

# THE AFRICAN UNION PANEL OF THE WISE:

Strengthening relations with  
similar regional mechanisms



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A report based on the High Level Retreat of the African Union  
Panel of the Wise on Strengthening Relations with Similar Regional Mechanisms,  
held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on 4 and 5 June 2012, organised by the  
African Union Peace and Security Department in partnership with the  
African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes



## **About the African Union Panel of the Wise**

The African Union Panel of the Wise (AU PW) is one of the critical pillars of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The AU PW is provided for by Article 11 of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the African Union Peace and Security Council (AU PSC) and is tasked with supporting the PSC and the Chairperson of the Commission in the area of conflict prevention. Established in 2007, the AU PW is comprised of eminent African personalities from the five geographical regions of the continent (East, West, Central, North and southern Africa).

## **About ACCORD**

The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) is a civil society institution working throughout Africa to bring creative African solutions to the challenges posed by conflict on the continent. ACCORD's primary aim is to influence political developments by bringing conflict resolution, dialogue and institutional development to the forefront as alternatives to armed violence and protracted conflict. ACCORD specialises in conflict management, conflict analysis and conflict prevention. We intervene in conflicts through mediation, negotiation, training, research and conflict analysis.

## **The High Level Retreat**

The High Level Retreat was held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso on 4 and 5 June 2012. The major objective of the retreat was to strengthen relations between the AU PW and similar mechanisms at the level of the regional economic communities (RECs). This was achieved through sharing experiences, challenges and possible solutions to prevent conflicts on the continent from escalating into violence. The retreat also aimed to strengthen African peacemaking efforts aimed at addressing governance-related conflicts.

## **Acknowledgements**

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## Acronyms and abbreviations

ACCORD	African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes
AFISMA	African-led International Support Mission in Mali
AMU	African and Malagasy Union
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
ASF	African Standby Force
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
AU PSC	African Union Peace and Security Council
AU PSD	African Union Peace and Security Department
AU PW	African Union Panel of the Wise
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan States
CMI	Crisis Management Initiative
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CSOs	Civil society organisations
EAC	East African Community
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
GDP	Gross domestic product
GLF	Global Leadership Foundation
HD Centre	Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
HDI	Human Development Index
ICT	Information communication technology
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
IPI	International Peace Institute
KNDR	Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation
MARWOPNET	Mano River Women's Peace Network
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MoU	Memorandum of understanding
MNCs	Multinational corporations
MP	Member of Parliament
MSU	Mediation Support Unit
OAU	Organisation of African Unity

Pan-Wise	Pan-African Network of the Wise
PPG	Pastoralist Parliamentary Group
RCPE	Regional Centre for Pastoralist Elders
RECs	Regional economic communities
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
UN	United Nations
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNOAU	United Nations Office to the African Union
UNOCA	United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa
UNOWA	United Nations Office for West Africa
USA	United States of America
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding

## Executive summary

The African Union (AU) convened an inaugural High Level Retreat of the AU Panel of the Wise (AU PW) where the continental body brought together its Panel of the Wise and similar regional mechanisms in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on 4 and 5 June 2012. The retreat was convened by the African Union Peace and Security Department (AU PSD), in collaboration with the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD). The retreat provided an opportunity for participants to discuss challenges to the peace and security landscape in Africa and proffer solutions aimed at informing initiatives to achieve more coordinated approaches to peacemaking. Participants were drawn from a wide range of intergovernmental organisations, regional economic communities (RECs), civil society organisations (CSOs), governments and experts. The AU (Commission, AU PW and Friends of the AU PW), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA), Southern African Development Community (SADC) as well as the secretariats of the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the African and Malagasy Union (AMU) were represented at the retreat. The United Nations (UN) was also represented.

Through panel presentations and plenary discussions, the retreat provided an opportunity for members of the AU PW to interact with members of other panels and councils of the wise from the RECs. The retreat was designed as a platform to facilitate initial engagement between the AU PW and other similar institutions from the RECs, with plans to facilitate subsequent meetings, detailed consultations and action planning in the near future. As well as providing a platform for an assessment of the implementation of the mandates of the AU PW and similar institutions of peacemaking, discussions that came up during the retreat drew attention to the security-development nexus, which has become increasingly apparent, particularly in post-conflict countries.

Delegates discussed contemporary challenges to peace and security in Africa and explored the mandates and modalities of the operations of the AU PW and similar mechanisms at regional level. Furthermore, delegates also examined lessons drawn from years of the AU PW's operation, including weaknesses and opportunities to be more proactive in preventing conflicts from escalating into violence. Focus was also placed on discussing opportunities for enhanced coordination and collaboration between the AU and RECs around conflict prevention and mediation in Africa. At the conclusion of the retreat, a structure known as the Pan-African Network of the Wise (Pan-Wise), which links the AU PW, various councils and panels from the RECs and other institutions and individuals involved in mediation activities, was set up.

The establishment of the Pan-Wise was unequivocally embraced by representatives from the AU and RECs. The Pan-Wise provides an avenue for consolidation and enrichment of peacemaking frameworks on the African continent. It was agreed that the details and operation modalities of the Pan-Wise were to be submitted to the policy organs of both the AU and the RECs for further deliberation and acceptance. A follow-up retreat to further discuss and advance the ideals of collaborative peacemaking was also agreed on by members.

## **Recommendations from the retreat**

Recommendations emerging from the retreat included:

- establishment of a continental network of African panels and councils of the wise that should meet regularly to discuss peacemaking initiatives and ensure coordinated approaches to preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacebuilding.
- ensuring a strengthened culture and practice of mediation on the African continent by the UN, AU and RECs through prioritising the finalisation of the guidelines for, and harmonisation of mediation activities.
- adoption of a regionalised approach by the UN, AU and RECs in the design of peacemaking initiatives and development of mediation mandates. There is a need to focus on regional developments in areas such as West Africa, the Mano River Union, the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region where conflicts that begin in one country tend to spill over into neighbouring countries.
- harmonisation of responses to conflicts on the continent by the AU and RECs, including standardisation of reactions to unconstitutional changes of power, popular uprisings and other spontaneous conflicts that have affected African countries in recent times. A unified response has the effect of reducing ambivalence and ultimately enhancing coordinated approaches to peacemaking.
- promotion of good governance by the AU and RECs through increasing efforts aimed at ensuring that member states honour their political commitments.
- encouraging greater engagement and more concerted efforts by governments and development partners to address factors driving conflict in post-conflict societies. To this end, governments should focus on strengthening social development initiatives to create an environment that addresses the root causes of conflict.
- promotion of more holistic functions of mediators and institutions of peacemaking and peacebuilding through encouraging focus on both reaching an agreement to ensure the cessation of hostilities by conflicting parties and shepherding post-conflict countries through comprehensive processes of 'peace implementation' which will help sustain the peace.
- encouraging focus by mediators, including members of the panels and councils of the wise in respective continental and regional institutions, on capitalising on their unique positions which enable them to interact with politicians.

## Structure of the report

This report captures the essence of presentations and discussions, as well as recommendations that emerged from the inaugural High Level Retreat of the AU PW. The first part assesses the state of peace and security in Africa, while part two provides an overview of current trends and challenges in preventing and resolving conflict on the continent. In part three, the report examines opportunities for peace and security in Africa, including progress achieved in the operationalisation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), democratisation efforts on the continent, increased collaboration between the AU and RECs and the move towards African ownership to resolve the continent's challenges. Part four examines how to capitalise on existing potentials, such as mediation efforts by various African panels and councils of the wise, and provides recommendations for AU member states, the AU and RECs, the AU PW and other panels and councils of the wise. As the retreat aimed at and focused on strengthening relations between the AU PW and similar mechanisms on the continent, the establishment and operationalisation of the Pan-Wise was a key aspect of the deliberations, as reflected in part five of the report. Lastly, the report draws lessons from the current mediation context on the continent, based on reflections and candid exchange of views of a diverse set of eminent speakers at the retreat.

## Introduction

### Background on the retreat

The AU PSD convened a retreat of the AU PW and similar regional mechanisms which was held on 4 and 5 June 2012 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. The choice of Burkina Faso as the venue for the retreat was timely given that the president of Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaoré, played an influential role in the initial mediation processes in Mali, as well as in other countries in the sub-region. President Compaoré's efforts in Mali were mandated by ECOWAS in March 2012.

Delegates attending the retreat included members of the AU Commission (AUC), AU PW, RECs and Friends of the AU PW. The Council of the Wise for ECOWAS, the Committee of Elders for COMESA and IGAD's Mediation Contact Group were some of the regional panels and councils of the wise which were represented at the retreat. In addition, representatives from organisations with similar mandates, including the Regional Centre for Pastoralist Elders (RCPE), the Global Leadership Foundation (GLF) and other mediation experts and high level representatives, among them the Chair of the AU PSC for the month of June 2012, and others from the UN participated in the retreat. CSOs were also represented. These include ACCORD, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD Centre), the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) and the International Peace Institute (IPI), among others. ACCORD collaborated through the provision of conceptual, facilitation and rapporteuring support.



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*Delegates at the inaugural High Level Retreat of the African Union Panel of the Wise*

The retreat was held in pursuance of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed between the AU and RECs in 2008 which called for greater collaboration and coordination of efforts in, amongst others, the area of peace and security, which includes conflict prevention, mitigation and initiatives such as mediation and post-conflict reconstruction. Furthermore, the retreat was hosted in line with the 2012 work programme of the AU PW, which was adopted by the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Panel on 5 November 2011 in Zanzibar, Tanzania.

The two-day retreat of the AU PW was convened within the normative framework of the AU PSC and was expected to assist in building synergies in policies and mechanisms towards enhancing the APSA. The retreat was officially opened by Prime Minister Luc-Adolphe Tiao of the Republic of Burkina Faso, representing President Compaoré. The opening was followed by remarks from Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra, the AU commissioner for peace and security. Welcoming remarks were given by Dr Mary Chinery-Hesse, member and acting chair of the AU PW, and Djibril Bassolé, the minister of foreign affairs and regional cooperation of Burkina Faso, closed the retreat.

A minute of silence was observed in remembrance of the late Algerian President Ahmed Ben Bella. He was a founding member and the chairperson of the AU PW prior to his death on 11 April 2012.

The AU PW and the panels and councils of the wise from the RECs are charged with the responsibility of mediating and preventing conflicts, monitoring elections and making themselves available to mediate disputes between political parties. The AU PW was created in 2002, but became operational in 2008, while ECOWAS' Council of

the Wise was created in 1999. COMESA's Committee of Elders was launched in 2008, while the SADC Panel of Elders was established in August 2010. IGAD has established a Mediation Contact Group whose responsibilities are similar to those of the AU PW.

Given these developments, the retreat in Ouagadougou was a timely initiative which provided an important platform for the AU PW and regional mechanisms to discuss collaboration and coordination of efforts as they attempted to define their identity and operationalise their mandate. The retreat accordingly aimed to:

- i. examine contemporary challenges to peace and security in Africa
- ii. review the mandates and modalities of operation of all panels of the wise and similar mechanisms on the continent
- iii. examine lessons drawn from years of operation, including discussing weaknesses and opportunities to be more proactive in preventing conflicts from escalating into violence
- iv. provide a platform for delegates to discuss coordination and collaboration of conflict prevention and mediation efforts between the AU and RECs.

The deliberations held during the High Level Retreat aimed to generate consensus on outcomes related to the achievement of:

- i. enhanced understanding of threats to peace and security on the continent and the roles of the various panels of the wise and similar mechanisms in responding to these
- ii. enhanced understanding of conflict prevention opportunities for the panels of the wise and similar mechanisms
- iii. the creation of a continental network of panels and councils of the wise to achieve enhanced coordination and collaboration between the AU and RECs.

## **The context of peacemaking in Africa**

The emergence of independent African states, while ushering in prospects for majority rule and socio-economic development, has also been accompanied by various challenges, among them, the problem of fledgling democracies. In the post-Cold War era, there has been an upsurge of intra-state conflict in the form of civil wars, as well as post-election violence. This has made it necessary for RECs and the AU to establish Afro-centric institutions for peacemaking. These institutions adopted and re-engineered the concept of 'wisdom' as one which should play a more prominent role in the peace and security realm.

The AU and regional panels and councils of the wise, among them ECOWAS' Council of the Wise, COMESA's Committee of Elders, SADC's Panel of Elders and the IGAD Mediation Contact Group all agree on the importance of strengthening and deepening cross-regional relations and enhancing their capacity to collectively address the scourges of conflict and ensure the promotion and maintenance of peace, security

and stability on the continent. Identified avenues through which this can be achieved include regular information exchange about activities pertaining to the promotion and maintenance of peace, security and stability; enhanced coordination of activities; joint implementation of programmes; and initiatives aimed at strengthening the continent's capacity in relevant areas.

Specific areas of cooperation include:

- supporting the operationalisation and functions of the APSA
- prevention, management and resolution of conflicts
- humanitarian action and disaster response
- post-conflict reconstruction and development
- arms control and disarmament
- counter-terrorism and the prevention and combating of transnational crime
- border management
- capacity building, training and knowledge sharing
- resource mobilisation
- other areas of shared priorities and common interest.

During the last few years, the AU, alongside the UN, has assumed more prominent roles in programmes and interventions which aim to support the achievement and maintenance of peace, security and stability on the continent. It was therefore timely to convene a retreat where these institutions could discuss collaboration, cooperation and coordination of efforts, as they worked to define their identity and operationalise their mandates in achieving peace, security and stability on the continent. The retreat provided these actors with a platform to exchange information and ideas and to identify concrete opportunities for future collaboration.

