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# Preparing for the Third Millennium: Towards a Policy Framework for the OAU Conflict Management Mechanism

by Cedric de Coning\*

There is a cliché in African diplomatic circles that is repeated whenever Africans meet to lament the lack of peace and stability in many parts of Africa, namely that 'if the OAU did not already exist, we would need to establish it tomorrow'. It reaffirms Africa's need to have a strong multi-lateral institution that deals with conflict management on the continent and focuses attention on the need for solutions, as opposed to a mere fixation on the problem. It raises the question: what can we do to strengthen the OAU's capacity to deal with Africa's conflicts?

As we approach the end of the 20th century, it would be appropriate to consider the type of challenges the OAU will face in the next millennium, and what needs to be done to better prepare the OAU for those challenges. Despite high-sounding millennium talk, the reality is that it is possible to forecast, with reasonable likelihood, the types of conflict the continent may experience over the next ten to twenty years. If so, it would make sense to try and map the OAU and other institutions' capacity at present, and to suggest where efforts need to be expended in order for them to be in a better position to face the challenges ahead.

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This paper is intended to identify the challenges facing the OAU, and to suggest methods of OAU preparation for a better position to respond to conflicts as we enter the third millennium. The emphasis is on practical steps that the OAU and others can implement in the short term.

One of the greatest shortcomings identified recently with regard to the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) interventions in Lesotho and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), was the lack of a coherent policy with regard to:

- ▲ Decision-making processes needed to be followed in order to approve a mission under SADC auspices, e.g. an Interstate Defense and Security Committee (ISDSC) meeting of Defence Ministers (which was the level at which the DRC Mission was approved) or a SADC Organ on Politics, Defense and Security at the Foreign Minister level, or SADC Summit level (which was the level the Lesotho Mission was approved), etc.
- ▲ How that decision should be taken, i.e. should the appropriate body adopt a United Nations Security Council-type resolution that can become the mandate for the mission, and should that decision be made public and transparent?
- ▲ What kind of missions the SADC should undertake and what kind of missions the SADC have the capacity to undertake? i.e. peacekeeping, military observers, civilian observers, human rights monitoring missions, peace enforcement, enforcement, military interventions, etc.
- ▲ SADC undertaking enforcement operations (as was the case most recently in Lesotho and the DRC). Is it going to seek prior authorisation from the UN Security Council as required under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter? What is SADC's relationship with the OAU in this regard? Should it at least inform the OAU of its intentions prior to undertaking such an intervention?
- ▲ How SADC Missions will be financed. If donor money will be accepted, what are the principles that should govern the relationship between the donors and the SADC mission to ensure that only SADC will determine the mandate, objectives, duration, exit strategy and overall approach of the mission?

This list is not exhaustive, but it attempts to point to some of the key issues that need to be in place at the policy level to ensure the success of any mission, even before it is contemplated. It is important to recognise that this kind of policy framework is not a luxury. The problems experienced with the recent SADC interventions in Lesotho and the DRC, especially their alleged illegality under international law and their strong South African and Zimbabwean identities respectively, as opposed to a SADC identity, can

be directly attributed to the lack of clear policy on these issues at the SADC level.

The situation at the OAU is slightly better, but much can still be done to ensure that the appropriate policy frameworks are in place. The Declaration establishing the OAU Mechanism for the Prevention, Management and Resolution of Conflicts has established the Central Organ as the body where policy, and actual missions, will be considered and approved. Central Organ decisions are subject to the higher authority of the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, but are the *de facto* decision-making body when it comes to all matters regarding peace missions. It is still unclear, however, at what level of the Central Organ (Summit, Ministerial, Ambassadorial) missions can be approved and ended. The decision to terminate the OAU Observer Mission to Burundi (OMIB) in the wake of the military coup in Burundi in July 1996, and the decision to deploy the OAU Observer Mission to the Comoros (OMIC), were both taken at the Ambassadorial level<sup>1</sup>. The Ambassadorial level is the most efficient and practical level for this kind of decision, and enables the OAU Central Organ to meet and take decisions in Addis Ababa at any time, within hours, when the need arises. The Burundi and Comoros decisions have established a precedent, but it would be useful if a clear policy decision could be taken on this important procedural issue. This will ensure that such a policy is in place prior to it becoming an issue when a particular controversial mission has to be considered. In this way, a potential future policy dispute resulting in a delay and or hindrance in the Central Organ's ability to speedily react to an unfolding crisis situation, is eliminated.

