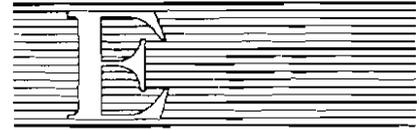




UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL



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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Fifteenth meeting of the Technical
Preparatory Committee of the
Whole

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
26-30 April 1994

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Twenty-ninth session of the Commission/
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**Critical Capacities in Support of
Good Governance, Political Stability,
Peace and Security in Africa**





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**CRITICAL CAPACITIES IN SUPPORT OF GOOD GOVERNANCE,
POLITICAL STABILITY, PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Conflicts, with their attendant problems of massive human displacement and destruction of human lives and property, constitute the greatest challenge currently facing the African continent. Issues of identity, governance, resource allocation, State sovereignty and power struggle, sometimes coupled with the personality question, have all conspired, not only to cause staggering losses of human lives and environmental degradation but also to make Africa have the unenviable record of having the biggest numbers of uprooted communities in the world: 7 million refugees, 18 million internally displaced persons!

2. Of course conflicts have existed since the beginning of recorded history and as long as there is interaction between human beings, conflicts will continue to exist. At any rate, most of the good things that people always yearn for in life generate conflicts either because they are in short supply or because they are badly managed.

3. One example that comes immediately to one's mind is the question of economic reform: a concept that has been prescribed as the best cure for Africa's current economic malaise. But appealing as that concept may be, economic reform can turn societies upside down. It raises expectations which, if not fulfilled, may widen the gap between rich and poor which, in turn, can generate conflicts between the haves and the have-nots. Sometimes politicians have opened up closed economies but not policies that go with it. But by so doing, people have come to realize that the only way to win political concessions is not through peaceful negotiations but rather through the power of the gun.

4. It follows, if you give people a free economy, you will one day have to give them other related freedoms: the freedom to identify their leaders, the freedom to express themselves on issues affecting their lives, and the freedom to associate with those they choose to. By offering people those other freedoms, you will be averting the war of unmet expectations; and this is good governance.

5. **Democracy** is yet another cherished ideal in Africa which, paradoxically, can tear societies apart if not properly handled. As an expression of democracy, elections can, indeed, act as an effective tool for conflict management. But, at the same time, elections can also deepen the degree of dissent and instability, if not properly managed.

6. The above two examples help to demonstrate four things. Firstly, conflicts are not simply an academic issue. They are a practical reality; and the role of socio-economic forces either in generating them or in helping to resolve conflicts is quite discernible. Secondly, as long as people continue to rub shoulders with one another, conflicts will continue to exist in human institutions. One cannot, therefore, think of eliminating them altogether. But, as a result of their intensity and multiplication, it is imperative for us to create mechanisms for managing conflicts or scaling them down to acceptable proportions. Indeed, as Professor Ali Mazrui put it on one occasion, "*... without a minimum of peace, development is impossible; and without development, peace is not durable*". Thirdly, all good things in nature have a price tag. If we have to develop, we must be prepared to deal with the trade-offs relating to the process of development, namely conflicts. Fourthly, bad policies or lack of good governance can legitimize the birth of conflicts. It follows, building critical capacities in Africa in the area of conflict management has never been so compelling as it is today.

7. For while increased cooperation between various African countries has, fortunately, helped to reduce inter-State conflicts which were the order of the day during the cold war era, the post-cold war period has ushered in its wake an upsurge of conflicts along regional, ethnic, religious, clan and even sub-clan lines within nations. From Liberia to Somalia, we have seen some African nations almost disintegrate. From Angola to Burundi and Rwanda, we have witnessed death and destruction as a result of conflicts and instability. As the

twenty-first century approaches, the imperative for Africa itself in alliance with its friends outside the continent to take a hard look at the scourge of armed conflict, and to come up with viable mechanisms for conflict-resolving or management capacities becomes more pressing. Put most simply, for Africa to remain relevant in the new international order, international organizations such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU) must fill in the vacuum left behind by cold war engagements in tackling the scourge of conflicts.

8. As the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa pointed out in May 1993, "*The people of Africa have become chronically vulnerable and dependent on international charity, not only for survival, but also for the containment and solution of the conflicts perpetrated by the Africans themselves*"¹ Our future generations will not forgive us, when they come to learn of the use of Africa's limited resources for self-destruction. Moreover, we will remain in the intensive care unit (ICU) of the international community if we do not utilize our limited resources for meaningful development or if we fail to create the conditions for peace and justice, by ruling with the consent of the governed; ensuring respect for human rights, equitable distribution of resources, suppression of egoism and, above all, establishing a democratic culture that promotes advancement of mankind on merit. Indeed, we all agree that Africa is a continent in transition but we should not turn this transition into a permanent feature. We must assiduously work towards getting to our destiny as soon as possible. For Africa to achieve economic success and avoid being marginalized by the rest of the world, it is imperative that we build an enabling political environment capable of managing conflicts.