## **Peace and security in Africa: An assessment**

This section is based on information provided by presenters during the High Level Retreat. The remarks have been corroborated by key literature in the field of peace and security to provide a context-specific analysis of the African situation.

Presenters acknowledged the timeliness of the inaugural retreat of the AU PW, elders and wise persons from the RECs and eminent African personalities. Hosting the High Level Retreat in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, was serendipitous given that the Burkinabé government and President Compaoré had demonstrated focus and commitment to achieving and maintaining collective peace and security, particularly through mediation.

Currently, the African peace and security environment is characterised by strong normative instruments whose implementation needs to be enhanced. The concretisation of the APSA was lauded as having great potential to help articulate the vision of the AU for a continent that is peaceful and well developed.

The AU recognised the importance of peacemaking for sustainable peace. Theories on peace and security and conflict resolution highlight the merits of prevention and virtues of mediation. In the past 20 years, a number of violent conflicts and incidences of politically motivated violence, including in Burundi, Kenya, Sudan and Zimbabwe, have been resolved through mediation. Indeed, during these years, mediation fostered more peaceful solutions to conflict and violent situations than it did in the preceding two decades. The use of mediation as an effective approach to resolving conflict can therefore not be emphasised enough. This highlights the need to acknowledge the duality of mediation. Referring to Kofi Annan's statement that mediation is an art and a science, Ambassador Lamamra added that mediation is also a cultural practice which requires tact and commitment. He explained that in Africa, mediation is rooted in centuries of interaction of social categories and years of cultural practices of dispute resolution. In many societies in Africa, the influence of elders and wise people in dispute resolution at all levels has been highlighted.

Although many peace accords have been signed in the past, the African peace and security environment is threatened by questions of durability of peace. During the retreat, a key issue that emerged was related to the short-term focus of peacemaking, specifically the observation that conflict resolution efforts have not been long-term enough to foster sustainable peace. The focus on reaching peace agreements, without factoring in the necessary support after the agreement has been signed, has left many communities vulnerable to relapse into conflict and violence. Research indicates that no fewer than 30% of peace agreements are broken less than five years following signature due to failures in addressing the root causes of conflict (Bekoe 2008). Facilitating a successful transition and ultimately creating sustainable peace are processes which can be undermined any time. As much as peace agreements are important in facilitating transition and halting violence, it is important to note that peace agreements do not in themselves address the root causes of conflict, especially with regard to issues relating to poor governance, poverty, colonial history, and ethnic and identity conflicts. In addition, the time following the signing of the agreement, that is, the implementation phase, is when other demanding negotiations occur between the parties, as it is here that the peace is maintained or broken (Ibid.). As such, focus on both peace facilitation and 'peace implementation' is required to achieve more durable and sustainable peace.

Efforts to tackle peace and security issues in Africa should also focus on identifying strategies for fostering sustainable peace as specifically seeking more informed understanding of conditions is necessary for the successful implementation of peace agreements. Ambassador Lamamra referred to the resurgence of *coup d'états* in Guinea-Bissau and Mali as indicators of the fragility of peace in West Africa and urged the AU and RECs to work together to develop modalities to ensure the attainment of the ideals and principles enshrined in the APSA. This reality, therefore, means that the AU should be committed to deepening the rule of law and consolidating democratic processes, as well as enhancing economic development in member states. In addition,



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*President Blaise Compaoré (centre) flanked by Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra (far left), Ambassador Said Djinnit (left), and Mr Djibril Bassolé (right), during the retreat*

the fragility of peace agreements could also be reflective of an inadequacy of other factors, such as internal party consensus and commitment towards implementing the peace agreement by parties to the conflict.

The peace and security environment in Africa is made more challenging by the fact that conflicts often have a regional dimension (Shaw 2003). Most regions on the continent, including West Africa, the Horn of Africa, the Great Lakes region and the Sahel show evidence of having been impacted by the regional nature of conflicts. Although such conflicts generally have localised origins, they tend to be amplified by regional dynamics, ultimately creating a web of complications affecting efforts to resolve them. The regional dimension of conflicts in Africa is often epitomised by proxy conflicts, as well as the burgeoning populations of refugees in neighbouring countries. As a mediator in the Mali conflict, President Compaoré noted that it would be difficult to resolve the Mali crisis without paying attention to the Sahelian context. West Africa, the Sahel and the Great Lakes regions were most affected by violent conflicts, especially during the 1990s. The Sahel crisis reflects the challenges of achieving unity within divided states and compromises the notion of collective security. To a large extent, many of the problems in West Africa are connected to the problem of drug traffickers, who predominantly originate from South America and now use the latest technology, such as submarines, to perfect their trade.

It is against this background that conflicts in Africa are increasingly becoming interrelated and taking on a regional character. In light of this, peace and security promotion efforts should be directed towards more coordinated and regionalised

approaches to peacemaking. Collectives such as the AU PW, therefore, are expected to intervene through mediation, preventive diplomacy and engagement with national and regional infrastructures of peace. Ultimately, the AU PW is expected to support other components of the APSA and assist in peacebuilding. During the establishment of these bodies and institutions, there was a lot of emphasis placed on their values and principles, their integrity, wisdom and capacity to mediate and engage with personalities.

Referring to the challenges inherent in popular uprisings and the tensions between the Republic of South Sudan and the Republic of Sudan, participants made a call for a forward-looking approach to find collective approaches to ensure good governance and concomitant action towards conflict prevention to promote the well-being of millions of Africans.

## Mapping conflict trends: The African condition today

A plenary presentation was designed to map the peace and security situation in Africa. This session was moderated by Vasu Gounden, Executive Director of ACCORD, who presented on current and future conflict trends in Africa. During the same session, Francesco Mancini, Senior Director of Research at the IPI, discussed global conflict trends which are linked to the causes and drivers of conflict in Africa. Both presentations complemented each other in mapping the challenges facing the African continent into ten distinct categories, namely:

- emerging, recurring and ongoing conflict
- underdevelopment
- weak and uncoordinated civil society
- weak states and institutions
- governance, democracy and election-related violence
- regional dimensions of conflict
- limited national frameworks and institutions of peace
- population trends and dynamics
- poverty and inequality
- coordination of peacemaking efforts.

### Emerging, recurring and ongoing conflict

In spite of the recent positive developments towards establishing and operationalising the APSA, the African continent continues to experience a high incidence of violent conflict, which not only derails its development trajectory, but also hinders peace and reconciliation efforts. In the 21st century, the African continent still faces the challenge of addressing ongoing and recurrent conflict, with regions such as the Horn of Africa, the Great Lakes, the Sahel and West Africa being most affected. In light of

developments in Mali, West Africa was singled out as being more volatile than before and an appeal was made to the AU and requisite RECs to make more concerted efforts to resolve the conflict and stabilise the region.

Other conflicts that are emerging on the continent include secessionist movements, which have been registered in countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Zambia, among others. In Zambia, the Barotse who live in the west of the country are demanding autonomy, a situation which threatens the country's stability.

## Underdevelopment

This presentation, given by Mr Gounden, focused on analysing global trends in conflict, tracing the evolution and transformation of conflicts since the feudal era in Europe. Mr Gounden highlighted how the feudal system in Europe was characterised by violence, which then transformed during the industrial age as the means of production shifted. Citing the example of Nokia, a Finnish communication and information technology corporation which reported a gross domestic product (GDP) that was bigger than the country's, the presentation highlighted how the shift towards the information age in contemporary societies has been accompanied by power changes, as information shapes society and influences its evolution.

Paying attention to the role of technology in development, the presenter highlighted that the African condition is characterised by an agricultural society with limited access to information and knowledge. This has implications on the ways in which conflict manifests and how it is resolved on the continent. Specifically, Mr Gounden highlighted how power relations and interaction of citizens with the governing class are defined by 'centre-periphery' dynamics, where power within this governance framework is concentrated in the centre.



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*The retreat provided an important networking and discussion platform for delegates*

The presentation drew its analysis from Raúl Prebisch's (1959) centre-periphery theory which was influenced by several disciplines, including political science, sociology, conflict resolution and international relations. The centre-periphery theoretical framework, which has major parallels with the dependency theory postulated by Latin American scholars such as Gunder Frank (1966), posits that overconcentration of power in the centre is not only a governance challenge, but is also a prelude to instability and a threat to peace and security. Most forms of governance in a number of African countries epitomise the centre-periphery theory, with leaders maintaining a strong grip on power and resources, while a larger population of the citizenry has limited access to socio-economic and political resources. To counter the overconcentration of power at the centre, rebellions and other forms of dissent emerge, aimed at destabilising the state.

## **Weak and uncoordinated civil society**

The session highlighted the important role of civil society in advancing Africa's peace and security agenda. Mr Gounden noted that for civil society to play a meaningful role in promoting peace and security, it has to be vibrant, well-informed and active. A robust and effective civil society is dependent on open and free access to information, which ultimately provides space for participation in political debates and for interaction with leaders. Access to information will ensure that CSOs are able to have their voices heard and included in public debate in order to influence policy decisions.

However, discussions during this session underscored the challenge of a closed society. Specifically, it was noted that despite global advances in information technology, in Africa the nation state is still a powerful entity controlling information and resources. Mr Gounden added that there is inadequate separation of power between the three arms of government, namely the legislature, executive and judiciary, in many countries on the continent. As such, the presenter concluded by emphasising the need to establish a sound regulatory environment for a sustainable, independent private sector, which must exist on its own, and not 'because of' government. Citing the example of Sweden, Mr Gounden explained that there is a more or less even distribution of power and influence between the state and economic sectors.

## **Weak states and institutions**

According to Mr Mancini's presentation, notable factors that contribute to weak states and institutions in Africa include the effects of colonialism, gaps in political and economic order, and challenges associated with democracy, taking into consideration the socio-cultural setup of Africa. In Europe, unlike Africa, the state has traditionally been the leading force for development. However, Africa inherited a template from its colonial past which made it virtually impossible for the state to implement any development agendas. Colonialism did not concentrate on establishing effective state institutions for governance and socio-economic development of African countries. Instead, the colonial system created a vacuum

which is taking decades to fill. Most African states were left with festering ethnic and tribal tensions caused by the creation of newly independent political governments. As a consequence, countries on the continent have spent years trying to contain threats of secession, tribal wars and border disputes, instead of focusing on building strong development institutions.

The issue of colonial mentality, which shaped most of the continent's policies for years, was also discussed. This problem emerged from systems that were mooted by the colonisers and imposed on the colonised. Since independence, most African countries have continued to rely on former colonial countries for policy initiation, trade, investment and other developmental programmes in order to grow. The continent also faces the challenge of statebuilding. Africa has been seeking a new political and economic order since the 1960s brought independence to a significant number of African states. After years of political instability in post-colonial Africa, the continent attempted to adjust to the new world presented by the global North in the early 1980s, including embracing the 'universal' values of democracy and freedom. Although this new governance order seems to be working in some parts of the continent, other countries are facing challenges with the system as a result of their socio-cultural set-ups. This new world order has become the yardstick by which development within countries is determined by the international system. Africa can thus neither turn away from it, nor question its frameworks.

During this session, discussions also focused on interrogating the ability of African states to provide human security to citizens, therefore shifting the focus towards protection of individuals. It was noted that the issue of the state in Africa is the most important variable in the peace and security equation. Africa not only needs strong and efficient states, but all-inclusive ones that have well-functioning institutions which will cumulatively bring together the essence of a nation state. The rule of law and democracy will only be guaranteed by strong institutions. In his brief remarks during this session, the former president of Cape Verde, Pedro Pires, drew lessons from Europe and observed that the AU had not been effectively addressing the question of institutional development on the continent.

## **Governance, democracy and election-related violence**

The presentation by Mr Mancini further highlighted other challenges of governance found in weak states and institutions which the presenter labelled as 'separation of power' and 'personalisation of governance'. These two phenomena have contributed to increases in election-related violence in countries like Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Nigeria and Zimbabwe, among others. Indeed, research into electoral processes in Africa (Oko 2009 and Abuya 2010) highlights that the continent has consistently experienced the problem of contested electoral processes which have occurred in a number of countries. Such elections are often accompanied by violence, with devastating effects not only on human security, but also on prospects for democratic consolidation

in these countries (Mutisi 2013). The threat of electoral violence demonstrates that some African leaders wish to be elected at all costs, even against the background of a weak state.

In contemporary Africa, elections represent the political nexus between democracy, governance and peace, especially in the context of several episodes of election-related violence (Ibid.). The context of this fierce competition must be well understood. Most political and electoral systems in Africa are fraught with zero-sum strategies for democracy; these systems grant victory to one faction at the expense of all others. A loss for a faction often means exclusion from governance and marginalisation. Factions therefore strive hard and use many means (including violence) to win elections (Bruce 2009). There are limited instances of proportional representation, which is a system designed to ensure a positive-sum approach towards the exercise of democracy.

Against this background, the consolidation of democracy and the advancement of good governance were highlighted as crucial aspects of conflict prevention and resolution in which the panels and councils of the wise could play an important role. In order to deal with the problem of election-related violence and personalisation of power in Africa, the AU PW was highlighted as being in a better position to interact with leaders and political personalities based on the political gravitas that its members possess.