Similarly, the policy and procedures with regard to the type of decision that will result in an OAU Mission being deployed need to be clarified. An OAU Central Organ decision authorising an OAU Mission should preferably be in the form of a UN Security Council-type resolution which clearly stipulates such aspects as the objective of the mission; the level of force that may be used; the size, composition and management of the force; administrative, logistical and financial guidelines; the end state, and the duration of the mandate, i.e. when the mandate needs to be reviewed.

The question as to which types of missions the OAU should and or could undertake, have already reached an advanced stage after two OAU Central Organ Chiefs of Staff meetings deliberated on this and related issues. In essence, their recommendations are that the OAU should focus its attention on the prevention of conflicts, and develop the capacity to deploy limited peacekeeping operations of its own. At the same time, the OAU should coordinate African participation in UN peace operations to ensure greater participation of African peacekeepers, both

civilian and military, in such UN missions. If conflict situations deteriorate to the extent that peace enforcement action becomes necessary, the OAU and UN would need to revert to coalitions of willing parties who have the capacity to carry out such operations, but all such operations in Africa need to take be authorised by the OAU. At the same time, however, it was decided that each sub-region should develop a brigade strength stand-by capacity, which, if it ever came to pass, would mean that the OAU would theoretically have five brigades available for peacekeeping operations – a capacity far greater than would be required if the OAU decided that it will only undertake limited peacekeeping operations. In reality, these brigades would also be on the UN stand-by roster, and the capacity-building initiative is thus not intended for the OAU's needs only. Some argue, however, that what is needed in Africa is a peace enforcement capacity. Most conflict situations in Africa are highly volatile, and it is likely that most peacekeeping operations in the foreseeable future will have a Chapter VII-type<sup>2</sup> peace enforcement mandate. What is needed is for these positions to be deliberated by the Central Organ, analysing what each of these types of missions imply, and what procedures and modalities need to be developed. What do we mean, for instance, with limited peacekeeping operations? 'Limited' probably implies small in numbers, logistical implications and financial costs because the OAU does not have the resources to finance and or manage and sustain large-scale peacekeeping missions. 'Peacekeeping' refers to the classical understanding of peacekeeping, i.e. consent, impartiality and minimum use of force, as opposed to 'peace enforcement' missions. One can also add quite a number of additional types of 'limited' missions to the list, such as, civilian observer missions, human rights monitoring missions, sanctions monitoring missions, etc. We will deal with these civilian missions in greater depth later, but from a policy perspective, the Central Organ needs to identify the kind of missions it would like to see the OAU undertake, so that the necessary procedures and modalities for such missions can be developed and implemented.

Perhaps the most crucial 'make or break' issue for OAU peace missions is the issue of finances. Peace operations are, by their very nature, costly affairs. They usually require the movement of heavy equipment and large numbers of people, and costly supply lines to maintain them in hostile circumstances. Even when they are relatively small and less logistically intensive, e.g. the OMB operation in Burundi from 1994-1996, they are still costly operations. It cost the OAU approximately US \$300 000 per month to maintain 64 military observers in Burundi, i.e. approximately US \$7,2 million over two years<sup>3</sup>. Thus far, the OAU had to rely on

donor funding to finance these types of missions. The OAU's lack of resources, especially financially, denies it the freedom to unilaterally decide on the strategic, operational and tactical aspects of the Peace Missions it wishes to undertake. If the OAU is unable to fund such an operation itself, whoever funds it will have a large influence on the objectives and implementation of the mission, based on their own national interests. Donors can determine the duration of a mission, and can influence a mission's mandate by placing terms and conditions on continued funding, or by withdrawing funding if the OAU wishes to amend the scope of the mission. To combat this, the OAU needs to develop clear and transparent policies that describe under what circumstances it will accept donor support to undertake peace missions. At the same time, such policies should attempt, as far as possible, to build a firewall between the need to receive donor support for such operations on the one hand, and undue influence on the organisation's ability to execute those operations as it sees fit, on the other.

