

AFRICAN UNION and Agenda 2063

THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE



Adeoye O. Akinola & Khabele Matlosa (Eds)



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List of Abbreviations

4IR/4.0	Fourth Industrial Revolution era
A4P	Action for Peacekeeping
AAEA	Association of African Electoral Authorities
AAU	Association of African Universities
ABCD Commission	Africa–Brazil–Caribbean Diaspora Commission
ACA	African Curriculum Association
ACDEG	African Charter on Democracy, Election, and Governance
ACERWC	African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
ACHPR	African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights
ACLED	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project
ACOTA	Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance
ACP	African Caribbean and Pacific
ACRI	African Crisis Response Initiative
ADERN	Africa Decolonial Reading Network
AEC	African Economic Community
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AfDB	African Development Bank
AFISMA	African-led International Support Mission to Mali
Africa-CDC	Africa Centre for Disease Control
AFRICOM	United States Africa Command
AFRIPOL	African Police
AGA	African Governance Architecture
AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
AHS	Africa Health Strategy
AHSG	Assembly of Heads of State and Government
AHSI	African Human Security Index
AI	Artificial Intelligence

African Union and Agenda 2063

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ALC	Africa Liberation Committee
ALSC	African Liberation Support Committee
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
AORs	Areas of Responsibility
APAYE	African Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
ARVs	antiretrovirals
ASCC	Army Service Component Command
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASF	African Standby Force
ATU	African Telecommunications Union
AU	African Union
AU FMP	African Union Free Movement of Persons
AUBP	African Union Border Programme
AUC	African Union Commission
AUCSEG	African Union Cybersecurity Experts Group
AUDA	African Union Development Agency
AUEOM	African Union Election Observation Missions
AUs DTS	African Union Digital Transformation Strategy
AUTJP	African Union Transitional Justice Policy
AU-YVC	African Union Youth Volunteer Corps
AYC	African Youth Charter
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BIAT	Boosting Intra-African Trade
BLM	Black Lives Matter
BRI	China Belt and Road Initiative
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa
BSM	Black Students Movement
BWIF	British West Indies Federation

List of Abbreviations

CAAU	Constitutive Act of the African Union
ACSRT	African Centre of Studies and Research on Terrorism
CAR	Central African Republic
CAR MINUSCA	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic
CARICOM	Caribbean Community and Common Market
CARIFTA	Caribbean Free Trade Area
CCDM	Combatant Command
CCJ	Caribbean Court of Justice
CCS	Caribbean Community Secretariat
CELAC	Community of Latin American and Caribbean States
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan States
CEWS	Continental Early Warning System
CFP	CSME Focal Pointw
CFTA	Continental Free Trade Area
CG	Corporate Governance
CHG	CARICOM Heads of Government
CHOG	Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CNN	Cable News Network
CODEO	Coalition of Domestic Election Observers
CODESRIA	Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa
COFCOR	Council for Foreign and Community Relations
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
COMYAP	COMESA Youth Advisory Panel
COTED	Council for Trade and Economic Development
CPAPS	Commission for Political Affairs, Peace, and Security
CPX	Command Post Exercise
CRM	Civil Rights Movement

CSG	CARICOM Secretary-General
CSL	Co-operative Security Locations
CSME	CARICOM Single Market and Economy
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSSDCA	Conference on Security, Stability, Development, and Co-operation in Africa
D4D	Digital4Development
DCI	Development Co-operation Instrument
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration
DEAF	Democracy and Electoral Assistance Fund
DEAU	Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit
DOD	United States Department of Defence
DPG	Democracy and Political Governance
DPoA	Decade Plan of Action
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DSR	Digital Silk Road
DZP	Dispensation of Zimbabweans Project
EAC	East African Community
EALA	East African Legislative Assembly
EC	European Community
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOSOC	Economic, Social, and Cultural Council
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EDF	European Development Fund
EEC	European Economic Community
EGM	Economic Governance and Management
EHAGL	East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes
EMB's	Electoral Management Bodies
EOM	Election Observation and Monitoring
EPAs	Europe's Economic Partnership Agreements
ERV	Election-Related Violence

List of Abbreviations

ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Policies
ETM	Emergency Transit Mechanism
EU	European Union
EUCOM	United States European Command
EUTF	EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa
FIS	Islamic Salvation Front
FOC	Full Operational Capability
FOCAC	Forum on China–Africa Co-operation
FOL	Forward Operating Locations
FRELIMO	Mozambique Liberation Front
FTA	Free Trade Area
G20	Group of 20
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GCM	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GERD	Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GIA	Algerian Islamic GroupsGII Global Innovation Index
GIZ	<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Internationale Zusammenarbeit</i>
HDI	Human Development Index
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Countries
HIS	Health Information Systems
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HoSG	Heads of State and Government
HSGIC	Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee
HSS	Health Systems Strengthening
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organisation
ICC	International Criminal Court

ICGLR	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
ID	Identity Document
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IEBC	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
IEMS	Integrated Electoral Management Systems
IFI	International Financial Institutions
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority for Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IRD	<i>Institut de Recherche pour le Développement</i>
IRENA	International Renewable Energy Agency
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
ISS	Institute for Security Studies
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
KIEMS	Kenya Integrated Electoral Management System
LAP	Lagos Plan of Action
LCBC	Lake Chad Basin Commission
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
M4BL	Movement for Black Lives
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MDC-M	Movement for Democratic Change led by Arthur Mutambara
MDC-T	Movement for Democratic Change led by Morgan Tsvangirai
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals

List of Abbreviations

MDRI	Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative
MFPA	Migration Policy Framework
MHP	Malawi Health Passport
MINURSO	UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara
MINUSMA	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali
MIP	Minimum Integration Programme
MISR	Makerere Institute of Social Research
MNJTF	Multinational Joint Task Force
MONUSCO	UN Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPFA	Migration Policy Framework for Africa
MSC	Military Staff Committee
MUJAO	Movement of the Unicity and Jihad
MYP	Malawi Young Pioneers
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NARC	Continental North African Regional Capacity
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NdoH	National Department of Health
NDPs	National Development Plans
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NPHIs	National Public Health Institutes
NTBs	Non-Tariff Barriers
NUTA	National Union of Tanganyika Workers
NYCs	National Youth Councils
NYDA	National Youth Development Agency
OACPS	Organisation of Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific States
OAS	Organisation of American States
OAU	Organisation of African Unity

ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAC	Pan-African Conferences
PAM	Pre-election Assessment Missions
PAP	Pan-African Parliament
CPCRD	Centre for Post-Conflict Reconstruction Development
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for AID's Relief
PHEOC	Public Health Emergency Operation Centres
PIDA	Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa
PoW	Panel of the Wise
PRGF	Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility
PRIDA	Policy and Regulatory Initiative for Africa
PSC	Peace and Security Council
PTAs	Preferential Trade Areas
PYM	Pan-African Youth Movement
PYU	Pan-African Youth Union
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
RCPs	Regional Consultative Processes
RDC	Rapid Deployment Capability
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
RENAMO	<i>Resistencia Nacional Mocambicana</i>
RHIS	Routine Health Information Systems
RMs	Regional Mechanism
RMPF	Regional Migration Policy Framework
RMT	Rational Actor Model
ROW	Rest of the World
RSF	Rapid Support Forces
RTC	Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas
SAATM	Single African Air Transport Market

List of Abbreviations

SACU	Southern African Customs Union
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADCBRIG	Southern African Development Community Brigade
SADCC	Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference
SADR	Saharawi Republic
SAF	Sudanese Armed Forces
SAIIA	South African Institute of International Affairs
SAMIM	SADC Mission in Mozambique
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programmes
SCOK	Supreme Court of Kenya
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDM	Single Digital Market
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SLW	Small Light Weapons
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies
SOTU	State of the Union
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SSR	Security Sector Reform
STC	Specialised Technical Committee
STC-HPDC	African Union Specialised Technical Committee on Health, Population, and Drug Control
STG	Silencing the Guns
STISA	African Union's Science Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa
TANU	Tanganyika National Union
TB	Tuberculosis
TEIs	Team Europe Initiatives
TFTA	Tripartite Free Trade Area
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
TTC	Trade and Technology Council
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

TYL	Tanganyika Youth League
UCG	Unconstitutional Changes of Government
UfC	Uniting for Consensus
UFL	Unity of Fusion and Liaison
UK	United Kingdom
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
UN-INSTRAW	United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women
UNISFA	United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei
UNITAMS	United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan
UNNADF	United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa
UNOCA	United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa
UNOWAS	United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel
UNPAAERD	United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development
UNSCR-	United Nations Security Council Resolution

List of Abbreviations

UNSOM	United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia
UNSOS	United Nations Support Office in Somalia
UNWA	United Nations Women Africa
US	United States
US SOCOM	United States Special Operations Command
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USIP	United States Institute of Peace
USSR	United Soviet Socialist Republic
UWT	<i>Umoja wa Wanawake Tanzania</i>
VNRs	Voluntary National Reports
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union
WB	World Bank
WCAR	World Conference Against Racism
WGDD	Women, Gender, and Development Directorate
WGYD	Women, Gender, and Youth Directorate
WHO	World Health Organisation
WIAS	West Indies Associated States
WIC	West Indian Commission
WITS	World Integrated Trade Solution
WTO	World Trade Organisation
Y4P	Youth for Peace
YES	Youth Engagement Strategy
YLM	Youth League of Malawi
YPS	Youth, Peace, and Security
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front

Acknowledgements

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Jointly hosted by the Institute for Pan-African Thought and Conversation (IPATC) at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa and TrustAfrica in Dakar, Senegal, the AU@20 Symposium focused on the theme “The AU@20: Progress, Problems, and Prospects towards Agenda 2063”. The event received technical support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Regional Service Centre for Africa (RSCA), based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

We convey our profound gratitude to the keynote presenters: Emeritus Professor Kwesi Kwaa Prah, Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS), Cape Town, South Africa; Her Excellency Benita Diop, Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Women, Peace and Security, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; and His Excellency Erastus Mwencha, former Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. We appreciate the invaluable assistance provided by Ratidzo C. Makombe and Nompumelelo Ndawonde in preparing this book for publication. We are also grateful to the leaderships of IPATC, Professor Siphamandla Zondi, and TrustAfrica, Dr Ebrima Sall, as well as all the presenters, session facilitators, and all the participants of the symposium. The success of this symposium and the quality of the papers and debates in Pretoria birthed the publication of this important book.

Editorial Foreword

Sven Botha 

University of Pretoria 

Co-Series Editor: *African Political Science
and International Relations in Focus*

The African Union (AU) and its predecessor, the Organisation for African Unity, have undergone many trials and tribulations. Pan-Africanist through leader and former South African President (1999–2008), Thabo Mbeki, summed up this journey as follows:

The one thing that genuinely united the [C]ontinent was the struggle for liberation. The area of focus was to end colonialism and apartheid. Following the struggles against colonialism and racist oppression, there was also the struggle against poverty and economic oppression, in order to have total liberation of the Continent...¹

Against this backdrop, the AU has become an ever-present institution within African politics, ushering in multilateral cooperation in trade, international security, health, governance, regional integration, and digitalisation, to mention a few. The editors and contributors of this volume expand upon and interrogate many of these thematic areas. The book is divided into nine sections. Alongside the introductory section, the editors and contributors address the Pan-African Agenda, regional integration, Africa's presence and participation on the international stage, migration, democratic processes, youth and women empowerment, ICT, health, and education.

Taken collectively, this volume provides a wealth of perspectives from established and emerging scholars alike, aligning with the aims and scope of the *African Politics and*

1 African Union Development Agency. 2021. Quote from H.E. Thabo Mbeki [18 June 2025], <https://www.nepad.org/content/quote-he-thabo-mbeki#:~:text=Former%20President%20of%20the%20Republic,that's%20how%20NEPAD%20was%20born.%22>

International Relations in Focus book series to call attention to a collaborative cohort researching, pondering, and debating Africa's international relations. On behalf of the Series Editors, I would like to thank the book editors for choosing to publish their work with our series.

With the AU taking up full G20 membership in 2023 and the broader international community experiencing many geopolitical tensions, this book will become essential reading for scholars, diplomatic practitioners, policymakers, thought leaders, agents of change, and other interested stakeholders as they reflect upon the role of the AU as a political actor as well the fulfilment of Agenda 2063.

Funded by



Foreword

In early 2022, the leadership of the Institute for Pan-African Thought and Conversation (IPATC) at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa and TrustAfrica in Dakar, Senegal met to discuss how we could respond to Africa's development and security challenges. The discussion extended to the need to reinvigorate the Pan-African agenda on the continent and strengthen the African Union (AU)'s capacity towards delivering on Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. We decided to host a continental symposium titled, "The AU@20: Progress, Problems and Prospects Towards Agenda 2063", held in Pretoria, South Africa from 2-4 November 2022. The symposium provided a thoughtful evaluation of the achievements made by the AU and the challenges it has faced while navigating its strategic direction for the future. One hundred and sixty-eight (168) participants attended physically in Pretoria, and over 250 additional participants attended online via Zoom.

The symposium featured three keynote addresses by highly esteemed dignitaries: Professor Kwesi Kwaa Prah, a professor emeritus of sociology at the University of the Western Cape; HE Bineta Diop (PhD), the African Union Special Envoy for Women, Peace, and Security; and HE Erastus JO Mwencha (PhD), former deputy chairperson for the Africa Union Commission (AUC), Addis Ababa. Other prominent speakers included Professor Eddy Maloka, then the chief executive officer (CEO) of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), and Professor Horace Campbell of Syracuse University in the United States of America. The three-day event replicated the Pan-African intellectual engagements and political movement that gave birth to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU).

The hosting of the symposium coincided with the establishment of the African Union Studies programme at the IPATC. The unit aims to become a centre of excellence in knowledge generation and dissemination and to build a robust community of practice (CoP) on African affairs, specifically focusing on the AU. Its vision is to become the research, teaching, and training

centre of the AU and its regional economic communities (RECs). This is predicated upon the firm belief that Africa's academic and think tank community can independently conduct research, generate context-specific knowledge, and design its curriculum to positively impact the African transformation and development agenda. On its terms, the African community can effectively engage policymakers and stakeholders in development and peace-building initiatives across the continent. Furthermore, it is well positioned to develop innovative strategies to enhance the AU and RECs' capacity to address continental challenges, including economic transformation, violent conflicts, democratic reversals, climate change, rising debt, and exclusive governance.

Ours is a continent with a median age of 19, making it one of the youngest (from a demographic viewpoint). In a few decades, the number of its young people will be larger than Europe's total population. This demographic reality must be reflected in the governance of African countries in ways that put the continent's youth and women at the centre of governance. Reimagining and reinventing governance in Africa is an urgent need. Economic transformation, including industrialisation and changes in the modes of engagement of African economies in the global economy, is another urgent need for our continent.

Thus, as we commemorate the AU's 20th anniversary, this 30-chapter book, *African Union at 20: Towards Agenda 2063*, edited by Adeoye O Akinola and Matlosa Khabele, provides a timely reflection on the institution's journey, its accomplishments, and the challenges ahead. The AU, established in 2002 as successor to the OAU, marked a pivotal shift in Africa's approach to unity, peace, and development. Over the past two decades, the AU has evolved from a largely political organisation focused on decolonisation and anti-apartheid efforts into a dynamic platform championing sustainable development, economic integration, and shared prosperity for all Africans.

This volume is dedicated to exploring how the AU has laid the groundwork for Agenda 2063, Africa's blueprint for transforming the continent into a global powerhouse. Agenda 2063, adopted in 2013, articulates an ambitious vision of

an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa driven by its citizens and representing a dynamic force on the world stage. Twenty years since its inception, the AU has made significant strides in achieving this vision through initiatives to foster economic growth, build a robust continental infrastructure, promote governance reforms, and strengthen peace and security frameworks. However, many of these accomplishments remain in progress, and the continent continues to grapple with complex issues such as poverty, inequality, the loss of our precious natural, financial, and other resources through various extractive processes, political instability, and the impacts of climate change.

This book brings together a wealth of perspectives from scholars, policymakers, civil society actors, and practitioners across Africa, highlighting the AU's performance across the board, critically interrogating its shortcomings, and indicating areas where progress is still needed. Through critical analysis, case studies, and firsthand accounts, it examines the AU's role in promoting the Pan-African agenda, ensuring peace and security, advancing economic development and continental integration, upholding human rights, and shaping Africa's global partnerships. Furthermore, it probes the challenges that must be addressed to keep the dream of Agenda 2063 alive, particularly for Africa's youth, who stand to inherit the fruits of the AU's efforts and will be at the forefront of realising this vision. The book also includes contributions that show how the AU itself needs to take a hard look at how it is organised, how it works, its relationships with ordinary Africans on the continent and in the diaspora, and its international relations and interventions. Our premier and leading Pan-African institution is thus being invited to engage in some re-envisioning. Becoming an AU of the peoples of the continent and its diaspora is a condition for making the continental integration and transformation agenda people-centred.

As we look forward to 2063, the need for collective commitment and visionary leadership is more urgent than ever. This book serves as a call to action, reminding us of one of Nelson Mandela's sayings: "the future is in [our] hands". The future of the African Union is a shared responsibility that requires enduring solidarity, resilience, and a steadfast commitment to

Africa's emancipation and development. I am sure that readers will find this book inspiring and thought-provoking as we work together to build The Africa We Want. TrustAfrica is committed to the Pan-African project, which is why we are very proud of our collaboration with IPATC in this great initiative.

Dr Ebrima Sall

Executive Director
TrustAfrica, Dakar
Senegal

Preface

Africa: Pathways and Crossroads

Introduction

When we at the Institute for Pan-African Thought and Conversation (IPATC) decided to reflect in a high-level symposium on the 20 years of the African Union (AU), it was with genuine understanding that in the aftermath of the COVID pandemic, it was clear that Africa was at a crossroads. The continent could advance, having prevailed over the pandemic and its ramifications, or it could be stuck in a downward spiral of low growth, arrested development, and shattered expectations. It was clear that the 20 years had set out clear pathways for achieving a prosperous Africa. This was evident in the decisions of the AU, including the adoption of Agenda 2063 with the tagline ‘The Africa We Want’. Yet the difficulties worsened by the pandemic were such that the continent was on the edge.

The AU’s Agenda 2063 represents a strategic framework aimed at transforming Africa into a global powerhouse over 50 years. Adopted in 2013, this agenda envisions an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa driven by its citizens and capable of playing a prominent role in global affairs. While Agenda 2063 offers a comprehensive roadmap for sustainable development, its realisation faces numerous challenges. The following key obstacles, including governance deficits, economic challenges, security threats, and climate change, could impede Africa’s progress toward achieving this ambitious vision.

Institutional Deficits

Sound governance and strong institutions are critical for sustainable development, but many African countries struggle with governance deficits. Corruption, lack of transparency, and inadequate accountability mechanisms hinder effective policy

implementation and erode citizens' trust in public institutions. For instance, Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index has consistently shown high levels of corruption in many African nations.¹ Poor governance practices weaken public service delivery, impede economic growth, and discourage foreign investment. Institutional weaknesses also extend to the enforcement of laws, making it difficult to tackle issues like human rights abuse and social inequalities.²

Inequality

Africa's economic potential is substantial, with a young and growing labor force, vast natural resources, and emerging markets. However, persistent economic challenges continue to impede the continent's growth. High poverty levels, income inequality, and unemployment, especially among the young, are prevalent across the continent. According to the African Development Bank (AfDB), youth unemployment was nearly twice the global average before the COVID-19 pandemic, and the economic shock that resulted from the pandemic exacerbated this challenge.³ It has grown since. Moreover, Africa's heavy reliance on commodity exports makes it vulnerable to fluctuations in global prices, undermining economic stability and development efforts. With a growing appetite for rare minerals used for digital technologies and renewable energy tools, Africa risks sinking deeper into this economic dependency. To meet the goals of Agenda 2063, African countries know they must diversify their economies, invest in manufacturing, and promote inclusive growth. Yet this has not happened. This is a crisis of leadership, and a failure of citizens, too.

1 Amnesty International. (2021). Corruption Perception Index. Available at <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2021>.

2 United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. (2018). African Governance Report. https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/36843-doc-aga_report_-_english_-_online.pdf

3 African Development Bank. (2020). African Economic Outlook 2020. AfDB.

Insecurity

Security threats and conflict pose significant obstacles to Africa's progress. The persistence of armed conflicts, insurgencies, and terrorism destabilises regions, disrupts development initiatives, and leads to humanitarian crises. For instance, extremist groups like Boko Haram in Nigeria and Al-Shabaab in Somalia have caused widespread violence, displacement, and loss of life. The low-intensity wars in various countries and the return of coups also add to instability. This insecurity hampers trade, investment, and development. The African Union's Peace and Security Council has taken steps to address conflicts. Still, challenges such as weak peacekeeping capabilities, limited funding, and complex socio-political dynamics often undermine efforts to establish lasting peace.⁴ But insecurity continues unabated.

Climate and Environmental Crises

Africa is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, which pose severe risks to livelihoods, food security, and health. Rising temperatures, unpredictable rainfall patterns, and increased frequency of extreme weather events threaten agricultural productivity, upon which much of the continent's population depends.⁵ Desertification, deforestation, and water scarcity further exacerbate these challenges, intensifying resource competition and fueling conflicts. Addressing climate change is essential for achieving the aspirations of Agenda 2063, but many African countries lack the financial and technological resources to adapt and mitigate its impacts. Global co-operation and increased investment in sustainable energy and climate-resilient infrastructure are critical to overcoming this challenge.⁶

4 The AU Peace Fund was established to address key financial challenges associated with peacebuilding efforts.

5 IPCC. (2019). Special Report on Climate Change and Land. Geneva.

6 See United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. (2020). "Building Climate Resilient Economies in Africa." UNECA.

Inadequate Infrastructure Development

Infrastructure gaps in energy, transportation, and digital connectivity impede Africa's socio-economic transformation. Reliable infrastructure is crucial for promoting trade, attracting investment, and improving access to essential services like healthcare and education. However, many African countries face significant infrastructure deficits due to limited public resources and high costs of construction. The African Union's Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) aims to address these gaps, but financing remains challenging.⁷ Additionally, inadequate infrastructure undermines regional integration efforts, making it difficult for countries to fully benefit from initiatives like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Digital Divide and Marginalisation

The continent benefits from participation in the digital transformation that has hit the world. The new technologies, including artificial intelligence and robotics, promise to revolutionise economies, improve efficiency, increase economic participation, and improve social and human development. Africa has identified this as a huge opportunity. But without massive investment in data infrastructure, technology development, and acquisition, this dream would be deferred.

Conclusion

Africa's pathway is evident in Agenda 2063, but the continental blueprint for Africa's socio-economic transformation is in jeopardy. While Agenda 2063 envisions a brighter future for Africa, achieving its goals requires addressing a range of complex challenges. Good governance, economic diversification, security, climate resilience, and infrastructural development are essential pillars for realising the agenda's transformative vision. Success will depend not only on strong leadership and regional co-operation, but also on the mobilisation of global partnerships and

7 See African Union Commission. (2019). "Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA)." African Union.

Preface

investment. By overcoming these obstacles, Africa can harness its immense potential and build a sustainable and prosperous future for its people.

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Section One

Introduction



Chapter 1

African Union and the Agenda 2063 Project

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Introduction

On 9 July 2002, South Africa played host to eminent Africans as the African Union (AU) was officially founded and launched in its port city of Durban, amid diplomatic fanfare. The AU emerged as the custodian of continental unity and integration, inheriting the noble mantle from its precursor, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which had gallantly steered the course since its inception in 1963. Both the OAU and AU stand as formidable bastions of Pan-Africanism and heralds of the African Renaissance, epitomising the fervent pursuit of state-driven continental cohesion and solidarity.

As the AU commemorated 20 years of its existence in 2022, a judicious appraisal of its trajectory became imperative. This momentous and intellectual reflection beckons an introspective gaze into the milestones achieved, the trials encountered, and the path charted for the future. It is a timely contemplation, adorned

with significance, especially amidst the ingenious adoption of Agenda 2063 – The Africa We Want. Agenda 2063 is a visionary blueprint orchestrated for the collective socio-cultural and politico-economic metamorphosis of the African continent and its people. Thus, as the AU moves past the 20-year mark, the confluence of introspection and foresight shall illuminate the path ahead, guiding the Union towards the realisation of its noble aspirations and the fulfilment of the boundless potential inherent within the rich socio-political landscape of Africa.

Contextual Background

It is impossible to have a full appreciation of the AU without the OAU as part of its historical context. The genesis of the OAU stems from the collective yearning of continental Africans for unity, dignity, liberation, and self-determination amidst the trials and tribulations of colonial exploitation and postcolonial challenges. A confluence of historical imperatives, including the ravages of struggles against slavery, colonialism, imperialism, racism, apartheid, xenophobia or afro-phobia, the fervour of Pan-Africanism, and the imperative of decolonisation, propelled the birth of this strategic institution. Grounded in the ethos of solidarity and the recognition of shared destinies, African leaders embarked upon the noble endeavour of establishing the OAU. This historic breakthrough, catalysed by the imperative of collective agency and the fostering of continental cohesion, stands as a testament to Africa's resolve to chart its destiny and transcend the shackles of oppression, exploitation, and socio-political strangulation. Thus, the OAU emerged as a beacon of hope, heralding a new era of African agency, unity, and collective empowerment on the continent and on the global stage.

It is the pursuit of Pan-Africanism around which the historical evolution of the OAU should be appreciated. Pan-Africanism is a set of shared ideas and assumptions expressing the desire for the total liberation and unity of Africans in Africa and around the world (Mandaza & Nabudere 2002; Mathews 2018:16). Its origins are traceable to the liberation struggles of African Americans in the United States (US) and around the world against slavery and racial discrimination (Adi 2018).

The strongest features of Pan-Africanism include:

- a. a movement aimed at giving people of African descent full participation in the political, social, cultural, and economic dimensions of their countries and the world;
- b. Afrocentrism – taking Africa as a starting point for all its ideals, ideas, and beliefs;
- c. the belief that all Black people around the world constitute a single united family, descended from a common African origin, heritage, and culture;
- d. a firm stance for the decolonisation of Africa and independence of all African states and an opposition to all forms of racial domination, discrimination, oppression, and injustice; and
- e. a commitment to the universal recognition of the full dignity of the people of African descent, and their equality as citizens of the world (Kuambi 2002:47-48).

Pan-Africanism was popularised by, *inter alia*, lawyer, activist, and author Henry Sylvester Williams (Trinidad and Tobago), African American sociologist and historian William Edward Du Bois (US), journalist, historian, and author George Padmore (Trinidad and Tobago), and political activist and Black nationalist Marcus Garvey (Jamaica), who led several Pan-African Conferences (PACs). The most notable one that influenced the establishment of the OAU was the fifth Pan-African Conference, held in 1945 in Manchester, Britain. The fifth PAC – also attended by some African leaders, including Nkrumah and Kenyatta – adopted significant resolutions. These included:

- a. Africa's total decolonisation and complete independence;
- b. the unification of Africa through regional blocs;
- c. the importance of unity and integration;
- d. the embrace of Africa's non-aligned position; and
- e. non-interference in internal affairs.

These positions influenced Nkrumah, who proclaimed that Ghana's 1958 independence was incomplete without the total liberation of the African continent. Of the several conferences that Nkrumah organised in Accra on Pan-Africanism, the most significant was the 1958 All African Peoples' Conference attended

mainly by liberation movements across the continent, with the central theme of solidarity and unity in the struggle against racism (Bujra 2002).

The OAU was the culmination of heated debates on the form and substance of regional integration between two ideologically opposed schools of thought, namely: the radical (revolutionist) camp (The Casablanca Group) and the moderate (evolutionist) camp (The Monrovia Group). The former espoused the union of African states with a union government at its pinnacle. The latter supported gradual integration predicated upon narrow-national sovereignty. Several conferences were organised aimed at bridging the divide between the two groups. At such a conference convened in Lagos, Nigeria in 1962, a compromise between these opposing groups was reached based largely on proposals made by Ethiopia, Liberia, and Nigeria. This led to the adoption of a functional approach to Pan-African unity and integration.

The conference adopted the Lagos Charter, which recommended the establishment of the following organs:

- a. an Assembly of Heads of State and Government (HoSG);
- b. a council of ministers;
- c. a general secretariat; and
- d. various commissions.

On 25 May 1963, the Lagos Charter was presented at the Conference of HoSG held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Founded by 32 independent African states, the OAU was established not as a political union, but as a functional integration body, with Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia playing a major role. The Addis Ababa HoSG summit was preceded by the meeting of foreign ministers held on 15 May 1963.

The ideals of Pan-Africanism were central to the formation of the OAU. Established on 25 May 1963, the OAU pursued five main goals:

- a. to promote the unity and solidarity of African States;
- b. to co-ordinate and intensify their co-operation and efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa;

- c. to defend their sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence;
- d. to eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa; and
- e. to promote international co-operation, having due regard to the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (OAU 1963:3).

Despite the numerous challenges that it faced between 1963 and 2001, the OAU pursued the above objectives and registered major achievements, especially in ensuring the completion of the continent's decolonisation with the liberation of the last bastions of colonial domination in Namibia (1990) and South Africa (1994). The OAU kept the spirit of Pan-Africanism alive through solidarity among Africans in Africa and the diaspora. It protected Africa's interests globally within the difficult environment marked by the Cold War, which divided the world into two ideological camps led respectively by the United States (US) and the United Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR). The OAU was the first international organisation on the continent to begin a deliberate process of regional and continental integration.

While building on the milestones of the OAU, the mandate of the AU was much more expansive. While the AU remained faithful to the ideals of Pan-Africanism articulated above, the new generation of African leaders reinforced this with renewed commitment to the African Renaissance. The African Renaissance denotes the renewal of the spirit of Africanness, including adherence to African cultural heritage and the embrace of our common history. It was popularised by former South African president Thabo Mbeki after his 'I am an African' speech of 1996. It is an "unflinching belief in Africa's common destiny, shared values, and "the affirmation of African identity; the celebration of unity in diversity and the institution of the African citizenship" (AU 2013:2).

By the time the AU was founded, the global political and economic context had radically changed from the OAU era. Fundamentally, three key developments influenced this transformation. First, the fall of the Berlin Wall (and, with it, the collapse of the Cold War ideological bipolarity globally) presented

a new context for the transformation of the OAU. Second, the European Economic Community (EEC) – which had existed since 1957, transformed in 1993 to the European Community (EC), and subsequently the European Union (EU) in 2009 – presented an external stimulus for the transformation of the OAU. Third, while the collapse of the Cold War and the demise of apartheid contributed to the significant decline in inter-state wars, intra-state conflicts intensified, leading to massive loss of lives, as well as internal and external displacement of persons, accounting for Africa's humanitarian crisis. The doctrine of non-interference in internal affairs of member states had failed to address intra-state conflicts, most notably the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, claiming more than a million lives and even more displacement of persons.

In response to the changing global and continental environment, during its 26th Ordinary Session, the OAU Heads of State and Government Assembly held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 9-11 July 1990, adopted the Declaration on the political and socio-economic situation in Africa and the fundamental changes taking place in the world. It was this declaration that provided a bridge between OAU and its successor, the AU. The declaration made it clear that because of the global and continental changes, the OAU had to change course from its historical focus on decolonisation, liberation, and nationbuilding towards socio-economic development, structural transformation, self-reliance, social justice, popular participation, human rights, democracy, constitutionalism, and the rule of law, with emphasis on inclusion of marginalised and vulnerable social groups like women and youth. In this vein, African leaders resolved to strengthen the OAU so that it might become a viable instrument at the service of Africa's economic development and integration, revive the ideals of Pan-Africanism and commitment to strengthening their unity and solidarity, and pool their resources and wisdom to face the emerging challenges (OAU 1990).

It was, therefore, within this new post-Cold War and post-apartheid context that the AU was established, in part, to address the challenges identified in the 1990 OAU declaration above. Hence, it came to pass that during its summit held in Sirte,

Libya in 1999, the OAU adopted a resolution to create the AU. It subsequently adopted the Constitutive Act, a treaty establishing the AU during its summit held in Lome, Togo in 2000. Finally, the AU was inaugurated officially in Durban, South Africa on 9 July 2002. The AU's vision is "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena" (The AU Commission n.d.). The objectives of the AU are to:

1. achieve greater unity and solidarity between the African countries and the peoples of Africa, and to defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence of its member states;
2. accelerate the political and socio-economic integration of the continent;
3. encourage international co-operation, taking due account of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
4. promote peace, security, and stability on the continent;
5. promote democratic principles and institutions, popular participation, and good governance;
6. promote and protect human and peoples' rights in accordance with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and other relevant human rights instruments;
7. establish the necessary conditions that enable the continent to play its rightful role in the global economy and international negotiations;
8. promote sustainable development at the economic, social, and cultural levels as well as the integration of African economies;
9. promote co-operation in all fields of human activity to raise the living standards of African peoples;
10. co-ordinate and harmonise the policies between the existing and future regional economic communities for the gradual attainment of the objectives of the Union;
11. advance the development of the continent by promoting research in all fields, in particular in science and technology; and

12. work with relevant international partners in the eradication of preventable diseases and the promotion of good health on the continent (AU 2000:6-7).

Building on previous development and integration efforts of the OAU – such as the Lagos Plan of Action and the Act of Lagos (1980), the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (1991), as well as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (2001) – the AU adopted a new continental development blueprint in the form of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want in 2014. This agenda evolved as part of Africa's collective response and common position to the process of the development of the 2030 global agenda for sustainable development that resulted in the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the United Nations in 2015.

The Vision, Aspirations, and Goals of Agenda 2063

In 2013, African leaders celebrated the Golden Jubilee of the OAU/ AU under the theme: Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance. At the end of the celebration, they adopted the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration, thereby renewing their commitment to continental unity and integration.¹ This declaration represents a perfect bridge between the ideals espoused by the OAU, which were predicated upon the old doctrine of non-interference in the internal affairs of member states and the new paradigm of non-indifference to human rights abuses within member states. Even more importantly, the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration created a firm platform for the development of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want.

Currently, it is essentially Agenda 2063 that defines what the AU is and what it is not. As declared in the agenda, "The aspirations reflect our desire for shared prosperity and wellbeing, for unity and integration, for a continent of free citizens and expanded horizons, where the full potential of women and youth, boys and girls are realised, and with freedom from fear, disease

1 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration.

and want” (AU 2015:1). This agenda has seven aspirations (AU 2015: 2):

- **Aspiration 1:** A prosperous Africa, based on inclusive growth and sustainable development
- **Aspiration 2:** An integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of the African Renaissance
- **Aspiration 3:** An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law
- **Aspiration 4:** A peaceful and secure Africa
- **Aspiration 5:** An Africa with a strong cultural identity, values and ethics
- **Aspiration 6:** An Africa whose development is people-driven, especially relying on the potential offered by its youth and women
- **Aspiration 7:** Africa as a strong and influential global player and partner

This agenda is being implemented through ten-year action plans. The first of these started in 2014 and ended in 2023. The AU highlights the following 20 goals of this agenda:²

1. a high standard of living, quality of life, and wellbeing for all citizens;
2. well-educated citizens and a skills revolution underpinned by science, technology, and innovation;
3. healthy and well-nourished citizens;
4. transformed economies;
5. modern agriculture for increased productivity and production;
6. a blue/ocean economy for accelerated economic growth;
7. environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient economies and communities;
8. a united Africa (federal or confederate);
9. continental financial and monetary institutions that are established and functional;
10. world-class infrastructure that criss-crosses Africa;

2 For full information of Agenda 2063, see <https://au.int/en/agenda2063/goals>.

11. democratic values and practices, universal principles of human rights, justice and the rule of law entrenched;
12. capable institutions and transformative leadership in place;
13. peace, security, and stability preserved;
14. a stable and peaceful Africa;
15. a fully functional and operational African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA);
16. a pre-eminent African cultural renaissance;
17. full gender equality in all spheres of life;
18. engaged and Empowered Youth and Children.
19. Africa as a major partner in global affairs and peaceful co-existence; and
20. Africa taking full responsibility for financing its development.

Since 2018, the AU has been undergoing institutional reforms. As part of this reform exercise, the African leaders have decided to streamline the AU's programming along four main continental priority areas: democracy and governance, peace and security, socio-economic development, and repositioning Africa globally. So far, the outcome of this reform process remains a mixed bag. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic considerably derailed efforts on the institutional reform front as the AU devoted more attention to containing the pandemic over every other issue from 2020-2021. However, the reform agenda is a contested terrain between and among key players, which partly explains why the leadership of the reform process seems paralysed. Many African elites continue to ignore the Pan-African agenda, including continental integration and the free movement of people. This is compounded by the AU's dependence on external resources from powerful global players, such as the European Union (EU), the United States, China, France, the United Kingdom, and Germany.

Challenges and Prospects

The AU was established to fulfil its vision of an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa. Yet, more than 20 years after its existence, Africa is not integrated and peaceful, and its population cannot be said to be prosperous (see Monyae & Nkala 2023). The continent has been confronted with governance challenges, while

many countries have experienced political instability, military coups, and autocracy. In 2023, numerous countries witnessed civilian transitions, a commendable feat indicative of democratic progress. However, elections held in Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Eswatini, Gabon, Sierra Leone, and Madagascar were marred by heavy contestation and denounced by disillusioned citizens. These electoral processes have become more of a ritual aimed at preserving political stability rather than delivering tangible benefits, thus failing to fulfil the true promise of democracy for African populations.

In the past few years, Africa experienced several shocks, like the COVID-19 pandemic and the effects of the Russia-Ukraine war, which have reduced the continent's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth from 4.8% in 2021 to 3.8% in 2022 (AfDB 2023:1). In 2023, the GDP of Africa was estimated at \$3.1 trillion, and the continent was host to an estimated 1.4 billion people. African economies remain resilient in 2023-2024, with average growth projected to stabilise at 4.1%. In monetary terms, the proportion of sub-Saharan Africa's contribution to the global GDP dwindled to a mere 1.9%, starkly contrasting with its population share of 18% worldwide (The Economist 2023). The cost of basic amenities, energy, and food were very high, with average inflation increasing to an estimated 15.1% in 2023, from 14.2% in 2022, and 12.9% in 2021 (AfDB 2023:1-2).

In 2023, a report by Statista found that about 430 million Africans were living in extreme poverty, with the poverty threshold at \$1.90 a day.³ A substantial portion of Africa's population, comprising approximately 615 million individuals, lacks access to essential healthcare services, representing more than half (52%) of the continent's citizens. Furthermore, the overall quality of health services in Africa remains sub-par, exacerbating the health disparities its populace faces.

Economic indicators across Africa underscore a concerning trend: inflation rates escalated from 9.1% in 2003 to 15.7% in

3 For more information on the poverty rate from 2016, see <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1228533/number-of-people-living-below-the-extreme-poverty-line-in-africa/>.

2023, while unemployment rates have crept upwards from 6.47% in 2013 to 7.11% in 2023. Moreover, the Corruption Perception Index revealed that in 2023, 44 out of 49 countries scored below 50, indicative of pervasive corruption. This confluence of factors, compounded by conflicts and political instability, has eroded institutional efficacy in combating corruption. Additionally, the year 2022 witnessed unprecedented flooding in Niger, destroying 38 000 homes, and 2.3 million people were displaced across the Horn of Africa due to drought. While this was attributed to climate change, it underscored the inadequacies in institutional readiness and response mechanisms.

In contemporary African societies, the prevalence of conflicts has become a pervasive phenomenon, prompting ongoing investigations into their distinctive characteristics that precipitate their escalation into severe forms of violence. The issue of conflict in Africa demands meticulous scrutiny, given that discussions about its endemic nature are relatively constrained. Central to this conversation were key deliberations on the historical underpinnings of conflicts in Africa, the contributions of diverse actors (states and non-states) in addressing issues of violence and conflict, the significance and progress of initiatives aimed at combatting violent conflict, and the impact of external actors on the African continent. Fundamentally, the overarching challenges facing Africa remain misgovernance, leadership failure, and the formidable presence of conflict and violence. These conflicts are not novel occurrences, and their manifestation in specific regions is not recent. It is imperative to recognise that the emergence of new conflicts alongside existing ones follows a discernible pattern, suggesting a recurrent cycle.

The imposition of Westphalian paradigms of statehood upon African countries served as a disruptive force, severing the natural trajectory of indigenous African governance frameworks from blossoming into paramount structures for the African populace (Atta-Asamoah 2016). The emergence of African nation states bore the indelible imprint of colonial exploitation, born out of a rapacious scramble for resources and the perpetuation of socio-cultural and economic hegemony during the tumultuous era of postcolonial statecraft.

The average state in Africa is a few decades old. This means that as much as some progress has been made in the preservation of their dominance in the monopoly over the use of force, they are still defined by certain fundamental challenges and weaknesses in projecting relevance to citizens and establishing a presence across their territories. These weaknesses have meant that, in many cases, the idea of the state is not yet a natural part of citizens. The main challenge of state-making in this part of the world is therefore centred around constructing the idea of the state in the minds of citizens and getting them to accept its naturalness as a core part of their social, economic and political mobilization” (Atta-Asamoah 2016: 31)

Unlike its predecessor, the AU swiftly recognised the peril certain state actors pose to their citizens. While the AU garnered praise for its courageous adoption of Responsibility to Protect (R2P), it has nonetheless fallen short in fulfilling its duty to safeguard civilian lives in various instances, including the ongoing crisis in Sudan. Conflict and other forms of political violence have continued to define Africa. In 2007, Kenya experienced electoral violence resulting in over 1 000 fatalities. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been embroiled in violent conflict since 1996, claiming the lives of over 6 million individuals, marking it as one of the deadliest conflicts since World War II. The Sahel region witnessed approximately 15 000 conflict-related deaths between 2020 and 2021, as reported by the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project. In 2022, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) highlighted the dire humanitarian crises affecting 10 million children in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger due to ongoing conflicts.

Since the mid-2000s, a discernible trend of democratic haemorrhage (atrophy, decay, and degeneracy of democratisation) has been underway. After a long lull, and despite zero tolerance for unconstitutional changes of government by the AU and regional economic communities (RECs), military coups are prevalent on the continent, especially in the Sahel belt stretching from Niger to Sudan. Between 2002 and 2023, there were 26 successful military

coups in Africa, most of which occurred in West Africa. Since 2019, there have been ten successful military coups in Africa in Sudan (2019, 2021, followed by outright civil war in 2023), Mali (2020, 2021), Guinea (2021), Chad (2021), Burkina Faso (February and September 2022), Niger (2023), and Gabon (2023). During the same period, the continent has experienced 12 unsuccessful military coups.⁴ Ironically, the upward spiral of coups occurred at the time when the AU had committed to silence the guns in Africa by 2020, an initiative whose time frame has now been extended by ten more years to 2030.

A slightly more complex phenomenon of democratic 'haemorrhage' (as compared to military coups) has been the executive coups that take the form of manipulation of constitutions by incumbent heads of state to elongate their stay in the state house. Since 2002, when the AU was established through its 2000 Constitutive Act, which explicitly declared zero tolerance of unconstitutional changes, about 23 incidents of manipulation of constitutions have occurred, of which 18 were successful, while only five failed (Matlosa 2023).

The war in Ethiopia's Tigray region in 2022 led to an estimated 100 000 to 110 000 battle-related deaths and displaced over 1.5 million individuals. According to the Missing Migrants Project, since 2014, the Central Mediterranean Sea route, predominantly used by African migrants, has witnessed the highest number of casualties, with an estimated 22 746 individuals dead or missing. Push factors such as extreme nationalism, economic protectionism, anti-migration policies, xenophobia, climate change, and autocratic regimes have driven more irregular migrants to undertake perilous journeys through the Sahara Desert and Mediterranean Sea to Europe.

4 Twelve (12) African countries that experienced abortive military coups are the Central African Republic between 17 December 2020 and 13 January 2021; Niger, 31 March 2021; Sudan, 21 September 2021; Guinea Bissau, 1 February 2022; Mali, 16–17 May 2022; Sao Tome & Principe, 24–25 November 2022; The Gambia, 20 December 2022; Sudan, 15 April 2023; Sierra Leone, 31 July 2023; Burkina Faso, 26 September 2023; Sierra Leone, 26 November 2023; and Guinea Bissau, 30 November–1 December 2023.

The AU has also recognised the difficult task ahead when it notes that, “Agenda 2063 builds on past achievements and challenges and takes into account the continental and global context and trends in which Africa is realising its transformation” (AU 2015:11). Despite the struggles of the AU to fulfil its mandate, the continental body has navigated through difficult terrain to record moderate successes. The drafting of the Agenda 2063 is the pinnacle of AU’s achievement. However, its successful implementation will project the AU as an effective regional organisation, matching the dreams of the drafters of the Consultative Act, and millions of Africans who have put their faith in the continental body.

The AU stands poised to spearhead the transformation of the African economy and uplift its people, leveraging the continent’s abundant human and mineral resources, including its burgeoning youth demographic. Currently, Africa is host to the youngest population in the world with about 400 million people between the ages of 15 and 35. Children under the age of 25 made up 60% of the African total population in 2020. African political leaders have failed to utilise these human resources, opening the space for their mobilisation for conflict and terrorism by warmongers. As the preeminent agency on the African continent, the AU assumes paramount importance in shaping Africa’s international relations and governance landscape. With the advent of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which consolidates Africa’s 55 economies into a singular market, the AU now commands an economic bloc ranked as the world’s 8th largest. However, the realisation of its potential hinges upon adeptly navigating the challenges posed by the resistance of national leadership to AU’s evolution into a supranational entity and ensuring the unimpeded movement of people across the continent.

The AU has established many protocols for the free movement of persons, including the AU revised Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018–2030); however, there has been less momentum toward its actualisation. Several nations are now seizing the initiative and challenging the artificial boundaries imposed by Western colonial powers by partially or

entirely dismantling visa restrictions. Mozambique, for instance, has lifted visa requirements for 29 countries, while Rwanda has eliminated visas for all African citizens. Additionally, Kenya has joined this movement by implementing a 90-day visa waiver with South Africa, and South Africa itself has established a visa-free agreement with Ghana. Notably, Ghana's President Nana Akufo Addo has underscored Accra's commitment to welcoming all African citizens in 2024, signalling a burgeoning trend towards enhanced regional integration and co-operation.

The AU facilitated the end of the Ethiopia-Tigray destructive war. On November 2, 2022, a historic peace accord was inked between representatives of Ethiopia's federal government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), effectively halting nearly two years of devastating conflict that had exacted a heavy toll on the nation, claiming the lives of countless individuals. The culmination of extensive mediation efforts, the agreement was brokered in Pretoria, South Africa, under the auspices of the AU. The mediation process, spearheaded by an eminent team comprising former Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo, former Kenyan president Uhuru Kenyatta, and former deputy president of South Africa Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, heralds a significant step towards reconciliation and stability in the region. Although the AU's efforts in facilitating the peace deal are acknowledged, there is a call for greater dedication to swiftly quell hostilities. With Sudan embroiled in conflict since April 2023 and the protracted violent conflict in the DRC, there is a pressing need for the AU to intensify its interventions for prompt resolution of such crises. Undoubtedly, peacekeeping is an expensive endeavour, and the AU has struggled financially.

The financial standing of the AU continues to raise apprehension. With an endorsed budget of \$650 million for the year 2022, allocation details reveal \$176 million designated for general operations and \$195 million earmarked for programmes (Nantulya 2022). While member state contributions commendably cover 72% of operational expenses, this achievement falls shy of the ambitious target of attaining self-sustainability. Furthermore, the Union's reliance on external funding for peace and security initiatives remains a pressing concern, as evidenced by the fact

that donors predominantly finance the substantial \$279 million allocated to this critical endeavour (Nantulya 2022).

To a significant portion of the African populace, the AU often appears as a makeshift apparatus tailored to accommodate the interests of presidents and prime ministers, rather than a dynamic institution poised to effectively serve their needs in alignment with its stipulated protocols and conventions (Nantulya 2022). For many across the continent, the AU's credibility hinges upon the diligent adherence to the principles enshrined within its founding charters and supplementary protocols, especially those mechanisms devised to amplify citizen engagement and input. Thus, it falls upon the AU to reshape the perceptions of Africans by demonstrating outstanding performance despite its institutional hurdles, thereby persuading Africans and the international community of its preparedness to serve as a guiding light for the continent's people and a potent force in global affairs.

Objectives of this Book

While this book offers a nuanced exploration of the performance of the AU as it responds to the divergent challenges that have curtailed African prosperity, stability, and security, the rationale for this significant undertaking is grounded in ten primary factors.

Firstly, the transition from the OAU to the AU in the late 1990s was an epoch-making development. Therefore, there is a need to review the result of the transition to date.

Secondly, there is a need for an evidence-based comparative study of the OAU and AU, by identifying the points of convergence and divergence.

Thirdly, this book offers an immense intellectual contribution towards breathing life into the almost defunct Agenda 2063 as the long-term development blueprint of the AU. For instance, except for the much-vaunted African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the other 13 flagship projects of Agenda 2063 – including the Free Movement of Persons and the African Passport projects – remain dormant. More than 10 years after the launch of Agenda 2063, Africa is still confronted with diverse

violent conflicts. African leaders made a modest effort towards achieving the ideal of silencing the guns' and ending wars in Africa (another flagship project of Agenda 2063), including declaring 2020 as "the year of Silencing the Guns". In 2020 itself, however, not much was achieved in terms of silencing the guns, given that much effort was invested into containing the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, not much progress has been made in containing violent conflict (including terrorism) in Africa today. Hence, during its extraordinary summit held on 16 December 2020, the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government resolved to extend the deadline for Silencing the Guns from 2020 to 2030. What informed the 2030 deadline for its actualisation? Based on the security landscape on the continent, the growing proliferation of terrors, and the complicit intervention of mercenaries in many countries, guns may continue reverberating through the continent beyond 2030.

Fourthly, this project revitalises Africa's shared history and agenda, reigniting a sense of African consciousness and intellectual vigour to foster collective Pan-Africanist endeavours towards integration. This comes as a necessary antidote to the prevalence of unilateralism and bilateralism exacerbated by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as highlighted by the ongoing Russian-Ukraine conflict and apartheid Israel's war of aggression against Palestine.

Fifth, this publication plays a pivotal role in advancing the decolonisation of Africa's international relations, facilitating the continent's rightful assertion of its position within the global community of nations, both within and beyond the United Nations system.

Sixth, it offers an in-depth review of the performances of the AU, particularly its efforts at delivering on the core objectives of Agenda 2063, as well as delving into the imperativeness of effective institutional reforms of the AU. It is pertinent to question whether the AU requires superficial reforms that merely scratch the surface or if it demands a profound institutional overhaul coupled with a fundamental shift in the mindset and behaviour of regional stakeholders.

Seventh, it offers evidence-based sustainable suggestions on how to transform contemporary Africa into the Africa that we all want.

Eighth, despite its good intentions, norms (African Charter on Democracy, Election, and Governance – ACDEG), institutional frameworks (African Peer Review Mechanism – APRM), and zero tolerance approach to unconstitutional changes of government (UCG), the scourge of UCG continues in the form of military coups, electoral manipulation, and executive coups, thereby dimming hopes of democratic renaissance and silencing the guns in Africa by 2030. Ninth, the mutually reinforcing collaboration between the AU and RECs/Regional Mechanism (RMs) remains a mixed bag as the twin principles of subsidiarity and complementarity do not seem to work uniformly across all five regions (e.g. it has paid a dividend in West Africa more than in the other four regions so far). Tenth and finally, the global power asymmetry still perpetuates Africa's underdevelopment, marginalisation, and exploitation for the benefit of powerful actors in the current phase of globalisation – a global village for the West and a global pillage for the rest, including Africa.

Key Themes Covered in the Book

The book encompasses nine major themes, divided into 30 chapters, authored by meticulously chosen contributors well-versed in AU affairs. Section 1, *Introduction*, offers a thoughtful reflection on the AU's 20-year milestone in 2022, evaluating its trajectory with discerning insight. This reflective analysis delves into the achievements, challenges, and prospects of the AU, particularly concerning Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. This section also highlights the imperative to address unresolved issues inherited from the OAU, focusing on key challenges in development, governance, peace, security, and global positioning. The AU's reform efforts, led by President Paul Kagame, address fundamental shortcomings hindering its optimal performance.

Section 2, *Pan-African Agenda*, explores the genesis of Pan-Africanism, a global movement for the emancipation and unity of Africans, and examines its influence on the AU's formation and

engagements with the global order to counter neocolonialism. It further analyses how the principles of Pan-Africanism shaped the development and performances of the continental institution and influenced modern Pan-African ideas and practices. It examines the international backdrop of the Global Pan-African Reparations movement, tracing its trajectory from the inception of the AU following the 2001 World Conference Against Racism in Durban. The analysis scrutinises Afro-pessimism amid efforts to undermine Pan-Africanism and negate African agency in challenging colonialism and apartheid, including issues such as global warming. It thus argues for reparative justice for Global African people.

Section 3, *Unity, Integration, and AfCFTA*, engages the objectives of the OAU's transition to the AU, which aimed to foster an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa. However, this integration agenda faces hurdles like fragmented societies, colonial legacies, sovereignty and nationalism concerns, and institutional weaknesses. It argues for the transformation of the AU into a supranational institution for the advancement of the AU's integration goals. This section further undertakes an examination of AU leadership, correlating it with the organisation's effectiveness. This analysis, necessitating a historical exploration of the AU's development and current trajectory, highlights the intricate challenges of leadership, termed the "leadership conundrum", which locates the AU's struggle and the lack of development in Africa in unresolved leadership issues. Moreover, the authors delve into the significance of AfCFTA for continental integration and development. They analyse the role of intra-African trade in AfCFTA's success and Africa's emergence as a major global economic force. The section provides actionable strategies for enhancing intra-African trade within the free trade framework, emphasising the need to strengthen regional economic communities (RECs), tackle tariff and non-tariff barriers, and establish regional and continental customs unions to ensure AfCFTA's success.

In Section 4, titled *Africa's Global Voice*, the focus is on evaluating the AU and Africa's interactions with global entities. It places international collaboration within the realm

of diplomacy and African influence, examining the driving forces behind the AU's international partnerships and the ways various actors assert their influence. The section also delves into CARICOM's involvement with Africa, exploring decisions made by CARICOM heads of government and outlining potential pathways for enhancing regional ties, particularly in inter-regional trade. Furthermore, it discusses US-Africa relations, tracing the evolution of US 'Africa policy' and considering the partnership in a world no longer dominated by a single hegemon. Critically, the section evaluates collaborative efforts between the AU and UN in achieving peace, security, and sustainable human capital development, aligned with the AU's Agenda 2063. Within its chapters, the section examines Africa's positioning in negotiations with strategic partners, probing its capacity for effective engagement.

Section 5, *Migration Challenges and African Borders*, delves into the complex issues surrounding both intra-African and Africa-EU migration dynamics. It sheds light on the obstacles facing the AU's efforts to achieve free movement of people across the continent. Despite its significance for economic integration and Pan-African unity, the AU has struggled to implement its ambitious frameworks and foster a shared African identity and citizenship. This section situates Africa-EU migration within historical and contemporary contexts, addressing the asymmetrical nature of relations between the two regions. It examines the 2015 migration crisis in Europe and its profound impact on EU migration policies, leading to a shift towards securitisation, development aid leverage, and intensified border controls. Additionally, the section explores how colonial legacies and border security concerns have strained inter-state relations within Africa, citing the Malawi-Tanzania border dispute within Southern Africa as a case study. This conflict was heavily influenced by the agendas of former White regimes in Southern Africa and the (re)integration aspirations of postcolonial Southern African countries.

In Section 6, *Peace and Security*, the authors assess the effectiveness of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The section reveals the fractures within the AU's

framework for continental peace and security, emphasising the lack of co-ordination between the AU and regional economic communities and the resulting implications of policy and harmonisation gaps on African peace and security. This prompts an examination of the Silencing the Guns project – the AU's flagship initiative aimed at preventing, managing, and resolving conflicts in Africa by 2020. However, the failure to achieve this objective led to a review and the implementation of a revitalised roadmap for Silencing the Guns by 2030. The section critiques the limitations of this initiative and advocates for its reframing and reorientation, proposing a regionalised approach to addressing conflicts across the continent. Using Algeria as a case study, the section illustrates a roadmap for Silencing the Guns in Africa. Algeria employs a combination of hard and soft power strategies, including promoting national reconciliation, deradicalising youth, raising public awareness through education, and effectively disseminating information via the media. Additionally, the section explores diverse human security concerns on the continent, shifting focus from solely state security to socio-economic and environmental issues that threaten human lives.

Section 7, *Democracy, Elections, and Governance*, explores the AU's efforts towards promoting multiparty elections during its initial two decades and delves into its role as a norm-setter, particularly in fostering credible, transparent, and peaceful electoral processes. It applauds the AU's proactive initiatives in establishing norms and standards to guide democratic elections across the continent. Using Kenya's 2022 elections as a case study, it examines the impact of adopting electoral technologies on African citizens, questioning whether the ostensibly peaceful electoral transition marked a step forward for democratic consolidation or served as a test for democracy itself. It advocates for a Pan-African approach to institutionalising democracy on the continent. Furthermore, the section evaluates the AU's performance since the adoption of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance (ACDEG) in 2012, particularly concerning election-related violence. It conceptualises the violence, explores its causes and consequences, and interrogates the AU's role in resolving such conflicts through

various means, including early warning systems, preventative diplomacy, election observation, mediation, and the Panel of the Wise. Lastly, it examines the governance and leadership failures, weak institutional capacity, and contested legitimacy that often precipitate military coups in Africa. It assesses the AU's performances and the challenges it confronts in countering military regimes and advancing democratic consolidation on the continent.

Section 8, *Youth Empowerment and Gender Equality*, delves into the marginalisation of youth and women in Africa's pursuit of security and prosperity, challenging conventional views on gender inequality. It provides historical context on gender relations, emphasising women's inclusion within Pan-Africanism and decolonial movements. Highlighting the vital role of women's participation in achieving Agenda 2063 and ensuring peace and security, it employs theoretical frameworks to conceptualise their involvement in peace processes. Additionally, it acknowledges grassroots women's organisations' significant contributions to peacebuilding efforts. It further evaluates the African Union's Free Movement Protocol (AU FMP) concerning challenges faced by African women labour migrants, focusing on South Africa. It critiques labour migration provisions through a gendered lens, proposing gender-responsive policy frameworks to safeguard women's rights. By enhancing protections for women labour migrants, the AU FMP can realise its potential as a tool for empowerment and continental integration, towards the actualisation of Agenda 2063. This section extensively analyses the AU's policies and initiatives concerning youth, which are crucial for achieving Agenda 2063. With youth inclusion deeply ingrained in African history, contemporary efforts represent a revival rather than a new concept. It also outlines a roadmap to strengthen the AU's Youth Agenda, emphasising the importance of empowering young people in shaping Africa's future.

Section 9, *Cross-Cutting Issues (ICT, Education, Health and Climate Change)*, discusses the AU's 2020 Digital Transformation Strategy, investigating its potential and obstacles for digital advancement in Africa. It discusses strategy features, the continent's digital status and policy landscapes, and weighs

risks and opportunities, including leveraging geopolitical dynamics. It reflects on pathways to achieve Africa's vision for a digitally evolved society. It also thoroughly evaluates curriculum transformation in Africa, focusing on decolonisation efforts. It advocates for re-evaluating educational curricula to rectify historical biases and Eurocentrism. Emphasising inclusivity, it highlights the importance of reflecting diverse perspectives and cultures. The AU acknowledges the necessity of prioritising epistemology for Africa's autonomous, decolonised future, aligning with Agenda 2063. The section further assesses Africa's health systems post-COVID-19, focusing on the AU's Africa Health Strategy (AHS) and its alignment with member states' health plans. It examines Health Systems Strengthening (HSS) initiatives and their role in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2063 objectives on health and wellbeing. Through a constructivist lens, the section finally delves into Africa's dual commitment to both climate protection and ongoing development. It frames climate-oriented development as a matter of multiscale co-ordination, exploring how African stances between climate and development are established and advanced at sub-regional and national levels.

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Chapter 2

The Reform of the African Union: History and Progress

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Introduction

The imperative of reform within the African Union (AU) has been an ongoing process marked by pivotal transitions to elevate continental governance and prosperity. Originating from the nuanced negotiations of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Charter in 1963, the need to address unresolved issues within its framework laid the foundation for subsequent reform agendas. The OAU's shortcomings in effectively addressing key challenges such as development, governance, peace, security, and Africa's global positioning underscored the necessity for reformative measures. Engaging African citizens further justified recalibrating the organisation to align with continental aspirations. The evolution of reformative paradigms over successive generations saw visionary leadership emerge during the 'plans without champions' era, with figures like Adebayo Adedeji spearheading transformative initiatives such as the Lagos Plan of Action and the Abuja Treaty. However, the slow pace of reform prompted a shift towards a more assertive, action-oriented approach during the era of 'champions', led by figures like former South African president Thabo Mbeki, Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo, and Libyan president Muammar Gaddafi.

The transformation of the OAU into the AU during the Cairo and Algiers summits marked a tectonic shift catalysed by visionary leaders like Muammar Gaddafi. Rejecting

unconstitutional changes of government and promoting regional economic integration became central tenets of the AU, serving as a bulwark against authoritarianism and underdevelopment. Initiatives like the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) contributed to a renaissance in developmental governance, fostering a more equitable, partnership-driven model of African integration. The subsequent trajectory of reform, epitomised by Agenda 2063 and the Kagame Reforms, signifies a transition towards an institutional and technocratic framework aimed at consolidating gains and strengthening the AU's institutional architecture. These reforms reflect a commitment to continuous improvement and adaptation to ensure the AU effectively addresses the evolving challenges and aspirations of the African continent.

Formation of the OAU

The narrative of Africa's postcolonial emergence portrays a continent ensnared in ideological discord, epitomised by the divergent blocs of Brazzaville, Casablanca, and Monrovia between 1960 and 1963 (Ifidon 2011:1). The OAU emerged in 1963 as a culmination of diplomatic negotiations, effectively diffusing tensions between these antagonistic factions. The OAU's genesis marked a pivotal compromise between radical and conservative factions, albeit with inherent challenges that marred its subsequent performance. The Brazzaville Bloc was one of the first postcolonial organisations to promote political and economic collaborations. The bloc, formed in 1960 following a convention held in the capital city of Brazzaville in Congo, was composed of countries that had previously been part of French Equatorial Africa and French West Africa. The Organisation of Co-operation of the African and Madagascar States replaced the short-lived Brazzaville Bloc in 1961, and this finally resulted in the creation of the OAU in 1963.

While noting the existence of the Brazzaville Group, the Monrovia and the Casablanca Groups remained the two prominent ideological groupings before the establishment of the OAU. The Monrovia Bloc, convened in Liberia in 1961, comprised nations advocating for a gradualist approach to

African unity, emphasising national sovereignty and prioritising socio-economic collaboration over rapid political integration. In contrast, the Casablanca Group, formed in Morocco in the same year, championed a radical agenda, advocating for swift political federation, unified armed forces, and synchronised foreign policy to combat imperialism and colonialism. Despite the ideological divisions among the groups and their divergent inclinations for the African project, the establishment of the OAU in 1963 at the Addis Ababa Conference marked a watershed moment, resolving the conflicts between the Casablanca Group and the Monrovia Bloc. This pivotal compromise sought to accommodate the diverse perspectives of member states while fostering a unified front against external powers.

Nevertheless, the fault lines within the OAU persisted, exacerbated by the prevailing Cold War politics, hostility, and dynamics that polarised African states along capitalist and communist ideologies. The ambitious vision of a 'United States of Africa' introduced further divisions within the organisation, underscoring the complexities inherent in fostering continental unity amidst diverse political and ideological landscapes. The OAU's establishment symbolised a beacon of hope for African emancipation and unity, yet its effectiveness was hampered by inherent challenges, including bureaucratic inefficiencies, funding constraints, and overlapping institutional mandates. Despite these shortcomings, the OAU's legacy endures as a testament to Africa's collective aspiration for unity and solidarity in the face of historical adversity.

The initiative to establish the AU was revived in the mid-1990s by Libyan Muammar al-Gaddafi, South African Thabo Mbeki, and Nigerian Olusegun Obasanjo. In 2000, an OAU Extraordinary Summit was convened in Sirte, Libya, where the AU was officially proclaimed and, eventually, it was officially launched on 9 October 2002 in Durban, South Africa. At its formation, the AU embraced a mixture of three different ideas, preventing it from functioning as a system. These divergent ideas included the Libyan quest for Pan-African unity, Nigeria's desire for a Conference on Security, Stability, Development, and

Co-operation in Africa (CSSDCA), and South Africa's idea of an African Renaissance.

OAU Reform Agenda

Building on the aforementioned background, several factors drove the reforms of the OAU. Firstly, the OAU Charter, established in 1963, represented a compromise between competing perspectives, leading to unresolved issues being postponed for later consideration. Consequently, addressing deferred issues became a major agenda for reform. Secondly, the OAU's poor performance in addressing significant challenges such as development, governance, peace and security, African involvement in global affairs, and citizen engagement highlighted the need for reform. The failure to effectively tackle these challenges during the post-independence period underscored the urgency for change. Additionally, the ongoing question of how to achieve a united and prosperous Africa necessitated continuous reform efforts. These reform endeavours can be categorised into three generations, each aiming to establish an institutional model conducive to realising the goal of a unified and prosperous Africa.

The first generation of reforms within the OAU occurred during the period from the late 1970s to the 1990s, known as the 'era of plans without champions'. As highlighted above, this epoch was heavily influenced by the leadership of Professor Adebayo Adedeji, particularly through his role in the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). A pivotal moment during this time was the Monrovia Summit of 1979, which played a significant role in shaping African political and international relations discourse. At this summit, two crucial decisions were made regarding the future of the OAU. Firstly, a Charter Review Committee comprising 14 member states was established and tasked with proposing amendments to the OAU Charter, which was originally a compromise document. Secondly, the decision to create the African Economic Community (AEC) led to the development of the ambitious Lagos Plan of Action in 1980. This plan outlined objectives and a staged approach to achieving them by the year 2000.

However, the 1980s, often referred to as the 'lost decade', saw limited progress towards these goals. Subsequently, the Abuja Treaty of 1991 emerged as a new framework intended to guide Africa towards economic integration, building upon the Lagos Plan of Action initiatives. Concurrently, the United Nations (UN) also launched initiatives such as the Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development in 1986 and the New Agenda for Development of Africa in 1981, aligning with the objectives of the Lagos Plan of Action. Despite the optimism of these efforts, events eventually surpassed the timelines set forth, emphasising the importance of this period in the OAU's reform journey and the introduction of programmes aimed at fostering self-reliance and regional economic co-operation.

