Report of the Roundtable on Trilateral Cooperation in Peace Operations in Africa

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia | 7–8 October 2015

Multilateral responses to conflict situations are becoming increasingly complex, involving an increasingly broad array of actors and interventions. This raises the requirement for coordination, cooperation and partnerships between multilateral organisations, both at headquarters and in the field, if international peace operations are to be effective. The peace operations which have been undertaken in Africa in recent years by the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU) are perhaps the most representative of the growing requirements for effective peace operations partnerships.

The operations deployed by these organisations in Somalia, Mali and the Central African Republic (CAR) have served to highlight the growth in trilateral cooperation between the UN, the AU and the EU in relation to addressing conflict situations. This serves to raise key questions on how cooperation, coordination and coherence between these three multilateral organisations can be achieved, and how unique comparative advantages in response to each distinct conflict situation can be leveraged. It also raises questions as to how the UN, the AU and the EU shape and implement their actions, both as individual organisations and collectively, in response to new threats and challenges.

To explore some of these questions further, the Center for International Peace Operations (ZIF) and the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) jointly convened a roundtable on "Trilateral Cooperation in Peace Operations in Africa" in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 7–8 October 2015. The roundtable, supported by the Federal Government of Germany, brought together 45 participants from the UN Secretariat, the AU Commission and the EU Commission, as well as representatives from the current or most recent peace operations of each organisation in Somalia, Mali and the CAR.

UN, AU/African and EU Missions deployed to African Countries 2010–2015			
	UN Missions	AU Missions	EU Missions
Abyei	UNISFA (since 2011)		
Boko Haram Regions		MNJTF (since 2015)	
Burundi	BINUB* (2007–2011) BNUB* (2011–2015) MENUB* (since 2015)	Military and HR Observers (2015)	
Central Africa	UNOCA* (since 2011)		
Central African Republic (CAR)	BINUCA* (2009–2014) MINUSCA (since 2014)	MICOPAX (2008–2013) MISCA (2013–2014) MISAC*** (since 2014)	EUFOR RCA** (2014) EUMAM RCA** (since 2015)
Chad-CAR	MINURCAT (2008–2010)		
Cote d'Ivoire	UNOCI (since 2004)		
DRC	MONUSCO (since 2010)		EUPOL RD Congo (2007–2014) EUSEC RD Congo (since 2005)
Guinea-Bissau	UNIOGBIS* (since 2010)	ECOMIB (since 2012)	(EU SSR Guinea Bis-sau; 2008–2010)
Indian Ocean			EUCAP Nestor (since 2012)
Liberia	UNMIL (since 2003)		
Libya	UNSMIL* (since 2011)		EUBAM Libya (since 2013)
Lords-Resistance-Army (LRA)-affected Areas		RTF (since 2011)	
Mali	MINUSMA (since 2013)	AFISMA (2013) MISAHEL*** (since 2013)	EUTM Mali** (since 2013) EUCAP Sahel Mali (since 2014)
Niger			EUCAP Sahel Niger since 2012)
Sierra Leone	UNIPSIL* (2008–2014)		
Somalia	UNPOS* (1995–2013) UNSOM* (since 2013	AMISOM (since 2007)	EUTM Somalia** (since 2010)
Somalia/Gulf of Aden			EUNAVFOR Somalia- Operation Atalanta** (since 2008)
Sudan/Darfur	UNMIS (2005–2011) UNAMID (since 2008)	UNAMID (since 2008)	
South Sudan	UNMISS (since 2011)	MVM (since 2014) AU Political Mission (since 2015)	EUAVSEC South Sudan (2012–2014)
West Africa	UNOWA* (since 2002)		
Western Sahara	MINURSO (since 1991)		

*UN Political Missions; **EU Military Missions, ***AU Political Missions*

Moving from Cooperation to Partnership

The peace operations landscape in Africa has changed significantly over the course of the past decade. Whereas in the 1990s and early 2000s almost all peace operations in Africa were undertaken by the UN, from the mid-2000s onwards the AU has taken on an increasingly operational role, deploying Peace Support Operations (PSOs) in response to a range of crisis and conflict situations. In addition, the EU has over the course of the previous years deployed more and more military and civilian operations on the African continent. As the table below illustrates, the UN, the AU and the EU alone have deployed 48 operations across 22 operating areas on the African continent in the past five years.