Delegates reiterated the complexity of the environments in which institutions such as the AU PW operate. The nature and context of conflicts in Africa makes it impossible for the various peacemaking institutions to effectively respond. Although the different panels and councils of the wise were configured and influenced by African values such as respect for elders and reverence to wisdom, the reality is that the African state is also a political entity which respects legitimacy that emanates from political authority. This stems from the fact that states are at times reluctant to surrender some of their political powers to supranational institutions. Given this paradox, members of the AU PW were urged to collaborate with state institutions, especially in implementing early warning activities and taking appropriate action, among others, which might be politically sensitive.

There was debate on the nature of the state and its implications on peace and security on the continent. The state in Africa currently faces internal challenges, among them calls for secession which have been experienced in Zambia, where the Barotse in the north threatened to secede during the tenure of President Michael Sata, Katanga in the DRC and Mombasa in Kenya. These developments provide examples of potential conflicts in their early stages.

As such, processes of peacemaking in the African context should not merely seek to mitigate conflicts without addressing and resolving the root causes. Addressing only the symptoms or expressions of conflict often makes the recurrence or relapse very likely. Proactive conflict management is that which seeks not only to mediate but to prevent conflict through processes such as development, good governance, and

more importantly, facilitating the achievement of human security. Nonetheless, the normative framework of mediation has tended to create a centre which might not necessarily close the gap between the rich and poor. Sometimes, mediation creates a stable centre which might not necessarily benefit the local populations; hence the need for mediators to take responsibility for the unsustainable outcomes they produce.

### **Challenges to statebuilding and consolidation of state institutions: Burundi**

Even though elections are a major step towards ensuring political stability and consolidation of new state institutions, the legitimisation of the democratisation process in a post-conflict situation largely depends on the livelihoods of the local population and the improvement thereof. In Burundi, however, 61% of the working population is employed in the public sector, 35% in the private sector and only 4% in CSOs. These statistics cover 5% of the population, implying that 95% of Burundi's population is concentrated outside the spheres of control, influence and economic empowerment. These figures indicate that the peace dividend has not yet accrued for the majority of citizens. The socio-economic perspectives within the country have not yet changed, and this has not been viewed or addressed as a priority. Current economic dynamics in the country consist of various small-scale programmes that are mainly of a standard development nature, although they do not directly contribute towards peacebuilding in the country. As such, emphasis should be placed on revisiting existing policies, strengthening those with inadequacies and ensuring their implementation so as to ensure that inequalities are addressed, while at the same time promoting institutional accountability.

Source: Authors' analysis of Burundi's labour statistics of 2009 (NationMaster 2009)

## **Regional dimensions of conflict**

Another theme emerging from these discussions was directly related to the regional nature of contemporary conflicts. This observation is corroborated by evidence from scholarly and policy research. Conflicts in many parts of the continent are regional in nature, characterised by a set of transnational conflicts that form mutually reinforcing linkages with each other across state borders (Ettang, Maina and Razia 2011). According to Tschirgi (2002), contemporary conflict creates a web of interlocking conflicts involving the transfer of populations, arms, armies, finances and conflict goods across increasingly porous borders. This web of regional interconnectedness of contemporary African conflicts has meant that conflicts in one country and their subsequent conflict dynamics will definitively have an effect on a neighbouring conflict. This was evident in conflicts in the Mano River region, the Horn of Africa, the Great Lakes region and the Sahel.

The activities of armed groups in northern Mali, for instance, reflect the internationalisation of conflict in Africa and the transnational nature of crimes on the continent. Furthermore, the narcotics trade in Guinea-Bissau is believed to be linked to the trends of terrorism cross-cutting from the Atlantic via Mauritania, to Mali, Niger and Nigeria (led by groups such as Boko Haram). Such a situation requires multi-track and multi-pronged processes which will accommodate the multi-level character of the conflict and the actors proliferating at different levels.

Regionalised approaches to conflict do not necessarily negate the role of national efforts to achieve peace and security; rather, they complement these efforts in attempts to facilitate and achieve a more sustainable peace. Regionalised approaches to peace and security are beginning to emerge, especially in West Africa where ECOWAS was able to respond promptly to crises in Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone by adopting a regional and coordinated approach.

## **Limited national frameworks and institutions of peace**

Ultimately, the conflict prognosis reflects that the African condition is characterised by a likelihood of protracted conflict escalating in countries such as Chad, the DRC, Libya, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan, among others. This is compounded by the lack of strong institutions of peace. Throughout the world, only two countries have a Ministry of Peace – Costa Rica and Nepal (South Sudan established a Ministry of Peace in 2011, but later downgraded it to a commission, the South Sudan Peace and Reconciliation Commission). Africa, despite its numerous conflict situations, cannot boast of a single institution or ministry at national level which is mandated to independently address conflict and peace developments.

To address the challenges confronting Africa in achieving peaceful resolutions, delegates at the retreat explored efforts that can be made by partner organisations, continental structures and individual member states to enhance the capacity of the continent to respond effectively to conflict situations. Primary emphasis was laid on the need to develop skills through provision of universal education and the rollout of large infrastructure, for instance as was done by Ethiopia.

Since the 1990s, the reduction of pervasive poverty and the promotion of human development have been priorities for Ethiopia. Over the years, the country has witnessed significant progress in economic growth. Ethiopia recorded more than 11% average GDP growth between 2003/4 and 2010. This growth is explained by a strong performance in agriculture, construction and manufacturing. Furthermore, across the country health service coverage and school enrolment at all levels improved remarkably as human capital development also received significant attention from the Government of Ethiopia. Economic growth brought with it positive trends in reducing poverty in both urban and rural areas. Measured by the national poverty line of less than US\$0.60 per day, in 2004/05 38.7% of Ethiopians lived in extreme poverty, while in 2009/10 the figure had declined to 29.6% - a decrease of 9.1%. Using the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP), the target is to reduce this further to 22.2%

by 2014/15 (World Bank 2013). By spending more than 60% of its total expenditure on poverty alleviation-oriented sectors, such as agriculture, education, health, water and infrastructure development (Human Development Report 2011, cited in Nganwa 2013), the Government of Ethiopia maximised its efforts, demonstrating that a high level of dedication is required to bring about pro-poor economic growth.

Despite the impressive growth record in recent years, low levels of income, unemployment and a narrow modern industrial sector base are the major challenges facing Ethiopia, in addition to the challenges of inflation and the pressure on the balance of payments. Ethiopia exports a number of raw materials, particularly coffee. However, the value (price) of this coffee does not balance the value spent on manufactured imports because they are more expensive and tend to increase in price faster than raw materials. As a result, the balance of payments is in deficit, with more money being spent on imports than is earned on exports. Inadequate development finance had also been a critical constraint to the implementation of programmes articulated in the country's development plan. As a result of effective monitoring, the macro-economic situation has been stabilising – a condition which is conducive to the achievement of peace. However, sustaining macro-economic growth and stability requires close monitoring and prudent management.

Following discussion of the case of Ethiopia, it was stressed that there is the need for a comprehensive outward looking approach that adopts best practices and learns from lessons from other parts of the world. It was concluded that there is need for emphasis on the need for a healthy exchange between countries and communities to foster consistent growth and development.

## **Population trends and dynamics**

According to Mr Mancini's presentation, the global population is growing. It is estimated that by 2050, Africa's population will be three times that of Europe and that Nigeria's population alone would be more than Europe's. During the retreat, it was highlighted that between 1900 and 2012, 442 cities across the world grew to a level where they had populations of over one million people; 32 of these cities are in Africa. Population growth has been accompanied by growing pressure on the ecosystem as increased energy consumption leads to environmental degradation through deforestation and carbon emissions. It has been established that these developments are associated with migration, displacement, food insecurity, water crisis and water-related conflicts; factors that have an indirect link to most conflict that occurs across the world.

One major challenge many African countries face is the 'youth bulge' and the attendant challenges of absorbing large numbers of unemployed youth into the mainstream economy. Youth around the world are increasingly growing agitated and are consequently susceptible to recruitment by various armed groups and agents conducting illicit trade, including human and drug trafficking. The 'youth bulge' is often accompanied by extreme poverty. In Burundi, for example, many employed

youth earn less than US\$1 a day. Although youth populations constitute over 60% of the entire African population, they are under-represented in the economic activities of many countries on the continent. This is demonstrated by widespread youth unemployment in Africa, whereby, according to a 2012 report by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), from 2000 to 2008 73 million jobs were created in Africa, but only 16 million targeted youth between the age of 15 and 24 (UNECA 2012).

Youth unemployment is the source of multiple global challenges to the achievement of peace as banditry, crime, rebellion and terrorism keep increasing. It is important to note that the challenge of terrorism is no longer peculiar to the Middle East and the United States of America (USA) alone, but has become a problem for contemporary Africa, affecting countries such as Kenya, Nigeria, Somalia and Uganda, among others. Unemployed young people in many African countries have become targets for drug barons and warlords who recruit and train them to participate in drug trafficking and other criminal activities.

In many countries in sub-Saharan Africa population growth, coupled with urbanisation, unemployment and inequitable distribution of resources, has become the source of an overwhelming dissatisfaction among citizens, especially young people. These socio-economic inequalities are increasingly causing people to lose confidence in public institutions, which are often accused of corrupt practices. The results are frequent eruptions of violence in protest against these practices. In response, delegates at the retreat called for greater transparency and accountability in governance and constant interaction between government and civil society in attempts to ensure that policy development and implementation are appropriate to the demographic and social context.

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*Ambassador Said Djinnit (far right), and Mr Anatole Ayissi, Chief of Staff at the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) (right), discuss an ACCORD publication at the retreat*

To add to these challenges, food insecurity is aggravated by the rise of corruption, which undermines the capacity of state institutions to effectively respond to security challenges. A good example of the nexus between food security and peace is the Horn of Africa, which is one of the world's most food-insecure regions. The region is comprised of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda and has a combined population of about 160 million people. A total of 70 million (nearly 44% of this population) live in areas that are prone to extreme food shortages (Food and Agriculture Organisation 2013). Over the past two decades, the region has experienced extreme famine and food security threats as a result of the effects of the climate change phenomenon, leading to a declining GDP in terms of agricultural production against growing populations. The Horn of Africa is also amongst the least developed regions on the continent, indicating a limited capacity to respond to drought or food insecurities where they occur. All these challenges have negative implications on peace and security within the region and the continent in general.

## **Poverty and inequality**

African countries have differential rates of growth and GDP, as well as human development indices. Most African countries have a high GDP, yet rank low on the Human Development Index (HDI) which reflects an uneven distribution of wealth. Dismissing the exogenous explanations for the causes of conflict in Africa, President Pires explained that inequality is caused by poor governance and that the elites are responsible for the condition of Africa through the perpetuation of patronage politics. Nonetheless, a few countries have a high HDI, among them Cape Verde and Seychelles.

Inequality is compounded by inept development policies, including the notion of 'growing villages', where the rate of urbanisation is not concomitant to changing values and practices of urbanites. Referring to the notion of the 'social contract' which is entered through election, it was mentioned that the state must be able to not only enhance resources, but to distribute them effectively. Ethnicisation of politics is likely to become a trend, as political parties mobilise constituencies while manipulating ethnicity or using identity as an explanation for inequality.

Additionally, unequal access to services and opportunities is often considered a core cause of conflict and continued instability. Inequality has become a global trend, and Africa is not spared. The upsurge in social uprisings in North Africa in 2011 was largely considered a response to the inequality gap. Inequality and perceived unfair distribution of resources often leads to instability. Inequality in income, when aligned with other factors such as ethnicity, religious marginalisation and gender imbalances, is a catalyst to conflict and social unrest. In classical conflict resolution literature, the relative deprivation thesis posits that communities engage in conflict when there are perceptions of inequality. Utilising this theory, Gurr (1970) posits that political violence is a product of collective discontent arising from a discrepancy between expected and achieved welfare.

Social instability and violence increase because of growing inequality, poverty and mistrust of political leaders and institutions. In Africa, poverty, inequality, corruption and instability have the potential to erode the social fabric of families and neighbourhoods; restrict mobility and force displacement. In North Africa, perceived and real inequalities, juxtaposed marginalisation of the population as well as rising cases of corruption cumulatively added to the increasing discontent in the region. The revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia were led by a critical mass of young people who used new and social media to mobilise for uprisings. The regimes in these two countries, despite being authoritarian, managed to control religious parties, for instance the Muslim Brotherhood, while strengthening public support for them in the process.

A situation described as ‘economic insurgency’ has been noticed in some African countries where governments and private sector development programmes end up displacing and disadvantaging local communities. Multinational corporations (MNCs) are acquiring vast amounts of land without the acquiescence of local populations. Land conflict is on the rise, especially in the context of rising global demands for land and the quick rate of urbanisation in Africa, as well as the limited regulatory role of the state due to the predominance of weak institutions. The AU has produced protocols on democracy and other issues, but what is lacking is a normative framework to guide acquisition of land in member states. Local communities and CSOs have protested when African governments are mortgaging land to MNCs with little regard to the impact on local populations and the overall economic future of the continent.

In Kalayi near the Red Sea in Ethiopia’s Afar region, the government is reported to have appropriated 90,000 acres of land from the Afar people<sup>1</sup> without compensation, while the discovery of oil in Uganda’s Lake Albert negatively affected the movements of the pastoral communities along this oil route. In Arusha, Tanzania, approximately 2,000 pastoralists were moved from a park to make way for a hotel construction project by the United Arab Emirates. The displaced populations were not compensated. The matter was taken to the Third UN Forum on Minority Issues held on 14 and 15 December 2010 in Geneva, Switzerland, to address the issue of minorities and their effective participation in economic activities. Unfortunately, there had been no tangible outcomes from this forum at the time the retreat was held.

