



TANA HIGH-LEVEL FORUM ON SECURITY IN AFRICA

Outcomes Document

5th Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa
Theme: “Africa in the Global Security Agenda”



Figure 1: Panellists at the 5th Tana Forum discussing Peace Support Operations in Africa

A. Introduction

The 5th Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa, also known as the “Tana Forum,” took place on 16-17 April 2016, in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia, on the theme *Africa in the Global Security Agenda*. It is gratifying that in less than half a decade, the Tana Forum has established itself as a platform for frank, rigorous, informal, constructive and ‘no-holds-barred’ dialogue on common security challenges in Africa, and how best to sustainably address them in the short, medium and long terms.

Given the range, salience and seriousness of the issues discussed as well as the sheer diversity of participants, the Tana Forum is quickly maturing into an authentic African brand, with the requisite intellectual credentials to interrogate some of the most pressing peace and security challenges facing Africa and, by extension, the world. It offers a pan-African platform that is



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truly plural and enriching. Once again, this year's Forum attracted eminent participants from different countries, sectors, and institutions across Africa and beyond. With eleven incumbent and former African Heads of State in attendance, and the first non-African former President of Timor-Leste, H.E. Jose Ramos-Horta, this year's event received a keynote address from the Chair of the Kofi Annan Foundation and former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan.

The theme for the 5th Tana Forum, *Africa in the Global Security Agenda*, was set against the backdrop that as much as three-quarters of today's global peace support operations are located in Africa. In all cases, these operations - and wider aspects of the continent's role in the global security arena - often take a heavy toll in terms of human, material and fiscal investments and costs on the countries hosting - or affected by - them. To paraphrase the Chair of the Tana Forum Board and former President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, in comparison with other regions of the world, Africa alone is both disproportionately responsible for the largest number of mostly intra-state conflicts and peace operations, often with far-reaching cross-border spill over effects.

Despite the size, scope and heavy costs, however, Africa's immense contributions to global peace and security are mostly underrated, disparaged and/or completely ignored. The theme for this year therefore recognises Africa's extensive involvement in keeping the peace within itself - and around the world - over the past six decades while pointing to the need for a commensurate and corresponding amplification of the continent's voice and agency, in the global security arena.



Figure 2: H.E. Joyce Banda, Former President of Malawi greets H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, Chairperson of the Tana Forum Board

Specifically, the 5th Tana Forum recognises the urgent need to reverse the marginalisation or outright exclusion of Africa within the pinnacles of decision-making on global security issues, particularly in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), where issues relating to the continent security interests, priorities and alternative futures are discussed and determined. Today, the debate on peace operations has



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changed considerably but so too have the complexities of actors and institutions involved, and the broad ramifications of their engagements.

Once again, then, the 5th Tana Forum sought to harvest diverse perspectives as to “why” Africa’s role in agenda setting on global peace and security is still minuscule, stifled, and far-fetched; “what” the key features of Africa’s engagements within the existing global security architecture should be; and finally, “how” the continent should meaningfully input into the conception, design and implementation of the global security agenda. The deliberations, over the two days of several sessions, produced the following far-reaching conclusions:



Figure 3: Mr. Kofi Annan, delivering a keynote address at the 5th Tana Forum after an introduction by H.E. Thabo Mbeki (left), former President of South Africa

B. Emerging issues/conclusions

1. Participants recognised that Africa has enormous potential - and that it continues to make significant developmental strides despite the empire of odds it faces. How well, and quickly, these challenges are addressed would depend on the extent to which African governments prioritise human security in terms of well-being, access to subsidised



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socio-economic and political opportunities, and the safety and security of citizens over and above regime security. To continue to do otherwise invariably creates an incentive for disenfranchised segments of the population, most particularly the youth, to embrace the types of violence that are leading to the collapse of public order;