This growing level of deployments, in particular on the part of the AU and the African sub-regional organisations, has contributed significantly to the development of the relationship between the UN, the AU and the EU in the field of peace and security. For much of the past decade, the UN-AU relationship was framed within the context of capacity-building, where the UN worked to assist the AU to develop its own capacities to plan and deploy peace operations. Similarly, the EU-AU relationship was framed in the context of capacity-building and the provision of the bulk of the finances which were required to conduct African-led peace operations. Over the course of the last few years however, this relationship has evolved significantly from one of cooperation and capacity-building to one of partnership for peace and security in Africa.

In January 2012, the AU released a report of the Chairperson of the Commission titled "Towards Greater Strategic and Political Coherence"[1], which started to shift the narrative on the relationship between the AU and the UN on peace and security away from one of capacity-building for the AU towards one of partnership between the two organizations. It outlined principles of cooperation and outlining modalities for cooperation at the strategic and operational levels. Specifically, the AU called for (1) support for African ownership and priority-setting, (2) flexible and innovative application of the principle of subsidiarity, (3) mutual respect and adherence to the principle of comparative advantage, and (4) a division of labour underpinned by complementarity. This was followed up in September 2013 by a similar report titled "The Need for Greater Coherence", where the AU continued to elaborate on its vision of partnership with the UN in peace and security in Africa.

The UN Security Council, building on this engagement, and also taking stock of the practical lessons from its partnership with the AU requested the Secretary General to draft a report on lessons identified from AU-UN transitions in the cases of Mali and the CAR. The report, released in January 2015, noted the various models of cooperation which had gradually emerged between the AU and the UN, anchored in the principles of complementarity and comparative advantage. The report noted that the specific circumstances of each conflict should determine the particular model of collaboration between the AU and the UN. The report further made specific recommendations in relation to joint planning, benchmarking, transitions, and the re-hatting of personnel. Specifically, the report recommended that the AU and the UN jointly develop a creative and flexible transition toolbox, which would include guidance and standards on (1) joint assessments and planning, (2) pre-deployment visits and force generation, (3) coordination mechanisms, (4) continuity in command and control, as well as re-hatting (5) transfer of civilian capacity, (6) support mechanisms, and (7) arrangements to increase troop standards.

The UN and the EU have also worked to better structure their partnership on peace operations and crisis management, which resulted in the development of a "Joint Declaration on UN-EU Cooperation in Crisis Management" in 2003, a "Joint Statement on UN-EU Cooperation in Crisis Management" in 2007, and a "Plan of Action to Enhance EU Support to UN Peacekeeping" in 2012. In March 2015, building on this cooperation, the EU and UN presented the "Priorities 2015 – 2018" which are designed to strengthen the UN-EU strategic partnership on peacekeeping and crisis management.

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[1] African Peace and Security Council, 2012, *Report Of The Chairperson Of The Commission On The Partnership Between The African Union And The United Nations On Peace And Security: Towards Greater Strategic And Political Coherence*

Importantly, one of the seven priorities is the "Support to the African Peace and Security Architecture" which highlights that closer trilateral cooperation with the AU, including making contributions that enabled the AU to improve its own rapid response capacity, are a key aim of the UN-EU cooperation.

Over the last year efforts have been made to consolidate this evolving thinking on partnerships through three different processes at the UN level. First, the UN released its report titled "Partnering for Peace: moving towards Partnership Peacekeeping" in April 2015, which recognized that the engagement of regional partners in peacekeeping alongside UN operations had become the norm, rather than the exception. The report noted that this is most evident in Africa, where the engagement of the AU and sub-regional mechanisms, as well as the EU, alongside UN operations was present throughout all phases of conflict. It was noted, however, that the potential for closer trilateral engagement and cooperation among the UN, the AU and the EU had yet to be fully explored. Second, the report of the UN's High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations of June 2015 called on the UN to further strengthen its partnerships with regional organizations as part of an increasingly global and regional peace and security architecture. Third, the UN Secretary-General in his report "The Future of United Nations Peace Operations" of September 2015 noted that the UN needed to move away from improvisation in the manner in which it worked with regional organizations, and that it needed to build on its experience to establish standing arrangements and procedures which can be applied flexibly when operations are sequenced or parallel.