## **Coordination of peacemaking efforts**

Although the increase in the number of structures and institutions of peacemaking is a welcome development which ensures that efforts aimed at the achievement of peace and security are harnessed and galvanised, there are some challenges. For one, the multiplicity of intermediaries can create a cacophony of peacemaking actors which has the potential to derail the peace process. Côte d’Ivoire and Madagascar had a plethora of intermediaries trying to help resolve their conflicts, without much success. The presence of these many actors served to create confusion among them and resulted in the duplication of roles, which further complicated these conflicts and any efforts to resolve them.

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1 The Afar people are an ethnic group of Djiboutian, Eritrean and Ethiopian descent.

Various peacemaking structures are affected by bureaucratisation. For instance, at continental level, the institutionalisation of the APSA has been curtailed by lack of coordination among the various peacemaking structures. Delegates discussed strategies for improving coordination between peacemaking actors and came up with two main recommendations on the way forward: developing and implementing a clearer strategy for division of labour and subsidiarity, as well as the need to avoid overcrowding of mediators working on resolving the same conflict situation.

## Opportunities for peace and security in Africa

### Progress in the African Peace and Security Architecture

Since the establishment of the AU in 2002, the first ten years of its existence have witnessed the body's investment of most of its resources in peacemaking processes on the continent. As such, the AU has been instrumental in developing significant collective security architecture among African member states and regional mechanisms. The body has been successful in establishing the APSA, which emerged as the Pan-African peace and security regime.

During the retreat, the consensus was that Africa has made significant progress in collating strong normative frameworks for the peace and security architecture. There is significant progress that has been achieved towards operationalising the key pillars of the APSA, including the AU PSC, the AU PW, the Continental Early Warning System and the African Standby Force (ASF). The strong normative architecture for peace and security is further appreciated in the context of decreasing numbers of inter-state conflicts on the continent, apart from the conflicts between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and between South Sudan and Sudan. Overall, it was noted that the number of violent conflicts in Africa has decreased, especially those that were accompanied by gross violations of human rights, compared, for example, to the 1990s.

While examining the different conflicts on the continent, with particular reference to Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Sudan, Zambia, the Great Lakes region, North Africa and the Sahel region, as well as election-related disputes in general, the participants lauded the AU's efforts in operationalising the APSA. The contributions of the RECs towards this end were also acknowledged. The AU and RECs were commended for their efforts in developing and strengthening their conflict prevention, management and resolution mechanisms which have been fairly effective in confronting these and other emerging threats appropriately. Participants reiterated that if the APSA frameworks are fully operationalised, best practices documented and appropriately disseminated, such knowledge would have the potential to transform the African continent into a viable, stable, peaceful and developed continent.

## **Increased collaboration between the AU and RECs**

Coordination and collaboration are important if the AU and RECs are to develop and implement a cohesive strategy for peace and security on the continent. Delegates participating in the retreat welcomed opportunities for increased collaboration between the AU and the RECs in implementing conflict prevention, management and resolution initiatives. Delegates also acknowledged efforts made to enhance collaboration, in light of the relevant provisions of the AU PSC Protocol, the MoU between the AU and RECs, as well as other instruments which specifically aim to strengthen the continent's capacity for conflict prevention, mitigation, resolution and transformation.

Informed by the notion of collective security, the 2008 MoU between the AU and RECs not only demonstrates the determination of various entities of the APSA to ensure that there is peace, security and stability in Africa, but it also illustrates the realisation that cooperation, rather than disparate initiatives, will bring sustainable peace to the continent. Currently, the AU and RECs cooperate in a number of areas, including the fight against the illicit trafficking of small arms and drugs, the threat of terrorism and transnational organised crime.

The aforementioned MoU laid the foundation for a collective approach to conflict prevention, resolution and transformation and subsequent developments since the agreement provided for the regular sharing of information between the AU and RECs. In West Africa, for example, ECOWAS has not only collaborated with the AU and UN, but also works closely with CSOs such as the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) and the Mano River Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET). By adopting a collaborative approach, the AU and RECs can strengthen their capacity to promote peace and security on the continent. In order to effectively promote durable peace, the culture of collaboration between the AU and RECs will need to be formalised and institutionalised and a framework for the operation of the panels and councils of the wise established.

## **Progress recorded in democratisation efforts**

Another positive development is that member states of the AU and RECs have made substantive progress in development and democratisation. Following the end of colonialism, some African countries struggled with democratisation, resulting in the emergence of military rule and one-party states. However, the 1990s saw Africa embarking on a renewed search for democracy, while the 21st century has heralded the consolidation of democracy in a number of countries. While it is clear that democratic rule in Africa does not follow a standard approach and that it takes different forms in different countries, there was consensus among delegates in their identification of African countries which are viewed as practising sustainable democracy.

Botswana, Cape Verde and Ghana were advanced as examples of African states that have improved their governance machineries and recorded increased economic growth as a result of it. Consolidation of democracy and the advancement of good governance were also highlighted as crucial aspects of conflict prevention and resolution in which the panels could play an important role. It was felt that to a large extent, recent conflict trends in Africa are ‘manageable’ and revolve around governance challenges, rather than responding to symptomatic effects such as violent conflict.

Additionally, there are positive developments on the African continent which are epitomised by increasing collaborations between the AU, RECs, the UN and partners such as CSOs on matters relating to peace and security. In many cases, the principle of subsidiarity has been applied where RECs address emerging challenges first, followed by the AU, and where necessarily, the UN intervenes last.

The rise and influence of emerging economies, popularly known as the BRICS and comprised of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, has led to a geopolitical imbalance in trade and development, as well as other determinants in the international system. The influence of the BRICS countries, which collectively claim approximately 15% of global trade, has created a shift in global economic power. In addition, trade between Africa and the rest of the world increased by 200% between 2000 and 2011, and China (the second largest economy in the world) has surpassed the USA as the largest trading partner for Africa (Dugan 2012).

Apart from the shift in global economic power, there are also notable political transformations. These include the fact that regional organisations are more involved in resolving conflicts and supporting the UN in its activities. The development and consolidation of RECs is also an outcome of the shift in geopolitical balance, which has witnessed more complex and value-added relationships within the peace and security realms. For example, the Arab League has been revitalised and takes centre stage in resolving problems in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. In addition, the definition of power has since shifted from military power towards more focus on cultural power and economic influence. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are now becoming increasingly popular tools of power as alternative perspectives are being presented.

## **The global rise of ICTs**

Mr Mancini’s presentation highlighted that in recent years ICTs have transformed policies, societies and behaviours globally. The presentation on this phenomenon highlighted that globally there are currently five billion cell phone subscribers, while 41% of the world’s households are connected to the Internet (International Telecommunication Union 2013). The Americas boast of 50% internet usage, Arab states have 30% and Africa records 10%. Although Africa is still the smallest user of the internet globally, the continent has experienced exponential growth in internet usage in the past decade. Between 2000 and 2008, internet subscription grew by more

than 1,000% in Africa (Africa Business Source 2009). The internet has enhanced citizen participation, providing constituents with increased access to information and improving their interaction with political elites and government officials. ICTs also facilitate citizens' engagement with political elites and their ability to monitor their governments.

Good governance is that which empowers citizens through open and transparent public administration, financial management and political representation. In sub-Saharan Africa, countries that have taken the lead in embracing 'digital democracy' include Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa – through the introduction of e-governance mechanisms (Mutisi 2012). Electronic governance provides opportunities for citizens to virtually interact with government on various matters, including service provision. In a number of African countries, citizens increasingly wield the power to widely share information about governance, which means that the state is no longer the custodian of knowledge and information. This has the potential to foster an empowered and critical citizenry, which will ultimately advance democracy and peacebuilding initiatives.

### Using ICTs for early warning and conflict prevention: *Ushahidi*

*Ushahidi* is a Kenyan open-source project which allows users to 'crowd-source' crisis information which is disseminated via mobile phone technology. Literally translated from Swahili, '*Ushahidi*' means 'testimony' or 'witness'. *Ushahidi* promotes early-warning for conflict prevention by providing a timely response to incidences of political violence. By encouraging citizens to report incidences of politically motivated violence in their communities via their mobile phones, *ushahidi* facilitates political participation and ultimately empowers citizens to demand accountability from those in power. Through *ushahidi*, those who witness acts of violence can immediately report these acts as a means of achieving timely intervention. *Ushahidi* platforms have been used to monitor elections and track violence in other countries, such as the DRC, and to monitor the provision of social services in Malawi, Uganda and Zambia.

## Economic progress and development in Africa

While assessing the opportunities of scaling-up efforts to maintain peace and security in Africa it is important to note that since the first countries on the continent became independent, Africa has experienced sustained economic growth. However, due to armed conflicts, many economies in Africa regressed in the 1990s. After an initial rebound from the 2009 world economic crisis, Africa's economy was further undermined in 2011 by the Arab Spring uprisings which saw growth on the continent declining from 5% in 2010 to 3.5% in 2011. Notwithstanding this, the continent has witnessed the highest economic growth rate over the past ten years of approximately

6%, while some countries have maintained two-digit rates of growth (UNECA 2012). Considering recent economic trends in the wake of the global financial crisis and its devastating effect on the Eurozone and the USA, Africa may be in a better position to offer economic assistance to these countries if the continent continues on its current positive growth track.

## **Increasing role of CSOs in peace and security**

While the AU and RECs continue to gain prominence in peacemaking, it is evident that the challenge of peace and security is too big to be tackled only at the level of Track I diplomacy, hence the need to harness the capacities and contributions of CSOs as they have already demonstrated that they can be important actors in implementing Track II diplomacy. The motivations for ensuring civil society's involvement in peace processes is explained by Lederach (1997) when he proffers a pyramid-approach to peacebuilding. This approach is multi-layered and includes the participation of various actors, such as governments and civil society and grassroots organisations. Sustainable peacebuilding is achievable when all actors, including those from civil society, participate in peace processes.

The fact that conflict actors in Africa are increasingly becoming non-state ones also opens the way for CSOs, think tanks and traditional and religious leaders, among others, to become more involved in conflict transformation processes such as mediation support and capacity building for negotiation among conflicting parties. As such, CSOs such as ACCORD continue to be relevant in the peace and security agenda, providing much needed expertise.

## **African ownership to resolve African challenges**

*'No more, never again. Africans cannot...watch the tragedies developing in the continent and say it is the UN's responsibility or somebody else's responsibility. We have moved from the concept of non-interference to non-indifference. We cannot as Africans remain indifferent to the tragedy of our people.'*

Ambassador Said Djinnit, AU Commissioner of Peace and Security,  
Addis Ababa, 28 June 2004

Increasingly, the AU and RECs have resolutely expressed the need for 'African solutions to African challenges' in the course of implementing various conflict intervention initiatives on the continent. Not only does the call for 'African solutions' demonstrate a desire and move towards greater independence from Western powers, it is also a practical way of operationalising the principle of subsidiarity. The determination by Africans to resolve the continent's challenges for themselves has been a common feature of policy debates during the past two decades. The move towards employing 'African solutions' is due to several factors, key among them being the realisation by



*Ambassador René Mbongo, Chair of the AU PSC, and Dr Mary Chinery-Hesse during the retreat*

African leaders that the international community had disengaged from the continent following the end of the Cold War. Indeed, during the 1990s, as evidence from the Rwandan genocide demonstrates, the international community displayed little interest in engaging with Africa's wars, compelling Africans to intervene and address these on their own (Williams 2008).

With time, the concept of 'African solutions to African challenges' gained prominence and found support from a variety of sources, including the RECs, AU member states and even the UN. With each emerging conflict, Africans are realising that responsibility to intervene lies with actors on the continent. This, in turn, compelled African leaders and institutions to increase their capacity to ensure success in resolving existing challenges, resulting in the establishment of mechanisms such as the ASF. The founding of such institutions reflects a huge watershed in Africa's progress towards resolving its conflicts and building durable peace and security. Increasingly, the AU has deployed peacekeeping missions on the continent, including the AU missions in Burundi (2003–2004) Sudan (2004–2007), in Somalia (2007 to date), the AU-UN Mission in Darfur (2004 to date) and most recently the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA), which was established in January 2013 following a 20 December 2012 Resolution which authorised the deployment of a peacekeeping mission to Mali for an initial period of one year.

Similarly, the role played by ECOWAS in addressing conflict situations in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Niger and most recently Mali clearly demonstrates how Africans are taking ownership of their own challenges. Not only did ECOWAS deploy peacekeeping missions, the ECOWAS Monitoring Group to Liberia (1990–1997), Sierra Leone (1997–2000) and Guinea-Bissau

(1998), but the regional organisation also deployed mediators in attempts to finding a lasting solution to the crises in these countries. Similarly, SADC also deployed troops in Lesotho and the DRC in 1998, as well as providing mediation to support the resolution of political stalemates in Zimbabwe since 2007. Considered together, these initiatives clearly reflect how determined actors on the continent have become to contribute to peace on the continent.

There are both challenges and opportunities facing the African continent as the AU PW and mechanisms of the RECs engage in conflict prevention and mitigation processes. While the identified challenges are significant, the opportunities discussed present a hopeful situation where the AU PW can achieve notable impacts on the peace and security environment in Africa, with support from African actors and institutions.