Participants recognised that when governments spend less on, or pay miniscule attention to, key social sectors as is the case in many African countries, they inadvertently leave governance gaps that encourage the incubation of prolonged social tensions, civil strife and instability; with several implications for national, regional, continental and global security. Moreover, the same considerations and constraints that make African governments give limited priority to tackling poverty and myriad other forms of socio-economic inequalities also plays out in their s lack of political will to meet commitments relating to collective security imperatives at the regional, continental and global levels;

C. Africa's unifying voice in the global security agenda

1. A lot was said, rightly so, about the need for Africa to have a greater voice and more established presence at the pinnacle of the global security order; particularly in terms of permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). However, this

If we cannot first develop and implement Ethiopian, Nigerian, Egyptian, Kenyan, Rwandese solutions and institutions, how come we expect to develop and deploy African solutions and institutions?

- *H.E. Mr. Hailemariam Desalegn*

- quest is currently being met with bemusement, perfunctory endorsement or derision by major global players and by the P5 members of the UNSC. Even at that, participants noted that the rhetoric around the reform of the Council will not happen unless African governments make a bold and collective move rather than be drowned by the pursuit of enlightened national interests;
2. Participants were of the strong opinion that Africa's clamour for a greater role in global governance should begin, first and foremost, with reforming and repositioning its own institutions, especially the AU, to exercise greater leverage and effective leadership on security issues affecting the continent; and also how the rest of the world responds to the continent's myriad security concerns;



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3. Participants recognised the existence of a direct and causal linkage between Africa's role in the global security arena and making sure that the key pillars of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) are fully functional and responsive in terms of conflict prevention, conflict management, conflict resolution, and also tackling the challenges of post-war reconstruction and development (PCRD);
4. Participants recognised that institutions are as strong, important and useful as their member states want or make them. African institutions at the forefront of defining, mobilising and harmonising Africa's security interests, particularly the African Union, must be empowered by member states before they can fully, and successfully, take up the challenge of unifying and amplifying an African voice or position across all issues.

D. Sovereignty versus strong institutions

5. Participants insisted that the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC), in particular, must be in a position to undertake current and possibly expanded future mandate of coordinating African positions but also ensuring that member states faithfully comply with the conditions of their membership;

6. Participants recognised that in order for the AU to genuinely function as a veritable focal point and unifying force for the pan-African agenda on peace, security and development, the consensus building power of the AU has to increase in qualitative and numerical terms; with African Heads of States championing an ever closer and unified Union.



Figure 4: Ethiopian Foreign Minister Dr. Tedros Adhanom (left) with Rwandan Foreign Minister Ms. Louise Mushikiwabo

At the heart of the current inability to mobilise one voice on Africa's role in the global security agenda, or indeed, on broader developmental issues, is the reluctance of African governments to pool, hand over, or cede some authority to the African Union while expecting it to act in a determined manner. The time has come for African states to



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reconsider the rigid interpretation of state sovereignty and agree to cede/transfer more power and authority to the AU to allow it deliver a more robust and effective peace and security regime;



Figure 5: (L-R) H.E. Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo, H.E. Mr. Hailemariam Desalegn, Mr. Kofi Annan and H.E. Mr. Thabo Mbeki

7. Participants warned that there is sufficient - but often discounted - grounds to believe that the most important decision on peace and security by Africa's regional and continental institutions are either routinely ignored or breached by member states. This situation, in turn, sends the wrong signal - especially to outsiders - that African governments and institutions cannot (or should not) be taken seriously.
8. Member states should show greater commitment to decisions of the AU by ratifying and domesticating them; especially but not limited to those on democracy, elections, and governance given the growing realisation that some of the disturbing threats to peace and security in Africa mostly come from within the continent rather than from outside. This imperative requires closing the gaps between governance and security; and by extension, enhancing the synergies and complementarities inherent in the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the African Governance Architecture (AGA).