Contemporary Peace Operations: Evolving Contexts need Evolving Partnerships

The further enhancement of these partnerships will be based on the experiences which have been made to date, in particular in the African context. Drawing on the partnership experiences made in Somalia, Mali and the CAR will be of particular relevance, as all three organisations operated, and continue to operate, parallel to one another in rapidly evolving environments. This is often characterised by the use of asymmetric tactics by non-state armed actors, and in many cases directly targeting peace operations themselves. In response, mandates have been adapted to cater for the conduct of counter-insurgency operations, the deployment of parallel forces, the conduct of offensive operations, stabilisation tasks, and an increasing use of technology and intelligence. Based on the experiences gained in the past few years, the UN is making investments in improving peace operations capabilities, including through strengthening analysis, planning and intelligence capabilities, as well as working with its member states to broaden the capabilities available, as highlighted by the peacekeeping summit held in September 2015. The EU, for its part, is working to improve in particular its threat assessment and analysis capabilities, and is making stronger investments in crisis management and capacity-building initiatives. The AU in turn is working to enhance its rapid deployment capabilities, and its ability to address asymmetric threats.

These deployment experiences have highlighted that each organisation is still struggling to respond to the changing strategic and operational requirements needed to respond to the shift from deploying peacekeeping operations to deploying operations that operate in areas where terrorist organisations and organised criminal networks are active, and where operations become direct targets. Similarly, crisis situations or conflicts that have regional dimensions are still extremely difficult to address, as the multilateral frameworks for addressing such regional non-state threats have not been developed sufficiently. In this context, the need for effective peace operations partnerships which leverage roles and responsibilities between multilateral organisations, and which also enable the utilisation of member state capabilities in key roles, is heightened. A key lesson here has been that the added value of such partnerships is the ability to use the role of each organisation in a manner that enhances the effectiveness of the actions undertaken, individually and collectively, overall to attain outcomes which no organisation acting alone can achieve.

Achieving this in the cases of the deployments in Somalia, Mali and the CAR has proved very difficult to date. The UN has developed relatively effective channels of communication with the AU, and the conduct of joint assessments and planning exercises has become relatively routine, and has been strengthened through each deployment exercise. In the case of Mali, the UN was involved in significant ways in the planning of the AU operation, and the AU was consulted to a degree in the transition from AFISMA to MINUSMA. In the case of the CAR this relationship was strengthened further, and transition planning from MISCA to MINUSCA was undertaken on a joint basis. Similarly, the UN and the EU have strengthened their ability to involve each other in planning processes through their deployments in Mali and the CAR. In the CAR, an EU operation was deployed specifically as a bridging operation as the UN mission was being established.

The AU and the EU have to date not evolved their relationship at the operational level between the headquarters, and the exchange of analysis and planning information is limited. While these relationships have therefore been evolving at a bilateral level, no mechanism has been developed through which all three organisations could conduct joint analysis of the conflict situations, and through which operational planning processes could be shared. The exception here has been the engagement of the UN, the AU and the EU on Somalia, where benchmarking processes have drawn all three organisations together for the conduct of joint analysis and planning.

Center for International Peace Operations (ZIF)
Human rights officers with the UN Mission in South Sudan, political advisors for the EUPOL Mission in Afghanistan, or election experts in Haiti: The Center for International Peace Operations (ZIF) is Germany's central point of reference for civilian expertise. On behalf of the Federal Government of Germany and the Bundestag, ZIF recruits and trains German civilian personnel for international peace operations and election observation missions and offers information and advice to national and international decision makers.

Thus, while the trilateral partnership should be based on joint analysis of the crisis or conflict situation at hand and joint planning processes, the mechanisms for doing so were not in place, resulting in largely fragmented planning processes and ad hoc coordination, driven in large part by the operations in the field. As a result, parallel operations were given unsynchronized mandates which were at best complementary, at worst overlapping, and in some areas divergent. The coordination of the implementation of these mandates in the field also proved challenging at times accordingly.