As a result of the reforms initiated in the late 1970s and carried through the 1990s, a structured treaty system has been established within the AU, comprising the AU at the continental level, regional economic communities (RECs), and member states. This period saw the emergence of what can be termed the Pan-African Architecture, with the formation of the AEC and subsequent programmes. However, progress during this era was slow, with the Charter Review Committee making limited headway. The second generation of reforms, beginning in the late 1990s with the end of the Cold War, marked a shift towards more proactive leadership, particularly with figures like Mbeki and Obasanjo assuming central roles. Unlike the ECA-dominated era, the focus shifted to the AU as the primary driver of reform and implementation.

During this period, the OAU introduced various initiatives such as the Conflict Mechanism, regional human rights bodies, and regional economic communities, all without amending the founding Charter. Under the leadership of its secretary-general, Salim Ahmed Salim, and the Declaration on the Political and Socio-Economic Situation in Africa and the Fundamental Changes Taking Place in the World, the OAU effectively responded to changes in the global order in the early 1990s. The prevailing order at the time was occasioned by the fall of the Soviet Union and the ascendancy of the US as the superpower, as well as the rapid momentum towards globalisation and the formation of regional

economic alliances, such as the European Union, exemplifying prevailing trends in the contemporary international landscape (Maloka 2024).

While noting the devastating effect of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and its heavy political costs, the declaration reinforces the responsibility of African governments and their peoples to facilitate sustainable development of the continent, and the determination of the OAU “to lay a solid foundation for self-reliant, human-centered and sustainable development on the basis of social justice and collective self-reliance, to achieve accelerated structural transformation of our economies” (OAU 1990:3). OAU leaders acknowledged the imperative of advancing a global economic framework that champions justice and equity, reinvigorating the principles of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). They underscored the necessity to bolster co-operation among Southern nations and affirmed their preparedness to collaborate with other developing regions to revitalise dialogue and co-operation between the North and the South (AU 1990:5).

The OAU leadership initiated three major changes (Maloka 2024):

1. The inception of the treaty establishing the AEC in 1992 laid the groundwork for the transformation of the OAU into the AU in 2002.
2. The adoption of the OAU’s ‘shared values’, comprising a comprehensive framework of norms, standards, and principles, strengthened the continent’s commitment to fostering good governance, democracy, and human rights, exemplified by pioneering initiatives such as the dispatching of election observer missions to member states.
3. The active engagement of the OAU in peace and security, culminating in the establishment of the conflict management division within the erstwhile Political Affairs Department of the regional entity, reflected a proactive approach towards conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts.

These changes were pivotal for the repositioning of the OAU and the evolution of the regional organisation as an effective African agency.

The ECA, under the leadership of Professor Adedeji, played a significant role in economic development thinking. However, institutional arrangements were often disjointed, leading to a fragmented regional landscape. The Sirte Summit of 1999 marked a pivotal moment, with the Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi advocating for a new organisation to replace the OAU. This summit also saw the rejection of an unconstitutional change of government (UCG), signalling a shift in the OAU's stance on governance issues. Concurrently, efforts like NEPAD, spearheaded by Professor Nkuhlu and endorsed by leaders like Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo, aimed to mobilise global support for African development initiatives. Overall, this period witnessed a transformation in the institutional landscape of the AU, paving the way for more cohesive regional integration efforts and a renewed focus on addressing governance challenges.

NEPAD, parallel to the OAU processes, represented a distinct approach to African development. Unlike the functionalist model of integration outlined in the Abuja Treaty, NEPAD introduced a partnership-based development model. This model emphasised the need for African leaders to commit to democratic practices in exchange for international support and resources. Through this compact between Africa and the world, NEPAD aimed to transform the continent. The formation of the AU provided an opportunity to integrate these parallel streams of thought, including peace and security initiatives under the Conflict Mechanism, political and economic considerations, and development strategies. Key summits, such as those held in Durban and Maputo, facilitated the establishment of various AU bodies and initiatives.

While underscoring the limitations of NEPAD, Maloka (2002) argues for a focus on the essence of NEPAD, which he interprets as a pledge by African leaders to transform the African countries into a vehicle for development rather than a source for personal accumulation and institutional repression. Furthermore, he believes that civil society organisations must take advantage of NEPAD's inclusive process by establishing independent national structures to monitor and enforce compliance. In reference to the expectations of NEPAD, Maloka (2002) interrogates the concept

of Afro-pessimism, distinguishing three forms of negative perceptions about Africa's future.

The first is associated with the strong perception that nothing can work in what *The Economist* regards as a “hopeless continent”. This is founded on the notion that Africans are inherently inferior. This accounts for the continent's underdevelopment, which is linked to its “static” and “non-dynamic” culture. The second form of Afro-pessimism is subtle and intellectually more sophisticated. Many were pessimistic about NEPAD because of the nature of the African postcolonial state, which has been characterised as collapsed or weak entities, and inherently predatory and driven by the politics of the belly. Some proponents of this view even attribute the challenges of the African postcolonial state to adherence to certain African cultural practices. The third feeds on a fundamentalist interpretation of the critique of neo-liberalism and the tenets of the Washington Consensus. There was a perspective that NEPAD would reinforce African dependency on the West, preserve the hostile external environment, and consolidate the internal weaknesses that constitute the major obstacle to Africa's development (Maloka 2002:66). These are genuine concerns, but also show the misconception of NEPAD's mandate.

Reforms: From the OAU to the AU

The AU introduced several innovative developments, including the promotion of shared values such as democracy and human rights. This marked a departure from the previous stance of non-interference, as the AU recognised the importance of intervening in cases of human rights abuses or political instability. This led to the adoption of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) initiative, which authorised the regional organisation to use force where necessary. Additionally, the AU prioritised gender parity, significantly advancing the drive for gender equality within the continent. However, tensions between supranationalism and intergovernmentalism persisted, particularly evident during debates surrounding the concept of a union government, championed by figures like Libyan Gaddafi. This period saw discussions on issues such as the powers of the Commission

Chair and the balance between centralised authority and national sovereignty. Ultimately, the AU played a crucial role in shaping normative developments within Africa, fostering a greater commitment to democracy, human rights, and gender equality among member states.

The formation of the AU saw intense debate surrounding the concept of a union government, particularly driven by Gaddafi's push for centralised power. President Obasanjo's team navigated this pressure through careful auditing of existing capacities, which temporarily slowed the momentum of the union government drive. However, Gaddafi's demise during the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (NATO) invasion of Libya led to a shift in priorities, and the issue was indefinitely postponed from the AU agenda. Despite this, the unresolved question of power distribution between Addis Ababa and member states continued to linger, awaiting future resolution.

Transitioning from the era of plans without champions, the AU entered its third generation of reforms characterised by a heightened political will and direct leadership. This phase began with the adoption of Agenda 2063 during the 50th Anniversary Summit of the OAU. Unlike previous programmes in Lagos and Abuja, which followed a stage-based approach, Agenda 2063 employs a long-term perspective methodology. It outlines a vision for the continent over the next 50 years and identifies key aspirations and priorities to achieve this vision. Agenda 2063 shifts away from linear stages toward a more holistic approach, with aspirations serving as drivers and catalytic projects guiding implementation efforts.

The Kagame Reforms, which followed the adoption of Agenda 2063 in 2013, mark a shift towards institutional and technocratic changes within the AU. Unlike the ideological debates surrounding the union government concept, these reforms focus on reconfiguring institutions and enhancing operational efficiency. Notable achievements include the integration of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) into the AU framework, the restructuring of the African Union Commission (AUC), and the momentum generated for initiatives like the Africa Continental

Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The reforms also introduced a merit-based system and streamlined the summit process, consolidating it into a single substantive summit.

President Paul Kagame-led Reform of the AU

Within the AU, the Kagame Reforms represent a significant milestone in a continuum of reform efforts that have evolved over the organisation's history. Preceding the AU, its predecessor, the OAU, embarked on a series of reforms in response to pressing challenges, such as developmental, governance, and security concerns. The OAU Charter, adopted in 1963, laid the foundation for subsequent reform agendas, grappling with unresolved issues and striving to address the organisation's shortcomings. The quest for reforms within the OAU and later the AU has traversed distinct generations, each characterised by unique approaches and objectives. The first generation of reforms, spanning from the late 1970s to the 1990s, witnessed initiatives driven by visionary leadership, notably exemplified by the Monrovia Summit of 1979. This pivotal gathering initiated the Charter Review Committee tasked with re-evaluating the OAU Charter and laid the groundwork for establishing the African Economic Community (AEC) through the Lagos Plan of Action and the Abuja Treaty.

Subsequent generations of reforms within the AU have grappled with evolving challenges and aspirations, transitioning from plans without champions to more concerted efforts aimed at realising the organisation's overarching goals. Key elements of these reform agendas have included enhancing institutional structures, fostering continental integration, and advancing the AU's role in global affairs. Despite progress, ongoing reforms continue to confront persistent questions surrounding the AU's ability to effectively unite Africa and foster prosperity while navigating complex geopolitical realities.

In essence, the journey of reforms within the AU reflects a dynamic process of adaptation and renewal, driven by a shared commitment to realising the continent's collective aspirations. By addressing historical legacies, harnessing visionary leadership, and embracing innovative approaches, the AU endeavours

to pursue a path towards a united and prosperous Africa, firmly rooted in principles of inclusivity, co-operation, and self-determination.

Fundamentally, the imperative for reform stemmed from challenges including bureaucratic inefficiencies, inadequate implementation of decisions, funding constraints, and the presence of overlapping institutional mandates (Gruzd & Turianskyi 2019). Thus, the Assembly of Heads of State of the AU mandated President Paul Kagame of Rwanda in July 2016 to lead the process, by consulting widely and delivering practical recommendations. President Kagame appointed a nine-member Pan-African advisory team that was drawn from African governments, civil society, the private sector, and international agencies. Based on research and consultations, four important core challenges of the AU were identified (AU 2017):

1. The AU was highly fragmented with too many focus areas.
2. The AU operated under a complicated structure and the limited managerial capacity made it inefficient and unaccountable.
3. It was neither financially independent nor self-sustaining.
4. There was poor co-ordination between it and the regional economic communities.

After about two years of deliberations, the panel offered a five-major comprehensive plan for the revitalisation of the AU. They discovered that the AU needs to:

1. focus on fewer priority areas with a continental scope.
2. review the structure and operations of the AU and ensure institutional realignment for better service delivery.
3. connect with African citizenry.
4. become operationally effective and efficient in the performance of its mandate.
5. identify and implement sustainable financing for its programmes and reduce over-reliance on development partners.

In September 2017, the AUC appointed Pierre Moukoko Mbonjo and Ciru Mwaura as the head and deputy head respectively, of the

nascent Institutional Reforms Unit. Entrusted with the solemn duty of effectuating the minutiae of the reform agenda, their stewardship heralded a pivotal chapter in the union's relentless pursuit of organisational enhancement and efficiency.

In 2020, significant strides were undertaken to actualise the resolutions of the 2018 African Union Assembly, marking the genesis of a comprehensive transformational endeavour. This epoch witnessed a thorough revamping of the AUC and its associated structures, aligned with the directives of the AU's policy organs. Over three years, the departmental framework of the commission underwent rigorous implementation, culminating in a revamped organisational landscape. Notably, a novel administrative architecture introduced approximately two years ago ushered in a wave of institutional reforms affecting multiple AU organs. In 2021, a new cohort of commissioners assumed office, selected under a reformed framework emphasising merit, competitive candidacy, and visionary leadership – a pivotal departure from traditional practices, heralding a landmark evolution within the AU.

The pursuit of reforms within international organisations is a multifaceted endeavour aimed at aligning objectives, revisiting visions, and addressing legal, institutional, and programmatic aspects. These reforms often unfold over time and encompass various dimensions, including enhancing the efficiency and competency of organisational structures and personnel, refining decisionmaking processes, and fostering harmonisation and alignment with related bodies. Additionally, facilitating participation by member states and citizens, forging partnerships with non-members, and establishing self-financing models are integral components of the reform agenda.

Focal Point for the AU's Reform

Looking ahead, future areas for reform include legal consolidation, starting with the discontinuation of the Abuja Treaty and the Constitutive Act in favour of a new legal instrument. This would address the current situation of operating under multiple legal frameworks within the AU system. Additionally, there is a need

to develop a legal mechanism for member states to domesticate regional commitments, ensuring their implementation at the national level. Strengthening the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) and regional courts, resolving outstanding issues, and establishing a Court of Justice as an interpretive body are also crucial legal reforms.

Furthermore, addressing the co-ordination and rationalisation of RECs, as well as enhancing the architectures for peace and security, governance, and development, are essential for future reform efforts. This includes establishing a high authority for infrastructure development in Africa and creating commissions for specific infrastructure projects, each legally instituted according to relevant treaties. Additionally, Africa's engagement in global affairs, particularly regarding the strategic use of its seats on the UN Security Council, and the institutionalisation of partnerships, will be key considerations moving forward.

Similar to the European Union's intergovernmental conferences held every four years to assess progress and discuss reforms, there is a need for a comparable gathering within the AU structures. Such a strategic meeting, involving stakeholders from across the continent and African diaspora, would evaluate the AU's successes and identify areas for reform, providing the incoming commission with a clear programme upon assuming office. These reforms are crucial for the AU's evolution and sustainability and do not rely solely on exceptional leadership but are ingrained within the AU system itself.

An urgent matter that demands attention is the issue of self-financing. The outdated notion of relying on external funding sources must be replaced with innovative solutions tailored to the AU's mandate. Transactional methods, as explored by various entities, offer promising avenues for generating income within the AU's established framework without burdening member states already facing financial constraints.

The AU must take a leading role in the space programme and implement effective policy on space use and management. While other regions are advancing in space exploration, Africa

lags behind, lacking both trained astronomers and a concerted effort to explore beyond its planet. Most of the AU member states seem not keen on space-related endeavours. However, investing in space exploration could position Africa for significant advancements in the 21st century and open new opportunities for scientific discovery and technological innovation. The quest for an invigorated AU and attainment of Agenda 2063 is intrinsically linked to the implementation of a robust reform agenda, emphasising the following specific focal points:

Legal Renaissance: An imperative beckons for legal reform, as the venerable Abuja Treaty, still in operation, bespeaks the need for nuanced resolution to preclude legal confrontations that impede the progress of economic and developmental initiatives.

Ensuring Compliance: A cogent legal mechanism is essential to oversee the domestic commitments of member nations, ensuring steadfast adherence to regional regulations, thereby fortifying the union's institutional integrity.

Empowering Governance: The augury of progress necessitates a reinvigoration of the African Parliament, endowing it with augmented authority, thus amplifying its efficacy as a vanguard of continental governance.

Innovative Financial Praxis: Innovation must hallmark the AU's financial strategies, as it transcends conventional paradigms to secure sustainable funding for the union's multifaceted endeavours, recognising the exigency posed by cost constraints and the attendant dearth of viable financial streams.

Judicial Eminence: The lacuna in a dedicated Court of Justice and interpretative apparatus must be addressed with alacrity, enshrining a robust legal framework to arbitrate disputes and interpret statutes with judicious sagacity.

Global Engagement: Strategic recalibration of Africa's engagement with the global arena, epitomised by the deft utilisation of African seats within the Security Council, is imperative to safeguard and promote African interests on the international stage.

Inclusive Commissioning: A paradigm shift beckons towards a more inclusive commission, wherein the voices of diverse

stakeholders, including private sectors and civil society, resonate alongside governmental representatives, fostering a holistic approach to governance.

Infrastructural Cohesion: The burgeoning proliferation of infrastructure projects mandates the establishment of a high authority or commission tasked with rationalising and harmonising these initiatives across national boundaries, thereby fostering continental cohesion and efficacy.

Pioneering Space Ventures: The union must espouse a visionary outlook towards space exploration and technology, spearheading initiatives to cultivate interest and devise programmes that entwine Africa's burgeoning technological prowess with the exigencies of the global space discourse, thereby positioning Africa as a pioneering force in this epochal frontier.

Conclusion

The imperative for reform within the AU remains intertwined with the essential tasks of fortifying legal frameworks, bolstering regional integration mechanisms, and innovating financing strategies. Furthermore, as the AU confronts global challenges like the democratisation of space exploration, it must seize the mantle of leadership in shaping the trajectory of the 21st-century global order. The trajectory of reform within the AU serves as a testament to Africa's resilience and collective yearning for a more prosperous and integrated future. Embracing the imperatives of change and innovation, the AU stands ready to embark on a transformative journey towards realising the continent's aspirations in the 21st century and beyond.

While the Kagame Reforms aimed to prioritise continental-wide objectives, discussions surrounding AU reform should extend beyond the scope of the Kagame-led initiatives. The realignment of AU institutions to effectively address these priorities has proven challenging. One significant criticism levelled against the AU is its perceived disconnect from the African populace. Addressing this issue must be a paramount focus for any meaningful effort to fortify the AU. The reform and restructuring of the AU should not be viewed as a one-time

undertaking but rather as an ongoing process aimed at enhancing the efficacy of the continental organisation, which stands as the foremost agency for African interests.

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Section Two

Pan-African Agenda



Chapter 3

The African Union and the Pan-African Agenda

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Introduction

A comprehensive discussion and analysis of the African Union (AU) and its Pan-African Agenda requires a consideration of Africa's history, as well as how Africans have and continue to respond to slavery and colonialism. Among the most notable of these responses is the growth of Pan-Africanism globally, as well as struggles for the independence of African countries from colonial domination. Slavery and colonialism carved a master-servant relationship between the colonial powers and the colonised African countries. This asymmetric relation still characterises Africa's engagement with the rest of the world today, and it has continued to entrench the continent's political, economic, social, and cultural marginalisation.

The AU, with its Pan-African Agenda, represents a global movement that seeks to inspire and consolidate unity between all natives and diasporas of African origin. It also aims to counter the effects of both slavery and colonialism. The growth of the agenda was not an organic unleashing of a people's aspirations but rather a reaction to how the rest of the world treated the continent and perceived Africa and its people to be.

This chapter aims to analyse the genesis of the AU and its Pan-African agenda, as well as the extent to which the agenda has been implemented, considering the global context of the Cold War and neocolonialism. Two of the main developments that helped

shape the AU and the Pan-African Agenda are the growth of Pan-Africanism as an idea and a philosophy in Africa and the global stage. The global context is important in these analyses because the rest of the world continues to have political, economic, social, and cultural interests in Africa. While Africa is charting its own agenda, derived from its historical and current material conditions, stronger external powers have a material interest and explicit agendas in Africa. The complexity of this intra-African relationship and the extra-African interest in Africa has a strong bearing on how the AU and Pan-Africa Agenda are defined and executed.

It is also important to highlight the distinctions between the OAU/AU institutions and their programmes, and to measure potential gaps between what is contained in pronouncements and what is implemented. It is the gap between these two that determines whether the AU and the Pan-African Agenda are reacting to stated objectives and the post-independence aspirations of the African people.

The first part of this chapter tracks and analyses the origins of the AU and the Pan-African Agenda, noting that the agenda preceded the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU)/AU and its institutions. It briefly analyses the extent to which the ideals of Pan-Africanism influenced the development of the continental institution and the Pan-African ideas of today. It also analyses the key drivers of the formation of the OAU and its key objectives and programme of work. The second section of the chapter highlights and analyses relevant global developments and programmes that were established for Africa, mostly by the United Nations (UN), the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). It engages the extent to which these programmes accelerated or derailed the implementation of the AU and its ideas.

The third part of the chapter identifies and analyses the implementation of the AU since the establishment of the OAU (the AU's predecessor) and the transformation of the OAU to the AU in 2002. This includes an examination of the Lagos Plan of Action, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as a comprehensive, sustainable development plan of the AU,

the Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) as a governance programme of the AU, the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and Agenda 2063 as the long-term development plan for Africa. The fourth section of the chapter explores how the AU and the Pan-Africa Agenda are being undermined by both African and external players, and offers some recommendations for building a stronger base for Africa's economic, social, and cultural development. The conclusion underscores the core argument of the chapter, which holds that although the AU and the Pan-African Agenda have been well articulated in various political declarations, frameworks, and development plans and programmes, unless the AU, its African institutions, and its citizens embark on an economic and social revolution, the AU's vision will remain an illusion.

Genesis of the African Union and its Pan-African Agenda

The genesis of the AU and its Pan-African programmes can be traced back to Pan-Africanists' thoughts and philosophy. Pan-Africanism was born out of Black people's response to oppression arising from slavery first and colonialism later. The desire for a Pan-African front arose from the massive and systematic dispersal of Africans for close to 500 years through slavery and imperialism.

The Pan-Africanist platform broadly called on all people of African origin to maintain political, economic, and cultural unity, in a bid to achieve freedom from political, economic, and cultural bondage. The Pan-African vision is based on the conviction that all people of African descent globally are a collective cultural and political community based on their shared racial, social, and economic marginalisation derived from their African origins. However, the concept of Pan-Africanism is contested – there is no single agreed definition or approach because, over time, several Pan-Africanist approaches emerged. Pan-Africanism presents a related but slightly different understanding to other African philosophies, as key political figures in the historical Pan-Africanist movements developed and popularised approaches

aligned to their specific contexts. Key figures involved in developing and defining Pan-Africanist thought include Frantz Fanon, W.E. DuBois, Marcus Garvey, and Kwame Nkrumah.

The first Pan-African Congress, held in London in 1900, was among the most significant convenings of Pan-Africanist thinkers and figures. It gave great impetus to Black people across the world to fight a “protracted struggle against racism and economic exploitation of their countries by Europe and the United States” (Chrisman 1973:2). Pan-Africanism became the programme and platform, and with the task of creating an international political community of all peoples of African descent according to Moyo and Ramsamy (2014), from a philosophical perspective,

Pan-Africanism represents the aggregation of the historical, cultural, spiritual, artistic, scientific, and philosophical legacies of Africans from past times to the present. Pan-Africanism as an ethical system traces its origins from ancient times and promotes values that are the product of the African civilisations and the struggles against slavery, racism, colonialism, and neo-colonialism.

Pan-Africanism is also seen as a “...worldwide movement that aims to encourage and strengthen bonds of solidarity between all indigenous and diasporas of African ancestry”. Further, Pan-Africanism can be defined as “...a belief that African people, both on the continent and in the diaspora, share not merely a common history, but a common destiny” (Forever Africa n.d.).

From the foregoing, this chapter defines Pan-Africanism as a philosophy, a movement, and a belief that embodies the cultural, spiritual, artistic, value systems, scientific inheritance, and aspirations of Africans on the continent and in the diaspora.

It regards Pan-Africanism as inherently connected to the fight against slavery and its repercussions, including historical and contemporary racism in all forms, colonialism and its physical, emotional, and psychological impacts, as well as neocolonialism.

The Organisation of African Unity (OAU)

This section examines the origins of the OAU, which followed the emergence of the Pan-African Agenda. The evolution of the AU and pro-African agenda was accelerated when Ghana gained independence in 1957. African figures like Nkrumah believed that “independence [was] meaningless unless it [was] linked up with total liberation of the African continent” (Johnson 2022). In 1960, 17 African countries gained independence, and the OAU was formed in 1963. This was a huge boost to Pan-Africanism and its focus on ridding the continent of political colonialism. The independence of the rest of African countries under colonialism remained high both on the global Pan-Africanist agenda and the agenda of the newly formed OAU because a key tenet of the Pan-Africanist platform is its advocacy for African independence. The most important success of the OAU was its intolerance to colonial heritage and its support of liberation movements across Africa. This is evidenced by the content of the OAU Charter, which aligns with the continued advocacy work of the Pan-African Congress.

Commenting on the Pan-African congresses between 1900 and 1945, Adejumo (2008) maintains that:

While the Pan-African congresses lacked financial and political power, they helped to increase international awareness of racism and colonialism and laid the foundation for the political independence of African nations. African leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, and Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya were among several attendees of congresses who subsequently led their countries to political independence. In May 1963, the influence of these men helped galvanize the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), an association of independent African states and nationalist groups.

The Pan-Africanism platform, therefore, influenced both the pace of African countries' independence and the content of the OAU agenda.

The OAU Charter and its Agenda

The OAU Charter specifies two key objectives of the OAU. The first is to promote the unity and solidarity of African states and to co-ordinate and strengthen co-operation amongst states and their struggles for the improvement of the lives of all Africans. A critical part of the purpose of the OAU Charter was to defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence of all states, to eradicate all forms of colonialism on the continent, and to promote international co-operation within the framework of the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Independence.

The second main purpose of the OAU was focused at the national/member state level as part of its efforts to give effect to the first objective. Members states were expected to co-ordinate and harmonise their policies with a specific focus on political and diplomatic co-operation, as well as mutual support in the fields of economics, transport, communications, education, culture, health, sanitation, nutrition, scientific and technical fields, as well as defence and security. It is evident that the preamble of the OAU Charter – which sets the framework for the purpose of the organisation – is very much influenced by the values of Pan-Africanism. The preamble recognises the inalienable right of a people to take charge of their own destiny. It also notes the conviction, consciousness, inspiration, determination, and dedication of the signatories to the charter. It highlights the desire of African people for solidarity, their aspirations for freedom, justice, dignity, peace and security, independence, co-operation, and unity amongst themselves. It also calls for the need to create and strengthen common institutions amongst member states.

Even though one of the OAU's main achievements was the attainment of political independence across the continent, there was a recognition that this was just the start – it would need to be followed by the struggle for economic independence. In his speech at the launch of the OAU in 1963, Kwame Nkrumah clearly projected an African vision that went beyond political independence when he said:

The struggle against colonialism does not end with the attainment of national independence. Independence is only the prelude to a new and more involved struggle for the right to conduct our own economic and social affairs; to construct our society according to our aspirations, unhampered by crushing and humiliating neo-colonialist controls and interference (AU 1963: 44).

Key Achievements of the OAU

The OAU had many challenges, but it also had many successes. The most notable success of the OAU was the fight for the liberation of countries under colonialism. Through advocacy and the work of the OAU's Africa Liberation Committee (ALC), the organisation strengthened liberation movements' capacity to fight colonialism. Indeed, the organisation managed to achieve this by assisting African countries such as Angola, Mozambique, and South Africa that were under colonialism to attain liberation. Under its priority for the economic integration of the continent, the OAU made inroads into the establishment of regional economic communities (RECs),¹ which are the current building blocks for regional integration on the continent.

The adoption of the African Economic Community in Abuja, Nigeria, in 1991 was a further step in the right direction as it laid the foundation for the now-established African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which is headquartered in Ghana. The adoption of the Lagos Plan of Action in 1980, also in Nigeria, was a notable success. Other milestone achievements were the adoption of the African Convention on Refugees in 1969, and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights in 1981.

1 The RECs are: the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) (1989); the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) (1994); the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) (1998); the East African Community (EAC) (1967); the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) (1983); the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (1975); the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)² (1986/1996); and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) (1992).

The independence of South Africa in 1994 heralded a new era for the OAU and Africa, as the whole continent could be said to be free from colonial and foreign domination. As such, it was time to direct the efforts of the continent towards economic self-reliance and poverty eradication, as well as to promote peace and security. The 35th Summit of the OAU held in Libya initiated talks aimed at ‘reconceptualising’ the continental organisation. At the summit, calls were made for the OAU to hold an Extra-Ordinary Summit to further discuss a ‘reformation’ of the OAU into a more capable and less constrained AU.

The AU and its Agenda-setting Constitutive Act

The Pan-African posture of the AU is derived from its vision and Constitutive Act. The AU Vision is that of an “integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena” (AU n.d. a). This means that, unlike the OAU, the AU had to be more focused on integration, prosperity, peace and security, and citizen participation in the affairs of the union. The AU also had to bolster its capacity and strategies for engaging with the rest of the world in ways that would benefit the continent. The OAU had delivered on political liberation; the AU now had to utilise the dividends of political liberation and turn the continent into a land of prosperity.

An analysis of the performance of the AU since it was established is best done by looking at two levels: the institutional and structural, and the programmatic and developmental. Both levels are critical in determining the capability of the AU as an institution to deliver on the AU Agenda as specified in its Constitutive Act and Vision. The AU vision encapsulates the AU and Pan-African agenda, which denotes integration and prosperity, which speaks to economic development, peace and security, citizen participation, and being a strong global player. These priorities have been clear even before independence. That is why the OAU, and later the AU, have developed various programmes aimed at realising this vision. A summary and short analyses of each of these programmes follow below.

The AU's Objectives

Unlike the OAU, which only had two core purposes, the AU has 14 objectives (OAU 2000:5). While some of the detailed focus areas of the OAU are aligned with the AU objectives, the major difference between the two lies in the AU's prioritisation of economic development, peace and security, and promotion of democratic principles. Additionally, the structure of the AU Commission and the rest of the organs of the union demonstrate the greater importance of the AU as compared to the OAU.

Some of the major issues that have bedevilled both the OAU and AU are inadequate financial and human resources, as well as structures and work methods, particularly of the AU Commission. The objectives of the AU include the attainment of unity and solidarity between African countries and citizens; safeguarding the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence of the member states; accelerating the continent's political and socio-economic integration; promoting peace and security and the stability of the continent; promoting the principles of democracy and good governance; investing in research; enhancing international partnerships; and protecting human rights and the rule of law. The objectives of the AU Constitutive Act are aligned with the priorities that had already been set out in the Lagos Plan of Action in 1980 but were never implemented. In setting out its objectives, the AU further established organs and institutions that would facilitate the realisation of these objectives.

At the launch of the AU in 2002, the organs of the union were as follows: Assembly of the Union; Executive Council; Pan-African Parliament; Court of Justice; Permanent Representative Committee; Peace and Security Council; Specialised Technical Committees; Economic, Social and Cultural Council; and financial institutions. The financial institutions include the African Central Bank, the African Monetary Fund, and the African Investment Bank. The AU has been unable to establish the continental financial institutions, which would have replaced the roles of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund – but likely with fewer conditionalities. It is also likely that the Africa's current development trajectory would have been more positive.

Regarding the establishment of the African Union Commission (AUC) in 2002, it has the following various sectoral commissions: Peace and Security; Political Affairs; Trade and Industry; Infrastructure and Energy; Social Affairs; Rural Economy and Agriculture; Human Resources, Science and Technology; and Economic Affairs.

Africa's Development Efforts

As Africa continues to grapple with the challenges of economic, social, political, and institutional development, the AU has spared no efforts to ensure that the continent rids itself of poverty and global marginalisation. While the development paradigms that have defined the continent's postcolonial period have been well articulated and inspired, they have been unimplementable largely because African states do not have the resources for implementation and key co-ordination issues have not been addressed. This is evidenced by the many development programmes it has developed since it was established. These include the Lagos Plan of Action, 1980; the African Economic Community, 1991; the New Partnership for Africa's Development, 2001; and Agenda 2063. All of these were meant to give effect to the AU and its Pan-African posture. An understanding of these programmes is important in contextualising the current state of the union and its challenges, as well as the prospects for the future.

The Lagos Plan of Action

The Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) was adopted by the OAU in 1980. It was the result of African leaders' frustration with the lack of progress in the implementation of international measures aimed at developing the continent. This was the first development programme to be initiated under the auspices of the OAU. In its principles, programmes, and implementation modalities, it indoctrinated the ethos of a Pan-African agenda and was very much linked to the ideals of Pan-Africanism.

The programmes outlined in the LPA focused on areas including food and agriculture, industry, and natural resources.

The plan recognised human resources development as key to unlocking the continent's development potential. Actions for implementing the plan were identified at the national, sub-regional, continental, and international levels. For example, science and technology was identified as a priority, and the international community was called upon to support this pillar. Transport and communication was another critical priority that was viewed as a key ingredient for the socio-economic integration of the continent and the promotion of intra-African and international trade. Trade and finance featured strongly in the LPA, with a focus on domestic trade and intra-African trade. Chapter 8 of the LPA focuses on measures to build and strengthen economic and technical co-operation, including the creation of new institutions and the strengthening of existing ones. Environment and development was also a priority.

The priority of the least-developed African countries was to influence member states to take ownership for the development of their economies and to undertake the necessary reforms to spur development. The role of energy for development received attention, and African countries were called upon to undertake collaborative energy projects. Short- and long-term energy plans were proposed for implementation. Regarding women and development, the LPA called on member states to take centre stage in driving the participation of women in development. The LPA had a significant impact as far as it raised the consciousness of Africans and African governments to take responsibility for their economic emancipation as much as they had for political emancipation. Through the LPA, the principles of self-reliance and utilisation of the continent's natural and human resources for the benefit of Africans gained prominence. Any meaningful implementation of the initiative was hampered by a lack of resources, as well as competing "global economic pulls and initiatives" (Ikome 2004:3). Contrary to the inspiration provided by the LPA and its objectives, the economic situation got worse by the late 1990s, prompting African leaders of the time to intervene through the development of new programmes such as NEPAD.

The African Economic Community

The African Economic Community (AEC) was established in 1991. It is, by far, the foremost programme of the OAU that focuses on integrating the continent through economic, social, and cultural ties. The four main objectives of the AEC are to:

1. promote economic, social, and cultural development and the integration of African economies to increase self-reliance and promote endogenous and self-sustained development;
2. establish, on a continental scale, a framework for the development, mobilisation, and utilisation of the human and material resources of Africa to achieve a self-reliant development;
3. promote co-operation in all fields of human endeavour to raise the standard of living of African peoples; maintain and enhance economic stability; foster close and peaceful relations among member states, and contribute to the progress, development, and economic integration of the continent; and
4. co-ordinate and harmonise policies among existing and future economic communities to foster the gradual establishment of the community (AU 1991: 19)

The implementation of the AEC faced many challenges from the onset. For example, the proliferation of RECs, currently totalling eight, presents co-ordination challenges. The co-ordination challenges are exacerbated by the fact that many member states have multiple memberships to some of the RECs.

The AEC does not have the legal provisions to prevent member states from belonging to more than one REC. There is also no formal or legal linkage between the AU and the eight RECs. The current working relationships between the RECs and the AU Commission – as well as amongst the RECs themselves – are based on mutual understanding rather than any legal obligation. Nevertheless, all of them exist to serve the AU member states. Another key challenge resulting from poor institutional co-ordination is the ineffectiveness of both financial and human resources.

AU Peace and Security Council

Peace and Security is a critical pillar of the AU agenda. The Peace and Security Council (PSC) was established in 2002 and became fully operational in early 2004 (AU n.d. b). The AU recognises that without peace, there can be no development; and without development, there can be no peace. As such, peace, security, and development are viewed as two sides of the same coin. The PSC is a decisionmaking organ of the AU. Its core purpose is to facilitate the “prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts”. However, like all other organs and programmes of the AU, the PSC’s work is hampered by a shortage of both financial and human resources. Commenting on this challenge, Kenyan president William Ruto maintained in early 2023:

We need serious interrogation of the management of the African Union. Today, we cannot even support Somalia. We are waiting for the EU to give us US\$85 million. 54 (55) countries, 50 years after independence, cannot raise this amount to support Somalia. The AU Chairman cannot do much because we, as Heads of State, have retained all the powers” (Garowe 2023).

The failure of the AU to fund its programmes, especially the Peace and Security agenda, is one of its most fundamental weaknesses. It diminishes the ability of member states to lead and own the AU agenda by leaving space for international players to fund the operations of the AU and embed their agendas and interests.

The New Partnership for Africa’s Development

The New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) was launched in 2001 as a development programme of the AU. It was developed on the premise that African leaders:

... have a pressing duty to eradicate poverty and to place their countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable development, and at the same time, to participate actively in the world economy and body politic. The programme is anchored on the determination of

Africans to extricate themselves and the continent from the malaise of underdevelopment and exclusion in a globalising world (AU 2001:5).

The NEPAD programme is comprehensive and covers the following sectoral priorities (adapted from NEPAD, 2001):

1. bridging the infrastructure gap, covering the digital divide, and investing in information and communication technologies, energy, transport, water, and sanitation;
2. a human resource development initiative, including reversing brain drain, poverty reduction, bridging the education gap, creating health, agriculture, environment initiatives, and building culture, science, and technology platforms;
3. mobilising resources: the capital flows initiative, increasing domestic resource mobilisation, debt relief, and private capital flows;
4. market access initiative: diversification of production-agriculture, mining, manufacturing, tourism, services, promoting the private sector, promoting African exports, and the removal of non-tariff barriers;
5. a new global partnership, establishing a new relationship with industrialised countries and multilateral organisations;
6. implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development: agriculture, promotion of the private sector, infrastructure, and regional integration;
7. needs assessment; and
8. management mechanisms of the New Partnership for Africa's Development's Heads of State Implementation Committee.

While the programme's content is flawless, its effective implementation remains elusive. Twenty years after its launch, the NEPAD programme faces the same challenges as similar and previous programmes. A key challenge among these is inadequate resources for implementing priority programmes. Like the rest of the AU programmes, NEPAD highly depends on donor funding. The issue highlighted above in relation to the challenges of institutional co-ordination with RECs and the AU Commission also persists.

The African Peer Review Mechanism

The Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) was adopted by the AU in 2003 as an upshot of the governance pillar of NEPAD. The APRM was established in 2003 by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC) as an instrument for AU member states to voluntarily self-monitor their governance performance. It covers four thematic areas that were deemed to be critical for governance in Africa, which are (AU n.d. c):

1. Democracy and Political Governance (DPG);
2. Economic Governance and Management (EGM);
3. Corporate Governance (CG); and
4. Broad-based Sustainable Socio-Economic Development (SED).

The adoption and implementation of the APRM demonstrated the importance of governance in Africa. It stemmed from a recognition by African leaders of the importance of sitting together, reflecting on one another's governance gaps, and assisting each other in closing those gaps. From the onset, it was clear that African countries were doing this for themselves to ensure transparency across all development fields. In its initial stages, the APRM was hailed as an innovative governance instrument, further fostering its democracy and governance agenda.

Unfortunately, the mechanism has been used to attract external financial support to countries that have acceded to the APRM. This thwarts the original intentions of the mechanism. As such, countries see the completion of reviews as an end, rather than part of an iterative process for improving governance. Implementation of the programme of action arising from the reviews is commonly neglected.

The Pan-African Parliament

The establishment of the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) in 2004 was a strong signal to Africans that the AU was serious about the Pan-African regional integration agenda. According to the AU (2023:n.d.), "The PAP is intended as a platform for people from all

African states to be involved in discussions and decisionmaking on the problems and challenges facing the continent”. Even though the PAP has faced some challenges, its prospects for effectiveness are high, especially within the context of the Kagame study and report on the institutional reform of the AU (Qobo 2007).

Agenda 2063

The AU adopted Agenda 2063 as Africa’s long-term development plan. The AU set out seven aspirations, which set out a clear vision for Africa to be achieved by 2063. The agenda’s seven aspirations are (AU n.d. e):

1. a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development;
2. an integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa’s Renaissance;
3. an Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice, and the rule of law;
4. a peaceful and secure Africa;
5. an Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values, and ethics;
6. an Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children; and
7. Africa as a strong, united, resilient, and influential global player and partner.

Moreover, several initiatives have been identified as the flagship projects of Agenda 2063, the successful implementation of which has the potential to change the face of Africa and begin to reverse the divisive borders established by the Berlin Conference.

One of the aspirations of Agenda 2063 is democracy, good governance, and the rule of law. However, the current democratic and governance architecture is based on internally entrenched systems established after the Second World War and before the independence of African countries. Governance systems that require African countries to hold elections every four or five years have not helped the countries to grow their economies. Instead,

much time and resources are spent developing five-year national development plans that must align with the election cycle. It is not surprising that African countries do not make much progress in addressing the needs of the citizens and eradicating poverty. Despite the regularity of elections in Africa, unemployment and inequality have increased.

Africa prides itself on its abundant natural resource base. However, it has not managed to stem the tide of natural resource extraction for the benefit of the rest of the world, rather than Africans. During colonialism, there was significant hope that upon independence, Africa's citizens would be able to access these natural resources and change their developmental fortunes. More than 50 years later, the AU is churning out more plans, that never get implemented.

Global Programmes Focusing on Africa

The AU and its institutions do not exist in isolation from the rest of the world, in which it seeks to be a dynamic player. While the AU seeks to influence global developments, other players also seek to influence the AU and its Pan-African agenda, for their own interests. This section briefly highlights programmes for Africa's development that have been conceptualised and implemented by international organisations, particularly the UN. This is important to demonstrate the fact that there are external forces that have a powerful influence on Africa's development trajectory; even more powerful than the AU and its member states. Most of the time, these externally determined programmes have little effect on Africa's development goals and aspirations. This also demonstrates the AU and its member states' weakness in dealing with the rest of the world, which continues to impose programmes they view as serving Africa.

The global actors have intervened through different programmes, which included the following:

United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD) (1986–1990)

The UN General Assembly adopted UNPAAERD in June 1986 to address the dire economic and social conditions in Africa, which started in the 1970s. The key areas of concern at the time included sluggish economic growth and food production, high levels of external debt amid declining international assistance, and environmental degradation due to drought, resulting in famine and hunger in many countries.

The programme was launched for implementation after the five-year existence of the Lagos Plan of Action. This means that the international community paid no regard to the African programme. In retrospect, even though the Lagos Plan was premised on the principle of self-reliance, it dawned early on African leaders that they could not implement it without external financial resources. Therefore, the launch and implementation of UNPAAERD was a demonstration of the adage: ‘He who pays the piper calls the tune’. This saying still applies to the relationship between Africa and the global community today.

UN New Agenda for the Development of Africa (UNNADF) (1991–2002)

UNNADF was initiated after an agreement between African countries and the international community to address what was viewed as an African economic crisis. UNNADF was largely premised on funding from official development assistance (ODA), a feature that negated the key foundation of the LPA’s call for self-reliance for Africa’s development. The promised funds worth \$30 billion did not materialise at the implementation level. The anticipated external trade opportunities for African countries did not yield the expected results. African countries also failed to diversify their economies and relied on a few commodities. African countries were encouraged to develop long-term national development strategies and adhere to the regular conduct of elections as a sign of good political governance.

The first round of UNNADF ended in 2002, a year after NEPAD was established. The UN had appointed a panel to

undertake a review of UNNADF and their review recommended that UN support to Africa be subsequently undertaken through NEPAD. By 2002, NEPAD had become internationally recognised as the long-term development programme of the AU (UN 2002).

The Bretton Woods Institutions

The Bretton Wood Institutions, namely the World Bank (WB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Trade Organisation (WTO), wield significant power and influence on African countries' economic, financial, and social policies. The World Bank was created in 1944 to provide loans and grants to its members who needed financial assistance for economic development. The bank has 187 members globally, of which 54 are African countries.

The IMF was also established in 1944, in response to the Great Depression of the 1930s. It started off with 44 founding member countries. As of 2023, the IMF boasts 190 members, 51 of which are African. The IMF provides short-term financial support to African countries to enable them to ease balance of payment adjustments. It is also now involved in poverty reduction measures under the Enhanced Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative.

The World Bank and the IMF have significant influence on the economies of their members in Africa. The influence varies from policy prescriptions to governance conditionalities that are tied to their loans and support. Examples of World Bank conditionalities include the disastrous Economic Structural Adjustment Policies (ESAP) of the 1980s, whose main thrust was market liberalisation (Crawford 1997). African governments were torn between the need to reduce public expenditure for economic efficiency, and pursuing their social development objectives. The result of ESAP was mass impoverishment (Kawewe & Dibie 2000).

The World Trade Organisation was established in 1995, taking over from the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which had provided rules of global trade since 1948. It has 159 members, of which 44 are African. Given the influence that these institutions have in determining the course of

development of African countries, it becomes difficult for African countries to claim economic, financial, and social independence. The fact that most of the loans that the African countries receive come with conditionalities is a negation of the development and implementation of independent national development policies and the attainment of AU's continental development programmes and its Pan-African Agenda.

Some of the rules of the WTO could also potentially hamper the optimisation of the implementation of AfCFTA's regional integration agenda. Commenting on the AU's 2019 application for Observer Status at the WTO, Erasmus (2019) maintains that the WTO views the 55 AU member states as "independent and sovereign states" whose responsibilities are to the national audience, and not to the AU collective aspirations. He further notes that, "The WTO is a multilateral organisation. Its objectives are about the rules-based liberalisation of global trade, not regional integration" (Erasmus 2019). This means that primacy for AU members states lies with their individual WTO obligations, and not with the AU's objective to "speak with one voice in international trade negotiations...to ensure that Africa is effectively integrated and represented in the international trading system" (WTO 2019), as was being requested by the AU to the WTO.

AU and Pan-African Institutional and Structural Challenges

Each time the AU creates a new development initiative, it also establishes institutions to drive the implementation of the new programme. For that reason, the continent has witnessed the establishment of new institutions over the years. The multiplicity of institutions comes with many challenges, and the AU has not been spared. One of the challenges that Africa has faced in the implementation of the AU's master plan involves a lack of institutional capacity and coherence. About five years after the establishment of the AU, questions were already being asked about the capability of AU institutions and organs to deliver on the 14 objectives of the Constitutive Act.

Furthermore, the RECs were also championing regional projects that were not always in alignment with those of the AU/NEPAD. The poor co-ordination in the implementing of projects bred inefficiencies in financial and human resource allocations. Yet these resources were coming from the same member states that belonged to the RECs and the AU. Arising from this and other challenges, an audit of the AU was undertaken by a high-level independent panel in 2007, and another review in 2017 (AU 2017b).

Audit of the African Union: 2007

By 2007, the euphoria that characterised the launch of the AU, its organs, and its institutions had started wearing off. Despondency was starting to creep in due to the delayed realisation of the benefits that had been promised at the launch of all the initiatives that accompanied the establishment of the AU and NEPAD. As part of the efforts to address the challenges confronting its member states, the AU Assembly called for an audit of the AU, with a view to strengthening the continental institution and accelerating the implementation of the identified programmes. Thus, an independent High-level Panel of the Audit of the AU was established by the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the AU to undertake an audit review of the state of the union in 2007 (AU 2017). The panel produced a comprehensive report (also referred to as the Adedeji report) and some recommendations to the AU Assembly.

Overall, the key recommendations of the audit report speak of the need for accelerated continental integration and transformation, based on a clear set of ethical values. The report emphasises the need for participatory transformation, highlighting that, “establishing strong ethical values in pursuit of Pan-African transformational goals is the only way of promoting solidarity and the acceptance of the oneness of the African humanity” (AU 2007:204). The report recommends that “ethical and moral values constitute the foundation of political, economic, social and cultural activities at the national, regional and continental levels” as means of accelerating the attainment of continental objectives. Unfortunately, the report was never

considered by the Heads of State and Government, and its recommendations were never implemented.

Study on the Institutional Reform of the AU: 2017

In 2016, the AU Assembly called for another study on the institutional reform of the AU. The basis of the decision to undertake the study in 2017 was, once again, a realisation that the AU, like the OAU, was not capable of delivering on the AU objectives. The AU Assembly acknowledged that the AU was facing too many challenges, which hampered it from adequately responding to the needs of the continent. According to the Assembly Decision: “the unfortunate truth is that Africa today is ill-prepared to adequately respond to current events, because the AU, despite its achievements, still has to be made fit for purpose... Without an AU that delivers, the continent cannot progress, and we face the likelihood of yet another lost opportunity” (AU 2017:4).

As reported by the AU (2017a:5), the report came up with 30 recommendations which were clustered into five key pillars:

1. Focus on key priorities with continental scope, and improve the division of labour with regional economic communities;
2. Realign African Union institutions to deliver on those priorities;
3. Connect the work of the AU more directly to citizens;
4. Manage the business of the AU more efficiently at both the political and operational levels; and
5. Sustainably self-finance [the AU's] activities.

Some of the recommendations of the report have already been implemented. For example, a Reform Unit in the Office of the AU Chairperson has been established. The Reform Unit's main task is “implementing the day-to-day activities to be delivered on the reform process” (AU n.d. f). Further, the harmonisation and reductions of the commissions have been completed, enabling the move from eight to five commissions. It remains to be seen whether the challenge of the union is simply institutional and funding-related or whether existing issues result from a lack of

leadership, ownership, and responsibility, which starts at the national level and manifests itself at the continental level.

This speaks to the frustration expressed by President William Ruto of Kenya in May 2023 at what he called poor management of the AU due to the interference of some heads of state and government. Ruto said, “We have the wrong architecture in the management of the African Union. The AU Commission Chairman can do very little because we have retained all the powers as Heads of State, and yet you cannot run one country and run the continent” (Garowe 2023).

Ruto’s questioning of the appropriateness of the architecture for the management of the AU two years after the adoption and ongoing implementation of the Kagame report on institutional reform is worrisome. It highlights how the values, principles, cultures, behaviours, and ethics brought by individual member states actively work to either weaken or strengthen the AU and its agenda.

An Alternative Path?

Internationalism and its ideals have also broken down the bonds that were formed around the political phase of Pan-Africanism. A new African Economic Pan-Africanism is required: one that focuses on the economy and development of the continent. The economy knows borders. Indeed, Africa is not one, but 55 geographical spaces that must be individually governed. It is only the political aspects that remain collective. That is why AfCFTA is such a ground-breaking tool not only for Africa’s economic independence but also a disruptor for Africa’s economic development.

Conclusion

The chapter has demonstrated that the AU and Pan-African Agenda are well rooted in the Pan-Africanist movements of the 1900s. These movements influenced African leaders of early independent African countries, such as Ghana, Nigeria, and Kenya. Having been fired up through the Pan-African Movements,

these leaders were instrumental in establishing the OAU in 1963. The same values developed within the Pan-African movements permeated through the agenda of the OAU.

Despite all the efforts made by the OAU and its member states at the time, various factors prevented the successful implementation of these programmes – some of these were domestic to Africa and others external. The domestic factors included inadequate financing, insufficient human resources, poor infrastructure, weak institutions, poor economic policies and lack of long-term planning, and over-reliance on external support. The issue of regular elections and democratic practices has not yielded the promised results. Instead, every cycle of elections brings about anxiety and a replanning by the incoming government, whether new or incumbent. The two-terms requirement for heads of state and government mean that every four, five, or ten years, countries go back to the drawing board and reprioritise their development plan to align with the petty priorities of the new head of state and government, and not the consistent needs of the population.

As demonstrated above, the AU and its Pan-African Agenda have been very clear since the evolution of the regional institution. Africans want to extricate themselves from the political control, exploitation, oppression, and resource plunder of the Western world. Over the years, they have proclaimed their desire to freely chart their own destiny in many development plans. However, at the same time, they have also yielded to the pressures of the same system they are trying to disentangle themselves from. As such, the foundations for building “The Africa We Want” remains weak. In a bid to find new implementation modalities for the development programmes, almost every decade, the AU does a review of the current programme, then instead of revamping the foundation to make it work, they develop a new one. Many decades of development potential are lost this way.

Going forward, nothing short of an AU and Pan-African economic revolution will enable Africa to meet its development aspirations and achieve the vision of the AU. Even Europe had to go through an industrial revolution as part of establishing the strong

levels of industrialisation seen across many European countries. AfCFTA will not be effectively implemented without some hard sacrifices by Africans themselves. Similarly, implementing initiatives such as the African passport, free movement of people, and the high-speed train all require Africans to break mental, emotional, and psychological barriers. Africans, particularly the national and regional elites, should endeavour to do what they have never done before and how they have never done it before. Failure to achieve this will relegate the AU and its Pan-African agenda to mere rhetoric, consigning the dreams and aspirations of many Africans to the dustbin of history.

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Chapter 4

Reconstruction and Reparative Justice for Global African Peoples in the 21st Century

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“Today each group of people, armed with its rediscovered or reinforced cultural identity, has arrived at the threshold of the post-industrial era. The atavistic but vigilant African optimism inclines us to wish that all nations would join hands in order to build a planetary civilization instead of sinking down to barbarism” (Diop 1986:1).

“One of the cardinal principles of Pan-Africanism is that the people of one part of Africa are responsible for the freedom of their brothers in other parts of Africa; and, indeed, black people everywhere were to accept the same responsibility” (Rodney 1975).

Introduction

The vigilant African optimism that was invoked by Cheikh Anta Diop is being deployed in the face of the challenges to humanity accentuated by the crises of global capital. From the period of the Atlantic slave trade, through Jim Crow, the colonial period, and apartheid, the organisational capabilities of African peoples for emancipation and the humanisation of the planet Earth had prevented humanity from slipping into total barbarism. The resistance to enslavement, whether in Africa or the Western world, created the basis and momentum that led to the formation of organisations and the birth of the idea of Pan Africanism.

Vincent B Thompson, Walter Rodney, and CLR James were Pan-African thinkers who elaborated on the genius of those early resisters who paved the way for a global movement. Micere Githae Mugo strengthened the understanding by focusing on the lived experiences of the ordinary African person at the grassroots level. Martin (1993) observes that the genius of the movement was to bring coherence to the scattered Africans. At every turn, when the ideological organs of the empire attempted to place the stamp of dispersal, dysfunction, and disaster on Global Africa, the Pan-African movement responded with robust ideas about reparative justice and reconstruction. The latest response of the Pan-African movement has been most forthright in the Global Africa reparations movement for healing and restorative justice.

That vigilant optimism girded the will of Africans to reverse the trends of global apartheid (Mullings 2009; Bond 2003). Global apartheid amplifies the array of threats to the future of humans on planet Earth, with wars, pandemics, artificial intelligence, cyberwarfare, and global warming heading the list of threats to African survival. With each passing day, there are reports on the catastrophic results of global warming, with scientists stating explicitly that human-caused climate change is a threat to the continued existence of our species. If humans do nothing to slow climate change, then global temperatures may increase by 4 degrees Celsius or more by the year 2100. Scientists term these dangers 'existential threats' so far as there is a genuine possibility that within the next century, contemporary societies will hit temperatures that are deeply incompatible with the continued existence of human life. Militarism, occupation, warfare, and geo-economic competition further compound the challenges facing humanity. On a similar note, a robust reconstruction plan for saving Lake Chad has been on the table for three decades, with stern opposition from France, the European Union (EU), and the United States (US).

Planning for the reconstruction of Africa to confront the threats of global warming has, up to now, not dominated the front pages of the African press. This does not mean that Pan-Africanists within the environmental justice movement internationally have been inactive. The pedantic work to save

Lake Chad has maintained the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) as a premier Pan-African organisation for nearly 60 years. Wangari Maathai, one of the leading Pan-Africanist, peace, and environmental justice activists, introduced the Green Belt Movement to the entire planet. African environmental justice activists have been sounding this alarm for over 30 years with the deep displays of global warming manifesting in massive dislocations in Africa. Nnimmo Bassey, in *To Cook a Continent: Destructive Extraction and Climate Crisis in Africa*, has gone beyond the alarmist statements to link the struggles for the rights of mine workers to the struggles for environmental justice with the struggles for reclaiming mother earth and for reparative justice (Bassey 2012). Simply stated, reparations and repairing the environment are not about money but about reversing the forms of economic relations that hasten warming. It is in the context of the reparative claims of the global Pan-African movement that inspires this contribution to the edited volume.

Most meetings and discussions of Pan-Africanism reflect the range of intellectual and ideological orientations on Pan-African thought and action. The keynote speaker¹ at the conference in November 2022 represented a variant of Pan-Africanism that has for decades stressed the differences between “Black Africa and Arab Africa”. Such differences had simmered in the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and now act as a lag to properly mobilise Africans to oppose the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation’s (NATO) destruction and plunder of Libya. Similarly, the intellectual output about Sudan hinders an appreciation of the fundamental shift that has taken place in that society (Campbell 2023; Berridge *et al*, 2022). South Africa has produced a political leadership that turned its back on global African solidarity and embraced the ideas of the European Enlightenment to propose an African Renaissance. It is within that Newtonian discourse that confusion prevailed with the South African leadership joining with Europe on the question of reparative justice at the

1 Prof Kwesi Prah, Emeritus Professor, Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society, Cape Town, South Africa. The lecture was titled, “Pan-Africanism, African Renaissance and the Africa We Want”.

World Conference Against Racism in Durban in September 2001 (Beckels 2013).

Hilary Beckles, chair of the Caribbean Reparations Commission, in a pique, penned an article 'End of Pan-Africanism: Reparations and Global Africa'. This was not the first time that erudite scholars had heralded the death of Pan-Africanism. In the early 70s, before the overthrow of fascism in Portugal and the straitjacket of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) leaders, many commentators had written about the death of Pan-Africanism before the African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC) joined a robust Pan-African campaign to push the planet into opposing apartheid. Beckles's intervention challenged the version of Pan-Africanism that was emanating from some academic circles in Africa that allied with Western Europe at Durban and proposed the establishment of the New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD) (Adedeji 2002). This chapter agrees with the need to embrace the formulation of Global Africa to retreat from the ideas of the African diaspora that were promoted within the African Union (AU). The AU designation of the scattered African children in the diaspora as the sixth region of Africa will be analysed against the contribution of scholars such as Michael O West, who has given a robust critique of the vindicationist traditions within the Pan-African movement (West 2005).

This intervention starts with the global context of the global Pan-African reparations struggles, highlighting the twists and turns within the Pan-African world since the founding of the AU right after the World Conference Against Racism. The interrogation of the Afro-pessimism generated by the push to discredit Pan-African thought and action is examined within the context of the intellectual energy to deny the agency of Africans in reversing colonialism and apartheid. By presenting the reversals of apartheid as a gift from Western diplomacy, this same academic ecosystem is deployed to render the military activities of the US and France as fighting terror. The Sudanese revolution of 2019 and the booting out of France in parts of West Africa with the new alliance of Sahel states opened new possibilities for the realisation of full unification of Africa and Agenda 2063. This

intervention highlights the push to rejuvenate Lake Chad with the canal and water transfer system proposed by the Lake Chad Basin Commission. The conclusion presents the quantum leap that can emanate from new thinking and a renewed push for Pan-African dignity.

The Context of the Celebration of the African Union @20: Pan-Africanism and the Aspirations of Agenda 2063

In many ways, “The Africa We Want” was spelled out in Aspiration 7 of Agenda 2063 and my contribution focuses on the conjuncture which is forcing the agenda for a full unification. It is the conjuncture of pandemics, artificial intelligence, wars, and hunger, where humanity is pleading for reparative justice, healing, and reconstruction. Reparative justice is a way of thinking about justice (a mindset) that centres on those who have been harmed and focuses on repairing past harms, stopping present harm, and preventing the reproduction of harm. Every generation of Pan-African resisters proclaimed an agenda for reparative and restorative justice.

Fifty years after Kwame Nkrumah spoke at the founding of the OAU, at the same event when Pan-Africanists were commemorating the contribution of Tajudeen Abdul Raheem, strategists of the AU wrote a document called Agenda 2063. That document built on the Constitutive Act of the AU (CAAU) to advance an agenda declaring that we want:

1. a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development;
2. an integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa’s Renaissance;
3. an Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law;
4. a peaceful and secure Africa;
5. an Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics;

6. an Africa where development is people-driven, unleashing the potential of its women and youth; and
7. Africa as a strong, united, and influential global player and partner.

This document was itself an effort to rescue the AU from the NEPAD agenda that had been imposed on the Pan-African project after the United Nations Third World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) in Durban in 2001. That episodic Durban meeting had channelled a generation of resistance to systemic racism and laid a clear path in the Durban Declaration Programme of Action. The First World Conference Against Racism was held in 1978, and the second in 1983. Apartheid was designated as a crime against humanity at the second WCAR. Twenty years after the removal of Kwame Nkrumah, there was another effort to derail Pan-African initiatives when the West came out with the Berg Report to divert energies from the Lagos Plan of Action. Susan Williams, in *White Malice: The CIA and the Recolonisation of Africa*, spells out the destructive techniques that were unleashed to save White supremacy.

Twenty years after that the removal of Kwame Nkrumah, there was another effort to derail Pan-African initiatives when the West produced the Berg Report to divert energies from the Lagos Plan of Action. In *White Supremacy Confronted: US Imperialism and Anti-communism vs the Liberation of Southern Africa, From Rhodes to Mandela*, Gerald Horne outlines the historical forms of struggle by the international forces of peace and social justice to defeat apartheid (Horne 2019).

In tracing the long battles against White supremacy, it became clear that it was the clarity of the global Pan-African movement that inspired the nonaligned movement and the international anti-racist forces. The Pan-African project had been rejuvenated by four important sequences:

1. the military defeat of the apartheid army in Angola at Cuito Cuanavale;
2. the coming to power of the liberation forces in South Africa and Namibia;
3. the birth of the African Union; and

4. the World Conference Against Racism, calling for reparations and reparative justice.

Many younger scholars remain unaware of the major sacrifices that were made by Africans in all parts of the world to beat back apartheid, with the strong efforts of the OAU Liberation Committee under the leadership of Tanzania and Julius Nyerere (Mbugnuni 2006). In South Africa, the intellectuals from the former apartheid state continued to produce theses and texts that argued that apartheid ended because of the diplomatic skills of the US and South African diplomats (Crocker 1992; Cohen 2000 & 2020; Baines 2014; and Scholtz 2013). This brand of scholarship coincided with intellectual work from within the African National Congress (ANC) that diminished the significance of Cuito Cuanavale with the military and diplomatic defeat of the South African forces (Campbell 1990; Gleijeses 2013). In the pursuit of the conception of the authentic liberation movement, some intellectuals within the academy in South Africa had turned their backs on the solidarity work that had been growing within the Southern Africa region in the era of the anti-apartheid struggle.

Western think tanks, foundations, and governments intervened to diminish the importance of Pan-African solidarity by first seeking to dismiss the strength of the Pan-African process that had anchored the OAU Liberation Committee. Western foundations and governments then expended more than 1 billion US dollars to promote the ideas of neoliberal economic reforms, good governance and the tropes that had been associated with World Bank conditionalities (Stacey & Aksartoya 2001; Hearn 2000). Intellectuals from the former think tanks and consultancies of the apartheid war machine mobilised energies against structural transformation away from apartheid and spread into the Southern African region with the assistance of Western governments. The Institute for Security Studies (ISS) in Pretoria and the Brenthurst Foundation in Johannesburg are some of the entities in Southern Africa that seek to drive the intellectual debates on Pan-Africanism and Africa's economic future. It would then not be surprising that an edited collection on the African Union @20 anchored within the intellectual horizons of the ISS

would exclude the defeat of the apartheid military (Okuma & Atta-Asamoah 2023).

Unlike the neoliberal outlook on Pan-African thought and practices that are advanced by Western institutions, scholars such as Tim Muruthi and Carlos Lopez have been drawing from the richness of Pan-African ideas and how these ideas set the scene for the new union. In my scholarship on the unification of Africa, I have drawn liberally from Cheikh Anta Diop, Wangari Mathai, Kwame Nkrumah, Walter Rodney, and Thomas Sankara to spell out a brand of Pan-Africanism that is inscribed in an emancipatory framework. Walter Rodney is explicit in his writings on Pan-Africanism, maintaining that Pan-Africanism should be centered around the working people. This message was communicated quite clearly when, in the early 70s, many 'Marxists' in the Southern African liberation movements heralded the death of Pan-Africanism. In my other writings, I spelled out the emancipatory framework for Pan-African scholarship, drawing out the four other dominant approaches to the study of Pan-Africanism, which are positivism, constructivism, Marxism, and feminism (Campbell 2018).

The positivist approach has been the most dominant approach to Pan-Africanism, with the traditions being laid very early by the great Pan-African leaders (Geiss 1967). Pan-African feminists such as Micere Githae Mugo, Ama Ata Aidoo, Graca Machel, and Winnie Mandela made their contributions to the understanding of Pan-Africanism that challenged sexism and patriarchy. *In Search of Mr. McKenzie*, a book written by two Black, England-born Caribbean women about their quest for their father, draws from years of investigation by the sisters who were raised in children's homes, and reveals that Ernest McKenzie Mavinga was a dedicated activist of the Pan-Africanist movement who travelled from his home island, Trinidad, to Britain and perhaps Africa (Harris 1996; Mugo 2002). This clear message was that Pan-Africanists cannot proclaim to be fighting for African dignity while neglecting their families. Similarly, in the current period of energetic conservatism, conservative leaders seek to take leadership in the AU with assertive homophobia that promises to kill same-gender-loving persons.

The Emancipatory Approach to Pan-African Thinking

The conjunctural crises of global capital have pressured the Global African intelligentsia and researchers to elevate the aspirations of the AU and formulate approaches to these objectives that are emancipatory. The approach of this scholar to Pan-African liberation is that it must be undergirded by an emancipatory framework. One reads as many definitions and understandings of Pan-Africanism as there are writers and pundits. I started with two thinkers, Cheikh Anta Diop and Walter Rodney, whose lives, writing and examples continue to inspire those who want to break from Eurocentric and Newtonian approaches to Africa's transformation. In numerous publications, I elaborate on the qualitative differences between the Pan-Africanism of great men and that which is grounded in the lived experiences of those who always resisted oppression. As a scholar, it becomes important to spell out the emancipatory framework based on fractal thinking and fractal optimism.

Fractal thinking incorporates quantum realities that are very different from the linearity of stages of growth. These Newtonian approaches have brought the allure of progress and that humans must embark on human development. In Africa, the UN mobilised Africans into the unsuccessful Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which was later replaced with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). African Universities and governments were then lured into extensive work to fulfil the goals of the SDGs. That development approach had been rejected by Pan-African scholars such as AM Babu and Samir Amin.

The Newtonian approach to 'development' was given a new lease of life in the discourses and papers on Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance. Eurocentrism in Pan-African scholarship had been strengthened by the ideas of Immanuel Kant and Frederick Hegel, who sought to write Africa out of the central path of human transformations. That brand of Pan-African scholarship has been termed vindicationist Pan-Africanism by Michael West. If Europe had great civilisations, then Africa must celebrate its civilisations, too. Hence, if Europe went from communalism to

slavery, from feudalism to capitalism, and from capitalism to socialism, this is the path for humanity. Africa must emulate the same path as Europe. This rendition of human development had been reformulated by liberals of the modernisation school to highlight the stages of economic growth: 1) traditional society, 2) preconditions to take-off, 3) take-off, 4) drive to maturity, and 5) age of high mass consumption (Rostow 1971).