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9. African governments (and the institutions they have created to serve broad and specific purposes) should see and treat themselves in complementary terms rather than engaging, as has become quite often, in unhealthy competition and rivalries that lead to the dissipation of limited resources, and generally puts the continent at a disadvantage in global governance;

E. The need for internal funding mobilisation to foster African ownership

10. Participants were unanimous that one of the most intractable - but also avoidable - problems facing Africa's inter-governmental institutions, in varying degrees, relate to the dearth of political will by member states to adequately fund or resources them. There is clear disconnect between the commitments freely laid down by African governments and what they actually put down. To achieve ownership and autonomy in policy responses, African governments and their institutions should look inwards to fund, and resource, peace operations rather than overly relying on external actors to meet their basic needs;

11. Participants converged on the point that more than any other time in the past, it is now urgent imperative that African governments implement decisions wilfully endorsed on financing the AU and other inter-governmental institutions. Member



Figure 6: Prof. Adebayo Olukoshi, Regional Director, Africa and the Middle East, IDEA International speaking during a session on "Africa's Role in the International Security Realm"

states, both large and small, have a responsibility to follow-up their commitments with adequate funding and by taking general responsibility. Participants questioned, with substantial justification, whether a model of African solutions to African problems can emerge where others have to pay for it, even as they also recognised that the narrative of African solutions to African problems might provide an excuse for key partners to leave the continent in the lurch;



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12. While the perennial challenge of paucity of funding for a variety of peace operations persists, it is by no means the only factor undermining Africa's capacity to stand firm, act alone, or play a lead role in the global security agenda. Much would also depend on the continent's capacity to define, determine and pursue clear and coherent mandates;
13. If the continent, through the African Union, is to serve as a credible interlocutor for the continent in the global security arena, it would have to tackle constraints linked to funding, absence of clear and coherent mandates, and those related to the coordination and harmonisation of diverse interests and priorities;

F. Divergent interests versus strong positions by partners

14. Participants stressed the urgent imperative to deepen and also broaden coordination among African stakeholders: first, between the AU and the African Group in New York; and second, of necessity, insist on greater coordination, synergy as well as compliance by African members of the UN Security Council (A3) with the decisions of the Assembly of Heads of State of the AU. Doing so would generally help to bridge the current disconnect between the AU in Addis Ababa and the UN in New York, and also promote the continent's position in the global security arena;
15. Prior to engagements with New York, Brussels and other major global capitals, Africans must identify, mobilise and forge unified positions. The time is now for the AU, through the African Group in the UN, to insist on the operationalization of Article 109 of the UN Charter without the possibility of a veto from the P5 members of the UNSC. Although the P5 will not accept this without a pushback, Africa must be resolute;
16. Participants recognised that the widening gap in the current relationship between and among African governments, inter-governmental institutions and civil society organisations (CSOs) working on peace and security issues, should be quickly closed up. It is imperative for all stakeholders to work much more closely and concerted in order to successfully mobilise an authentic and credible African voice on key peace, security and development;

"You cannot have peace and security without inclusive development, the rule of law and the respect for human rights."

- *Kofi Annan*



G. Emerging African PSOs as a mechanism for asserting Africa's voice in the global security agenda

17. Participants recognised that Africa needs to develop/adopt a clear and coherent set of doctrines to guide and shape its response to myriad global security imperatives rather than pursue ad-hoc, knee-jerk and often disjointed responses. Although the continent has made impressive and enduring contributions to global security, it has so far failed to put in place any coherent or substantive doctrinal guidelines, rules of engagement, or to mobilise an overarching narrative to guide current and future interventions. One immediate implication of this is that Africa's role in global peace and security is either haphazard or limited to the provision of troops, as if her men and women in uniform are mere cannon fodder. In creating an overarching doctrine or narrative therefore, there is need to reflect on the peculiar and changing nature of conflicts in Africa, coupled with a recognition that the continent must, to varying degrees, work with a range of external actors.



Figure 7: Participants at the 5th Tana Forum



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