A further experience from the sequenced and parallel deployments to date is that although there is a political willingness to adjust mandates to meet operational realities, the ability to adapt to these changing mandates at the operational level remains a major challenge for all three organisations. Few states possess appropriate capabilities for dealing with asymmetric threats, and these are usually not made available for multilateral deployments, but are retained as national capabilities. AU operations in particular tend to lack sufficient capabilities for addressing asymmetric threats, ensuring force protection, and face challenges in securing specific assets, in particular aviation assets. The UN faces many of the same challenges, but is also constrained when mandated to provide support to AU operations. Thus, the provision of UN logistical support to the AMISOM operation and the Somali security forces has been characterised by numerous challenges inherent in differences in organisational approach.

A further experience relates to the different standards and requirements that UN, AU and EU operations have, and the manner in which they engage with their Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) and their Police Contributing Countries (PCCs) when planning operations, deploying them, and planning for transitions. To date, joint engagement by the UN and the AU with contributing countries when preparing for deployments or transitions has been relatively low. In the case of Mali, for instance, it was found that the UN and the AU were working with the same contributing countries in parallel, leading to fragmentation in the transition process.

In the EU context, coordination with European contributing countries to UN missions and the EU Commission remains challenging and is often handled at a bilateral level, while contributions to EU operations are not transitioned into UN operations but are generally viewed as bridging operations. Thus, while AU operations have been re-hatted into UN operations, EU operations are withdrawn and European contributions to UN operations are generally undertaken by member states on an individual basis. Ultimately, all the capabilities required for peace operations reside with the member states, whose membership in organisations overlap. The coordinated engagement with member states on their contributions to the operations undertaken by these various organisations has generally been weak to date.

As a result of these challenges, it was found that partnerships in planning do not always result in partnerships in implementation. The ability to follow through on the decisions which have been taken remains a major stumbling block for all three organisations, as each does not act as a unitary actor, but is reliant on its member states to ensure that decisions taken are implemented. In the case of the AU this is complicated further by the inter-dependence between the AU and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the Regional Mechanisms (RMs), where the AU at times works directly with its member states, and at other times with the regions, which in turn work with their member states. The overlapping membership of all AU member states in one or more regions and the AU serves to complicate this situation even further. Thus, whereas in the case of Somalia the UN, the AU and the EU work directly with one another, in the case of Mali ECOWAS was involved as a further multilateral actor, as was the case with ECCAS in the CAR. An additional complication here is that the same member states may on occasion take very differing views, and divergent positions, within the different organisations they are members of.

A further experience gained through the deployments made to date is that each organisation has a valuable contribution to make in the prevention of the crisis, the responses to conflict situations, and the long-term engagement which follows through peace consolidation and peacebuilding efforts and these should be effectively leveraged on the basis of comparative advantage to ensure effective engagement. Thus, the political and security aspects of operations cannot be separated from one another, and must be supported by each organisation. A further area requiring a strong trilateral partnership is engagement with the national security sector in countries of deployment.

The UN, the AU and the EU all undertake important work in this area, working to enhance the national and regional security capabilities and capacities of member states, undertaking different roles at different times. The coordination of these efforts has however proved challenging, complicated by the necessity to coordinate these multilateral initiatives with bilateral partnerships by states and organisations operating outside of the multilateral processes which are established and supported by peace operations.

> **Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS)**
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> The Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) at the Addis Ababa University (AAU) is a prominent Institute for education, research, and policy dialogues on peace and security in Africa.
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> The IPSS produces skilled professionals in conflict prevention, management, resolution, and peace building in its several graduate programmes; and promotes the values of a democratic and peaceful society.
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> The IPSS also serves as the secretariat of the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa, a high-level annual gathering to discuss and find solutions to Africa's challenges in peace and security.

From Practice to Policy:
Strengthening the Trilateral Partnership

On the basis of the experiences gained and lessons identified through the parallel deployments of UN, AU and EU operations in countries such as Somalia, Mali and the CAR in recent years, several recommendations are to turn some of the lessons identified and practices into policy, with the aim of strengthening and deepening the trilateral partnership on peace operations.

1 Cooperation starts with prevention

Cooperation must start with conflict prevention. Modalities should be explored on how, under which circumstances, and by which process early warning, intelligence and analysis could be shared between the UN, the AU and the EU in a structured manner.

