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International Support to Credible Regional Political Processes in Africa

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Executive Summary

This Policy Brief will assess examples of the settlements of civil wars that were facilitated by regional actors with the support of the United Nations (UN). In particular, this Policy Brief will discuss the cases of Sudan and South Sudan and Burundi, which were initially led by the African Union (AU) and subsequently taken over by the UN. Specifically, this Brief will assess the nature of the international support to these regional efforts. This Brief will seek to draw out the lessons learned from the follow-up engagement in the fragile post-conflict context. A particular emphasis will be placed on instances of overlap, as well as factors that facilitated complementarity or precipitated contradictions in the interventions.

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Disclaimers

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Regionalism and the Persistence of Violent Conflict

The conflicts that have plagued parts of post-colonial Africa have brought about the collapse of social and economic structures and generated political tension. Infrastructure has been damaged and education and health services have suffered, not to mention the environmental damage which has been caused by these conflicts. Socio-economic development has also been severely retarded as a result of the carnage and destruction caused by the conflicts. Furthermore, the effects of conflicts in terms of refugee flows into neighboring countries, the illicit flow of arms, narcotics, and the emergence of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has demonstrated that no African country is an island unto itself. In this context, a regional approach to addressing the persistence of conflict, and the potential for relapse, is a necessary strategy going forward. For example, the camps in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) from the Rwandan genocide of 1994 remain a source of concern for all the key actors involved in the Great Lakes region. Another example is the hundreds of thousands of refugees generated by the most recent crisis in South Sudan that have spilled into neighboring countries including Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia. Similarly, refugees have spilled over into Chad as a result of the violent conflict in Sudan's Darfur region. This cross-border spillage in terms of human communities 'regionalizes' the nature of these conflicts, which calls for strengthening the effectiveness of regional actors and their international partners in implementing post-conflict reconstruction processes.

The UN Infrastructure for Peacebuilding

By post-conflict reconstruction, we are referring to the medium to long-term process of rebuilding war-affected communities.[1] This includes the process of rebuilding the political, security, social and economic dimensions of a society emerging from conflict. It also includes addressing the root causes of the conflict and promoting social and economic justice as well as putting in place political structures of governance and the rule of law in order to consolidate peacebuilding, reconciliation and development. As the UN High-Level Panel Report of December 2004 noted, half of all countries emerging from conflict in the post-Cold War era relapsed into conflict within five years as a result of inadequate post-conflict peacebuilding.[2]

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[1] See Michael Lund, 'A Toolbox for Responding to Conflict and Building Peace', in L. Reychler and T. Paffenholz (eds.) *Peacebuilding: A Field Guide*, (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001); and Peter Wallensteen, *Understanding Conflict Resolution: War, Peace and the Global System*, (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2002).

[2] High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*, New York: United Nations, 2004.

This culminated in September 2005 at the UN world summit and the 60th session of the General Assembly during which the recommendations of the report were reviewed. The General Assembly adopted an Outcome Document[3] at the close of the meeting which the UN Secretary-General described as "a once-in-a-generation opportunity"[4] to forge a global consensus on development, security, human rights and reform. On 20 December 2005, the Security Council and the General Assembly concluded their negotiations on the operationalization of the recommendation of the world summit and adopted joint resolutions establishing the UN Peacebuilding Commission (UN PBC).[5] Paragraph 97 of the Outcome Document recognized "the need for a coordinated, coherent and integrated approach to post-conflict peacebuilding and reconciliation."[6] The Document also identified the importance of "achieving sustainable peace and recognizing the need for a dedicated institutional mechanism to address the special needs of countries emerging from conflict towards recovery".[7] On this basis, the General Assembly decided "to establish a Peacebuilding Commission as an inter-governmental advisory body."[8] The established PBC backed by a Peace Support Office (PSO) and "a multi-year standing Peacebuilding Fund" marked a new level of strategic commitment to enhancing and sustaining peace after conflict. The mandate of the PBC is to "bring together all relevant actors to advise on and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery".[9] The core work of the PBC will be its country specific activities. It strives to ensure that the international community supports national authorities, but focuses on country-based realities.