## Capitalising on existing potential

This section examines the mediation environment in Africa. It draws together key issues emerging from the remarks and contributions made by eminent personalities and distinguished participants at the High Level Retreat and offers recommendations aimed at strengthening mediation. An assessment of these recommendations, highlighting how they can be adapted to respond to the experiences and operational context of the AU PW and similar mechanisms is also provided.

### **Mediating peace in Africa: African panels and councils of the wise**

The AU PW and other panels and councils of the wise from the RECs are conceptualised as pan-African institutions of peacemaking which are in sync with the objectives of African leadership. The AU PW enjoys good and long standing relations with the AU. The High Level Retreat in Ouagadougou provided an opportunity to revisit these cordial relations and strengthen them to allow members of the AU PW to continue to contribute their leadership to addressing difficult situations.

Dr Chinery-Hesse emphasised that collaboration between the AU and RECs is imperative, given that these institutions work for the same constituencies and aim to achieve similar goals and objectives. Currently, there are ongoing joint missions between the AU and RECs. The operational environment in which panels and councils of the wise currently work accommodates their role. Today, Africa is moving to a place where individuals and institutions on the continent are working on uncovering solutions to support economic development, political stability and peace and security.

The Chair of the AU PSC for the month of June 2012, Ambassador René Mbongo, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Congo to the AU, observed that the collaboration between the AU PW and RECs was a laudable initiative that would be important in facilitating more constructive exchange between members of the AU PSC, AU PW and RECs.

In his opening address, Prime Minister Tiao explained that wisdom is the basis for a united, strong and prosperous society. The AU PW and other panels and councils of the wise were described as epitomising authority and inspiring confidence in African people. Traditional African societies have always given prominence to holding consultations when searching for permanent solutions for problems confronting their people. The judicious reference to cultural values facilitates appropriate responses and lasting solutions to conflicts which threaten peace and security in Africa.

The panels and councils of the wise were called upon to emphasise preventive diplomacy and proactive peacemaking in the course of carrying out their roles. This approach was reflected in the initiatives of the AU PW, in collaboration with the AUC Chairperson, during the elections in the DRC and Senegal. Their efforts were lauded for having contributed to peaceful conduct of elections in these two countries.

Prime Minister Tiao acknowledged evidence of proven reforms in governance areas in a number of African countries as a result of the efforts of the AU PW, and called for further efforts towards achieving greater and more sustained economic development.

## **African Union Panel of the Wise**

The AU PW is a consultative body of the African Union, comprised of five eminent individuals appointed for a three-year period. Its role is to provide opinions to the AU PSC on peace and security issues and to promote efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts across the continent. Article 11(2) of the AU PSC Protocol states: ‘The Panel of the Wise shall be composed of five highly respected African personalities from various segments of society who have made outstanding contributions to the cause of peace, security and development on the continent. They shall be selected by the Chairperson of the Commission after consultation with the Member States concerned, on the basis of regional representation and appointed by the Assembly to serve for a period of three years.’

Article 11 of the AU PSC also stipulates that the AU PW shall:

- support the efforts of the AU PSC and those of the Chairperson of the Commission, particularly in the area of conflict prevention
- advise the AU PSC and the Chairperson of the Commission on all issues pertaining to the promotion and maintenance of peace, security and stability in Africa
- undertake such action deemed appropriate to support the efforts of the AU PSC and those of the Chairperson of the Commission for the prevention of conflicts, and to pronounce itself on issues relating to the promotion and maintenance of peace, security and stability in Africa.

In 2007, the Assembly of AU Heads of State and Government endorsed the appointment of five African personalities to serve on the AU PW. Subsequently, the PSC adopted modalities for the functioning of the AU PW during its 100<sup>th</sup> meeting on 12 November

2007. The AU PW was officially inaugurated in Addis Ababa on 18 December 2007. On 20 February 2008, the AU PW adopted its first annual programme of work. It exemplifies the AU's efforts towards prioritising the prevention of conflict in Africa. As the term of the first members of the panel came to an end on 18 December 2010, the AU Assembly, meeting in Kampala, Uganda in July 2010, appointed three new members to the panel and decided to establish a group of Friends of the Panel of the Wise, consisting of three of the founding members.

## **Inter-Governmental Authority on Development**

IGAD in East Africa was created in 1996 to supersede the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development which was founded in 1986. As a regional organisation, IGAD is comprised of eight East African countries – Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda. Since the early 2000s, IGAD has increasingly focused on contributing to efforts to achieve peace, prosperity and integration in the region.

According to a presentation from an IGAD representative, efforts aimed at institutionalising mediation began in 2007 and have been gradually taking shape since then. IGAD has not yet established a fully-fledged mediation department, although a Mediation Support Unit (MSU) was being established in Djibouti to facilitate IGAD mediation efforts at the time of writing this report. Preparatory processes in establishing the MSU include a 2007 meeting held in Mombasa, Kenya, to review lessons learnt from the IGAD-brokered Somali and Sudan peace processes. Subsequent meetings have been held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and Nairobi, Kenya as well as training courses in Mauritius and Uganda. The MSU is expected to enhance mediation efforts in the region through capacity building and preventive diplomacy, as well as linking Track I and II diplomacy.

IGAD asserts that its member states have been actively involved and, since 2010, have been working towards establishing the mediation framework for their region. On 24 May 2012, member states organised a meeting between the AU and RECs to discuss entering into an MoU. Current IGAD initiatives around peacemaking include the peace process in South Sudan, where the REC is working on mediation between the Misiriya and Dinka at local level.

## **COMESA Committee of Elders**

The COMESA Committee of Elders was established during the 11<sup>th</sup> Summit of COMESA, held in Djibouti in 2006, to address conflict trends among and within its member states. The committee's mandate is to steer the course of preventive diplomacy for conflict resolution and to augment COMESA's peacebuilding and peacemaking processes, many of which require the participation of multiple actors and well-coordinated interventions in order to effectively address the region's complex challenges. The composition of the committee must be gender balanced,

and it is important that it draws its influence from personal achievement and not state association. In their presentation at the retreat, members of the committee emphasised the importance of preventive diplomacy and the need to collaborate with the AU on conflict resolution and management.

Membership of the COMESA Committee of Elders is determined by country. Each member state was mandated to nominate a representative who is experienced, distinguished and respected in the COMESA region to take part in an election by secret ballot held by ministers of foreign affairs.

In 2007, within the COMESA Committee of Elders' framework, a decision was made that dialogue, and not coercion, should be a key tool for mediation. In December 2011, COMESA held the first ever retreat for the Committee of Elders to develop rules and procedures on how the committee would function. Following this retreat, members of the Committee were tasked with developing their own set of standard operating procedures, including reporting structures and relations with other organs. The Committee of Elders also developed comprehensive mediation guidelines to direct its operations.

So far, the activities of the Committee of Elders have included election observation missions to the DRC, Uganda and Zambia. The committee also worked with the AU PW in undertaking pre-election assessment missions to the DRC and Egypt. In June 2012, the Committee of Elders met with various heads of departments of COMESA institutions and organised a retreat on the theme 'Gap analysis on current mediation efforts in the region' in an attempt to provide information that would guide their mandate.

Some challenges faced so far centre around the need to link identified needs to action; failure to invite the Committee of Elders to mediate in conflicts within the region and insufficient collaboration between the AU and COMESA. Recommendations proposed included that there should be more efforts made to identify special competencies of the members of the committee and to establish a mediation fund to ensure the sustainability of the body.

## **ECOWAS Council of the Wise**

The 1991 ECOWAS Revised Treaty under The Mechanism (Article 20) refers to the establishment of the Council of the Wise which was mandated to play the roles of mediator and facilitator in conflict situations in the sub-region. The 15-member council is comprised of representatives of CSOs and religious institutions, among others. The council's mandate is supported by ECOWAS' various structures and mechanisms which include the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (2001), the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (2008), Mediation and Security Council, Commission and Secretariat, and Early Warning and Response Network.

The council's activities include election observation, monitoring of human rights abuses, supporting peace processes, providing counselling to heads of state and government and to ECOWAS, undertaking 'quiet diplomacy', which is devoid of publicity, and institutionalisation of the Council of the Wise as part of the ECOWAS peace and security architecture.

The council, like other bodies within the regional blocs, is also dealing with various challenges relating to the operationalisation of its mandate. A few of these challenges include the lack of ECOWAS-dedicated staff to support the Council of the Wise (although there are plans in place to have the Mediation and Security Council focus on this); financial constraints; absence of a dedicated workplan of the Council of the Wise; insufficient feedback from member states served by the Council of the Wise and the absence of a summit or other forum convened for purposes of reviewing the qualities of the members of the Council of the Wise and their activities.

Some recommendations proposed to address these challenges include ensuring the availability of technical assistance for the ECOWAS office supporting the Council of the Wise; collaboration between the AU and RECs' panels and councils of the wise; development of a joint annual programme of the continental network; joint financing and budgeting to support the joint annual workplan instead of relying on donors; and formal recognition of the panels and councils of the wise by the statutory-making institutions of the AU and RECs so that consulting with the panels becomes natural and routine.

## **Recommendations for member states**

Representatives of member states at the retreat identified key challenges undermining the performance of their states and contributing to the occurrence of tensions and conflicts. These challenges are outlined in more detail below. In addition, this section further examines the centrality of the state in preventing conflicts and its role in addressing their root causes.

### **Statebuilding and institutional strengthening**

Statebuilding is an endogenous process which seeks to strengthen state capacity to perform its functions, which include delivery of security and justice, revenue collection and management, overall economic management and provision of goods and services. Statebuilding and institution strengthening processes ultimately promote the legitimacy of the state (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development 2008). Key objectives of statebuilding include the need to construct positive relations and engagement between the state and citizens.

The form, shape and strategies for statebuilding differ from country to country. For example, a country such as South Sudan is confronted with the need to initiate the development of a whole range of basic capabilities and to establish new institutions

capable of managing government resources and the delivery of services. On the other hand, post-war countries such as Burundi, Liberia and Sierra Leone are at the stage where they are working on ensuring that their governments have the necessary capacities to deliver expected services through implementation of long-term measures, which include the reform of the civil service.

The need for African states to work towards building institutions and enhancing their capacity is also informed by the imperative to augment local ownership of peacebuilding processes. Through statebuilding, state institutions will be strengthened to ensure that they are capable of providing checks and balances within the political systems, including through parliament and the judiciary.

The discussions on institutional capacity building, especially through statebuilding, have emerged in response to the growing concern that traditional development approaches might not be adequate in situations characterised by insecurity, heightened risks of conflict and weakened state capacity (Ibid.). Strengthening state institutions is designed to not only ensure that states are able to deliver services to their people, but also that citizens are able to constructively engage with their state. Through statebuilding, a platform for inclusive political dialogue is created and this facilitates the generation of broader consensus on issues relating to peace, development and security.

Nonetheless, local, national and international actors need to agree on the priorities and modalities of statebuilding processes and the specific institutions that need to be strengthened.

## **Broadening the concepts of democracy and participation**

Discussions during the retreat also focused on issues of good governance, democracy and participation. Although delegates emphasised that elections are an important vehicle for democratic participation, it was underscored that elections are not synonymous with good governance and democracy. Therefore, to maintain peace and order, it is imperative for politicians and governments to honour their political commitments and electoral promises.

## **Analysing models of the state and models of development**

Theories of change and projections on what African states need to look like will have to be revised given the different African realities and contexts. Arguments that are often raised question the applicability of liberal democracy in Africa. Specific questions relate to whether Africa should focus on competitive, liberal and multi-party elections or otherwise in the context of the longstanding culture of coups and power-sharing arrangements.

Additionally, the discord between current years of tenure and the need for long-term operationalisation of development plans was also highlighted as a challenge during the retreat. Currently, African countries focus on short-term growth, which is reflected by

their short-term development plans. However, contemporary Africa needs a political theory that focuses on both political change and the improvement of economic growth, which are developments that might take longer than the short-term plans provide for. Thus, conflict resolution approaches that do not address the root causes of conflict systemically and longitudinally are bound to be limited and unsustainable.

## **Addressing underlying causes of conflict**

There was consensus among delegates that current conflict intervention activities need to go beyond mitigation towards transformation. This requires the utilisation of strategies that focus on addressing the root causes of conflict and not just the manifestations. Underlying causes of conflict that were advanced include poverty and inequality, weak states and institutions, as well as the challenge of democratisation. Thus, conflict resolution efforts should seek to mainstream structural approaches by strengthening national peacemaking institutions as well as addressing the challenges of broken relationships.

Given the realisation that African panels and councils of the wise work on a continent which is characterised by numerous development challenges, including growing income gaps and relatively high poverty levels, the need to strengthening human security is undeniable. Against this background, it is important for governments to facilitate socio-economic development through implementation of programmes that focus on broadening educational opportunities, skills development, creating employment and expanding the provision of social services. Broadening educational opportunities requires that the nature of education is also transformed, to focus more on vocational, industrial and entrepreneurship-oriented fields. In addition, education and training in agricultural development need to be elevated to the level of national development and provided for in national budgets.

## **Role of member states in preventive diplomacy**

Although the AU and RECs have developed robust institutions of peacemaking, nothing can replace the role of the political will of elected leaders in each member state. For instance, it is African leaders, through the AU and RECs, who should make statements on current conflict situations. Such statements and observations, accompanied by recommendations, are important in informing their counterparts of their opinions and standpoints.