2 Enhance understanding of partnerships

A deeper understanding of how the partnerships are envisioned by the UN, the AU and the EU is required beyond the level of agreed-upon principles. The forms of peace operations partnerships evolving in Africa today are charting the future of global-regional peace operations partnerships. In addition, these experiences lead to an enhanced understanding of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. All organisations undertaking peace operations must work to better understand their dual role, on the one hand working as organisations responding politically and operationally to crisis and conflict situations alongside others, on the other hand as organisations working with, and enabling, others to achieve better outcomes than any one organization can achieve alone. In all of this, in the African context, African leadership is essential.

3 Trilateral partnership is always context-specific

The notion of strengthening the trilateral partnership on peace operations should not be all-encompassing. Rather, primacy should always be given to process, and not to pre-determined models. Therefore, the trilateral relationship should be light and flexible, and should add value and be context-specific. Thus, identifying comparative advantage will always be a context-specific exercise. As such there cannot be pre-determined outcomes, but the manner in which outcomes are attained can be structured in a reliable manner. In this regard, the current situation, in which the AU typically undertakes stabilization operations, these are transitioned into UN consolidation operations, and the EU provides support through funding, bridging operations and security sector capacity-building operations may be a useful form of partnership in some contexts, but is not necessarily the model for the future.

4 Develop framework that brings the three organisations together at political-strategic and operational levels

A framework which draws together the UN, the AU and the EU at the political-strategic level and the operational level on areas of mutual interest in relation to peace and security in Africa, in particular on peace operations partnerships, should be developed. Further, each organisation needs to make the necessary investments in strengthening the capacities to maintain this relationship in New York, Addis Ababa and Brussels so that all partners maintain effective information-flows.

⑤ Understand what each organisation brings to the table, and how
A better understanding of what each organisation is able to do, and what it is not able to do, is required to enable a more effective partnership. As such, the capabilities, deployment requirements and doctrine of each organisation need to be jointly understood, and where possible, policies, standards, requirements and support arrangement modalities could also be developed jointly.

⑥ Joint planning teams, or ability to plan in a joint manner from the beginning
Each organization is responsible for conducting its own planning processes. However, there is added value in conducting certain planning processes in a joint manner, in particular where these relate to initial assessments, conflict analysis, the development of intervention strategies, benchmarking processes, and the planning for transition processes. The development of agreed-upon mechanisms which can be activated when required can only serve to enhance the speed of the planning process, and as such, the speed of deployment.

⑦ Include the regions
Within Africa, the same partnership dialogue which is taking place between the UN and the AU and the EU and the AU is also taking place between the AU and the RECs and RMs. Here, questions of leadership, subsidiarity, comparative advantage, and roles and responsibilities for an effective partnership for peace and security are at the forefront. For the African continent to effectively engage with the UN and the EU, and to develop an effective peace operations partnership, an effective manner for including the regions in this dialogue must be found.

⑧ Engage Member States jointly
In the final instance, all capabilities required for peace operations reside with the UN, AU, and EU member states. Developing coordinated mechanisms for engaging with member states and contributing countries to access these capabilities and deploy them in effective ways across operations will be key.

The Way Forward

As the global-regional partnerships pillar of the UN Secretary General's report on the future of UN peace operations is unpacked and further explored, significant attention will be given to the enhancement of the UN-AU strategic partnership on peace operations. Similarly, the UN and the EU will continue to develop their partnership on peace operations on the basis of the joint action plan. At the same time, the AU and the EU will continue to enhance their partnership in Africa, in particular in relation to the African *Peace and Security Architecture* (APSA) and the *Africa Peace Facility* (APF).

While the development of these partnerships is key to the future of peace operations in Africa, attention must also be given to the strengthening of the trilateral partnership between these three organisations. In a context of rapidly evolving threats to international peace and security, effective burden-sharing, and effective partnerships for peace operations, will be essential for peace and security in Africa. As such, the UN, the AU and the EU must learn to operate effectively alongside one another, and to effectively enable one another, wherever possible. Unlocking the potential of a strengthened trilateral partnership between these three organisations is therefore key to the future of peace operations in Africa.