Walter Rodney, in *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, critiques European conceptions of modernisation, enlightenment, and Renaissance. The anti-imperialist Pan-African scholarship that originated from the University of Dar es Salaam is consistent with the Pan-African thinking in a society that supports liberation. Rodney and the scholars of the Dar es Salaam School of Political Economy argue that the ideas of modernisation legitimised the doctrines of discovery, genocide, colonialism, and the plunder of humans and nature. Rodney notes in *The Groundings with my Brothers* that there were three ways to break with Eurocentric thinking in order to start a new process of reconstruction. Rodney (1969) notes:

I would suggest first that the intellectual, the academic, within his own discipline, has to attack those distortions which white imperialism, white cultural imperialism have produced in all branches of scholarship... My second point is that the black intellectual has to move beyond his own discipline to challenge the social myth, which exists in society as a whole. In other words, the myth about multi-racial society. This is the sort of thing which we have a duty to perform to the black people from whom we came. Thirdly, the black intellectual, the black academic, must attach himself to the activity of the black masses.

Not only did Walter Rodney attach himself to the activity of the masses wherever he lived, but he dedicated his life to rediscovering the threads of the ancestral past to liberate for humanity the ideas and practices of 'modernity and progress'. That formulation of modernity had been promoted by some Marxists under the guise of 'developing the productive forces'. Walter Rodney's contribution to understanding global capital is to elaborate on the

dialectical relationships between underdevelopment in Africa and technological advances in Europe and North America.

Examining the meaning of Pan-Africanism in the current context of massive technological change requires a new language and orientation – an orientation that breaks away from the stultifying concepts embraced by a class of leaders and intellectuals who have no loyalty to Africa, and who seek to turn citizens into tribal nanobots without a spiritual core. In this era of artificial intelligence (AI), the future of humanity is the struggle between humans that control machines and machines that control humans. Stephen Hawkins observed that artificial intelligence can be the worst event in the history of civilisation. He remarked that, “unless we learn how to prepare for, and avoid, the potential risks, AI could be the worst event in the history of our civilisation. It brings dangers, like powerful autonomous weapons, or new ways for the few to oppress the many. It could bring great disruption to our economy” (Kharpal 2017).

The new digital technologies have offered great possibilities for humans and, at the same time, great dangers for dehumanisation. Two Black feminist scholars, Ruha Benjamin in *Race after Technology: Abolitionist Tools for the New Jim Code* and Safiya Umoja Noble and in *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism*, warn of the bigoted assumptions and ideas that inform the mindset of the mainstream technicians who are programming the systems for machine learning and artificial intelligence. As Campbell (2018) argues elsewhere:

African languages hold some of the key signposts of the refinement of cognitive technologies that are part of the assemblage of converting technologies (nanotechnology, information technology, biotechnology and robotics). For a short moment, the National Science Foundation of the USA and its scientists in California had mooted a project called the Human Cognome project to harness the understanding of cognitive psychology. According to the scientists who were promoting this enterprise, the Human Cognome Project had planned to span various scientific fields, including neuroscience, cognitive science, artificial

intelligence and psychology. Africa as the fountain of homo sapiens was a key area of interest, as were the early African languages...

A better understanding of the cognome can illuminate how the brain perceives and responds to the environment, thereby augmenting artificial intelligence technology. It also has many important implications for the study of disease progression by observing changes in cognition to localised damage. A map of the cognome promises to increase mechanistic understandings of the brain. To further this research, bioanthropologists have tapped into the cell lines of the Hadza, the Iraqw, the Maasai, the Samburu, Sand

we, Shilook, Nuer, Turkana Dinka and San Peoples. These peoples are being studied to learn how to maximise AI capabilities to programme robots.”

Ngugi Wa Thiongo wrote extensively on the decolonisation of the mind and the urgency of using African languages as the language of instruction at every level of education in Africa. Creative writers and linguists in Africa have pointed to one direction of what is possible when African languages and African knowledge systems, along with the principles of social collectivism, are unleashed for the good of society. One could see that throughout Global Africa, people’s understanding of their links to their ancestors and their totems prevented the complete robotisation of their societies. Bob Marley, a cultural leader in Global Africa, had exhorted African peoples to emancipate themselves from mental slavery. It is this emancipation from mental slavery that informs the emancipatory framework.

This epistemological approach is the interconnectivity of humans and the natural environment. One cannot have a peaceful Africa without Africa building on the capacity of women and youth. You cannot have a prosperous Africa without an African at peace; thus, the necessity of Silencing the Guns. In other words, our conceptual framework begins with thinking of African interconnectivity with the universe. African mathematicians such as Paulos Gerdes researched African mathematics, and the

richness of that body of scholarship has now been enhanced by Ron Eglash in *African Fractals: Modern Computing and Indigenous Design*. It is now well established in scientific research that African mathematics made modern computing possible. Ironically, the social sciences taught in Global Africa have not yet caught up with the knowledge of the African countryside in the villages which have been here for about 8 000 years. Instead, in African universities, we teach Euclid and these institutions in the main, as well as the geometry of closed spaces without understanding the great possibility that arises from going back to African knowledge systems.

According to the AU, Pan-Africanists should work for the five transformative outcomes. These outcomes are:

1. the improvement of the living standards of the people;
2. transformed, inclusive, and sustainable economies;
3. integrating Africa;
4. empowering women and youth; and
5. well-governed, peaceful, and cultural-centric Africa in a Global Context.

This author has been writing and advocating for the youth to embrace the technological future in the same ways as those freedom fighters of the Pan-African revolts of the previous generations. Earlier in 2022, I edited a special issue of the *CODESRIA Bulletin*, where the reparative framework for Global Africa was spelled out. Drawing from the expertise of African youths in the digital era, that missive seconded this call:

A revolutionary future is taking place that is transforming almost every aspect of society on a global level. Africa has been engulfed by this revolutionary transformation as well as the entire African Diaspora. Of course, this means that Pan-Africanism, the discourse and action that links together Africa and the African Diaspora, is being transformed in the digital age (Alkalimat & Williams 2021:49).

One component of this transformation has been the new demand for algorithmic reparation. This new field of reparative justice emanates from the clear inequalities embedded in machine learning systems. Rooted in theories of intersectionality and movements for reparation, the new discussions on algorithms for emancipation seek to mobilise the creative and scientific skills of scientists for the deployment of artificial intelligence for human needs. It is in the context of the dire challenges of the new technologies and the changed international system that this essay leans on the extended linkages between the African peoples internationally. The election results in Brazil in 2022 and the coming to power of President Lula da Silva expanded the possibilities for co-operation between the AU, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), and African descendants in North America and Europe. The struggles over the sanctity of Black life and reparative justice behove the Pan-Africanists to be clear on the constitutive makeup of Global Africa to tap into the tremendous energies of the Global African youth.

Global Africa and Pan-Africanism Beyond the So-called Sixth Region and a Union of States

Pan-Africanists celebrated, along with progressive peoples everywhere, the victory of the Workers Party of Brazil in 2022. The victory of candidate Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva cemented the broad alliance of workers, poor farmers, cultural workers, landless persons, African descendants, indigenous persons, anti-fascists, and environmental justice activists. During the global capitalist crisis, with the heightened racism of elements such as Donald Trump and Jair Bolsonaro, the attacks on Black lives imposed a certain urgency in the approaches of the AU to Global Africa.

The assassination of Marielle Franco in Brazil sent a major blow to progressives in all parts of Global Africa:

Born and raised in the *favela* in Rio de Janeiro, Marielle had first-hand experience with poverty, disenfranchisement, alienation and systemic oppression. Her ability to rise above all these challenges and hold a political position, while championing justice and equality for marginalized,

working-class people in the community, served as an inspiration, particularly to black women, LGBTQ and others who felt excluded. Marielle made our fight visible on the global stage and served as a reminder that Black Lives Matter” (Modestin *et al*, 2020).

The Brazilian change, of course, in 2022 strengthened the BRICS organisation (drawn from the acronym of the members: Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) and the anti-racist forces in Latin America.

This change emerged after the victories of the progressive forces in Columbia which was also anchored in a new electoral alliance of African descendants and indigenous peoples. The victory in Brazil strengthened forces in the Permanent Forum for African Descendants in the United Nations along with the resolve of progressive forces who have come to power recently in Peru, Chile, Bolivia, Barbados, and Honduras. This victory meant that the conservative elements in Latin America and the Caribbean were isolated. Six of Latin America’s seven largest countries have now elected progressive leaders since 2018.

These political changes point to the urgency of clarity of the relationships between Africans residing at home and those dispersed outside Africa. In July 2007, during the Union Government debate in Accra, Ghana, the Assembly of the Union acknowledged: “the importance of involving the African peoples (as well as the African Diaspora) to ensure that the AU is a Union of peoples and not just a ‘Union of states and governments’ in the processes of economic and political integration of our continent” (AU 2007). The Peace and Security Council (PSC) Protocol also acknowledges and encourages “non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations and other civil society organisations, particularly women’s organisations, to participate actively in the efforts aimed at promoting peace, security, and stability in Africa.”

The chroniclers of the aspirations of the AU write about the global context, yet turn back on the realities of Global Africa and the Global African family. The president of the African Development Bank (AfDB), Akinwumi A Adesina, notes that “the

African diaspora has become the largest financier of Africa”. It is now accepted that the African diaspora is the biggest funder of change on the continent, where Africans who live outside of the continent sent home more than \$95 billion in remittances in 2022. Yet, even with the initiative in the hands of Africans overseas, the African bureaucrats from the AfDB and the AU are committed to the World Bank’s strategies to trap these remittances into the international financial system under the US dollar.

Thus far, there is little reciprocity between the African leadership in the AU and the struggles against racism and police killings in Global Africa. The Global Africa idea advocates for the recognition that Africans and peoples of African descent share common historical and geographical experiences. Africa is more than geography; it is based on history and people. It is here important to restate the clarity of Walter Rodney on Global Africa: “One of the cardinal principles of Pan-Africanism is that the people of one part of Africa are responsible for the freedom of their brothers in other parts of Africa; and, indeed, Black people everywhere were to accept the same responsibility.”

The concept of Global Africa is a call for recognition of unity in the diversity of all peoples of Africa and African descent. It contends that Africa and its dispersed offspring constitute one family on the planet Earth. According to the AU, the dispersed offspring constitute one region, yet the need for rigorous intellectual and policy planning may revise this concept of a sixth region and instead offer the idea of 11 regions.² The geographical worlds that Black people inhabit, with their peculiar social systems, together constitute Global Africa and comprise 11 regions. This position of designating 11 regions was outlined at the seventh Pan-African Congress in Kampala in 1994 (Abdul-Raheem 1996). Five of these regions are in Africa; that is, the five African sub-regions of West Africa, East Africa, North Africa, Southern Africa, and Central Africa. The worlds of the African family outside of the

2 Rebuilding The Pan African Movement, A Report on the 7th Pan-African Congress. (1996). *African Journal of Political Science / Revue Africaine de Science Politique*, 1(1), 1–8. [Why is this highlighted? Also, why is it not in the reference list? And who are the authors? Please follow correct referencing format.]

homeland constitute the remaining six of the Global Africa idea. These are North America, South America, Central America (the Caribbean), East Asia, West Asia, and Europe. It is posited here that rather than constructing the African diaspora as inhabiting one region, members of the Global African family are dispersed geographically in these six regions but united ideologically and historically to the peoples on the African continent.

Hilary Beckles, in his submission “From Pan Africanism to Global Africa” intensifies the need for the intellectual break with the concept of the diaspora to strengthen the intellectual and social bonds of all parts of Global Africa. In reprising what he termed the betrayal in Durban in 2001, Beckles notes that:

President Thabo Mbeki presided over the delivery of the diaspora to the UN machine. The diaspora woke up in Africa and realised that it was far away from home. In the waking moment there was a stark understanding that it cannot count on Africa to reciprocate or to return in kind that which was given in blood. African leaders joined with the West to tear down the agenda of reparatory justice for Africans. In so doing, they allowed those who had committed this crime against humanity to walk free...

Pan-Africanism was blunted and buried in the post-apartheid politics of African states. Diaspora political and academic services, no longer required by African states, led to the expiration of Pan-African politics. African leaders at Durban saw their future responsibility for the continent through a different lens and did not see eye to eye with the diaspora. The latter had hoped that the reparatory justice movement would create for Pan-Africanism a new frame of reference, an adjusted, relevant agenda that could create for the 21st century the same passion and purpose that had characterized the 20th-century project...

This was not the thinking of African leaders who proposed to the UN a different vision. They rolled out and tabled the ‘African Renaissance Manifesto’ as the alternative to the ‘reparatory justice agenda,’ and they actively sought to

delegitimise the latter by winning Western support for their strategy” (Beckles 2018).

Despite the call to retreat from Pan-Africanism, the highly charged call of Beckles linked the sacrifices at Cuito Cuanavale to the call to retreat from the European ideas of enlightenment, renaissance, and modernity. In his formulation, the very ideas of political collectivism, African identification, and idealisation of Africanness were in themselves revolutionary. The notion that Africa should be freed from colonial rule required military and intellectual actions. Pan-Africanism must be restored to its prior historical trajectory, which was intended to turn modernity upside down.

Beckles was distancing himself from the postmodern fads of decoloniality that wrote about postcolonialism and decoloniality without advocating decolonisation of the remaining colonial outposts on planet Earth. The military and intellectual action that Beckles drew from was alive at the grassroots level all over Global Africa. Tony Martin used the experiences of the Garvey movement to highlight the majesty of Pan-Africanism, the mass mobilisation of the grassroots movements, and the positive results of building a movement from below. Martin requested processive Pan-Africanists to delete the formulation, ‘diaspora’ from our vocabulary. He argued that the deployment of the concept of diaspora reinforced a “tendency among those writing our history to see the history of African peoples always in terms of parallels with European history” (Grant 2021).

The tendency in question here is the experience of the Jewish people, who had developed a robust intellectual arsenal to argue for a homeland for the Jewish Diaspora. That conceptualisation of the diaspora had morphed into an embrace of a concept of a homeland that became associated with wars of occupation and settler colonialism. The distance that is being placed by Pan-Africanists from the concept of the African diaspora is to reinforce the understanding that the Global African family has no plans for occupation and displacement of people in any part of the planet. The Global African family and the concept of Pan-African activity is to reinforce this understanding of emancipation. What makes

the activity Pan-African is the conceptualisation on the part of the participants in their local struggles of their being a part of a larger worldwide activity, including Black people everywhere, with the various segments having obligations and responsibilities to each other.

Black Lives Matter and Global Reparations Campaign as the foremost Pan-African activity

The assassination of Marielle Franco and the lynching of George Floyd on African Liberation Day in 2020 brought new international attention to the rejuvenation of Global Africa that was coming from the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. Within one month, the *New York Times* wrote: “Black Lives Matter May Be the Largest Movement in US History” (Buchanan 2020). Throughout Africa and in all parts of the world, the BLM movement has become the leading edge of the Pan-African movement mobilising, educating, and struggling for Black humanity in all parts of Global Africa. That the four Black women from South America had termed their intervention on Marielle Franco as part of the BLM mobilisation was one indication of the global reach of this movement.

Formed as a broad front in the aftermath of the killing of Trayvon Martin, this front exploded on the world stage after the killing of George Floyd in 2020. Back in 2014, BLM came out with its platform on six points of how to carry the struggles for liberation forward. These points are valid for Black lives, whether in Brazil, Sudan, Germany, Nigeria, or Minnesota in the United States. The literature on BLM is now quite robust, with the scholarship pointing to the fact that BLM is the latest iteration in a centuries-long forging of the Black international. The internationalisation of Pan-Africanism had been projected the by the Anglo-American media because of the dynamism of Pan-Africanists in the US such as Martin Luther King Jr, Malcolm X, Maya Angelou, and Stokely Carmichael (aka Kwame Ture). Christopher Strickland argued that:

the Modern Civil Rights Movement (CRM) of the '60s and the current Movement for Black Lives (M4BL), should not be viewed as separate movements but rather as a

different iterations of liberation activism born in different geopolitical times. The strategy and tactics of the two movements are strikingly similar and the goals are almost identical: to achieve new systems for Black social support and wellness (Strickland 2022).

This is a movement that has taken the revitalisation of the consciousness of African peoples to new levels. Barbary Ransby drew from the ideas of self-organisation and self-confidence of Ella Baker to render her grasp of the intervention of BLM (Ransby 2018). In the reimagination of freedom, this new social movement was led in the main by women and distilled their message in North America into six clear points:

1. to end the war on, criminalisation of, and dehumanisation of black people;
2. to pursue reparations for past and present crimes, including red-lining and the reformulation of cultural and educational institutions;
3. to invest in housing, divest from the military, and establish universal healthcare, and decriminalisation;
4. to ensure economic justice and reconstruction;
5. to guarantee democratic community control; and
6. to attain political power, including independent Black political power and Black self-determination.

The six points are very well elaborated, and it is the second point that has accelerated the new pace of the progressive Pan-African movement. It focuses on reparations: past and present crimes, including red-lining and the reformulation of cultural and educational institutions. The global reparations movement is now the most dynamic aspect of global Pan-Africanism, yet the current leadership in Africa has retreated from establishing a reparations commission within the AU. It is very important that all progressive forces study and understand these points, because they have an important influence on the future of Pan-African politics in the 21st century.

The Global Africa Reparations Campaign.

The global claims for reparative justice by the global Pan-African movement provide the second leg of the contemporary rejuvenation of Pan-Africanism in the 21st century. This movement has been alive since the dawn of racial capitalism and has become internationalised with force since the Durban conference in 2001. More than 30 years ago, the OAU established the Group of Eminent Persons to promote reparative claims.³ Influential scholars F Ade Ajayi, Ali Mazrui, Samir Amin, and Dudley Thompson took the mandate of the OAU Eminent Persons seriously and left a clear trail that linked educational transformation to reparative justice. In all corners of the 11 regions of Global Africa, the reparative claims for enslavement, colonialism, genocide, indentureship, and stolen artifacts drive the political agenda. As a grassroots movement for centuries, in the past decade, governments have attached themselves to this reparations movement and this has been best manifest in the 10-point programme of the Caribbean Reparations Commission. So strong and deep is this movement in four of the five regions outside of Africa, that no government dared to retreat from the 10-point agenda. The engagement of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) with the AU has seen concerted efforts for the revival of the Reparations Commission that had been active in the Group of Eminent Persons.

Since the passing of Queen Mother Moore, Ali Mazrui, Dudley Thompson, and Ade Ajayi, the Caribbean reparations movement joined forces with the North American Reparations front to take the lead in Global Africa for Pan-African reparative

3 The original chair of the group was the Nigerian businessman Chief Bashorun MKO Abiola, who was later elected president of Nigeria, although never permitted to take office. Other members were the Nigerian historian JF Ade Ajayi, Professor Samir Amin of Egypt, US Congressman R Dellums, Professor Josef Ki-Zerbo of Burkina Faso, Graca Machel (formerly the first lady of Mozambique and later the wife of Nelson Mandela), and a political activist in her own right), South African singer Miriam Makeba, Kenyan social scientist Ali Mazrui (based in the United States), former Director-General of UNESCO Professor M M'Bow, former president A Pereira of Cape Verde, former foreign minister in the government of Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana ambassador Alex Quaison-Sackey, , and Jamaican lawyer and diplomat Dudley S Thompson.

claims. The vice chancellor of the University of the West Indies, Hilary Beckles, has been the most energetic in pushing these reparative claims in all corners of the globe. He has spoken on platforms from the British House of Commons to Harvard University, pushing the reparative claims of CARICOM. He was one of the eminent participants at the 2022 Global Reparations Summit in Accra in August 2022. For this assembly, it is essential to reiterate the Accra Declaration resulting from the Reparations Summit in Accra, Ghana. This summit again called on the AU to strengthen the support for reparative claims by establishing a Commission on Reparations. Below are texts from the Declaration of the Accra Summit on Reparations:⁴

On August 1-August 4 2022, Black activists, artists and scholars from Africa, the Caribbean, North America, Europe, Central and South America convened to discuss a global agenda for reparations and healing. Recognising the importance of reparations and healing as a global imperative, we are charging the Global African Reparations Movement to build upon the legacies established by social movements that produced outcomes such as the 1993 Abuja Proclamation and the 2001 Durban Declaration and Program of Action. While we are opposed to past colonialism, apartheid and slavery, we are also opposed to all current and contemporary forms of colonialism, apartheid, xenophobia and exploitation. We condemn the outright use of violence and terror designed to extract, exploit and advance the system of plunder. There is an evolution of economic systems that have come to naturalise poverty and inequality and casts it as the result of deficient people rather than resource deprivation and exploitation.

We call for the adoption of a clear, comprehensive definition of reparations, and forming criteria for reparatory justice initiatives based on the Durban Declaration and Program of Action. An important goal is to distinguish reparations from

4 See https://au.int/sites/default/files/decisions/43383-Declaration_-_CIDO_.pdf.

equitable, inclusive and ordinary public policy, and the narrow Black nativist lineage proposition...

We charge that Global Africans work for the development of prosperous economies based on values of African humanism with principles of inclusive economic rights, including Dr Martin Luther King's call for an Economic Bill of Rights to create independent, self-reliant African-centered knowledge systems. We recognize that reparations are a necessary, critical step to propel us to create these systems with the intentionality that ensures a guarantee of non-repetition of harms against Black people, or any groups of people.

We commit to supporting existing efforts for the return of artifacts, monuments, human remains connected to our memory as African people.

What was striking about the Global Summit was the absence of university researchers. The declarative statements of the Accra Summit were taken by the president of Ghana to the General Assembly of the UN in 2023. But here was an example of Pan-Africanism from above, where leaders embraced fashionable Pan-African ideas on the world stage but denied the elaboration of transformative and reparative education in their societies. Ghana is a good example of a society that promotes Pan-African tourism without reciprocal actions to oppose systemic racism in North America and Europe. As an activist and scholar within the Global Pan-African movement, it is possible to alert brothers and sisters in all parts of Africa that the reparations push has placed the imperial forces on the defensive. At the international diplomatic level, the establishment of the United Nations Permanent Forum on People of African Descent has placed the US government on the defensive. After two decades of opposing the Durban Programme of Action, the political class in the US has now resorted to threatening Africans militarily (via the US Africa Command – AFRICOM) economically (via the weaponisation of finance and trade), and diplomatically through hostile legislation.

Imperial Opposition to Pan African Initiatives

Space does not allow for an elaboration of the US military activities to derail the revitalisation of Pan-African thought and action in the 21st century. The destruction of Libya by NATO forces was one of the boldest and most brutal efforts to forestall plans for the African currency and the establishment of the African Central Bank, (Campbell 2013). The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) worked with institutions in Africa to document capital flight. Other scholars have established how the US AFRICOM served as a front for the weaponisation of the dollar (Hudson 2016). In the face of the expansion of the Black Lives Matter movement, imperialism changed tack by unleashing foundations to invest in steering the direction of the BLM and the reparations movements. Throughout Global Africa, foundations intervened to promote the NGO-isation of resistance (Rodgers 2019). At the level of the US government, there was the diplomatic tact of bullying and convening the US-Africa Leaders' Summit in 2022.

The White supremacist's approach to Africa and disrespect for the AU was again underlined when in 2022 the US rolled out a policy for 'sub-Saharan Africa'. The contradictory nature of the US policy was manifest in the hosting of a summit for the leaders of the AU where the US entreated the leaders to the idea of great power rivalry with China in Africa. The summit invoked the Pan-African mantra that "Africa will shape the future – not just the future of the African people, but of the world" (US Department of State n.d.).

The policymakers within the US national security apparatus sought a new rationale for global warfare in Africa while registering crucial African minerals as being 'strategic' for the computer chip industry. The Minerals Security Partnership Act that was passed by the US Congress focused on African mineral resources. Two states in Africa, Nigeria and Rwanda, signed the Artemis Accord, which was the blueprint for fighting China in space. US digital companies whose focus is on technology, infrastructure, finance, manufacturing, insurance, and energy are now treating data as a form of capital. Pan-African scholars who engaged the role of these digital companies have warned about

how the US companies are arrayed to undermine data sovereignty in Africa. According to Monyae (2022):

Data sovereignty denotes a widespread phenomenon characterised by a conscious engagement in institutional innovation by nation-states through regulations, laws, and policies designed to subject the generation, flow, and use of personal and non-personal data that occurs within their territories to national jurisdiction usually for reasons of national security, economic and strategic interests...

Data is at the centre of military and economic competition amongst major world powers. The exploitation of data has led to acceleration of knowledge production in such fields as climatology, medical sciences, epidemiology, physics and social sciences...the effective use and control of data yields knowledge which in turn yields more power. It is not surprising that many states around the world are fast spreading their sovereign tentacles in the digital sphere to take advantage of the data generated and stored in their territories.

Monyae brings to the attention of Pan-Africanists the centrality of the US military, financial, and industrial complex in the new push to control human and data resources in Africa. There are two pieces of legislation from the US that are worth noting in a discussion on Pan-African reconstruction: the Global Fragility Act, passed in Congress in 2019, and the Countering Malign Russian Activities in Africa Act, 2022. The first is a hostile bid to deepen the militarisation of Africa through the double-speak of over five years to support peacebuilding efforts that take place in collaboration with designated countries and regions. In April 2022, the White House announced that the priority countries under the Global Fragility Act are Haiti, Libya, Mozambique, Papua New Guinea, and a grouping of Coastal West African countries comprised of Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, and Togo.

The US and France have been responsible for the destabilisation and destruction in Haiti and are currently

seeking to manipulate the Security Council of the UN for military intervention in Haiti. The Global Pan-African movement has joined with the brothers and sisters in Haiti in opposing this planned intervention. It should be pushed in this meeting that Haiti should be considered for membership in the AU. It is puzzling that Israel has been accredited observer status in the AU, but Haiti has not been accorded membership or observer status.

One can penetrate the hypocrisy of the Global Fragility Act for the destruction of Libya. The US was one of the states that invaded Libya in 2011, killed the president, and destabilised the Sahel region. The AU has been comatose on the challenges unleashed by the aftermath of this invasion. This is one of the many battlefronts of Global Africa where there must be a sustained push to demilitarise Libya and to place the country on a road to elections, peace, and reconstruction. The reverberations from the instability in the Sahel region are still being felt, with strenuous efforts by Africans to expel the French military, who are seen as the authors of the instability in that region.

The second insult of the US to Pan-Africanists everywhere is in the 'Countering Malign Russian Activities in Africa Act.' Even before this Act has become law, the White House has begun to implement bullying of Africans to prevent them from having an independent position on international issues such as the current war in Ukraine, sanctions against Cuba, or the Israeli occupation of Palestine. The law would oblige the US administration to punish some Russian companies which do business in Africa, and African entities that transact business with the Russians could also be punished. One can see the same principles in the new US Strategy towards sub-Saharan Africa. As one Pan-African diplomat stated, this Act is unprecedented since it entails punitive actions against nations reluctant to synchronise their stance with Washington regarding the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. The South African Minister of International Affairs and Co-operation, Naledi Pandor, took the principled position of opposing this bullying when the US secretary of state visited South Africa in August 2022. She stated that this is "another remarkable example of modern American so-called diplomacy, based on coercion, blackmail and total disregard for partners' interests."

Pandor, in a joint press conference with the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in August 2022, stated: “In terms of our interaction with some of our partners in Europe and elsewhere, there has been a sense of patronising bullying toward ‘you choose this or else’...One thing I definitely dislike is being told ‘either you choose this or else’. When a minister speaks to me like that... I definitely will not be bullied in that way, nor would I expect any other African country worth its salt to agree to be treated” (Van Wyk 2022).

The bullying approach of the US was forcing the South African government to take a more independent stand internationally. In 2023, the US government accused the South African government of selling weapons to Russia. The stern and dignified response of the South African leadership pushed the diplomacy of South Africa to be closer to the BRICS formation. At the BRICS summit in 2023 in South Africa, the organisation extended memberships to Saudi Arabia, Iran, Ethiopia, Egypt, Argentina, and the United Arab Emirates. The independent foreign policy of South Africa was also manifest in the struggles over getting access to vaccines in the era of COVID-19. South Africa has refused to follow the US position on Ukraine and Israel.

From these wars, we are witnessing a break from the neoliberal dominance with new realignments in the multipolar economy. The combined opposition of the BRICS societies, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), Gulf Cooperation Council, and Germany (supporters of the Euro) point to the increased isolation of the US. As the weaponisation of the dollar deepens, there is an alternative demand for a new international monetary system. All over the world, with the economic disruptions unleashed by rising energy prices and disease pandemics, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) calls for devaluation, the downward push of wages and benefits, and militarism have generated new energies for progressive forces.

African Canal Systems for Unification

The very existence of the existential crisis of global warming opens opportunities for new directions in reconstruction and transformation in Africa. Carlos Lopes, formerly of the Economic Commission for Africa, has urged African policymakers to consider the vast possibilities of the golden opportunity for Africa. He maintains: “The cost of producing energy from renewable sources is now equal in cost to production from fossil fuels. Africa has the opportunity that has never been achieved in any other economy in the world, which is to grow in a clean way” (Yaïche, 2024). The existential threats presented by global warming have placed concrete plans, such as the Great Green Wall of Africa, back at the centre of the agenda. Pan-Africanists like Wangari Mathai focus their activities around the issues of environmental repair and renewal.

The AU has established the Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), with the overall goal of promoting socio-economic development and poverty reduction in Africa through improved access to integrated regional and continental infrastructure networks and services. The PIDA Sector Studies assisted in developing a vision for Africa’s infrastructure based on strategic objectives. PIDA’s policies prioritised regional and continental infrastructure investment programmes (energy, transport, information and communication technologies, and trans-boundary water resources), over the short, medium, and long term.. In addition, existing studies recommended the required institutional arrangements, legal frameworks, and financing mechanisms for the implementation and monitoring of the programs(African Development Bank 2023). PIDA was hamstrung by the idea of RECs that had been proposed by those opposing the union government plans of the Accra summit of 2007.

Despite the written claims for infrastructure development, when states such as Egypt seek to militarise the question of the shared waters of the Nile, as in the building of the Renaissance Dam in Ethiopia, the AU should have intervened appropriately. This author has written extensively on the importance of

transcending transboundary concepts when it comes to water in Africa. One area of Africa where this renewal is urgent is in the Lake Chad basin. The lake has lost 95% of its groundwater since 1992. The planning for the refilling of Lake Chad has been ongoing for decades, and in the past four years, the Lake Chad Basin Commission, based in Chad, has beseeched the AU to be more directly involved in the Transaqua project. This is a project to build a Pan-African waterway, from the east bank of the Congo River, through the Central African Republic, to the Chari River, to Lake Chad.

The Lake Chad replenishment project is a proposed major water diversion scheme that has been discussed for decades. This project would involve damming the Ubangi River at Palambo in the Central African Republic and channelling some of the water to Lake Chad through a navigable canal. According to engineers who have been dreaming of this massive reconstruction project to transform the heart of Africa:

In addition to transporting this considerable mass of water to Chad, the artificial canal would perform another important, not marginal, function: It would represent a means of water transport for freight, that, as is known, is the most convenient form of transport that exists. This “river highway” of 2 400 km in the heart of Africa would cover approximately 800 km in the territory of the Central African Republic and 1 600 km in the territory of Congo. On the sides of the waterway there would be two service roads for the clearing of the wooded areas and the construction of the canal, as well as for maintenance once it is completed (African Development Bank 2023).

This Transaqua project would link roads, canals, and an artificial Lake to create the ‘Inter-African Polyfunctional Exchange Area’. Such bold plans for transformation require a new breed of scientists and hydrologists so that African scholars and researchers can be in the lead for these ambitious projects. This is the most ambitious Pan-African infrastructure project before the AU, but the French laboured to oppose this water transfer system by deploying the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement

(IRD – the French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development) to mount propaganda against the water transfer plans. This author participated in the Conference of Heads of State of the Lake Chad Basin Commission in Abuja in 2018, and followed the deliberations of scientists, hydrologists, and planners from West Africa, China, and Italy who have been working to make these plans a reality. It is estimated by geologists and hydrologists that reserves of groundwater across the continent are 100 times the amount found on its surface or 0.66 million cubic kilometres. (MacDonald *et al* 2012).

It is based on these considerations that we draw the principal thesis of this reflection on the unification of Africa. The unification of the water resources of Africa is one of the primary bases for African unity, with a system of canals linking rivers and lakes in the kind of infrastructure planning that ensures that all will have water.

In my work on Pan-Africanism, I have drawn from Kwame Nkrumah's vision of planning for unification drawing on the history and potentialities of canal systems for the reconstruction of Africa in the era of the bio-economy. This will attract the required interest in canals, including mixed grid electrification for all, transportation, irrigation, and reforestation of Africa. The transition from the combustion engine to electric automobiles and from the fossil fuel economy to the solar economy offers new paths for reconstruction in Africa. In a short article on transition, Walter Rodney argued that it was possible to leapfrog the underdevelopment of Africa.

Unification and Quantum Leap

Rodney maintains that:

The necessity for social change in the Third World arises out of a conjuncture of contradictions in the system of capitalist/imperialist production. But the appreciation of this necessity and its historical implementation requires the political organisation of those social classes with the objective interest in the overthrow of capitalism and the

creation of a society freed from the exploitation of labour. The leap from evolution within capitalism to evolution within socialism is no mere spontaneous process. It involves changing levels of consciousness, building working class organisation and self-discipline, and above all the revolutionising of the state and hence of the character of all subsequent social and political intervention (Campbell 1980).

How do we achieve that quantum leap in our consciousness, so that the Pan-African traditions of inspiration and creativity, based on self-determined politics and self-determined social activities, become the reference point for the people and reparative justice?

At the opening of the OAU, Nkrumah stated, “We must unite for economic viability, first of all, and then to recover our mineral wealth in Southern Africa, so that our vast resources and capacity for development will bring prosperity for us and additional benefits for the rest of the world. That is why I have written elsewhere that the emancipation of Africa will be the emancipation of man” (Kah 2012). The struggles for the unity of Africa must now be advanced with the knowledge of what humans can accomplish. Julius Nyerere worked hard towards the United States of Africa. This was to be a new system based on the unity of the peoples of Africa and not on the Berlinist states.

Every Pan-Africanist lives in multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-religious societies. Progressive Pan-Africanists are against all forms of racial determinism. So, while the task is to build African unity, it must not be at the cost of stifling cultural, regional, and linguistic diversity. Amartya Sen cautions against perceiving unity as a mere illusion of uniformity. Unity instead must be expressed through the multiplicities of diversities. Universality then becomes the “unitary significance of our diverse diversities” (Eisenstein 2008). Cultural unity is not then a simplistic concept of unity akin to the uniformity and unity that emanated from the concept of the ‘nation’. It is the multiplicity of diversity that assists us in understanding African peoples and cultures in South Africa, Sudan, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Haiti, the Caribbean, the North American mainland, Europe,

and Africa (in essence, the contemporary pan-African World). There are many examples of this diversity and unity. These examples are to be found in diversities of spiritual reflections, gods, goddesses, rituals, and accompanying musical forms. These diversities include the diverse languages of Africa and the African world. These include the diverse ethnic groups, races, and peoples of Africa at home and abroad. It is this diversity that elevates Pan-Africanism beyond the simple universalism and universal claims of Eurocentric modes of thought and classifications of races.

Rising above the European classification of races is a crucial element of Pan-Africanism today and the challenge is nowhere more evident than in Sudan, where ideas of race and racial classifications are being challenged in a revolutionary process. Over the past few decades, Sudan has struggled for peace, transformation, and healing. When Karl Marx wrote about the civil war in France, he celebrated the Paris Commune, for the brave stand against militarism in the quest to build a new society. Pan-Africanists must support the Sudanese revolution and build on the ideas of Amartya Sen. The grassroots resistance committees held the line against the militarists for four years before the militarists started a bloody war among themselves. The AU has proven ineffective in implementing its stand against military actions in African politics.

During the struggles for the removal of the apartheid regime, Walter Rodney wrote that Africa was on the move. Africa is now on the move again, with the twin push of the Black Lives Matter movement and the reparative justice movement. African scholars will have to push for the resolution of several outstanding issues of peace and demilitarisation more seriously.

Conclusion

In the era of the consumer culture of the West and the debased values of greed and corruption, African religious practices and other forms of spirituality are now important forms of self-expression. Africans and other oppressed people want to identify with spiritual values, which can provide a base for emancipation and redemption. African customs, values, and traditions are

being interpreted in a way that could oppose the Western cultural domination. However, in many cases, some exploit spiritual values to promote organised forms of religious expression, which are also oppressive. African fundamentalism exists and is manipulated by some forces; however, these forces do not have the material resources to create havoc as other religious fundamentalists have. Bob Marley placed Pan-African sentiments in his song, 'Africans must unite'. I capture the centrality of the African voice in the book *Rasta and Resistance*. Paul Zeleza also reflects on the power of Pan-African music when he writes:

Music has been one of the primary media of communication in the Pan-African world through which cultural influences, ideas, images, instruments, institutions and identities have continuously circulated in the process creating new modes of cultural expression both within Africa itself and in the diaspora. This traffic in expressive culture is multidimensional and dynamic, affecting and transforming all it touches. Rooted in the dispersals and displacements of African peoples, it is facilitated by persistent demographic flows and ever-changing communication technologies and involves exchanges—that are simultaneously transcontinental, transnational, and translational—of artistic products, aesthetic codes, and conceptual matrixes (Zeleza 2010).

The spiritual values of self-reliance, love, redemption, and deliverance are values which can unleash the creativity of the Africans to develop new forms of organising and conceptualising society. The task is to find new ways to harmonise the relations between human beings and between humans and nature. Africa is a rich continent. Thus far, the conception of the African leaders has been to mobilise resources and raw materials based on the vision and demands of Europe.

In this contribution, I drew from the reparative framework that started from the position of healing Africans from the sickness of racial capitalism. After outlining the rejuvenation of Global Africa since the defeat of apartheid, this chapter focused on the two new signposts for rejuvenation, the BLM movement

and the Global Africa reparations movement. The concept of reparative justice deployed in this chapter aims to harness the push for environmental repair, the return of cultural artifacts, transformative education, peace, and algorithmic reparations. Drawing from Ngugi's call for the *Decolonization of the Mind*, this intervention restated the call for the teaching and research on African languages to harness the cognitive skills of Africans. Algorithmic reparation is also linked to data sovereignty in Africa. Big tech corporations now understand that the 'most valuable resource is no longer oil, but data'. All the documents relating to the imperial think tanks gush about the youth population of Africa and their engagement in digital spaces.

Breaking out of global apartheid by linking with the forces of the Global Pan-African movement will strengthen the resolve of those who want to confront White supremacy and imperialism across Africa. It is now evident that the drip-drip contradictory conceptions of sustainable development cannot break the stranglehold of the imperial forces over Africa. The rejuvenation now requires boldness and audacity. All the great scholars and important figures of Pan-Africanism, such as Samir Amin, Amilcar Cabral, Walter Rodney, Ngugi Wa Thiongo, Micere Mugo, Wangari Mathai, Winnie Mandela, and Thomas Sankara called for boldness and imagination. We end where we started to draw from the vigilant African optimism.

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Section Three

Unity, Integration and AfCFTA

Chapter 5

African Union Integration Agenda and the Challenges of Plurality and Sovereignty

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Introduction

The determination of African leaders to pursue the ideal of African integration has a long history that dates to the early period of the development of Pan-Africanism. In other words, the development of Pan-Africanism is intertwined with the determination of African peoples to address the challenges of unity, peace, security, and stability on the continent (Nwebo 2020:438). This objective is aptly encapsulated in the vision of the African Union (AU), which is to build “an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena”.¹ The vision crystalised in the institutionalisation of the ideals of Pan-Africanism manifested in the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963 and its eventual transformation to the AU, with its integration agenda as a necessary adjunct of Africa’s socio-economic and political development.

The Pan-African initiative of determining Africa’s destiny by addressing its challenges to unity, peace, security, and stability has its foundation in the institutionalisation of and transfer of Pan-African ideals from the OAU to the AU. The aim of these institutionalisations, with reference to the epoch of the AU, was to, among others, achieve greater unity and accelerate the

1 For more information on the African Union’s Vision and Mission, see <https://au.int/en/about/vision>.

political and socio-economic integration of the continent. This is because the integration of the African political economies was foreseen as the necessary adjunct of Africa's socio-economic and political development agendas (Nwebo 2020:440; Nwebo 2019).

It must be noted that the transformation of the OAU into the AU became necessary due to the common knowledge that the OAU did not commit itself sufficiently to the promotion of integration. The OAU nevertheless substantially achieved its set agenda under the 1963 charter and managed to register some modest achievements. These achievements are particularly evident in the areas of decolonisation of Africa and in developing some of the earliest normative, constitutional, and democratic frameworks and mechanisms, which were inherited by the AU. These were further developed to meet the challenges of globalisation under the AU developmental template. Nevertheless, the promotion of African integration under the OAU was not prioritised and did not gain much traction. As the AU intensifies its efforts to promote regional integration, it has been met with diverse impediments, which relate to some existential and fundamental challenges, particularly the sovereignty conundrum.

Though the OAU experienced these challenges, the process of the institutionalisation of the ideals of Pan-Africanism led to the eventual shift of focus from supporting liberation movements in the erstwhile African territories under colonialism and apartheid to the attainment of Africa's development and integration, spearheaded by the AU. Hence, the crystallisation of the new dynamic of a vision of the AU integration confirms the African leaders' realisation that the AU integration is a necessary adjunct of Africa's socio-economic and political development. Thus, the establishment and strengthening of the necessary economic, political, socio-cultural, and legal frameworks for the realisation of the AU integration agenda cannot be overstressed.

The challenges to the realisation of the AU integration agenda include the fragmented and plural character of African societies, the existence of different legal systems, and the preservation of sovereignty. These factors characterised the consciousness of the leaders of the emergent independent African

states. In other words, plurality about African cultural, legal and governance systems arising from vestiges of colonialism, and the obsession of the emergent African leaders with the desire to preserve their hard-won independence and sovereignty from the former colonial powers, are the major factors that pose serious challenges to the implementation of the AU integration agenda. Thus, the above factors substantially constitute the foundation of the necessary justification for the operation of different governance systems in different parts of Africa and the quest for an African intergovernmentalist approach to integration.

Against this background, this chapter interrogates the process of the implementation of the AU integration agenda. It argues that despite the achievements of the OAU, which are particularly evident in the areas of decolonisation of Africa and the development of regional frameworks and mechanisms by the AU, the realisation of the African integration agenda remains atrophied by existential fundamental challenges built around the question of sovereignty. Therefore, a redefinition of the African idea of sovereignty is critical to the relaxation of the African intergovernmentalist approach to integration, which has hitherto slowed down the AU integration agenda.

It then recommends a paradigm shift in attitude or approach to integration, which emphasises the adoption of the idea of 'pooled sovereignty' or 'supranationalism' as the only viable approach toward enhancing the prospects of achieving the AU integration agenda. Invariably, it is crucial to advocate for the creation of a standardised system of national laws in Africa, especially concerning shared values instruments. Thus, the adoption of shared values instruments that establish the necessary legal framework for the promotion of the ideals of the AU integration agenda can effectively catalyse the achievement of the African development agenda.

Indeed, African leaders, under the auspices of the AU, have made various attempts through the adoption of shared values legal instruments that are aimed at effectively catalysing the achievement of African development and the African integration agenda. Some examples of African Union shared values include

the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981), the Protocol on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990), the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (2003), the Protocol to the Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003), and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (2007).

However, it is not enough to aggregate and adopt shared values legal instruments aimed at promoting the AU integration agenda; it is equally imperative that such instruments are ratified, domesticated, and implemented by member states to be able to achieve the desired result across state boundaries. The failure or slow pace of AU member states in the ratification, domestication, and implementation of their own voluntarily adopted shared values instruments and decisions is the bane of Africa's efforts at achieving the AU integration agenda.

Furthermore, it is instructive to note that the recognition of these challenges is not new. For instance, reports are normally received at almost every AU summit during which member states are called upon to take necessary steps to ratify and domesticate, where necessary, the AU shared values legal instruments. However, the next summit would record no progress by member states on the issue. Thus, the challenges of actualising the African integration agenda will remain the same unless the AU member states eschew their intergovernmentalist approach to integration and rather adopt supranationalism as the only viable outlook. The chapter concludes with recommendations for the acceleration of the AU integration agenda through supranationalism as a dynamic option for continental integration.

To effectively address the theme of the chapter, it commences with the introduction, followed by an examination of some of the important conceptual issues. The third section briefly discusses the AU agenda on integration *vis-à-vis* the challenges posed by nationalism and member states' sovereignty, which continue to impact intergovernmentalism. The subsequent section examines the role of AU institutions in promoting integration and the imperative of legal harmonisation as a mechanism for the

enhancement of the AU agenda on integration. The chapter ends with concluding remarks and makes important recommendations.

Conceptual Issues

Integration

The concept of integration can be explained as the act of bringing together smaller components into a single system that functions as one.² It is important to note that there is neither a clear definition of integration nor consensus on its substantive content and form, let alone a common agreement on paradigms that should inform it (Chingono & Nakana 2009). However, in the context of this chapter, regional or continental integration refers to a mechanism by which states with certain common historical, socio-economic, political, and security challenges and interests can come together and co-operate to develop their economic potential and thereby fast-track their social development. Regional integration helps the integrating states overcome the divisions that impede economic development, especially the free flow of goods, services, capital, and people (Chingono & Nakana 2009).

Against the background of the permissive and competitive nature of international relations in a globalised world, the scope and effectiveness of a state's participation in the political and economic sphere is a function of its capacity. However, capacity disparities exist between the more developed and the less developed countries of the world about global resource capabilities. This disparity puts the developed countries in an advantageous position in the quest for economic development. Therefore, the need arises for states bound together by geography and a common history of exploitation, underdevelopment, impoverishment, disabilities, or weak capacities *vis-à-vis* the global resource pool, to collaborate either to enhance their potential or competitiveness in the global race for economic development of individual member states. States can also co-

2 For more information, see <https://www.techtarget.com>.

operate to constitute themselves as a bulwark against the predatory instincts of more endowed states.

Therefore, regionalism or regional integration can be described as an instrument of socio-economic development of the integrating states or the protection of their economies. It is also a mechanism for the maximisation of member states' national security, economic interests, and regional interdependence and co-operation. Furthermore, the integration of national economies can consequently lead to a bigger market for both primary and finished products. Ultimately, integration will engender greater progress in the political and economic conditions of African states. Thus, regional integration arrangement is presented as a viable strategy that can help in the maintenance of good governance, peace, and security necessary for development. The European Union (EU) was erected upon these beliefs.

Intergovernmentalism

Intergovernmentalism refers to a system of international organisational governance in which member states co-operate in matters of common interest, of their own volition, and to the extent or level they can control. It is a loose association of states who desire to co-operate for their mutual benefit while holding tenaciously to their independence and territorial boundaries. A good example is the United Nations (UN), which provides an international platform for states to co-operate to solve issues of global concern, without any significant loss of states' sovereignty. Whereas supranationalism implies that certain aspects of member states' sovereignty can be ceded to a higher body or international organisation, intergovernmentalism is averse to the ceding of states' sovereignty or sacrificing their national interests at the instance of a supranational authority, such as the EU. Rather, intergovernmentalism focuses on co-operating or working together for mutual benefit, without any constraints. Thus, intergovernmentalism assumes national governments to be the key actors in regional integration (Schimmelfennig 2018).

Plurality

The term plurality can be used in different contexts to simply mean the state of being plural or in large numbers. In the context of this chapter, plurality is used to refer to the existence of diversities that manifest in inequality of the size of the components, governance systems, economic systems, culture, and religion. The aggregation of different nationalities into one political structure without addressing questions of diversities is bound to generate problems of economic exploitation, minorities' fear of dominion by the major ethnic groups, and ethnic politics. The former colonial powers imposed different legal and governance systems on ethnic nationalities in Africa, without their consent. Thus, Africa's internal plurality challenges and contradictions remain major impediments that the AU must recognise and address in prosecuting the AU integration agenda.

Sovereignty

The concept of sovereignty represents the complete and undisputed control over a specific geographical area, and all individuals present in the area at any given time. In particular, territorial sovereignty is one of the essential attributes of statehood, implying that a state exists and operates within a territorial area over which it exercises supreme authority. It is one of the characteristics or indicia of statehood without which nations cannot be accepted into the club of global actors. However, as presented in this chapter, membership of international organisations and their obligations thereby, may constitute an obstacle to full political control of state activities and the rights of the citizens. The concept of territorial sovereignty, therefore, signifies the existence of a territorial domain within which a state exercises exclusive jurisdiction over persons and property concerning other states.

Max Huber, arbitrator in the *Island of Palmas* arbitration case, describes territorial sovereignty as signifying independence to a portion of the globe in "the right to exercise therein, to the

exclusion of any other state, the functions of a state”.³ Thus, the question arises as to what constitutes the functions of a state. Thus, the exercise of the functions of a state is the hallmark of the existence of territorial sovereignty. These activities will encompass state actions that demonstrate the exercise of authority within that specific territory. State activities imply the exercise or enjoyment of some rights and the carrying out of some duties attributable to a sovereign state. This means that a sovereign state has several rights, powers, and privileges attributable to it under international law.

Some of the rights, powers, and privileges associated with sovereignty include the power and authority to exclusively control its domestic affairs, its diplomatic envoys in other countries, and to have sole jurisdiction over crimes committed within its territory. A sovereign state also has co-relative duties binding on it, such as the duty not to perform acts of sovereignty on the territory of another state; the duty to abstain from or prevent agents or subjects of that country from committing acts constituting a violation of another state’s independence or territorial sovereignty; and the duty not to intervene in the affairs of another state, which extends to both internal and external affairs.

It is important to note that international relations are based on the principle of sovereign equality of all states. The UN recognised the fundamental importance of this principle, hence it provides in Article 2(1) of the Charter of the UN that the organisation is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its members. Among others, Article 2(7) of the Charter further makes provision that “nothing contained in the present shall authorise the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state or settlement under the present charter” (UN 1945:3). Therefore, domestic jurisdiction under international law means the totality of the foregoing as captured and protected under Articles 2(1) and 2(7) of the charter.

3 See *The United States of America v. Netherlands* in the Yearbook of the ILC.

Thus, there are two types of sovereignty: internal and external sovereignty. Internal sovereignty relates to a condition where a state is sovereign to the extent that it monopolises the exercise of governmental authority at home, rejecting the right of foreign states or other external actors to impose their laws from the outside or in any other manner interfere in its domestic political order. External sovereignty therefore means the exclusive legal authority of a government over its population and territory, independent of external authorities. This implies that the application of international instruments meant to promote supranationalism must necessarily derogate from the concept of domestic jurisdiction in its absolute context. Here lies the challenge *vis-à-vis* supranationalism in international organisations.

Supranationalism

It is undeniable that international organisations have recently and increasingly become active players in the field of international lawmaking, most notably with respect to treaties and the interpretation of these, and other norms by international adjudicatory bodies (Wouters & De Man 2011). Hence, when specific contracting states collaboratively establish an international organisation centred around mutually beneficial objectives, they delegate essential powers, coupled with a degree of discretion, to the organisation's officials. This strategic delegation empowers the organisation to execute specific functions aimed at realising predetermined policy objectives on behalf of its members. These delegated powers are subject to defined controls, ensuring a balance between organisational autonomy and accountability to the member states. Such measures, then, can be said to constitute a form of constitutionalism at an international level, referred to as supra-constitutionalism. Thus, supranationalism and supra-constitutionalism are two sides of the same coin or condition that transcends national boundaries, authority, and interests (Nwebo 2019).

Thus, supranationalism or supra-constitutionalism is an attempt to translate to the international plane concepts and values that were traditionally reserved for domestic constitutions,

as a mechanism for controlling or modulating constitutionalism at the level of states and in conformity with the relevant international instruments, which states have voluntarily adopted. To this extent, supranational organisations can constitute a challenge to state sovereignty by limiting the powers of member states in certain economic and political actions (Nwebo 2019). The difference between supranationalism and intergovernmentalism is that, in supranationalism, some aspects of sovereignty are ceded to a higher body. On the other hand, intergovernmentalism focuses on a situation that allows different governments to work together, while protecting their national interests and without ceding any sovereignty to a higher authority (Nugent 2017). It is against this backdrop that this chapter analyses the prospects of the AU to effectively deliver on its integration mandate by superimposing a supranational constitutional model and legal order on member states' domestic constitutional orders.

AU Integration Agenda and the Challenges of Sovereignty and Intergovernmentalism

AU Integration Agenda

Regional integration has been recognised, the world over, as a tool that can be used for the economic, political, and social development of countries. Hence, countries in various regions of the world continue to engage in regional integration arrangements. This is due to the immense benefits of stimulating development among the states involved. Accordingly, regional co-operative initiatives have emerged to impact the economic fortunes of integrated regions. There have been significant successes recorded in more advanced integrated regions as evidenced by increases in intra-regional trade and resultant increases in economic growth and development in regional organisations like the EU and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). It was this success that largely encouraged Africa to embrace the idea of regional integration (Nwebo 2019).

African states need integration more than other regions because they are not strong enough individually to survive in the

world market. For instance, being militarily weak, African states and governments cannot defend themselves effectively from internal and external aggressions and would have to belong to a regional group to increase their clouts and ensure their security (Chingono & Nakana 2009). Thus, by pooling their resources and exploiting their comparative advantages, integrated countries can devise common solutions and use their resources more efficiently to achieve better outcomes (UNECA 2004). Integration of African states is therefore necessary as a veritable means of fostering inclusive and sustainable development, as well as addressing concerns around poverty alleviation, healthcare, food security, and access to essential services. This is why the AU has long “identified economic co-operation and integration as the engine to propel African development” (Van Ginkel *et al* 2003:1). This also explains why the demand for integration remains on the front burner of socio-economic and political discussion in the AU. Hence, integration is foreseen as a viable means of addressing the challenges of globalisation and the changing global economic and political environments within which Africa stands in a marginal and disadvantaged position.

The foregoing explains why post-independence African leaders have long recognised the importance of regional economic co-operation and integration as a means for accelerating and consolidating economic and social development (Lebale *et al* 2014). Hence, many African governments embraced the idea of regional integration, initially mainly for political reasons and later as a development strategy to rise above the challenges of small markets and many landlocked African states, and to benefit from economies of scale in production and trade (Tanyanyiwa & Hakuna 2014). However, the integration process involves the use of different forms of integration arrangements, including the establishment of free trade areas, customs unions, common markets, and economic unions, which would necessitate the establishment of common legal rules.

Against the above background, it can be understood why African states have entered into several regional integration agreements. Currently, each Africa country is a member of at least one regional economic group (Geda & Kebret 2002). The

following are some of the regional integration arrangements existing in Africa: The East African Community (EAC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). Though ECOWAS, EAC, COMESA, and SADC have played a crucial role in enhancing the political, social, and economic development of their member states, the impact has not been felt as in the case of the European and Asian regional economic communities (Nwebo 2019).

Beyond integration arrangements at regional levels, attempts have also been made to integrate at the continental level to achieve higher economic co-operation among African countries (Nwebo 2019). Indeed, African leaders aspire to foster regional integration, which gave impetus to the adoption of the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA), which was an initiative of the OAU that was adopted in 1980. It aimed to increase Africa's self-sufficiency and reduce dependency on Western countries. The treaty emphasised African solidarity, self-reliance, and an endogenous development strategy through industrialisation, and envisaged the development of an African Economic Community (AEC) by 2028. The major contribution of the LPA framework for industrialisation includes the division of the economic space of Africa into regional integration areas for the establishment of building blocks of a united African economy. The foregoing shows that the issue of continental integration as an accepted development strategy has remained on the African agenda right from independence.

Having identified economic co-operation and integration as the engine that can propel African development and regional economic communities as pillars for continental integration and development (Chingono & Nakana 2009), it becomes apposite to analyse the challenges and prospects presented by the AU integration agenda.

Challenges of Sovereignty and Intergovernmentalism

The challenges confronting the African integration agenda have a historical background dating back to the formation of the OAU. It must be noted that during this era, integration was conceived as a highly intergovernmental relationship with decision making centralised at the highest level of the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government. The point is that the early integration efforts in Africa were based on 'nationalist' strategies, which focused on co-operation with the sole aim of solving political problems for emerging African states (Nzewi 2014). Indeed, the preoccupation of the leaders was to guarantee absolute control over both external and internal affairs of member states based on the principle of sovereignty and non-interference. An intergovernmentalist approach to African integration was therefore adopted by the leaders in order to secure their countries' sovereignty while co-operating and gradually implementing the agenda.

It is apposite to note that it was based on this intergovernmentalist stance that the AU leaders opted for limited legislative powers for the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) in the interim, allowing it to evolve into a parliament with full legislative powers with time. This was a compromise option between the demand for a supranational regional parliament with full legislative powers and the complications of the sovereignty concerns of member states. Thus, the AU member states might have exercised fears that ceding legislative powers to the PAP would amount to subjecting the lawmaking powers of national parliaments to that of a regional parliament, thereby compromising the legislative sovereignty of the former. Accordingly, the evolution of the PAP into a parliament with full legislative powers was linked to the gradual process of the African continental integration agenda (Nwebo 2019). The PAP is important in terms of providing the legal and legislative instruments for regional integration.

However, the above arrangement could not be sustainable in the long run due to the tremendous influence of multilateral organisations like the UN and supranational bodies like the

EU, and the impact of globalisation. Arguably, the idea of absolute control over both external and internal affairs could be understood and accepted in the 18th and 19th centuries, when states were self-sufficient units of relatively equal powers. Possibly, states were then capable of protecting themselves against internal and external sources of instability and change. Besides, they were states with clearly definable borders, unlike the contemporary dispensation in which globalisation and the challenge of security are rapidly closing the 'iron walls' separating countries. Though national sovereignty is still valued around the world, even in EU countries (which still retain sovereign rights and authority in sensitive areas like foreign policy), the forces of globalisation are constantly chipping away at its walls (Biersteker & Weber 1996).

It is noteworthy to understand that the contemporary global system is shaped by global activities and events that affect national governments at different historical periods. Notably, Europe provides a clear illustration of how sovereignty has changed in the current interdependent world. Since the 1950s, a growing number of European states have voluntarily relinquished some of their sovereign rights, such as determining their own economic policies and other initiatives that were formerly reserved to the exclusive competence of domestic authorities. In an effort to promote economic growth, environmental co-operation, security, and other mutual interests, European governments have established integrated Europe-wide institutions and engaged in joint decisionmaking procedures, establishing what has been described as a system of pooled sovereignty⁴ (Miliband 1969). These efforts culminated in the formation of the 27-member EU.

Arguably, by entering treaties, countries impliedly agree to live harmoniously under an international system or organisation that can interfere in their domestic affairs, especially when it becomes obvious that certain elements that ensure international peace have been tampered with, in order to restore harmony.

4 For clarity, pooled sovereignty simply describes a system in an international organisation whereby member states give up part of their sovereignty by allowing some shared institutions they have established to achieve specific purposes to democratically take binding decisions on specific matters of joint interest on their behalf.

The UN established the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principle in 2005, which embodies a global political commitment to end the worst forms of violence and persecution through multilateral military interventions in the affected areas when necessary.⁵ In this context, it can be concluded that the idea of the state's absolute control over its affairs is now obsolete under a globalised political system.

However, this does not mean that countries are no longer in control of their affairs; rather, the presence and actions (collective actions) of the members of the international community have eroded the growing influence and absolute control of states over matters essentially within their domestic jurisdiction. Thus, the moment a state accedes to a treaty or an international instrument signifying its consent to be bound by it, it can no longer plead the rule of equality and sovereignty of the state as a bar to international obligation concerning that instrument. It is, however, submitted that the loss of sovereignty by acceding to such treaties is minimal, *vis-à-vis* the maximum benefit to the states and the entire international community.

Furthermore, during the era of the OAU, the African governance system was more state-centred than people-centred, as most African governments were preoccupied with the problem of political survival. Therefore, the need for the transformation of the OAU to enable it to respond to the prevailing African problems was glaring, culminating in the transformation of the OAU to the AU under the Constitutive Act of the African Union. Accordingly, the AU under the Constitutive Act abandoned the old OAU doctrine of non-interference in the internal affairs of states and adopted a new and more proactive and progressive paradigm of non-indifference (Nwebo 2019).

Nevertheless, the African integration progress has been very slow, largely because of the fear on the part of some member states that integration might undermine their sovereignty. In other words, the entrenched overriding principle of non-interference and sovereignty in the AU system continues to

5 More information is available online at <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/about-responsibility-to-protect.shtml>.

dictate the character of the African integration space (Nzewi 2014). Accordingly, the AU remains a highly intergovernmental system, highly concerned about sovereignty, and is reluctant to cede power to supranational institutions like the African regional parliaments, especially the PAP (Nwebo 2019). In other words, the overarching principles guiding the relationships between the African heads of state and government right from the OAU era – “the sovereign equality of all member states” and “non-interference in the internal affairs of states”⁶ – remains the albatross on Africa’s journey towards integration. Thus, the excessive adherence of member states to these principles, without flexibility in their interactions, significantly hindered the promotion of African economic integration under the OAU. This challenge persists to this day, impeding progress in the region.

Role of AU Institutions: From RECs to the PAP

This chapter argues that, without a supranational approach to the promotion of integration based on the harmonisation of a set of common democratic values that support integration, the achievement of the AU integration agenda will remain elusive. This can only be realised through the critical roles of AU governance institutions and African regional economic communities (RECs). Against this backdrop, the role of the AU regional institutions and the RECs in promoting the AU integration agenda deserves special analysis, given the strategic importance of integration in catalysing the realisation of African developmental aspirations and the attainment of Agenda 2063.

In particular, the role of the African regional parliaments, especially the PAP, deserves special attention, especially regarding some of its mandates. Article 11(4) and (7) empower the regional legislature “to make recommendations aimed at contributing to the attainment of the objectives of the OAU/AEC and draw attention to the challenges facing the integration process in Africa as well as the strategies for dealing with them” and “to promote the co-ordination and harmonization of policies, measures,

6 See Articles 3(1) & 3(2) of the Charter of the Organisation of African Unity (1963).

programmes, and activities of the RECs and the parliamentary fora of Africa” (AU 2001:8-9). The above provisions clearly show that in establishing the AU, the African leaders foresaw that the PAP has a critical role to play in realising the integration agenda, especially in the area of governance, co-ordination, and harmonisation of the integration process amongst stakeholders.

In this connection, it is noteworthy that the treaty establishing the AEC provides the modalities for the implementation of the integration project, as provided in Article 4(1) of the AEC Treaty. Under the AEC treaty, African integration was to be achieved in stages and the PAP was conceived as a necessary institution to be established at a later stage, whose membership would be determined by universal suffrage. However, the treaty did not elaborate on the form or the nature of the envisaged parliament. Rather, it provided that the PAP’s powers, composition, organisation, and functions were to be set out under the protocol to be adopted at a later stage. With the adoption of the protocol, the PAP has the mandate of promoting the strengthening of the existing RECs, the harmonisation and co-ordination of policies among existing regional and future sub-regional communities, and the harmonisation of national policies.⁷

The harmonisation of laws is particularly imperative for Africa, being a continent bedevilled with plural or diverse legal frameworks for regulating business laws in different countries, thereby constituting huge legal obstacles to intra-African business. Yet, Africa remains the continent where the least progress has been made in the readjustment of international commercial law (Fombad 2013). The harmonisation of international business laws will invariably reduce the costs of doing business, which are normally increased by the diversity in legal rules in the different countries. It will also make it easier for the continent to deal with the rest of the world with one voice and make it difficult for foreign partners to exploit Africa’s weakness in a globalised world. This is particularly evident in the differences

7 For more information see AU (2000).

in the legal systems, which enable the foreign partners to underpay for the goods and services they obtain from Africa.

Considering the above, the PAP was rightly foreseen as a necessary part of the institutional framework for the strengthening and facilitation of the process of actualisation of the African political and economic integration agenda. This is particularly critical in view of its contribution to continental integration and addressing the challenges of integration in Africa. This provision empowers the PAP to develop continental institutional regulatory frameworks and mechanisms that can propel integration, leveraging on the existing RECs as building blocks. The PAP can achieve this by formulating model laws for co-ordination and co-operation strategies for adoption by the assembly.

Furthermore, the PAP has the mandate of promoting and popularising the integration agenda in the constituencies of the member states (Article 11(6) of the protocol) as one of the major policies and programmes of the AU. In this regard, the PAP has been very instrumental in facilitating co-operation among the RECs and their parliaments by organising, on an annual basis, regional meetings on issues of integration, harmonisation, ratification, and domestication of AU legal instruments. Accordingly, the PAP has established organic linkages with all regional parliamentary bodies, such as the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), ECOWAS' Parliament, the CEMAC Parliament, and the SADC Parliamentary Forum. These organisations, especially through their parliaments, play important roles in promoting African integration following their respective mandates. As part of its strategies in promoting the AU agenda, the PAP has also established an inter-organ forum, which meets annually to consider the processes of integration on the continent. This is in line with the protocol that provides for co-operation between the PAP and other AU organs.

In line with the above reasoning, a model law is typically a detailed set of provisions embodying the international, regional, or sub-regional standards on a particular subject, developed to facilitate the adoption of national legislation. This means that the purpose of proposing model law is to attempt the harmonisation

of states' laws on a particular subject. That is, to achieve uniformity in their form and content, particularly in the areas of shared values. Therefore, it is the responsibility of state parties seeking to adopt a model law to determine the nature and scope of adjustments that may be required regarding the form and content based on the provisions of its constitution and the structure of its legal system. The use of model laws in Africa is particularly important as a means of shaping the development of national legislation in conformity with generally accepted regional models or standards.

Thus, based on the African common position on certain subject areas, a model law for the AU will provide a framework for the guidance of member states in formulating or updating their local legislations. This process will serve to align national legislation in conformity with the regional standards, considering national interests, levels of development, contexts, and peculiarities. The process also assists the national governments in understanding their obligations to their country and how they can address them through their national parliaments. In other words, unifying or harmonising the laws of different countries means replacing, to respective degrees, the existing national laws with common rules (Fontaine 2013).

Furthermore, the convergence of laws assists member states of an international organisation in reforming or making changes in their national laws following the benchmark set by international organisations to produce uniformity in areas of common interest.⁸ The justification arises from the need to overcome jurisdiction barriers and externalities, which are antithetical to the integration agenda, and to promote transparency (Dabiru & Lala n.d.). Herein lies the critical role of the PAP, which understandably was established as a 'parliament without authority' to exercise legislative powers, as its powers and functions are limited to advisory and consultative roles only. As such, its legitimacy and incentive to effectively promote the AU integration agenda through legal harmonisation remain atrophied.

8 See <https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095921694>.

Furthermore, it is instructive to note that the attempt to strengthen the PAP by adopting the revised protocol which declared the PAP as the legislative organ of the AU⁹ with enhanced powers, including the power to promote model laws, has not been realised because the protocol is yet to be ratified as required.¹⁰ The challenge of the ratification of the revised protocol¹¹ is one of the problems that negatively impact the capacity of the PAP to effectively deliver on its mandate of promoting the AU integration agenda, especially through the proposition of model laws to enhance legal harmonisation.

