervention. In West Africa, for instance, this entails having a standing committee of high-level officials from the AU and ECOWAS (a Troika format) that could easily work together to address peace and security crises when conflicts erupt in the region. This involves enhancing joint analysis, planning and decision-making framework to enhance effectiveness.
- **Enhancing Institutional Alignment:** The AU should work closely with RECs to agree on mechanisms that should be mirrored at the AU and RECs levels. This will enhance a seamless desk-to-desk interaction between officials of the AU and RECs in line with the MoU.

1) To the International Community: Maintaining the Coherence of APSA

International partners have a critical role to play in ensuring the coherence between APSA institutions by maintaining inter-institution cooperation through donor projects. This includes supporting the ongoing AU effort to secure predictable funding for African peace

operations through the 0.2% Levy as well as the use of UN-assessed contributions. The internal funding process spearheaded by the AU could enhance coherence and coordination within APSA.

Conclusions

Thus far, this policy brief has shown that the responsibility for intervention within APSA is context-specific and often determined by a fluid concept of subsidiarity and comparative advantage. This makes it untenable to have a clear-cut division of labour between the AU and sub-regions especially at this stage of APSA development. The policy brief shows that while some strong RECs, in line with the principle of subsidiarity, exhibit high self-reliance in peace and security initiatives, the AU has a comparative advantage in a context where RECs are unable and reluctant to intervene. In the latter case, however, the AU is hamstrung due to its reliance on sub-regional cooperation to have influence on the ground. In such cases, the AU is required to bring together and coordinate various actors as seen in the CAR peace process.

Moreover, the multiplicity of sub-regional organisations and the cross-regional dimensions of conflicts have also blurred the lines of responsibility

between AU and RECs. While the AU has some advantage to intervene directly in cross-regional issues or bring together the affected RECs, the delays and institutional bureaucracies within the AU have often led to the rise of ad hoc coalitions that seek expedient responses to peace and security threats as highlighted in the case of the G5 Sahel Force. Furthermore, due to the multiplicity of interveners in Africa, member states also pick and choose which APSA institution intervenes in their crisis situation.

While a clear-cut division of responsibility at this stage in APSA trajectory is untenable, the AU and sub-regions ought to develop a sequential guiding framework for their working modalities and enhance their coordination mechanisms.

Endnotes

- 1 This publication was made possible by support from the African Peacebuilding Network of the Social Science Research Council, with funds provided by Carnegie Corporation of New York.
- 2 Kagame, Paul. (2017). The Imperative to Strengthen Our Union: Report on the Proposed Recommendations for the Institutional Reform of the African Union. 28th Summit of the African Union, 29 January 2017. African Union: Addis Ababa.
- 3 AU PSC Report. (2020). Report of the Peace and Security Council on its Activities and the State of Peace and Security in Africa, for the Period from February 2019 to February 2020. Thirty-Third Ordinary Session, Assembly/AU/5(XXXIII), 9-10 February 2020, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- 4 PSC Report. (2017). Options to restructure the AU to ensure greater peace and security. ISS, 22 August 2017.
- 5 AEC and RECs Protocol. (1998). Protocol on Relations between the African Economic Community and the Regional Economic Communities.
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- 9 Momodu, R. (2016). New AU-RECs relationship needed for integration. GREAT Insights Magazine, Volume 5, Issue 4. July/August 2016.
- 10 AU Assembly. (2017). 28th Ordinary Session, Assembly/AU/Dec.631(XXVIII), 30 - 31 January 2017 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- 11 A proposal on a division of labour between the AU, RECs, and Member States was presented at the first mid-year coordination meeting in July 2019 along six areas: Policy planning and formulation; Policy adoption; Implementation; Monitoring and evaluation; Partnerships; and Joint resource mobilization. However, the proposals were bullet point proposals of more generic and broad responsibilities that are more or less obvious along continental and sub-regional levels.
- 12 ISS PSC Report. (2014). African Union Mission for Mali and the Sahel (MISAHHEL). Peace and Security Council Report. Institute for Security Studies, Issue 58.
- 13 AU PSD, 2010
- 14 RECs also develop norms that are replicated at the level of the AU thereby showing sub-regions could also develop norms. See: Darkwa, L., and Attuquayefio, P. (2014). Analysis of Norm Diffusion in the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States. *African Conflict and Peacebuilding Review*, 4(2), 11-37. doi:10.2979/africonfpeacrevi.4.2.11
- 15 EU Commission. (2017). Evaluation of the implementation of the African Peace Facility as an instrument supporting African efforts to manage conflicts on the continent – 2017/383799, Final Report Volume 2: Annexes.
- 16 The ongoing call for the use of UN assessed contribution for African-led peace operations since 2007 is also a motivating factor for unity in line with the AU which leads this discourse.
- 17 When seeming strong RECs are unable to intervene due to crises in one of its strong member states like Nigeria within ECOWAS and South Africa in the SADC – the AU has a comparative advantage to respond although with limited impact.
- 18 AU Assembly. (2006). Assembly Decision - Dec.112 (VII). 2 July 2006, AU: Addis Ababa
- 19 AU PSC. (2015). Communiqué of the Peace and Security Council of the AU (AU), at its 544th meeting on the situation in Mali and the Sahel region in general, 18 September 2015.

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