Africa's Regional Actors and the Infrastructure for Peacebuilding

In 2006, the AU launched its "Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Policy-PCRD" - aimed to lay the foundation for social justice and sustainable peace, based on principles similar to those underpinning the mandate of the UN peacebuilding architecture, including i) prevention of relapse into violence; ii) peace consolidation; iii) national ownership; iv) complementarity of security and development strategies; and v) coherence of regional and international engagement. The intention behind the creation of the African Post-Conflict Reconstruction Policy Framework was to articulate a policy that would coordinate and guide the AU Commission, regional economic communities (RECs) such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), civil society, the

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[3] United Nations General Assembly, *Outcome Document*, 14 September 2005.
[4] Centre for Conflict Resolution, *A More Secure Continent: African Perspectives on the High-Level Panel Report*, Cape Town: Centre for Conflict Resolution, April 2005.
[5] United Nations General Assembly, *The Peacebuilding Commission*, A/60/L.40, New York: United Nations, 20 December 2005.
[6] UN, *Outcome Document*, paragraph 97.
[7] UN, *Outcome Document*, paragraph 97.
[8] UN, *Outcome Document*, paragraph 97.
[9] UN, *Outcome Document*, paragraph 97.

private sector and other internal and external partners in the process of rebuilding war-affected communities. This is based on the premise that each country should adopt a post-conflict reconstruction strategy that responds to its own particular context. Essentially, the AU's Policy Framework provides an overall strategy from which individual country programs can develop their own context-specific plans and strategies.

As of 2014, the AU has intervened in a number of countries while the AU PSC has convened more than 430 meetings. It has also authorized sanctions against several member states and the deployment of peace operations in Burundi (2003 to 2004), Comoros (2008 to present), Somalia (2007 to present) and Sudan (2004 to present - now jointly with the UN). In addition, the AU is involved in the African-led Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA), which was scheduled to transition to the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) on 15 September, 2014. In 2013, the AU participated in, and provided money to the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA). The African Union-led Regional Task Force, which is mandated to pursue members of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), is also operational in the Central African Republic, and north-eastern DRC.

The AU's Intervention in Burundi and the Support of the UN

The AU was summoned to undertake post-conflict peacebuilding in Burundi prior to the formal adoption of its PCRD Policy Framework in 2006. In a sense, the AU was already implicated in a PCRD intervention due to the exigencies on the ground. Burundi represents a case in which there was a need for a degree of flexibility and coordination in responding to the evolving crisis in the country. Following decades of political tension and sporadic civil war in 2003, the African Union Mission in Burundi (AMIB) was the AU's first post-conflict peacebuilding operation wholly initiated, planned and executed by its members. In this regard, it represents a milestone for the AU in terms of self-reliance in operationalizing and implementing a post-conflict reconstruction intervention. AMIB was mandated to stabilize a fluid and dynamic situation in which the country could relapse back into violent conflict. In April 2003, the AU deployed AMIB with more than 3,000 troops from South Africa, Ethiopia, and Mozambique to monitor the peace process and provide security.[10] Specifically, AMIB's objective was to monitor the ceasefire between the government forces and the armed resistance groups. The AU appointed Mamadou Bah as its Special Representative to Burundi to oversee this peace operation. One of the tasks of the AU force was to protect returning politicians who would take part in the transitional government. Other tasks included the core business of PCRD including opening

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[10]T. Murithi, *The African Union: Pan-Africanism, Peacebuilding and Development.* (London: Ashgate, 2005), pp.91-93.

secure demobilization centers and facilitating the reintegration of former militias back into society. These centers supervised the demobilization, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) process. AMIB was also involved in creating conditions that would allow Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees - based in the eight Burundian provinces and three refugee camps in Tanzania - to return to their homes.

AMIB had the task of establishing conditions which would allow for a UN peace operation to come into the country. The UN was reluctant to enter into a situation in which there was the potential for a relapse into conflict. AMIB's role in this case was a vital and crucial one in creating conditions through which peace, albeit a fragile one, could be built in the country. In the absence of the AU Mission, Burundi would have been left to its own devices, which probably would have led to an escalation of violent conflict. AMIB was therefore engaging in post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding to prevent violent conflict from returning, and trying to lay the foundations for stabilization and reconciliation.

Throughout its period of operation, AMIB succeeded in de-escalating a potentially volatile situation and in February 2004, a UN evaluation team concluded that the conditions were appropriate to establish a UN peacekeeping operation in the country. Following the UN Security Council Resolution 1545 of 21 May 2004 to deploy a peacekeeping mission in Burundi, Kofi Annan, the then UN Secretary-General, appointed a Special Representative, Ambassador Berhanu Dinka, to head the mission on 1 June 2004. The former AMIB troops belonging to the AU were incorporated into the UN Peace Operation in Burundi (ONUB). By 2009, some 20,000 military personnel had been demobilized, but many still lacked economic opportunities and could therefore potentially be recruited to subsequent militia activity. The issue of how to reintegrate demobilized personnel remains one of the enduring challenges of Burundi's post-conflict reconstruction efforts. This situation suggests that symbiotic coordination between the lead organizations is vital when it comes to planning for the aftermath of conflict. The essential ethos of PCRD is that sustaining the peace is just as important as achieving it.