Concluding Remarks

The chapter has engaged Africa's attempt at regional integration amidst the diverse challenges of sovereignty and pluralism. It further attempted to make the case that the AU's political and economic integration agenda is a visionary and viable initiative in response to the continent's underdevelopment and economic marginalisation. However, the AU's agenda cannot be realised without rekindling the spirit of Pan-Africanism necessary to achieve unity, solidarity, cohesion, and co-operation among African states and their people. Indeed, the commitment to regional integration can be seen as "part and parcel of the broader aspiration of continental integration, which takes its roots from the Pan-African movement of shared values, collective self-reliance in development, and political independence" (Lumumba 2018:6).

In this regard, the LPA's architecture envisaged a continent where regional integration arrangements served as the building

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- 9 The legislative mandate of the PAP is provided for in Art 8(1) of the revised protocol.
 - 10 See Art 23 of the revised protocol, which provides that the protocol shall enter into force 30 days after the deposit of the instruments of ratification with the chairperson of the commission by a simple majority of the member states.
 - 11 On 27 June 2014, in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, the revised protocol to the Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU) Relating to the Pan-African Parliament was adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the AU. However, the protocol is yet to become operational because it has not secured the required number of ratifications.

blocks for the goal of establishing the United States of Africa. The convergence of the laws of member states is very crucial in achieving this important feat. Therefore, the PAP¹² was envisioned as a catalyst for the familiarisation of the peoples of Africa with the objectives and policies aimed at integrating the African continent, as well as strengthening continental solidarity and facilitating co-operation among RECs and their parliamentary forums.

Thus, without the full involvement and participation of African governments and peoples, the vision of the AU will not be realised. Therefore, regional co-operation and interaction are required to support continental arrangements aimed at achieving the objectives of an economically and politically integrated African continent. Given the sensitive and deep-rooted nature of the above challenges, the buy-in of the African leaders and well-directed diplomacy are recommended to effectively confront them. This requires serious advocacy and proper communication with countries to make them realise that integration does not necessarily conflict with the sovereign authority of states. Rather, integration will make the continent politically and economically stronger by leveraging comparative advantages in endowments and productivity.

The chapter submits that the PAP can lead this crusade by leveraging its advisory and consultative powers under the protocol to synergise with the parliaments of the RECs and national parliaments or other deliberative organs in promoting the AU integration agenda. Therefore, for the African integration agenda to succeed, the AU member states should be prepared to give up part of their national sovereignty in favour of pooled or shared sovereignty. For instance, AU policies aimed at liberalising the free movement of people, capital, and labour, can promote economic integration. Furthermore, the PAP should be strengthened to continue to play its pivotal role in catalysing informed dialogue

12 This is one of the activities of the PAP Consultative Dialogue with the PAP on 9 May 2007 in Midrand, South Africa. It is available online at <http://www.pambazuka.org/pan-africanism/submission-civil-society-organisations-pan-african-parliament>.

with relevant segments of the African people and soliciting their support at both regional and national levels.

The chapter concluded by emphasising the fact that the new paradigm of non-indifference challenges the concept of state sovereignty in its absolutist form in the AU. It supports the concept of pooled or shared sovereignty by which states are supposed to subject their sovereignty to the implementation of AU legal instruments, aimed at promoting democratic governance in member states and enhancing the integration agenda. Unfortunately, intergovernmentalism continues to determine the attitude of African leaders to the ratification and implementation of AU legal instruments. Therefore, the time is now ripe for AU leaders to change their 'operational gear' towards the promotion of supranationalism as an effective option for the acceleration of the AU integration agenda.

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Chapter 6

African Union and the Leadership Conundrum

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Prologue: The institutional leadership of the African Union rests on the leader of any of the member states who are appointed by the African Union's institutional mechanisms for the purpose of guiding the Union through its fundamental principles and directing the regional body towards a desired future.

Introduction

This chapter attempts a discourse of the African Union (AU) within the context of leadership on the African continent. Doing it essentially requires a delve into history, especially on the evolution of the union and its current trajectory. Indeed, “history helps us understand and grapple with complex questions and dilemmas by examining how the past has shaped (and continues to shape) global, national, and local relationships between societies and people. Historians use a wide range of sources to weave individual lives and collective actions into narratives that bring critical perspectives on both our past and our present” (Department of History 2023). The subsequent section interrogates the complex questions and dilemmas of leadership, otherwise termed the “leadership conundrum” in Africa.

The OAU Dispensation

The AU emerged in 2002 from the then 39-year-old Organisation of African Unity (OAU), established in 1963 and subsequently replaced by the AU. Thirty-two states of Africa represented by their governments had signed the treaty that established the OAU as a regional institution for confronting both the existing and anticipated problems that were common to its member states, which had just attained statehood after decades of colonial subjugations. Hitherto, there had been three separately operating ideological blocs in Africa: the Monrovia Bloc led by Tafawa Balewa of Nigeria, the radical Casablanca Group led by Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, and the Brazzaville Group led by Cameroonian political elites. The leader of each of the groups agreed to the formation of the Pan-African organisation based on a loose association of states.

The idea of forming an intergovernmental institution was favoured by Monrovia and supported by the Casablanca Group (Amate 1986). The OAU Charter was signed by 30 out of the 32 African countries, with the exception of Morocco and Togo, which later joined in July and September 1963, respectively. The idea, in a sense, was to promote unity and co-operation among members in such a way that could give Africa one voice against imperialism and neocolonialism. In specific terms, the articles in the organisation's charter present its objectives, which were to promote unity and solidarity of the African states, co-ordinate and intensify their co-operation and efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa, defend their sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence, eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa, promote international co-operation, and have due regard to the Charter of the United Nations (UN) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Elias 1965).

While the above background relates to the OAU, a discussion of its successor – the AU – within the context of its leadership becomes imperative. It is important to note that membership of the OAU was limited to only independent countries in Africa, and this explains the later admission of 21 other states, with South Africa becoming the last to join (Edo & Olanrewaju 2012).

The structures of OAU included the Assembly of Heads of States and Governments, which acted as the supreme organ and met annually for policy formulation and direction. There was also the Council of Ministers which was made up of foreign ministers of each member state, who met biannually to prepare matters of concern for discussions at the General Assembly. The Secretariat was headed by a Secretary-General who was expected to be objective and accountable to the organisation, its member states, and their governments. The Commission of Mediation, Conciliation, and Arbitration was also established to undertake dispute resolution among member states. Specialised commissions, which included the Economic and Social Commission as well as the Educational, Scientific, Cultural, Health and Defence Commissions, were also established through the General Assembly.

To some extent, the organisation was still able to achieve its core aim of liberating all African countries from the claw of colonial rules and apartheid regimes. This is despite the foreign ideological persuasions that flooded the region during the Cold War era. They successfully mediated in several border disputes, including the dispute between Algeria and Morocco (1963–64) and Kenya and Somalia (1965–67). The organisation monitored events in South Africa and advocated international economic sanctions against that country during apartheid. In 1993, the OAU created a mechanism to engage in peacemaking and peacekeeping on the African continent. In 1998, the institution sponsored an international panel headed by former Botswanan president Ketumile Masire to investigate the genocide that took place in Rwanda in 1994. Its report was released in 2000.

However, the regional institution failed to address a whole lot of issues. The inability of some of the member states to completely dissociate themselves from foreign ideological persuasions impeded the OAU's attempt at resolving most of African problems. Seen from this latter point, most African leaders during OAU remained tools in the hands of the foreign powers, thereby often compromising on some general ideals of the organisation. Other states and their leaders allegedly became so powerful that they stalled some of the peaceful negotiations of the regional body. Of particular note during the OAU era was the sit-

tight syndrome of most rulers of African states, and this became a cog in the wheel of political stability and socio-economic development of the concerned states. Consequently, there was a decline in the socio-economic conditions of most of the member states, which then had to rely on foreign aid for survival because of their lack of resources to meet their financial obligations. This subsequently left a huge vacuum in the OAU and created illegitimacy problems, as many of these rulers were regional actors. Towards the end of the 1990s and the early 2000s, it had become apparent that the internal structures, ideas, and workings of the organisation were no longer in tandem with contemporary Africa; thus, it needed a major transformation.

The Establishment of the African Union

Therefore, in 2000, the Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo, and South African president Thabo Mbeki, spearheaded the move to replace the OAU with a new body, the AU. The proposed union was to be more economic and driven by the ideals of regional integration, similar to the European Union (EU), with regional structures such as a central bank, a court of justice, and a Pan-African parliament. A Constitutive Act, which provided for the establishment of the union, was later ratified by two-thirds of the OAU's members and came into force on 26 May 2001. After a transition period, the AU formally replaced the OAU in July 2002. Moreover, the African Standby Force (ASF) was created with the intention of establishing consistently trained reserve forces across the five African regions: north, east, central, west, and south. The comprehensive framework aims to include 25 000 personnel from three regional economic communities (RECs) and two regional mechanisms (RMs), collectively representing the entire continent's five regions (Tchie & Ani 2022:2).

On 9 September 1999, Gaddafi initiated the process by inviting the Assembly of Heads of State and Government to an Extra-Ordinary Summit to amend the OAU charter for efficiency and effectiveness. Thus, the Sirte Declaration set the tone for the transformation of the OAU into the AU, and the secretariat was tasked with the working out of the legal documents and modality for the new organisation. The document was submitted at the

36th Heads of State and Government Summit, which was held in Lome between 10-12 July 2000, and signed by member states between 11-27 July 2000, with the exception of Egypt. The treaty was ratified during the Lusaka 2001 Summit, where the Secretary-General of the OAU was mandated to fine-tune the modalities for the launching of the union and its organs, as well as prepare the draft rules. The rules governing the organs of the organisation, the Assembly, the Executive Council, the Commission, and the permanent representatives, were developed before the inaugural summit of the new union in July 2002.

A significant difference between the OAU and the AU is that, while the former was focused on eliminating what Lisk (2012:1) describes as “the last vestiges of colonialism in Africa”, the latter extended its focus to “propelling African states towards peace and prosperity as the basis for achieving the ultimate goal of the political and economic integration of its member states”. Lisk (2012:2) adds:

The AU was modelled on the European Union with structures that included an Assembly of heads of state/government, an Executive in which countries were represented by their foreign ministers, and the AU Commission which is the administrative branch made up of 10 commissioners and headed by a President. The transition from OAU to AU was clearly intended to transform the institutional framework for realizing the pan-African vision and mission from what some critics regarded as a mere ‘talking shop’ to an action-oriented forum.

The AU, in its first decade, and from a broad perspective, recorded an array of achievements. It resolved conflicts in some of Africa’s trouble spots, through both soft and hard power. The AU intervened in Sudan, Cote d’Ivoire, and Kenya where, at different points, it resolved conflicts and restored political power to democratically elected administrations where military regimes had taken over, and also resolved electoral disputes, particularly where the incumbents had attempted to upturn results in their favour and engage in illegitimate power consolidation. These were achieved in collaboration with states and non-state actors

within the international community. In other words, the AU did not operate with the doctrine of 'non-interference' in the internal affairs of member states, as against the extreme adherence to this doctrine by its predecessor, the OAU. Rather, it technically interfered, when necessary, in member states' affairs, to promote peace, address humanitarian concerns, and protect democracy. Efforts in this direction included deploying military force in situations that were categorised as genocide and crimes against humanity. This was made possible through the AU structures such as the Peace and Security Council (PSC), while its Peer Review Mechanism, spearheaded by its agency, African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), allowed it to engage with member states on issues around governance, electioneering, peace, and security. As Lisk further maintains, the AU initiated working mechanisms in which each member was subjected to governance reviews by a team of experts, drawn from other member states, to encourage and deepen democracy and good governance. Lisk (2012: 2) notes that:

AU observer missions are now sent as a matter of routine to cover elections in all member states, in accordance with the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (2007). Judging from the drastic fall in conflicts and coups, and the increasing number of successful elections in the region in the past decade, it can be inferred that on balance actions by the AU have added value to Africa's 'political performance'.

The AU has invested in efforts to promote and garner support for economic integration in its first ten years. Better co-ordination permeated the 54 member states, and this raised optimism across the continent for national and regional sustainable development. The regional economic communities (RECs), such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the East African Community (EAC), and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), in collaboration with the AU, international partners, and the UN, began to activate internal and external economic programmes that focused on Africa. The AU took a notable step by proposing the establishment of an African

Central Bank and an African monetary union at the continental level. Similarly, it played a significant role in how the election dispute in Zambia was resolved, ensuring political stability, peace, and security in the country. As the AU advanced toward its 20th anniversary, the COVID-19 pandemic struck. During the pandemic, the union lobbied the international community for vaccines and debt forgiveness as palliatives to members who were hit hard economically by the highly disruptive and destructive disease.

Over the years, the AU and regional leaders have faced several challenges. Twenty years after its establishment, the Pan-African agency has been unable to realise the economic and political objectives of the union's mandate, although, with optimism, one would submit that the AU can be revitalised to subdue its problems and take its rightful position within the regional and global space. However, achieving this objective requires deeper reforms, renewed ideas, and reinstitutionalising of the current institutional arrangements and behavioural changes of African leadership. Leadership is the main issue because the series of problems confronting the institution have culminated in distrust among the member states, thereby creating some impression of a loose, unfocused organisation. In other words, the major challenge of the AU is its leadership conundrum.

On Leadership: Conceptual and Theoretical Understandings

It is important to explore the concept of leadership before locating it within the context of the AU. Although the objective is linked to the AU as an organisation, the institution itself is made up of individual member states, whose leaders are the major actors, thereby setting the agenda for its activities. Thus, this chapter approaches the discourse of leadership, based on the above caveat, thematically eclectic, and encompassing the use of the theme leadership in all the senses it could possibly take.

It is most desirable to start from a simplistic definition of leadership. Leadership involves the exhibition of power, wisdom, and popularity, usually directed towards the accomplishment

of some set goals, usually through the involvement of human assistants. This suggests that a leader is someone who successfully marshals his human collaborators to achieve particular ends. This is leadership at the individual level, and it can connote chairpersons, statements, and even some drivers who work with or through others. In line with this, it is asserted that leadership takes both monomorphic and polymorphic forms (Lin & Boh 2020). From this line of thought, polymorphic leadership deals with a range of different issues and sets of goals, and must use other subleaders to achieve its aims. A president or prime minister, for instance, must deal with diverse issues of politics, health, war, education, environment and agriculture, infrastructure, and technology, locating their leadership from a polymorphic standpoint. A military leader, on the other hand, provides monomorphic leadership, because the group being led falls under just one career. However, even within a monomorphic leadership like the military, leaders still need to deal with different issues. Thus, the dichotomy between monomorphic and polymorphic leadership may just be a matter of nomenclature.

Theoretically, leadership is the ability to influence the actions of others towards the realisation of a particular objective. This involves different conceptual and theoretical postulations, particularly at the level of the individual (Novak 2020). This chapter explores a few theoretical positions that attempt to analyse the concept of leadership. The trait theory, for instance, explains leadership from the biological composition of the individual or group of people involved, as well as those selected to lead others. According to this theory, leaders are born, not made (Novikova 2013). Another theory, contingency theory, engages leadership from the perspective of styles, roles, and situations. That is, there are different leadership styles under the contingency approach or theory. One is the activator leadership, which represents a leader that involves other people in the decisionmaking process. The controller leadership employs the use of the 'stick and carrot' when necessary. This type of leadership employs the use of punishment and reward mechanisms. The martyr leadership plays the pity card to achieve the desired results.

Furthermore, the cavalier is interested in the approval of others, while the analytical leadership style employs the use of thorough research before critical decisions are taken. Servant leadership theory explains leadership from the perspective of leaders having the motivation to serve for the improvement of others. The emphasis here is servitude or service. On its part, transactional leadership leads through social exchange, while transformational leadership helps in the empowerment of the followers and greatly impacts their environment. These are examples of leadership theorised from the point of view of individuals.

Additionally, especially because the focus of this chapter is on the AU, the idea of institutional leadership becomes very important. Institutional leadership explains, for instance, how an executive changes or is transmogrified from being a leader to a statesman. It involves setting out to achieve certain objectives through a set of designs and ensuring that such becomes a reality. In the view of Smeets and Beach (2023), the function of institutional leadership is majorly political, and this explains the interdependence of administration and politics and policy nexus. Institutional leadership addresses the internal bearing. It uses the external environment to generate acceptance and works against external enemies. However, this is affected by the institutional behaviour.

Zaccariah (2023) goes further to draw attention to the difference between institutional leadership and institutional leaders. The former addresses the legal framework binding both the leaders and member states within the national, regional, or international organisations, structures, processes, and the people that are involved in the decisionmaking process of the organisation. The latter, however, comprises those appointed by the institutional mechanisms to direct and guide policy frameworks, including during periods of crisis.

From the foregoing, locating the meaning of leadership in extant literature is difficult. This is because most authors and analysts of the concept usually premise their thoughts upon popularity, showmanship, power deployment, wisdom, and

charisma, from both corporate and individual perspectives. Confessedly, leadership in its generic sense involves all the above postulation, including those appointed by the institutional mechanisms (of the AU) to direct and guide policy frameworks. The AU suffers from an institutional leadership crisis, as some of the established organs and agencies are in crisis and enmeshed in leadership tussles. The union has also had to deal with other issues that affect the legitimacy of its leaders, particularly on the issues around rivalry between regional powers, and the seeming hostility between the francophone and anglophone countries. These conflicts are reflected in the divisions that marred the establishment and functioning of the Pan-African Parliament (a forum where the opposition parties in Africa can air their voices). The issue of rotation of powers within the AU architecture along regional or sub-regional lines has also been one of the burning issues tearing the organisation apart. Indeed, if the AU aimed at maintaining unity in the continent, the seeming ideological divides must be handled carefully.

Thus, the problems confronting Africa have been closely linked to the leadership question. The ineffective control and management of resources at the national levels and other challenges of the 21st century have exacerbated leadership failures and endangered the continent. The political instability that arises from civilian dictatorship, abuse of constitutions, and the manipulations of electoral systems, including the rising popularity of unconstitutional governments, have produced sit-tight leaders that are oftentimes bereft of ideas on how to promote effective governance and develop Africa. This lack of ideas often leads to dependency on foreign and Western governments in the quest to develop Africa, a situation that has further deepened poverty and increased foreign debts (Tieku 2019). While the AU is not directly responsible for the inept leadership in several countries on the continent, it has the responsibility to enhance the quality of leadership through its involvement in the institutionalisation of credible elections and enhancement of government performances through its agencies, such as the APRM.

Furthermore, the AU was established to correct the inadequacies of OAU, by providing leadership for Africa as it

pertains to other areas, such as improvement in intra-African trade, that would reduce dependency on Western governments. It would also drastically promote economic growth in Africa, with the focus expected to shift from the state control of the economy to the involvement of private sectors. This attempt to foster more co-operation between state and non-state actors is directed at limiting the overbearing power of the states on the protection of the interest of the citizens, which was neglected during the OAU years. African states are to subject themselves to the peer review mechanism, to allow for more scrutiny of their records and performances in comparison with the benchmark set (Nwanolue 2017).

The AU has pledged its commitment to the entrenchment of democratic values and tried to discourage one-party rule, autocratic democracy, and military intervention in politics. The realisation by the union that civil wars and bloody conflicts needed to be halted for the continent to harness the benefits of development imposed a greater responsibility on the AU peace and security actors to intervene in countries such as Somalia and Sudan. Intervention in Sierra Leone, Sudan and Liberia, as well as dispute resolution in Côte d'Ivoire and Chad, all prove to the world that Africa has grown enough to proffer African solutions to African problems.

A review of the agenda of the AU in the last 20 years proves that the organisation has demonstrated its leadership in peace and security on the continent. However, the lack of resources to fund its operations, especially peacekeeping, has left the union at the mercy of its foreign sponsors. The difficulties in reaching a consensus due to the diversity and rivalry between some regional powers have done a lot of harm to the functioning of the AU. Despite putting the necessary framework in place to ensure compliance with the union resolutions, it is still finding it difficult to compel member states into accepting its resolutions. There is a compelling perception that the AU is being used by powerful African leaders to advance their interests. This was evident in the way the AU shielded leaders of both Kenya and Sudan from prosecution at the International Criminal Court (ICC) for the

roles they played in the killing of thousands of civilians and the genocide in Darfur (Bachmann & Sowate-Adjei 2020).

The inability of the AU to fund its specialised commissions through voluntary donations and payment of dues by the member states is undermining the performance of the organisation and affecting its leadership roles in matters that concern Africa. The adoption of a new financial rule that allowed the EU to bypass the AU when funding national projects in Africa has not only questioned its leadership role but has also undermined the national security of member states (Luursema 2023). Though the AU has made tremendous efforts at keeping peace in Africa, such efforts have not translated into economic growth. Other efforts at continental integration are taking off at a slower pace. The New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), which was a homegrown attempt at promoting growth and integrating Africa into the global economy in order to reduce poverty, has not yielded the desired positive result because of the low volume of trade among member states. For instance, the volume of trade among the member states was around 15%, while the volume with Europe was estimated at 68% (Agupusi 2022). The free trade initiative, under AfCFTA, is expected to address this dilemma.

The lack of trust by the citizens of member states because of its inability to consult with civil society has contributed to the stunted growth of the body, particularly in terms of accountability and a sense of belonging by the citizens of member states. The AU has not been able to satisfy the concerns of the majority of ordinary Africans, who require public goods and service delivery. The AU is facing challenges of leadership that have burdened the organisation in its last two decades of existence, with poor governance and dependency on foreign assistance. However, these problems are a result of the institutional makeup of the institution itself, as leaders across the continent do not have a uniform understanding of development. While a leader could have a good grasp of the structure and dynamics of governance needed for development and of the major internal and external factors that shape events, implementation of the ideas has become problematic. Based on the current reality in many states, one may argue that many African leaders have no understanding

of the diverse problems confronting their citizens and are not too enthusiastic in implementing developmental policies in their national boundaries. The critical question is even deeper. For instance, while agreeing that the leadership problem is the root behind of the AU's unconvincing performance, do we mean institutional leadership or institutional leaders?

History has acknowledged the leadership effectiveness of a few people in Africa, and beyond. These individuals serve as leaders in various states, transitioning to different roles either directly or through influential and hegemonic methods. For instance, before the administration of Rwandan president Paul Kagame, Rwanda was known as a war-torn country, and noted for poverty and bad governance. However, with the strong and transformational leadership style of President Kagame, Rwanda has recorded tremendous economic growth. In terms of women in leadership positions and education, Rwanda is ranked amongst the best (Halidu *et al* 2022). Former president of Mozambique Samora Machel, one of the leaders of the *Frente de Libertação Moçambique* (Mozambique Liberation Front – FRELIMO), fought for the independence of Mozambique and became its first president in 1975. His leadership style was based on the principle of contingency and transformational leadership style amongst others. His leadership strategies include the need for the emancipation of women, the dismantling of capitalist structures by delinking with the imperialists, and the abolition of exploitative and capitalist structures and practices of forced labour through nationalism (Daniel 2016).

Fidel Castro's pragmatic leadership style endeared him to many Cubans. First, through his idea of revolutionary struggle and the ideology of socialism, he fought against the Baptista government. Second, through his pragmatic efforts, Cuba gained independence under his auspices and became one of the best-performing societies, particularly in terms of education, health, and general level of development (Garcia 2020).

In Europe, German Angela Merkel's leadership was based on inclusive governance, through clear policy directives. Her leadership style was equally based on using a non-compromise

posture to achieve the necessary results. With this, Merkel can be described as a non-conformist leader, who remained steadfast on issues such as migration, environment, and climate change (Tirmizi 2023). The European Union was faced with the problem of ameliorating the condition of the member states during the COVID-19 pandemic, which had ravaged Spain and Italy, leading some of the member states to question the financial capacity of these states and their capacity to recover. While there was a plan by the EU through the COVID-19 Recovery Fund, the idea of political leadership and the institutional rancour between and among member states showed the problem between institutional capacity and crisis management. Drawing from Article 133 of the EU Treaty, member states first engaged in polemics as to the legality of loans and grants. The EU eventually earmarked 750 billion to strengthen states' capacity to ameliorate COVID-19 fatalities, as against the initially suggested 500 billion by Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron. The fund could not solve the crisis of COVID-19 or the post-COVID-related issues.

Conclusion: Addressing the Leadership Conundrum

Certainly, there are pressing leadership challenges within the AU that require immediate attention. While the AU serves as an institutional leadership platform for Africa, its effectiveness relies heavily on the leaders of member states. In other words, the institutions within the organisation can only function optimally when guided by strong leadership from the member states' leaders. Quality leadership of the AU is a function of leadership of the member states. Is there an individual leader of any of the member states who can provide institutional leadership for the AU? The forgoing issues, along with the questions that follow them, constitute the leadership conundrum in the AU which, along with the subsequent questions, embody the leadership dilemma faced by the AU.

By July 2002, when the AU officially came into being in Durban, South Africa, the African leaders who met were quite convinced that they had built a bespoke architecture that would respond effectively to the plight of contemporary Africa, as stipulated in its mandate. While the promotion of peace,

security, and stability on the continent are some aspects of its core mandates, others include the economic development of the region. Upon constant interrogations, there are certain aspects of the mandate that demand emergency attention if the AU is to retain its status in Africa and around the globe as the most decisive Pan-African agency. In the immediate realm, these include securing a ceasefire in troubled countries, such as Sudan, Somalia, Mozambique's Cabo Delgado, the Democratic Republic of Congo (Congo DRC), and Cameroon.

The AU must, without delay, intervene in the conflicts in the Sahel region, and restore democratic governance to those countries under the siege of military regimes. Indeed, the West African region is becoming a coup belt, and the AU must be pragmatic in tackling the rising incidences of unconstitutional changes of government on the continent. These issues, which are all linked to governance failures, must be addressed urgently. The AU must redress the entrenched impunity by the political elites and their disregard for the rule of law and national justice institutions. In the long run, the AU should actively address the human rights problems and humanitarian concerns, including those related to climate change in countries like Somalia, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Chad.

Agenda 2063 is a summary of what and where African countries want to be in 2063. It is a blueprint and master plan for transforming Africa into the global powerhouse of the future. It is a manifestation of the Pan-African drive for unity, self-determination, freedom, progress, and collective prosperity pursued under Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance. Unity, resilience, and ambition are needed amongst African leaders to lift their people out of poverty. To meet this agenda, there is a need for every African leader to, in their state, accelerate joint efforts by giving priority to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at all levels. They must also align their national policies and strategies with the regional and global templates for development: SDG 2030 and Agenda 2063. This will first restore the mutual trust that has been lost, as a prelude to bridging the gap between the citizens and the AU, and

ensure societal harmony. Further reforms are necessary for the effective functioning and delivery of the expectations of Africans.

For every social formation where leaders exist, there are always some set goals. These set goals define leadership in particular situations and highlight their responsibilities. Thus, the idea of leadership in the AU is best hypothesised and discussed within the context of the set goals of the AU. Since leadership is egalitarian and rotated yearly at the level of the AU, national leaders must deliver on the AU agenda and be committed to aligning them with national priorities. This will ensure that such leaders have implemented policies in support of the collective African Dream, with the assurance that they will not deviate when it is their turn to lead the AU.

This chapter has delved into history by claiming that the AU was founded upon the pillars of the OAU. While these two organisations had different objectives, they were both established to protect the interests of Africa. However, the AU is a better-focused and more inclusive organisation than the OAU. While few African leaders have worked assiduously to make the AU a reality, the current leadership and national political elites must make sure that the gains of 20 years will not be lost to military coups and democratic backsliding. As has been observed by International Crisis Group (2022:1), “the year 2021 was tumultuous in Africa, with coups in Chad, Guinea, Mali, and Sudan, an orchestrated power grab in Tunisia, protracted fighting in Ethiopia, and a rising threat from transnational Islamist militancy. The AU’s response to these crises has been mixed”.

This difficult question of leadership and the leadership conundrum within the AU rests on the character of the leaders of the individual member states, who are expected to provide institutional leadership for the regional organisation. Institutions are made of individuals; thus, institutional leadership is dependent on the disposition of these leaders. Located within the context of the AU are the leaders of member states, who thereby become key figures within the AU institutional mechanisms. Such leaders must be capable of interrogating existing structures constantly and visualising how to effectively improve them.

Does the mechanism exist in the AU to address this leadership conundrum? This remains a future research theme.

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Chapter 7

Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement – AfCFTA: Prospects and Impediments

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Introduction

The African Union's (AU) efforts to promote intra-African Trade have reached a zenith with the ratification of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) by 24 countries in May 2019. AfCFTA aims at increasing Africa's economic growth and industrial competitiveness. As a part of the larger Pan-African vision, the initiative is a part of the commitment to building economic and political unity and enhancing the attainment of Agenda 2063. According to Geda and Yimer (2019), the AfCFTA agreement aims to provide better opportunities to gain economies of scale and efficiency through greater competition and specialisation. As anticipated, it offers a more attractive domestic market for international and local investment. In addition, an increase in intra-regional commerce would boost economic expansion and help pull people out of poverty.

The eventual success of AfCFTA hinges on African states not just ratifying it but also fully implementing and complying with the elements in the protocol establishing the free trade regime, and on the commitments of the economic players being able to utilise it (Apiko, Woolfrey & Byiers 2020). Beyond the ratification of AfCFTA, there is a missing aspect based on the Abuja Treaty's recommendation and implementation hierarchy – the disparity between the progress of existing RECs and the 'preemie' of AfCFTA

(Seife 2022). As a result, the AfCFTA idea, rather than increasing intra-African trade, exacerbates the existing problem, and will continue to do so unless the AU takes prompt remedial actions.

Ajibo (2019) asserts that the AU transitional plan outlined in Article 6 of the Abuja Treaty of 1991 consists of six stages:

- **Stage 1:** strengthening and creating RECs (the first five years);
- **Stage 2:** stabilisation of tariff and other barriers to regional trade and strengthening of industry and energy (the next eight years) – this includes sectorial integration, particularly in the fields of trade, agriculture, finance, transport and communication;
- **Stage 3:** establishment of a free trade area (a further ten years);
- **Stage 4:** harmonisation of tariff and non-tariff systems (two years);
- **Stage 5:** establishment of a common market and adoption of common policies (four years); and
- **Stage 6:** integration of all sectors, the establishment of a central bank and a single African currency, setting up an African monetary union, and creating and electing the first Pan-African parliament.

The treaty clearly specifies the conditions for establishing regional economic communities (RECs).

The first stage is characterised by the consolidation of existing RECs and, within a maximum of five years, the formation of new economic communities in regions devoid of any formula or preconditions. However, because of structural impediments, the RECs remain weak, and most of them are still in various evolutionary phases. The assumption is that RECs are the fundamental pillars that carry out most of AfCFTA's work at the sub-regional level, whereas AfCFTA is anticipated to facilitate the policy framework at the continental level. Which came first – the horse or the cart? When we consider the feeble and non-existent RECs, it is difficult to establish a continental body like AfCFTA.

In Africa, some RECs are in the phase of eliminating tariff and non-tariff barriers, while others are PTAs (Preferential

Trade Areas), FTAs (Free Trade Areas), and customs unions. These facts are questionable, according to Seife (2022), since the recent entry of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) into the East African Community (EAC) complicates and contradicts the fundamental premise of the Abuja Treaty. The actions taken by East African leaders and the DRC go against the Abuja Treaty. Consequently, it will be more challenging for the EAC, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) members to harmonise tariff and non-tariff obstacles and establish an FTA from scratch.

This chapter focuses on the positive development and potential impediments to implementing AfCFTA. Specific effort is directed at the inevitability of establishing a unified market economy, which will serve as the primary motivator for political union. Importantly, 54 nations have signed the agreement, and 47 have signed and ratified it, representing the culmination of a protracted and arduous effort to get all member states to co-operate on a single trade platform (Leshoele 2020). African countries can benefit from free trade and open markets because they facilitate trade by adjusting prices based on supply and demand.

This chapter critically engages the processes that led to the creation of the AfCFTA Agreement and its subsequent implementation. It discusses the economic and political motivations behind the creation of AfCFTA, AfCFTA's equitability, the implementation issues that lie ahead, and the policy responses that are needed to overcome these obstacles. It aims to lay the groundwork for further research and better policy prescriptions by providing an analytical basis for interpreting AfCFTA's opportunities and problems in light of regional economic integration theory. Indeed, policymakers should examine the indigenous unification theory, which includes the mandate and authority of AfCFTA and the restructuring of institutions. Agendas for African unity and the extent of harmonisation can vary between blocs, and membership in overlapping customs unions can impede the establishment of unified external tariffs.

Before addressing the larger task, AfCFTA is expected to respond to this issue.

The political and economic ramifications of AfCFTA must be analysed by looking at how African countries do business with one another. AfCFTA's prospects and challenges must also be assessed in terms of their respective time, governance, context, and conduct. The four fundamental problems must be addressed systematically. First, it is necessary to determine the 'when' question, which is related to the timeframe for existing RECs to harmonise their common customs union. This will enhance the effective performance of the continental free trade initiative.

The subject of 'how' pertains to governance and institutional renewal, particularly the quests for each state to belong to a specific regional institution. Regarding the potential challenges provided by the question 'why', the current governance model is incompatible with the context, goals, and operationalisation of AfCFTA. The conduct of AfCFTA and the rationale behind it must specify 'what' is expected to overcome the existing structural problems and address the future political and economic consequences.

By any measure, this is a significant milestone indicating that Africa's unity is inevitable. On the other hand, it is crucial to raise three key issues. The first pertains to the potential conflicts of interest among existing RECs, such as the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) in attaining their goals. The second relates to the issue around compatibility. Thus, the study highlights the current institutional and governance difficulty, focusing on the RECs and the AU. The third focuses on the obstacles related to AfCFTA's mandate and challenges that impede the successful implementation of the free trade mission.

What Are the Most Important Opportunities Presented by AfCFTA?

Although Africa has a long history of grandiose rhetoric about regional unification, it has rarely translated into concrete political or economic results. AfCFTA is a progressive step in the

right direction, regardless of how one evaluates the agreement's structural and institutional problems (Signé & Van der Ven 2019). The primary goals of AfCFTA are to establish a continental customs union by creating a single continental market for goods and services and free movement of persons and investments (Wapmuk & Ali 2022). By opening up continental markets to African products, increasing industrial capacity, and facilitating more efficient use of available resources, AfCFTA is poised to improve the continent's economic competitiveness.

Given the potential for AfCFTA to enhance low levels of intra-regional trade and stimulate industrial growth and the establishment of regional value chains, the economic potential from the trade and investment benefits of AfCFTA is substantial (Abrego *et al* 2020). The agreement aims to lower all trade costs and facilitate Africa's integration into global supply chains. The AfCFTA roadmap was approved at the 2012 AU Summit in Addis Ababa. At that time, African heads of state formally backed the action plan on Boosting Intra-African Trade (BIAT) and voted to hasten the development of a CFTA by 2017 (Wapmuk & Ali 2022). Initial expectations were to finalise the COMESA-EAC-SADC tripartite FTA by 2014, and have non-tripartite RECs establish regional FTAs by 2014. This would reflect the preferences of member states, consolidate the tripartite and other regional FTAs into a CFTA initiative in 2015 and 2016, and have the CFTA established by 2017, with the target date subject to review based on progress.

While AfCFTA's institutionalisation is proceeding in a positive direction, comprehensive discussions are required to reengineer the RECs to harmonise trade facilities among member nations. The African Union (2020) stated that, for AfCFTA to be effective, it must address two significant obstacles: one, strengthening RECs through negotiations with member states, and two, "building a powerful instrument to engage with parties outside of Africa". These include the European Union (EU), China, India, the United States (US), and others. One of the ways to achieve this is by ensuring that trade within the EAC and ECOWAS does not have any tariffs (Parshotam 2018; Seife 2021). Aside from that, Mauritius is the only SADC country that does not charge any

import taxes on SADC or COMESA trade. Parshotam (2018) also says that ECCAS has duty-free trade on paper, but it does not work well in real life. This creates scepticism about the capacity of AfCFTA to get rid of tariffs across the whole continent, when no REC has been able to do it completely. Since no country can gain an advantage without providing the same for others, this also gives them a unified voice in trade discussions for services (Simo 2020). Its member states drive AfCFTA, and the secretariat is responsible for ensuring its seamless operation.

The first major round of conversations between member nations centred on exchanging goods and services. Consequently, the convention on trade in goods addressed tariff liberalisation, non-tariff barriers, rules of origin, customs co-operation, trade facilitation and transit, trade remedies, product standards, technical regulations, technical assistance, capacity building, and co-operation (Wapmuk & Ali 2022). Protocols about trade in products and services, dispute settlement, intellectual property rights, investment, and competition regulations fall under the purview of AfCFTA (Abrego *et al* 2020). However, AfCFTA aims to establish a single continental market where products, services, and investments can be freely traded among participating countries.

The transfer of production components when a service is rendered in a particular way is a crucial feature of Africa's involvement in international trade and services (Simo 2020). The AfCFTA secretariat is the governing body responsible for organising and supervising AfCFTA's implementation. In order to ensure the agreement is implemented, the AfCFTA secretariat is tasked with delivering capacity-building resources to both state parties and non-state parties (AU 2020). The secretariat performs capacity-building assessments and provides individualised interventions to guarantee that all member states and state parties have an equal opportunity to contribute to the agreement's adoption and implementation (Albert 2019). Even if the documents state standardised regulation and application, it will be a test for AfCFTA in the next years as to whether it follows the norms.

The secretariat collaborates with state parties to create trade laws and frameworks for reducing trade barriers and establishing a dispute settlement mechanism, levelling the playing field for expanded intra-African trade. To prevent trade tensions among participating member states, the secretariat has therefore put in place dispute resolution mechanisms for the swift and transparent resolution of possible contentions (Simo 2020; Ajibo 2019). The AfCFTA Dispute Settlement Mechanism comprises vital institutions such as the Dispute Settlement Body, the adjudicating panels and the Appellate Body for second-tier review, and other appropriate avenues for seeking redress.

The secretariat is also in charge of making sure that each state party's trade policies are in line with the rules of the AfCFTA agreement. In cases when gaps are found, the secretariat helps to implement the agreement in a way that fills them (Albert 2019). It also performs periodic inspections of state parties' reports and keeps tabs on the agreement's overall implementation, while intervening as needed. The AfCFTA secretariat is expected to be staffed by professionals with expertise in a variety of areas, including law, economic policymaking, research, and public relations (Soutar 2021). However, like other agencies within the AU, AfCFTA faces challenges in allocating positions based on merit rather than political influence and regional representation, which may hinder its ability to address critical issues effectively. The primary role of these entities is to support the member states in ensuring the efficient advancement of discussions and the appropriate implementation and enforcement of the regulations specified in the agreement. However, the development made since its inception could have been better.

What is the Primary Challenge that AfCFTA May Face?

Despite the multiple benefits of AfCFTA to Africa's socio-economic development, regional and national actors must overcome the inherited governance obstacles must be overcome to maintain a vibrant and productive organisation. Some of these historical obstructions in African states and within RECs have

existed for a long time, including institutional and governance issues that ought to be addressed methodically. Of course, huge tariff revenue losses and an uneven distribution of costs and benefits are unquestionably among the most fundamental impediments to the continent's integration, which AfCFTA must address. Albert (2019) identified conflicting RECs as one of the most significant challenges. Since most African countries belonged to multiple RECs, convergence among RECs must be addressed in a manner that is compatible with AfCFTA.

It is not the strength of an organisation that determines the appropriateness of an issue, nor is it its ability to ensure success. The mismatch between existing RECs and the new idea of AfCFTA exacerbates the situation rather than fostering intra-African trade and economic development. Seife (2018) adds that an additional barrier to AfCFTA is the top-down institutional framework that limits the participation of most of society. A bottom-up approach, encouraging people's engagement with AfCFTA and its supporting institutions, is likely to yield a stronger mandate to participate meaningfully, and a participatory mentality will likely translate to institutional excellence, rather than a radical action. The possible implementation of a hybrid top-down and bottom-up approach would help AfCFTA to provide checks and balances between governance and institutional systems.

The fundamental problem that could arise in achieving the goals of AfCFTA might be its competition with pre-existing regional economic communities (RECs) like COMESA and the Southern African Customs Union (SACU). According to Hollington (2021), the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) was created in 2015 to integrate SADC, COMESA, and the EAC into a unified economic bloc. However, Hollington argues that the TFTA must still achieve its intended outcomes. The TFTA has not yet gone into effect, due to the complexity of liberalising tariffs across three intra-regional trade groupings aiming to consolidate into a single trading organisation. The TFTA aims to combine SADC, COMESA, and the EAC into one trading bloc of AfCFTA-ratified states; consequently, memberships overlap (Gumede 2020). Further, Hollington (2021) reiterated the provision of Article 19 of AfCFTA: "State Parties that are members of other regional economic communities, regional

trading arrangements, and customs unions, which have higher levels of regional integration than under this Agreement, shall maintain such higher levels among themselves.”

Neither COMESA nor the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) are geographically organic RECs; rather they are economic and political interests of leaders established with fluid structures (Kidane 2018). The principal objectives of COMESA and CEN-SAD are to encourage economic, cultural, political, and social integration among its member states through the establishment of a single market and collaboration (Hollington 2021; Gumede 2020). It is evident that COMESA and AfCFTA have contradictory and comparable purposes, but since they are aiming toward similar goals, COMESA should alter or modify its objectives to align with the goals of AfCFTA. The AU’s relations with the RECs concerning their recognition are baffling and inconsistent in many ways, not least because COMESA and CEN-SAD were recognised while SACU was not, since, relative to other RECs on the African continent, SACU is the most effective and represents the gold standard in customs unions.

Six provisions of the Abuja Treaty and Agenda 2063 have made little progress in utilising these activities as a guiding instrument for the establishment of a framework for the political and economic unification efforts in Africa (AUC 2019; Kidane 2018). Given the circumstances, there has been less dynamism in the development of Abuja Treaty plans that serve as a strategy for regional economic integration (Albert 2019; Ajibo 2019). Nonetheless, African political leaders should learn from this setback, while using the experience as a foundation for institutional re-engineering. The AU and regional communities should adopt two essential programmes: the consolidation of RECs and the establishment of a comprehensive regional customs union. The table below sheds more light on how the RECs have responded to the Abuja Treaty (where ✓ is achieved ~ is in progress).

Table 7.1: Status of Regional Economic Integration by Abuja Treaty Phases

RECs	1994-99	2000-2007	2008-17		2018-19	2020-23	2024-28
	RECs establishment and consolidation	Tariff and non-tariff barriers	Regional FTA	Regional CU	Continental CU	Continental Common Market	Pan-African Economic and Monetary Union
EAC	✓	✓	✓	✓			
ECOWAS	✓	✓	✓	✓			
COMESA	✓	✓	✓				
SADC	✓	✓	~				
ECCAS	✓	✓	~				
IGAD	✓	✓	~				
GEN-SAD	✓	~	~				
AMU	✓	✓	~				

Source: AUC (2019)

The purpose of the overall analysis presented in this table is to demonstrate and assist in examining the various levels of RECs' progress in achieving the goals established by the Abuja Treaty.

AfCFTA is an essential step toward African economic integration. It provides unprecedented possibilities for African countries to expand commerce within the continent and boost their standing in global markets (Simo 2020; Albert 2019). It will significantly aid in the development and economic prosperity of African countries by lowering the cost of cross-border trade, hence creating jobs, lowering poverty, and modernising African economic systems and communities.

RECs and Governance Structure Impediments

The Abuja Treaty was envisaged as the way through which the AU would implement African economic integration and a continental free trade area (CFTA) (Mevel & Karingi 2012). The CFTA is one mechanism that could be used to realise the African Economic Community (also known as the AEC). AfCFTA is being heralded as the solution to the problem of multiple overlapping RECs, tariff- and non-tariff-based programmes, and international responsibilities now in effect across most of Africa (Magwape 2018). In contrast to the bottom-up strategy of the Lagos Plan of Action, which bound states to RECs and RECs to a broader continental FTA, AfCFTA uses a top-down method, generating harmonisation by laying responsibilities on all participating member states.

AfCFTA aspires to liberalise trade between African countries in a phased approach. It also attempts to build on the accomplishments of the RECs, and achieve harmonisation of the RECs based on AfCFTA principles. Its members are signatories of numerous RECs with obligations that are both complementary and contradictory (Nwankwo & Ajibo 2020). It is not apparent how AfCFTA will be incorporated into the plan to harmonise these parallel memberships and overlapping commitments; ultimately, the mismatch between existing RECs and AfCFTA exacerbates the problem (Kidane 2021). Article 3 of the AfCFTA treaty indicates that one of its goals is to address the difficulties of

various and overlapping memberships and to accelerate regional and continental integration processes (Nwankwo & Cajibo 2020). The question of ‘how’ AfCFTA intends to fix the issue remains unanswered because it is not mandated to restructure its members’ governance and institutional barriers.

The chapter’s central argument began with the question: Which came first – the horse or the cart? It then argues that the re-engineering of RECs should occur before the operationalisation of AfCFTA. Kidane (2021) contends that for the RECs model to be sustainable and relevant, political reform must undergo a genuine transformation and a re-engineering process. This author further implies that any theoretical framework without institutional re-engineering is analogous to putting new wine in old wineskins. The ineffective structural governance and institutional structure of the AU system are to blame for the system’s ongoing operational difficulties (Udombana 2002; Herbst 2014). Institutional mandate and structural reform are necessary to address operational issues, some of which stem from a deficiency in organisational philosophy, leadership style, a lack of priority, and political clientelism.

The complexity of governance structures and representation in the majority of postcolonial African nations has remained primarily unchanged and silent over the past 60 years (Seife 2021). Seife also alludes to the fact that the AU’s policymaking processes have been confined to the heads of state; this trend has extended across borders, particularly in the RECs. Yet the absence of a governance system that ensures appropriate mandate and representation at sub-regional and regional levels poses a grave threat to both intra-African trade and the political cohesion of the continent. There is a chasm between the African people and the opportunity presented by AfCFTA, making it difficult for them to participate in or even understand the agreement. None of the eight RECs recognised by the AU has taken substantial measures toward building a united market or effectively functioning customs union. The challenges are best addressed by re-engineering RECs from the perspectives of institutional capabilities, governance structure, mandate, and

authority, together with an indigenous governance system that led to the *one nation, one REC* configuration.

Limitations on the Free Movement of People and Goods Hinder AfCFTA Objectives

The Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment was adopted by the AU at its January 2018 summit in Addis Ababa. The primary aim of this protocol is to enhance the execution of the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community by establishing a framework for the gradual realisation of unrestricted movement of persons, the right to reside, and the right to establish oneself inside Africa. According to Hirsch (2021), it was anticipated that the protocol would play a crucial role in addressing and establishing AfCFTA, which necessitates the unrestricted movement of persons and goods.

Due to the fear of the unknown, the massive movement of migrants from conflict-prone African countries into other countries with appreciable levels of economic and political stability has become an obstacle to the continent-wide implementation of the free movement of people. As a result, the AU protocol for the free movement of persons project did not make considerable progress. Comoros, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Seychelles, Senegal, So Tomé and Príncipe, Niger, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, and Madagascar are among the few African nations that grant African nationals visa-free entry or visas upon arrival. Rukema and Vhumbunu (2020) argue that the AU comprises 55 different countries, each of which has its unique colonial, historical, political, economic, and socio-cultural context. As a result, the AU's efforts to establish a continental regime that allows for the free movement of people have, unsurprisingly, been fraught with their fair share of complexities and intricacies.

Implementing the free movement of products and people to build interdependence will increase intra-African commerce and investment from their current low levels to an acceptable

one (Kidane 2021). Kidane also makes a veiled reference to the fact that the Organisation for African Unity (OAU)/AU was meant to serve as the political backbone upon which African nations could build to bring about the desired change on the continent. However, these two continental organisations did not resolve issues relating to colonial borders, free trade, economic autonomy, or political power. Many African governments have made remarkable unilateral progress toward free migration, which is striking because numerous creative visa-openness and travel document solutions have been implemented by these countries (Hirsch 2021).

However, most of the countries at the forefront of this movement are either developing or small island governments with few resources (Hirsch 2021; Rukema & Vhumbunu 2020). The more developed and populous states in Africa, including Egypt, South Africa, Algeria, and others, are experiencing a widening gap in their progress towards liberalising their borders. While certain African states have a larger market share in AfCFTA and lead the organisation, they send contradictory messages to the general public. While responding to a question in the South African parliament on 30 August 2022, President Cyril Ramaphosa maintained, “Like any sovereign nation, we have the right to implement policies and measures that guarantee the integrity of our borders, protect the rights of South Africans, and provide that all who reside in our borders have legal right to be here” (The Presidency 2022). The free movement protocol encapsulates the objectives of African unification, economic growth, and progress, with the potential to yield substantial benefits and enhanced productivity. In this particular situation, the AU should promptly address this matter by enhancing and implementing the free movement protocol.

Conclusion

Africans, from Cape to Cairo and Djibouti to Dakar, anxiously anticipated AfCFTA’s implementation, which would galvanise the continent’s economic growth and development. It was envisaged that the achievement of AfCFTA would restore the dignity of African citizens and equality in the global arena: these

have become very important. Peace, security, and stability on the continent can only be guaranteed if political leaders and economic actors create decent employment for youth and guarantee food security. Through industrialisation and the supply of services, intra-African commerce is at the centre of the development demands of African states. The mission and responsibility of the AfCFTA secretariat are to realise AfCFTA's goal of growing intra-African trade through the acceleration of the Continental Free Trade Area.

Accelerating the pace of intra-African commerce would encourage the free movement of manufactured goods and labour throughout the continent. To effectively achieve the objectives of AfCFTA, which encompass the integration of the current RECs, the eradication of both tariff- and non-tariff-based obstacles, and the establishment of a regional and continental customs union, it is imperative to critically reassess the provisions outlined in the Abuja Treaty. In addition, AfCFTA would be ineffective in the absence of robust and well-organised RECs. As a result, AfCFTA lacks a sufficient mandate, preventing it from addressing concerns such as intra-state taxation, customs control, and the free movement of persons and goods. To harness the agreement's benefits and generate a commensurate economy of scale among its signatory nations, a concerted effort on the part of all stakeholders to find a solution to the diverse problem has become essential.

Indeed, the world's focus will shift to Africa if it manages to implement and establish a broader integrated market system. Likewise, Africans living throughout the continent ought to be cognisant of and engaged in AfCFTA's activities and explore its potential benefits. However, it is important to also be aware that the external version of the African story has not been a true reflection of the reality on the continent. Nevertheless, this misleading narrative has dominated how the rest of the world sees the continent, and most people fail to recognise the economic implications of this. Reframing these false conceptions of Africa should be a top priority for African institutions and other actors.

To attain a balanced economy of scale among its constituent nations and fully capitalise on the advantages offered by AfCFTA, it is imperative to reassess the institutional mandate and delegation. This chapter concisely analyses the advantages and obstacles associated with AfCFTA. Based on the information mentioned earlier, AfCFTA is deficient in terms of its mandate and its ability to effectively tackle issues related to intra-state taxes, customs regulation, and the facilitation of free movement of persons and goods. AfCFTA's current framework as a policy instrument is insufficient to eliminate intra-African trade obstacles and other significant objectives.

If Africa wants to meet its expectations, AfCFTA needs to figure out how to negotiate meaningfully and independently. African political actors should endeavour to sit at the table with enormous clout and respect that carries the weight required to bargain more effectively on a global level and from a position of strength. The impact of AfCFTA on interactions with international traders represents a significant aspect worth exploring in future research, shedding light on the agreement's potential benefits and the challenges it may pose. While AfCFTA has its roots in Africa, it must be considered within the larger global trade frameworks. However, harnessing the dividend of AfCFTA is only possible with a solid internal governance system, backed by vibrant and robust RECs.

Policy Recommendations

The AU has reached a watershed moment with the signing of AfCFTA. African nations can boost their presence in international trade and benefit from the increased intra-Africa trade made possible by this agreement. The demographic dividend of 1.3 billion individuals presents a significant opportunity for facilitating the shift from mostly agricultural and extractive industries to more advanced and value-enhancing industrial sectors. The agreement has the potential to substantially stimulate economies, reduce poverty, advance gender equality, and enhance governance. According to the UN-ECA, this trade agreement will allow the African economy to reach \$29 trillion by the year 2050. AfCFTA is transforming the African economy

and establishing itself as a model for international cross-border co-operation. Specifically, it is a one-of-a-kind opportunity to lift millions of people out of poverty by empowering women and youth to alter the business environment on the continent.

The advancement of e-commerce and the digital economy is influenced by various factors encompassing both digital and physical connectivity, limited internet penetration (30% of the overall population of Africa), low adoption of banking services or mobile money (40%), inadequate provision of secure internet servers, and unreliable postal services (Lemma *et al* 2022). Africa is home to the global population with the lowest median age, with a staggering figure of more than 400 million individuals between the ages of 15 and 35. The fundamental driving force behind AfCFTA, which is aligned with the continent's development blueprint known as Agenda 2063, is the significant presence of youth and women. This demographic group plays a crucial role in stimulating Africa's economic advancement and promoting the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The implementation of this extensive, unified continental market is anticipated to result in a 52.3% growth in intra-African trade, foster greater continental integration, enhance productivity, generate additional employment possibilities, and provide significant gender-balanced prospects by incorporating women and youth into Africa's trade liberalisation efforts. Making intra-African trade competitive will help African countries and citizens to develop economically, creating jobs, decreasing poverty, and modernising African economic structures and societies. The ability of African nations to realise their full potential may be contingent on their ability to implement this agreement among themselves successfully. However, there are significant challenges and issues that member countries are currently facing and will continue to face in the future, and they must be addressed promptly. One new problem is the wide range of difficulties in putting the plan into action, which calls for various approaches in terms of policy, administration, and funding initiatives. Emphasis must be put on re-engineering RECs and other institutional and governance strategies.

AfCFTA Secretariat should be equipped with appropriate mandate and authority for the implementations of the Abuja Treaty and AfCFTA protocol by reconsidering contemporary demand and development. To fully harness the economic prospects presented by the agreement, policymakers would need to adopt supportive complementing policies geared to help structural transformations. The promotion of intra-African trade must be matched with these policies. Ensuring that member state negotiators take full advantage of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and create e-commerce facilities and connectivity, they should implement a protocol on e-commerce. Such promotion will allow them to take full advantage of the opportunities presented by AfCFTA.

The current structure of RECs needs to be adjusted through institutional and governance frameworks to improve intra-African commerce. African states' dual memberships of RECs create complex issues that impede the effectiveness of trade harmonisation at both regional and continental levels. Resolving this challenge will improve the governance structures of RECs and boost their efficiency. The REC must consist of a minimum of three and a maximum of five member nations (inter-states). Principal responsibilities should include formulating, executing, and monitoring policies as a collective, with increasing authority for local states. The formation of RECs must take into account population size, economic status, seaport access, customs facility, trade accessibility as an economic zone, and administrative facilities. The strategy's objective is to establish viable institutions that promote interaction between member states.

There is also a need to enhance and make available an environment that is conducive to the expansion and continued viability of micro, small, and medium businesses, the majority of which are found on the African continent. Regional and continental actors must be more committed toward solving the problem of youth unemployment and underemployment that is progressively affecting the African continent. African countries need to advance their efforts to create a unified economic community and single market for the continent in addition

to establishing an African Monetary Union, central bank and single currency.

The AfCFTA system should consider the historical structural imbalance between Africa and the rest of the world, particularly the EU, the US, and the newly emerging economic giant – China. Consequently, developing robust negotiation procedures with the EU, the US, China, and other economic partners with solid strategic positions is essential. In addition to developing comprehensive intra-REC tax monitoring systems, intra-African tax monitoring procedures should be established by AfCFTA, and member countries should work together. Furthermore, Table 7.2 specifically raised questions on key areas of intervention and provides possible policy responses. The goal of the table displayed is to condense important information and provide it in the form of questions and answers.

Table 7.2: Recommendations: Areas of Concern and Viable Considerations

#	Area of Concern	Observations and Considerations
1	What measures should be taken to address the prevailing issue of a lack of surpluses in essential consumer and industrial commodities throughout the majority of African nations? The region relies significantly on mineral resources that lack a domestic market and are not consumed locally.	African nations must formulate plans to diminish their dependence on raw materials and natural resources, while concurrently diversifying their industrialisation efforts and fostering the advancement of the service sector. Facilitating local markets for mineral and industrial products is very important.
2	In what ways may robust and well-structured RECs assist AfCFTA in being at its most functioning and maintaining a healthy operation?	First and foremost, these institutions must have complete autonomy, with the mandate emanating from the citizens of Africa. The existing accountability model for African heads of state is antithetical to Africa's developmental and regional goals.
3	In the absence of a resilient financial sector and the necessary conditions for commerce and industrialisation, what avenues are available for Africans to derive benefits from AfCFTA? This entails striving to establish a global financial governance structure that ensures equitable opportunities for all individuals and enhanced accessibility to financial resources.	AfCFTA should prioritise enhanced competitiveness, accelerated industrial growth through diversification, and expanded regional value chains. It should make manufacturing the primary focus of policy, expand regional commerce in services, promote job creation, and investigate alternative financing mechanisms. Critical to commodity and trade among African nations is the use of local currency or an electronic equivalent exchange rate.
4	Are there procedures preventing Africa from becoming a dumping ground for items from China, India, or other big industrial nations?	Africa should create control points at airports and seaports, as well as a strong customs union that checks how goods move within and between RECS.

#	Area of Concern	Observations and Considerations
5	What are some policies that may be implemented as an alternative to the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), to prevent to the exportation of raw materials and industrial goods from Africa?	For a variety of reasons, the AGOA has not been successful in helping African countries overcome some of the structural limitations of their economies. Africa needs to diversify the markets it exports to due to excessive tax imposition. Most importantly, boosting intra-African trade will be much more beneficial than the AGOA and other programmes of its like.
6	Chicken or egg? None of the eight RECs recognised by the AU has even begun to negotiate the terms of a continental customs union. What roles are the RECs playing in constructing a stable and effective AfCFTA?	An ultimate answer to this question is to ensure effective partnership between the RECs and AfCFTA. RECs are the official pillars of the AEC; thus, the RECs are the critical. The success of AfCFTA depends on a well-structured RECs.
7	No RECs have yet achieved the point where they have harmonised customs unions for trade, reduced tariff and non-tariff barriers, and established a customs union at both the regional levels. How will the RECs be integrated into the institutional architecture of AfCFTA and integration schemes and action plans for the continent? What does it mean to be a member of AfCFTA's building bloc?	The AU and other partners must equip all AfCFTA state parties with the tools they need to enhance trade governance within their borders and their countries. Specific reform initiatives at the national and regional levels need to be developed to achieve this goal. AfCFTA must plan for multiple African FTAs to coexist, while RECs must plan for successful regional integrations.
8	AfCFTA and the RECs do not have a clear mandate for re-engineering institutional and organisational roadblocks. As a result of these barriers, they cannot respond to various issues concerning intra-state taxation, customs regulation, and the free movement of persons and things.	The RECs and AfCFTA do not have a mandate structured to address the socio-economic difficulties faced by populations, enhance commerce between African countries, restore African identity, and increase economic interdependence among member countries. As a direct consequence of this, several components of the original vision, including unrestricted migration, open borders, unrestricted trade, and Pan-African unity, continue to be a pipe dream.

#	Area of Concern	Observations and Considerations
9	What can be done, given that RECs are not all at the same developmental stage and do not represent a unified group of regional integration arrangements with shared goals? How exactly should the RECs affect AfCFTA?	The RECs need a novel redesign that re-engineers the past and reinvigorates the current impasse. The essential premise is supported by four pillars: restoration, reconfiguration, harmonisation, and implementation. Additionally, 'one nation, one REC' must be highlighted, and institutional and structural reform must take precedence.
10	The realisation of the benefits of the AfCFTA agreement is contingent on the resolution of a critical question: how can African countries promote proportional industrialisation and economic growth?	African political actors at all levels must invest in young talents and technology to close the gap between African companies and the worldwide cutting edge of technological advancement. There is a need to raise more funds internally, particularly from land and real estate, to improve public service quality. It is important to boost regional commerce in the service industry, encourage the development of new jobs, investigate alternative financing methods, and make manufacturing a policy priority.
11	Why is it so difficult for African countries to allow free movement of Africans, and how can this be addressed?	Some of Africa's wealthier nations have been slow to open their borders out of a sense of uncertainty and in a display of extreme nationalism. Remarkably, several African governments have made significant unilateral and bilateral progress toward free mobility. This is due to the widespread implementation of novel visa-openness and travel document solutions. To facilitate intra-African trade, however, all African countries should be fully committed to free movement of persons. Therefore, African countries and the local population should be prepared to welcome any African person from another nationality, without visa requirements.

#	Area of Concern	Observations and Considerations
12	The AU and its organs must implement a governance structure and conduct comprehensive research on business re-engineering in order for the existing and recommended policy framework to be applicable throughout Africa. Both sub-regional and continental levels should employ these measures.	The process of re-engineering AU governance can be undertaken via the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and other relevant entities within the AU. Nevertheless, it is imperative for the AU to demonstrate attentiveness, and member states must adhere to the comprehensive results of the overhaul and grant authority to the African Union Commission (AUC).

Source: *Author's formation*

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Chapter 8

Rebuilding African Economy in a Globalised World: The African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) and the Question of Intra-African Trade

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Introduction

In postcolonial Africa, the growth and development of the economy have been long-standing issues. Over the years, the African continent has been disadvantageously positioned in the global economy, despite its abundant human and natural resources, as well as its contribution to the mainstream global economy. Africa holds a significant share of the world's resources, with approximately 30% of global mineral reserves, 12% of oil reserves, and 8% of natural gas reserves situated on the continent (Mohseni-Cheraghloou 2023). Mainstream literature, theories, and African-centred analysis on institutional performance have primarily considered Africa a disadvantaged continent and at the receiving end of an institutional framework structured to reward the United States (US)-dominated brand of capitalism, while also benefiting other industrial states and international financial institutions (IFIs), governed by the free market system.

Despite the efforts of African countries to record appreciable levels of development, it is without doubt that they are confronted by imminent challenges, such as violent conflict and an unstable political environment, an export-oriented and import-dependent economy, infrastructural deficits, and low digitalisation. These have limited the capacity of African countries to attain sustainable development and become active players in global economic relations. However, as African countries continue to grapple with the challenges of economic growth and development in a globalised era, African actors have promoted the idea of integration, either regional or continental, as an important means of attaining sustainable growth and development, as espoused by the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063.

As argued by Akinpelu and Adebunsi (2015:12), the logic underlying the institutionalisation of regional economic communities (RECs) in Africa has been to engender group competitiveness within the global economic framework. Put differently, integration is designed to enhance regional trade flows, facilitate economic interactions, foster economic integration, and primarily achieve sustainable growth and development. Given the importance of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), African leaders over the years have continued to introduce policies and initiatives that can drive such goals.

AfCFTA is a ground-breaking step to revitalise African economies by making them independent of the Global North, as well as to situate Africa as a major force in global economic relations. However, while the economic benefits of implementing AfCFTA remain a key discursive focus, there exists little consideration for intra-African trade within the operational context of AfCFTA and, therefore, how intra-African trade can shape AfCFTA activities, at both the national and transnational levels. Given this, this chapter examines the place of intra-African trade in the successful implementation of AfCFTA and Africa's formidable position as a key global economic player. This chapter operationalises the importance of intra-African trade and offers practical templates on how it can be enhanced within the AfCFTA initiative. The chapter is organised as follows: It starts with an

overview of the postcolonial African economy under the influence of globalisation, then it engages AfCFTA, and discusses the intra-African trade question in the implementation of the continental free trade arrangement. The chapter then examines the challenges facing intra-African trade, using the case of Nigeria.

Africa Economic Experience in Global Economic Relations

Any discussion of AfCFTA must start from a much broader consideration of the general state of the African economy under the influence of economic globalisation. It is also important not to underestimate the influence and effects of colonialism on the postcolonial African economy. Under colonial rules, the African economy was incorporated into the global economy as producers of raw materials and cash crops, which were used to sustain the European Industrial Revolution. The colonial economic policies initiated in African colonies were designed to protect and advance the economic interests and industrial growth of Europe (Kalu & Falola 2019:4). Hence, the African economy, in reality, emerged from colonialism fractured, exploited, and devastated, with permanent deformities that have so far proven intractable and not amenable to modern economic development (Kalu & Falola 2019:4). Among the traits of these permanent deformities are Africa's position as a producer of raw materials, perpetual market and destinations for finished goods, its lack of manufacturing industries, and its undiversified and import-oriented economy. As summed by Kalu & Falola (2019:6), "the overall effect was a precarious economic structure dependent exclusively on the export of natural resources – a disease that continues to define Africa's economy up to the present day".

In the first decade of their independence, several African states were faced with economic problems, such as the fall in commodity prices in the international market during the 1960s and reduced revenues for the new states since prices of raw materials were externally determined (Kalu 2018:61). Consequently, economies relying solely on commodity exports experienced severe economic devastation, given that several

African countries lacked templates for development. Even the little industries and development programmes modelled after the industrialised nations failed due to the absence of sustainable planning, implementation, and management of growth and development programmes (Kalu 2018:61).

The constellation of the above events led to foreign interventions through loans, foreign aid, and technical support towards the industrialisation agenda, implementation of the developmental agenda, and efforts at enhancing economic growth in several African countries. It is estimated that Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) received \$848.4 billion in official development assistance (ODA) from 1960 to 2013 (WB 2014). The IFIs, such as the World Bank, and bilateral support from individual countries, have also accounted for the major source of funds for implementing developmental projects on the continent. Despite these financial supports, African states not only experienced economic crises but also spiralled into poverty and debt crises, which paralysed their domestic economic interventions. Given the endemic poverty and low Human Development Index (HDI) rate in African countries by 1990, 28 African countries were categorised within the low HDI (UNDP 2022). In the 1970s, foreign aid shifted from locally generated economic templates to programmes designed by foreign actors to assist sub-Saharan African countries in combatting poverty.