The funding dilemma also has important implications for the UN's stated policy of greater reliance on regional organisations<sup>4</sup>. If the UN were to delegate more conflict management responsibilities to the OAU, it would at the same time, have to provide the OAU with the necessary resources to carry out such an enlarged mandate. The slogan made popular by local and state vs. federal politics in the United States: 'No Unfunded Mandates', come to mind.

The funding issue lies at the heart of the OAU's capacity to undertake certain types of peace missions. If the OAU, after a thorough process of analysis, finds that it is not able to undertake large scale peacekeeping or peace enforcement missions without undue reliance on donor funding, and thus unacceptably large exposure to donor influence, it will be wise to only concentrate its efforts on preventive diplomacy backed up by limited civilian and observer missions. If that is the case, the OAU, like the UN, may have to state that it is unable to carry out enforcement actions, and that such missions need to be left to coalitions of the willing who have the capacity to carry out such missions. Instead, the OAU can play a role in authorising such missions in Africa or adopt a complementary role to the UN, and retain the overall political control. The OAU will be well advised to make a strategic decision to concentrate its efforts on limited civilian and military observer missions which are designed to back-up political initiatives in finding peaceful solutions to conflict situations. This would enable the OAU to focus its attention on implementing preventive diplomacy and limited observer missions within its means without undue influence from donors or coalitions of the willing.

## Preventive Diplomacy

The establishment, within the OAU of a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution as stated in the 1993 Cairo Declaration, has as its primary objective: *“the anticipation and prevention of conflicts. In circumstances where conflicts have occurred, it will be its responsibility to undertake peace-making and peace-building functions in order to facilitate the resolution of conflicts. In this respect, civilian and military observation and monitoring of limited scope and duration may be mounted and deployed”*<sup>5</sup>. Preventive diplomacy and related activities have always been the OAU’s strengths, and the area in which it has developed the most experience and expertise. Whilst the peaceful settlement of disputes through dialogue and diplomacy remains at the core of the OAU’s conflict management activities, the flurry of activities spurred by the various donor initiatives to develop Africa’s peacekeeping capacity, threaten to shift the spotlight onto peacekeeping and related interventionist solutions.

It is important to emphasise that all initiatives, especially the military interventionist type of solutions, are undertaken to achieve a set of political objectives, which in the peace realm should be to achieve a cessation of hostilities and a negotiated settlement to the conflict at hand. We have to re-learn time and again that sustained peace only occurs when the parties to a conflict have come to realise that there is no other solution to their stalemate position but to seek a negotiated solution. The UN, OAU and even a coalition of the willing are powerless to make peace in a conflict situation where the parties believe that they can gain more if they continue fighting. At best, the UN or the OAU can assist or facilitate a peace process. A peace enforcement mission can, at best, try to enforce a peace agreement or protect a safe zone and/or humanitarian workers.

Thus, the political and diplomatic supremacy of any mission should always be maintained so as to ensure that whatever initiatives are undertaken, they remain within the overall objective of the mission. The focus on peacekeeping and ‘operations’ results in an inappropriately large proportion of funds and effort directed at training soldiers for peacekeeping operations when the real need is to train civilian and military experts in conflict analysis, mediation and negotiation techniques and other related skills. There is also a real need to develop the institutions and mechanisms necessary to undertake peace-making work, and to fund and equip peace making missions. The OAU should do everything in its power to retain the correct balance in the face of donor emphasis on capacity building for peacekeeping, and remain focused on peace-making. In this regard, the OAU, African sub-regional organisations and conflict management NGOs are probably partly to blame for not confronting the donors with credible alternative programmes which would aim at

capacity building for peace-making initiatives and funding actual peace-making missions.