In 2006, ONUB was subsequently replaced by the United Nations Office in Burundi (BNUB), which is still involved in providing assistance to the country. More specifically, on 13 February 2013, the United Nations Security Council extended BNUB's mandate for another year until 15 February 2014, ostensibly to support peace and long-term development in the country. This transition between the AU mission and the UN operation required a degree of symbiotic coordination and points to how similar situations might become necessary in the implementation of future PCRD interventions across the African continent.

BNUB is involved in PCRD interventions geared towards managing the historic political tensions in the country as well as supporting ongoing efforts to prepare for the parliamentary and presidential elections of 2015. The recurring incidents of extra-

judicial and politically motivated killings, the mistreatment of detainees and allegations of torture, means that there are undue pressures being placed upon citizens in the form of the infringement of their civil liberties.[11] The current Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Parfait Onanga-Ayanga, works to actively improve dialogue between the country's different political formations as well as ensure that the civil society is provided with adequate space to engage the government and other national stakeholders. BNUB is also undertaking a number of PCRD interventions relating to capacity building, notably around human rights protection and transitional justice processes and mechanisms. In particular, Burundi has been laying the foundations for the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which will facilitate efforts to uncover the legacies of the past, so as to encourage efforts to promote national reconciliation. This aspect of post-conflict peacebuilding promoting reconciliation through uncovering truth and pursuing justice features prominently in the AU PCRD Policy Framework, and it is an area that needs the increased symbiotic coordination between in-country partners.

It is too early to conclude whether the foundations for post-conflict reconstruction that were laid by AMIB, ONUB and BNUB will be sustained. Burundi was one of the first countries, together with Sierra Leone, to fall under the purview of the UN PBC. Given the AU's institutional memory with regards to the Burundi crisis, the UN PBC should strengthen its operational interface with the AU to ensure that key insights and lessons learned are incorporated into its post-conflict reconstruction work in the country.

IGAD's Intervention in Sudan and Support from the UN

The AU's regional economic communities (REC), such as the Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), are involved in a number of peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction processes across the continent. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed on 9 January 2005 to conclude one of Africa's longest running conflicts between North and South Sudan. The Agreement was brokered and mediated by IGAD between the National Congress Party (NCP) in the North and Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) in the South of Sudan, between 1993 and 2005. IGAD's mandate gradually expanded to address political, peace and security issues. Article 7(g) of IGAD's Treaty notes that a key objective of the organization is to promote regional peace primarily through political dialogue. The conflict in the Sudan is historically one of Africa's longest running conflicts. The rebellion can be traced back to tensions which existed between the northern and southern constituencies of Sudan following independence in 1956.[12] In 1972, a peace agreement between the South and North was signed in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

[11] United Nations, 'Security Council Extends for Another Year the Mandate of the UN Office in Burundi', (Burundi: United Nations Office in Burundi, 2013), http//www.bnub.unmissions.org, (Accessed 10 November 2014).
[12] Francis Deng, War of Visions: Conflict of Identities in the South Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 1995.

However, after more than a decade tensions emerged again and the SPLM/A was founded in 1983. For another decade the conflict in Sudan continued unabated.

IGAD's intervention in Sudan took place over a twelve-year period. In September 1993 the President of Sudan, Omar El-Bashir, invited IGAD (at that time still being referred to as IGADD) to intervene and assist in resolving the North/South conflict.[13] Eventually, after an arduous process of mediation, the parties eventually drafted and signed the CPA in Nairobi on 9 January 2005, effectively bringing to a close the IGAD peacemaking initiative.