II. OAU AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

9. For the purpose of our discussion, conflict management will be taken to mean a process embracing three main areas of activity. In their descending order, these areas are:

- (a) Conflict prevention or peace promotion;
- (b) Conflict control or abatement; and
- (c) Conflict resolution.²

10. This approach assumes that there is a baseline of relative peace and harmony in inter-personal relations but due to endogenous or exogenous factors such as shortage or mismanagement of resources, causes of friction may be introduced in a social system. It is the duty of the community in question to immediately identify those causes and prevent them from erupting in a conflict. Where prevention fails and a full-blown conflict emerges, then the second stage is reached called conflict management by which efforts aimed at diffusing, controlling or abating the conflict are deployed. If that conflict persists to the extent that people's existence as a harmonious community is visibly threatened, then the third stage is reached called conflict resolution, characterized by peace-keeping efforts as well as intensive and extensive negotiations to settle all the fundamental issues involved in

¹ Layashi Yaker, Welcoming Address at IPA/OAU Consultation on "The OAU and Conflict Management in Africa", Africa Hall, 19-21 May 1993.

² Cf. T.A. Imobighe, The role of subregional arrangements in conflict management, (mimeo), 1993, p. 1.

the conflict. Once the fundamental issues are resolved, conflict management is said to have gone full circle, by which the relationship between the individuals concerned is back to tolerable proportions.³

11. Based on the above analysis, it is wrong to think that the majority of the common citizens in Africa are not managing their conflicts. Indeed, everywhere in Africa people on a daily basis are busy addressing situations of domestic tension of immediate concern to them. But the causes of tension have become so many, so complex and so intolerable that without outside assistance, especially in terms of financial resources, conflicts resulting from such tension cannot be meaningfully tackled even with the use of available mechanisms.

12. It is equally wrong to think that OAU has not been concerned with the issues of conflicts. Indeed, as the Secretary-General of OAU has clearly stated in his "Report on the establishment of a mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution" [CM/1767(LVIII)] submitted to the fifty-eighth Ordinary Session of the OAU Council of Ministers, held from 21 to 26 June 1993, in Cairo, Egypt, "... *conflict resolution and the issue of peace, security and stability have been a major concern of our Organization from its inception*". It is also noted in the same report that the Commission of Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration, which was set up as the official organ charged with the responsibility for peaceful settlement of disputes among Member States never became fully operational. The question of financing its staff and operations, for instance, remained an academic exercise. Nor were other ad hoc arrangements such as Defence Commission later put in place to deal with inter-State disputes and conflicts without shortcomings. However, one would argue that they did have a positive impact on stabilizing situations of conflict among Member States.⁴

III. OAU MECHANISM FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION, MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION

13. It may be recalled that since the turn of the 1980s, there has been a growing understanding among the OAU Member States that the Organization must show more responsiveness to new challenges, particularly in the field of economic integration and development on the one hand and, especially, that of conflict prevention, management and resolution on the other. In the case of the former, the decision was reached in 1991 to house the secretariat of the African Economic Community in the present General Secretariat of OAU. In the case of the latter, the Secretary-General's proposal in 1991 for the creating of a Division for Conflict Management in the Political Department was approved. This proposal was based on the July 1990 "Declaration of the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity on the Political and Socio-Economic Situation in Africa and the Fundamental Changes Taking Place in the World", in which the Heads of State and Government reiterated their "... *determination to work together towards the peaceful and speedy resolution of all the conflicts*" in Africa - both internal and inter-State. Such resolution, they stated, would be "... *conducive to the creation of peace and stability in the continent*", and would "*also have the effect of reducing expenditures on defence and security, thus releasing additional resources for socio-economic development*". Indeed, they recognized that it is "*only through the creation of stable conditions that Africa can fully harness its human and material resources and direct them to development*".

14. Following this, the OAU Secretary-General submitted to the fifty-sixth Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers and the twenty-eighth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, in Dakar, in June/July 1992, a report entitled "Report of the Secretary-General on conflicts in Africa: Proposals for an OAU mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution". That report outlined a number

³ Imobighe, *Ibid*, pp. 1-2.