## Peace Missions

In fact, it may be very useful for the OAU to adopt a ‘mission’ approach to all its initiatives with regard to a specific conflict. Once the Central Organ has decided to focus some of its attention on a specific conflict, for instance, the DRC, it could adopt a resolution spelling out its approach and objectives to its work in the DRC. It could also appoint a Special Envoy or Representative of the Secretary General to oversee its work in this regard. This should result in an integrated approach that will see the early warning, conflict analysis, preventive diplomacy, peace-making, and any peacekeeping or observer missions that may eventually result, as part of one holistic mission plan. This would hopefully also result in the development of a core group of experts and practitioners around each ‘mission’ which will encourage continuity, professionalism and increased synergy in the OAU’s approach to conflict situations.

## Civilian Missions

Civilian missions were touched upon earlier and it was mentioned that they can add a number of specialised missions to ‘limited peacekeeping’ such as civilian observer missions, human rights monitoring missions, sanctions monitoring missions, etc. All of these are civilian missions that monitor either the political implementation of peace agreements or specific aspects, such as the impact of sanctions on a given situation, the human rights conditions, etc. We have seen a sharp rise in recent years in the greater utilisation of civilian as opposed to military missions. Examples include the UN weapons inspection mission in Iraq (UNSCOM), the latest OSCE monitoring mission in Kosovo and several other OSCE missions<sup>6</sup> in Georgia, Croatia, Tajikistan, Ukraine, etc. These civilian missions are often less controversial than military observer missions, require less logistical support, have less financial implications, are more flexible in term of the size and composition of the missions, and are highly mobile. Perhaps most importantly, they give the sending organisation, in this case the OAU, a visual presence on the ground that has a very strong two-way effect. They provide their sending organisation with its own information on the conflict situation, as opposed to relying on the media and reports by the UN agencies, NGOs and others in the field; and they provide the sending organisation with an operational capability on the ground that acts both as a visual presence, and a voice on the ground. The operational capability implies that the sending organisation, e.g. the OAU, can use its mission in the field

to undertake certain actions. These include investigating specific allegations, mediating disputes, release media statements (e.g. making locals aware of what the OAU is doing or of decisions taken at the Central Organ in Addis Ababa, etc.), and co-ordinating the OAU effort with other actors in the field, such as the UN, NGOs, etc. In today's world, information is power and the capacity that the OAU will gain from having its own, independent, source of information on the ground, will greatly enhance the Central Organ's ability to impact on the conflict situations it is trying to resolve.

Within the context of the limited resources available at the OAU and the Conflict Management Division, it may be advisable to focus the OAU's initiatives around its ability to manage and sustain limited civilian and military observer missions. Its efforts with regard to peacekeeping and limited peace enforcement missions can be focused on enhancing the UN's capacity to undertake such missions in Africa. This can be done by co-ordinating African and international efforts to develop Africa's capacity to participate in UN peace operations. When it comes to enforcement action, the OAU could play a role in co-ordinating its efforts with coalitions of the willing that have the capacity and the impetus to carry out such missions. The OAU should be the authorising agency and retain political control over such missions in Africa, or co-ordinate with the UN in cases where they are the principal authorising agency.

## Peacekeeping

This does not imply, however, that the OAU should not continue to co-ordinate the various African and international donor initiatives to develop Africa's peacekeeping capacity. A broad set of capacity building objectives should flow from a strategic level policy framework which addresses the OAU's role with regard to peace operations. This framework should be in relation to that of the UN and other bodies, and convey a better understanding of the type of missions the UN, OAU and sub-regional organisations can conceivably assume responsibility for. The OAU should, once it has arrived at a clear understanding of its role, and the type of missions it is capable and willing to undertake, develop a needs-assessment that would indicate what the continents' needs are with regard to capacity building for peacekeeping operations. On the basis of such a policy framework and needs-assessment, a clear and transparent capacity building programme can be developed and negotiated with those willing to invest in Africa's peacekeeping capacity.