The Sudan example demonstrated that in some instances sub-regional actors, such as IGAD, are more appropriate in managing localized conflicts, in this case between the North and South. Consequently, the AU and the UN had a supportive role in this particular case. Specifically, the close proximity of IGAD member states and the sense of shared crisis set the scene for the body's consistent engagement with the Sudanese situation. The comparative success of IGAD in Sudan can be ascribed to the fact that there was a dedicated lead country in driving the political negotiations between the parties. In the case of Sudan, the lead for IGAD was Kenya, and the process could proceed relatively smoothly notably because there was no direct dispute or tension between Nairobi and Khartoum. This allowed the negotiating parties to view Kenya as an honest broker with no major hidden agenda. The context of the IGAD mediation efforts could also be defined as one in which there was increasing international pressure from external actors as well as regional state actors and the AU to find a solution to the crisis. In the case of Sudan, the context was affected by the geo-strategic interests of countries like the US to see a resolution to the crisis. Specifically, the US Congress passed a resolution prohibiting trade with Sudan including the extraction of oil from the country unless progress had been achieved with advancing the peace process. However, this did not prevent corporations from other countries like China, India and Malaysia from exploiting the resources of Sudan and particularly its Southern-based oil fields. Constantly present, in IGAD's intervention in Sudan was the peril that always confronts a mediation process in terms of managing the interests and actions of secondary actors. Uganda maintained an interest in the resolution of the Sudan dispute due to the spill-over effect of the conflict on its own efforts to contain the LRA. In the case of Sudan, efforts by IGAD countries to mediate the North-South conflict were often to belie concealed interests and agendas: Uganda, Ethiopia and Eritrea overtly supported the mediation efforts even though they recognized that they could potentially weaken the government in Khartoum. Meanwhile, Kenya has a sizeable expatriate and refugee population from Sudan and Somalia therefore it was committed to finding a solution to the crisis.

IGAD maintained due diligence in ensuring that it was always available to facilitate talks, however, whenever parties disagreed with an IGAD action or position they

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[13] Ruth Iyob and Gilbert Khadiagala, *Sudan: The Elusive Quest for Peace* (New York: International Peace Academy, 2006), pp. 101-132.

would threaten to pull out of the mediation process and often engage in parallel processes. Despite the potential for parties to engage in "forum shopping" in order to get the agreements that suit them, IGAD's intervention in Sudan illustrates the importance of persisting with a peacemaking processes. It also illustrates the importance of always identifying the regional interests of neighboring countries and international actors who will often not hesitate to foster "false interventions" in order to ensure their political or economic gain. Despite the potential for false interventions, the Sudan and Somalia initiatives illustrate that IGAD benefited from a concerted and strategic partnership with interested parties through for example the IGAD Partners Forum, which included the UN and the AU. However, such an arrangement needs to be carefully coordinated so that the mediator and their supporting cast effectively sing from the same song sheet. The failure to effectively coordinate the efforts of a Partners Forum can undermine the work of a mediator and generate confusion in the minds of the parties, which has short-term repercussions in terms of the loss of life and property. In the Sudan intervention, IGAD relied, and still relies, substantially on the support of the wider international system, notably the AU, UN and donor community, and rightly so. The UN has remained actively engaged in promoting peace in South Sudan through the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS). The UN also maintains a humanitarian presence in Sudan and is actively engaged in providing humanitarian and food assistance to regions in the South.

In theory, IGAD effectively subordinates its actions to the mandate of the UN and the imperatives of the AU to resolve disputes, however, in practice where it has a comparative advantage, such as in the Sudan dispute, it can and does take the lead in peacemaking. There is increasingly a recognition within the AU and UN that they have to, at the very least, consult if not work in tandem with or delegate to IGAD the task of advancing peace and security in the Horn of Africa. This would be an instance of overlapping jurisdiction in the promotion of regional security as IGAD, the AU and UN all have a mandate to promote stability in the region. However, these overlapping mandates do not have to contradict each other, but in order to ensure that this does not happen there would need to be careful coordination between the three organizations.

The Challenges Facing AU-UN Collaboration

The AU's commitment to intervening in crises is hampered by its lack of capacity and self-sustaining resources. Even though the AU PCRD Policy Framework exists, the organization has not succeeded in mobilizing the necessary resources and building the capacity to undertake peacebuilding effectively. As a result, it relies on the UN to buttress, and gradually take over, its interventions. This has historically been a contentious issue between both institutions, with the UN arguing that it cannot always take on responsibility for AU matters. The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) is ambitious and reveals the AU's emerging interventionist policy. However, for

APSA to succeed it is self-evident that both organizations need to cooperate to prevent the political risk of relapse of violent conflicts.