⁴ See Organization of African Unity, Resolving Conflicts in Africa (OAU Information Service), 1993.

of options on the form and nature of such a mechanism. The Assembly then adopted, in principle, such a mechanism for preventing, managing and resolving conflicts in Africa.

15. Subsequently, the Secretary-General submitted to the fifty-eighth Ordinary Session of the OAU Council of Ministers and the twenty-ninth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, in June 1993, in Cairo, yet another report reflecting on all aspects relating to the mechanism, including institutional and operational details, as well as its financing. The report was entitled "Report of the Secretary-General on the establishment, within OAU, of a mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution". On the strength of that report, the Assembly adopted its "Declaration ... on the Establishment, within the OAU, of a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution".

16. The adoption of such a mechanism signalled Africa's determination to resolve its own problems. Furthermore, by establishing within OAU a Mechanism for Conflict, Prevention, Management and Resolution, the Heads of State and Government have avowedly given concrete expression to their commitment, made in July 1990, to work together towards the peaceful and speedy resolution of conflicts on the continent.

17. This Mechanism, as provided for by the Declaration establishing it, has in brief the following structure:

(a) It is built around a Central Organ composed of the States which are members of the Bureau of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, the State of the outgoing Chairman and, where known, that of the incoming Chairman, with the Secretary-General and the Secretariat as its operational arm. The Central Organ assumes the overall direction and coordination of the activities of the Mechanism, between Ordinary Sessions of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, and functions at the level of the Heads of State and Ministers as well as that of Ambassadors accredited to OAU or duly authorized representatives;

(b) The Secretary-General, under the authority of the Central Organ and in consultation with the parties involved in the conflict, is mandated to focus efforts on conflict prevention, peace-making and peace-building. Indeed, it is much cheaper to concentrate on diffusing tension and instability than to wait for situations of tension to turn into full-blown conflicts and then rush in to put out the flames of war. Peace-keeping, thus, does not constitute a priority activity for OAU at present. However, by force of circumstances, the Organization may be compelled to deploy small-scale peace-keeping operations, mainly of an observer-mission character, as exemplified by the OAU Neutral Military Observer Group which was placed in Rwanda in 1993. In his efforts, the Secretary-General may, in consultation with the authorities of their countries of origin, and relying heavily on their cumulative experience and deep-seated knowledge of the African historical, socio-economic and cultural condition, also resort to the use of eminent African personalities. Where necessary, he may make use of other relevant expertise, send special envoys or special representatives as well as despatch fact-finding missions to conflict areas;

(c) In addition, within the context of the Mechanism, OAU is expected to closely coordinate its activities with African regional and subregional organizations and cooperate, as appropriate, with neighbouring countries with respect to conflicts arising in the different subregions of the continent, it being understood that these regional organizations and countries are more familiar with the local issues within the subregion in question;

(d) Similarly, OAU cooperates and works closely with the United Nations, not only with regard to issues relating to peace-making, but and especially, also those relating to peace-keeping. In like manner, the Secretary-General of OAU maintains close cooperation with other international organizations;

(e) Finally, an OAU Peace Fund, governed by the relevant OAU Financial Rules and Regulations, has been established for the purpose of providing financial resources to support exclusively OAU operational activities relating to conflict management and resolution. It will be made up of financial appropriations of 5 per cent of the regular budget of OAU, voluntary contributions from Member States as well as from other sources within Africa. The Secretary-General may, with the consent of the Central Organ, and in conformity with the principles and objectives of the OAU Charter, also accept voluntary contributions from sources outside Africa.

18. With the establishment of the Mechanism, OAU's capacity to deal with conflicts in Africa has been strengthened and enhanced in order for the Organization to make effective contribution to the cause of peace, security and stability on the continent.

19. Mention may also be made at this point of the fact that OAU, at the invitation of the authorities concerned, has also been involved in election monitoring with the objective of assisting Member States in the peaceful management of change and in the building of democratic cultures and institutions capable of diffusing tensions arising from rival political groups. OAU has now established an Electoral Unit within the Political Department, following the July 1990 Declaration already referred to in this paper, which re-affirmed the right of African States to decide which form of democratic government might be most appropriate for them, given the existing socio-cultural values and current socio-economic realities. Since 1990, OAU has monitored or observed presidential and parliamentary elections/referenda within 24 Member States (see annex).