Since foreign aid was not able to engineer the desired growth and development, African leaders began to look inward around the late 1970s, under the auspices of the Organisation of African Unity (now the African Union) to craft the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA), aimed at the economic development of Africa (1980–2000). According to Kalu, the LPA not only detailed African states' challenges and the path to development using the continent's human and material resources, but it also "blamed the continent's poor economic performance on its *overdependence on the West*, the heavy reliance on the export of primary commodities, and the exploitation and racism perpetrated by Europe and its allies during several decades of colonialism and the new wave of neo-colonialism" (Kalu 2018:65). The LPA emphasised greater integration, self-dependency, and African

economic diversification, and ultimately enjoined all African countries to “pursue all-embracing economic, social and cultural activities which will mobilise the strength of the country as a whole and ensure that both the efforts put into and the benefits derived from development are equitably shared” (Kalu 2018:65).

However, at the time African leaders were developing the LPA, the World Bank was also commissioned by many African ministers of finance (who somehow may have regarded it as strategic to turn their backs on the paper prepared in Lagos by their colleagues) and ministers of planning to produce a study to address the challenges encountered by African economy. Upon its completion, a report – popularly known as the Berg Report – was submitted (Benachenhou 1983). The Berg Report attributed Africa’s problem to leadership failures, corruption, and rent-seeking behaviour, which was contrary to the content of the LPA. The Berg report’s recommendations coincided with the popularity of neoliberal policy on the continent. It focuses on reducing government control for market determinism through economic conditionalities and structural adjustment programme (SAP) designed to invigorate the African economy. Several African countries subsequently patronised the IFIs-inclined SAP, thereby neglecting the LPA.

The SAP opened the African economy to privatisation and commercialisation of public corporations, global market determinism, and other neoliberal policies. It emphasised limited government restriction (in government’s involvement in the domestic economy and reduction of public service spending, including the removal of subsidies on education and several other social services). The implementation of these policies had severe consequences on the livelihood of the people. It accounted for the heightened migration of millions of Africans to the Global North and a wave of military incursions into African politics, as the continent groaned under severe economic woes. Between 1980 and 1989, 20 military coups led to changes in government, while the continent recorded several other failed military coups (Habiba & Mthuli 2012).

In the post-SAP period, Africa's economic growth pattern entered another phase. Firstly, there was a change in the scope of IFIs' policies towards Africa. After the failure of the SAP to engineer the desired growth and development in Africa and the unwillingness of the West to admit the failure of the SAP, IFIs launched the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC) in 1996. The thrust of this initiative was a 'debt forgiveness' for states in the Global South that democratise and recommit to capitalism (Ali 2011). Apart from the HIPC, the institution also introduced a Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF). By 2005, these institutions also launched a Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI) to allow for 100% relief on eligible debts by these three multilateral institutions – the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), and the African Development Fund (AfDF) – for countries completing the HIPC process (IMF 2014). The overall goal of these initiatives was to help improve African states' domestic economies, as well as keep them more integrated and dependent on the global economic powers. Despite these negative developments, African countries continue to accumulate loans.

Second, there were the increasing economic bilateral and multilateral relations between foreign countries, particularly the West, and African countries. In the case of the United States (US), the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) was an important economic development launched to bring about US economic relations with Africa. Under the AGOA, imports to the US grew by 53% in 2005 (Adebajo 2018:32). However, in 2006, 93% of AGOA imports were petroleum products. Also, trade with China and Africa increased, hitting a record high of \$200 billion in 2013, with a further 5% increase in 2014 (Liu 2018:80). India's economic relationship with Africa also increased tremendously. In 2015, Africa was India's second-largest source of crude oil imports (19%), after the Middle East at 58% (Kudiratzq 2018). Total trade has grown very rapidly, rising from a low base of \$9.6 billion between 2004 and 2005 to \$71.5 billion from 2014 to 2015.

However, the primary question concerning these policies, programmes, and bilateral and multilateral relationships is the status of Africa amidst this wave of relations. Do these

policies help to improve African states' economies within the global economy matrixes, or make them more disadvantaged? Furthermore, to what extent have African states been able to maximise the opportunities offered by these programmes, bilateral and multilateral relationships for a sustainable self-sufficient economy? Are these programmes designed for the sole interests of the global economic power?

Thirdly, African countries realised the need to revert to inward-looking policies and increase their efforts and commitments to develop the continent through its resources and recourse to continental integration. The efforts towards achieving this goal started with the 1979 Monrovia Strategy for the Economic Development of Africa, which birthed the LPA's quest for the economic development of Africa. African economic growth and development with no reliance on the West and its IFIs remains the cornerstone of this development framework. Despite the effect of the Berg Report on the LPA, African leaders, during the 1991 OAU summit, established the African Economic Community (AEC), otherwise referred to as the Abuja treaty. The AEC goals are to be achieved in six stages, as contained under Article 6(1&2) and as shown in Table 8.1. However, despite the initial challenges faced in the implementation of these development templates, African leaders subsequently agreed to establish a free trade area to boost Africa's economic position in the globalised age. Thus, the next section examines a significant economic initiative – AfCFTA, which was designed to boost African economic development and its status within global economic relations.

Table 8.1: Stages of African Economic Community (AEC) implementation

Stage	Duration	Task
1	Six years (1994–1999)	Strengthen existing RECs and create new RECs
2	Eight years (2000–2007)	Stabilise tariff and non-tariff barriers; strengthen sectoral integration; co-ordinate REC activity
3	Ten years (2008–2017)	Establish regional free trade areas and customs unions

Stage	Duration	Task
4	Two years (2018–2019)	Harmonise REC tariff and non-tariff systems to establish a continental customs union
5	Four years (2020–2023)	Establish the African Common Market
6	Five years (2024–2028)	Finalise establishment of AEC: monetary union and other institutions of the community

Source: AU (1994)

The African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA)

AfCFTA developed out of the need for African countries and leaders to secure a sustainable space in global economic relations as well as to “unlock Africa’s tremendous potential” (AU 2013). AfCFTA is one of the key projects under the AU’s Agenda 2063. It is also believed that this historic AfCFTA will become the world’s largest free trade bloc. The FTA was adopted at the 18th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the AU, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 2012.

The summit further adopted the Action Plan on Boosting Intra-African Trade (BIAT), which identifies seven policy clusters for achieving meaningful trade integration (AU 2012). These include trade facilitation, trade policy, productive capacities, trade-related infrastructure, trade finance, trade information, and factor market integration (AU 2012). After its adoption, Africa’s heads of state and government launched the negotiations stage at the 25th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Africa Union in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2015, but the actual negotiating process started in 2017. The formal launch of the AfCFTA programme was accomplished at the 10th Extra-Ordinary Summit of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the AU, held in Kigali, Rwanda, in March 2018.

The main objective of AfCFTA is to create a single market and deepen economic integration on the continent, in line with Agenda 2063’s vision of “an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its citizens and representing a dynamic force

in the international arena” (AU 2015:1). Other AfCFTA basic objectives are to:

1. create a single continental market for goods and services, facilitated by the movement of persons to deepen the economic integration of the African continent; create a liberalised market for goods and services through successive rounds of negotiations;
2. contribute to the movement of capital and natural persons and facilitate investments building on the initiatives and development in the state parties and RECs; to lay the foundation for the establishment of a continental customs union at a later stage;
3. enhance the competitiveness of the economies of state parties within the continental and global markets;
4. promote industrial development through diversification and regional value chain development, agricultural development and food security; and
5. resolve the existing challenges of multiple and overlapping memberships and expedite the regional and continental integration process.
6. AfCFTA aimed at creating a single continental market for goods and services, with free movement of persons. AfCFTA Agreement Framework covers trade-in-goods and trade-in-services, investment, intellectual property rights and competition policy. The Assembly has also decided to add e-commerce to the AfCFTA negotiations – AfCFTA Protocol on E-Commerce. Trade-in services are being negotiated in Phase 1, with negotiations on several issues, while negotiations on tariff concessions, rules of origin for goods and schedules of specific commitments for services still ongoing. The aims of the service agreement include enhancing the competitiveness of services; promoting sustainable development; fostering investment; accelerating efforts on industrial development to promote the development of regional value chains and progressively liberalising trade-in services. Phase 2 of the negotiations covers Investment, Competition and Intellectual Property. Article 16 of the AfCFTA outlined in the Agreement

design and mechanics postulates a consensus approach to decisionmaking.

Intra-African Trade in AfCFTA Implementation: Necessary or Automatic?

Trade has been an integral part of Africa's economic development strategies and an essential contributor to African economies' Gross Domestic Profits (GDPs), accounting for above 50%, on average, between 2010 and 2016 (Nicole 2016:213). Since 2000, Sub-Saharan Africa has been the lowest-ranked region in the world, in terms of its global share of total trade in goods and services. Africa has never crossed the 4% threshold (Table 4). However, as the importance of AfCFTA in boosting continental and regional trade as well as repositioning African countries as key players in global economic relations cannot be disputed, the importance of intra-African trade in the implementation of these policies and initiatives cannot be under-emphasised.

Statistical estimates show that AfCFTA should stimulate total African exports by 4% (US\$25.3 billion) and result in an overall 52% (US\$34.6 billion) increase in intra-African trade, covering a wide range of sectors, including agriculture and agro-processing, industry, and services (Barassoy *et al* 2020:778). Trade in industrial goods was expected to increase by 53% between 2010 and 2022 (Valensisi *et al* 2016). Despite the importance of trade and the launch of AfCFTA, the current state of intra-African trade (importation and exportation) is far below expectations given Africa's human and natural resources availability. Put differently, low intra-African trade can affect the successful implementation of AfCFTA and shows the lack of member states' commitment to the AfCFTA project. Indeed, intra-African trade between 2013 and 2018 experienced significant fluctuation. Table 8.2 indicates intra-African trade (export and import) between 2013 and 2018.

Table 8.2: World Trade by Continents – Imports and Exports (Percentage)

Continent	World Trade by Continent – Imports (milliards/billion USD)				
	2013	2015	2017	2018	2019
North America	16.9	18.8	18.3	18.0	18.2
South and Central America	4.1	3.7	3.2	3.3	3.2
Europe	35.0	34.8	35.9	35.8	35.7
Africa	3.4	3.3	2.9	2.9	3.0
Middle East	4.2	4.6	4.1	3.8	3.9
Asia	33.5	32.6	33.4	34.1	33.8
	100	100	100	100	100
World Trade by Continent – Exports (milliards/billion USD)					
North America	12.7	13.9	13.4	13.2	13.5
South and Central America	3.9	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.1
Europe	35.8	36.1	36.1	36.6	36.7
Africa	3.1	2.4	2.4	2.5	2.4
Middle East	7.1	5.4	5.3	5.7	5.1
Asia	33.2	36.0	36.0	35.5	35.8
	100	100	100	100	100

Source: *Africa Trade Statistics (2020:24)*

African countries' performance and commitment to intra-African trade have been minimally low when compared to their volume of trade with the Rest of the World (ROW). Total trade from Africa to the rest of the world averaged US\$760 billion in current prices in the period 2015–2017, compared with \$481 billion from Oceania, \$4 109 billion from Europe, \$5 140 billion from America and \$6 801 billion from Asia (UNCTAD 2019). In 2017, intra-African trade was estimated at US\$135 billion, growing by 9% year-on-year from US\$124 billion in 2016. The share of exports from Africa to the rest of the world ranged from 80% to 90% in 2000–2017 (UNCTAD 2019). Intra-African trade hovered at around 15.2% in

2015–2017, while comparative figures for America, Asia, Europe, and Oceania were, respectively, 47.4%, 61.1%, 67.1%, and 7.2%.

In 2018, intra-African trade export stood at 18.25%, while imports were 17.59% (UNCTAD 2020). In comparison, intra-American (North and Latin) exports and imports were 54.26% and 39.16%, intra-Asian exports and imports were 59.86% and 62.66%, intra-European exports and imports were 68.59% and 65.83%, and intra-Oceania exports and imports were 6.75% and 6.91% (UNCTAD 2020). Hence, Africa only ranks above Oceania and significantly behind America, Asia, and Europe, thus exposing the lack of economic integration in Africa. In 2019, South Africa remained the main intra-African exporter and importer, accounting for 31.4% of intra-African exports and 14.4% of intra-African imports in 2019 (Africa Trade Statistics 2020:35–36). Other main intra-African trade importers in 2019 included Namibia, Botswana, Nigeria, and Zambia, while the main intra-African trade exporters in 2019 included Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, and Ghana. Also, 23% of intra-African exports were mineral fuels, followed by exports of machinery, floating structures, vehicles, and precious metals (Africa Trade Statistics 2020). The decline in intra-African state trade has been attributed to the dependence of African economies on commodity production and exports, a lack of diversification resulting in a mismatch between supply and demand, tariffs and non-tariff barriers (NTBs), inefficient transport infrastructure, poor trade logistics and high security risks. Despite AfCFTA potentialities to boost intra-African trade by 52% between 2010 and 2022, as well as a boost in industrial goods by an additional 53% in the same period, the need to enhance intra-African trade remains very germane.

Also, the fragile nature of intra-African trade was exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic, which generally affected the global, regional, and national economies, also affected the implementation of AfCFTA. AfCFTA implementation was originally scheduled to begin on 1 July 2020. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the implementation was moved to 1 January 2021. The total or partial lockdowns, closure of land, sea, and air borders, and issuance of travel bans enforced by most African

countries had negative implications for AfCFTA's implementation. The pandemic negatively affected states' economies and the performance of RECs, and also hampered the expectations of enhanced intra-African trade. PricewaterhouseCoopers (2020) research on the implication of the pandemic on AfCFTA reveals that measures adopted by key and emerging African economies, such as Nigeria, South Africa, Ghana, Algeria, Morocco, Kenya, and Ethiopia (who are the main intra-African trade importers and exporters) hurt intra-African trade. The pandemic further placed national economic interest at the forefront of AfCFTA (PricewaterhouseCoopers 2020).

Furthermore, it will be challenging for AfCFTA to engineer the needed change in global economic relations without building strong intra-African trade. For instance, for AfCFTA to redefine Africa's position within the international economic order, there would be a need to establish a continental customs union, to align its trade interests with other trading blocs, such as the European Union (EU), and for the AU to represent Africa in other international trade negotiations. However, the customs union could prove difficult with low intra-African trade. In practice, several African states have numerous trading partners and diversities of trade interests. The complexities of African states' trade and economic interests make it difficult to relinquish their economic sovereignty to AfCFTA. In other words, negotiating as a bloc would likely only be feasible if African states were willing to transform the AU into a supranational organisation, thereby empowering the continental entity to facilitate African trade with the rest of the world.

Table 8.3: Intra-African Union Import and Export Trade, 2013-2019, million US dollars

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total AU Import	621, 828.3	638,170.5	592,117.5	508,071.7	510, 782.7	572,253.2	560, 485.5
Intra-AU Import	97, 626.6	95, 028.2	81, 244.2	61, 789.4	61,966.0	74, 732.4	70, 432.7
Share of Intra-AU imports	15.7	14.9	13.7	12.2	12.1	13.1	12.6
Total AU Export	575, 188.5	554, 621.5	401,821.0	348, 671.3	429,551.1	491,107.2	465, 920.8
Intra-AU Export	104, 503.3	105,491.1	95, 302.0	82, 191.8	84, 083.2	98,565.5	91, 819.7
Share of Intra-AU Export	18.2	19.2	23.7	23.6	19.6	20.1	19.7

Source: *Africa Trade Statistics (2020:26-31)*

Challenges of Intra-African Trade

The African Development Bank (AfDB), in its 2017 Africa Economic Outlook report, states that “trade between countries has the greatest potential for building sustainable development and integration” (AfDB 2017). However, intra-continental trade remains low in Africa. Beyond AfCFTA, the low intra-African trade has prevented African economies from “harnessing the synergies and complementarities of their economies and taking full advantage of the economies of scale and other benefits (such as income and employment generation) that greater market integration would have provided” (AU 2012). There are several categories of challenges affecting intra-African trade, which in turn also affect the effective implementation of the free trade initiative. AfCFTA is a trade liberalisation initiative that focuses on removing non-tariff barriers, and its inability to achieve this objective has negatively affected the efforts to build intra-African trade.

However, tariffs and other trade barriers such as customs procedures, driver- and vehicle-related regulations, and delays at ports, weighbridges, and roadblocks are still very prevalent on the continent. Tariffs are important sources of government revenue for many African states; thus, the leaders need to consider the revenue losses because of a reduction in intra-African tariffs. Approximately 1.5% of African GDP (\$37 billion) comes from tariffs on imports from the rest of the world. By comparison, intra-Africa trade tariff revenue equates to just 0.1% of African GDP in 2015 (\$3.5 billion). Hence, as AfCFTA focuses on the removal of 90% of tariffs, it will provide the platform for African countries (LDCs) to implement their agreed tariff reductions over ten years and boost intra-African trade. The remaining 10% of tariff lines are divided into two categories – 7% of the tariff lines may be designated sensitive products and liberalised over ten years (LDCs have 13 years), and the remaining 3% may be excluded from liberalisation. Therefore, several African countries will face a transitional phase in their economic capabilities and productivity.

The reduction in non-tariff goods will create uncertainties for African economies, due to the huge reduction in their

revenues. Since the removal of non-tariff barriers will change the landscape of trade, African countries and regional blocs whose source of revenue comes largely from intra-African trade might find it difficult to provide services. However, economists and policymakers have argued that, despite the challenges these countries might face, especially at the initial implementation of AfCFTA tariffs and ROO, they stand to benefit more from AfCFTA trade liberalisation, given the volume of trade such tariffs will support (AfCFTA 2022). Also, while the removal of trade tariffs is a step toward greater regional trade, it does not necessarily mean that intra-African trade will increase, as African states' tradable supply-side capacities are weak.

Trade with the Rest of the World is another major challenge affecting intra-African trade. According to World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS) data, from 2008 to 2018, eight countries accounted for 47.85% of SSA exports and 43.23% of imports (WITS 2018). These countries are China, the US, India, Japan, the United Kingdom (UK), Germany, the Netherlands, and France. Disaggregated, on average from 2008 to 2018, in terms of exports, China accounts for the most share with 12.53%, followed by the US (10.69%), India (7.20%), the Netherlands (4.73%), and the UK (3.8%). In terms of imports, China again has the largest share with 14.06%, followed by the US (6.04%), India (5.16%), Germany (5.05%), and France (4%) (WITS 2018). However, Africa has not crossed the 4% threshold of its global share of total trade in goods and services.

African low share of international trade can be explained by the nature of commodities traded within the global market. During colonialism, the fabrics of African economies, which were forcefully geared towards raw materials, left permanent deformations on the continent. African nations have a limited and fragile export portfolio, primarily stemming from their economies' heavy reliance on natural resources. According to the IMF, the top five African exporting countries for 2018 were South Africa (27.4%), Nigeria (12.1%), Kenya (6%), Ghana (4.5%), and Tanzania (4%) (IMF 2018). Raw materials represent over half of African exports to other countries. The result of raw material dependence has affected African states' capability to diversify

their goods and services. Given the low economic productivity, African countries remain a primary producer of products and natural resources as their main exports, whereas much of global trade consists of manufactured goods and industrial products.

It is also important to note that intra-African trade has underperformed, given some structural and perennial factors, which include Africa's infrastructure deficits (such as low industrial capacities and skill deficits), lack of adequate trans-regional transportation infrastructures (such as railroads), erratic power supply, and inadequate telecommunication connectivity that could drive trade in goods and services. Data from the AfDB show that Africa's road network of 3.6 km per 1000 persons does not compare favourably with the global average of 7 km per 1000 persons (AfDB 2014). Afrobarometer data on 35 African countries in 2015 show that only 54% of roads in Africa are tarred or paved (Afrobarometer 2015). Rail networks on the continent are also underdeveloped, and most countries in Africa have not significantly invested in rail infrastructure since independence.

Also, data from the AU show that the entire African railway network, estimated at 75 000 km on a surface of 30.2 million km², translates into a density of approximately 2.5 km for 1000 km², which is far below that of other regions and the world average of 23 for 1000 km² (AU 2014). This leads to slow intra-African trade and a high cost of doing business between African countries. Also, insecurity and an unstable political environment constitute imminent challenges. Several African countries are facing challenges – insurgency, terrorism, human trafficking, smuggling, and civil wars. For instance, a terrorist group, Al-Shahab, operates in the Horn of Africa, Al-Qaeda in Central Africa, and Boko Haram in West Africa. This has often resulted in an unstable socio-political environment that cannot support intra-African trade.

Also, the technological deficit and absence of sustainable digitalisation are other impediments to intra-African trade, especially given the constraining physical and economic geography of Africa – a continent characterised by fragmented markets, many small countries, and 15 landlocked economies.

The African economy during COVID-19 witnessed significant setbacks since the African digital economy remains at the infant stage. Many African countries also lack the industrial capacity to innovate, absorb, and effectively use new technologies to diversify manufactured goods and move toward higher-quality products. Also, the absence of a common cross-border information and communication technology (ICT), infrastructure for processing goods through African ports, standardised processes and procedures, as well as the prevalence of unexpected and inconsistent fees, non-convertible currencies, non-existence of cross-border payment systems, and incoherent regulatory frameworks impede trans-African trade. They lead to long processing and turnaround times, high storage and warehousing costs, and corruption and red tape across transit routes and borders, further inhibiting intra-African trade and the effective performance of AfCFTA.

Conclusion

Since the waves of independence in Africa, Western countries, such as the United States, France, United Kingdom; IFIs like the IMF and World Trade Organisation; and other African trading partners, such as China and India, have pursued and protected their economic interests in Africa and globally. However, Africa has continually occupied a disadvantageous position within the global order. An attempt to instigate sustainable development and redefine Africa's economic position *vis-à-vis* the globalised environment led to the establishment of AfCFTA. As examined in the chapter, the sustainability of AfCFTA and the level of African countries' integration depends on the degree of intra-African trade.

The concept and focus on fostering intra-African trade do not centre around advocating for a singular African economy, specific goods, or services, nor do they aim to undermine trade between Africa and the rest of the world. However, the emphasis on intra-African trade and the benefits that flow from such compliance will tremendously contribute to African economic emancipation. Indeed, intra-African trade (import and export) has not received any progressive boost and is also incomparable

with trade with its global partners. However, low intra-African trade has been caused by diverse obstacles, among which are Africa's infrastructural deficits, absence of a digitalised economy, unstable political systems, and the high cost of trade and unease in doing business on the continent.

Therefore, this chapter reinforces the importance of rooting AfCFTA success within the intra-African trade thesis. By committing to intra-African trade, member states will lay fertile ground for the robust actualisation of AfCFTA goals, such as the ability to negotiate with other economic and trade blocs, and deeper integration required for a successful continental customs union. It also affords member states the opportunity to emphasise the centrality of the choice made by African leaders and the readiness of its leaders to determine how best to move the continent forward. The idea that AfCFTA will contribute positively to the socio-economic wellbeing of Africans is one that logically requires that intra-African trade obstacles be addressed and promoted for a successful AfCFTA and implementation of the AU's economic blueprint.

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Section Four

Africa's Global Voice

Chapter 9

The Question of The Decade: Is it Feasible for CARICOM to Co-ordinate its Foreign Policy towards Africa?

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Introduction

Once dubbed a paradox by Anthony Payne due to the unique arrangement of a community of sovereign states, the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) is guided by Article 6 of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, which mandates the regional body to enhance the co-ordination of member states' foreign policies. However, even with a Council for Foreign and Community Relations (COFCOR) and a Prime Ministerial Subcommittee on External Relations, CARICOM has failed to achieve one of its integral pillars – the co-ordination of member states' foreign policy. This has resulted in numerous insurmountable tensions, as countries have strayed from CARICOM's scrutiny and delved into bilateral or plurilateral arrangements.

This chapter seeks to investigate the challenges and implications presented, to ascertain the feasibility of a co-ordinated CARICOM foreign policy towards Africa, while addressing the level of inconsistency at a regional level. As CARICOM member states grapple with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and plan for their future economic diversification and transformation, several leaders have considered forging new and non-traditional partnerships outside the hemisphere. This has led

to the establishment of new embassies and joint representations, as well as the utilisation of commercial diplomacy as a key tool to help identify and penetrate new markets. This chapter utilises a content analysis of the CARICOM Heads of Government Conference's decisions over the last 15 years to determine the region's African trajectory.

Furthermore, the chapter seeks to critically analyse these fostered relations' impact on the Caribbean region. It raises several questions, including whether a significant volume of South-South trade has occurred, or if the conditions within the region have deteriorated due to these arrangements. However, it is noteworthy to engage the management of these arrangements within the framework of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). A key question raises concerns about the complementary nature of those countries to the relevance and effectiveness of CARICOM's agenda. Will the expansion of relations enhance the capacity of CARICOM member states to perform effectively and achieve its goals? The chapter seeks to identify potential areas and avenues for greater CARICOM activity and even opportunities to export goods and services to the African market. In conclusion, this chapter illustrates that these arrangements can indeed provide actual benefits for both parties to the arrangements, once they do not inhibit the efficient functioning of the CSME and *vice versa*.

Conceptual Clarification

Defining Globalisation

According to Boxill (1999:232), globalisation entails increased "interconnectedness of people from different nations in the areas of politics, economics, and culture". To Held *et al* (1999), globalisation is simply the movement of people "across regions and between continents, be they labour migrations, diasporas or processes of conquest and colonisation." Dupuy discusses it as a process "of integration of all parts of the world in the international division of labour of the capitalist system and concomitant shift of power" (cited in Meeks & Lindhal 2001).

According to Oman (1994:33), globalisation can be described as a “centrifugal process, as [it is] a process of economic outreach.” Martell (2010) illustrates that the process of globalisation is complex as a result of the numerous activities, actors, and dimensions. This is supported by Woods (2001), who indicates that globalisation refers to at least three different sets of forces in the world economy. These are internationalisation (which describes the increase in transactions among states via trade), investment and capital flows, and the technological revolution, which highlights the effect of new electronic communication and liberalisation (Woods 2001).

Globalisation versus Regionalisation

Blake (2000) details the argument on the contradictory, overlapping, mutually reinforcing, facilitating, and challenging nature of globalisation and regionalisation. According to Blake, “globalisation and the creation of regional blocs [are] diametrically opposite and competing concepts” (2000:128). On the other hand, Dent (2008) details that regionalisation is closely linked to globalisation and claims that regionalisation is merely the increase in levels of “connectivity, integration and interdependence...on a regional scale.”

Dent (2008) further contends that, due to the challenges faced by countries due to globalisation, their ability to survive is based on co-operatively pooling their “strengths, resources and preferences” within regional associations. Dent is supported by Anderson *et al* (2002:151), who maintain that, as integration is vital to the continued existence of CARICOM, “the pressures of globalisation have resulted in an upsurge of new regionalism motivated by the need to integrate into the global economy”, thus “...it is highly unlikely that individual member states will be able to meet the challenges of globalisation acting in isolation.”

Although regionalisation may be seen as a response to globalisation, it is actually not a contradiction as put forward by Blake (2000), but rather it is “a process feeding the globalisation process” where, in the centre, it is a government’s undertaking to exploit the benefits and abate the costs of globalisation.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) clarifies that a strengthened regional position reduces the challenges posed by global integration (ILO, 2004). However, globalisation remains useful due to its ability to connect regions, transfer resources, support values, and provide greater democratic governance options.

Regionalism

With the standpoint that integration remains ambiguous, and regionalisation is being classified as a hybrid, the discipline of regionalism remains complex. Located in the interdisciplinary field of international relations, it covers all levels and actors within the international order. It may be defined as being within states or between states, ideas and aspirations, or policies and plans. Regardless of its defining scope, it has become a pervasive feature of international affairs and is one of several forces “challenging the traditional centrality of states in international relations” (Best & Christiansen 2008). It has even been classified by several scholars as the management of independence, interdependence, or internationalisation. However, what is noteworthy is that all these complexities have driven scholars to assert that “there is no single or simple path of regionalism” (Best & Christiansen 2008:447).

Economic integration has been the current method of facilitating regional integration in the Caribbean. This has historically advanced the Balassa stages to form a single market and eventually a single economy. To govern this form of integration, CARICOM member states have settled on the intergovernmentalism approach to ensure that their national sovereignty is maintained. Intergovernmentalism guarantees a measure of compatibility with sovereignty and regional integration commitments. Malamud and Schmitter (2011:146) advance the argument which has been illustrated in the Caribbean that,

The initiation of regional integration requires an explicit agreement among governments, and the institutions and competencies that they endow it with initially will have a

continuous impact on its subsequent trajectory. Moreover, there is a high likelihood that the nation states that agree to such a founding treaty will do so with the expectation that it will protect and even strengthen their sovereignty, not transform it. What happens subsequently, once the process of integration has kicked in and begun to generate its intended and unintended consequences, can be quite another matter.

This gives the reader the feeling that the Caribbean has embarked on this journey with one goal in mind, but along the way, the goal has been multiplied and the methods to achieve these divided, thus resulting in the loss of states' sovereignty along the path to greater integration. Initially, regional integration served several purposes. For the former colonisers, it was a means to decrease administrative costs. For the former colonies, it was a means to achieve independence and self-determination, while for the newly independent states, it was an expression of statehood, the ability to join regional trading arrangements to cope with international and multilateral events. With the evolution of mainstream globalisation in the early 1980s, regionalism took a different twist and became an instrument for states to cope with the effects of this phenomenon. It also presented an effective response to the international arena which called for greater openness. This resulted in the deepening of the scope of regional arrangements (Baylis & Smith 2003).

Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism first reared its head in the Caribbean in 1992, and is outlined in the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas. Neoliberalists believe that states will choose to co-operate to succeed, as evident with the newly independent Caribbean small states in the early 1970s. Keohane and Nye (1977) argue that conditional co-operation forces member states to keep their promises. In this strand of thought, the principle of reciprocity is the key to states co-operating. However, the institution and framework proposed within the international environment is the regional institution of the CARICOM Secretariat. This secretariat is the administrative

body responsible for keeping the peace between member states, and ultimately becoming the mechanism through which states attain their goals of integration and co-operation.

According to neoliberals, the biggest obstacle to co-operation within the system is that of non-compliance by the units within the system. This becomes a problem in the area of agreed regional decisions to harmonise or implement a policy or even a regulation. If states opt not to comply, there is no mechanism through which the central authority or even another state could force them to do otherwise.

States will co-operate to achieve positive gains, especially in mutual areas such as health, education, climate change, and regional standards (Baylis & Smith 2001). Although securing this co-operation, the region now must take it a step further and seek to harmonise and standardise these areas to create a level playing field within the CSME. This helps to explain the need to have an effective CSME in the world arena, especially representing the issues of small states. From this process, the smaller CARICOM member states have more benefits within a regional grouping such as CARICOM than by themselves whilst facing mega blocs or superpowers during negotiations.

Overview of the Caribbean Community

Historical Introduction to Caribbean Regionalism

Since time immemorial, the Caribbean has continuously developed regional integration schemes to achieve greater independence and development amongst themselves. This has resulted in several multipronged approaches to integration covering a wide scope. Early approaches from the 19th century saw separate federations between the Windward and Leeward Islands, which were created to assist Britain in administratively managing its colonies. Towards the mid-20th century, the most notable experiment at regionalism was the British West Indies Federation (BWIF) comprising ten colonies. Following the demise of the BWIF, the smaller territories constructed the West Indies Associated States (WIAS) in 1966 to become viable. Upon gaining independence,

these smaller countries decided to rejoin the larger territories of the region to form a Caribbean Free Trade Area (CARIFTA), to combat the challenges posed by their small size, undiversified economies, and limited financial and human resources.

CARIFTA came into effect on 1 May 1968, to assist countries in their efforts to expand and diversify trade, ensure fair competitive practices, and advance the harmonious development of Caribbean trade and its attempt at liberalisation. However, during CARIFTA's existence, trade had been skewed in favour of the larger territories within the region, namely Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica, with stronger manufacturing and industrial capacity and centres, which thus created additional problems for the smaller territories. By the early 1970s, as Britain prepared to accede to the European Community, Caribbean territories again decided to transform their regional integration efforts into becoming a Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM). CARICOM was considered to be the next stage of integration post-CARIFTA, which was only a free trade area as it "did not provide for the free movement of labour and capital, or the co-ordination of agricultural, industrial and foreign policies" (CARICOM Secretariat 2005). The switch to CARICOM was expected to generate greater benefits for its members' national economic development.

Formation of CARICOM

Throughout the years, these small Caribbean territories were forced to integrate as they have become increasingly marginalised in the international arena. Former Vincentian prime minister James Fitz-Allen Mitchell argued that the "Caribbean needed unity not to survive, but to be heard... in the new, global cut-and-thrust order" (Mullerleile 1996:255). Therefore, CARICOM was established by the Treaty of Chaguaramas in 1973, which was signed by Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago, and came into effect on 1 August 1973, after which 11 other territories joined.

Upon its inception, CARICOM was guided by Article 4 of the original Treaty of Chaguaramas, with its objectives ranging from

economic integration via a common market regime to achieving “accelerated harmonious and balanced development” (Treaty of Chaguaramas, Article 4(a)(i)), and foreign policy co-ordination to functional co-operation. The functional co-operation pillar was concerned with the sharing of “certain common services and activities for the benefit of its peoples” as stipulated in the original Treaty of Chaguaramas (Article 4(c) (i)).

At this time, the newly independent CARICOM member states agreed to adopt an intergovernmental approach to integration for the protection of their sovereignty, while functioning as a member of the community. To develop the decisions and policies for the region, there were two principal decisionmaking organs in the form of the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM (CHOG), and the Common Market Council of Ministers. The former is comprised of all regional heads of government, whether prime ministers or presidents.

Institutional Governance Arrangements within CARICOM

Regional Governance

Panebianco *et al* (2005) argue that regional governance is a “multifaceted phenomenon”, due to the complexities involved in the various models of co-operation agreements, networks, alliances, and partnerships within a region amongst several actors. Whilst Benz (cited in Panebianco *et al* 2005) defines regional governance as “the structures and processes of steering and co-ordination in regions”. Barnes and Foster (2012) define regional governance as “deliberate efforts by multiple actors to achieve goals in multi-jurisdiction environments”. For the Caribbean region, this definition of regional governance may be applicable due to its characteristics of being a process that is cross-border, multisectoral, holistically encompassing the institutional infrastructure, purpose driven, accommodating states’ attempts to exercise power, and making CARICOM not an end.

An important dimension of regional governance, which is of the utmost importance to this chapter, is the “implementation experience” (Barnes & Foster 2012). This dimension provides the following indicators, which are the “level of region-scale activity” and the “level of region-scale activity on this goal” (Barnes & Foster 2012). Indeed, “both of these indicators capture the degree to which a region has institutionalised its experience in policies, structures or organisations, and processes, thus normalising its habits of regional governance” (Barnes & Foster 2012:7) However, it must be noted that, “institutionalising practices or structures does not automatically enhance regional governance. Irrelevant or inappropriate institutions can lock in a region to practices that ultimately hinder regional governance” (Barnes & Foster 2012:7).

Is there a necessity for regional governance? I posit that it is essential to address problems that states and parts of the system are unable to solve alone due to the complexity and multiplicity of issues, the cross-border nature of problems, and shrinking financial resources. This is to regulate monetary and financial systems, to facilitate trade, to settle trade disputes, and to promote collective security.

CARICOM Secretariat and CARICOM Secretary General

Erisman (2003) examines the roles played by the CARICOM organs and the Secretariat and describes them as the “CARICOM policymaking hierarchy [which] involves three main centres of authority and influence’. He describes the Caribbean Community Secretariat (CCS) as the “true nerve centre of integrationist sentiment”. At the centre of regional integration, the CCS is compelled to “serve the community rather than the parochial concerns of any of its members” (Erisman 2003:122). Erisman (2003), using Axline’s study, states that the CCS cultivates an “ideology of integration” within the Caribbean region. He further maintains that “...the secretariat represents the vanguard of the Caribbean integration movement by attempting to build a regional consensus around measures which will constitute an integration scheme likely to contribute to the development of the region” (Erisman 2003:122).

According to Erisman (2003), the CARICOM Secretary-general (CSG) has an integral role “in negotiating compromises among member governments, often through personal contact and face-to-face discussions with heads of government” (Erisman 2003:122). The CSG represents the leading regional civil servant, fulfilling the administrative requirements of the Conference of Heads of Government.

Conference of Heads of Government

This conference is the ultimate decisionmaking body within CARICOM. It is comprised of all member states’ heads of government, prime ministers, or presidents. It convenes twice a year with an intersessional meeting in the first quarter whilst their regular meeting is convened during the latter half of the year. This conference is chaired by a rotating head who also acts as host for the regular meetings (Erisman 2003). Each member state within the conference has a single vote; however, it must be noted that “decisions are made on unanimity which is required to pass recommendations, compliance here being voluntary or binding resolutions” (Erisman 2003:122).

Erisman (2003) describes the functions of the conference and notably mentions that the actual practice of the CHG involves rubberstamping previously agreed decisions. According to Erisman (2003:122), “In practice, however, the CHG often merely ratifies proposals that have been worked out within the Council of Ministers”. The prominence of the Council is also highlighted as they are responsible for meetings before the CHG to establish their agenda, which “the prime ministers will consider and usually accept without major modification” (Erisman 2003). This chain of decisionmaking represents what Patterson (2012) considers to be a “political structure with representative decisionmaking boards”.

It is important to draw attention to this point – one complication is found in the pronouncements of the country representatives at the council and the conference meetings, that they “...represent their governments and hence may be inclined to give priority to national rather than CARICOM interests” (Erisman 2003:122).

Role of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas

CARICOM's objectives ranged from economic integration and foreign policy co-ordination to strengthening the regional capacities of its members. These are located in Article 6 of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas 2001, for the establishment of the CSME. As CARICOM celebrated its 50th Anniversary in 2023, the pillars of economic integration have been seen as the vehicle to propel the Caribbean towards the attainment of its goals. Thus, all the other pillars should converge to help the Caribbean achieve this major goal – economic integration. One of the four pillars of CARICOM mandates the regional organisation to make concerted efforts for the co-ordination of foreign policies of member states to create a common CARICOM foreign policy. However, Article 6(h) of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas mandates the member states to enhance the co-ordination of their foreign and foreign economic policies.

The Role of the Council for Foreign and Community Relations

CARICOM has the institutional architecture to enhance the co-ordination of foreign policies by the Council for Foreign and Community Relations (COFCOR), as well as the Prime Ministerial Sub-committee on External Relations. Article 16.3(b) states that COFCOR shall be responsible for,

establishing measures to co-ordinate the foreign policies of the Member States of the Community, including proposals for joint representation, and seek to ensure, as far as practicable, the adoption of Community positions on major hemispheric and international issues (CARICOM Secretariat, 2001: Article 16.3 (b)).

Article 16 of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas (RTC) assigns the responsibility of foreign and community relations to COFCOR, which should consist of ministers of foreign affairs from each CARICOM member state. This organ is specifically responsible for:

1. promoting the development of friendly and mutually beneficial relations among CARICOM members;
2. establishing measures to co-ordinate CARICOM member states' foreign policy, inclusive of: joint representation proposals and CARICOM adopted positions on "major hemispheric and international issues";
3. co-ordinating CARICOM positions within inter-governmental organisations
4. promoting and developing co-ordinated community positions in conjunction with CARICOM organs responsible for trade and economic development (COTED) to enhance the region's external economic and trade relations; and
5. co-ordinating with member states to agree on common positions on third states, groups, IGOs, or other international issues.

Interestingly, Article 16(4) of the RTC states that "only Member States possessing the necessary competence concerning the matters under consideration from time to time may take part in the deliberations of COFCOR". As the last clause of the article, it demarcates that, as much as COFCOR is comprised of all ministers of foreign affairs; however, additional officers of some countries may be invited, and others may not be. This sets a tone that only a select few may decide for the region.

CARICOM'S Track Record with Foreign Policy Co-ordination

While there is no universally agreed definition of foreign policy, a working description would be the pursuit by a state of its interests, concerns, and values in the external environment. This definition could be taken to mean that foreign policy includes all policies concerning external issues. However, there is often a considerable overlap between the foreign and domestic aspects of a country's policies, and it is not always easy to distinguish between the two. It can be argued that all foreign policy objectives are ultimately domestic, since all such objectives in some way reflect internal interests or concerns. Therefore, foreign policy is considered to be

a boundary activity, as it straddles both the internal and external environment.

Within that context, the former Barbadian prime minister Lloyd Erskine Sandiford advances the goals and objectives of the foreign policy of Caribbean states towards African states, which should focus around the following themes:

1. expansion of the national economies and protection of national resources and national interests;
2. creation of an integrated regional economy among Caribbean states;
3. building stronger bridges of co-operation among the states of North, Central and South America; and
4. designing new bases for political, social, economic, and cultural collaboration and mutual assistance between Caribbean and African states (Sandiford 2000).

However, from CARICOM's position, the sovereign power of its individual member states is solely driven by its national interest and capacity. Thus, the co-ordination of its foreign policy is challenged by the views and interests of over ten sovereign states, which naturally are inclined to pursue national and regional paths that are mutually beneficial and sometimes convergent.

Deputy Secretary General of CARICOM Lolita Applewhaite remarked at the 14th Meeting of the COFCOR in 2011 that "one of the main weapons in the Community's diplomatic arsenal was that of a co-ordinated foreign policy". As newly independent small states, CARICOM member states utilised the tool of foreign policy co-ordination successfully to conclude trade negotiations as a key region in the African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) states.

Feasibility of CARICOM Foreign Policy Co-ordination: Implications and Challenges

The goal of a country's foreign policy lies in its pursuit of its national interest in the international arena. This national interest is simply the "goals that states pursue to maximise what is selfishly best for themselves" (Kegley & Wittkopf 1999:10). This chapter argues that regional foreign policy should ultimately be

indicative of its interest within the hemisphere and international arena. Thus, this is determined by the current policymakers, which can range from security, welfare, survival, or even defence issues (Evans & Newnham 1998).

For foreign policies to be constructed, there are some decisionmaking models that states must follow. The most popular of these models is the Rational Actor Model (RAM), in which decision-makers calculate the costs vs benefits, or the risks involved, and then choose the most beneficial path (Goldstein 2001:166). This model can also be used to assess the actions of the opposition.

To completely understand decision-makers, one must analyse or rather appreciate a person's cognition and operational code which basically comprises the personal characteristics determining their behaviour, how the individual perceives, interprets and learns, as well as past experiences influencing their behaviour. According to Alexander George, (cited in Neack 2003:63), a leader's operational code is "the leader's beliefs about the nature of politics and political conflict, his views regarding the extent to which historical developments can be shaped, and his notion of correct strategy and tactics".

Neack (2003:64-5) believes that, with a clear articulation of a leader's beliefs about the world, "these beliefs can be matched against the leader's real foreign policy decision and behaviour in order to elaborate his or her instrumental beliefs". For an additional understanding, it is essential to acknowledge the individual motivations about foreign policy making. That is, how interested are they in foreign policy? It also becomes vital to understand the level of their education in foreign policy, which constitutes their socialisation into the position and the nature of the foreign policy climate, as well as the international system. Hermann and Hermann (1980) maintain that if the levels are low, it equates to "political and personal predispositions in decision-making". But the larger question remains: how is this to operate on a regional scale with 14 independent countries in various geographic regions within the Caribbean Sea, in Central or South America?

CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME)

History and Development of the CSME

Twenty-seven years after the commencement of the regional independence movement, CARICOM heads of government at the 10th Meeting of the Conference at Grand Anse, Grenada in 1989, agreed to deepen the integration process by conceptualising a regional single market and economy. This was to be achieved “in the shortest possible time” with the hope of strengthening the regional community to respond to the challenges and opportunities posed by the changing neoliberal international environment (Hall & Chuck-a-Sang 2012:21).

Another key decision made in 1989 was to allow for the establishment of an independently managed West Indian Commission (WIC) to advance the goals as stated in the Treaty of Chaguaramas. By 1992, the report of the West Indian Commission diagnosed CARICOM as suffering from “an implementation paralysis”, which was then viewed as a “chronic CARICOM deficiency”. One of the main recommendations was to establish a single market and economy, similar to the EU’s regional integration.

This situation was further compounded by the threat of losing preferential markets, diminishing growth rates, an exodus of regional citizens in search of a better life and uncompetitive manufacturing sectors. Thus, former prime minister of Barbados, Owen S Arthur, aptly described the CSME as the “unique and strategic tool for CARICOM whilst we attempt to reposition our economies to compete effectively in a globalising world” (Arthur 2004). Hence, it was envisaged that the CSME would assist CARICOM in achieving its goals ranging from improving national standards of living to increasing levels of employment and achieving comprehensive development.

In essence, the CSME can be simply deconstructed into the CARICOM Single Market and Economy. The former’s main feature is the enabling of the free movement of labour, services, and capital throughout CARICOM member states in order to create a single, large economic space. The single economy would comprise

integrated capital markets, harmonised fiscal incentives, fiscal policy harmonisation, as well as co-ordinated interest and foreign exchange rate policies throughout CARICOM.

To accommodate this new regime, in 2003, the Rose Hall Declaration¹ provided several options for regional governance within a mature regionalism framework. This framework de-emphasised national sovereignty and recognised the centralised authorities as being responsible for decisions. Following this, in 2005, the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) was established. In its original jurisdiction, the CCJ is responsible for the application and interpretation of the RTC and any disputes arising from it. The CCJ also has an appellate jurisdiction, in which it hears and determines appeals from common law court matters within the jurisdictions of member states, which are party to the CCJ agreement.

Following a strict programme for the removal of restrictions, member states agreed to launch the CSME in 2006. The CSM was prioritised, with the CSME to follow between 2008 and 2015. The leaders of Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago ratified the treaty and started the operationalisation of the CSM upon signing the declaration of compliance with the CSM on 30 January 2006 in Kingston, Jamaica.

Governance Structure of the CSME

With the advent of the new regional integration initiative, CARICOM decided to utilise its existing framework to create, operationalise, and manage the CSME. The CHOG remained at the helm of the decisionmaking structure, also assisted by a prime ministerial sub-committee on the CSME. The regional heads of government are advised by a CSME implementation unit belonging to the CARICOM Secretariat. In addition, the CARICOM COTED is mandated to oversee the operationalisation of the CSME. Within COTED, a country's delegation comprises the minister responsible for trade, assisted by the CSME Focal Point (CFP).

1 This provides a roadmap for modernising regional integration for CARICOM states.

CARICOM'S Relations with the African Union (2006–2021)

The principal decisionmaking organ of the Caribbean Community, the CARICOM Heads of Government, meets biannually for an intersessional and annual conference. After each meeting of the conference, a communique is issued. This chapter thematically analysed the communiques from 2006 to 2021, to examine the region's foreign policy decisions from the regional prime ministers' and presidents' perspectives and decisions.

In 2005, CARICOM prime ministers agreed to further “strengthen the relationship between the AU and the Community”, especially following the AU's designation of the community as its 6th region (CARICOM 2005). The 2005 meeting saw the CARICOM heads extending “warm and fraternal wishes” to the AU on its 5th ordinary session of the assembly. In addition, the community thanked the AU for involving CARICOM diaspora nationals within the Civil Society Advisory Group in the United Nations (UN). The Caribbean has proven to be a supportive partner of Africa, as it continuously supported the South African bid to end apartheid. The regional organisation has continued to ensure that the bonds between the two regions were strengthened. The CARICOM heads also made the point that the two regions shared a similar history of embracing sovereignty while progressing on a “complex route of integration”, and a belief that regional integration is the solution to the region's underdevelopment.

The relations between the two regions also saw extraordinary representation when the former prime minister of Barbados, Owen Arthur, as the lead head of government responsible for the CSME, at the 2nd ordinary meeting of the assembly in Maputo, Mozambique, saw this partnership as a “demonstration of [CARICOM'S] commitment to work with the AU to address our common problems and to strengthen our alliance in the face of global challenges” (CARICOM Secretariat 2005). The regions both agreed on targeted areas of collaboration and increasing connections between each other. A call was made for the two secretariats to “explore ways to harness international

diplomacy to promote our mutual objectives in the UN and the WTO” (CARICOM Secretariat 2005).

In 2008, the 29th conference of CARICOM heads discussed the sensitive nature of the Zimbabwean presidential elections and called for the regional and sub-regional organisations to intervene to avoid a worsening situation for the citizens of Zimbabwe and “its harmful effect on neighbouring states” (CARICOM Secretariat 2008). During an intersessional meeting in the Bahamas in 2015, the conference of CARICOM heads agreed to launch national programmes on reparations for slavery, which coincided with the International Decade of People of African Descent (CARICOM Secretariat 2015).

Following another conference of heads meeting in St Lucia in 2019, the 40th regular meeting accepted the proposal to establish a permanent Africa-Brazil-Caribbean Diaspora Commission (ABCD Commission). A special prime ministerial sub-committee comprised of the prime ministers of St Vincent and the Grenadines and Barbados, as well as the president of Suriname, supported by the delegation of the University of the West Indies, was established. Although a proposal was submitted, the extent of this collaboration bodes well for the relations between the two regions (CARICOM Secretariat 2019).

In 2020, the intersessional meeting of the conference recognised “the increasing contact between Member States and African countries” and agreed to the convening of the 1st CARICOM-AU Summit in Kenya. Based on the CARICOM perspective, the summit should assist in “strengthening the relationship” between CARICOM and the AU in the areas of trade, investment, and culture. At this intersessional (2020), the conference acknowledged the increasing relations of the CARICOM member states, prompting the prime ministers of Barbados and Jamaica to visit Africa, while the presidents of Ghana and Kenya visited the Caribbean. In 2020, the CARICOM heads described the visits as a demonstration of a rekindling of interest on both sides to forge deeper partnerships. During the 2020 meeting, the CARICOM heads discussed the weakening of multilateralism and the concurrent strengthening of unilateralism by stronger states

as the only solution for increased solidarity within the developing world and greater South-South collaborations (CARICOM Secretariat 2020).

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the successful hosting of the CARICOM-AU summit in 2020, CARICOM heads agreed to pursue a co-sponsored summit with CARICOM, AU and European heads of government. Also, within the 32nd intersessional meeting of the conference, CARICOM prime ministers extended gratitude to the South African Republic and the AU for “carving out an allocation for CARICOM countries” to receive COVID-19 vaccine supplies, via the AU’s African Medical Supplies Platform (AMSP) (CARICOM Secretariat 2021).

Conclusion: Reflecting on the Way Forward

This chapter has located the establishment of CARICOM in historical and current reality, reflected on CARICOM-African relations, and identified the pattern of their partnership. As CARICOM member states grapple with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and plan for their future economic diversification and transformation, several leaders have considered forging new and non-traditional partnerships outside the hemisphere. This has led to the commissioning of new embassies and springing up of joint representations, as well as the utilisation of commercial diplomacy as an effective tool to identify and penetrate new markets. To this effect, CARICOM member states have fostered intimate relations with the African continent through several political and diplomatic engagements.

Before the pandemic, CARICOM’s engagement with the African countries had been focused on summits (Bardouille 2021). However, there have been bilateral engagements between individual countries in both regions. For instance, there has been the twin-island CARICOM state of Trinidad and Tobago establishing its Republic Bank in Ghana. Subsequently, there has been a growth in CARICOM’s relations with non-traditional partners in Africa, such as Morocco, Kenya, and Nigeria.

As the need to chart a new path has emerged, it must build on the extensive historical-neighbourly diplomatic relations

and expand into one that is driven by commercial diplomacy and grounded in enhancing South-South trade relations. This trade partnership must move beyond mere market access and the creation of trade agreements to specific market penetration strategies. This will allow CARICOM goods and service providers to be visible in Africa and able to make their imprints within the African continent. This must lead to the establishment, familiarisation, and expansion of regional brands, from the large conglomerates to the smaller enterprises, in Africa.

Furthermore, it is time that the Caribbean community consider converting the emphasis on foreign policy co-ordination to foreign trade policy co-ordination in its relations with the African continent. This revision of CARICOM's pillar and its focus are both well equipped to insert regional businesses into Africa. It is also a potential win-win scenario since, as a community, the Caribbean could start to explore the possibilities of providing rice, medicaments, and pesticides to key African countries, such as Ghana and Kenya, as a necessary starting point for deepening both foreign and trade relations.

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Chapter 10

The African Union and the United States: The Pursuit of a Strategic Partnership

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Introduction

The African Union (AU) has been one of the key organisations and most important actors in the interstices of collective diplomacy, multilateralism, and inter-regionalism for the past 20 years. From a regionalist perspective, Africa's future largely depends on the effectiveness of the African Union Commission (AUC), because it negotiates and implements international agreements on various issues, especially on security and development. These two are very important, given the view that security and/or political stability are a prerequisite for African development and prosperity. It is imperative to highlight that the AU is a relatively nascent organisation, representing the world's most fledgling nation states, in terms of statemaking and nationbuilding¹. Hence, Africa faces two challenges. The first is how to catch up with the rest of the world, in terms of security and development. The second is how to reconcile any projects on institutions or nationbuilding

1 This is to differentiate the process of state formation and nationbuilding in Africa from the breaking up of states in Eastern Europe (some of which were part of the Soviet Union), and those in Asia and the Pacific, which gained independence from others even though nationbuilding and statemaking had a longer history. This does not imply that postcolonial experiences in Europe and Asia were less significant than those in Africa.

with the rest of the world. Hence, the AU is inadvertently thrust into a theatre of international partnerships to achieve its goals.

It is imperative to clarify that international partnerships were not imposed on Africans. Africans pursued partnerships since the early days of African multilateralism. During the early days of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), African technocrats settled on developing Africa using a “tripartite approach...involving Arab money, African resources, and Western technology” (Gassama 2013). It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss the merits and demerits of this approach, but this ‘dependent’ path represents a critical juncture from which African multilateralism has hardly deviated since the first experimentation with the Africa-Arab League Partnership of 1975/6. Efforts to foster African agency were evident, starting with the Lagos Plan of Action in 1980 and culminating in the somewhat hesitant adoption of the Conference on Security, Stability, Development, and Co-operation in Africa (CSSDCA) in the late 1990s (Akuffo 2011).

However, the verve for international partnerships retroceded and resurged under the auspices of the AU. Both the Constitutive Act of the AU – under Article 3(e, i, n) – and the Protocol on the Peace and Security Council (PSC Protocol) – under Article 7(k) – highlighted the significance of international partnerships (AU 2000). However, the implicit claim of African agency should not mute the *international partners’* direct interest in the “partnerships”. Foreign states and organisations have a direct interest in “helping” a struggling and underdeveloped continent, such as Africa. Erstwhile colonisers, among others, have taken advantage of this milieu and reinvented bilateral programmes and passed them off as pillars and entities of these partnerships (Bagoyoko & Gibert 2009). Currently, the most powerful states such as the United States (US), Russia, and China are viciously agitating for influence and hegemony in Africa. These three have strategic partnerships with Africa through bilateral agreements with African countries, regional economic commissions (RECs), and the continental body, the AU. The partnership between the US and the AU is one of the most intriguing case studies, given its intricacy, controversy, and occasional melodramatic fits.

This chapter examines the US-Africa strategic partnership. The primary argument in this chapter is that the US-Africa partnership has grown, but largely outside the framework of the AU partnership. The partnership has gyrated in and out of the framework due to contestable preferences around issues on African agencies. It attempts to assess the nature of US-Africa relations within the AU framework. However, as the next two sections demonstrate, the partnership with the US has been the most difficult to sustain within the AU's framework in the last 20 years. The chapter notes that the US, unlike other international actors, has resisted the major institutionalisation of the partnership. It thereby examines three major aspects of the partnerships that exist both within and beyond the AU framework: politics and security, trade and development, and social relationships. It is imperative to highlight that, although the AU forms the basis and scope of discussion in this book, the AU is primarily a conduit for reducing transactional costs of bilateral, trans-regional, and inter-regional co-operation.

This chapter unfolds in three parts. The first part contextualises international partnerships as an aspect of international diplomacy and African agency. Thereafter, it appreciates the existence of these partnerships in the light of the unfolding coloniality and imperialism. In the second part, the chapter examines the role of agents or processes driving the AU's international partnerships. It pays special attention to the role of members of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government (AHSG) and the office of the Chairperson of the AU. It also highlights and describes the processes through which the various actors seek to exert agency. The third part examines the performance of the AU's international partnerships in the last two decades, and concludes, offering some important recommendations.

The African Union and African Agency in International Affairs

When discussing or commemorating the two decades of the existence of the AU, especially *vis-à-vis* its relationship with the

US, it is fitting to apply the notion of agency to the discourse. The most used definition of agency, which was derived from Colin Wight, posits that agency is the ability to do something (Brown 2012). When extrapolated to the notion of African agency, this is rooted in intentionality, accountability, and subjectivity (Blaauw 2015). However, I have argued elsewhere that African agency is “agency slack” (Gwatiwa 2022). This is not a polemic or exegetical overstretch, but a simple acknowledgement that African actors, including the AU, have limited power in international politics. Indeed, regarding the relationship with the US, the AU is dealing with a powerful country that has little respect for the agency.

The AU’s partnership with the US exhibits agency slack, which refers to an independent action by one party that is undesirable to other contracting parties. Agency slack takes two forms: “shirking”, which is when an agent minimises the effort it exerts; or “slippage”, wherein an agent shifts policy away from a preferred outcome to its preferences (Hawkins *et al* 2006). This chapter holds that the US-AU partnership exhibits substantial slippage. To understand these dynamics, it is important to understudy how the US approaches regionalism, particularly because it is not used by regional organisations. Historically, it has been reluctant to promote regionalism within its region. It has largely remained ambivalent on regionalism, as evident by its membership of the Organisation of American States (OAS). The goals of the organisation are at odds with the enduring Monroe Doctrine.² The chapter subsequently highlights how difficult it was for the US to adjust to a relatively new organisation, which sought to minimise or limit American influence, in a region where Chinese and Russian influences were increasing.

2 The Monroe Doctrine, first articulated by US President James Monroe in 1823, emphasises that the European powers – specifically the United Kingdom – were obligated to respect the Western hemisphere as the United States’s sphere of interest and influence.

Origins and Motivations for the US-Africa Partnership: History on Repeat

US-Africa relations predate the memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the US State Department and the AUC. The origin of this partnership has a binary explanation. The first relates to the evolution of the United States' "Africa policy". The second perspective relates to the US's role in a post-hegemonic world. The two can provide an understanding of the nature of this partnership. The evolution of the US "Africa policy" was problematic. This is attributable to the fact that the US State Department and the US Department of Defence (DOD) had a lackadaisical policy approach towards Africa. When the State Department established its Bureau of African Affairs in 1958, "the top echelons of the Africa Bureau...were dominated by European specialists who continued to approach the continent from a Eurocentric point of view (Schraeder 1994).

Similarly, the word 'Africa' was not introduced into the DOD policy and structures until 1952. These two inadvertently shaped (or warped) perceptions of Africa among US policymakers meant that the problems of racialism, prejudice, and policy errors were ingrained into the US policy towards Africa. Recent events, including the public statements by the former AU ambassador to the US, Arikana Chihombori-Quao, show that much has not changed (*Al Jazeera* 2022). The recent bullying of African states to take sides in the US's geopolitical meanderings in Ukraine (Fabricius 2022), as well as the abrasive engagements with South Africa (Imray & Biesecker 2023) and other states, show that American viewpoints of Africa have not changed much.

Subsidiarity is a key feature of US-Africa relations that has a long trajectory. It took more than five decades for the US government to finally warm up to the idea of a whole-of-government approach. The fragmented policy formulation and implementation can be explained by two major factors. First, US engagement with Africa was defined and driven by narrow interests. For instance, anti-communism was a key feature of US involvement in Africa. Currently, the US is also primarily driven by the desire to counter Chinese, Russian, and Iranian

influence on the continent. Second, US involvement in security and developmental issues was subsidised to specific government agencies and departments.

After World War II, US activities in Africa were primarily left to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), which has a penchant for clandestine operations. The CIA, which was not accountable to the US Congress, is characterised by a legacy of political destabilisation, entrenched autocracies, and various abuses of human rights. The CIA also supported the apartheid regime in South Africa, including its domestic terrorism against the Black populations, as well as its destabilisation of Southern Africa (Schraeder 1994). This pattern exhibits itself in the way the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM), which was established in 2007, with the headquarters located at Kelley Barracks, Stuttgart, Germany, in the last fifteen years, has virtually become the largest US foreign policy machine in Africa (Wiley 2012). It is therefore not surprising that the US government is failing in its current attempts to implement its ambitious development programme.

Furthermore, a related and undying feature of US foreign policy towards Africa is its militaristic obsession. US military activities in Africa have always been about seeing the enemies and annihilating them. As communism became a less fashionable policy tool, terrorism became a new speaking point. In 1986, the US bombed Libya for its alleged sponsoring of terrorism (John 2002). In 1992, the US led the (UN) Unified Task Force to create a safe passage for humanitarian work during the Somali civil war. Shortly thereafter, the US withdrew from Somalia, following the killing of 19 US Special Forces in Mogadishu. In 1994, the US deployed combat-ready troops in Burundi as the Rwandan genocide took place, but it did not intervene. It also deployed combat-equipped contingents to Sierra Leone and Liberia between 1996 and 2003, as well as sending forces to Cote d'Ivoire in 2002 – all of which were solely to protect American personnel or military installations (Ploch 2011). It was not until 2012 that the US deployed Special Forces to track Joseph Kony – a warlord who has terrorised the Ugandan frontier territories since his fallout in the late 1980s (Roberts 2014). This culture of parochialism

continues, while the US-Africa policy is still defined by narrow interests that largely revolve around a military economy.

Mapping US-Africa Relations in the Age of Partnerships

It is appropriate to posit that US-Africa relations grew noticeably during the first seven years of the establishment of the AU. It is also imperative to contextualise the events. On the one hand, the transition from the OAU to the AU in 2002 was characterised by political will and verve towards a better form of institutionalism. The AU, or African continent, accentuated its agency. When Africa renegotiated the Lomé Agreement with Europe in the late 1990s, the OAU Commission explicitly tasked negotiators as follows: “[it] is important that there is no Eurocentric perspective of these essential elements. The ACP must give their perspective of these elements which takes on board the social, cultural, historical, political, and economic specificities of our states” (OAU 1999:9). The AU has collaborated with different countries and organisations, while the Africa-EU partnership as well as the Forum on China-Africa Co-operation (FOCAC) continue to grow exponentially.

On the other hand, the US had its strategic concerns. First, the idea of an African combatant command was mooted during President Bill Clinton’s administration to quell the rise of transnational terrorist networks in failed or weak states in Africa (Le Van 2010). Second, as the command took shape during President George Bush’s dispensation, the war on terror was no more an important consideration than oil diplomacy, as three African states were among the top ten oil producers in the world. By 2001, Nigeria, Angola, and Algeria ranked between 5th and 7th largest oil suppliers to the US (Berchinsky 2007). More importantly (to the Americans), the US government sought to counter Chinese influence in Africa. China surpassed the US as Africa’s largest trading partner in 2005. These self-serving interests defined the environment in which the AU and the US government sought to negotiate their strategic partnerships.

Locating US AFRICOM in US Foreign Policy towards Africa: Optics and Realities

During the dawn of AU partnerships, in the early 2000s, the US sought to engage the AU based on the formation of a partnership. After all, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) – a largely US-led military alliance – already had an operational partnership with the AU. The AU also emphasised the efficacy of these partnerships in reducing transaction costs in international co-operation. Moreover, the European Union (EU) – a key strategic ally of the US (regardless of the presence of difference) – also had a flourishing strategic partnership with the AU. The US continued its policy of mimicking European strategic behaviour in Africa. Apart from policy imitation, they repeated their old system of a military frontloaded approach. However, that did not entirely go well during early attempts to negotiate a partnership between the US government and the AUC. Before discussing this negotiation, it is imperative to introduce the notion of a US Africa Command.

For almost 20 years of US-Africa relations, the US military was the primary policy instrument in Africa. The creation of the US Africa Command (AFRICOM) should not generate confusion in scholarship. AFRICOM was designed from existing bilateral relations with various African states. As Wyatt demonstrates, a ‘new’ Combatant Command (CCDM) was long overdue. The US already had different combatant commands assigned to different areas of responsibility (AORs) (Wyatt 2021). However, there are claims that it was designed in a uniquely organisational format to appeal to the AU and sub-regional organisations. The workforce of AFRICOM consists of officials from the US Department of Defence, the US State Department Bureau of African Affairs, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and other government departments and agencies (Berchinsky 2007). According to various sources, this amalgamation was in pursuit of a whole-of-government approach. However, not long after 2007, there were accusations that the US military personnel had dominated the space in which US foreign policy towards Africa was initiated and implemented.

At the initial stage, AFRICOM was designed and positioned for political objectives. AFRICOM is headed by a four-star army general (the most senior rank), with immense political significance. A four-star general is directly accountable to the US cabinet (especially the Secretary of Defence), the US Senate, and the US Congress – all key components of US foreign policy. The first leader of AFRICOM, General William Kip Ward, was an African American. As symbolic as it was, this did not amount to much because most African American policy officials remain ‘American’ to the core. It is no surprise that, as the Joseph Biden administration sought to revamp US-Africa relations, the government appointed another African American, General Elliott Langley, to head the US AFRICOM.

Langley habitually parrots the old mantra of a “holistic approach in Africa relations” – one of the Bush administration’s greatest hits (Vergun 2023). However, beyond this racial symbolism, Langley does not represent a departure in US foreign policy towards Africa. Just like the irony of a [then] Black US president born of an African father, the US remains an ambiguous and destabilising force in Africa. For example, while touting a ‘3D approach’ representing diplomacy, development, and defence, and repeating the old tired tune that African countries “prefer to solve African Problems with African Solutions” (Garamone 2023). Langley met with a controversial General, Khalifa Haftar – a US-backed Libyan warlord, whose butchering record earned him the moniker ‘Khalifa Hifter’, which rhymes with Hitler (Turse 2023). Arming and back-patting a ruthless high-ranking soldier, among other recent AFRICOM controversies, is an ironic case of supporting “African Solutions to African Problems”.

This seemingly contradictory implementation of US policy towards Africa is not surprising, given the fact that US Special Operations Command (US SOCOM), located in MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, usually undertakes controversial activities. I have argued elsewhere that AFRICOM expanded based on a combination of Special Forces and intelligence apparatus across Africa (Gwatiwa 2021). Among other things, the US SOCOM conducts what it calls 127e operations, which “allows US special operations forces to use certain host-nation military units as surrogates

in counterterrorism missions” (Turse & Naylor 2019). As far as AFRICOM and accompanying special forces are concerned, they hold a fluid position where they can display their oratory prowess to political audiences while militarising the continent and arming several destructive forces that further destabilise Africa. Indeed, the AUC and its member states have not concertedly criticised the US security policy and its complicit interventions in African peace and security architecture. The AU has kept mute on many US controversies since the AU-US negotiations have produced mixed outcomes, during the heyday of their international partnerships.