The AU is committed to promoting peace across the continent, as evidence in its new African Solidarity Initiative (ASI), in partnership with other intergovernmental organizations such as the UN and the RECs, which is in stark contrast to the Organization of the African Unity's (OAU) unspoken policy of "non-intervention". The AU is skilled at designing and proposing policies, but it has been less successful at implementing those policies due to a lack of political will. This hampers the ability to respond to threats and challenges, even though the PSC makes regular pronouncements. APSA will succeed only by addressing education and skills training on peace and security through Pan-African and international partnerships.

The Case for Symbiotic Coordination

The process of rebuilding the political, security, social and economic dimensions of a war-affected community requires several different programs functioning simultaneously. However, if multiple actors are conducting their affairs without any sense of coordination, then a duplication of functions can occur. This can lead to a waste of human and financial resources. Even though the efforts of external actors are well intentioned, they can ultimately undermine the very objective that they are trying to advance. One solution is to ensure that there is a greater degree of co-ordination based on an understanding of the needs of the local target population. This means that external actors and organizations have to establish a level of symbiosis in their peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction efforts. Symbiosis refers to a relationship between two organisms or organizations which is mutually enhancing and complementary. A symbiotic relationship therefore benefits both organisms and organizations. With reference to peacebuilding a symbiotic organization operating in tandem with another seeks to promote a partnership in order to achieve the ultimate objective, namely, post-conflict reconstruction. Inter-organizational symbiosis in post-conflict reconstruction essentially means promoting a complementarity of functions and avoiding the duplication or replication of activities.

Three strategies for symbiosis in post-conflict reconstruction include the following:
- articulating more explicitly a commitment to partnership with other post-conflict reconstruction actors in the policies and mandates of their organisations;
- since policy does not always translate to practice, institutional structures need to be established to ensure that this interface actually takes place; and
- once these official structures exist, it is important to ensure that they actually work together on the ground.

An important step to achieving this is the development of institutional structures to enhance the interoperability and coordination between both the AU and UN systems. For example the UN PBC and PSO and the AU's Directorate of Peace and Security

need to establish strong lines of communication, perhaps reciprocal liaison officers, in order to coordinate the implementation of concrete post-conflict reconstruction initiatives and programs on the ground. This would also go a long way to ensuring that both institutions understand each other's organizational culture.

Policy Recommendations

To the UN Peacebuilding Infrastructure:
- Sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the AU Commission for Peace and Security on strategic coordination of peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction interventions
- Establish strong lines of communication with the AU PSD, perhaps reciprocal liaison officers, in order to coordinate the implementation of concrete post-conflict reconstruction initiatives
- Implement joint training programmes with the AU PSD on the interoperability of peacebuilding interventions to maximize the value-added by different actors

To the African Union:
- Building upon the ongoing engagement with the UN Security Council and wider UN system, and sign a formalized a MoU with the UN PBC and PSO to ensure effective coordination for support of credible political processes
- Establish strong lines of communication with the UN PBC and PSO, perhaps reciprocal liaison officers, in order to coordinate the implementation of concrete post-conflict reconstruction initiatives

To Think-Tanks and Civil Society:
- Establish a working partnership with the UN PBC and AU PSD to conduct further research and analysis on strategies to enhance coordination between regional actors and international partners, to support credible political processes
- Establish joint training programmes for UN PBC and PSO and AU officials on practical approaches to collaborating on the ground to enhance peacebuilding interventions

To International Partners:
- Increase the resources dedicated to supporting peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction processes in Africa, by increasing to 0.7 percent of GDP the official development assistance designated by the UN system

Conclusion: The Way Forward

In terms of strategies to strengthen the role of regional actors in supporting credible political processes, there is a self-evident case for greater collaboration between the UN PBC and the AU framework. In particular, the PBC and AU need to develop a *symbiotic partnership* predicated on complementarity. Such a relationship is necessary in order to avoid the duplication or replication of functions, and strategically to target the disbursement of mobilized resources to support political processes. Therefore, the PBC needs to reorient its engagement towards deeper collaboration with Africa's regional and sub-regional actors. In order to enhance the

symbiotic partnership links between the UN PBC and the AU. One way in which this could be done is through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU): the MoU would outline the specific areas in which inter-organizational collaboration can yield the greatest impact with regards to peacebuilding efforts in Africa. An MoU on the specific issue of post-conflict reconstruction would emphasize the importance of establishing a symbiotic partnership to deal with the multiple challenges that face war-affected societies. There is no question of whether the UN PBC and the AU should collaborate. The only question is how deep the partnership between the two organizations should be in order to improve and enhance post-conflict reconstruction systems in Africa.

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