The OAU's co-ordination role with regard to peacekeeping has thus far focused on two issues: the strengthening of Africa's capacity in the field of peacekeeping under the aegis

of the United Nations, and the modalities for limited peacekeeping operations undertaken by the OAU itself.

With regard to the first issue, there is general agreement that Africa should further develop its peacekeeping capacity through improved regional co-ordination, the standardisation of peacekeeping training along UN norms, the improvement of inter-operability through the development of standard operating procedures, and the use of compatible equipment (especially communications).

The issue of limited peacekeeping under the aegis of the OAU on the other hand, remains more ambiguous. Some countries like Kenya reject the concept in principle, arguing that the UN should be the only institution responsible for peacekeeping, whilst others question the OAU's capacity to conduct peacekeeping operations, especially citing its lack of financial resources to fund such operations<sup>7</sup>. Once the OAU has addressed the strategic level issues, and clarified the type of missions it is capable and willing to undertake, the OAU Secretariat and bodies such as the Central Organ Chiefs of Staff meeting, will be in a better position to develop the necessary policies, procedures and doctrine needed before such missions can be put into operation.

In general, it has become clear that whilst Africa is prepared to assume even more responsibility for peacekeeping within its borders, it does not want to erode the principle that the international community, through the United Nations, has collective responsibility for global security. In other words, the OAU should not be forced to accept sole responsibility for peacekeeping in Africa, whilst the UN looks after the rest of the world.

## Relations with UN, Other Regional Organisations and African Sub-regionals

### OAU Relationship with the United Nations

Another policy issue that needs clarification is the relationship between the OAU and the United Nations. Whereas the OAU and UN have from both sides consistently stressed the need to improve co-ordination of effort, exchange of information and joint initiatives, the one unspoken issue that remains ambiguous is the OAU's stance *vis-à-vis* Article 53 of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. Chapter VIII specifies that regional organisations may not undertake enforcement action without UN Security Council authorisation. At the first ever OAU Chiefs of Staff meeting held in June 1996 in Addis Ababa, the OAU Secretary General, Salim Ahmed Salim argued that world events have demonstrated that even though the OAU may wish to focus its efforts on the prevention of conflicts, it cannot exclude itself in some circumstances from under-

taking activities of a peacekeeping nature<sup>8</sup>.

The OAU's position that it may, under certain circumstances, be forced to undertake limited peacekeeping operations on its own, does not necessarily imply that it will not seek prior authorisation from the UN Security Council for missions that have an enforcement element, as required in Chapter VIII. The reason for this is the need to intervene in situations where, from an African perspective, the OAU feels it necessary, whilst the UN remains uncertain or unwilling. For instance, the situation in Burundi immediately after the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 was extremely precarious and the OAU's assessment indicated the need for a peace mission to be deployed in Burundi to prevent another genocide from taking place. The UN Security Council could not develop the political will to establish a peace mission and in the end the OAU established a small observer mission of its own. This experience, and several others in the past<sup>9</sup>, have led the OAU to realising that it may, under certain circumstances, be forced to act on its own. From a policy perspective, the question remains whether the OAU will, under circumstances that include an enforcement action, approach the UN Security Council for approval, or whether it will act without seeking UN authorisation. One example where the OAU did not seek prior approval was the imposition of sanctions against Burundi in the aftermath of the Buyoya coup in June 1996. Strictly speaking, the sanctions were imposed by a Summit of east African Heads of State and Government and only endorsed by the OAU Central Organ. Thus, the OAU may not necessarily have been in a situation where it technically had to seek authorisation from the UN as required in Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. Rather than avoid the issue of the relationship between the UN and OAU as described in the chapter on Regional Arrangements in the UN Charter, the UN and OAU should perhaps enter into dialogue over the issue and find ways in which this apparent problem can be overcome. Perhaps like-minded African states who are all members of the UN and the OAU can agree to, under certain circumstances, take enforcement action when the UN is reluctant to do so.