Diplomacy and Engagement, 2007–2013

In 2007, the US engaged the continent in the formation of AFRICOM. Part of the reason was to create a buy-in for the command and possibly foster a partnership with the AU. The founding senior staff of AFRICOM often distance themselves from previous consultations on locating AFRICOM on the continent but attribute those efforts to US State Department staff. However, the hostility towards the establishment of AFRICOM and its possible hosting in Africa was evident across the continent (Nathan 2009). The polemics of what was attempted in secret around relocating AFRICOM from Germany to Africa is a complex subject. However, the US government and the AU engaged in diplomatic negotiations around the pursuit of a strategic partnership.

The most prominent diplomatic engagement revolved around security co-operation. The initial (direct) negotiations between AFRICOM and the AU Peace and Security Department were not fruitful.³ The unwillingness of the US to balance its interests with AU preferences hampered negotiations. However, the US, with its existing military networks, remains an indispensable actor in international security. Instead of an outright dismissal of the US, the AU settled for an informal agreement for collaboration in peace support operations from around 2009. The informal agreement simply built on pre-

3 This was prior to the formation of the Partnerships Management and Co-ordination Division (PMCD), and any aspiring partner had to negotiate directly with the concerned department.

existing bilateral security co-operation between the US and African states: primarily the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI) 1996–2004, and the subsequent Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) 2004–2017 – which focused on peacekeeping and humanitarian training (Karis 2009; US State Department, n.d.). This was no complex task because the formation of AFRICOM largely involved the formalisation of existing bilateral security co-operation arrangements (Le Van 2010). US–Africa security relations continued in that manner until the second round of negotiations from around 2011.

The irony of the negotiation of this strategic partnership was how the issue of subsidiarity complicated the final negotiations between 2011 and 2013. While negotiations covered various issue areas, ranging from energy to business and trade, the security component had a special place. Some sources indicate that AFRICOM wanted a separate agreement, similar to the AU–NATO partnership agreement (Choge: Personal Communication 2015). However, that desire did not materialise. This was largely due to the AUC’s increased distrust of the US. AU officials have attested to a widespread distrust of the motives behind the US quest for seeking partnerships with Africa. One of the most contentious aspects of the negotiations was the US’s unwillingness to compromise on its preferences around security co-operation.

In 2013, the AUC and the US government held final negotiations on a US–Africa strategic partnership, at which point they decided to expand their scope. This new round of negotiations also included the RECs, such as the Southern African Development Commission (SADC), the Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS), the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). Negotiations reached a deadlock around the issue of African agency, especially regarding resource disbursement from the US government to the AU Commission. Specifically, the AU sought far-reaching reforms of ACOTA to meet AU training directives, but the US rejected these suggestions (Order, personal communication, August 2015).

Moreover, the RECs were not receptive to the prospect of an increased US military presence in Africa (Le Van 2010). The issue of African preferences and US interests became contentious such that when the parties signed the US-Africa strategic partnership in 2013,⁴ it was overshadowed by other components. The agreement focused on issues like trade, development, energy, and aid while making a skeletal reference to security co-operation (Office of the Press Secretary 2012).

Contentious Preferences in US-Africa Relations

Preference definition and bargaining have been problematic in US-Africa relations. This is largely due to US unilateralism. Indeed, the US government is more accountable to its domestic audiences than the international community. However, foreign relations either in bilateral or multilateral forms require periodic bargaining and adjustment of preferences, regardless of the stature of those involved. The US has a different approach to international affairs. As the AUC seeks to promote African agencies in international affairs, it is bound to clash with incongruent US approaches. For instance, as some scholars note, the US can either support or undermine regional projects, depending on their assessment of how those initiatives or developments affect US interests (Hettne & Ponjaert 2013). As a latecomer to the AU partnership milieu, the US has had an incentive to approach the AU with cynicism. As a result, the US focused on expanding its 'beloved' AFRICOM project through clandestine means (Turse 2013). This expansion is meant to enable the US to act according to its interests.⁵ This reflects self-interest and anarchy in the international system.

4 The US-Africa Strategic Partnership of 2013, which was signed by the chairperson of the AU Commission, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma and the then-US State Department Secretary Hilary Rodham Clinton.

5 US expansion in Africa contravenes an AU/AHSG declaration on the hosting of AFRICOM on African soil. Even the countries that host such bases have little awareness of or control over US activities within these military bases (or "lily pads" as they are known). There have been complaints and friction about US activities in some lily pads such as Djibouti, Ethiopia, and – less so – the Seychelles. The only base to be closed was the US drone base in

There is poor preference co-ordination in US-Africa relations. The recent fanfare over a revised and/or revived oomph and verve in US-Africa relations should not be misleading. In 2022, the US hosted the second US-Africa Summit, which was attended by 49 African leaders. Before and during that summit, the Joe Biden administration changed its rhetoric to support African agencies. In a radical departure from the tradition, US President Biden addressed African states as partners and used the word “partnership” more than ten times. He also reiterated US support for the AU to become a permanent member of the Group of Twenty (G20) and secure a permanent membership of the UN Security Council (UNSC) (The White House 2022). While the former promise (on G20 permanent membership) was fulfilled in September 2023 (Acharya & Singh 2023), the issue of UNSC permanent seats is yet to materialise. It is unlikely that the issue will be resolved, given the current tense relations between the P3 (the US, France, and the UK) and the P2 (Russia and China). Thus, these new developments should be taken with a caveat because the US has a long history of jettisoning African interests.

Between 2022 and 2023, a former AU Ambassador to the US, Arikana Chihombori-Quao, lamented the strategic insignificance of Africa to the US. There is an enduring view among top decisionmakers that Africa is not a strategic priority to the US. Former US president George W Bush, under whom AFRICOM assumed operational status, once remarked that “while Africa may be important, it doesn’t fit into [American] national strategic interests, as far as I can see them” (Berschinsky 2007). Similarly, former US president Barack Obama failed to redeem the pledges of the first US-Africa Summit that was held in 2014, but dispatched a US peacekeeping mission to Somalia, killing thousands of

Ethiopia. While the official reasons were undisclosed, this incident followed an episode of disagreements between Ethiopia and the US on how to approach security issues in the Horn of Africa (see Maru (b), personal interview, 2015). Disagreements between Djibouti and the US have not led to the closure of any bases because US, French, Russian, Chinese, and Japanese military bases are strongly tied to the Djiboutian political economy. However, the friction has strengthened Djibouti’s negotiating position vis-à-vis the US in the renewal of the lease of military bases.

both local militias and innocent Somalis in search of ‘terrorists’ (Bump 2016).

Some observers posit that the US national security strategy towards Africa is closely tied to its interests in violent extremism, maritime security, oil, and global trade. However, the promotion of the US interests deepens Africa’s marginalisation in the world economy, due to unfair trade agreements and high levels of raw materials exportation by African countries. In the case of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), it is important to highlight that, while the trade policy remains open to all African states, there are qualifying factors that limit access to US markets. For example, as of 2023, ten states are still ineligible for AGOA, and President Biden terminated preference benefits for four countries (i.e. Ethiopia, Mali, Guinea-Conakry, and Burkina Faso). The main beneficiaries in AGOA are few: South Africa, Kenya, Lesotho, and Ghana. Yet, AGOA trade statistics show that South Africa-US trade volume outpaces all African states combined by far (Wong 2023). Without broad-based, inclusive, and consultative partnerships, it will be impossible to build a healthy US-Africa relationship. Among other things, the parties need to have candid conversations over some of the major issues and occurrences that have destabilised Africa.

The intervention of the West in Libya in 2011, which drew condemnation from several national and regional actors as well as the AU, was a clear illustration of the failure of preference definition and co-ordination between the US and the AUC. Surprisingly, this jingoistic intervention occurred five years after the inception of AFRICOM. Moreover, AFRICOM had launched Operation Odyssey Dawn – a US military operation that preceded NATO’s Operation Unified Protector – before the US government could conclude its negotiations with the AUC on the strategic partnership. There is yet to be any candid conversation between Africa and the US government around this controversy. This means that US AFRICOM can launch another major destabilising operation in Africa. The so-called 127e programmes are clear indications that the US may not cease its unilateral operations, damning its destabilising effect on African security (Turse & Naylor 2019).

In the run-up to the legitimisation and execution of the NATO-led intervention in Libya, the US overlooked African states and the AU to pursue the interests of the West in Libya.⁶ The US sponsored and drafted the UN resolution that legitimatised the intervention in Libya. Instead of engaging the AU or the Africa Group in New York, the US and its allies created a NATO no-fly zone over Libya. Alder-Nissen and Pouliot (2014) give a detailed explanation of how the P3 used the diplomatic manoeuvre to systematically ostracise Nigeria and South Africa and privileged the role of the Arab League to support regime change in Libya. This happened at a time when the Arab League member states already had difficult relations with Libyan leader, Muammar Gaddafi. Ironically, two of Africa's so-called hegemonies were diplomatically outmanoeuvred, but they were already divided on Gaddafi.

When African heads of state and government secretly met in Gabon to discuss the impasse, they still could not agree on a solution. Former South African president Thabo Mbeki has described how NATO aborted its trip to convince Gaddafi of a diplomatic solution (Mbeki 2016). Western obstinance and African divisions enabled the prevalence of US or Western interests. As a result, AFRICOM commenced Operation Odyssey Dawn in Libya days ahead of the NATO intervention. This circumvention of African interests was emblematic of the general failure of preference definition and co-ordination in the partnership.

Slippage between Addis and Washington: A Set of Ruminations

Indeed, the US-Africa partnership is emblematic of slippage by the way the AU often shifts from a strong engagement with the US to alternative partners. The AU, which is usually the weaker party, carefully calculates its fortunes. Given the US-Africa Leaders Summit in 2022, some of the issues articulated hereunder may change significantly in the future.

6 AU interests are represented by the "Africa Group" at the UN Headquarters in New York.

The slippage is partially attributable to the type of agreement guiding the management of this partnership. The agreement governing the AU-AFRICOM collaborative partnership is thin and vague. Consisting of only a three-page document, it is the thinnest document in the AU partnership milieu. Precisely, the agreement is inimitably vague on peace and security. It is also heavily themed towards economic issues rather than peace and security. It also leaves the peace and security component very open. In the absence of a clear articulation of the peace and security component of the partnership, there is no action plan as found elsewhere (in partnerships with the EU and UN). With the benefit of such precedence and with no soft, binding, or at least guiding addendum to the agreements, neither partner sees any serious obligations to implement the agreements. This creates room for any party, especially the stronger one, to act as it pleases, including 'breaking down' (atomising) the partnership. Empirically, this usually incites a response in the form of agency slack.

The aforementioned issues invite the subject of African agency in this partnership. Did the lack of an elaborate agreement undermine African agency? When the US AFRICOM commenced in the early years of the Bush administration, there was a "perceived need for Africans to 'do more for themselves' in the realm of conflict resolution" (US Senate 2001). Did this mean that the US would accommodate African "agenda and priority setting", which the AU and its lead states vehemently sought? Indeed, the foregoing rhetoric by the then US secretary of state Collin Powell seemed to have resonated with the mantra of 'African Solutions to African Problems', which has gained ample buy-in in Europe.

However, a closer look at Powell's⁷ statement reveals that this was hortatory rhetoric in what was an already changing political landscape. Evidence suggests that even when AFRICOM took shape, the Combatant Command (CCMD) had problems with either enabling or letting Africans 'do more for themselves'. It habitually overrode African preferences at the technical or operational level, especially considering the type of operations the

7 Collin Powell was the United States Secretary of State from 2001 to 2005.

US conducts in the periphery of African peace support operations in Somalia, North Africa, and the Sahel region. In Somalia, the US has an estimated 450 military personnel supporting Somali forces and the AU mission in Somalia (Faruk & Anna 2023).

Indeed, the US operates 11 so-called ‘co-operative security locations’ (CSLs) – which host unspecified numbers of special forces and intelligence collection apparatus – in different African states such as Niger, Djibouti, Kenya, and others (Vine 2015). In total, there are 29 confirmed US military bases in Africa consisting of CSL, forward operating locations (FOL), and other types (Turse 2013). These US troops operate independently and provide little room for African preferences in mission areas such as Somalia and the Sahel region. It is doubtful that AFRICOM’s General Langley, given his contradicting rhetoric and action, will do anything differently.

Africa’s slippage was caused by a lack of professional networks between the US and Africa. The echelons of the CCMD, as well as the security elites in government, had either no or limited networks in Africa. Indeed, there were scores of people with experience in African affairs who could have better articulated how the US could contribute to the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) but were replaced by several personalities with either corrosive or no experience in Africa. For instance, US president George Bush’s assistant secretary of state for African affairs, Jendayi Frazer, had a hardline approach that favoured US militarism in Africa (US Senate 2008). She had no extensive policy networks with senior African policymakers who were the main drivers of APSA projects. This also applies to the inaugural commander of AFRICOM, General William Ward, who had no strong background in African security. This is evinced by how he failed to create lasting networks during his tenure, which also remains a mystery. If these two influential figures had established meaningful networks, they could have advocated for improved collaboration between Africa and the US, particularly between AFRICOM and APSA. A similar issue appears to be noticeable in the current leader of AFRICOM, General Langley.

AU agency slack is also attributable to the problem of historical longevity. The historicity of sporadic and very perfunctory engagement between the US and multilateral actors undermined the process of institutionalisation, as well as engendering trust between the US and AU. As the parties stuck to their preferences, they eventually adopted somewhat opposed approaches to security. The US also failed to transform from a realist approach to its touted 'whole-of-government approach'. Ironically, the latter resonates with the AU's human security approach and could have somewhat eased co-operation between the two. As a corollary, the US often implemented its preferred programmes, often strengthening bilateral security co-operation. This implies that the AU's slippage tactics were not sufficient to inhibit US activities in the continent.

Agency slack, in this case, is also a response to cognitive regionalism. Indeed, there was an appetite for a paradigm shift towards comprehensive security to align with AU security doctrines. However, old perceptions and habits prevailed. Schraeder observes that the nucleus of the Bush administration consisted of a "realist-oriented foreign policy" triumvirate that "emphasised a more 'hard-headed' analysis of concrete US interests" and criticised the preceding Clinton administration for a "feel good" policy towards Africa (Schraeder 1994). This implies a contradiction between the previously mentioned rhetoric and practice. This hampered an actual shift, thereby making the command appreciate the efficacy of APSA. This explains the chronic problem of gyrating between positive and negative developments in US-Africa relations.

The slippage in this partnership is also attributable to its form of institutionalisation. Unlike other partnerships (with the EU and China), the institutional structures for facilitating the US partnership with the AU are very weak. Apart from the US Ambassador to the AU (which is a 'second rate' ambassador), the US does not have a significant presence and clout that reflects the importance of the strategic partnership. Moreover, this ambassadorial position and the tag "strategic advisor" to the AU, do not reflect any aspiration to enhance US-Africa relations. It is surprising that even as the Biden administration seeks to improve

relations with its new-found 'partner', the security domain remains largely unchanged under the auspices of the AU.

Finally, there is fear of the militarisation of the continent. AFRICOM is still headquartered in Stuttgart (Germany) with nearly 600 military officers who were transferred from the US European Command (EUCOM) to form the then-nascent AFRICOM, and an additional 600 civilians were incorporated into the amalgamated organisation (Murithi 2010). There are also more than 30 security co-operation officers attached to US embassies all over Africa. This overwhelmingly military formation creates unease. To the AU, formalising a partnership with such an actor carries greater risks.

Conclusion: Towards Better African Agency in US-Africa Relations

In the broader context, US-Africa partnership requires a comprehensive review and fundamental paradigm shift concerning how African agency is perceived and approached. There is no doubt that the security interests of the two parties have meeting points. However, its potential efficacy requires further dialogue regarding the role of African agencies. African agency does not imply a radical transformation of US security interests, but the need for the US – especially as a relatively new player in the continent – to adjust its manner of engagement and alignment of its security interests. The biggest failure in this partnership has been the US's inability to treat the AU as an equal partner and abandon its unilateralism.

The stakes are also not necessarily in favour of either party. To start with, the US already has its agency, which is built around force, political bullying, and the dwarfing of other actors' efforts. The contemporary African security architecture should involve multiple players, traditional and emerging powers, from which the AU and its member states can draw resources that the US is unwilling to provide. China, Russia, Turkey, Brazil, and others are willing and making concerted efforts to occupy the position of the US in Africa, by pandering to African agencies. Conversely, the AU cannot completely avoid relating with the US either.

Most AU member states are tied to US security architecture through diverse bilateral terms. As the world's most advanced security establishment, the US is unavoidably a necessary foe. Thus, the AU can only exercise slippage to a certain extent and for a certain period. The AU should explore its existing ties with the US to engage its member states to diplomatically persuade the US – which has strong relations with individual states – to formally accept African agency. This should not only be found in the rhetoric of senior political leaders (as it was in the case of the Bush administration) but codified into official documents, including future US-Africa strategic partnership agreements. Moreover, there are already ample avenues for further institutionalisation of the relations through AU diplomatic offices in Washington, New York City, and Brussels (which is not far from Stuttgart).

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Chapter 11

United Nations–African Union Relations: Towards Sustainable Peace and Economic Development and the Attainment of Agenda 2063

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Introduction¹

This chapter provides a constructive discussion of the actors and factors relevant to the African Union (AU)'s relations with the United Nations (UN) and their respective institutions. The chapter further provides a critical assessment concerning the rules of engagement between these two international organisations over 20 years since the establishment of the AU in 2002. The major discussion adopts a political economy, human security, and developmental-led approach situated in fundamental international relations theories, critique, and debates to assess how the relations between these two organisations have fared, see where the gaps are, and identify key recommendations toward building solid relations. Addressing the AU and its relations with the UN's peace and security architecture to achieve the AU's Agenda 2063, therefore cannot be discussed in the absence of geopolitical economics.

¹ I acknowledge that part of this discussion is premised on my 2022 book published by Springer, Switzerland and Palgrave Macmillan, New York, titled: *Challenging the United Nations Peace and Security Agenda in Africa: 1960 to 2022*.

On its part, the UN Charter of 1945 was primarily created for the maintenance of world peace, with a 193-member-state body comprised of the UN General Assembly (UNGA), and a further rotation of ten non-permanent members on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), as well as five permanent positions – the P5 comprising of the world’s most powerful global militaries and economies. However, the five powerful drivers do not align with the immense global mineral and agricultural wealth of AU member states, encompassing both land and sea resources. Africa also possesses significant human capital, with 60% of its population of 1.4 billion being youth. Additionally, the continent hosts the world’s largest free trade area by population size, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Nevertheless, the P5, comprising China, France (a European Union [EU] member state), the United Kingdom (UK) (a recent Brexit or non-EU-member), Russia, and the United States (US), have control over world peace and economic oversight through veto power. But ever since their creation and particularly in the last 20 years, Africa has simply not benefitted from peacebuilding, peacekeeping, and post-conflict reconstruction models as enacted within the UN and its institutions. The continent has remained resource-poor, while conflicts are spiralling with UN resolutions made, delayed, or insufficiently resourced.

While the ten non-permanent member states on the UNSC have an opportunity to push for equality of negotiations within global peace and security and human economic development, it is more of a window dressing. On the other hand, the UNGA has shown significant clout in world affairs – and has not hesitated or shied away from intervening in their attempts to maintain world order within global security and human rights affairs. For instance, the UNGA has intervened in the tumultuous Israel and Palestine wars, the Ukraine and Russia wars, the intra-state conflicts between Ethiopia’s governments and its Tigray ethnic population, and several other pertinent issues that are being constructively engaged by the UNGA. Concerning the AU and the UN security interventions, the divergence of UNSC dynamics in dealing with Africa’s conflicts has become like Groundhog Day for Africa (with the same issues being replayed and the past being

infused with Africa's present-day reality). They have responded to old issues such as the superpower rivalry during Africa's Cold War of the 1980s, with capitalist and socialist/communist blocs competing against each other in Africa's continent over Africa's economic resources, while pushing military apparatuses and proxy wars under the banner of UNSC resolutions.

The UNSC, as the purse-holder, provides the largest budget to the UN and its institutions and, as realism dictates, these powerful military and advanced economies have created the penholder system – a second UNSC structure subsumed within the current UNSC structure – best understood as a spaghetti bowl of power dynamics among P3 (France, the US, and the UK) *versus* P2 (France and the US) or P1 (the US) *versus* P2 (China and Russia), all happening behind the scenes and closed doors of engagement, as they set the rules of the game infused with infighting, economics, and trade (Ugarte 2014). Such engagements have invariably become further infused with power and greed and decisions are thus enacted in what the P5 member states think in their view are important. They also influence the development and timing of peacekeeping efforts in conflicts both across Africa and globally. For example, while Russia abstained from voting for an increase in troops for the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic (CAR) (MINUSCA) in December 2018, it also provided CAR's military personnel training at Russian military schools – largely provided by Russia's Wagner mercenary group. The Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of National Defence of CAR signed several agreements on military co-operation in August 2018, as well as in 2019 and 2020 (Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation 2020).

But this all changed in 2023 with the infighting of Russia's military contraction of its Wagner mercenary group, showing off too much muscle and over-reach against Russia's military forces, particularly against the Russian government, when it staged a mutiny in the heart of Moscow in June 2023 – in defiance of Russia's president Vladimir Putin. This move resulted in huge humiliation for President Putin and made him a laughingstock to the Russian people and the rest of the world. Within months of the

June 2023 mutiny, there was the unexplained death of Wagner's military stalwart and boss, Yevgeny Prigozhin, when his plane crashed and exploded on 23 August 2023, killing all passengers on board (Yeung & Said-Moorhouse 2023). Russian investigation authorities revealed in October 2023 that the death of the Wagner boss's crashed plane showed fragments of hand grenades found in the remains among the dead (Knight & John 2023). The death of Wagner's boss came as a huge blow to Africa's West African states, particularly Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso, where Wagner operated extensively, resulting in these African countries expelling UN and France's troops from its countries – while also staging several military coups (Beta 2023).

Undoubtedly, France, the US, and China have their agendas and ideas of how peace and security should evolve in Africa, with major in-fighting among the three powers. The US has been proactively anticipating China's engagement with Africa, particularly since the onset of the Russia-Ukraine war in February 2022. Since then, and with increased intensity, the US has closely monitored how China will interact with Africa during this conflict. Hence, in December 2022, US President Joe Biden invited the AU to join the Group of Twenty (G20) states as the representative of its 55 member states – a move to counter China's influence on Africa (Abutaleb 2022). On 9 September 2023, the AU was formally admitted to the G20 as a full member (Mothata 2023).

The Africa Group, as the largest bloc at the UN, has been an important platform through which African states have co-ordinated their positions and tried to influence decisions on the world body. Africa has created strong relations with the UN, which could be beneficial to advancing the UN's 2018 reform processes and forging stronger multilateral engagement. Ismail (2023) maintains that one of Africa's superpowers, South Africa, has strong relations with China and Russia, particularly as a member of the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS) Plus Six. Moreover, of the 16 UN peacekeeping operations globally, half are in Africa, such as MINUSCA, the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), and the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). However, in June 2023, MINUSMA was forced out of Mali by its new military

guard since the regime change happened there (UN News 2023). The UN Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) (MONUSCO) was similarly asked to leave in September 2023 by DRC president Felix Tshisekedi, after a 20-year failure to rein in the rebel groups primarily operating in the Ituri region (Princewill 2023).

The UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), as well as the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) were established (UNMISS 2023). Oil matters to the US and China business industries in the two Sudans and oil-rich Abyei region; thus, such missions were given an extended mandate under the banner of civilian protection (United Nations 2023). Somalia continues to host the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and the UN Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS), both mandated in 2020. However, these mandates are not primarily focused on addressing the humanitarian needs of Somalians – who face dire conditions, with a child admitted to a hospital every minute (UNICEF 2022). Instead, the extended mandate aims to combat terrorism, particularly to curb the economic expansion of Al-Shabaab and other rebel groups. This effort is crucial for maintaining global economic stability, especially for superpowers whose economic interests are at stake (UN 2023a).

Chapter Hypothesis and Theories

This presentation, therefore, claims that, through a neorealist security convergence critique, Africa's peacekeeping has been infused with mineral and agricultural wealth, whereby superpowers have had as their principal gain and self-interest portrayed a dominant mercantilist approach by which they set the rules of the game (Nagar 2020; Yates 2018). A neo-imperialist critique: superpowers have used the security stage to perpetuate neocolonial domination for their geopolitical parochial interests. Thus, under the banner of peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and post-conflict reconstruction, major parochial economic interests lie at the heart of overt conflicts, which have exacerbated wars in Africa's resource-rich, conflict-ridden states.

A neoclassical economics convergence critique is that Africa's political economy is transformed through imperialist regionalism played out in Africa's economic trade relations, consumed in Africa's regional security architecture. A neorealist security convergence critique is of the coming together of peace and security efforts of powerful state actors largely in Africa. The flip side of the neorealist security convergence critique is strongly forged in a pan-African economic convergence critique. The central argument of this critique is that the scope of trade conducted under AfCFTA, encompassing its 55 member states and nearly universal signatory participation, will foster economic convergence. This is expected to establish the necessary conditions and provide greater leverage for enhancing intra-continental and regional trade. Such convergence efforts will exponentially build socio-economic development toward achieving the ideals of Agenda 2063; such moves will also in turn create greater security gains.

In considering the past and present rules of engagement between the AU and the UN, security has been infused in economic agreements between them in the hope of achieving greater peace and security, and for timeous implementation of UN mandates and resolutions. Given the slow pace of executing peacekeeping mandates, several genocides have occurred in Africa and a tidal wave of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in dire need of humanitarian aid and survival has transpired. The Great Lakes Region witnessed a spate of civil wars and genocides in Rwanda in 1961 (300 000 people died) and again in Rwanda in 1994 (800 000 people died). Burundi experienced recurrent civil wars and deaths: in 1966 (3 000 deaths), 1972 (300 000 deaths), 1988 (150 000 deaths), and between 1993 and 2005 (300 000 deaths). The conflict in Sudan has led to about 300 000 deaths. During these killings, the French, British, US, Russian, and Chinese business monopolies progressed steadily. The UN's Global Peace Charter was fully operationalised in 1945, and African member states became members of this Charter, as they began gaining independence from colonial masters in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Despite the wars, Burundi only received its first UN peacekeeping mission intervention in 2004 for 12 months, with an insignificant brigade size provided for that country. Meanwhile, in the diamond- and coltan-rich DRC, the UN has been involved since 1960 (from three weeks into the country's independence) and have remained involved, in some way or another, with heavy artillery. Therefore, a pan-African economic convergence critique claims that trade can only be enhanced to the extent that Africa's states commit to a continental security and governance architecture. It is within this securitisation and within such incentives that will irrevocably boost trade, improve security, and rout out terrorism and transnational crime, while substantially improving socio-economic human capital development-led growth, particularly for Africa's youth and women.

In further support of these arguments, notably at the centenary of the First World War, UN Secretary-general António Guterres indicated that "it took a second global cataclysm to trigger the multilateral arrangements that exist today" (UN News 2018). Thus, in strengthening multilateralism, further efforts were orchestrated – where 120 countries expressed their commitment to create a more effective global village (UN News 2017). In this light, these countries institutionalised UN reform processes, which began implementation in earnest in 2019 with a major focus on: i) development system reform; ii) management; and iii) peace and security. The secretary-general's Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative serves as a guide to the AU and takes stock of Africa's AU Peace and Security Council, and its AU African Governance Architecture (AGA).

The African Peace and Security Architecture: A Formidable Player in Africa's Peace and Security Efforts

Over the past decades, the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) has grown in leaps and bounds. Evidently, with continuous regional threats of terrorist extremism, Africa's regional brigades are moving toward the forefront in prioritising regional security and creating the G5 Sahel Force. Regardless of its limited

resources, the regional security framework has attempted in every possible way to find the means to intervene in conflict regions and intra-state hostilities when necessary, while nudging the UN to come on board and fulfil its responsibility of maintaining world peace. Moreover, APSA gains further support in the modalities provided in Agenda 2063. Notably, Agenda 2063 enunciates in its Aspiration 4 Goals 1–3 respectively: “a peaceful and secure Africa [actively promoting the silencing of all guns in the continent]”, “a stable and peaceful Africa [that strengthens mechanisms for securing peace and reconciliation at all levels [...]]”, and “a fully functional and operational APSA” (AU n.d.).

In March 2021, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) again urged and stressed the need for burden-sharing, with adequate UN finances timeously executed to achieve real gains in Africa’s security challenges (AU PSC 2021). Africa has thus, through its regional brigades, and through the AU PSC, become a formidable player in executing peace and security in the African continent.² The most important takeaway of this chapter is that the AU should never sit idly watching continental inequalities or waiting on the UN to respond in case of the urgency of passing security resolutions.

The Fisher report culminated in the APSA implementation roadmap of 2011–2013. As noted by AU Commissioner for Peace and Security Ambassador Chergui, APSA is particularly renowned for designing and implementing

conflict early warning systems; strengthened institutions, preventive diplomacy capabilities and the planning and conduct of its peace and security operations (PSOs); set out to operationalise the African Standby Force (ASF) by providing the ASF at [African] Union and regional economic

2 As articulated in the operationalisation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) under the AU Constitutive Act of 2000, Article 13 relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council of 2002, and Article 18, which relates to the Policy Framework on the establishment of the ASF and the Military Staff Committee of 2004, which acts under Articles 4(h) and (j) of the 2002 AU Constitutive Act, to promote, respect and deploy peace support missions and interventions timeously.

communities/regional mechanisms (RECs/RMs) level with the required staff, training and tools to do their work effectively (APSA, 2015:14).

The major goal of these efforts is to make the 40 000 ASF Continental Brigade more visible.

The 2016–2020 APSA Roadmap again sets out key priorities and objectives to be strengthened and reinforced for its RECs/RMs and the AU to implement as guided under the main APSA pillars, which include: 1) the Peace and Security Council; 2) the Panel of the Wise; 3) the ASF; 4) the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS); and 5) the Peace Fund. The 2016–2020 APSA Roadmap also addresses 15 key issues to be implemented and strengthened in their co-ordination efforts among the RECs/RMs, including:

1. the AU's strategic partnerships on peace and security with RECs/RMs, with the UN and the EU;
2. mediation and preventive diplomacy;
3. gender, peace, and security;
4. disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR);
5. security sector reform (SSR);
6. maritime safety and security;
7. counter-terrorism;
8. climate change and security;
9. the AU Border Programme;
10. post-conflict reconstruction and development;
11. the AU Liaison Offices in conflict and post-conflict countries;
12. engagement with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs);
13. donor assistance to APSA;
14. the RECs and RMs' capacity-building needs for the operationalisation of APSA; and
15. the APSA Roadmap.

The P5 members have the power to inculcate a socio-economic development-led model in Africa's peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction mandates and support AU efforts. The P5 member states must use their trade agreements with Africa, and their powerful agricultural and mineral conglomerates operating in Africa's resource-rich, conflict-ridden states, to

benefit Africa's socio-economic underdevelopment much more effectively. Unless this happens, Africa will remain conflict-ridden and socio-economically deprived, regardless of how many trade partnerships are signed and peacekeeping mandates authorised. Deprivation of basic human needs has been exacerbated over 60 years since the African continent achieved independence and has only bred conflict and slow economic growth.

The African Union Redefining its Position of Power: Economics Trumps Security

The AU is in a very strong position today and its work is evident in the creation and reform of its internal institutions and the structures of APSA. It has made progress since 2002, when it evolved from the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). However, the AU must adopt a realist approach for itself and put the continent first. Is the continental body giving away too much? In November 2020, the US, Europe, and Africa created a single Army Service Component Command (ASCC) with 41 000 US soldiers dispatched around the world, including to Africa. The major mission of the ASCC is to provide combat-ready and credible land forces to defeat aggression in Europe and Africa, which builds on a multinational military interoperability and capacity-building approach to fighting terrorism and extremism (Allen 2016).

Somalia is currently engaged in a protracted battle against Al-Shabaab, grappling with persistent security challenges. Meanwhile, key permanent members of the UNSC, including the US, France, and the United Kingdom (UK), are heavily focused on the conflict in Ukraine. Since February 2022, these nations have prioritised raising \$200 billion for Ukraine's humanitarian needs and consistently supplying billions of dollars in weapons to support its war efforts against Russia. Ironically, each minute of the day one child is dying of malnutrition in Somalia and elsewhere in Africa. In October 2023, the US was again at the forefront alongside the UK and France in providing huge military support to Israel in their fight against Hamas in Palestine, and trying to curb any Islamic states, such as Iran and Saudi Arabia, in strengthening the Palestinian position.

The P5 is fighting for, and more concentrated on, dealing with a 'rich man's war'. Ethiopia and the Tigray peoples were at war for several years, while the violent conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) continues to claim the lives of both the civilian population and combatants. Africa has instead joined forces with the creation of a single Army Service Component Command with the US and did so in the absence of a continental force. Under the auspices of the AU, Africa's strong high-level political actors eventually managed to mediate between the conflict parties – the Ethiopian government and the Tigray leaders. This led to the signing of the peace agreement between the Ethiopian government and the people of Tigray in November 2022 (Dahir 2022). But is this enough to hold the peace? These efforts are important, but equally important is Africa's brigade readiness for the implementation of effective post-conflict reconstruction models, and early warning mechanisms that can intervene promptly when necessary and support economic development in conflict-ridden states.

The UN's involvement in Africa has much more to do with economics than security. Since Belgium's footprint in the DRC, Africa at large became a main attraction to the P5, with the UK's mining interests, specifically its Tullow offshore oilfields, and the French uranium exploration multinational company, Areva, leaving Africa's people destitute and impoverished. Africa currently has the most under-developed countries in the world. Africa's conflict zones are also all major agricultural and mineral-resource rich, such as Sudan, South Sudan, Nigeria, Libya, and Angola. Indeed, Algeria's oil has been very strategically important and Abyei has the largest oil field size in Africa at 48 388 square kilometres. According to Shapland (2020), similarly, other resource-rich states include Namibia (diamonds) and Mali (uranium and cotton farms), while the Great Lakes states are rich in 3Ts (Tungsten, Tin, and Tantalum), diamonds, gold, copper, and cobalt (also a critical contribution to Elon Musk's all-electric cars, with cobalt deals signed with UK's Switzerland-based Glencore). Africa has important mineral resources, which have attracted interests from global powers and foreign multinational

corporations. Below is a list of a few African countries with mineral resources:

1. South Africa and Zimbabwe: coal, diamond, gold, platinum, and sugar
2. Somalia: oil, coal, and leather
3. Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire: palm oil, rubber, and cocoa
4. Burundi, Kenya, and Ethiopia: coffee
5. Morocco: fertilizer
6. Western Sahara: phosphoric acid and natural petroleum gas

Most external concessions in agriculture and minerals involve Africa's governments signing huge deals with conglomerates from France, the UK, China, the US, and Russia. However, there has been no trickling down of endogenous economic growth³ into African communities, particularly in Africa's conflict-ridden countries, to meet peace and security efforts and towards socio-economic development and growth as aligned with the AU's Agenda 2063 targets.

Building Human Capital Development Endogenous Economic Growth Models to Defy Human Insecurity

About 160 to 200 million youth are unemployed in Africa. Thus, idleness is moving youth to join rebel groups, as seen with Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, Al-Qaeda, and a surge of drug and human trafficking syndicates, amid a myriad of insecurity issues across the continent. This unemployment has led youth to view terrorist extremism activities as a huge attraction to sustain themselves and their families, including the deployment of child soldiers, among others. Similarly, the Corona-2019 (COVID-19) virus setbacks affected 253 million youth in the African continent, with great losses experienced in learning in 2020, owing to the lack of internet connectivity in the African continent. On the other hand, the AU and the World Bank estimate that by 2050, half of Africa's population will be under 25 years old. The World Bank's 2022 overview of Sub-Saharan Africa also highlights greater

3 See discussion on endogenous economic growth theories by Nagar in her PhD thesis and book volume, *The Politics and Economics of Regional Integration in Africa*, Chapters 1 and 2, 2015/2016.

economic growth potential in 2023 and 2024 – projected at 3.9–4.2% growth rates, respectively. Africa's technology sector is also booming, and technological needs in hardware could double from US\$200 billion in 2019 to US\$400 billion by 2025.

Africa's huge technological gap and value-driven youth model bring hope to the continent with strong opportunities, if correctly harnessed. Currently, the youth represent about 60% of Africa's current population of 1.4 billion people, as noted earlier. They could be upskilled and capacitated to provide an upward growth trajectory for Africa over the next 50 years, thereby significantly reducing their involvement in transnational crime. The AU should not sit idly by and watch this huge youth unemployment bulge in Africa, but view these issues as huge windows of opportunity if harnessed correctly, through creating tighter policy implementation instruments at national and regional levels.

The AU has prioritised investment in youth and has devised critical instruments for its member states such as the AU Roadmap of Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth, the African Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (APAYE) 2019–2023, and the 1 Million by 2021 framework, which are all platforms and critical instruments for governments to implement and tackle youth unemployment and unleash their potential. The AU's Science Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA) 2024 was also established to impact science and technology across critical continental sectors such as agriculture, energy, environment, health, and infrastructure development. Hence, the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR/4.0) era is a huge incentive for Africa, with the major percentage of the continent's youth under the age of 35. While the continent has been categorised as a technologically deprived continent, this provides huge potential to turn the tide around and convert its insecurity to human capital development.

Nevertheless, Africa's resource-rich DRC has remained economically poor and is not able to combat poverty. Africa holds 30% of the world's mineral reserves, 12% of the world's

oil deposits, and 8% of the world's natural gas reserves.⁴ The continent accounts for 90% of global chromium and platinum, and the largest reserves of cobalt, diamonds, and uranium in the world, but lacks the technology to achieve value-additions. In 2021, for example, of the 1.5 billion smartphones sold globally, all of their parts, particularly cobalt, were from Africa. However, the DRC, Africa's major cobalt hub, remains poverty-stricken, with thousands of children used as child slaves in the cobalt mines – instead of being educated in relevant education sectors. It is important to harness the transformative power of digital technology advancements, ushered in by the 4IR. This era introduces a plethora of cutting-edge technologies, including artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and robotics, which are poised to revolutionise this industry (African Intelligence 2022). Where an African country is making gains within the 4IR era is South Africa's strong footing in the automotive industry in producing electric cars and electric busses by its key academic institution, the University of Johannesburg.

The critical components required to build the automotive industry and produce semi-conductors are, notably, gallium (found in trace amounts in zinc ores and bauxite), gallium metal (which is produced when processing bauxite to make aluminium, 80% of which is in China); and germanium (a byproduct of zinc production and from coal fly ash, with Canada, Finland, Russia, and the US being its major producers). Such initiatives in value-added manufacturing must increase throughout the African continent (Harper 2023; Reuters 2023; Naprys 2023). The missing link to creating the requisite socio-economic development models that can create wealth in the continent is digital technology education. In 2019, Africa produced almost a billion tonnes of minerals, with a market value of US\$406 billion, (Al Jazeera 2018).

The African Governance Architecture must work closely with the AfCFTA secretariat and steer Africa's governments away from potential oligopolistic ways of conducting international business. It is important to be reminded that Asia's technocrats created the Asian Miracle while world markets and economies

4 See also <https://www.unep.org/regions/africa/our-work-africa>

plummeted during the 1980s. It is thus right now that we need to fervently act, and together find creative and constructive solutions and leverage the technocrats that the African continent offers to address Africa's centuries-old socio-economic and human capital underdevelopment, building collaborative partnerships to benefit Africa. These matters require solid partnerships with the relevant actors, to preserve the major achievements and strides that the AU's Peace and Security Architecture and AfCFTA is trying to consolidate.

Africa's Major Conflicts and Interventions: Progress and Challenges

The security apparatus of both the AU and the UN is actively engaged across six key African regions, including:

1. the Great Lakes Region, encompassing Burundi, the DRC, and Rwanda;
2. conflict areas along the borders of the Central African Republic (CAR) and Chad within the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS);
3. East Africa, with a focus on Sudan, South Sudan, and Abyei;
4. the Horn of Africa, which includes Somalia and its constituent federal states: Banadir, Galmudug, HirShabelle, Jubaland, Puntland, and South-West;
5. Western Sahara and Morocco; and
6. the Sahel Region, comprising the G5 Sahel countries: Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger.

While conflict persists in these regions, they are notably supported by the UN Security Council, the AU's African Peace and Security Architecture, the Peace Security Council, and the African Governance Architecture. These efforts have also involved peacemaking, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, and post-conflict reconstruction, aligned to socio-economic and humanitarian development-led models supported by the AU's Centre for Post-Conflict Reconstruction Development (CPCRD).

Currently, many African countries continue to experience violent conflicts and political instability. For instance, the Sahel

region continues to face enormous insecurity, institutional governance and economic challenges, and impeding progress in achieving lasting peace and sustainable development. In a September 2019 briefing by UN Deputy Secretary-general and the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group Amina Mohammed, she noted that “solutions to the problems in the Sahel region will only be sustainable when driven by local, national and regional actors, with external partners supporting these efforts” (UNSC 2019).

Therefore, the critical support of the now defunct peacekeeping operation, MINUSMA, required a multinational mechanism to promote local conflict prevention and resolution challenges. It did not do so and was thus booted out by the Malian regime, as earlier mentioned. Further issues in the Sahel region that aggravate of conflict among herder-farmers continue unabated, owing to the threat posed by the rising climate change challenges. Support is thus imminent for the holistic implementation of Sahel’s Climate Resilience and Sustainable Agriculture Pillar, as a key strategy towards achieving sustainable livelihood prospects for the vulnerable populations of the Sahel region, including women, farmers, pastoralists, and fishermen, particularly youth. There are insufficient economic development opportunities to curb the rising tide of migration from Africa to Europe, with millions of our people dying on these seas.

The UN will need more than \$1 billion per mandate to implement these programmes and secure these resources.⁵ Similar consideration must be given to Africa as is provided to Russia and

5 The programme focuses on three key areas: improved food security and nutrition through restoration of degraded land and sustainable management of natural resources in agro-pastoral and fishing systems; efficient and diversified value chains enhancing access to profitable markets for smallholder farmers and vulnerable households; and enhanced resilience of livelihoods through de-risking instruments, disaster risk reduction practices, and integrated food security and nutrition programmes that will make it possible to transform economies positively, improve the living conditions of the population, and give hope to young people. Fully developed initiatives within the Support Plan on the Sahel have been activated in key areas such as governance, energy, sustainable agriculture, and resilience (See, UNSC 2019).

Ukraine's war, and the latest Israel-Palestine (Hamas) war of October 2023. As the UN secretary-general highlighted in 2019 already, implementation of UN reform modalities that guarantee the required equality of peace operations ought to include humanitarian efforts, and are to be considered as the world moves forward to efforts in achieving sustainable development.

A coherent strategy and co-ordination efforts among the UN Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), ECCAS, and the AU could strengthen responses to Boko Haram and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) that remain strongly rooted in this region (United Nations 2019). Moreover, counter-terrorism strategies cannot be tackled through enforcement only, but require a holistic approach to identify drivers and enablers of violent extremism. Thus, hard power must be combined with soft power for sustainable peace in the Sahel region. In this regard, the EU is committed to forging a stronger partnership with Africa, and explicitly defining future modalities of co-operation described in its international co-operation initiative ("Article X"), outlining multilateralism and global governance as its key principle to promote international dialogue, with the UN at its core. The EU seeks effective solutions through partnerships to ensure peace, security, prosperity, and sustainable development for all, and to protect human rights (Immerkamp *et al* 2019:5).

In the G5 Sahel countries, the UNSC welcomed the co-operation of UNOCA with the UNOWAS, ECCAS, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Aside from peacekeeping and other efforts to resolve political crises, as seen in the Sahel region, UNOCA is also attempting to factor in how to develop long-term strategies for CAR's government to respond to climate change, ecological and natural disasters, drought, desertification, land degradation, and food insecurity. Partnerships and a clear division of labour to rally regional support for peace processes in CAR are critical. Thus, close collaboration efforts between UNOCA and the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in CAR could further strengthen the Central African region.

Southern Africa remains poverty-stricken, but houses Angola, which remains Africa's second-largest oil-producing country (after Nigeria). While the oil- and gas-rich Mozambique is infested with terrorism and extremism, the government is side-stepping regional military deployment and eventually agreed to the deployment of the Southern African Development Community Brigade (SADCBRIG). In East Africa, apart from the ongoing violent conflict between the RSF and the SAF, the region could experience peace if socio-economic models are considered in countries like Sudan. At the root of most conflicts in Africa are socio-economic challenges. Thus, there must be a focus on agriculture and water resources and those that move beyond the sole reliance on liquid gold (oil), which the country has an abundance of. South Sudan and Abyei are yet to find common ground in defining the oil fields and similarly enact strong agricultural resource infrastructure for its farming communities, as well as iron out autonomy for the people of Abyei, which has been happening since 2011 when South Sudan became Africa's newest independent country.

The Horn of Africa, notably the Somali federal states, was battled with political power struggles in its 2021 elections, owing to its oil-rich areas amid extreme terrorism, insecurity, and regional instability, with pre- and post-election reality continuing to spike violence. The government's deficits of extreme poverty and lack of development have perpetuated armed violence and extremism. While Western Sahara and Morocco are similarly not able to meet the sustainable development goals (SDGs) target, since these countries are the wealthiest phosphate-rich globally, these regions are not able to address poverty or find peace. Moreover, internally displaced persons have been living in camps for over four decades, with thousands of Sahrawi people living in abject poverty within these camps for over 40 years under atrocious conditions. The economics of UN post-conflict reconstruction efforts of over 60 years in Africa are not bearing the required fruits (Nagar 2022).

Stronger multilateral organisations must be forged to address the illicit exploitation of natural resources. Central Africa received praise from the UNSC in September 2019 specifically for the role of the UNOCA. The UN regional office has been able to

facilitate inclusive political dialogue in non-mission settings such as Cameroon, Chad, Gabon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, and São Tomé and Príncipe, consolidating peace, resolving tensions, and preventing or mitigating political crises (UN 2019a). For missions to work coherently and build sustainable peace and security within a region that provides socio-economic growth, what is required is good co-ordination between national governments, regional organisations, and the UN. They require closer co-ordination, as was the case between UNOCA and the UN Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the DRC, the Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes, and the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-general for Burundi. However, the situation is still very delicate, as UNOCA is still pressed with finding solutions to the humanitarian crises in Cameroon, where the presence of Boko Haram insurgents and deadly clashes between pastoralists and farmers have threatened regional security.

To support Africa's implementation strategies, the AU must lean more heavily on the experience of the EU parliament, which has a well-established Special Committee on Terrorism (TERR), and sharing information and data, countering terrorist financing, and regulating firearms, within AU operational frameworks, (Immerkamp 2019). The EU supports financing for co-operation with third countries through its Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP).⁶

AU's Post-conflict Reconstruction Model

The politics of Africa's governments must tightly match policy rhetoric with policy implementation and follow through. Such efforts will create a greater ability to move Africa's peacebuilding and peacekeeping efforts exponentially forward, such that inculcating a robust post-conflict reconstruction model is

6 EU Policies, "The Fight Against Terrorism" 2019. The European Union has been a strong supporter of the UN and is a major contributor to the UN's budget of 32% in 2017 and regularly, EU member states' contributions represent 30% of the UN budget. Similarly, the EU is increasing its humanitarian aid and crisis response under its EU multiannual financial framework (MFF) budget.

possible. This model must draw on a multilateral approach, which includes harnessing the potential of Africa's critical economic and trade pillar – the AfCFTA Secretariat – and working much more robustly with the UN SDGs' department, the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), UN Women, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), and the relevant local and international business communities (agricultural and mineral resources in both land and oceans, and mining agencies). This is to introduce coherent socio-economic policies specifically for mega conglomerates' roles and responsibilities, operating in Africa's conflict-ridden states and defining such policies within peacekeeping, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction mandates.

There are currently 500 million people globally (including in Africa) living in areas that experience desertification affected by climate change. According to the 2019 report by the UN International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the impact of the rise in global temperatures is linked to increasing pressures on fertile soil, which risks food security for the planet. Based on the World Economic Forum's 2019 global risks report, environmental risks accounted for three of the top five risks (economic vulnerabilities; geopolitical tensions; societal and political strains; environmental fragilities; and technological instabilities) by likelihood, and four by impact, owing to extreme weather and failure of environmental policy implementation (World Economic Forum 2019). The affordability of flood resilience and natural disasters is an increasingly important issue.

There is thus a need for a robust risk financing strategy to fund both investment in adaptation and funds for recovery when climatic disasters occur. Recent cases in point are the DRC's volcanic eruption of Mount Nyiragongo in Goma on 22 May 2021, which killed 30 people and displaced 400 000 more people, and the devastating earthquake in Morocco's Atlas Mountains in September 2023 (World Economic Forum 2019; UN News

2021). Africa had similarly battled to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with Africa's national militaries and police guards, lacking adequate training and implementation strategies to address and deal with the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted an urgency for a more robust multilateral partnership to address health and humanitarian crises through, for example, deploying national military and police guards that are effectively trained for more effective support of national humanitarian aid efforts.

There is also a lack of effective institutional templates to deal with climate challenges at national and regional levels. As noted above, Africa has become a continent under an enormous threat, with increased terrorist extremism, piracy, drug and human trafficking, and money laundering. These threats require well-equipped national and regional police and military forces to combat crime, terrorism, and extremism – which cannot be addressed or subsumed within peacekeeping mandates. It is therefore important for the stakeholders in Africa's peace and security mandates to partner with non-state actors, particularly civil society organisations, for a multidimensional approach to securing the continent and its people.

APSA must divvy its frameworks and involve the AGA more fervently to concentrate on, and work with Europe in, particular areas, such as combatting crime and terrorism, and money laundering. Economic losses of close to US\$1.8 billion in 2018 alone were owing to piracy, particularly off Somalia's coast. The AU PSC's focus and attention must lean much more heavily on peacekeeping and peacebuilding. It is also equally important that international organisations such as the EU's external assistance programme assess how to improve their support for Africa's national military bases in dealing with piracy issues, and particularly in equipping Africa's police force in training and development. This becomes important to effectively deal with human and drug trafficking, as well as bribery and corruption, in Africa's 100 ports, which handle major shipment containers.

Support provided and political dialogues facilitated by UN agencies and the EU between governments, opposition

leaders, and vigilante groups (in some instances) could greatly assist in achieving peaceful pre- and post-election processes. Therefore, there is a need for well-funded initiatives aligned to national governments' National Development Plans (NDPs) supported by the African Union's AGA in their Planning Element and Implementation Model, underpinned by strong endogenous economic growth models. Such models must consider policy approaches that address conglomerates' roles and responsibilities operating in Africa's conflict-ridden states, with the view to address the lack of real opportunity that breeds and feeds despair. Furthermore, it must similarly address respect for upholding human rights, preventing conflicts, addressing fragility, strengthening state institutions and civil society organisations; building durable peace, and promoting sustainable development to tackle issues of poverty, education, and inequality (UN 2015).

African Governance Architecture: Human Capital Development Framework

Also at the heart of Africa's conflicts are resource greed for oil, minerals, and agricultural concessions, with international conglomerates of these powerful P5 governments. These foreign multinational corporations do not have effective and adequate endogenous economic growth models being implemented in the countries in which they operate. Hence, there is simply no adequate socio-economic development model for Africa's people, the majority of whom remain poor and prone to conflict. This is exacerbated owing to the ongoing intra-state in-fighting and inter-state conflict with several spoilers of lawlessness, greed, xenophobia, ethnic cleansing, and terrorism, among others. Indeed, the list is endless— and none of the parties show regard for life.

As geopolitical tensions and competition over scarce resources in Africa intensify, the alignment of shared values and marked differences in interpretation and implementation can fragment the attempt to strengthen policy approaches in advancing the responsiveness of multilateral institutions. Multilateralism can be weakened in several ways, such as

states withdrawing from agreements and their memberships of international institutions or abstaining from participating in block consensus in support of norms and rules. Trade is arguably the most played-out arena in the global world. But one may ask: Why do states co-operate? A win-win solution must replace the current zero-sum approach to global economic engagement. For African countries, particularly the least developed countries (LDCs), producing value-added goods with tangible technological trickle-down effects in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) era is critical. Without reducing reliance on raw material exports and manufactured imports, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and addressing pressing issues like youth unemployment – which fuels vulnerability to violence, conflict, and risky migration – will remain unlikely.

The EU, the UK, and the US exhibit reluctance to embrace African Black populations, implementing stringent immigration laws and policies. The West capitalises on this stance, leveraging it to advocate for increased monetary allocations, burdening their economies, and using it as a pretext for border security. But when Ukrainians entered the UK, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's administration embraced the Whiteness with good humanitarian aid, including housing. There were no barges being built in the UK's harbours, as is the case in 2023 for Black African migrants. Clearly, racism remains deeply entrenched in the world against Africa – it is only Africa's resources that matter, and not its people. Indeed, nothing has changed for centuries. The only way that things could change is if Africa's leaders experience a psychological paradigm shift that shows them that the master/slave mentality is still very much at play in the world. America's Joe Biden, for example, took a U-turn and abandoned his original narrative about migration and in 2023 is in cahoots with the previous Donald Trump administration's thinking and building a wall to keep Mexicans out.

The value that migration brings is enormous in terms of skills, academic degrees, and others, but this does not matter to Germany, which also joined the US and UK bandwagon and staged mass protests in October 2023 against African migration. Africa's governments must now accept the fundamental fact that they are

not wanted by Europe, the UK, and the US. The West only want Africa's minerals, cheap labour, and agricultural resources that matter to the West. Such resources are further aligned to cheap and non-sensical trade policies, which are further sowing division among Africa's states as they compete for these cheap agricultural deals. Africans seem to have forgotten their roots and handed their economic growth and birthrights consciously, through African governments, for a 'bowl of lentil soup' (Nagar 2018).

Concluding Remarks

The chapter concludes by maintaining that the relationship between the West and Africa highlights the fact that the realism of powerful economies trumps economic wealth aligned to schizophrenia, double standards, and a 'spaghetti bowl' of confusion. The continent's issues have been complicated by the outbreak of COVID-19 and its socio-economic implications. Thus, the COVID-19 lockdowns have underscored the pressing need for African economies to accelerate technological innovation, integrating regional technologies with robust research and development to enhance global competitiveness and value addition. This endeavour aims to uplift Africa from poverty, ultimately reducing insecurity by bolstering peace and security efforts.

Despite the continent's resource, mineral, and agricultural wealth sectors, the continent is unable to produce value-driven agricultural and mineral commodities, nor to feed itself. Africa has strongly engaged multilaterally and signed several cheap economic trade agreements with global actors, notably Europe's Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). These agreements were signed with both African states and regions including the SADC-EPA, the Eastern and Southern Africa-EPA, the EU-Cameroon EPA, the EU-Côte d'Ivoire EPA, the EU-Ghana EPA (European Commission n.d.),⁷ the Central Africa EPA, the West Africa-EPA, and the East African Community (EAC)-EPA. Similarly, the US has unilateral trade agreements with many African countries,

7 These agreements do not promote migration governance between Europe and Africa.

such as phosphate (fertiliser) trade with Morocco, as well as trade agreements through the US African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) agreement, which it signed with several African countries, including Kenya, Namibia, and Uganda.

Beijing, on its part, has the China Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), enhanced through its Forum on China-Africa Co-operation (FOCAC) agreement, to boost Africa's special economic zones (FOCAC 2018). Trade partnerships are critical to economic growth, but their implementation should not mean a zero-sum game. This approach is crucial to prevent Africa from remaining at the periphery of peripheral economies and instead enable it to fully participate and thrive within the global economic landscape. These elaborate trade agreements can cause much trade diversion and poverty, and lead to huge insecurity, which may become a threat against peacekeeping and peacebuilding initiatives. Therefore, it cannot run on separate tracks, but APSA must work to forge a strong partnership between its African Governance Architecture and the AfCFTA Secretariat so that Africa's smaller economies can gain from the economic growth (Nagar 2020). Moreover, trade being conducted in conflict-ridden states has to consider how to implement a coherent policy that takes into account the implementation of the UN 2018 reform agenda of addressing peace and security efforts, but also meets the AU Agenda 2063 and Global 2030 SDGs.

These open-ended, multilateral agreements between the AU's 55 member states and the powerful five economies of the P5 member states (Britain, China, France, Russia, and the US) have been riding on the backs of Africa's 1.4 billion people and consciously created economic wealth, prosperity, and security for the economies of these most important global players at the expense of Africa's socio-economic and political development and sustainable development. The prioritisation of Africa's Agenda 2063, being geographic by nature, spanning over 55 countries, and driven through a region-building and regional integration approach, seems lagging behind the first ten-year targets that are stifled by several inhibitions. This backslide is also noted by the recent and ongoing Mo Ibrahim Foundation assessments and reports of Agendas 2063 and 2030, and they ask: Is Africa on

track? Well, it is not. Africa's Gini coefficient levels are relatively high compared to the rest of the world, totalling 193 million of 1.4 billion people as the working poor – earning less than US\$2 a day, with a total of 39% to 46% of people living in abject poverty, the highest in the world, and youth and women are largely affected (Bhorat & Tarp 2016; Rodrik 2018; McMillan & Rodrick 2011; Bhorat & Steenkamp 2018).

As New York's Wall Street Journal writer and financial market analyst Chris Skinner notes:

This is the one thing I believe the digital revolution will deliver: the right for everyone to have the opportunity to have a good life. That will create a better, more peaceful and more sustainable planet, as well as the thoughts of Jack Ma [Alibaba, Chief Executive Officer]. [...] technology is creating a democrati[s]ed planet where a basic right is to have a legal identity and the opportunity to trade, pay and network through the mobile network. That is definitely a better world than any we have seen before" (Skinner 2018).

While all these phenomenal instruments should facilitate an easy metamorphosis into wealth generation, and bring youth out of poverty and insecurity, the African continent remains trapped in abject poverty. The AU must urgently enhance its internal building blocks and become more committed to its people. The AU must invest fewer resources and energy in their quest to reform the UNSC. However, if the organisation wants to pursue the path of UNSC reform, it must be ready to navigate the complex relations of the P5, given the protracted nature of the division among the UNSC members since its creation in 1945. The AU member states must seriously reflect on this and rather focus on trade, economics, and security with the P5 members, important partners such as India and the UAE, and other non-permanent members.

The AU must refrain its member states from hegemonic – regional and inter-state – divisions and rivalry around who is best suited to serve on the two-year stints of non-permanent membership of the UNSC. This is, in my view, a no-brainer, which is only sowing division within the AU. That is why these forums

and additional bodies were created. They were created with neocolonial, neoimperialist, and capitalist agendas, which has been a pattern without any fundamental changes. These forums have only succeeded in wasting vast resources – human capacity and energy – by sowing division among states. This is evident within the G4: Brazil, Germany, Japan, and India, as revealed in Bjarke Zink Winther's⁸ work 'Reforming the UNSC: Increasing Equality in the International Arena'. Hence division between Brazil and its Latin American countries has expanded, while Pakistan does not recognise India as a member of the UNSC. China will continue to use its veto power within the UNSC to deny Japan's quest for membership, given the recent and ongoing geopolitical tensions between the two. Spain and Italy have also opposed Germany's position in the Council. Hence, the real reason for this two-year stint created for non-permanent membership and the intergovernmental negotiations about reform – the Uniting for Consensus (UfC) – are mechanisms designed to create greater divergence and derailment. For the AU, confusion, schizophrenia, and double standards are all at play – with the notions of realism at its best.

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Section Five

Migration Issues and African Borders



Chapter 12

Intra-African Migration and the Prospects for Regional Integration

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Introduction

The African Union (AU) has a four-pronged agenda for continental unity and integration: peace and security, democracy and governance, socio-economic development, and repositioning Africa in the global arena. A major theme that cuts across the four agendas is migration (i.e. human movement). It needs to be emphasised that migration has been part and parcel of human life from time immemorial (Cohen 2019). It cannot be wished away. It is here to stay.

This chapter discusses intra-African migration of Africans with a special focus on the free movement of persons. The principal thesis of the chapter is that, while the free movement of persons is key for the pursuit of Pan-African unity from below, efforts of the AU on this front lag far behind its expansive and progressive normative frameworks. The key normative instrument of the AU in this regard is the 2018 Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment, together with its Implementation Roadmap.

The chapter advances knowledge on migration in general and free movement of persons in particular by arguing that to

open up the continent to its citizens to move freely across the colonially constructed borders, the noble idea of free movement of persons should be pursued with the same vigour with which member states of the AU are pursuing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Although the easiest starting point is the relaxation (and ultimately abolition) of visas, a major catalyst for the free movement of persons is surely the issuance of an African passport to the public, which is bound to accelerate progress toward a common identity and a shared African citizenship.

This chapter reviews the AU's performance with respect to the facilitation of seamless migratory flows by Africans across borders of the continent over the past two decades. Migration is one of the most critical aspects of the socio-economic development of the African continent. However, one of the tragedies of Africa's development story is that some states on the continent perceive (erroneously) migration as a security and health threat, rather than a development imperative. It is this erroneous perception that often drives and undergirds xenophobic and Afro-phobic responses to immigration in some countries, notably South Africa (Matambo 2022).

It is this negative perception of migration by some states that has in turn led to poor political commitment of AU member states towards the idea of free movement of persons. Yet ironically, AU member states have enthusiastically embraced AfCFTA. But AfCFTA and the free movement of persons are inextricably intertwined and bound together such that one may not be achieved satisfactorily without the other. Therefore, this chapter reviews the AU's free movement of persons agenda. This chapter debunks this erroneous conventional wisdom. It is anchored on the ideation that migration is key for Africa's socio-economic development and structural transformation, in part because Africa is a continent of migrants (such as nomadic pastoralists), and because Africans are also by nature a communalist (not individualist) community.

Inclusive of this introduction, the chapter is organised into seven sections. The next section sets out the conceptual and normative frameworks upon which subsequent discussions will

be anchored. Section three articulates the problem statement that informs the analysis of the chapter. Section four explores the significance of the African passport as a key catalyst for the free movement of persons on the continent. Section five discusses the benefits and challenges of the free movement of persons. Section six gazes into the future and explores the prospects of Pan-African unity and integration from below. The seventh and final section winds up the discussion, teases out the main findings, and wraps up the chapter.

Conceptual and Normative Frameworks

Concepts

Migration refers to human movement from one region of a country to another (intra-state migration) or from one country to another (inter-state migration). It may be either permanent (as in the case of a migrant who moves to reside in another region/country) or oscillate between home region/country and another region/country for work purposes. Other related concepts are emigration, immigration, and displacement (Matlosa 2022; Matlosa 2023). This chapter focuses on the inter-state migration of Africans within the African continent.

Emigration is a component of migration, which represents movement out of a given country. It denotes “the act of moving from one’s country of nationality or usual residence to another country so that the country of destination effectively becomes his/her new country of usual residence” (IOM 2019:64). Conversely, immigration refers to a component of migration *into* a given country. This chapter is concerned with both emigration and immigration.

Displacement is a component of migration that is involuntary or forced upon the persons concerned due to circumstances far beyond their control. It denotes “the movement of persons who have been forced to flee or leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of, or to avoid, the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made

disasters” (IOM 2019:55). This aspect of migration is beyond the scope and coverage of this chapter.

Recent and emerging literature also points to climate change forcing people to migrate and this is referred to as environmental migration (Hocheleithner & Exner 2018; AU/IOM 2020). Environmental migration denotes “the movement of persons who, predominantly for reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are forced to leave their places of habitual residence, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move within or outside their country of origin or habitual residence” (IOM 2019:65). As with the displacement component of migration, this chapter does not address migration induced by climate change.

Simply defined, free movement of persons in Africa means unrestricted mobility or migration of African citizens across borders for various reasons, including livelihood needs. The usage of the notion of free movement of persons in this chapter denotes travel of Africans across borders of African countries, primarily for economic, tourist, or study purposes, based on an open visa policy as against a restrictive visa policy. The AU defines free movement of persons as “the right of nationals of a Member State to enter, move freely and reside in another Member State in accordance with the laws of the host Member State and exit the host Member State following the laws and procedures for exiting that Member State” (AU 2018:11).

Norms

While free movement of persons was prevalent during pre-colonial Africa without clear-cut geographic boundaries, it was restricted during the colonial era with the introduction of the advent of the Westphalian nation state and formal borders. However, the idea was reignited by the ideals of Pan-Africanism in the early 20th century (Mathews 2018; Adi 2018). Pan-Africanism denotes a set of ideas and a worldview “expressing the desire for political and psychological liberation and unity of all Africans on the continent or those in the diaspora” (Mathews 2018:15-16).

While there is no precise consensus on the definition of Pan-Africanism, its core principles upon which there is unanimity among activists, policy actors, and the academic community are “the unity, common history and common purpose of the peoples of Africa and the African diaspora and the notion that their destinies are interconnected” (Adi 2018:2).

When celebrating the 50th anniversary of the OAU/AU in 2013 under the appropriate theme ‘Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance’, the AU defined Pan-Africanism as “an ideology and movement that encouraged the solidarity of Africans worldwide. It is based on the belief that unity is vital to economic, social, and political progress and aims to unify and uplift people of African descent. The ideology asserts that the fates of all African peoples and countries are intertwined. At its core, Pan-Africanism is a belief that African peoples both on the continent and in the diaspora share not merely a common history, but a common destiny” (AU 2013:1). The main thrust of this chapter is anchored on the powerful ideation of Pan-Africanism which still influences the AU today. One of the core values of the AU is actually “Think Africa Above All”.

There is a plethora of normative OAU/AU instruments that have informed the evolution of the idea of the free movement of persons in Africa (Matlosa 2023). We will discuss some of these here.

First, the 1963 Charter of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) had as one of its noble goals the promotion of unity and solidarity of African states and the co-ordination of efforts to achieve a better life for Africans in the spirit of Pan-Africanism. Although the OAU Charter did not explicitly refer to the free movement of persons, it is implied by reference to unity, solidarity, and achieving a better life for Africans.

Second, The OAU’s commitment to the free movement of persons became more explicit 18 years after its establishment. In 1981, the OAU adopted the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights. The charter provided for the promotion and protection of the rights of African citizens to leave their countries of origin and reside in other African countries with the rights to return to

their countries of origin. Six years later, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, based in Banjul, The Gambia, was established to oversee the implementation of this charter. Article 12 of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights provides that (a) every individual shall have the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of a state, provided s/he abides by the law, and (b) every individual shall have the right to leave any country including his/her own, and to return to his/her country. This right may only be subject to restrictions provided for by law for the protection of national security, law and order, public health, or morality (OAU 1981:4-5).