Member states are better placed to facilitate continental peace and security because cumulatively, they provide a critical reference point on how to address contemporary challenges. The cause of African unity is not only based on geography, but also on shared values. Member states should be reminded that they are part of the AU and RECs, not necessarily because of where they are located, but because of the values espoused by this membership.

## Recommendations for the AU and RECs

At the continental and regional levels, the AU and RECs also experience challenges in carrying out their conflict prevention roles. Bearing in mind progress made in strengthening collaborations between the AU and RECs, delegates shared recommendations aimed at strengthening the role of mediation in conflict prevention, as well as raising awareness about initiatives that are being implemented on the continent.

### Strengthening conflict prevention and mediation

Delegates also stressed the importance of preventing and mediating in conflicts and the particular roles of the AU PW and similar mechanisms at the level of the RECs. Joint efforts employed with RECs, such as the AU PW's involvement in the DRC, Senegal and South Africa, were recognised and praised. In the same vein, delegates commended the platform provided by the retreat for affording important opportunities to cement cooperation and collaboration among these bodies and increasing their potential to achieve better results.

Mediation assists parties to a conflict to reconcile their differences through dialogue and to ultimately reach a common vision for their future by working together to attain it. Mediation, as a strategy for conflict interventions, needs to be strengthened. The UN and AU, in collaboration with the RECs, are finalising guidelines for mediation in order to achieve the harmonisation of initiatives in Africa.

### Raising awareness and clarifying the role of panels and councils of the wise

Although there is consensus that panels and councils of the wise are important peacemaking institutions, there is still limited knowledge about their roles. Although mediation is included as one of the initiatives that can be undertaken by panels and councils of the wise, it seems that in practice these institutions, particularly the AU PW, tend to play supporting roles in ongoing mediation efforts or provide suggestions for the AU PSC to consider. The mandate to mediate is often granted to AU Special Envoys, as well as eminent individuals such as incumbent and former presidents. It is therefore worthwhile to clarify how the AU PW can contribute to these mediation efforts and whether they can initiate mediation. Knowledge on the role and capacity of the AU PW is scarce; perhaps this is an avenue to pursue in terms of enhancing global awareness of the AU PW.

### Collaboration between the AU, RECs and the UN

Partnership between the AU, the RECs and other multilateral and bilateral actors has emerged as an issue for discussion in several forums relating to the APSA. Undoubtedly, partnership is important to maximise expertise, minimise inefficiencies and ultimately engender complementarity. There is an existing MoU between the AU and RECs,

although the operationalisation of this partnership would benefit from significant improvement. To effectively engage in peacemaking, enhanced collaborations between the AU PW and similar institutions in the RECs and the UN is important. These players have varied levels of political leverage, economic muscle and social capital, hence the importance of utilising a collaborative approach as it allows for the pooling of expertise and experience. For example, regional organisations respond faster to conflicts and often have a more informed and contextual understanding of the root causes of a particular conflict. On the other hand, the AU has the continental political muscle, while the UN can offer broader support for regional and continental peacemaking processes. Against this background, the AU PW needs to not only diversify its partners, but also to ensure that these partnerships are sustainable.

## **Harmonisation and regionalised approach to mediation**

It is imperative to focus on regional developments in West Africa due to this region being a potentially volatile one, as demonstrated by the recent coups in Guinea-Bissau (April 2012) and Mali (March 2012). Additionally, the region now hosts more former mercenaries than before, following the Libyan crisis. The risk of conflicts re-erupting is high, particularly given the fact that many countries in this region are preparing for elections. As such, the international community and regional and sub-regional institutions need to be more proactive in monitoring and responding to incidences in potentially volatile regions by prioritising and addressing the likelihood of violence in West Africa, the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region.

## **Engaging with pastoralist conflict**

An important recommendation which emerged from deliberations at the retreat centred on the need for the AU PW to consider working with local structures of peacebuilding. This matter particularly responded to the prevalence of pastoralist conflict in many countries, including Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and South Sudan. Given this background, members of the panels and councils of the wise were urged to also take the regional pastoralist problems in East Africa seriously and to look for solutions based on the AU Pastoralist Framework, which was widely considered to be credible. They were also encouraged to work together with the RCPE.

## **Collaboration with civil society**

The AU PW and related institutions should increase their collaboration with civil society. Civil society actors and organisations are more in tune with developments on the ground, and as such, their partnership with APSA institutions is more likely to contribute to strengthening the AU PW's work on a range of issues, including early warning. Collaboration between panels and councils of the wise and CSOs can also be strengthened through capacity building initiatives initiated by CSOs. A number of CSOs, such as ACCORD, HD Centre and CMI, have supported peacemaking

initiatives in Africa through provision of mediation training and support to several APSA institutions. Continued collaboration with CSOs is essential to the success of efforts to strengthen peacemaking efforts on the continent.

### **Proactive conflict prevention: The Regional Centre for Pastoralist Elders**

The issue of violence among pastoral communities affects countries in East Africa, including Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda. Pastoral and communal conflict has not only destroyed infrastructure, but also led to the displacement of local populations. Apart from the issue of violence within pastoral communities, conflicts also exist between these communities and their governments, especially in the context of governments' redirecting pastoral land for other purposes, such as tourism and commercial agriculture. For example, in Kenya's Maasailand, much of the pastoral land was diverted to accommodate wildlife, which pitted local communities against the government. An example of a major dispute involving a pastoral community is that between Maasai communities living in the Maasai Mara area and a private organisation known as the Mara Conservancy. The conflict revolves around the benefits that the Maasai get from leasing part of the Mara to this organisation.

In light of the prevalence of conflicts such as these, there have been attempts in Kenya to respond proactively to issues involving pastoral communities. The response to the Maasai Mara conflict which started at community level grew to become more national and regionalised in outlook. During the late 1990s, Members of Parliament (MP) for pastoralist constituencies in Kenya established a Pastoralist Parliamentary Group (PPG). Membership to the PPG is open to any MP concerned with pastoral development, although active membership is limited to MPs who represent pastoral constituencies. The initiatives of Kenya's PPG provided impetus for the establishment of the RCPE – an institution that has helped address inter-state pastoral clashes between inhabitants of Kenya and Uganda, and Kenya and Sudan.

The RCPE enjoys close relations and collaborations with various CSOs in the region and is involved in activities such as awareness-raising around challenges faced by pastoral communities, the promotion of peacebuilding at community level, as well as lobbying the government to implement measures that directly address insecurity in pastoral communities (Livingstone 2005).

### **Early warning and early intervention**

The AU, RECs, the panels and councils of the wise and institutions of peacemaking should make use of early warning information in a timely manner. For example, the AU APRM report of 2006 warned of likely tensions in Kenya. Little effort was made

to respond to this early warning in this instance, partly because the report was not widely disseminated and available. Additionally, available early warning information was not utilised in Mali as the *coup d'état* happened at the end of the AU Summit in January 2012. This speaks to the need for proactive intervention. It is important for the AU PW not to use the 'fire-brigade approach' in resolving conflicts. In the case of Guinea-Bissau, the AU PW should have acted even at the stage when there were indications that the constitution was about to be manipulated.

Despite the above mentioned challenges, ECOWAS is integrating its regional early warning mechanisms. However, intervention that occurs too early runs the risk of 'upgrading' or escalating the conflict, especially in the context of the principle of subsidiarity and sovereignty. Thus, early warning mechanisms should be strengthened at national level.

## Supporting democratisation processes

The nexus between democracy, peace and security continued to be highlighted throughout the retreat. There was consensus that unconstitutional developments which hinder democracy ultimately present challenges to the goal of realising a stable and peaceful Africa. Referring to the coups in Guinea-Bissau and Mali, delegates at the retreat emphasised that it is necessary for the AU to intervene directly where *coup d'états* and unconstitutional changes of government occur.

## Financial, technical and logistical support

Delegates also identified poverty and inequality within African nations as root causes of conflict and agreed that there is need for concerted efforts to improve economic development. The importance of infrastructure development in economic development was underscored. Stable and economically developed states provide more conducive operational environments for institutions of peacemaking to operate. Delegates also emphasised that for the panels to be effective, it is important to provide members with adequate financial, technical and logistical resources to enable them to fulfil their mandates.

## Decisiveness on conflict resolution

Decisiveness involves taking actions in a timely and adequate fashion. In the context of the AU, it is required in order to harmonise responses to conflict. Currently, African countries are said to have been perplexed and ambivalent about the continent's collective response to popular uprisings in North Africa and their subsequent outcomes. There are two hypotheses relating to Africa's perception of events in North Africa. One theory is that Africa is perceived as being aloof to the events in North Africa, imagining that these are unlikely to affect sub-Saharan Africa. Another theory is that events in North Africa will have a bearing on the rest of the continent, hence the need to be proactively involved.

Furthermore, the unintended consequences of the ‘Arab Spring’ are believed to have left Africa more perplexed. Following the fall of regimes in North Africa, new political parties and independent newspapers were established; thereby eradicating the entrenched authorities of previous regimes. This paved the way for the emergence of identity-based political parties such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. The 2012 presidential elections in Egypt, featuring candidates from the Muslim Brotherhood and the former prime minister in President Hosni Mubarak’s government presented a challenge to the AU in terms of how the continental body should respond.

However, there are also positive experiences which involve African leaders who have decisively intervened in situations that threaten peace and security in Africa. For example, ECOWAS took a critical decision on Guinea-Bissau, with support from the AU. This case demonstrates the importance of decisiveness by RECs in addressing challenges of peace and security. The UN followed later with the imposition of sanctions when ECOWAS had already taken the lead in resolving the crisis.

## **Recommendations for the panels and councils of the wise**

The AU PW and similar mechanisms on the continent have a central role to play in preventing conflict in Africa. To achieve their objectives, these panels will need to prioritise their quest to mainstream conflict prevention practices and expand their reach to the national and local peace frameworks.

### **Mainstreaming the broader agenda of transformation**

Africa is a continent in transition and is characterised by different realities. A clear understanding of the heterogeneity of countries on the continent will assist the AU PW in efforts to ensure that conflict mitigation/preventive diplomacy remains a central role of peacemakers in Africa. Delegates at the retreat highlighted that the AU PW should embrace and utilise longer-term processes of engaging with conflict in order to address the root causes of conflict after peace agreements have been signed and resolutions reached. In negotiating agreements and facilitating dialogue, it is important for the AU PW to recognise the importance of transforming structural arrangements to ensure that the root causes of conflicts are addressed. The UN’s Guidance for Effective Mediation document calls for a holistic approach to peace agreements (United Nations 2012). This means that peace processes should not only focus on ending the conflict, but should also underline the importance of addressing socio-economic and political drivers of conflict. Within this understanding, the scope of work for the panels and councils of the wise should also focus on mechanisms of transitional justice and structural transformation.

### **Capacity building for conflict transformation**

Members of the AU PW were encouraged to understand the context, political profile, actors and dynamics of the particular conflicts or countries where they contribute their

efforts. This will ensure that they intervene effectively. In order for this to happen, the AU PW not only requires support in terms of logistics, but members will also need to have their technical capacity strengthened.

In line with the thinking on the various roles of the mediator which include enabling and empowering the weaker party (Mitchell 1988), it was recommended that in certain conflicts it is important to equip the various actors with the necessary skills to engage in negotiation, conflict analysis and problem-solving. This can be done through various capacity building initiatives which include training parties to a conflict in negotiation and conflict management. Capacity building initiatives for parties to a conflict have been undertaken by mediation support teams as well as CSOs. For example, in its twenty-year history, ACCORD has carried out negotiation and mediation trainings for conflicting parties, including government representatives and armed groups. This has contributed not only to reducing asymmetry between conflict parties, but also to enhancing dialogue processes.

In addition, CSOs were also encouraged to enhance the mediation capacity of panels and councils of the wise by supporting research and conflict analysis activities. Organisations such as ACCORD were tasked with the responsibility of ensuring that members of the panels and councils of the wise receive necessary technical support through training, workshops, research and conflict analysis.

Participants recommended the establishment of a structure that will be charged with writing memoirs for influential political personalities. It was also suggested that institutions working with leaders and former heads of state should also record these experiences for their importance in imparting information on lessons learnt. Such initiatives were already being undertaken by organisations such as ACCORD and the HD Centre, but they needed to be shared and expanded.

## **Gender consideration in the work of panels and councils of the wise**

The work of the panels and councils of the wise will be greatly enhanced if specific consideration for the interests, needs and views of all key stakeholders in a dispute or conflict is made. As such, gender is an important factor which should be mainstreamed when engaging in preventive diplomacy and mediation. Gender influences both the development and subsequent implementation of peace processes, thus there is need for the APSA to be integrated with the African gender architecture.

## **Continuity and longer-term intervention**

Although the mandate of the AU PW is conflict prevention, rather than full-fledged mediation, it is important for this mechanism to mainstream a longitudinal perspective on conflict in its operations. This would ensure that there is emphasis on conflict transformation instead of mitigation. A long-term perspective on intervention is cognisant of the fact that conflict is an inevitable and permanent feature of society, which therefore requires sustainability to be built into intervention processes.

## Working with Track II diplomats

The AU PW, AU and RECs were encouraged to take the discussions to middle and grassroots level actors. A key strategy would be for the AU PW to convene public forums in the respective countries where they work and to involve CSOs in these. Country-based think tanks should work with the AU and RECs to assist in conflict analysis and problem-solving, as well as in getting local populations involved in efforts to achieve the transformation of the African continent. Apart from official mediators and diplomats, the reality is that peace negotiations are occupied by a diverse rubric of actors, who include CSOs, academic institutions, think tanks, private sector actors and community based organisations. As such, CSOs continue to occupy relevant spaces in the peace and security arena, providing much needed training and research expertise. In this regard, ACCORD was tasked with the responsibility of developing a compendium of all AU and regional mechanisms for circulation to everyone.