### **OAU Relationship with other Regional Organisations**

Perhaps on a lower level of priority, is the need for the OAU to develop healthy relations with other regional such as the NAM, EU, OSCE, WEU, NATO, OAS and ASEAN<sup>10</sup>. The most obvious advantage of such relationships is that the OAU and the other regionals can share their mutual experiences, and learn from each other in the process. Most of these regionals have a vast array of shared experiences, e.g. the OAS may have experiences in dealing with inter-state war

over disputed territory that may be useful for the OAU in its efforts to deal with the Ethiopian-Eritrean border war. Similarly, these also share the experience of dealing with the UN. Others, such as NATO, have expertise in peace enforcement, enforcement and collective security arrangements, and they may be useful partners to build co-operative relations in this regard. The OSCE has vast experience with specialised civilian missions and may be a useful partner in building co-operative relations. The OAU's exposure to these regionals have been limited until now, apart perhaps from a donor/client relationship with the EU, and so the potential value of these relationships needs to be further developed and explored.

### **OAU Relationship with African Sub-regionals**

Another crucial policy issue that needs thorough deliberation at the OAU level is the question what constitutes a legitimate intervention by the OAU, sub-regional such as SADC, ECOWAS and IGAD<sup>11</sup>, or by other groups of African states. Two topics need to be addressed: process and substance. With regard to process, the OAU needs to develop policy on what processes or procedures are necessary for an intervention to be regarded as duly authorised by the OAU. We have already touched on the need for clarity on the relationship between the UN and the OAU *vis-à-vis* Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. It follows that should the OAU decide it will follow the required procedural route of obtaining prior authorisation from the UN as described in Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, that it would likewise expect sub-regionals to do the same. At the same time, the OAU needs to develop policies that will regulate its own relationship with the African context. Should sub-regionals such as SADC seek prior authorisation from the OAU before undertaking intervention missions of their own? Or would it be sufficient if they inform the OAU, within a reasonable period after the intervention, that they have undertaken such intervention, and why they thought it justified to do so? Neither of the two recent interventions under SADC auspices, the Lesotho and DRC interventions, sought prior authorisation from the OAU or the UN.

Apart from policies on process, the OAU also needs to develop a holistic approach to its overall conflict management which would aim to be complementary or supplementary to sub-regions. Is the OAU going to duplicate what is done at the sub-regional level? For instance, will we see similar early warning systems at SADC, ECOWAS and the OAU, or will they all form part of one larger system? At this stage each organisation is developing their own systems and structures with only the most limited co-ordination between the sub-regional and OAU level. This co-ordination needs to be improved drastically if a holistic

conflict management system is the desired end state. However, prior to this, the OAU would need to take the lead in developing the necessary policy framework, together with the sub-regions, so that all can buy into the same vision, framework, structures, procedures and policies that would flow from such a common understanding.

## Conclusion

Since the decision to establish the Mechanism for the Prevention, Management and Resolution of Conflicts was announced in Cairo in 1993, the OAU has made considerable progress in developing the institutions, on the one hand, and the human and material resources at the level of the Secretariat, on the other.

What remains is in essence two-fold. The first is for the OAU to develop and implement a comprehensive policy framework that will guide the work of the Central Organ at the Strategic level, and the Secretary General and the OAU Secretariat's Conflict Management Division at the operational level. The second is the further development of the OAU Secretariat's capacity to implement these policies and to effectively put its conflict management work into operation. The following is a summary of the recommendations made in the previous section:

- ▲ The further development of the OAU's early warning system and its integration with other similar systems at the UN and sub-regional level.
- ▲ The further development of the Conflict Management Division's capacity to analyse the information developed by the early warning system, and to improve its ability to co-ordinate and network with others performing similar work on the continent and beyond.
- ▲ The further development and honing of the OAU's ability to undertake preventive diplomacy and peace-making missions, and to keep track of, co-ordinate and synchronise its efforts with other inter-governmental, governmental and non-governmental initiatives.
- ▲ To develop a holistic peace mission approach to management of conflicts, and to develop a comprehensive policy framework within which the various activities of the OAU, African sub-regional organisation and other initiatives with regard to a specific conflict situation can be co-ordinated and synchronised. This could occur under the umbrella of a single office, that of a Special Envoy of Special Representative of the OAU Secretary General.
- ▲ To develop clear policy on what type of missions the OAU can, and cannot undertake, and how those missions will be financed.
- ▲ To investigate and develop policy and modalities for the greater utilisation of specialised civilian and military missions, so as to include an OAU field presence as an integral part of the OAU's *modus operandi*.
- ▲ To co-ordinate the various African and international donor initiatives so as to develop Africa's peacekeeping capacity. This would translate into a joint, concerted effort aimed at achieving a set of capacity building objectives developed under OAU co-ordination. This would flow from a larger policy framework on the OAU's role with regard to peace operations in conjunction with the UN and other bodies, and a better understanding of the type of missions the UN, OAU and sub-regional organisations can conceivably assume responsibility for.
- ▲ To clarify the OAU's relationship with the UN, especially with regard to Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, the UN's expectations with regard to the enlarged role it foresees for regional organisations, and the funding of this role.
- ▲ To explore and develop relationships with other regional organisations, such as NAM, EU, WEU, OSCE, NATO, OAS and ASEAN, so as to share experiences and develop strategic relationships around issues of shared or complementary responsibility.
- ▲ To develop and co-ordinate the relationship with African sub-regional organisation, specifically with regard to prior or subsequent authorisation or enforcement of other initiatives; the co-ordination of all other conflict management activities so as to achieve an overall integrated and holistic conflict management system in Africa; and to avoid unnecessary duplication and wasted effort.

The need to develop comprehensive policy frameworks on all of these issues should not be seen as a luxury, but should be understood as a crucial part of the overall system's ability to function as a whole. Too often, as the recent SADC interventions in Lesotho and the DRC has again demonstrated, organisations wait until a crisis reveals their policy weaknesses. They then come up with an ad-hoc solution which only addresses the needs and circumstances of the issue at hand and fails to have holistic application the next time a similar type of situation arises. What is necessary is for comprehensive policy frameworks to be developed around the issues identified above so that the various components of the overall conflict management system can be integrated into one consistent whole.

## Footnotes

- 1 See the Communiqué of the Fortieth Session of the Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution at Ambassadorial Level, Addis Ababa, 6 November 1997.
- 2 Peace enforcement usually occurs in a hostile environment where consent is absent, but where the United Nations Security Council, often out of humanitarian considerations, authorises the use of force to protect non-combatants and humanitarian aid workers, and or to enforce compliance with internationally sanctioned resolutions or agreements. Peace enforcement is normally associated with Chapter VII of the UN Charter entitled Acts with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression.
- 3 De Coning, C.H, The Role of the OAU in Conflict Management in Africa, in Conflict Management, Peacekeeping and PeaceBuilding, ISS Monograph Series, No. 10, April 1997.
- 4 UN Report on Reform, 16 July 1997, <http://www.un.org/reform/track2/part2.htm>.
- 5 See Article 15, Declaration of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government on the Establishment, within the OAU of a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Cairo, Egypt, 30 June 1993.
- 6 See <http://www.osce.org/> for more detail on the various OSCE civilian missions undertaken to date.
- 7 The Report of the Meeting: Chiefs of Staff of Member States of the Central Organ: OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, OAU/CO/C.STAFF/RPT (I), June 1996.
- 8 The text of Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim's speech at the opening of the Meeting: Chiefs of Staff of State Members of the OAU Central Organ, June 1996.
- 9 For instance, the lack of international support for the operation in Chad in 1981, the lack of UN and donor support for the ECOMOG operation in Liberia, and the withdrawal of the UN in Rwanda in 1994, etc.
- 10 The European Union (EU), the Organisation of Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the West European Union (WEU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the Organisation of American States (OAS) and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).
- 11 The South African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Inter-Governmental Agency for Development (IGAD).



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