Third, the OAU adopted the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation following an international conference held in Arusha, Tanzania which it co-hosted together with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) on 12-16 February 1990, under the theme "Putting the People First". This charter focuses mainly on advancing popular participation and empowering ordinary people in the process of achieving human-centred continental integration and unity. The rationale behind this charter is that the people must be the means and end of development. Development must be driven by the people. Development must benefit the people, especially women and the youth, who constitute most of the continent's total population. The charter was therefore critical of the 1980s' structural adjustment programmes imposed on Africa by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. It, instead, embraced the African Alternative Framework for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation, which was developed by Adebayo Adedeji, then the United Nations (UN) undersecretary-general and executive secretary of UNECA. One of the core elements of popular participation in efforts aimed at Pan-African unity and integration is surely the free movement of persons on the African continent.

Fourth, in 1991, the OAU adopted the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (AEC) – The Abuja Treaty. Article 43 of the Abuja Treaty provides that: (a) member states agree to adopt, individually, at bilateral or regional levels, the necessary measures, in order to achieve progressively the free

movement of persons, and to ensure the enjoyment of the right of residence and the right of establishment by nationals within the community; and (b) for this purpose, member states agree to conclude a protocol on free movement of persons, rights of residence, and rights of establishment (OAU 1991:31).

Fifth, following the transformation of the OAU to the AU, the latter inherited the free movement agenda from the former. Thus, the AU adopted the Minimum Integration Programme (MIP) in 2009. Article 2.1.2, sub-section 93 of the MIP provides for the elaboration and ratification by the regional economic communities (RECs) and member states of protocols on the free movement of persons, and rights of residence and establishment as a priority of the MIP. Sub-section 94 of Article 2.1.2 provides that certain priority actions at the continental level, like visa exemption for Africans holding diplomatic and service passports among RECs, can facilitate the free movement of persons in Africa (AU 2009:31).

Sixth, during the celebrations of the golden jubilee of the OAU/AU in 2013, under the theme “Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance”, AU member states adopted the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration. In that declaration, committing themselves to the African identity and renaissance, African leaders proclaimed their “unflinching belief in our common destiny, our shared values and the affirmation of the African identity; the celebration of unity in diversity and the institution of the African citizenship” (AU 2013:2).

Seventh, it was based on this solemn declaration that Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want¹ was born. As enshrined in

1 Agenda 2063 is the long-term development blueprint of the African Union which was developed between 2013 and 2015 through an inclusive and consultative process culminating with seven aspirations on “The Africa We Want”. These are i). a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development; ii) an integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa’s renaissance; iii) an Africa of good governance, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law; iv) a peaceful and secure Africa; v) an Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics; vi) an Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of its women and youth, and caring for children;

Agenda 2063, the vision of AU is “an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its citizens, representing a dynamic force in the international arena” (AU 2015:1). Aspiration 2 of Agenda 2063 envisions “an integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Africa’s Renaissance” (AU 2015:1). By 2063, Africa shall be: (a) a continent with seamless borders, and management of cross-border resources through dialogue; and (b) a continent where free movement of people, capital, goods and services will result in significant increases in trade and investments among African countries. Towards realising this vision, African leaders have agreed to “introduce an African passport, issued by member states, capitalising on the global migration towards e-passports, and with the abolishment of visa requirements for all African citizens in all African countries by 2018” (AU 2015:4-5). It was in the context of the above vision that African leaders adopted the free movement of persons and the African passport as a flagship project of Agenda 2063.

Eighth, at the 2015 Summit of the AU held in Johannesburg, South Africa, a declaration on migration was adopted, calling for its member states to accelerate the free movement of persons and the development of the African passport. In January 2016, African ministers of foreign affairs met in Mekelle, Ethiopia as part of the implementation of the Johannesburg Declaration on Migration. The ministers recommitted the AU to the free movement of persons, imploring the AU member states to relax visa regimes to allow for the free movement of persons. The ministers urged the AUC to develop the protocol on free movement of persons to be adopted in January 2018.

Ninth, during the AU Summit held in Kigali, Rwanda in July 2016, the AU Assembly adopted a decision on the free movement of persons and the African passport which identified the free movement of persons as a crucial element for deepening continental integration and unity in the spirit of Pan-Africanism, African Renaissance, and the realisation of Agenda 2063. During the same summit, the African Union Passport was issued to various

and vii) Africa as a strong, united, resilient, and influential global player and partner (African Union 2015:1).

leaders in a symbolic gesture of political commitment towards the development, production, and issuance of the African passport.

Tenth, the Protocol to the African Economic Community Relating to the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment was adopted by the African Union policy organs in January 2018. During the development of this protocol, the AUC worked closely with RECs and member states with technical backstopping from the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). Significantly, the protocol was adopted together with a comprehensive implementation roadmap with clear milestones and time frames as its annexure.

The protocol envisages a three-phased process: (a) Phase 1, focusing on the right of entry/exit, with special emphasis on visa relaxation (and ultimately abolition); (b) Phase 2, focusing on the facilitation of the right of residence (the African passport is a major catalyst at this stage); and (c) Phase 3, focusing on the right of establishment (this will solidify common African citizenship, a core pillar of Pan-Africanism). The protocol has been signed by 33 out of 55 AU member states. It requires 15 ratifications for it to come into force. So far, only four AU member states (Rwanda, Niger, Mali, and Sao Tome and Principe) have ratified the protocol. So far, 11 more ratifications are still required, and this does seem like a tall order, judging by the lacklustre political commitment of member states to the free movement of persons in Africa. The fact that only 33 countries have signed this protocol and only four have ratified it shows that a huge gap still exists between declarations and concrete action on the part of African leaders.

Following the adoption of the 2018 free movement protocol, the AUC set out on a broadly inclusive process of consultations aimed at developing the African passport, working in close collaboration with RECs and the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). This process culminated in the development and design of the African passport classified into three categories: the green passport for ordinary citizens, the blue passport for government officials, and the red passport for very important persons and diplomats. So, the African passport was developed and designed by the African Union Commission (AUC) in 2019.

What remains is its production and issuance to African citizens at the national level within the AU member states. This is not merely a technical decision. It is a fundamentally political decision, requiring visionary and transformative leadership that believes in Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance and leadership that “Thinks Africa Above All”.

Problem Statement

Since the establishment of the OAU in 1963 and its transmutation to the AU in 2002, efforts geared towards Pan-African unity have tended to be largely state-led, elite-driven, and market-propelled. This conventional approach that tends to privilege states, elites, and markets in the process of continental integration, is not difficult to understand. This is because individual states and intergovernmental organisations, such as the AU, tend to be reluctant to involve non-state actors such as civil society organisations, the media, and academia until and unless these actors mount pressure for their meaningful inclusion in these processes. This predominantly top-down approach explains, in part, the limited successes towards continental unity and integration in Africa today. One of the policy domains where the OAU/AU’s top-down approaches to integration have not yet delivered palatable fruit is intra-African migratory flows, particularly the realisation of common African citizenship through the free movement of persons.

Available data show that, although the majority of migration by Africans is within Africa, Africans face more severe restrictions (especially acquisition of visas) than other nationalities (especially Europeans, Americans, and Chinese). The major weapon used against African migrants in Africa is the visa. The 2021 AfDB Visa Openness Report paints this alarming picture graphically, noting that “high visa fees and cumbersome application processes are a major deterrent to travel in Africa” (AfDB 2021:11). The statistical depiction of the problem illustrates that (a) the average visa fee for Africans travelling on the continent is USD63; (b) the range of visa fees, depending on the length of stay, is between USD12 and USD250; (c) the average processing time for visa issuance is 72

hours (three days); and (d) the processing time can be up to ten days (AfDB 2021:11).

This trend creates a situation where Africans tend to become foreigners in their continent. They are confronted with a multiplicity of obstacles to moving across borders in Africa as Africans. Stringent visa restrictions are imposed on Africans in Africa, predominantly for security and/or health reasons. The current continental record is such that 25% of countries welcome some or all African travellers visa-free, 24% of countries allow some or all African travellers to obtain a visa on arrival, and most of the countries (51%) require African travellers to obtain a visa before they arrive (AfDB 2021:1).

The onset of terrorism and violent extremism and the outbreak of health epidemics (notably Ebola and COVID-19) have given many African states the ammunition to tighten their borders against fellow Africans. Terrorism has afflicted all five regions of the continent (Central, East, North, Southern, and West Africa) and has, in turn, contributed to the current upsurge of military coups (Akinola 2023), especially in the Sahel belt (Mali, Sudan, Guinea, Burkina Faso, and Niger). Terrorism and militarism are used as an excuse for pushback and lack of political commitment to the free movement of persons in Africa.

The Ebola Virus Disease outbreak of 2016 affected mainly the West African region, most notably Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. While travel restrictions were imposed by some countries, the scale was not as widespread and severe as during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020–2021, which affected the whole African continent and, in the process, negatively impacted the free movement project.

During COVID-19, almost all African countries declared states of emergency, implemented lockdown procedures, and effected border closures as well as the shutdown of seaports and airports, thereby obstructing human movement within and without the concerned countries. In fact, the Free Movement Protocol itself allows for such emergency measures as a temporary, but not a permanent, condition. Article 31(1) of the protocol provides that “state parties may suspend, temporarily,

the implementation of the provisions of the present Protocol in case of grave threats to national security, public order and public health” (AU 2018:42).

Be that as it may, this problem is much deeper than meets the eye. It has a lot more to do with the historical legacies of slavery, imperialism, colonialism, and contemporary globalisation, which have all contributed to the asymmetry of power within the global political economy. The global balance of power is skewed in favour of the Global North (the Western world) while the Global South (the non-Western world) barely survives on the periphery. This situation is problematic because it turns Africans into foreigners in their continent and Westerners have increasingly become the real owners of the continent and its vast resource endowment. This is part of the historical process of how Europe has underdeveloped Africa, (to borrow from a book title by Walter Rodney in 1972) and how Africa has developed Europe (to borrow from the title of a rebuttal book by Nkwazi Kkuzi Mhango in 2018).

New players are also coming into the fray in the form of the Chinese, competing fiercely with the West in the current scramble for Africa’s abundant natural resources. Consequently, Europeans, Americans, and Chinese dominate the ownership of Africa’s expansive natural resources and crisscross the continent with fewer visa restrictions compared to Africans. As the English aphorism goes, when two elephants (in this case, the West and the Chinese) fight, it is the grass (in this case, Africa) that is bound to suffer.

This chapter argues that the free movement of persons project has to be pursued with the same vigour with which the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is being pursued in order to turn this dire situation around for the advancement of lives and livelihoods of ordinary African peoples. This will redefine continental unity and integration away from it being state-led, elite-driven, and market-propelled (top-down integration) towards being society-centred and people-led (bottom-up integration).

The African Passport

The idea of the African passport is traceable to the Conference of Intellectuals of Africa and the Diaspora organised by the AU Commission in October 2004 in Dakar, Senegal. This conference called for the promotion of African citizenship and the development of the African passport. This idea was taken up by the African Union Conference of Ministers of Immigration held in Tripoli, Libya in June 2005. This ministerial conference considered possible options to facilitate free movement for African citizens within the continent. These options included (a) liberalisation or abolition of visa regimes; (b) relaxation of legal frameworks and procedures for the issuance of residence permits in favour of African citizens; (c) initiation of modalities for the introduction of an African passport; and (d) harmonisation of policies and practices regarding deportations and mass expulsions to institute humane implementation procedures consistent with the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights.

Subsequently, the Seventh Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the AU, held in Sirte, Libya in June/July 2005, adopted Decision EX.CL/197(VII) on Free Movement of Persons in Africa, which accepted, in principle, the issuance of an African diplomatic passport. On 25 May 2007, the African Union Diplomatic and Service Passport was launched in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia by the then-president of the Republic of Ghana and chairperson of the AU, John Kuffor. At its Eleventh Ordinary Session held in July 2007 in Accra, Ghana, the Executive Council adopted Ex.CL/Dec.354(XI), in which it noted the symbolic launching of the African Union diplomatic and service passports and further requested the AU Commission to continue consultations with member states on the African Union diplomatic passport.

As highlighted earlier in this chapter, the ideal of free movement and the African passport was rekindled and given a further boost with the adoption of the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration adopted by African leaders in 2013 and the subsequent development of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. This explains, in part, why the Protocol for Free Movement of Persons and the establishment of the African Passport were flagship projects of

Agenda 2063. As indicated earlier in this chapter, during the AU summit held in Kigali, Rwanda in July 2016, the African Union diplomatic passport was issued to African leaders in a symbolic gesture of support for the development of the African passport. The Kigali summit implored member states to ensure issuance of the African passports to their citizens to facilitate the free movement of persons.

The Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment adopted by the African Union summit in January 2018 provides for the development of the African passport. Article 10 of the protocol provides that:

- State parties shall adopt a travel document called “African Passport” and shall work closely with the AU Commission to facilitate the processes towards the issuance of this passport to their citizens;
- The AU Commission shall provide technical support to member states to enable them to produce and issue the African passport to their citizens; and
- The African passport shall be based on international, continental, and national policy provisions and standards and on a continental design and specifications (AU 2018:9).

In order to facilitate the issuance of the African passport to African citizens, the AU Commission has facilitated the development of guidelines for the design, production, and issuance of the African passport, working closely with RECs and member states. During the development of these guidelines, the AUC received considerable technical support from the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). Once completed and adopted by AU policy organs, these guidelines will assist member states in issuing African passports to African citizens as a catalyst for the free movement of persons. With the coming into force of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons and the issuance of the African Passport, a visa-free Africa is likely to be within reach.

The African passport is not merely the precursor to a visa-free Africa, but also a solid foundation towards a borderless Africa.

With such a passport,² which is bound to eliminate the need for all national passports, a common African identity and citizenship will evolve, thereby shattering the myth of a divided Africa balkanised through colonially imposed borders. This will go a long way to cementing Pan-Africanism, integration, and unity from below. Africa will then be widely open to its citizens, and to other migrants from other continents on an even playing field, devoid of racism, xenophobia, and Afrophobia. It is highly possible that the free movement of persons in Africa could considerably reduce the outward migration of Africans to Europe, risking their lives through long and arduous journeys across the Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean Sea. What are the benefits and challenges of the free movement of persons in Africa?

Benefits, Challenges, and Prospects

This section discusses the potential benefits and challenges of free movement of persons sequentially.

Benefits

A recent study undertaken by the IOM identifies the benefits and challenges of free movement of persons in Africa (AU & IOM 2018). Free movement of persons in Africa has a huge potential to facilitate a bottom-up and people-centred Pan-African unity and integration. It will boost intra-African trade, investment, and commerce, and foster intra-African tourism and increase tourism revenue. It will promote Pan-African identity and African citizenship.

It will improve trans-border infrastructure and shared cross-border community development, including a seamless cross-border flow of remittances (Akinola 2022). It will improve cross-border management and shared interstate security arrangements. It will facilitate intra-African knowledge sharing, skills sharing, and cultural exchange, and ease intra-African remittance flows. It will enhance the preservation, promotion, and protection of the fundamental rights of African migrants. It

2 The passport will be issued by AU member states exactly the same way as is the case in ECOWAS and EAC.

will reduce the incentive (push factors) for Africans to migrate outside the continent, curbing brain drain.

Challenges

There is a plethora of challenges that face the AU in its quest for advancing a bottom-up approach to continental integration through the free movement of persons since its inception in 2002. First, rhetorical commitment to the free movement of persons is not matched by practical policy action on the part of AU member states (Hirsch 2021). Of the AU's 55 member states, only 32 have signed the 2018 Protocol on Free Movement of Persons. Of the 32 that have signed, only four have ratified the protocol (Mali, Niger, Rwanda, and Sao Tome and Principe). The AUC's position is that, while the AU has developed these progressive normative frameworks, member states lag behind in terms of their effective implementation.

Second, the AU member states do not seem to appreciate the reality that free trade goes hand in glove with the free movement of persons. These are flip sides of one coin: one may not be achieved without the other. The AU member states seem to give more pride of place to AfCFTA than the free movement of persons. Yet the reality is that there cannot be successful cross-border movement of goods, services, and capital, without a seamless cross-border movement of businesspeople and labour.

Third, the AU relies far too heavily on external resources for the implementation of the free movement of persons. Many of the resources have tended to come from Europe and the United Nations, especially the IOM. While this external support is important and has gone a long way in contributing to the progress outlined above, Africa must mobilise its internal resources to drive the free movement of persons agenda. The external resources from elsewhere should simply supplement Africa's resources. That way, Africa will be able to lead, own, and drive this important agenda, and not play second fiddle to external actors.

Fourth, evidence from studies conducted by the African Development Bank (AfDB 2021; AfDB 2022) points to the reality that bigger and relatively more developed African countries seem

less inclined towards free movement than smaller and relatively less developed countries. This trend is more pronounced in Southern Africa, where South Africa and Angola, as the two biggest economic powers, exhibit less appetite for the free movement of persons. The same is true for Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia in North Africa.

Fifth and finally, a majority of African countries tend to perceive free movement as a security threat, given the prevalence of terrorism and violent extremism. Terrorism has spread exponentially across the continent, leaving no region untouched, the latest being Southern Africa (Cabo Delgado in Mozambique) since 2017. Terrorism is much more entrenched in the Sahel belt stretching from Libya to Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Chad, North-East Nigeria, and Cameroon. The combined effect of the spectre of terrorism and narrow national sovereignty reinforces state security over and above human security, a trend that works against the free movement of persons.

What, then, are the prospects for the realisation of the free movement of persons as an integral part of Pan-Africanism and a core component of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want? It is to this issue that the next section now turns the spotlight.

Prospects

It is not easy to say definitively that the prospects for free movement of persons in Africa are gloomy or bright. Indeed, what exists currently is an admixture of both gloomy and bright prospects. The gloomy picture is presented by three main realities of the present African condition.

First, despite the long history of intergovernmental co-operation through the OAU/AU and RECs, narrow national sovereignty – bordering on national chauvinism – remains a strong norm on the continent and the idea of pooling sovereignty for purposes of continental unity and integration remains a distant mirage. Second, in the current conjecture, where nation states over-invest in security threats posed by terrorism and health threats posed by pandemics (such as Ebola and COVID-19), over-emphasising state security over and above human security,

prospects for free movement of persons look very bleak. Third and finally, challenges of underdevelopment, unemployment, and poverty have tended to turn Africans against one another based on an 'us and them' -inspired divide, fanning the flames of such vices as populism, racism, xenophobia, and Afrophobia – all of which are inimical to the noble AU efforts aimed at realising the dream of free movement of persons in Africa.

However, there is a ray of hope and bright prospects for free movement in Africa. Five conditioning factors are required for this bright prospect. First, the ongoing reform of the AU must include its transformation from being a mere intergovernmental organisation (as is currently the case) into a supranational entity whose power overrides that of its member states. Second, the AU must deliberately allow the RECs to lead on the free movement agenda with both the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the East African Community (EAC) leading the way, while others such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) follow. The rationale here is simple: RECs are highly advanced compared to the AU in terms of their normative frameworks on the free movement of persons and actual policy practice (Matlosa 2023a). It makes perfect sense to ensure effective leadership of ECOWAS and EAC on the free movement of persons agenda. The success of ECOWAS and EAC should be replicated across the other three regions of the African continent. In that way, free movement of persons may be a reality throughout the continent contributing in no small measure to the realisation of the common African citizenship catalysed by the African passport and abolition of visas.

Third, the political elites who control the levers of state power and the corporate elites who control the economy, business, and commerce may not advance the idea of the free movement of persons due largely to the fact that they already enjoy free movement based on their social status and acquisition of diplomatic passports. African citizens (both individually and collectively) must lobby and advocate for the implementation of free movement and the issuance of the African passport.

Free movement of persons will not fall from heaven like manna. It will be a culmination of popular struggles led by the poor masses (workers, peasants, women, youth, social movements, civil society organisations, and faith-based organisations). Women and youth formations are poised to play a critical role in pushing the free movement project forward, not only because they are the most mobile social groups, but also because they constitute the majority of Africa's current population of 1.3 billion. Women comprise more than 50% of Africa's total population, while the youth (age range 18–35) constitute more than 60%.

Fourth, as a vivid demonstration of their political commitment, all 55 member states of the AU must sign, ratify, domesticate, and implement the 2018 Free Movement of Persons Protocol and issue the African passport to Africans on the continent and in the diaspora. In fact, the relatively easiest starting point is the relaxation of the current stringent visa regimes. In this regard, the AfDB makes an important policy recommendation that “simplifying visa applications, reducing fees, and decreasing processing times are important reforms that countries can make to open their borders and ease movement across the continent” (AfDB 2021:11). Only then will it be possible for the free movement idea to move from just an idea to a lived reality that will change the lives and livelihoods of Africans for the better and forever. Only then will Africans feel that they are citizens and not foreigners on their own continent.

Fifth and finally, AU member states should ensure the simultaneous implementation of AfCFTA and the Free Movement of Persons Protocol as they are flip sides of one coin; one cannot be realised fully without the other. So far, African governments exhibit more appetite for AfCFTA and less appetite for the Free Movement of Persons Protocol. Non-state actors have to be mobilised to lobby and advocate for a balanced approach towards free trade and the free movement of persons. Efforts in this direction are already being championed by the AUC based in Addis Ababa and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) based in Lusaka, Zambia, with support from the IOM and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), which should be sustained.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the state of migration in Africa. It found that the AU has a four-pronged agenda for continental unity and integration: peace and security, democracy and governance, socio-economic development, and repositioning Africa in the global arena. A core theme that cuts across the four agendas is migration (i.e. human movement). This means that migration is a strategically important agenda of the AU. The main thrust of this chapter is anchored on the powerful ideation of Pan-Africanism, which still influences the AU today. One of the core values of the AU is actually “Think Africa Above All”.

The chapter has discussed the intra-African migration of Africans with a special focus on the free movement of persons. It has unearthed that while the free movement of persons is key for the pursuit of Pan-African unity from below, efforts of the AU on this front have lagged far behind its expansive and progressive normative frameworks. It has found that while the AU normative instruments on this issue are many and varied, the latest one is the 2018 Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment, together with its implementation roadmap. This normative framework is itself a direct byproduct of the 2015 Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, which is the current development blueprint of the AU.

The chapter has advanced the discourse on migration in general and the free movement of persons in particular. It has discovered the dire need to open up the continent to its citizens to move freely across the colonially constructed borders. In the spirit of Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance, the noble idea of the free movement of persons has to be pursued with the same vigour with which member states of the AU are pursuing AfCFTA. Although the easiest starting point is surely the relaxation of visas, a major catalyst for the free movement of persons is surely the African passport. The African passport is bound to accelerate progress toward a common identity and shared African citizenship (Matlosa 2023b).

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Chapter 13

Africa–EU Migration: Between a Rock and a Hard Place?

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Introduction

Migration is as old as human history. Africa–Europe migration is intricately woven with the timeless thread of contention, asymmetrical relations, and unresolved questions. Dating back to the pre-colonial and colonial dispensations, the movement of people across the two regions occupies a decisive space in Africa–Europe relations. Its historical resonance not only evokes the enduring ties that have bound these regions, but also illuminates the contemporary picture, wherein shared challenges and opportunities assume paramount significance. Migration in contemporary Africa–Europe relations emerges not merely as a vestige of the past, but as a potent catalyst propelling the current and future trajectory of collaboration between Africa and Europe.

This phenomenon, characterised by the fluid movement of individuals, serves as a conduit through which the rich environment of cultural interactions, economic partnerships, and social integration flourishes. It transcends the rigid iron walls of state borders, providing a robust platform for the seamless exchange of knowledge, innovation, and skills. Both African and European stakeholders, cognisant of the inevitability of migration, agree on the imperative to manage this perpetual phenomenon and address any emerging challenges. During the so-called 2015 ‘migration crisis’, over 1 million asylum applications were filed in the 28 European Union (EU) countries, constituting only 0.4% of

the EU population (Barysch 2016). However, the migration crisis has indelibly altered the contours of migration policies within the European Union (EU), instigating a paradigm shift towards the securitisation of migration and the weaponisation of development assistance by European actors.

Apart from causing “a rise in populist and racist discourses” in the EU (Kabata & Jacobs 2023:1223), the so-called crisis transformed migration policy and engendered differing perspectives on migration among policymakers on both sides of the Mediterranean. The diverging perspectives require delicate navigation in the ongoing discourse between Africa and its most important partner – the EU. While the EU actors see migration through the lenses of security and border control, African actors believe that migration is developmentally and mutually beneficial to Europe and Africa. Undoubtedly, the Africa-Europe migration discourse is being manipulated to justify the securitisation of migration. Despite the portrayal of a crisis, African migrants constitute only 12.9% of Europe’s migrant population (Barysch 2016).

Over the past decades, Africa has been bedevilled with governance crises, economic woes, aggressive extraction of mineral resources, destructive effects of climate change, political instability and social disorder, violent conflict, and – more recently – terrorism. Undoubtedly, a profound connection exists between migration and climate change, with Africa bearing the brunt of the impacts of climate change. Climate change constitutes one of the push factors of both internal and international migration, as people at risk seek refuge in more stable and developed regions (IOM 2024). In 2019, data on forceful displacement revealed that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) oversaw 6.35 million African refugees (Bertossi, El Ouassif & Tardis 2021:6). The increasing number of African migrants on European shores calls for a renewed partnership among the two blocs. Despite the consistent engagements between policymakers from both regions on migration, many questions are being generated on the nature, pattern, and reality of Africa-EU migration, including the status of migrants – regular and irregular – in Europe.

Africa-EU migration presents a very complex phenomenon, with a multifaceted range of viewpoints and approaches. These perspectives may differ depending on the individual, group, or country involved. While these standpoints are not mutually exclusive, there are ongoing debates and engagements within African and EU member countries, and between African Union (AU) leadership and EU actors, on how best to manage migration and address its various dimensions. For instance, the migration crisis in the EU in 2015 has elevated migration to a paramount concern for EU leaders. In contrast, African leaders have accorded priority to intra-African migration as a catalyst for continental integration, conceiving Africa-EU migration through the lens of innovation and development (AU 2015:3).

The shrinking regular pathways to the EU and border fortification have harmed African migrants, who are sometimes forced to use the dangerous irregular routes through the Mediterranean Sea and the Sahara Desert. Between January and June 2023, 289 children died while crossing the Mediterranean (Mbiyozo & Maunganidze 2023). African migrants who successfully reach Europe frequently encounter discrimination and are denied access to essential infrastructure in camps as they await processing through the asylum system. The urge for the securitisation of migration should not blur how migrants are being treated and their contribution to societies – both receiving and destination countries. The urgency to harmonise migration policies across the world and safeguard the wellbeing of migrants accounted for the adoption of the United Nations (UN) Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM) in 2018. The attainment of a global development framework (with sustainable development goals – SDGs) and Africa's development and peace blueprint (Agenda 2063), are dependent on the implementation of effective and humanistic international migration protocol, such as the GCM. The EU has persistently overlooked the stipulations of the GCM in its management of migration ties with Africans. This has underscored the imperative to bridge the gap between African and EU perspectives on migration, a crucial step in formalising movement between these two regions following the principles delineated in the GCM.

Notwithstanding the EU's acclaimed adherence to democratic principles, its approach to migration has been characterised as undemocratic. This assertion stems from the regional entity consistently framing migrants through a security-centric lens, emphasising the reinforcement of external borders and the implementation of proactive prevention measures, which encompass deportation and the instrumentalisation of migration. The increasing securitisation of migration in the EU has led to a rise in the exploitation and dehumanisation of migrants, who see their arrival in Europe as a 'do or die' affair. Many of them have fallen prey to human traffickers and other illegal migrant entrepreneurs, assisting them to cross the dangerous Mediterranean Sea, the Sahara, or any other irregular pathways. The categorisation of migration as a socio-economic threat is built on the alleged apprehension that immigration may infringe on public order, leading to a more fortified EU border and turning migrants into "securitised objects" (Zanker *et al* 2019:2). EU countries such as Hungary and Slovenia have generated a 'moral panic' and stereotyped irregular migrants as "criminals and a health risk", and former EU member state, the United Kingdom, has associated migrants with terrorism (Kabata & Jacobs 2023:1224). Africa-EU migration discourses are not driven by evidence-based research, but are informed by emotions, extreme nationalism, myths, and preconceived notions.

Thus, this chapter engages the reality of Africa-EU migration, examines the facts and debunks the myths of Africa-EU migration, and contextualises the Africa-EU migration relationship. It further highlights the divergent perspectives of African and EU actors towards migration and explores the securitisation of migration and weaponisation of Official Development Assistance (ODA). While identifying Africa-EU migration as a source of concern to the EU, the chapter concludes by providing effective suggestions for the promotion of mutually beneficial migration policies in both regions.

Intra-African Migration and the Complicity of African Leaders

Discussions on intra-regional migration and migration within the broader Africa-EU migration narratives consistently highlight the prevalence of migration controls and institutional measures aimed at combatting human trafficking and smuggling (Zanker 2019). Consequently, the leadership of the AU and EU, along with the national elites of both regions, are implicated in what is perceived as an attempt to arbitrarily regulate human movement. This is antithetical to the attainment of the AU's Agenda 2063, which recognises the importance of the free movement of persons within the continent and highlights the link between migration and development. The resources and efforts dedicated to border policies and migration controls could yield more substantial benefits if redirected towards harnessing the opportunities presented by migrants and integrating them into the socio-economic fabric of both sending and receiving countries, including their respective labour forces.

Since the inception of the AU, African regional actors have developed many protocols on migration, including the 2006 Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA), which aimed to strengthen the capacity of national governments and regional organisations on the following migration-related themes: labour mobility, internal migration, irregular migration, forced displacement, the migration–development nexus, inter-state co-operation, human rights issues, migration data management, and co-operation in border management.

The AU adopted the 2006 MPFA in Banjul, in The Gambia. Realising the changes in migration patterns and the emergence of contemporary issues on migration, the AU decided to review the MPFA and include a plan of action. This led to the adoption of the 'Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018–2030)' in 2018. It aims to improve migration governance within Africa through eight major themes: migration governance, labour migration and education, diaspora engagement, border governance, irregular migration, forced displacement, internal migration, and migration and trade (AU 2018). In comparison to

the EU migration policy, the AU's MPFA is inward-looking, but the EU's policy is predominantly outward-looking. The EU has been able to ensure the free movement of citizens of its member states within the bloc, but the AU and its member states have now shown the required commitment to the implementation of its free movement protocol.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Intergovernmental Agency for Development (IGAD) have the most developed common migration policy among the regional economic commissions (RECs). ECOWAS adopted a protocol relating to the free movement of persons, residence and establishment in 1979, while IGAD prides itself on the establishment of an effective regional migration policy framework (RMPF). In 2008 and 2010, IGAD's regional consultative processes (RCPs) on migration held two meetings that served as the foundation for the implementation of the IGAD-RMPF (IGAD 2012:5). The migration policies of both IGAD and ECOWAS are enforceable, but the AU protocol and policy on migration and mobility are not legally binding. This accounts for its inability to ensure member states' compliance with AU initiatives on migration.

Since 2020, seven African countries – Gabon, Niger, Burkina Faso, Sudan, Guinea, Chad, and Mali – have experienced military coups (see Akinola and Makombe 2022). This has heightened insecurity and engendered human rights abuses, fuelling irregular migration to Europe. In South Africa, the resurgence of xenophobic violence against foreigners of African descent over the past decade has claimed lives. The securitisation of migration and institutionalisation of anti-migration sentiments have driven a significant percentage of foreign nationals out of the country. The xenophobic attack in 2008 resulted in over 60 reported deaths and the displacement of about 100 000 people (OHCHR 2022). Institutionalised anti-migration measures, the rise of the anti-migration vigilante group Operation Dudula, and the politicisation and securitisation of migration have rendered the country inhospitable for migrants, especially irregular migrants. Consequently, South Africa – once considered migrant-friendly – is no longer a viable option for many African migrants, both

regular and irregular, prompting them to seek refuge in Europe and other continents.

Xenophobia and racialised anti-migration have also manifested in North Africa. From January to August 2024, Algeria repatriated over 20 000 migrants of various nationalities to its border with Niger (Human Rights Watch 2024:465). The migrants found themselves in Assamakka town, as thousands of them were stranded, lacking access to shelter, healthcare, protection, and basic amenities. The situation was exacerbated by military coups and the closure of borders, further deteriorating the humanitarian conditions for the migrants. Tunisia's president Kais Saied instructed the interior minister to combat irregular migration and save the country from the deliberate attempt by irregular migrants to distort Tunisian identity. He blurted out, "Hordes of illegal immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa are still arriving, with all the violence, crime and unacceptable practices" (Mhaka 2023). The AU must be credited for condemning the anti-migration, anti-Pan-African, and "shocking statement", which appears unusual given that, at the time, the estimated count of Black African migrants in the country, including those lacking proper documentation, stood at just 21 000, within a population of 12 million people (Mhaka 2023).

Though African migrants of Black descent have been experiencing human rights abuse and discrimination in Tunisia over the years, the country's security forces headed the clarion call of President Saied by arresting over 850 Black African foreigners in February 2023, including both regular and irregular migrants as well as students (Human Rights Watch 2024:627). In a similar fashion to the deportation of migrants in Algeria, Tunisia further deported about 2 000 people to its border with Libya and Algeria. The stranded migrants included asylum seekers, pregnant women, and children (Human Rights Watch 2024:627). Hostility against African migrants in some African countries, particularly those who continue to see their countries and leaders as the beacons of Pan-Africanism, is a mockery of African unity and solidarity. It becomes contradictory to expect the leaders of many African countries that have ignored the AU's migration policy and

implemented stern anti-migration laws to demand improved migration governance from the EU and its member states.

Africa-EU Migration: Factualising the False Narratives

Migration has attracted diverse definitions and conceptualisations due to its politicisation and securitisation. Many studies and policymakers have also tried to categorise migration into different forms, including regular and irregular, legal and illegal, voluntary and forced, which makes the concept very problematic, particularly from the standpoint of migrants, whose voices have usually been blurred. In the context of this chapter, it is thus more appropriate to see migration from the global context, as a “movement of a person either across an international border (international migration), or within a state (internal migration) for more than one year irrespective of the causes, voluntary or involuntary, and the means, regular or irregular, used to migrate” (EC n.d.). The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) also defines it as a “movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border (international migration) or within a state (internal migration), encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes” (EC n.d.).

Indeed, conversations around Africa-EU migration do not reflect reality but are constructed in a way to justify the securitisation of migration through political rhetoric and media agenda-setting. Fifty-three percent of African migration is intra-continental and African migrants constitute only 12.9% of the migrant population in Europe. During the so-called migration crisis in 2015, about 1 million applications for asylum were filed in the 28 EU countries, which represented an increase from the 2014 estimate of 600 000 (Barysch 2016). However, applications around this period constituted only 0.4% of the EU population (Barysch 2016). The data on Africa-EU migration have been dominated by EU institutions due to the weakness of African civil society organisations, and the lackadaisical posture of African governments and other global actors, the majority of whom have allegedly been accused of favouring the EU’s approach to

migration issues. This has led to an imbalance in perspectives, with EU-centric viewpoints prevailing.

The rhetoric from EU actors often creates the impression that the entire EU is inundated by migrants from developing countries, especially irregular migrants from Africa. Contrary to this, Africa hosts 25% of the global refugee population, with only 7.2% of African migrants in the EU being refugees. In 2019, out of the 28.7 million global refugee population, Africa hosted 7.3 million refugees and asylum seekers, which constituted 25% of the global population of refugees (IOM/AUC 2020:15). As contained in this IOM/AUC report, Afrobarometer survey conducted in 2018 shows that only 20% of respondents indicated their willingness to migrate from Africa to Europe. Intra-regional migration within Sub-Saharan Africa is estimated at over 70%, and the inclusion of the Maghreb countries and South Africa makes it 53%, while the African migrants in the EU constitute 26% of Africans on the move (Bertossi, El Ouassif & Tardis 2021:2).

Contrary to the conventional narratives that migrants are poor people, many people do not have the resources to travel through either regular or irregular pathways. As revealed by a 2019 UNDP report *Scaling Fences: Voices of Irregular African Migrants to Europe*, 50% of the 1 000 migrants that were interviewed in the study relocated abroad despite having a job and making a living in their home countries. Indeed, “it is not the poorest who emigrate... more development leads to more internal migration (rural flight) and more international migration. African migrants with limited material resources choose to travel short distances” (Bertossi, El Ouassif & Tardis 2021:7). Though this is more applicable to regular migration, studies have also shown that irregular migration from Africa to the EU – via the Sahara or Mediterranean – is quite expensive. As far back as 2005, migrants have had to pay about US\$1 250 from Senegal to the Canary Islands in Europe in a traditional small wooden fishing boat (Kohnert 2007:12).

As of 2021, about 34 million Africans were international migrants, while 104 million Asians, 62 million Europeans and 37 million Latin Americans were living outside their home countries (Bertossi, El Ouassif & Tardis 2021:6). In the West

African sub-region, 90% of human movement is regional and only 10% of migrants move from the region to the Maghreb or Europe. (Bertossi, El Ouassif & Tardis 2021:7). In 2020, only 3% of the African population resided outside their home country, compared to 8.5% of the European population (Mo Ibrahim/Africa Foundation 2022). Africa hosts 82% of African international migrants, and Europe accommodates only 12.7%. Of the total African migrants in the EU, just 7.2% are refugees. In 2022, the EU received 3 million migrant workers through legal pathways, compared to 300 000 arriving through irregular channels (Liboreiro 2023).

Africa-EU Migration: Dangerous Route, High Casualties

The EU's migration control policy – particularly the sealing off and policing of its southern borders and the coastal line between Morocco and Mauritania against irregular migrants – has led to a shift in migration routes to Europe (Kohnert 2007:12). During the first four months of 2022, the restriction of legal routes enforced migration from the East and Horn of Africa, and intensified border security near the eastern Mediterranean Sea (adjacent to the Saudi-Yemen border) resulted in the tragic loss of over 430 lives and injuries to approximately 650 migrants (Frouws & Horwood 2023). These incidents were reportedly attributed to gunfire from Saudi security forces. In a parallel timeframe in 2023, a distressing toll continued, with at least 75 migrants losing their lives due to actions by Saudi officials at the border, and 226 sustaining injuries. In their bid to cross to the EU through irregular routes, migrants have been caught in the crossfire of the Yemen conflicts. “Girls as young as 13 years old have reportedly been raped by Saudi security forces and pushed back across the border into Yemen without their clothes”, while in North Yemen, close to the Saudi border, 10 000 bodies of migrants were found in a cemetery (Frouws & Horwood 2023).

African irregular migrants continue to endure perilous journeys, facing harsh conditions as they attempt to reach the EU through hazardous Mediterranean Sea routes and the Sahara

Desert. Data between 2000 and 2005 recorded that between 65 000 and 80 000 migrants used the Sahara route to reach the EU. During this period, the EU supported Morocco to strengthen its capacity to police its border around the Spanish enclaves of Melilla and Ceuta, and along the Atlantic coast (Kohnert 2007:8). From 2015 to 2022, 13 out of 19 of the EU-funded projects in Niger were directed towards border controls and law enforcement (Grillmeier, Fallon & Haiges 2023). During this time frame, Germany allocated more than €166 million (£142 million) to fund 14 projects related to migration (Grillmeier, Fallon & Haiges 2023). While the Nigerien government responded by ostensibly criminalising irregular migration traversing its territory, the broader investment in border control has not proven efficacious in completely stemming the tide of irregular migration to the EU. This is attributed to the adaptive strategies employed by ‘migration entrepreneurs’, who have ingeniously identified alternative routes, particularly across seas and deserts, thus circumventing the purported deterrent measures.

Between 2014 and 2018, over 6 600 Africans died, mostly from starvation, dehydration, physical abuse, ill health, and lack of access to medical facilities, as they attempted to cross the Sahara Desert toward Europe (Schlein 2018). The Sahara Desert includes the 400 000 square km that incorporates the Ténéré desert, extending from northeastern Niger into western Chad (Grillmeier, Fallon & Haiges 2023). This vast expanse poses significant challenges to search and rescue missions due to its complexity, compounded by the presence of threats from armed bandits, kidnapping networks, and terrorist organisations operating in the Sahel region. Tragically, thousands have lost their lives, with many disappearing in the Mediterranean Sea.

Between January and March 2021, an estimated 4 159 migrants had been intercepted in the Mediterranean Sea by the Libyan coastguard and returned to the neighbouring Maghrebi countries.¹ From January to September 2023, approximately 186 000 people arrived by sea in Italy, Greece, Spain, Cyprus, and

1 See <https://ipatc.joburg/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/ipatc-policy-brief-9-centering-the-voices-of-african-migrants-in-africa-eu-migration.pdf>.

Malta. Within this period, more than 2 500 migrants lost their lives or went missing while attempting the perilous crossing of the Mediterranean Sea (Bowman 2023). Those unable to reach Europe often choose to stay in Northern African countries such as Libya, Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia (Aslan 2022). Some stay voluntarily, others are trapped, and a portion of the migrant community faces slavery, sexual abuse, and unpaid labour.

Since 2014, the Central Mediterranean Sea route, primarily utilised by Africans, witnessed the highest number of dead or missing persons, estimated at 22 746 individuals (Missing Migrants Project 2024). This was followed by the Western Sea path, with 3 712 and the Eastern Mediterranean Sea route, where approximately 2 349 migrants were dead or missing. The table below shows the causes and number of deaths through irregular routes.

Table 13.1: Cause and Number of Deaths Since 2014

	Deaths	Cause of Death
1.	311	vehicle accident/death linked to hazardous transport
2.	263	harsh environmental conditions/lack of adequate shelter, food, water
3.	73	violence
4.	51	accidental death
5.	29	sickness/lack of access to adequate healthcare
6.	26 867	drowning
7.	1 213	mixed or unknown

Source: Missing Migrants Project (2024)

As indicated in the table, most deaths were recorded through drowning, followed by those that were unaccounted for and thereby declared missing. The image below shows the number of dead and missing persons per year. Tragedies unfolding in the vast expanse of the Mediterranean Sea have regrettably become a familiar narrative, permeating an unsettling sense

of normalcy. Embracing a humanistic paradigm in addressing migration challenges, entailing the augmentation of legal avenues for prospective migrants and fortification of rescue endeavours, possesses the potential to significantly mitigate the toll of these regrettable casualties.

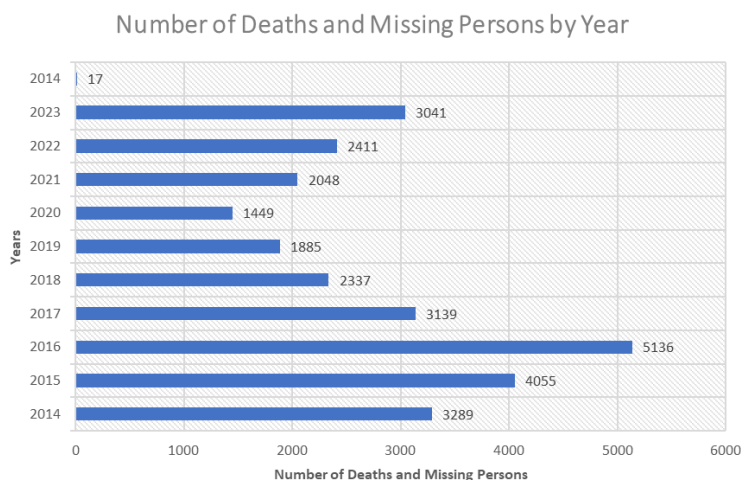


Figure 13.1: Number of Deaths and Missing Persons by Year

Source: *Missing Migrants Project 2024*

The EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) and the inception of the Team Europe Initiatives (TEI) in 2021 were geared towards the provision of financial support to sending and transit countries, with the specific aim of combating irregular migration. Nevertheless, the efficacy of these endeavours is potentially compromised by the absence of a cohesive funding strategy, which is indispensable for addressing the multifaceted challenges necessitating strategic, long-term planning (Bisong 2023). Bisong further maintains that the expeditious *modus operandi* evident in both the EUTF and the extant TEIs has attracted criticism, as it is perceived as predisposed to inadequacy, given that a sustained resolution to the underlying drivers of migration mandates a protracted, integrated, and sustainable approach.

Such intervention remains conspicuously absent from the present initiatives.

The quest to argue for the protection of irregular migrants should not be mistaken for supporting irregular channels, human trafficking, and human smuggling from Africa to the EU. The dire socio-economic reality, political tensions, reckless governance, violent conflict and insecurity, and climate change have displaced people from their homes. In addition to conflict, climate-induced² migration has been one of the major reasons for human displacement and push factors of Africa-EU migration. As noted in the IOM Strategic Plan (2024-2028), “conflict, climate change, environmental degradation and uneven development are driving more displacement and irregular migration, yet we lack the frameworks and resources to adequately protect the many people who have little choice but to migrate to find safety and a livelihood” (IOM 2024:5).

In Northern Nigeria, the escalation of temperatures and unpredictable rainfall has heightened the competition for resources between farmers and herders, precipitating a transformative shift in conventional migratory routes and escalating the tensions underlying intercommunal conflicts. Other African countries also experienced climate-induced displacements. For example, in December 2023, Somalia experienced about 86 000 new internal displacements: 3 000 were caused by conflict or insecurity, 4 000 were because of drought, 77 000 were displaced due to floods, and 2 000 were because of other factors (UNHCR 2024).

The prolonged conflicts in various African countries have triggered extensive human displacements, contributing significantly to the increase in the number of African migrants in the EU. Conflict emerges as a direct root cause of forced displacement, exemplified by the ongoing violent conflict that broke out on 15 April 2023 in Sudan’s capital (Khartoum) between the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and Sudan Armed Forces (SAF),

2 Based on an IOM report, “Climate-induced migration occurs when individuals or communities leave their homes due to the adverse impacts of climate change, such as prolonged drought, flooding or the loss of arable land”.

after an unresolved disagreement between General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan (SAF leader) and the leader of the RSF, Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo. The devastating conflict soon spread across the country. Since the conflict broke out, both factions have consistently employed both small light weapons (SLW) and powerful explosive weapons in densely populated regions, leading to numerous civilian casualties and substantial damage to civilian property and critical infrastructure.

As of September 2023, the United Nations (UN) indicated that the conflict had resulted in at least 9 000 reported fatalities – an estimate likely lower than the actual toll – and forced 5.4 million people to flee, with 4.1 million displaced internally and over 1 million seeking refuge in neighbouring countries (Human Rights Watch 2024:591). Based on the report, over 70% of health facilities in the conflict-affected zones were not functioning, and about 20 million Sudanese required food assistance. The warring factions threatened the lives of political activists and detained many, and about 300 000 fled to Chad, which is one of the transit countries to the EU (Human Rights Watch 2024:591–592). Approximately 5 million people have been displaced from their homes. Of these, 4.4 million are internally displaced, with over 1.1 million seeking refuge outside Sudan (UNHCR 2024), and some opting for irregular routes to Europe. Expectedly, many of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) may later make their way into the EU, as regular or irregular migrants.

The AU recognised that “many who migrate in an irregular manner do so because their countries are affected by armed conflict, political instability and economic decline” (AU 2016:5). Mere recognition does not save lives; concerted commitments by all the migration actors are required to achieve humane, safe, and orderly Africa-EU migration.

Africa-EU Migration Relationship: Motion without Movement

To foster a closer Africa-European partnership, European actors facilitated the Cotonou Agreement that defined the operational modalities of the Africa-European relationship, under the

platform of the African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries. The pact, which replaced the 1975 Lomé Convention, was signed by the European Commission and its member states, and the ACP and its member states, including AU member states. The Cotonou Agreement was constructed upon three foundations: development co-operation, economic and trade co-operation, and political dimension. Article 13(5) the 2000 Cotonou Agreement stipulates the obligations of all the states to “accept the return of and readmission of any of its nationals who are illegally present on the territory of an ACP State, at that State’s request and without further formalities” (EUR-LEX 2000:13).

African and EU actors have consistently reiterated their intentions to engage in migration and mobility within the framework of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy, such as the 4th Africa-EU Summit in Brussels in April 2014. The 2015 Valletta Summit was the first time African and EU political leadership would meet on the vexed migration phenomenon. The meeting attracted about 60 leaders from both parties (Zanker 2019). The EU-Africa Summit in 2014 gave more impetus to migration, as it adopted an action plan (2014-2017) and prioritised six important issues on migration: trafficking in human beings, remittances, diaspora, mobility and labour migration (including intra-African mobility), international protection (including internally displaced persons), and irregular migration (EC 2015).

Due to the so-called 2015 migration crisis, African and EU leaders held the Valletta Summit on migration between 11 and 12 November 2015. The summit aimed at six major migration issues – addressing the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement; enhancing co-operation on legal migration and mobility; reinforcing the protection of migrants and asylum seekers; preventing and fighting irregular migration; migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings; and working more closely to improve co-operation on return, readmission and reintegration.³

3 For more information on the Valletta Summit, see <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-summit/2015/11/11-12/>.

Europe continues to establish migration relationships with Africa on three different levels: continental through the AU, regional via the regional economic communities (such as ECOWAS), and bilateral through direct engagements with specific African countries. These are characterised by financial and logistical support. The EU has been able to enhance its working relationships through different pacts and “policy dialogues with countries along the western migratory route (Rabat Process⁴) and the eastern migratory route (Khartoum Process⁵)” (EC 2015). The AU is actively involved in these processes, which have been characterised by asymmetric relationships.

Between 17 and 18 February 2022, the EU and AU leaders met in Brussels to renew their partnership. The co-operation involved an Africa-Europe investment package of €150 billion, the provision of 450 million vaccine doses to Africa by mid-2022, enhanced peace and security co-operation, an enhanced migration and mobility partnership, and a commitment to multilateralism. The meeting included the following agreement on migration: a) preventing irregular migration, b) enhancing co-operation against smuggling and trafficking in human beings, c) supporting strengthened border management and achieving effective improvements on return, readmission and reintegration, and d) enhancing migration dialogues between the two continents. The sixth EU-AU summit produced a joint statement which reinforced the decision of both organisations and their members to “work in a spirit of joint responsibility and commitment, in full respect of international law and fundamental human rights” (EU 2022). Despite these promises, Africa-EU migration continues to be characterised by human rights abuse, asymmetry of relationships and EU’s hegemony, dehumanisation of migrants and the silencing of their voices, as well as a subtle rejection of the provisions of the GCM.

4 It involves engagements between European countries and African countries from North, West, and Central Africa, including a close partnership with ECOWAS. It facilitated partnerships between Spain, Portugal, Senegal, Mauritania, Cape Verde, Morocco, The Gambia, and Guinea Bissau.

5 It involves partnerships with five African countries: Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Sudan.

On 15 November 2023, the European Union and the Organisation of Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific States (OACPS) – formerly the ACP – signed the Samoa Agreement, which effectively replaced the Cotonou Pact, with a specific focus on migration. The Samoa Agreement has the following six pillars:

1. democracy and human rights;
2. sustainable economic growth and development;
3. climate change;
4. human and social development;
5. peace and security; and
6. migration and mobility.

This agreement is operative at the regional level; nevertheless, the EU and its member countries have also facilitated partnership with individual African states that are key to the externalisation of migration policy. For instance, the Italian prime minister, Giorgia Meloni, invited the leadership of many African and EU countries for a sensitive meeting on how to govern the vexed migration issues (Mbiyozo & Maunganidze 2023). African countries – Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, Mauritania, Niger, and Tunisia – attended the meeting.

Africa–EU Migration Discourse: Divergent Standpoints

Broadly speaking, African perspectives regard migration as a natural and developmental phenomenon that is mutually beneficial to both sending and receiving countries, but EU partners tend to view it through the lens of securitisation and border control. The pivotal moment that elevated migration policy to the forefront of European politics and policymaking was the Syrian refugee crisis in 2015, leading to the securitisation of migration. However, it is essential to recognise that migration from Africa was not the most decisive primary catalyst for the 2015 migration problem and the EU's border control policy. Certainly, in the year 2015, 17% of registered asylum seekers in the EU originated from European nations external to the EU bloc, Norway, and Switzerland. This encompassed a total of 68 000 asylum seekers from Kosovo, 67 000 from Albania, and 21 000

from Ukraine (Pew Research Centre 2016). Notably, these nations had previously contributed migrants during their tenure as part of the former Yugoslavia and the United States of the Soviet Republic – USSR (Pew Research Centre 2016).

Both African and EU policymakers agree on the interlink between migration and development, particularly the need to ensure proper regulation of migration; however, “Europeans see it [development] as an alternative to migration, Africans see it as a major potential for development” (Bertossi, El Ouassif & Tardis 2021:16). Since remittances have been surpassing ODA for the past years, it seems logical to have prioritised the flow of remittances from Africa to the EU, which could have reduced the pressures on the EU for development assistance. However, African leaders seem to have preferred development assistance. Beyond direct financial benefits, development assistance – which encompasses institution building, training, technical support, and policy development for migration-related purposes – creates an incentive for African governments to collaborate with the EU (Zanker *et al* 2019:11). However, a slight divergence exists between African policymakers and their citizens regarding the impact of development assistance on African citizens (see Zanker *et al* 2019:13). While many within the political class may prefer development assistance, a significant portion of which is being siphoned off from public accounts into private pockets through well-organised networks of political corruption, the citizens often derive more tangible benefits from remittances.

Both regional policymakers agreed on the need to foster more partnerships on Africa-EU migration governance, but the parties’ perceptions of migration governance remain at odds. Africans are advocating for the desecuritisation of migration and improvement in the human conditions of migrants in the EU, but the EU actors are keener on controlling or managing migration outside of the borders of the EU member states. African leaders are very enthusiastic about the 2018 Global Compact for Migration, but their European counterparts are not committed to the implementation of the compact. Africans are keener on beneficial migration policies; the EU are very enthusiastic about beneficial trade policies.

Furthermore, the AU actors are more interested in the protection of the human rights of all migrants (irrespective of their status and categorisation) in both transit and destination countries, but the EU leaders are more interested in stopping the boats from reaching the EU. The EU actors are keenly disposed to the deportation and return of irregular migrants, while deportation is unfavourable and unpopular within the African migration discourse. Apart from reducing the number of irregular migrants in the region, European actors see deportation as a potent deterrent to prospective irregular migrants from Africa. From the African standpoint, deportation reduces remittances and puts pressure on the dwindling employment opportunities in the origin countries.

Across Africa, there is also a perception that Europe was partly responsible for Africa's socio-political and economic woes, through the centuries of slavery and decades of colonialism and imperialism. Furthermore, the "EU contributed to Africa's economic misery due to its selfish external trade policy" (Kohnert 2007:8). The EU and its allies are also to be blamed for the imposition of Western-style neoliberal political and economic templates by the Bretton Woods Institutions (International Monetary Fund and World Bank) and other Western donor organisations (Akinola 2021). While internal problems have contributed to Africa's struggles, externally imposed ideologies – such as the structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) – have destabilised African economies and generated immense contradictions that deepened structural violence and engendered armed conflicts (see Akinola 2021).

Thus, a cross-section of Africans sees Africa-EU migration as well justified and legitimate, thereby constituting Europe's 'pay-back cheque' or reparations for the sins of slavery, imperialism, and colonialism. Despite the appealing narrative this holds, African regional actors and national political elites (the external actors) have the responsibility to ensure the safety, security, and development of Africa. Africa has the required resources (both human and material) for the economic and political development of African countries and improvement in the livelihoods and human conditions of its population; however,

there has been a lack of political will to transform these into human capacity development, improvement in the livelihood of poor Africans, and sustainable national economic development.

The importance of migration and the African diaspora community to the AU is reflected in its decision to make them the 'sixth region' of the AU Commission. The African diaspora has shown their willingness to give back to the continent through social and financial capital. Africa received over \$42 billion in remittances in 2020, making up the largest source of net international inflows after foreign direct investment, thereby surpassing ODA. Nigeria stands as the foremost net recipient of remittances in Sub-Saharan Africa. In 2017, the country garnered a substantial sum of US\$22 billion in official remittances, constituting 5.9% of Nigeria's GDP (Zanker *et al* 2019:9).

The AU notes that the contributions of diaspora and migrant communities (i.e. through remittances), both within Africa and beyond its borders, play a crucial role in the development of the continent (AU 2016:6; Akinola 2022). IOM Director General Amy Pope conceived migration as a powerful instrument for development, prosperity, and progress (IOM 2024). Over the past centuries, migration has been "a cornerstone of development, prosperity and progress for many" (IOM 2024:5). The AU acknowledges the significance of remittances as a tool to bolster individuals' resilience against shocks and contribute to poverty eradication (AU 2018). The imperative is underscored by the need to enhance the efficiency of remittance transfer mechanisms and reduce the associated costs. Yet, the AU lacks a comprehensive continental diaspora engagement policy that seamlessly incorporates the diaspora community into national and regional development initiatives. Such a policy should also strive to transform remittances from merely contributing to family wellbeing into powerful instruments for both national and continental development.

There is also a differing perspective on the extension of legal pathways as one of the instruments for reducing irregular migrants in the EU. Initially, the EU leaders considered measures to implement migration-friendly policies, including the

enhancement of legal migration pathways; however, migration issues soon became securitised and instrumentalised by the EU and many of its member states (Mbiyozo & Maunganidze 2023). Though the African stakeholders on migration continue to favour the expansion of legal pathways to the EU, this has been subtly resisted by European policymakers. Between 2010 and 2016, the number of visas issued to African nationals for labour purposes was reduced to 80% (Bertossi, El Ouassif & Tardis 2021).

Efficiently administered pathways for regular migration enhance global value chains and contribute to development financing through remittances and diaspora capital (IOM 2024). The AU is very passionate about the migration–development nexus and agrees on the need to devise proactive strategies, implement sustainable policies, and create the required “environment frameworks that foster Diaspora participation in the development of the continent and their countries of origin” (AU 2018:5).

From Securitisation of Migration to the Weaponisation of ODA

The EU has closely partnered with African RECs to enhance the migration policy of Africa and the EU. For instance, ECOWAS was allocated €24 million from the European Development Fund (EDF) to enhance the effective implementation of the ECOWAS Free Movement of Persons’ Protocol and its Common Approach on Migration (EC 2015). Furthermore, about €5 million was allocated under the Development Co-operation Instrument (DCI)–Migration and Asylum Programme to protect and assist Somali refugees in the Horn of Africa, mainly in Kenya and Djibouti. These forms of assistance were mutually beneficial and positively received in Africa, thereby supporting the assertion that not all financial assistance from the EU to Africa is directed at border control.

While originally the EU’s migration issues were “limited to internal policy, the external aspect of European migration policy is now becoming a central pillar. It has led to the practice of externalisation, that is, a process through which the European

Union outsources a share of the control of its borders beyond its own territory” (D’Humières 2018:1). The European Council confirmed the main objectives of the EU’s migration policy in September 2016 were to “reduce flows of illegal migration and increase return rates” (Tardis 2018). For instance, the EUTF was established in 2015 on the assumption that development assistance can prevent or control migration. The EU has thus popularised the weaponisation of aid and instrumentalisation of migration as a potent instrument of foreign policy and diplomacy, which has endangered Africa’s survival. The AU, most African governments, and RECs are disturbingly attached to the EU for development co-operation and regional security. Several African political elites conceive Africa’s development through the lens of European assistance (Mitzen 2006). Receiving external support is not the main problem; the decisive challenge is the dependence of many African leaders on this foreign assistance, including their acceptance of the negative conditionality attached to such foreign interventions.

For the EU, ODA has become a new conditional aid, premised upon adherence to the EU migration policy and its securitisation initiatives. Connecting the EUTF with weaponisation and the EU’s asymmetric migration relations with Africa, Bertossi, El Ouassif & Tardis (2021:19) maintain that,

The EUTF differs from official development assistance by its intervention logic and mode of governance. It favours project support rather than budget support for states... Since it was founded, the Fund’s Strategic Board, made up of representatives from the European Commission and donor states, has decided to limit its list of priorities to issues of return, migration governance, the EU-Africa Dialogue on Migration, the global response to the refugee situation, and security and stabilisation.

As noted by Zanker *et al* (2019), “the securitised vision of migration” dates back to the 1980s. It was reinforced after the so-called migration crisis in the EU, when over 1 million migrants entered Europe, and further heightened in the last few years, with the devastating effects of COVID-19 and the growing popularity of

right-wing political parties in the region. After the establishment of the EUTF, by September 2016, the EU explicitly outlined the primary goals of its migration policy, emphasising the intent to “reduce flows of illegal migration and increase return rates” (Tardis 2018). Consequently, the EU has been promoting the strategic use of migration as a powerful instrument in foreign policy and diplomacy, characterised by its instrumentalisation of migration and the weaponisation of development assistance. As noted by Mbiyozo and Maunganidze (2023), “leveraging development funding in exchange for migration co-operation has had dire outcomes for Africa. These include supporting Libyan militia and obliterating local economies in Niger without providing alternatives”. The dire economic implication of instrumentalisation in Niger tends to push more people out of the country in search of greener pastures, which will nullify the objectives of the EU’s migration containment policy.

The EU maintains that “migration and mobility have the potential to act as powerful enablers for economic, social and environmental development in low- and middle-income countries of origin and destination” (European Commission 2015). Yet, there are diverse institutional and policy measures to curtail the opportunities that migration presents to Africa and its people through its securitisation of migration and weaponisation of development assistance. Furthermore, European policies on returns, institutional barriers against money transfer, and restrictions in the legal migration channels and labour regulations are antithetical to the development of African economies and their people.

Since the AU and its member states have also presented migration as an important mechanism for economic development (AU 2015), it becomes illogical that African leaders and many countries continue to co-operate with the EU on the implementation of its policies on containment and forceful returns. Undoubtedly, “the EU intends to use a lot of money to get African countries to comply with its migration objectives. Indeed, it is international donors, particularly the EU, that support African governments in implementing their migration strategies. This casts doubt on the sustainability and ownership of migration

policies by African governments” (Bertossi, El Ouassif & Tardis 2021:18). The instrumentalisation of migration and weaponisation of ODA has played an important role in ‘convincing’ African states to support the EU’s securitisation regime.

The EU was less concerned about Saed’s human rights records and compelling cases of poor governance. Indeed, the securitisation of migration engenders “severe costs to democracy, safety and lives” (Mbiyozo & Maunganidze 2023). Both the EU leaders and the UK government have shown no reservations in dealing with African governments like Rwanda and Tunisia, that have been accused of autocracy. Therefore, “to stop migration flows, the EU and its Member States have engaged in bilateral relations with countries whose dominant political values are not aligned with the EU’s proclaimed values of democracy, human rights, freedom, inclusion and participation” (Bisong 2023:45).

The rigid stance of the EU actors on migration and the dehumanisation of its migration policy may harm the consistent relationship between Africa and the EU bloc. The EU is still Africa’s biggest partner. For example, in February 2020, the initiation of the EU-APSA⁶ IV unfolded with a substantial financial pledge of €40.5 million spanning a four-year horizon – 2020–2024 (ECOSOC 2023). This financial commitment was specifically directed towards enhancing the capacity and co-ordination of APSA components, equipping them to adeptly respond to evolving security challenges in Africa. However, the intensified ‘romance’ between Africa and non-Western actors, such as China, Russia, and Saudi Arabia may work against the hegemony of the West in Africa. The recent hostility between France and West African francophone countries, leading to the gradual exit of France from the Sahel, should be a major concern. Furthermore, the low publicity that surrounded the signing of the Samoa Agreement between the EU and OACPS must have jolted the European community.

Moreover, the joint declaration after the 2022 EU-AU summit reflected the aim of the 2000 Cotonou agreement,

6 African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) is the African Union’s framework for peace and security on the continent.

particularly concerning returns. The United Kingdom struck a deal with Rwandan president Paul Kagame in Prime Minister Sunak's promise to "stop the boats" bringing irregular migrants to the country across the English Channel from France, where over 29 000 migrants made the dangerous journey in 2023 (Lawless 2024). When compared with the 42 000 migrants that used the same route in 2022, the UK's border control regime is becoming very effective. Though no migrants have been relocated to Rwanda, the country has received a substantial sum of up to £240 million (\$305 million) through the agreement (Lawless 2024).

President Paul Kagame's asylum arrangement with the UK government, involving the permanent relocation of asylum seekers from Britain to Rwanda, has faced significant criticism in Africa and the UK. Kagame believed he was sincerely attempting to implement both the 2000 Cotonou Agreement and the pact between African leaders and the EU during their meetings, including the 2022 summit. While donor organisations and the West are free to include conditionality in loans and financial assistance to developing countries, it is unthinkable to turn irregular migrants and asylum seekers into 'objects' of conditionality and weaponisation.

However, President Kagame has been one of the few political leaders who have shown concern about the plights of irregular migrants in the transit countries and across the dangerous routes to the EU. He has forged partnerships with the AU, the EU, and other international actors on migration since 2017. Specifically, Rwanda's Kagame has partnered with the AU and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to establish an Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM) for evacuating or rescuing refugees and asylum seekers out of Libya (AU 2024). For whatever reason, including the weaponisation of developmental assistance and instrumentalisation of migration, Kagame has therefore filled the vacuum created by the regional and continental body and their complacency in effectively responding to the plights of Africa-EU migrants.

Conclusion: Towards Improved Africa-EU Migration Relations

The chapter has attempted to respond to Africa-EU migration relations through the lenses of history and current trajectory and to reinforce the strategic importance of migration to Africa-EU relations. The emerging nexus between migration and sustainable development resonates within the overarching frameworks delineated in global and continental developmental blueprints. Thus, the attainment of both Agenda 2063 and SDGs are dependent on the effective management of international migration, particularly their recognition of the imperativeness of creating the enabling environment to ensure the safety of migrants and exploring the opportunities that migration presents to both sending and receiving countries.

Currently, migration remains the most contentious discourse between African and EU policymakers. As noted in this chapter, migration partnerships between the two regions involve both the regional institutions and their member states. For instance, France and Italy have made concerted efforts to curb irregular migration through collaboration with African nations like Tunisia. However, addressing the issue requires expanding legal pathways to Europe and eliminating institutional barriers to visa processing and entry. Furthermore, a policy intervention, supported by the EU, to mitigate the impact of climate change, such as flooding and drought, would be more impactful in reducing migration than the EU's efforts at securitisation and border controls. Thus, apart from requesting aid to assist those displaced by climate change, the AU should seek the support of the EU in reviving the moribund early warning system to detect and prevent some of the risks posed by climate change. For instance, relocating people from a community prone to flooding is more proactive than supporting them after flooding. The EU could also strengthen the AU's Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings and other initiatives to eradicate human smuggling.