Members of the AU PW were also urged to collaborate with unofficial actors, who are hereinafter referred to as Track II and Track 1.5 diplomats, in implementing peace processes. Track II diplomats are the unofficial actors in peace processes who do not occupy positions in government and the military, while Track 1.5 diplomats are located between Track I and Track II actors. In many instances in Africa, mediators have not fully capitalised on their work and engagement with influential leaders in communities, including civil society actors and religious leaders. Track II actors support peace processes in various ways, including through preparing Track I and Track II actors for the negotiation processes and providing support for ongoing peacemaking processes, for example through conflict analysis, mediation process design and policy influence, among others.

ACCORD, for instance, has provided mediation support to various mediators in the Great Lakes region, including to the former president of Botswana, Ketumile Masire who was appointed as mediator in the DRC conflict by the then Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1999 and to presidents Julius Nyerere and Nelson Mandela during mediation processes in Burundi. ACCORD provided further support to the Inter-Congolese Dialogue in other ways, including bringing together CSOs from the DRC to contribute to the peace process in Sun City, South Africa.

Track II actors provide a reservoir of expertise and skills which can be utilised to support efforts of the AU PW and similar mechanisms. As such, African actors must focus on managing and utilising resources well if they are to achieve improvements in the situations of Africans. Other actors working around peacemaking with whom the panels and councils of the wise can engage and collaborate include the Forum for Former African Heads of State and Government, as well as various African ambassadors. Additionally, working within the realm of Track II diplomacy are religious and traditional leaders who also have a lot to contribute. Political negotiations that do not take into consideration the special role of religious leaders and traditional institutions are bound to be limited in scope, effectiveness and outcome. Religious and traditional leaders are very influential in their communities, hence the need to ensure their involvement and

contribution. Panels and councils of the wise need to focus on utilising existing infrastructure and practices that have been shown to work in their efforts to build and maintain peace on the continent.

## Generating information and documentation

Regional bodies should work with universities and think tanks on projects aimed at generating and disseminating progressive information on Africa so that positive lessons can be drawn and applied in resolving existing challenges. A good example is the initiative by President Pires, who was undertaking a project called 'Memoirs and History' which made a compendium of statements given by freedom fighters. Encouraging initiatives such as this will enhance Africans' understanding of their history and ultimately encourage them to generate their own information, ideas and visions, instead of solely consuming information produced from the work of others.

### Grassroots engagement in resolving communal conflict: Lessons from Tanzania

Pastoralists are self-identified populations that rely primarily on raising livestock on 'natural' pasture that has been unimproved by human intervention for their sustenance. They are found across much of East Africa, specifically in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

Pastoralist populations, due to their traditions and need for constant movement to find fresh pasture for their livestock, have been facing challenges with land ownership and acquisition. Land alienation was increasing poverty among pastoralist communities in Tanzania. This led to frequent outbreaks of conflict between pastoralist and non-pastoralist farmers around land and resources.

For years, there have been legal battles waged for the establishment of separate villages for farmers and pastoralists, but the High Court of Tanzania has so far not delivered its verdict on the matter. Between 2002 and 2010 clashes between pastoralists and farmers have been rampant, leaving over 800 people homeless, scores dead and property and livestock destroyed. Although the government had tried to relocate pastoralists some refused to move, causing serious problems.

To address this, the government under President Jakaya Kikwete put in place initiatives such as the District Land and Housing Tribunals, local ad hoc committees set up by communities and a commission of enquiry set up to find a lasting solution to the challenges. Prior to these initiatives, in 1993 a pro-pastoralist policy, known as the Wildlife Policy, was established to address the conflict between pastoralism and wildlife conservation. The programme seeks to recognise the role of pastoralism in conserving biodiversity and the opportunity costs borne by pastoralists in performing this role.

## Lessons from South Sudan: Addressing the challenge of pastoralist conflict

Ownership and use of land are of great importance in the livelihoods of most South Sudanese citizens. Agriculture is often identified by politicians and officials as having the potential to transform the economy and livelihoods of their regions, and to reduce or increase the risk of conflict.

For the majority of large tribal groups in South Sudan, the acquisition and rearing of cattle is central to their cultural identity and status and it provides subsistence and is labour-intensive. Every year, pastoralists from other countries migrate to South Sudan for six months. Within the context of East Africa, South Sudan is characterised by high level of competition for resources between agriculturalists and pastoralists.

Conflict assessment indicators have shown that cattle raiding remains a persistent problem and a primary source of physical insecurities in numerous parts of South Sudan. Areas such as Eastern Equatoria, Jonglei, Lakes, Unity, Upper Nile and Warrap have witnessed consistent raiding activities which have of late escalated in scope and intensity to include violence, rape, abduction and destruction of homes and infrastructure. In 2011, the states of Jonglei, Lakes and Warrap were at the epicentre of cattle-related violence which resulted in inter-tribe and inter-clan rivalry and retaliation, as well as economic losses.

Apart from the challenge of cattle raids, pastoralists in these areas also face challenges in accessing water and grazing land for their livestock. In 2009, the Jonglei state experienced violent inter-tribal conflicts, partly as a result of scarce water facilities for pastoralist communities during dry seasons.

To address these challenges, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) government has set limits to bride prices – reducing the number of cattle used as a means of payment from 200 to about 20 in the Lakes State. In Northern Bahr el-Ghazal this number has been reduced to 12. The new state authorities utilise security forces to enforce restrictions placed on pastoralists in Mbororo in Western Bahr el-Ghazal and Western Equatoria to control their movement. Furthermore, in order to also address the cross-border migration challenges, local communities and pastoralists have agreements on how to manage the situation, including regulations that no goats and camels should be brought into South Sudan.

However, government has much more to do to guarantee service provision to pastoralist communities, especially in terms of water, security and land, to help minimise the current cross-border conflicts and violence.

## Engaging with eminent personalities

Since the politics of personality are likely to continue driving the African continent for a long time, delegates suggested that members of the AU PW should capitalise on their unique stature and positions that enable them to potentially utilise the gravitas involved in politics of personality. Eminent personalities are those who are influential in African politics and whose participation can enhance the chances that peace and security processes will be successful. These personalities include former presidents who were instrumental in the establishment of the AU and contributed to shaping African politics. They provide the necessary gravitas to processes of preventive diplomacy and good offices, among other peacemaking initiatives.

Eminent personalities have been involved in several peacemaking processes on the continent. For instance, in 2008, following the post-election violence in Kenya, the AU enlisted support in mediation from the Panel of Eminent African Personalities, comprised of former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, former President of Tanzania Benjamin Mkapa and Graça Machel, a member of the UN Secretary-General's Panel of Experts on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Members of the Panel engaged conflicting parties in Kenya, namely the Party of National Unity led by President Mwai Kibaki and the Orange Democratic Movement led by Raila Odinga (now prime minister of Kenya), resulting in the signing of a peace agreement, which was a key outcome of a process called the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation (KNDR). Following the signing of the agreement, the Panel of Eminent African Personalities continues to be involved in Kenya, particularly in assessing and supporting the implementation of agreements reached during the KNDR process.

## Way forward: Establishing and operationalising the Pan-Wise

During this session, delegates discussed the modalities governing the operations of the AU PW and ultimately facilitated the operationalisation of the Pan-Wise. Discussions highlighted the role of preventive diplomacy and mediation in the African peace and security architecture. This approach is epitomised by the AU PW, whose mandate is by and large conflict prevention.

As the AU PW is a critical part of the APSA's conflict prevention and mitigation efforts in Africa, there is need for the AU PW to reinforce the efforts of the AU PSC by providing appropriate support for the activities of the AU PSC and AUC around conflict prevention. There were calls for greater dialogue and communication between the AU PW, AU PSC and AUC.

Although this was the first time that the AU PW was meeting with similar mechanisms, the forum provided an important space for presentation of the idea of establishing the Pan-Wise. Delegates reviewed a draft framework for the operationalisation of the Pan-Wise and reached consensus that the network would serve as an important institutional

platform for the various panels and councils to network and discuss potential areas for collaboration in mediation and preventive diplomacy. The continental network will also contribute to the operationalisation of the APSA, especially with regard to coordination between the AU and RECs.

In addition, participants adopted a preliminary framework for the operationalisation of Pan-Wise which, it was agreed, would be circulated to all stakeholders for their input. It would be discussed again before being finalised and submitted to the policy organs of the AU and RECs. The framework called on each institution to ensure that any collaboration under the auspices of the Pan-Wise would be done in line with the existing 2008 MoU between the AU and RECs. The proposals made by the AUPW in its concept paper titled 'Articulating a continental network of panels' would be discussed in detail during the next meeting. These proposals, which include suggestions and amendments made at the meeting, were contained in the draft framework for the operationalisation of the Pan-Wise. A commitment was also made to present the concept of the Pan-Wise to the policy organs of the RECs and AU during upcoming summits.

Additionally, the following issues were tabled for discussion in future fora:

- Funding for the joint initiative (Pan-Wise) should come from the AU and RECs, failure to do this will hamper implementation. Africans should take the lead in addressing African challenges through implementation of home-grown solutions and avoid relying so heavily on external donors. Efforts should be made to target African businesses, entrepreneurs and private sector actors for sponsorships as was successfully done with the AU's 'Make Peace Happen' campaign.
- The idea of forming the Pan-Wise, as well as recommendations emerging from the retreat, would be presented to the AU PSC and the Assembly of Heads of State and Government scheduled for January 2013.

## **Forecasting the future: Lessons from the current mediation context in Africa**

This session provided space for delegates to engage with eminent personalities such as President Compaoré, former President Pires, Dr Chinery-Hesse and Ambassador Djinnit. It was followed by remarks by Ambassador Lamamra, who emphasised the power of collective action and preventive diplomacy. These exchanges, which were candid and held behind closed doors, allowed for open discussions on real case studies of effective conflict prevention and peacemaking approaches. Distinguished speakers reflected on their experiences in peacemaking, mediation and preventive diplomacy, highlighting both their achievements and challenges. The diversity of the eminent speakers allowed for exchanges and reflections that employed multiple perspectives, thereby supporting the sharing of lessons and identification of opportunities for collaboration. Overall, the session aimed to facilitate an envisioning and forecasting process by the AU PW and similar regional mechanisms.

## President Compaoré sharing mediation experiences and reflections on the AU PW

*‘Conflict is like a disease for the nation. When a nation is at conflict, it is sick.’*

President Blaise Compaoré, remarks made at the High Level Retreat of the AU PW in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on 5 June 2012

In his introductory remarks, President Compaoré expressed his gratitude to the AU PW and the AU for choosing Ouagadougou as the venue of this important retreat. He explained that this decision reaffirmed recognition of Burkina Faso’s commitment to support efforts to achieve peace and security in Africa. President Compaoré’s session was highly interactive, offering delegates a unique opportunity to exchange views with the president on various issues, including the ongoing peace processes in the region, particularly in Guinea-Bissau and Mali. He discussed his involvement as the chief mediator in Mali and touched on issues of governance in Africa and related challenges.

President Compaoré commended the role and work of the AU PW and urged the use of elders’ wisdom in various ways. He called for more and urgent international support to resolve the crisis in Mali as it has dire consequences for the entire region. He also stressed the need for dialogue in resolving this conflict, while pledging his support both in this regard and to ongoing processes by the AU and UN to develop guidelines aimed at strengthening cooperation and identifying areas in which the AU could play a role.

With regard to governance issues, President Compaoré emphasised the need to give priority to infrastructure development, as well as to basic social services and needs, particularly education, health and food security. He underscored that the equitable provision of social services is a prerequisite for sustainable development, peace, security and stability, while concurring with delegates that the issue of governance and power remains a major problem in Africa, hence his emphasis on the need for leaders to respect their constitutions. Furthermore, referring to the worrying trend of electoral disputes, President Compaoré called for the AU to focus on and address issues of democracy, universal suffrage and governance and elections, given the increasing frequency with which conflicts relating to the crisis of governance are erupting.

In relation to his experiences in mediation and facilitation in Mali, President Compaoré noted that in mediation processes, parties have their own separate ‘truths’ which they hold onto. It is the duty of the mediator to create a balance to ensure that each party feels that they are being treated equally. There are complicated issues that the mediator comes across, for instance issues of Sharia law and issues of independence. These are issues that can catalyse war or confrontation. President Compaoré emphasised the important role of dialogue in addressing protracted conflicts, adding that a mediator should embrace political dialogue as a strategy for initiating and sustaining contact with all parties to a conflict, including armed movements. He also expressed his belief that

groups become radicalised when they perceive or believe that no one is listening to them. Therefore, dialogue with these actors is important as it promotes negotiation and problem-solving. Dialogue should be seized as a chance to resolve problems. While engagement with conflicting parties is important, President Compaoré also emphasised the importance of the notion of local ownership of peace processes and the resultant outcomes, adding that it is Malians who should resolve their conflict, albeit with the assistance of third parties where necessary.