20. As regards OAU's involvement in the work of the United Nations, it is to be recalled that cooperation between OAU and the United Nations in all fields, including peace and security, has existed since the establishment of OAU in 1963. Indeed, the OAU Charter stipulates in Article 2 one of the purposes of its establishment as the promotion of "international cooperation, having due regard to the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights". Such cooperation derives its existence not only from the complementarity between the purposes and principles of the two organizations but also on the basis of a number of resolutions and decisions adopted by the respective legislative organs of both organizations. In this connection, special reference may be made to the Cooperation Agreement concluded on 9 October 1990, which provided for mutual cooperation in all fields: political, economic and social, scientific and cultural.

21. It is the understanding of OAU that the coordination of the efforts of regional organizations with those of the United Nations, in the context of pacific settlement of disputes and the maintenance of international peace and security, as provided for in Article 52 of the Charter of the United Nations, implies that that relationship must be conducted in such a way that the comparative advantage of the regional organization on the one hand, and that of the United Nations on the other, optimally come into play. Thus, though OAU recognizes that the United Nations, being the world body, has the primary responsibility for international peace and security and that it is endowed with greater material and financial resources, OAU brings to such a partnership its political salience as the pre-eminent, continent-wide regional organization in Africa, deriving from its proximity to and better knowledge of local African conflict situations, the shared historical experience and culture of its Member States and the political will to resolve its own problems.

22. A review of recent developments in Africa clearly demonstrates that the respective roles of OAU and the United Nations have been complementary and mutually reinforcing. To this end, special reference may be made to the successful mediation efforts relating to the Liberian conflict jointly conducted by the two organizations through the OAU Eminent Person and the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Representative, together with the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS whose collective efforts culminated in the signing of a Peace Agreement for Liberia, in Cotonou, Benin, on 25 July 1993, by the parties concerned. In the case of South Africa, Mozambique and Burundi, the observer missions deployed by the two organizations are cooperating

closely in efforts to facilitate the reduction of political violence and the democratization process in those countries. In the case of Rwanda, the Neutral International Force set up in 1993 by the United Nations to implement the Arusha Peace Agreement on Rwanda incorporated the OAU Neutral Military Observer Group (NMOG II) in its structure, which it found on the ground. As regards Somalia, OAU has fully cooperated with the United Nations in the efforts to bring about an end to the conflict and, in particular, in support of the process of national reconciliation. It has to be noted that President Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia has been designated by the OAU Heads of State and Government to facilitate the peace process in that country, on behalf of OAU.

23. Indeed, on this issue of coordination, it is pertinent to note that the Mechanism requires OAU to cooperate and work closely with the United Nations not only with regard to issues relating to peace-making but, and especially, also those relating to peace-keeping. Further, where necessary, recourse could be taken to the United Nations to provide the necessary financial, logistical and military support for the OAU's activities relating thereto, in keeping with the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations on international peace and security.

24. It is also to be noted that although OAU is short of logistical, material and financial resources, it is well disposed to providing, through its Member States, human resources for peace-keeping operations in Africa to add to the efforts deployed by the United Nations.

25. Furthermore, attention should be drawn to the need to strengthen OAU's capacity to deal with conflict situations in Africa. In this respect, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in their Declaration on the Mechanism directed the Council of Ministers "*... in consultation with the Secretary-General, to examine ways and means in which the capacity within the General Secretariat can be built and brought up to a level commensurate with the magnitude of the tasks at hand and the responsibilities expected of the Organization*".

26. Concerning the level of cooperation between OAU, on the one hand, and subregional organizations on the other, within the context of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, it must be noted that the establishment of that Mechanism is not aimed at marginalizing those subregional organizations and arrangements. On the contrary, OAU works in close coordination and cooperation with those subregional organizations and arrangements, which it sees as constituting building blocks for its Mechanism. The reasoning behind that cooperation is that the interrelationship between human rights, democracy, security stability and development in Africa necessitates effective networking and cooperative action between OAU and the subregional groupings. Those groupings are at close proximity to conflict situations; they have innate knowledge of the local conflict situations; they have shared historical experience and culture; and they have the political will to resolve their local problems because being in the region of the conflict, they too, in one way or the other, can be affected.

27. Two recent examples may help. Firstly, OAU's cooperative action in Liberia through its Eminent Person in the name of Professor Canaan Banana of Zimbabwe was not aimed at supplanting ECOWAS but rather supplementing the commendable efforts of that subregional grouping. Similarly, under the flag of OAU and through H.E. Mr. Daniel Arap Moi, President of Kenya, the conflict in the Sudan is now being addressed by the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD).