Relating the Mali experience to trends in the ECOWAS sub-region, President Compaoré explained that the situation between Algeria and Mauritania required the intervention of the AU and ECOWAS to convene a meeting with the two countries so as to support the utilisation of dialogue to address their differences. However, President Compaoré noted that the Mali case was complex, reflecting the interaction of several factors, including governance challenges, lack of legitimacy as well as religious subtexts, which cumulatively presented major challenges for the intervention of the AU or ECOWAS. He stressed the need for Africa to make a distinction between religion as a faith and religion as an ideological tool. In other words, a distinction between religious growth and religious extremism has to be made. The former refers to the growth of the influence and outreach of religion, while the latter speaks to the use of religion as a tool to advance extremist agendas.

President Compaoré further explained that the security challenges in northern Mali were a major threat not only to Africa, but to international peace as the region had become a haven for terrorists and criminal elements. Against this background, the president proposed that the situation in Mali would only be addressed by adoption and utilisation of an integrated approach to peace and security which would compel ECOWAS to work closely with the AU, UN and the European Union (EU).

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*The High Level Retreat of the AU PW provided delegates with an important opportunity to interrogate the state of affairs in Africa*

The presenter acknowledged that mediation processes and initiatives around preventive diplomacy require substantial funding. He added that although the international community could assist by providing resources, it is Africans themselves who should take the lead in implementing peace processes because they know their own contexts better.

Discussing the situation in Libya, President Compaoré expressed the view that the Libyan crisis could be partly attributed to the gap between early warning and early response. He observed that in Libya specifically, African statesmen reacted late to the early warning information and signals of a deteriorating conflict in the country. Even though it was apparent that Libya was facing challenges of democratisation, African heads of state and government did not promptly engage with the late Libyan president, Muammar Gaddafi, on the need to uphold democracy and respect for human rights.

## **President Pires on intervention, African state structure and collaboration**

For his part, President Pires maintained that the future of Africa, and especially that of West Africa, was of huge concern, but that notions of state sovereignty and independence, pan-Africanism and political correctness inhibited member states from responding to challenges in neighbouring countries. These ideals made any interference or intervention in other African states unfavourable, even where that intervention might be necessary for the stability of a region, or the continent as a whole. Additionally, the very nature of the state in some African countries was worrisome, because it was not sustainable to have a state discriminate amongst its citizens. He said, for instance, that many African countries are characterised by significant regional and ethnic inequalities as nepotism and corruption determined by tribal, ethnic or cultural lines determined which areas received government funding for development, and which do not.

President Pires acknowledged that the situation in Mali went beyond ECOWAS alone, but required the participation of Algeria, Chad, Libya and Mauritania and their commitment if peace and stability were to prevail in Mali and the entire Sahel-Saharan region of Africa. Speaking on the influence of religious fundamentalism and drug trafficking on the Mali crisis, President Pires echoed the need for Africa to tackle the matter dispassionately and vigorously, taking into consideration the external dimensions of conflicts on the continent.

## **Dr Chinery-Hesse on Africa taking responsibility**

For her part, Dr Chinery-Hesse raised concerns about the global peace and security architecture making it almost impossible for Africa to take ownership of its own problems and find lasting solutions to them. She spoke on how Africa easily gave in to the interest and pressures of the international community, especially the influence of the UN Security Council. Referring to the issues of vested interests and double



*Delegates at the retreat made a number of recommendations, including establishing the Pan-Wise*

standards in global governance, Dr Chinery-Hesse asserted that African problems were handled differently from the way those from other parts of the world were tackled. As long as Africa kept going back to the same international community to request support, members of the international community would continue to make decisions on behalf of the continent and its leaders.

### **Ambassador Djinnit on the need for preventive diplomacy, a nationally institutionalised AU PW model and coordination**

In his remarks, Ambassador Djinnit acknowledged progress made by peacemaking institutions represented at the Retreat; and mentioned the emerging realities around the development gaps that Africa needs to address. Ambassador Djinnit called on the AU PW to focus subsequent actions on efforts to improve mediation and preventive diplomacy efforts in Africa. He acknowledged the need for the AU PW to coordinate with the RECs so as to effectively support the APSA to strengthen existing networks at continental, regional and national levels, while calling for regional bodies to recognise the huge potential in engaging with CSOs and the need for improvement in countries that are already doing well around peace and development issues, among them Botswana, Cape Verde and Ghana. Ambassador Djinnit further called on member states to inculcate the AU PW model at national level to ensure sustainable solutions to conflict situations at this level. He gave the example of how locals in Tanzania swiftly acted to address post-election conflict in Zanzibar. He concluded by joining other participants in calling for the use of dialogue and preventive diplomacy in resolving disputes on the continent.

## **Ambassador Lamamra on the power of collective and preventive action**

Ambassador Lamamra acknowledged the timeliness of the meeting, which coincided with the 10th anniversary of the AU and the 50th anniversary of the OAU (in 2013) and posited that the retreat was in line with the quest to promote the essence of the African Renaissance.

Ambassador Lamamra acknowledged the demonstrable evidence of the value of collective security and collective efforts towards promoting peace and security. He underscored the continued need to capitalise on the existing relationship between the AU and its partners, including the EU, RECs, UN and relevant CSOs towards promoting broad-based approaches to peace. Ambassador Lamamra added that the APSA should continue tapping into the wisdom and experiences of critical institutions and actors, such as traditional and religious leaders, in order to ensure that sustainable peace is achieved and fostered. He called for greater collaboration between modern and traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution, arguing specifically for the mainstreaming of wisdom into existing institutional frameworks such as the International Ombudsman Association and the Forum for Former African Heads of State and Government to address conflict situations in Africa.

In conclusion, Ambassador Lamamra reiterated calls made for African actors to adopt preventive diplomacy as a mediation culture for addressing ongoing conflicts on the continent, with particular emphasis on the conflicts in Sudan (Darfur) and South Sudan (Abyei).

## **Conclusion**

The High Level Retreat of the AU PW provided participants with the opportunity to examine the state of affairs in Africa, paying attention to the underlying causes of conflicts in the context of global socio-economic development trends. Delegates noted that the general African situation was improving, despite the challenges of ongoing conflicts in the DRC, Mali, the Sahel and the situation between South Sudan and Sudan. Additionally, there was consensus on the need to address these conflicts, although they were not necessarily equally applicable to all countries. The panels and councils of the wise from the RECs were encouraged to engage African governments in efforts to sensitise them on the need to proactively address these underlying causes of conflict.

Delegates also applauded the efforts of the AU PW in linking directly and substantively to similar panels and institutions at the level of the RECs, noting the positive examples given of joint information and fact-finding missions and pre- and post-election missions undertaken; as well as the active participation of the RECs in the AU panel's thematic work and related workshops.

In conclusion, participants were encouraged to continue to show their dedication and commitment to the continental network and to continue engaging on discussions around emerging issues, especially the question of short-term office vis-à-vis long-term development. The idea was that if national development plans change every time elections bring a new political party to power, little is likely to be achieved in terms of development. There was also a unanimous call from the various stakeholders for Africa to stand up to the challenge of solving its own problems and finding lasting solutions to them. Participants reiterated the need for the continent to generate its own resources internally to avoid over-dependence and interference from external actors and to ensure that conflicts are managed and prevented through dialogue and cooperation. Overall, the retreat provided a valuable opportunity for the panels and councils of the wise to discuss developments relating to the peace and security environment in Africa, and to strategise on their entry points whilst also informing each other on areas for mutual collaboration.

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## Annex

### Agenda

**High Level Retreat of the African Union Panel of the Wise  
on Strengthening Relations with Similar Regional Mechanisms  
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso  
4–5 June 2012**

Monday 4 June 2012	
<b>10:00</b>	<p><b>Opening ceremony:</b></p> <p><b>H.E. Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra</b>, Commissioner, Peace &amp; Security: General introductory and welcoming remarks (7 min)</p> <p><b>Dr Mary Chinery-Hesse</b>, on behalf of the Chair of the Panel of the Wise (5 min)</p> <p><b>TBC</b>, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Congo, Chair of the Peace and Security Council for the month of June 2012 (5 min)</p> <p><b>Opening address:</b></p> <p><b>H.E. President Blaise Compaoré</b>, President of Burkina Faso</p>
<b>11:00</b>	<b>Group photograph and coffee break</b>
<b>11:15</b>	<p>Interactive session with <b>H.E. President Blaise Compaoré</b></p> <p><b>Chair: Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra, AU Commissioner for Peace and Security</b></p>
<b>13:15</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
<b>15:00</b>	<p><b>Mapping the peace and security situation in Africa and assessing potential future threats:</b></p> <p>This is an introduction to the core objectives and the outcomes sought from the workshop: To map emerging challenges facing Africa's regions in the area of peace and security with the view of considering mitigation approaches. It will recall the efforts being undertaken by partner organisations, as well as continental structures, and attempt to assess the capacity required by these entities to respond to these emerging threats to peace and security. This session will look at ways to enhance conflict prevention efforts of the AU Panel of the Wise and similar mechanisms which is the niche within which they have been called by member states to operate. The session will also provide options for the types of concrete engagements that can be undertaken by these mechanisms within the context of preventive action.</p>

	<p>The moderator will deliver a 30 minute-long presentation on current and future conflict trends in Africa, followed by a presentation on emerging peace and security issues in Africa, to be delivered by Mr Francesco Mancini. The panelists will then be asked to react to the presentations.</p> <p>Guiding questions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the emerging challenges that the continent is facing and will face in the future which have and will have an important bearing on peace and security? Challenges will include election-related disputes; justice and national reconciliation; the third wave of democratisation in Africa in the context of the North African popular uprisings; the impact of conflicts on women and children, and others.</li> <li>• What lessons do these experiences offer the AU and the RECs?</li> <li>• What are the capacities of regional organisations to respond to these and to prevent them from escalating?</li> <li>• Speakers are asked to draw from their practical experiences</li> </ul> <p><b>Moderator: Mr Vasu Gounden</b>, Executive Director of ACCORD</p> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <p><b>Mr Francesco Mancini</b>, Senior Director of Research and Head of the ‘Coping with Crisis, Conflict and Change’ Programme, IPI</p> <p><b>H.E. President Pires</b>, Former President of Cape Verde</p> <p><b>Ambassador Said Djinnit</b>, UN SRSG for West Africa and Head of UNOWA</p> <p><b>Ambassador Zachary Muburi Muita</b>, UN SRSG, UNOAU</p> <p><b>Mr Anatole Ayissia</b>, Chief of Staff, UNOCA</p> <p><b>Dr Francis Deng</b>, Special Advisor to the UNSG on the Prevention of Genocide</p> <p><b>Mrs Ellen Margrethe Løej</b>, Former UN SRSG in Liberia</p> <p><b>Ambassador Ahmed Haggag</b>, Secretary-General of the African Society in Cairo</p> <p><b>Honourable Abdullahi Wako</b>, Chairman, RCPE</p> <p><b>Open Discussion</b></p>
<p><b>18:00</b></p>	<p><b>End of Day 1</b></p>

Tuesday 5 June 2012	
<b>09:00</b>	<p><b>Strategies for mediation and negotiation:</b></p> <p>This session will look at ways to enhance conflict mitigation efforts of the AU PW and similar mechanisms in response to the emerging peace and security challenges facing Africa which would have been discussed during the previous session. The presenter will, based on actual experience, engage delegates in a participatory discussion on strategies and tactics for mediation and negotiation and illustrate how to develop more strategic approaches to manage conflict.</p> <p><b>Moderator: Dr David Harland</b>, Director, HD Centre</p> <p><b>Presenter: Mr Vasu Gounden</b>, Executive Director of ACCORD</p> <p><b>Open Discussion</b></p>
<b>11:00</b>	<p><b>Reviewing mediation mandates of regional organisations and structures: Charting the way forward</b></p> <p>This session will review the mandates and modalities of operations of all panels of the wise and similar mechanisms towards promoting coordination and collaboration in conflict prevention and mediation initiatives on the continent. The session will also provide an opportunity to create a continental roster of high level personalities (panels and councils of the wise) and for the AU to introduce the AU-RECs joint modalities of work and draft joint work programme for three years for consideration.</p> <p>The speakers will focus their presentations on the composition, mandate and landmark activities since the establishment of their structures, as well as the challenges faced and areas of support and collaboration.</p> <p><b>Moderator: Mr Vasu Gounden</b>, Executive Director of ACCORD</p> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <p><b>Mr Wane El Ghassim</b>, Director, AU Peace and Security Department</p> <p><b>Honourable Netsannet Asfaw</b>, Director of Peace and Security, IGAD</p> <p><b>Ms Elisabeth Mutunga</b>, COMESA, Committee of Elders</p> <p><b>Ms Raheemat Momodu</b>, Head, Liaison Office of ECOWAS to the AU</p> <p><b>Mr Benoit Bihamiriza</b>, Early Warning, EAC</p> <p><b>Open Discussion</b></p>

<b>13:00</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
<b>15:30</b>	<b>Review of recommendations and way forward</b> <b>Moderator: Mr Vasu Gounden</b> , Executive Director of ACCORD
<b>16:30</b>	<b>Closing ceremony</b> <b>Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra</b> , Commissioner, AU PSD <b>Dr. Elisabeth Pognon</b> , Member of the Friends of the Panel of the Wise <b>H.E. Mr Ablasse Ouedragogo</b> , Minister of Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso
<b>17:30</b>	<b>End of the retreat</b>

# THE AFRICAN UNION PANEL OF THE WISE:

Strengthening relations with  
similar regional mechanisms

A report based on the High Level Retreat of the African Union Panel of the Wise on Strengthening Relations with Similar Regional Mechanisms, held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on 4 and 5 June 2012, organised by the African Union Peace and Security Department in partnership with the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes.