28. It should be noted that the main focus of the existing subregional groupings in Africa is economic development. However, quarrels, disputes and conflicts within and even between the member States of those subregional groupings have slowed down their pace of integration. For those subregional organizations to serve as useful instruments for a conflict management network in Africa, they need to be properly structured for such a role. There is, therefore, the need to identify specific and cost-effective ways to assist subregional

organizations in their efforts to enhance their capacity to maintain peace, security and stability within their respective member States.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

29. The prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in Africa has been one of the preoccupations of OAU since its inception. This is clearly illustrated in the principles and structures enshrined in the OAU Charter. But due to the inadequacy of the mechanisms that were put in place to tackle conflicts and given the nature of situations of conflict today, other arrangements presumed to be better than the past ones have been worked out aimed at addressing the current situations of conflicts; hence, the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, the newly established unit for election monitoring, as well as the African Economic Community.

30. By putting these three arrangements together, housed in the General Secretariat, our Heads of State and Government have recognized that poverty and lack of norms for good governance constitute the bedrock of tension and instability in Africa. For just as poverty breeds tension and instability, so do tension and instability cause poverty and underdevelopment. The advancing and strengthening of OAU institutional capacities as discussed in the present paper in support of good governance, political stability, peace and stability should now become a civic duty, indeed an international obligation, for mankind the world over. For the world is increasingly becoming a global village, to the extent that an event that takes place in one part of the world is bound to cause reverberation effects in the rest of the world. What this implies is that no country, however powerful it may be, can be at peace with itself, if its neighbour is engulfed in the flames of war.

B. Recommendations

31. The following is recommended:

(a) It must be recognized that the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution is, first and foremost, an African initiative, designed for the purpose of resolving African problems in an African way. The African general public, at all levels, including the man in the street and in the bush, must be made to feel that that Mechanism is theirs. The need for Member States to assist in reaching out to all and sundry, including trade unionists, scholars, women's groups, student's bodies and all those at the grassroots and sensitize them to the goals and objectives of the Mechanism is now an imperative;

(b) For purposes of improving institutional performance in the field of conflict prevention, management and resolution, the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity together with subregional organizations, should develop joint training programmes for their staff on the settlement of disputes. Equally important is the question of organizing joint seminars or workshops also to be attended by representatives of Member States of OAU as well as international organizations whose activities are in the area of peace, security and stability. Such seminars or workshops will also act as fora for popularizing the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution;

(c) The United Nations should be approached and requested to provide technical assistance to OAU to help that Organization encourage its Member States to create public knowledge of human rights and to support the activities of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights;

(d) Member States of OAU should impress upon their Permanent Missions at the United Nations about the need for them to play a more active role in the sessions of the United Nations Security Council on the subject of peace, security and stability in Africa and to feed Governments of their respective countries with all relevant information and data;

(e) OAU's current focus on preventing conflicts instead of waiting to resolve them is quite understandable. But given the experience of peace-keeping in Somalia and Rwanda, whether one likes it or not, peace-keeping in Africa will remain the primary responsibility of the Africans themselves. Bearing in mind that most of our soldiers in Africa have been trained more for war than for the cause of peace, the need to retrain them in the common doctrine of peace-keeping cannot be over-emphasized. Furthermore, peace-keepers should be made to understand that concentrating on the spoils of war is not part of the doctrine of peace-keeping;

(f) Finally, no peace efforts will endure in Africa, be it at the level of OAU with its newly established Mechanism or at the level of subregional groupings, unless the activities relating to peace, security and stability of those organizations are effectively funded. It should be recalled that one of the reasons why the OAU Commission on Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration could not become fully operational was lack of funding. Since the primary responsibility of managing conflicts in Africa now lies with Africa itself, much of the required funding will have to come from Africa, not only in terms of seed money but also in material terms, including troop contributions for peace-keeping or ceasefire monitoring exercises. To say this is not to ignore the pressing need and, indeed, the value of mobilizing resources from friends of OAU outside Africa.

Annex

MEMBER STATES WHERE OAU HAS OBSERVED ELECTIONS/REFERENDA SINCE 1990

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Comoros | 13. Ghana |
| 2. Cape Verde | 14. Senegal |
| 3. Benin | 15. Niger |
| 4. Zambia | 16. Lesotho |
| 5. Togo | 17. Burundi |
| 6. Mali | 18. Malawi |
| 7. Ethiopia | 19. Equatorial Guinea |
| 8. Congo | 20. Gabon |
| 9. Djibouti | 21. Guinea |
| 10. Angola | 22. Tunisia |
| 11. Eritrea* | 23. Uganda |
| 12. Central African Republic | 24. South Africa** |

* At the time of the mission, Eritrea was not yet a Member of OAU.

** South Africa is not yet a Member of OAU.