The path to improved Africa-EU migration relations requires the following specific recommendations:

1. There must be a shared priority between African and EU actors, backed by transparency and strong political will and commitments.
2. Desecuritisation of migration and deweaponisation of financial and development assistance from the EU to Africa should be a priority. Similarly, African actors should impress on their EU counterparts to abolish the social, national, and religious profiling of migrants at the border posts.
3. The historical asymmetric relation between Africa and the EU must be addressed; this is an important corollary of mutually beneficial migration governance.
4. Africa-EU narratives must be rewritten and its myths debunked through research. Migration policy should be based on research and not emotions or nationalistic extremism.
5. We must resolve the moral dilemma for African actors due to rising anti-migration feelings in Africa. The West has always 'lived by example' through the exportation of political and economic systems (capitalism and democracy), including a push for the liberalisation of African borders for free trade; thus, they should also take the lead in migration humanism.
6. There must be a rethinking of the root causes of the problem, and developmental assistance. ODA is not a well-targeted intervention. An increase in migration-related ODA, like strengthening border security of sending or transit countries, does not necessarily reduce migration. It may lead to a shift to irregular routes, raise in the cost of travels, and encourage the emergence of new networks of human traffickers and smugglers.
7. African elites should be proactive in transferring 'brain drains' to 'brain gains' by leveraging the knowledge, innovation, and resources of African migrants in the EU for the development of Africa. Many should be integrated into the workings and programmes of the AU.
8. All would benefit from the enhancement of the capacity of African civil society organisations, think tanks, and researchers to generate accurate data for migration policy intervention.
9. The voices of African migrants must be integrated into Africa-EU migration relations. The sending, receiving, and

transit countries are all guilty of seeing migrants as ‘objects’, rather than as human beings with families, identities, and aspirations. They are part of the global community, and their fundamental human rights must be protected.

10. Saving the lives of migrants and protecting their fundamental human rights should be the priority of African and EU actors. African actors should also make concerted efforts to sensitise Africans to the perils and dangers associated with using illegal routes to Europe. Agitating for the protection of lives, including those using illegal routes, should not be misinterpreted as condoning and legitimatising illegality.

At the root of the migration conversation are governance and security issues. African leaders have failed to direct Africa to the path of sustainable development, peace, and security. Many of them are so comfortable with the dependency syndrome. Temporary funding from the EU, which appears as a quick fix, is not the most effective intervention for the development of Africa. Rather, combatting structural violence (more effective than peacekeeping missions), institutional building, and investment in human capacity are more sustainable in reducing irregular migration. The optimal strategy for enhancing African security and development lies in an approach that emanates ‘from below’. This entails a commitment to investing in research initiatives and fostering multifaceted platforms for dialogue that encompass states and non-state actors, including the invaluable contributions from think-tank communities and civil society organisations. The discourse surrounding Africa-EU migration ought to be framed as a matter of choice rather than an existential imperative, alleviating the prevailing narrative of migration as a dire and life-threatening necessity for many fleeing Africans.

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Chapter 14

The ‘Unholy Trinity Powers’ in the Malawi–Tanzania Border Dispute: The Shaping of Postcolonial Relations in Southern Africa

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Introduction

After the independence of Malawi and Tanzania in the early 1960s, their relations soured, especially at the state level, following the countries’ laying of claim to Lake Nyasa. Whereas Malawi claimed that its sovereign territory with Tanzania is on the shore of Lake Nyasa in Tanzania (I call it the Eastern shoreline), Tanzania tenaciously recognised a boundary in the middle of Lake Nyasa (I call it the Middle line). Thorny relations between Tanzania and Malawi are attributed to both colonial and postcolonial forces. The influence of the colonial powers on the Malawi–Tanzania border dispute is highlighted by inconsistencies contained in colonial cartography, contradictions in the application of the mandate system in Tanganyika, and the ambiguities in the interpretation of the Anglo–German Agreement of 1 July 1890, which established the boundary between Nyasaland and German East Africa.

At independence, hostile relations between Malawi and Tanzania greatly reflected the difficulties of the postcolonial states to reposition themselves in the new postcolonial border context. This was aggravated by the differing foreign policies, domestic tribulations, and contestations over the interpretation of the boundary within the Organisation of African Unity (OAU)/

African Union (AU) border inheritance doctrine, as well as the environmental dynamic. This followed the suspension of some cabinet ministers in Malawi and the granting of asylum to the ministers by Tanzania and Zambia. The resultant tensions were compounded by the involvement of such ministers, who were labelled 'rebels' in the anti-Banda¹ movements in Tanzania and Zambia. While tensions were evident in the early decades after the attainment of independence, in later periods, especially when all Southern Africans became independent, relations were cordial and repositioned themselves in the new postcolonial context to collectively tackle their pressing socio-economic and political challenges.

The central thesis of the chapter is that the postcolonial border dispute between Malawi and Tanzania and the resultant relations within Southern Africa were largely swayed by the imperial agenda of the White regimes in Southern Africa, and the (re)integration agenda of the Southern African countries in the postcolonial dispensation. The chapter draws its sources from documentary evidence accessed from libraries at the University of Dar es Salaam and the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), private libraries, the AU documentation centre, and oral interviews. The chapter concludes that international relations in modern Southern Africa have been dynamic, and that this dynamism must be understood historically by considering the nature of the relations contested and negotiated during the colonial period, the events that shaped the colonial period, and the postcolonial history of conflict and peace on the shared international frontier and beyond.

Relations between Malawi and Tanzania: Power Politics in Southern Africa, 1964-1975

The preceding section has established a political crisis within the President Banda administration. This crisis led to certain ministers fleeing their country to Tanzania, an act that did not amuse President Hastings Kamuzu Banda. Indeed, Lake Nyasa

1 Hastings Kamuzu Banda was the prime minister and later the first president of Malawi from 1964 to 1994.

was regarded as an infiltration route. The Banda administration saw it necessary to control the lake and hold accountable those considered rebels. In this situation, there is no doubt that the Banda administration accused the neighbouring states of part-plotting the subversion of his administration. Three of his cabinet ministers, namely OE Chirwa (minister for justice), WMK Chiume (foreign minister), and A Bwanausi (minister for development) were dismissed from the government. Three other cabinet ministers, K Chisiza, W Chokani, and HBM Chipembere, resigned in sympathy with their fellow cabinet members. This political crisis witnessed the detention of about 1 200 Malawians (Mayall 1970). In addition, four senior Malawi Congress Party (MCP) members were expelled. Also, President Banda deposed a senior chief at Nkhata Bay, an area bordering Tanzania. It was alleged that all the expelled party members were unpopular and aided Banda's opponents (The Standard 1965; The Sunday Post 1969).² Thus, any hint of succession from any member of the cabinet had led to their unceremonious dismissal from office. Indeed, this characterised the Banda government (Mackenzie 1986).

During this political crisis, Malawi suspected that its neighbours, especially Tanzania and Zambia, had plotted subversion by aiding rebels within the government. Banda's government believed this, partly because the expelled ministers and many other actors sought refuge in Tanzania and Zambia. While in these countries, the dismissed groups allegedly formed opposition movements, which were aimed at assassinating Banda and, ultimately, overthrowing his government. For instance, Dar es Salaam was regarded by the Banda administration as the host of anti-Banda activities. Hence, in 1965, while addressing a political rally at Nkhata Bay, close to Lake Nyasa in Malawi, President Banda claimed that the Malawian rebels were trained in Tanzania in four camps, one of which was allegedly situated in a place close to Dar es Salaam. According to him, the training was meant to overthrow his government.³

2 Several newspaper reports captured the dynamism of the internal conflict.

3 *The Standard*, "Banda Accuses Tanzania", 25 August 1965.

While in Tanzania, the anti-Banda politicians opposed President Banda's claims over some districts, which they considered as baseless. They thus called on their fellow Malawians living in Dar es Salaam to embark on a protest action to force President Banda out of office. Also, the anti-Banda politicians participated in the mass demonstrations organised in Tanzania, which were aimed at denouncing Banda's territorial claims and his support for the Southern African colonial regimes.⁴ This tendency virtually destroyed the relations between Malawi and Tanzania (Mayall 1970).

The Tanzanian government rejected the allegations of supporting the anti-Banda politicians but maintained that it could not deny them refuge.⁵ James Mayall associates the Malawi crisis and the involvement of Tanzania and Malawi in such politics with Malawi's foreign policy towards the White regimes in Southern Africa. Thus, foreign policy differences and domestic crises influenced the border dispute and resultant relations between Malawi and Tanzania, and between Tanzania and the White regimes in Southern Africa.

Likewise, the politics of nationalism divided Malawi and Tanzania, frontline states and the White regimes in Southern Africa. From the 1960s to the 1970s, Malawi and Tanzania differed in terms of their foreign policy towards the racist regimes in Southern Africa. The difference especially concerned the liberation of the former Southern African colonies, including Southern Rhodesia (modern-day Zimbabwe) under Britain, Mozambique under Portugal, and South Africa under the Boers. Whereas Tanzania was among the frontline states in the liberation struggles in Africa in general and in Southern Africa in particular, Malawi had diplomatic relations with the same colonial regimes. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania was the headquarters of the co-ordinating committee of the liberation movements. The Frontline States Group was formed in the 1970s because of the intensity of the Southern African liberation struggle, after consultations

4 Ngurumo, "Wamalawi Wamkana Dr. Banda", 20 September 1968; *Ibid*, "Mhaini Dr. Banda Alaaniwe", 29 September 1968.

5 *Sauti ya Mwafrika*, "Nyerere Akanusha Banda", 18 June 1965.

between Presidents Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia.

After the independence of Mozambique and due to the pending independence of Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), the liberation base was moved from Tanzania to Zambia. Tanzania became the centre for organising liberation movements because of its status as an independent country, and because political parties and liberation movements had been banned in east, central, and southern African states. Thus, many leaders gathered in Tanzania to organise the movements and others formed political parties while in Tanzania. For instance, *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (FRELIMO) was founded in Tanganyika in 1962 (Mpungwe 2016).

Since its inception in 1963, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) now transformed into the African Union (AU) aimed to decolonise Africa (Binaisa 1977). It therefore declared hostility with and dissociated itself from any country under colonialism or ruled by foreign powers, including the South African apartheid government, ruled by the 'Boers'. The OAU's position on Southern Africa had three dimensions, namely: giving material and financial support to the armed struggle, imposing economic sanctions on South Africa, and isolating South Africa politically and culturally (Preiss 1973:2; Igbal 1973:1951). The OAU was of the view that apartheid persisted because of the attitudes of certain states towards the government of South Africa and their continued relations with the Southern African White regimes.⁶ So, a country that related with the White regimes in Southern Africa was an enemy of the frontline states.

However, Malawi objected to it and acted in contravention of the OAU deliberations, in particular the frontline states. Malawi's rejection was because she had diplomatic relations with and benefited politically and economically from the 'Unholy Trinity', that is the White regimes in Southern Africa, Southern Rhodesia, and Portuguese East Africa. The three regimes united to fight

6 OAU, Resolutions Adopted by the First Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Cairo, UAR, 17-21 July 1964". See Resolution. AHG/Res. 6(1).

the frontline states and aided any country that was against the frontline states. They did so because nationalism threatened their colonial hegemony in Southern Africa. Thus, they used Malawi as a base to 'punish' their enemies, including Tanzania and Zambia. Malawi's objection was attested by its leader, President Banda, at the Summit Conference in Cairo, where he said,

While I feel strongly against Imperialism and Colonialism in any form; while I am just as anxious as anyone in this conference to help our brothers and sisters still under colonial rule in neighbouring territories, Malawi's power, my own power, to help is limited and circumscribed by geographical position... I want to make it quite clear here at this conference that the geographical position of Malawi makes it impossible for me and my country to sever all ties, diplomatic economic and cultural, with a certain power [Portugal] now still controlling great portions of our continent. I cannot promise here that I and my country will be in a position to carry out to the letter any resolution which demands total severance of all relations, diplomatic, economic, and cultural, with that power.⁷

As intimated by President Banda's statement, Malawi's denial of support for the liberation struggle was a result of two things: economic imperatives and moral issues. Malawi was, and still is, a landlocked country; thus, the country sought access to the sea through South Africa and Portuguese East Africa. Additionally, it aimed to employ its citizens, many of whom had previously worked in South Africa's industry, commerce, and households. For these economic factors, the Malawian Ministry of Labour had called on able-bodied Malawians to contact their district labour officers for possible employment in South Africa. The ministry believed in South Africa's capacity to employ them due to its expansive labour opportunity.⁸ In respect of the moral issue, President Banda believed that violence demonstrated the inability

7 GL Binaisa, pp. 59 (copied in Proceedings of the Summit Conference of Independent African States, Vol. 1, sec. 2, Addis Ababa, May 1963, pp. 140-141).

8 *The Nationalist*, "Malawians for South Africa", 28 June 1969.

to effectively address the liberation struggle. Instead, he pursued a more nuanced approach, emphasising dialogue and engagement. Banda believed that, through contact with colonial powers, their perspectives on the colonisation of Black Africa could be altered.

Countless pieces of evidence indicate that Malawi's open intention to support the White regimes in Southern Africa was an attempt to build relations with them from 1964. In 1966, Malawi chose to remain in the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) as South African Foreign Minister Hilgard Muller addressed the assembly, while other African countries withdrew from the assembly. Malawi, too, objected to Afro-Asian attempts to wrest the Western part of Southern Africa from South Africa. In 1967, Malawian delegates visited South Africa and established diplomatic relations with the country.

Later, South African Prime Minister Vorster visited Malawi to strengthen the diplomatic relations. In 1971, President Banda visited South Africa and Mozambique, as the first African head of state to do so for diplomatic reasons. Malawi opened up its airport to the South African Air Force and admitted a military attaché from the country (Preiss 1973:4; Robinson 2009:4). In 1969, Malawi did not vote for the Lusaka Manifesto (the Fifth East and Central African Conference held in Lusaka, Zambia), which opposed the apartheid regime in South Africa. Also, President Banda did not attend the inter-African conferences, while his representatives who did so had no plenipotentiary powers.⁹

Similarly, Malawi did not attend the 1972 Rabat Summit, which called upon all independent African states bordering colonies to allow liberation movements to install military bases in their territories to help increase the number of liberation activities (Igbal 1973). While the Malawian government built relations with the Southern African White regimes, the frontline states did not engage in any diplomatic relations with the White regimes. They also mobilised other African countries to isolate the regime. For instance, African countries boycotted the 1975 Montreal Olympics. They adopted the 1977 Gleneagles Agreement, which sought to

9 *Mfanyakazi*, “*Malawi Yampendelea Kaburu*”, 18 May 1968.

isolate apartheid South Africa from participating in sports across the world (Mpungwe 2016).

Banda's foreign policy towards the White regimes in Southern Africa was partly a result of his support of capitalism. On many occasions, he opposed Tanzanian Julius Nyerere's socialist and Zambian Kenneth Kaunda's humanist philosophies. For him, these two philosophies had been tried out elsewhere and had never worked. To him, socialism was an 'economic and political suicide'.¹⁰ Because he supported capitalism, his critics often called him a defender of imperialism and fascism.¹¹

The relations between Malawi and the 'Unholy Trinity' had very significant effects on the frontline states (Tanzania and Zambia) that were close or directly opposed to the White regimes in Southern Africa. For instance, South Africa developed hostile relations with Tanzania and Zambia, where the guerrillas who fought against South Africa were trained. However, South Africa feared communist penetration in Africa, especially following the construction of the Tanzania-Zambia Railway by China (Preiss 1973). As a result, Malawi was not only isolated from the rest of Africa but also had sour relations with some neighbouring countries, especially Tanzania – relations that ultimately resulted in the border dispute between the two nation states.

The dispute over the Lake Nyasa frontier was provoked by the different policies endorsed by the two states (Mayall 1973). It is important to note here that the boundary was bitterly contested because Malawi and its allies wanted to control the activities of the freedom fighters and threaten Tanzania.

At this time, the relations between Tanzania and South Africa became very sour. For instance, in 1967, more than 40 Tanzanians were repatriated from South Africa and received by Minister for Home Affairs Oscar Kambona when they arrived

10 Often Banda said he was against socialism but pro capitalism. Countless pieces of evidence show this. See, for instance, *The Nationalist*, "I believe in Capitalism – Banda", 17 May 1968.

11 Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Banda was referred to by many African heads of state as a defender of imperialism because of his relations with the White South. See, for instance, *The Nationalist*, "Malawi Expels Tanzanians", 12 February 1969.

at the port in Dar es Salaam through a Kampala ship.¹² It is thus felt that Malawi and its allies were involved in the border dispute to control the liberation movements. In response, Tanzania initiated the dispute to stop Malawi and her allies from attacking the country, using the lake as a gateway in the fight against the colonialists. This indicates that the politics of both states, which led to the border dispute, were navigated within the foreign policy domain. This is because national leaders operate in the nexus of international and national politics. In doing so, they present their arguments within the context of domestic politics and remain concerned about international politics, how international affairs affect their supporters at home (Kim 2014).

As shown earlier, Malawi had diplomatic relations with the White Southern African regimes that threatened to destabilise Tanzania. Throughout this period, the border tensions were also stirred by Malawi's allies in the conflict. The allies were the governments of Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), the South African Boer regime, and the government of Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique). These governments had diplomatic ties with Malawi.¹³ Tanzania regarded Malawi as an enemy that was used by the colonialists against the frontline states in the struggle to liberate Southern Africa. It was in that context that the relations of these neighbours deteriorated shortly after independence.

Government officials and ordinary people in Tanzania believed that the border dispute had nothing to do with the two countries, but the quest for hegemony in Southern Africa, where a majority of the countries were ruled by a government with an imperial agenda. There was compelling evidence of the involvement of the White regimes in this border dispute. For instance, the Lake Nyasa people in Tanzania used songs to express their views in times of peace and conflict. During the period of active border tensions which involved White actors, there was a popular song:

12 Tanzania National Archives, Dar es Salaam, *Information General*, p. 9.

13 See Ngurumo, "Tanzania Itajibu Matendo, Siyo Majibu ya Banda-J. K. Nyerere", 14 September 1968; Mfanyakazi, "Banda na Vijibwa Vyake Hawawezi Kuchukua Tanzania. Kama Wanaume Wajaribu", 28 September 1968.

*Mnjangalia Banda wa ku-Malawi, adai ndema witu tenga, akotiki va Msumbiji na Makaburu va Kusini kutola ndema witu kwa makakala. Sinda sinda lelo kanandumbwe kandu kawoneka palochi, ku-Luhoho kandu kawoneka, ku-Mbaha kandu kawoneka, ku-Liwole kandu kawoneka.*¹⁴

The song loosely translates thus:

Watch Banda of Malawi, he has staked a claim to our country. He has sought the help of his Mozambican and South African Boer allies to snatch our country by force. Behold, behold, there is a thing seen in the waters, it is seen in Luhuhu, it is seen in Mbaha, it is also seen in Liuli.

The song was intended to call the government's attention to what they perceived as an imminent attack by certain Malawian warships and those of their allies. Through this song, a message was conveyed to the government to protect and support them. This song was metaphoric. It meant that a small country that had just gotten her independence threatened a neighbouring country through the deployment of marine vehicles in Lake Nyasa.

In another move, in September 1968, Banda extended his irredentist claims to Zambia. He repeatedly maintained that at least four districts in the Eastern Province of Zambia belonged to Malawi. In response, the President of Zambia Kenneth Kaunda, said in September 1968 that:

Let him go ahead and declare war on Zambia. Let him come. We are ready. Dr. Banda can bring in South African and Portuguese troops. But if they get in they won't get out. They will perish in Zambia. Banda is 'stooge and megaphone' [sic] of his master.¹⁵

14 Such songs and similar ones were widespread in Tanzania's Lake Nyasa region during this time of active border dispute.

15 There is a wide range of chronological events of rival and cordial relations between Malawi and Zambia. See *Sunday Nation*, "Zambia and Malawi: Healing the Breach", 20 September 1970.

The irredentist claims were recurrent and widespread throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Following such declarations of irredentism, two Zambian officials cancelled their official visit to Malawi.¹⁶ This indicates the knotty relations between the two countries.

The border issue continued to stir discontent among ordinary citizens, with voices of disagreement echoing from both Malawi and Tanzania. People in various regions of both countries engaged in heated verbal disputes over the matter. Verbal threats, mass demonstrations, and claims denouncing speeches characterised the socio-political environment of both countries.¹⁷ Regions such as Dar es Salaam, Moshi, Tanga, Mwanza, Arusha, Iringa, Mbeya, and Ruvuma in Tanzania participated actively in denouncing Malawi's claims. Most of the demonstrations were led by the Tanganyika National Union (TANU), which was the only political party in Tanzania at the time. Other demonstrations were organised by the sole trade union in Tanganyika, the National Union of Tanganyika Workers (NUTA), the Tanganyika Youth League (TYL), and the Union of Tanzania's Women, locally called *Umoja wa Wanawake Tanzania* (UWT). The NUTA General Meeting of 20 September 1968 discussed the matter and agreed on measures to be taken, including an agreement to draft a very strong report to denounce Banda's claims. Second, they agreed that workers' demonstrations against Malawi's border claims be staged in the whole country, at NUTA's headquarters as well as in regional and district offices. In Dar es Salaam, more than 20 000 workers and farmers demonstrated on the main road against what they called President Banda's wrong territorial claims.¹⁸ The police, army, musical bands, and thousands of civilians participated in the demonstrations on 25 September 1968, which had earlier been declared a country-wide demonstration day.

The deterioration of the relations was aggravated by bitter verbal exchanges between Presidents Banda and Nyerere at the

16 Ngurumo, "*Hakuna Urafiki na Malawi*", 28 September 1968; *Sunday Nation*, "Smith Visits South Africa", 12 July 1970.

17 See Ngurumo, "*Tanzania Itajibu Matendo – Siyo Majibu ya Banda*", Saturday 14 September 1968.

18 *Mfanyakazi*, "*Banda na Vijibwa Vyake Hawawezi Kuchukua Tanzania. Kama Wanaume Wajaribu-Simba wa Vita (Kawawa)*", 28 September 1968.

time. The aggressive name-calling made it impossible for Blantyre and Dar es Salaam to normalise relations, as the presidents were at the centre of the dispute. In another important meeting held at Malangali village, Iringa, President Nyerere stressed that not an inch of the land belonged to Malawi. He also argued that giving the territory to Malawi meant giving it to the White settlers of South Africa.¹⁹

Che-Mponda (1972) argues that at the time of name-calling, there was a definite breakdown in direct communication between the two leaders. Name-calling did not merely mean the exchange of insults between the two leaders, but the heightening of bitter interpersonal political hatred between them. This ultimately deterred relations between them and consolidated the tensions. Ironically, journalists were the only carriers of information from one country to another. As intimated earlier, the OAU's major role at this time was to ensure that all colonies in Africa were liberated through the provision of moral, financial, military, and economic counsel and intervention. Indeed, the crisis in question had compounded the very role the OAU and frontline states bore at their disposal. It is in this context that the OAU, due to ideological and foreign policy differences among its member states towards the White South, created a division between those who supported liberation through violent means on the one hand, and those who opted for adaptation on the other hand. The two lines were hard to reconcile and tensions between them were the order of the day.

Between 1964 and 1975, newspapers reported pronouncements by statesmen that showed the hostility and anxiety of the two nations. Certainly, this period witnessed the division rather than the cohesion of relations between Malawi and Tanzania and also in the southern African region. Due to the hostility that manifested itself in verbal and military threats,

19 While countering Banda's territorial claims, often Tanzania alleged that Banda was used by the White South regime which allegedly controlled Malawi and used it to fight the anti-colonial movements. As a result, no territorial area could be given or negotiated at this time, as giving any piece of land to Malawi was regarded as giving it to the enemy – the colonialists. See, for instance, *The Nationalist*, "Not an Inch of Land for Banda – Nyerere", 9 October 1968.

it became clear that the Lake Nyasa area was not peaceful. Ultimately, this slowed down the already inadequate socio-political and economic developments in both countries (Msafiri 2011). In Tanzania, a lot of people fled the Lake Nyasa area to other parts of the country. The presence of many combatants with ammunition in the area terrified the local people. Meanwhile, important centres of commerce that had developed during the colonial period collapsed. Liuli, Mbamba Bay, Manda, and Mwaya, for example, collapsed, while Mbinga and Songea became famous trading centres because the border tensions did not affect them (Mihanjo 1999).

Because of the active border dispute, there were limited cross-border movements, and so human interactions were virtually impossible. This shows the link between border disputes and regional integration initiatives. Indeed, people-to-people interactions and demilitarisation of African societies are germane to the attainment of Agenda 2063. During the border dispute, the Malawian government recruited a youth paramilitary group called the Malawi Young Pioneers (MYP), and stationed it along the border, especially in the Karonga district in Malawi, which borders the Kyela district in Tanzania. The MYP was also referred to as Banda's private army because of their loyalty to him. Its primary function was to maintain Banda's grip on power (Mackenzie 1986). They guarded the border and harassed people, especially those from Tanzania, thereby aggravating the tension at the border and preventing interstate movement between Tanzania and Malawi.

The Tanzanian government also prepared itself by enlisting some youth and able-bodied adults and turning them into militias to defend the border areas. Also, the government built military preparedness in expectation of President Banda's army. This was made explicit when the second vice-president and the minister for defence, Rashid Mfaume Kawawa, delivered a speech to the National Service Army at Mgulani barracks, Dar es Salaam.²⁰ Similarly, the road infrastructure in the region was improved

20 See, for instance, Ngurumo, "Banda na Atie Mguu Tanzania-Kawawa", 26 September 1968; *Ibid*, "Santuri ya Wabeberu ni Dr. Banda", 12 October 1968.

and military trucks and combatants were supplied to the Lake Nyasa region. The government spent about 1.5 million pounds on infrastructural development, including road upgrades and improvement in the transport and communication networks in the border region. In another development, the government offered military and political education to the villagers living along the shores of the lake.

The two governments' actions presented above sparked some exchanges of fire. In Tanzania, military displays caused psychological disturbances and internal displacement of people to the mountainous areas, where they took refuge. In short, they caused general unrest among the communities in the border region. Also, people dug bunkers in which to hide. One event that illustrates the tensions was witnessed at Manda in 1968. There was a graduation ceremony at St Thomas Middle School, Manda. Suddenly a submarine ship emerged from the lake and bombarded the area, leading to the paralysis of the ceremony, making it a struggle for parents to rescue their children. This was a very shocking event.²¹

The people expressed their frustration, anxiety, resentment, and disillusionment at the border tensions. The local people perceived the conflicts stirred by the states' ambitions to safeguard and enlarge their territories as factors that disconnected them from their peaceful interactions with their kin across the border (the lake). These tensions, initiated by the states, seemed irrelevant to the local communities, who felt estranged from their long-standing harmonious relationships. The reaction of the local people was expressed through letters and songs by organised traditional bands. One such letter, written to the editor of *The Nationalist* newspaper reads:

You very well know that both our countries are in a delicate period, that of development. We are concentrating all our efforts to get our people better housing, better education, better hospital facilities, better and high standard of living.

21 There are widespread tales, stories, memories, and songs describing this event in the communities that surrounded the respective school and communities in Lake Nyasa, in Tanzania.

I doubt if you have accomplished all these in your country!
Now that you are bringing in the unthinkable: war. All that
we have achieved will be destroyed.²²

Evidence also shows that the people of Katumbasongwe, Kasumulu, and Ikolo in the Kyela district, who crossed the border on foot, could hardly attend social events such as funerals, marriages, and initiation ceremonies in their friends' and relatives' villages in Malawi, as they were afraid of being harassed and, perhaps, imprisoned by the paramilitary Young Pioneers. At this time, such soured relations were neither intervened by the OAU nor did any international organisation come into play for mediation. Relations were largely shaped by interstate imperatives. When some people met the paramilitary group while trying to cross the border, the latter asked, "*wachokela kuti?*" This means, "Where are you from?". If one said he or she came from the Tanzanian side of the border, the person would be severely punished or imprisoned.

Several road blockades were set up by the paramilitary group, which controlled and blocked the movement of people, especially the movement of those from Tanzania. The actions of the group indicate that cross-border relations during this time were influenced by an instituted instrument of force. Indeed, both countries had a role to play in heightening this dispute, especially when diplomacy did little to settle the dispute. While there were road blockades at many entry points of the border on the Malawian side, equally Tanzania built infrastructure to prepare itself should war break out. Yet, both countries engaged in the display of firearms and shootings, but such actions did not escalate to a full-blown war.

In grappling with security threats, the Tanzanian authorities prohibited their citizens from crossing the border. For instance, the Mbeya regional commissioner ordered the people living in the Lake Nyasa area not to cross the border into Malawi, and not to attack the Malawians who were crossing the border into Tanzania. He, therefore, called for the maintenance

22 *The Nationalist*, "Open Letter to Dr. Banda", 4 October 1968.

of harmonious relations with Malawians, including those visiting Tanzania to greet their relatives; however, they had an obligation to report to the authorities in the Kyela district those with bad intentions.²³ It is important to note that, while the relations at the state level had soured, people living at the borders continued to enjoy cordial relationships. This is a lesson to African political elites and regional actors. The state and its apparatus had deviated from its original purpose of aligning itself to the interest of its subjects.

The cross-border relations were worsened by Malawi's decision to stop the Ilala ship from providing transport services from Malawi to Tanzania (Mayall 1973). Similarly, the boats that used to transport people and goods across Lake Nyasa were withdrawn by the Malawian government. As the steamers were only allowed to go to Mbamba Bay, Mwaya, and Manda, human interactions across Lake Nyasa greatly deteriorated. This caused some hardship for the lake dwellers (Che-Mponda 1972). The boats that managed to enter Tanzania were confiscated, and so was the property found in them. Due to this situation, the people stopped passing through the middle of the lake. They instead went to Kyela, where they crossed the River Songwe on foot. However, even the Songwe route was insecure. The border was guarded by the violent paramilitary Malawi Young Pioneers. A camp for this paramilitary group was established at Kapolo in Malawi, thus making it possible to control the cross-border movements of people, as the camp faced Kyela district, which borders northern Malawi. Also, some members of the Youth League of Malawi (YLM) were deployed together with the paramilitary group. The two groups harassed the people who crossed the border.

Thus, despite Karonga and Kyela being close to each other, the people in the two areas were separated from each other not because of natural barriers but because of the border surveillance mounted by the Malawian state. The local people at the border, especially on the Tanzanian side, were not passive, but worked out ways of crossing the border. For instance, they concealed their identity. Consequently, they identified themselves as affiliated

23 Ngurumo, "Wasivuke Mpaka", 11 December 1968.

with specific chiefs or clans in Malawi. Therefore, when questioned about their identities and backgrounds, they would refer to the names of their relatives or friends residing on the opposite side of the border. They could act the way they did because they spoke the same language as their Malawian counterparts and because the paramilitary youth who controlled the border were not natives of the border community. Thus, they could not countercheck the correctness of the information they were given. While the mobility from Tanzania to Malawi was reduced in scale and intensity, evidence indicates that the movement of people from Malawi to Tanzania was significant during the border dispute. There is strong evidence suggesting that Tanzanians treated individuals arriving from Malawi with respect and hospitality by Tanzanians. Unlike in Malawi, Tanzania did not have paramilitary groups, ensuring a more peaceful environment for those from Malawi.

Migration from Tanzania to Malawi was affected by the Mozambican wars of liberation. Between 1964 and 1974, the history of Mozambique was characterised by, among other things, political unrest. Movement from Tanzania to Malawi via Mozambique stopped because the route was unsafe. This was problematic because, prior to the war, this route was the most convenient. However, the conflict between African liberation movements and the Portuguese colonial government in Mozambique made the route insecure. Due to this insecurity, a refugee camp was set up at Lundo village in Tanzania for Mozambican refugees (Mihanjo 1999). Therefore, the interaction between Tanzanians and Malawians through Mozambique diminished between 1964 and 1974 for three reasons. The first reason was the constant unrest in Mozambique caused by the armed struggle. Military attacks ultimately spread to Mozambique's Niassa district that borders Tanzania. Tanzanians were equally targeted by the colonial state in Mozambique because they supported FRELIMO. Second, Malawi had bad relations with the Mozambican liberation movement, FRELIMO, since the former supported Portuguese rule in Mozambique. Third, both Malawi and Mozambique were faced with internal security problems, and their dissidents were granted sanctuary in Tanzania (Henderson 1977).

Some conclusions can therefore be drawn regarding the relations at this moment. First, when the interaction between people from the two neighbouring states was influenced by a neighbouring state engaged in war, cross-border movements suffered. Evidence shows that the interaction between Tanzanians and Malawians through Mganda and Kihoda ended at this time because the route to Malawi through Mozambique and Malawi itself was insecure. Second, when the two neighbouring states faced a border crisis, their relations and the movement of people diminished. Thus, the cross-border relationships that flourished before the crises – such as trade, intermarriage, relatives' visitations, and collective tackling of calamities – significantly deteriorated at this time.

Malawi-Tanzania Relations during the Conflict: (Re)Integration of Southern African Countries, 1975-2010

In 1975, another phase of the Malawi-Tanzania border dispute began. This phase was characterised by a passive and dormant border dispute. During this phase, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, and even Zambia were interested in normalising their political relations due to domestic and external pressures. There are certain reasons why this phase was characterised by the dormant border dispute. First, each government felt that it was internally preoccupied, especially with building economies that needed multilateral co-operation rather than conflicts with neighbouring countries. Second, any external conflict could hardly receive local support. Third, Malawi made a major foreign policy change at this time. Among other things, it sought to establish partnerships with its neighbours, including those who had been adversaries before. The fourth reason was Malawi's membership of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC), of which Tanzania was also a member. In this regional block, the countries needed each other for vested economic reasons.

Furthermore, the fifth reason was the increased tensions within and outside Malawian polity. President Banda faced stiff

political competition at home, especially from politicians who sought to subvert him. His opponents were supported by South Africa, the US, and a Mozambican political party called *Resistencia Nacional Mocambicana* (RENAMO). All these, especially South Africa, threatened Malawi with a destabilisation campaign (Robinson 2009). So, from such increased tensions, Malawi turned to her former enemies as potential trade and political partners. This is evidenced by many conferences, which involved Mozambique, Tanzania, Malawi, and Zambia, which were held between 1978 and 1979, and beyond.

The open border tensions between Tanzania and Malawi came to an end in 1975, leading to the normalisation of relations between the two states. This effectively diffused violence and threats. Also, the local people on each side of the border maintained harmonious relations between them. James Mayall asserts that some of the people of northern Malawi and southern Tanganyika (Tanzania), such as the Nyakyusa and Ngonde, were related (Mayall 1973). The normalisation of the relations manifested itself in, among other things, the resumption of the steamer services across the lake and official visits of senior government officials to each of the two states on matters relating to currency exchange and trade. Also, the paramilitary group that was stationed at the border region to block cross-border movements was withdrawn. Consequently, peace and stability returned to the border region and normal cross-border human interactions resumed.

Generally speaking, the official position is that cross-border relations are mutually beneficial to Malawi, Tanzania, and the entire Southern Africa. There is prosperity in trade, visitations by relatives on both sides, intermarriages, and exchange of official visits. There were other problems, such as smuggling and violation of immigration rules. However, these were tackled immediately as they happened and did not deter cross-border relations because most of the misconduct was founded on interpersonal issues.²⁴

24 Interview with government official, Nyasa District, 30 August 2022.

The restoration of peace and stability to the region accounted for the thriving of cross-border trade in domestic and other materials, such as cloth, soap, sugar, cooking oil, and cassava. People from one side of the lake established businesses on the other side of the border. For instance, a lot of people from the Tanzanian side of the border carried out business activities in Nkhata Bay and beyond. There was a market called Mataifa in Mzuzu, Malawi, which was mainly dominated by traders from Tanzania. Cross-border crossings were either by land via the official border at Kasumulu or porous borders such as Katumbasungwe in Kyela, or across the lake following the resumption of shipping services between Mbamba Bay and Nkhata Bay. Such Malawian ships as the Nkwazi and the Mtendele called at Mbamba Bay port once a week. Also, the Songea ship from Tanzania called at Nkhata Bay port once a week. This happened after the opening of the lake transport services between Tanzania and Malawi in 1996 to enhance the continuous operation of the ports at Mbamba Bay in Tanzania and Nkhata Bay in Malawi.²⁵

The establishment of the lake transport services at Mbamba Bay and Nkhata Bay increased the interaction between the Lake Nyasa communities in Malawi and Tanzania. Border passes, which were renewable, were issued to allow passengers to stay on either side of the border for seven days. Thus, a lot of people crossed Lake Nyasa to undertake trade and fishing, visit friends and relatives, and attend social events, such as funerals and marriages on either side of the border. However, others crossed the border illegally for similar purposes. This resulted in the smuggling of goods and other essentials from Malawi to Tanzania.

Studies indicate that most of the cross-border trade was done informally, and thus not recorded by government officials. This trade involved the traditional exchange of goods and services between the neighbouring communities on the two sides of the border, involving commodities intended for re-export and re-sale in distant, urban, and rural areas. Four categories of unrecorded goods were traded at the border: agricultural commodities,

25 Interview with port officer, 18 March 2022.

industrial goods, forest products, and water products (Ogutu & Echessah 1998:xii and Minde & Nakhumwa 1998).

While informal cross-border trade characterised the transactions between Malawi and Tanzania between 1975 and 2011, with a small contribution to the national economies, they largely grappled with seasonal food deficits among the bordering people in both countries. This resonates with other cross-border relations in Africa. For instance, despite its adverse impact on the economy, health sector, and environment, informal cross-border trade at Botswana's borders played a substantial role in involving individuals and families in trade. This engagement contributed to food security, employment, and income. Indeed, it alleviated poverty, complemented the formal commercial network, and created an opportunity for another market for domestic goods. Characteristically, the colonially imposed border across Africa did not deter the flow of goods and cross-border movement of people across border communities in Africa. As such, borders are not barriers to movement but are interstate pathways and conduits for intra-community relations. In this regard, boundaries in Africa are porous at the local level.

Due to the existence of harmony and peace in the border region, people from one side of the border could work on the other side. It is indicated that a lot of people from Malawi, especially from the Karonga and Rumpi districts, secured jobs in the Kyela district, Tanzania. Kyela attracts labour mobility because of its big border post as well as a commercially viable township at the border area. Some people from the Nyasa and Kyela districts also have been employed in kiosks, bars, and shops in Malawi.

Most of those who migrated from Tanzania worked in sectors that were owned by Tanzanians. Some Tanzanians have opened businesses in Karonga and Nkhata Bay, which are border regions. This was possible because people in border regions usually interact much with each other in business activities that contribute to the development of the township community. As such, those who had relatives on the other side of the border secured employment there and made others do likewise. After settling in their neighbours' land and mingling with the natives

for a long time, they established permanent settlements there. This caused immigration control problems, for most of the people at the border spoke the same language and had similar clan names.²⁶ Later, they visited their relatives back home during calamities or festivals and sent remittances to them, thereby building further ties between the cross-border people. So, during such calamities as hunger, drought, food shortages, and diseases, the people helped each other. For instance, during this study, the member of parliament for Ludewa constituency recollected the support his constituency received during a drought, including assistance in the form of firewood, food, and seeds from the lake villages in Malawi.

The residents in the border region engaged in cross-border interactions for medical purposes as well. Those living in adjacent areas had convenient access to medical facilities on both sides of the border. There is evidence supporting the fact that numerous dispensaries and medical stores situated on the Tanzanian side of the border served individuals from Malawi seeking immediate medical attention. In cases where specific medicines were either unavailable or expensive in Malawi, some Malawians would cross the border into Tanzania to obtain them. Additionally, when the dispensaries in Malawi offering necessary injections were situated far from their residences, individuals from Malawi would sometimes cross into Tanzania for these medical services. Conversely, residents from the Tanzanian side of the border also crossed into Malawi to receive medical treatment, often opting for public hospitals.

The hospital mentioned by most of the respondents was Apolo, located in the Karonga district. People from the Tanzanian side of the border, especially those from certain villages in the Kyela district, continued to seek medical services in Apolo Hospital because of free medical services in public hospitals in Malawi. Upon confirming their home villages, such as Katamba, Mwaituni, Mwambande, Mwasulama, Mwantende, and Kalongolela, they were provided with Malawi Health Passports (MHP) for easy facilitation of free medical services.

26 Interview with government official, 22 August 2022.

Sometimes, they used the passports of their friends and relatives who lived in Malawi. It was difficult for the hospital officers to verify their places of origin because the people from Tanzania spoke the same language as those of the villagers in Malawi, besides having identical clan names. It appears that, if a Tanzanian died in a hospital in Malawi and his identity showed that he or she came from a certain village in Malawi, the remains were transported to the respective village, and from that village, would be transported to the Tanzanian side of the border. This indicates the nature of the porosity of the border as well as strong social cohesion among the people in the bordering areas. This community cohesion and solidarity transcended the logic of an international frontier or modern-day border construction. While the heterogeneous nature of cities seems to reveal identity politics and hostility to migration in several African countries, the local population in villages and border towns have continued to live in harmony, rejecting xenophobia and anti-migration disposition.

However, one event threatened the harmonious relations between the border peoples in recent years. This had to do with the violence inflicted on some Tanzanian businessmen on the Malawian side of the border. The Tanzanians had opened small businesses in Malawi's Karonga district. However, between the 1990s and 2000s, the Malawian government forced the Tanzanians to close their businesses. There are two interpretations of this. First, the businessmen claimed that the order was issued because of jealousy from the local people, who thought that they were making lucrative profits from the shops. However, the jealousy argument has been refuted. Second, the superintendent of the immigration department in Kyela district maintained that the shops were shut because the owners did not have passports or permits to do business in the area, thereby evading taxes. These different views imply that there was articulation between the modern-day and official trade-related practices and the local or customary business practices. The local practices, which drive the economy of border towns, are usually in contravention of the state-established controls in the border region.

Although relations have subsequently normalised, they were not as great as they were during the pre-colonial and

British colonial periods. There were increased contacts between people from the Lake Nyasa area and those of the mountainous areas and the core urban areas. This happened because their contacts with the Malawians no longer yielded the expected results, especially trade-related ones. The transformation was influenced by the emergence of a novel connection between the lake's peripheries and the central regions, facilitated by enhanced road infrastructure.

In contrast, transportation services across the lake dramatically deteriorated. For instance, ships plied only the Mbamba Bay-Nkhata Bay route. Documentary evidence indicates that transportation services were irregular due to frequent vessel breakdowns and decreased water level in some of the ports. Furthermore, there were very few privately owned boats in the region; most of the boats belonged to the government of Malawi (Bootsma 2006). This suggests that, although a border was opened and human interactions were uninterrupted, opportunities were not, and still are not significantly directed towards economic progress at the local level. This calls for the intervention of RECs and regional actors to dialogue with state and non-state actors on both sides in the quest to overcome the challenges and enhance the economic activities in the border towns.

Conclusion

As systematically engaged in the chapter, the postcolonial states of Tanzania and Malawi exemplify how modern African states can alter the trajectory of international relations in times of conflict and peace. The first decade of independence witnessed division in international politics, the promotion of extreme nationalism, and co-operation among the states with similar ideological inclinations, which shaped cross-border relations. The agenda of imperial powers was to perpetuate colonial domination in areas still under their control. This agenda was achieved by making alliances with some newly independent African countries to sustain the hegemony of the imperial states.

On the contrary, frontline states intended to liberate the colonies – an agenda that met with strong opposition from

colonialists. Tanzania, being one of the spearheads of the liberation movements, met opposition from the colonialists. The White regimes in Southern Africa intended to use Malawi to countercheck Tanzania's move and that of the larger frontline states in Southern Africa. As such, the Lake Nyasa area became a zone of fierce contestation and the Lake Nyasa border region became a highly guarded frontier. This restricted the movement of people, as most of the relations that flourished during the pre-colonial and colonial times deteriorated during this period.

In the case of Tanzania and Malawi, lake transportation services ceased, and cross-border relations declined. Also, cultural visits, intermarriages, and trade relations experienced stagnation. In addition, after the two states became independent, co-operation in the education sector also ceased. However, after 1975, the two countries normalised their relations. This was because colonial territories, which used to divide them because of the penetration of the imperial agenda, attained independence. Thus, the key preoccupation of nation states at this time was to reposition themselves in the economic agenda of co-operations within the SADC framework. So, the demise of colonialism created a new wave of foreign policy within these countries, in which former foes became doves. As such, trade, transport services, and normal trans-lake visitations relating to marriages and ceremonies were restored.

Border disputes in Africa are still a practical reality that need politically and legally binding permanent solutions. African regional organisations, such as the African Union (AU), should intervene in border disputes to prevent degeneration into interstate wars. It is crystal clear that the colonialists who 'sliced' up the continent and those who divided the people into nation states due to power politics and struggles for independence have long gone, but their legacy remains. As noted in the preceding discussion, economic and political imperatives of integration brought together nations that were torn apart by the imperial agenda.

Countries in the Global South learned from past mistakes and used them as opportunities to forge strong solidarity in a path

of pursuing their common interests. Indeed, African countries should abide by the intervention of the African Union Border Programme (AUBP) to fix all remaining troubling interstate borders on the continent. This should go hand in hand with clearly defining interterritorial treaties, putting in place boundary marks on the ground such as pillars and beacons to complete the process of demarcation, and reports of these schemes should be submitted to the AU for evidence and reference. Implementing these measures will mitigate the likelihood of future interstate border disputes, fostering unity and bolstering continental integration, particularly within the SADC zone, thereby promoting regional cohesion and co-operation.

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Section Six

Peace and Security

Chapter 15

The Quest for Peace in Africa: Convergence and Fragmentation within the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)

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Introduction

Over the past three years, the African continent has been faced with a coup crisis driven by a renewed citizen demand for democratic dividends. Many of the coups in West Africa – specifically in Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso – are driven by widespread discontent over state ineptitude in the face of rising violent extremism, farmer-herder conflict, secessionist agitations, the COVID-19 pandemic, and environmental disasters that have claimed lives and displaced many. The political and security landscape is complicated by a rise in global power competition leading to the involvement of new security partners such as the Wagner mercenaries, while European partners have been forced to draw down or withdraw their forces in certain regions such as the Sahel. The evolving security situation calls into question the proactiveness and efficacy of the African security alliance in the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).

APSA, composed of the African Union (AU), regional economic communities (RECs), and regional mechanisms (RMs), has enhanced African agency in peace and security since the early 2000s. This is unlike the era of the Organisation of African Unity

(OAU), where much of the conflict response on the continent was dependent on the disposition of the United Nations (UN) and global powers such as the United States (US), France, and the United Kingdom (UK). The grand alliance envisaged in the context of APSA is rooted in the ideals of Pan-Africanism. The ideals are etched in the African Economic Community (AEC) Treaty of 1991, the AU Constitutive Act of 2002, the AU Peace and Security Council Protocol of 2003, as well as the 2008 memorandum of understanding between the AU and the sub-regional organisations. While APSA remains a game changer in the African security response, the normative and co-operation gaps and rivalries between the AU and RECs/RMs undermine the effectiveness of APSA and threaten to fracture the alliance.

The co-operation gap between APSA partners is among the reasons why the AU initiated a reform process in 2017 to enhance the efficiency of the AU and to efficiently co-ordinate Africa's response to avoid duplicity and wastage of resources (Kagame 2017). The reform process, which is led by President Paul Kagame of Rwanda calls for "a clear division of labour and effective collaboration among the AU, RECs/RMs, the Member States, and other continental institutions, in line with the principle of subsidiarity" (AU Assembly 2017). The AU reform decision further established a yearly co-ordination meeting between the AU, RECs, and RMs in replacement of the AU mid-year assembly meeting.

One of the major dynamics that brought about the need for the division of labour between APSA partners is the increased levels of engagement by sub-regional organisations in crisis response, while the role of AU in both mediation and peace support operations declined. When the AU was formed in 2002, it initiated several peace initiatives in member states, including Burundi, the Comoro Islands, Sudan, and Somalia between 2003 and 2007. In 2013 and 2014, the AU also took over missions initiated by sub-regional organisations in Mali and the Central African Republic (CAR). Currently, sub-regions are relying on their capacities to lead peace initiatives in their respective regions, as evident in the Lake Chad Basin, the Sahel, as well as in South Sudan, The Gambia, Lesotho, and Guinea Bissau.

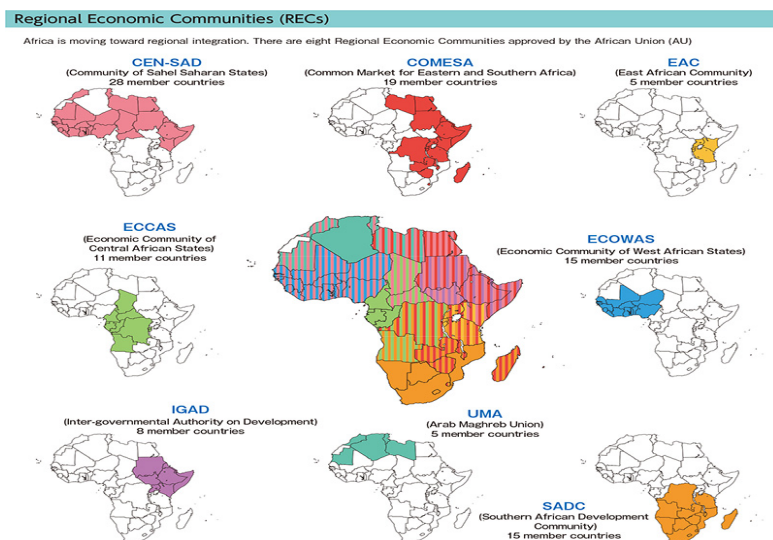
The AU now leads the mission in Somalia, while playing a support role to RECs/RMs in some crises. While these are in line with the principle of subsidiarity, some sub-regional initiatives – such as the G5 Sahel Initiative and the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against Boko Haram – diverge from the AU's oversight and primacy (Mutisi 2018). The quest for greater autonomy in intervention is shown by stronger RECs, such as the missions of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Guinea Bissau and The Gambia, as well as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in countries like Lesotho and Mozambique. RECs are increasingly showing a preference for subsidiarity while recommending that the AU plays a role in norm setting and resource mobilisation (AU PSD 2010; PSC Report 2017). The situation raises concerns over the extent to which subsidiarity could be applied, the future role and primacy of the AU, and APSA's ideal of maximising resources and capacities within the continent. Moreover, there remains poor guidance on how to provide checks and balances, especially when sub-regional roles become part of a problem (Nathan 2017).

This chapter therefore discusses the key drivers of coalition and fragmentation within APSA, to enhance understanding of APSA's working methods and identify areas of improvement. The analysis derives from an extensive review of primary and secondary literature on APSA institutions. The author also conducted interviews with officials working with the AU in Addis Ababa, the ECOWAS Commission in Abuja, and the SADC in Botswana, as well as virtual consultations with think tanks working in the APSA context. These interviews were conducted between October 2022 and March 2023 with support from the United States Institute of Peace (USIP). The chapter provides an overview of APSA's symbiotic co-operation framework. This is then followed by an analysis of the dilemma involved in the coexistence of the principle of subsidiarity and the AU's primacy. The chapter further examines the nature of the AU's comparative advantage in contexts with weak RECs. This is followed by a section on co-ordination between the AU and RECs, as well as the implication of co-ordination gaps amongst RECs.

APSA's Co-operation Framework

As shown in Figure 15.1, APSA is a multistakeholder co-operation framework involving the AU and eight RECs, as well as other regional mechanisms in the African continent.

Figure 15.1: An Overview of APSA Institutions in Africa



Source: Afriwonk (2018)

Given the multiple APSA actors with independent identities, one of the less understood aspects of APSA is the extent to which these independent organisations are interwoven and accountable to each other. Some analysts observe that the legal documents of sub-regions are independent and do not subscribe to an AU oversight (Suzuki 2022:174). While sub-regional organisations are independently established, they were created based on recommendations from discussions and decisions by the OAU for a gradual integration from the sub-regional level before a broader integration (AEC Treaty 1991). The agreed Lagos Plan of Action in 1980 and the African Economic Community (AEC) treaty in 1991 called for the enhancement of RECs and their formations where they do not exist, to foster a bottom-up approach for continent-

wide integration. Africa's integration agenda is driven by the constructed ideals¹ of Pan-African unity and solidarity among African states (Nkurumah 1970).

Pioneer RECs such as ECOWAS, formed in 1975, and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), established in 1983 – along with all the RECs except for the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) – recognised the co-ordinating and central role of the OAU/AU in the Pan-African integration agenda in their respective treaties. As such, inter-African co-operation at various levels were deliberate, with sub-regional institutions designed as part of the continental process (OAU 2000).

In 2002, the OAU was formally transformed into the AU to address the gaps in the latter, especially around peace and security where the OAU was hamstrung, leading to unco-ordinated responses by both African and external actors. The AU was equipped with normative and institutional mandates to spearhead the provision of African solutions for peace and security (AU Assembly 2013). Article 4(h) of the Constitutive Act stipulates that the AU has the right “to intervene in a Member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity” as well as a serious threat to legitimate order. With a two-thirds majority, the AU Assembly could authorise intervention in its member states, contrary to the complete consensus that characterised the OAU epoch. Article 4(j) also bestows the right of member states to request intervention to restore peace and security.

Equally, RECs held intervention responsibilities even before the establishment of the AU. Notably, ECOWAS, SADC, and IGAD have been prominent in peace initiatives in their respective regions since the 1990s.² As such, while acclaiming its

1 In line with constructivism, this shows how prevailing ideas amongst African states and people play a key role in shaping identities and practices. See Hurd, I. (2008). “Constructivism”. In Reus-Smit, C. & Snidal, D. *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*. New York: Oxford University Press.

2 This includes ECOWAS intervention in Liberia and Sierra Leone in the 1990s as well as SADC's regular intervention in Lesotho. IGAD

primacy for peace and security in Africa in line with article 16 of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) Protocol, the AU recognised the integral role of RECs by integrating them as building blocks of the AU's APSA strategy. RECs are required to intervene in crises in their respective member states in line with Article 20 of the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the AU and RECs/RMs. This is highlighted in Table 15.1, below. When RECs intervene, they are expected to keep the AU fully informed regularly and ensure that their activities are in line with the objectives of the AU PSC protocol.

Table 15.1: Key Protocols and MOUs Guiding APSA Relationships

Protocol/MOU	Key Objectives
Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the AU (PSC Protocol) of 2003	The AU PSC serves as the primary referent body for the “collective security and early-warning arrangement to facilitate timely and efficient response to conflict and crisis situations in Africa” (AU PSC Protocol 2002: art. 2). Article 16 of the PSC Protocol affirms that “Regional Mechanisms are part of the overall security architecture of the Union, which has the primary responsibility for promoting peace, security and stability in Africa”. The members of sub-regional organisations are represented in the AU PSC's 15 member states which represent the five regions of Africa.

continues to play a key role in addressing the security threats in Somalia and South Sudan.

Protocol/MOU	Key Objectives
Protocol on Relations between the African Union (AU) and regional economic communities (RECs) of 2008	The objective of the protocol is: Article 5 of the protocol requires members to review their treaties to strengthen their organic link with the AU. Article 5(b) of the protocol also charges RECs to align “their programmes, policies, and strategies with those of the AU” (AU-RECs Protocol 2008). The protocol also requires the AU to monitor the progress of the RECs and support their effort to realise the objectives of the AEC treaty in line with Article 11. Article 22 of the protocol also enables the AU to sanction RECs whose policies and measures are incompatible with the objectives of the AEC Treaty.
Memorandum of Understanding on Co-operation in the Area of Peace and Security between the African Union, the Regional Economic Communities and the Co-ordinating Mechanisms of the Regional Standby Brigades of Eastern Africa and Northern Africa of 2008. (AU-RECs/RMs MoU)	The objective of the MOU is: The objective of the MOU is to promote closer co-operation, partnership, exchange of information, harmonisation, and co-ordination between RECs and the AU specifically on peace and security issues. Article 4.4 highlights “the adherence of subsidiarity, complementarity, and comparative advantage, to optimize the partnership between the Union, the RECs and the Co-ordinating Mechanisms in the promotion and maintenance of peace, security and stability”. Article 4 outlines that the MOU is guided by the “recognition of, and respect for, the primary responsibility of the Union in the maintenance and promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa, following Article 16 of the PSC Protocol”. The AU Commission bears responsibility for keeping the UNSC in the loop of all interventions by AU, RECs, and mechanisms.

The idea behind the APSA alliance under the co-ordination of the AU is that security threats would be addressed by the collective strength and capacities within the African continent (AU CADSP 2004). As shown in Figure 15.2, APSA institutions engage through various mechanisms for intervention.



Figure 15.2: APSA's Mechanisms for Intervention

RECs have consistently served as the anchor for AU's leverage and response in affected member states. As such, the AU PSC has consistently endorsed and mirrored decisions taken at the sub-regional level. It follows a sequence of sub-regional decisions before the AU meeting and endorsement of the RECs' decisions. For instance, during the recent upsurge in the coup situation in West Africa, the AU PSC met to adopt the decisions taken at the ECOWAS level, while also suspending the membership of the affected countries in line with the decision of ECOWAS. Additionally, the AU PSC, composed of 15 member states based on equitable representation of the five regions in Africa, is designed to ensure that PSC members reflect the insights and perspectives of their regions in PSC debates. However, the institutional co-operation between the AU and RECs is marked by the following key areas of convergence and divergence.

The Principle of Subsidiarity vs AU's Primacy

The existing framework of co-operation envisaged among APSA institutions promotes co-operation but leaves room for ambiguities. Throughout the 2008 MOU between the AU and the RECs/RMs, the terms "work together", "co-operate", "combine their efforts", and "collaborate" were used to describe the rules of engagement for APSA. These wordings were motivated by the assumption that African states are united in solidarity and could easily navigate through situations by reaching 'common' positions.

However, in APSA's legal framework, there is no specification of which APSA institution should respond first or address specific types or stages of conflict, thereby creating room for tensions and hesitancy. The principles of subsidiarity, comparative advantage, and complementarity were only mentioned once in the MOU, without a description of what they mean operationally. This creates a lacuna on the extent to which sub-regions could intervene without backstopping and guidance from the AU.³

Interviews with ECOWAS and SADC officials show that there is growing evidence to suggest that in situations where a strong REC exists, there tends to be a lesser commitment to the AU's leadership. An example of the AU and RECs' conflicting views of subsidiarity and primacy played out in Mali in 2012. When the Tuareg rebel groups, along with jihadist allies, began their insurgency in Mali in 2012, ECOWAS planned to deploy a regional force following the meeting of the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council on 12 April 2012 (Reliefweb 2012). This was supported by the AU, and the continental body advised ECOWAS to seek the UN Security Council authorisation for the mission (AU 2012). The approval was granted by the UN Security Council in December 2012 (UNSC 2012).

However, building on the precedent of being responsible for deploying large-scale missions between 2003–2012 and in line with Article 16 of the PSC Protocol, the AU took on the responsibility for the mission with ECOWAS as its key partner. The AU appointed President Pierre Buyoya as the special representative and head of the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) on 30 January 2013 (AU PSC 2013). While the co-operation could be termed as a mark of scaling up within APSA, the situation led to ECOWAS' discontent over the AU's usurpation of the mission lead role. While commenting on the Mali crisis in 2012, a respondent from the ECOWAS commission narrates that, "ECOWAS established the mission as MISMA. The task of the AU was to support the intervention. But the AU was

3 The principle of subsidiarity devolves responsibility to local actors who are closer and able to respond to a crisis situation, as opposed to those further away from the crisis. See Djilo and Handy, 2022.

not seeing it in that way. What we saw is that while ECOWAS was in the field, AU was preparing to deploy AFISMA. When the AU came attaching its role under the umbrella of the UN, we were not really happy with that”.⁴ Another respondent from the ECOWAS commission maintains that,

There are certain principles that are important. ECOWAS is not a subsidiary or lower organisation to the AU. ECOWAS is a partner of the AU. But there seems to be an impression that subregions are an appendix of the AU. The unhealthy rivalry is not helping, and the MoU needs to be revised to show that RECs are the first responders and if they are not able to address the situation.⁵

The quest for autonomy in intervention is not specific to ECOWAS. While commenting on the question of specific roles, a respondent from the SADC region explains that, “in line with the subsidiarity principle, RECs should implement their mandate independently. The AU should not interfere in any peace and security matters in a sub-region unless requested to do so by an REC or if/when the situation endangers the lives of the civilian population, and the REC is unable to intervene”.⁶

An AU official sees this differently, noting that AFSMA “was designed to foster joint and collective action in respect to Article 16 of the PSC Protocol. The AU should be able to intervene when multiple partners are involved in the crisis context.”⁷ AFISMA involved troops mainly from ECOWAS member states and Chad, which belonged to ECCAS. The AU also led the funding conference⁸ for AFISMA in 2013 at the sidelines of the AU summit. There

4 Interview, ECOWAS Commission, 11 November 2022.

5 Interview, AU Commission, 1 February 2023.

6 Interview, SADC Commission, 1 March 2023.

7 Interview, AU Commission, 2 February 2023.

8 Most often, the approval of the AU is required for external parties such as the EU to provide funds to sub-regions. This was customary under the EU’s African Peace Facility (APF), which is now subsumed under the European Peace Facility (EPF). The EPF, established in 2021, does not require strict AU endorsement for support to sub-regional organisations in Africa. Increasingly, there are concerns about whether sub-regions will actually seek the approval of the AU if they can internally source the funding.

is no doubt that the tension created by the AFISMA situation continues to affect the response strategy in Mali. Recently, the security situation in Mali has deteriorated while the military junta insisted on the withdrawal of French forces and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Yet, neither AU nor ECOWAS has engaged the other on potential joint response or support to stabilise Mali. The AU has virtually stayed out of the ongoing challenges in Mali, while ECOWAS's legitimacy in the country has waned following the regional sanctions over the military coup.

The challenge of subsidiarity and primacy is not specific to APSA. The relations between the UN and AU often face challenges over the principle of subsidiarity as implied by Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. The irony at the level of APSA is that, while the AU advocates for subsidiarity in its relations with the UN, it is reluctant to adhere to this principle about RECs (Nathan 2017). However, it is important to note that the relationship between the AU and RECs is more deeply symbiotic than UN and AU relations. The AU PSC members agreed at their October 2018 retreat to respect a subsidiarity approach that allows the AU to take over implementation when RECs/RMs have exhausted their efforts and if they do not act swiftly to resolve a crisis (ISS 2018). However, it is not clear who determines when RECs/RMs have exhausted their efforts and if RECs are willing to allow the AU to intervene.

'Functional Subsidiarity' and the Comparative Advantage of the AU

While subsidiarity implies the capacity of the lower levels to respond to crisis situations, the term 'functional subsidiarity' serves to emphasise that lower levels could lose their 'jurisdiction' to respond to crisis situations when they are unable or unwilling to respond to crises (ISS PSC 2019). RECs are expected to anticipate and address security threats, but their capacity for meaningful response varies. In contexts where weaker RECs exist, the AU has effectively stepped up and responded to the crises in partnership

These funding dynamics shed some light on the role of external actors in the con-joints and disjoints in APSA.

with the affected RECs, reflecting “scaling up dynamics” (Coe & Nash 2020).

In the CAR, the AU and ECCAS have taken turns in addressing crises. When violence broke out in the CAR in 2012, for example, the AU took over ECCAS’s Multinational Force in the CAR (FOMUC) and transformed it into the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA) in 2013 to stabilise the country. Subsequently, the AU led the African mediation effort in the country along with ECCAS, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), and other partners within a framework known as the AU-led African Initiative (AU PSC Report 2020). While commenting on the inherent checks and balances within the subsidiarity principle of the 2008 MOU, a respondent from the AU argues that,

In the case of the CAR, for instance, ECCAS started but they did not have the capacity to complete the mission, then the AU took over and afterwards, the UN took over following complications in the AU mission. Hence, interventions are incrementalist from the sub-region, then continental and international. As such, the involvement of all the parties from the get-go is crucial for lasting peace.⁹

Nevertheless, the AU-led mediation is yet to lead to stability in CAR. Rather, the CAR government is increasingly relying on Russia and its Wagner forces to sustain its leadership.

The situation in Libya also shows that the AU could play a significant role where weak RECs exist but to a limited extent because it relies on RECs to anchor its interventions. When conflict erupted in Libya in 2011, the AU was keen on intervening in the crisis, but it lacked relevant influence on the ground due to the weakness and non-existence of the AMU. The weakness of the AU and the absence of a strong REC led to the intervention of the UN and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). The AU continues to struggle to find relevance in the peace process before and after the killing of President Muammar Gaddafi by NATO-backed local forces. Since 2016, the AU has been making rhetoric

9 Interview, AU Commission, 31 January 2023.

about initiating a national dialogue to foster the resolution of the conflict between the warring parties in Libya (ISS 2018; AU PSC Communique on Libya Feb 2023). However, it has been unable to do so due to a lack of leverage on the ground. France and the UN have brokered several deals with the warring parties.

Co-ordination between RECs and the AU

Members of RECs are represented at the AU PSC. However, there has been limited co-ordination between the AU and RECs at an institutional level when conflicts emerge. Several decisions from PSC retreats since 2007 recommended joint consultations between the AU PSC and similar bodies at the REC level. Yet, these decisions have not been implemented (PSC Secretariat 2018). It is often taken for granted that the cross-memberships between the AU and RECs foster harmonisation. Yet, the interests of APSA actors are continually shifting and could be conflicting, as shown by the fallout between the AU and ECOWAS over the conflict response in Mali in 2012. Interaction between the AU and RECs (as institutions) only occurs when the head of the AU Commission or the RECs are invited to each other's summits or the PSC sessions. The PSC rather engages more often with the UNSC and the EU Political and Security Council than it does with its REC partners.

The introduction of the Mid-Year Co-ordination between the AU and RECs in replacement of the second AU assembly meeting is a landmark step in terms of harmonising AU-RECs relations. This co-ordination must also be reflected in the context of AU PSC engagement with similar organs to prevent contradictory perspectives on conflict resolution. While differing perspectives are common in international relations, public disagreements debilitate the efficiency of APSA's conflict resolution. In the CAR, for instance, ECCAS and the AU had conflicting standpoints when Francois Bozize was deposed in March 2013 by the Seleka forces. When Seleka rebel leader Michel Djotodia took power, the AU suspended the CAR, in line with the African Charter on Democracy Elections and Governance (ACDEG), and imposed a travel ban on the junta on 25 March 2013. However, ECCAS recognised Djotodia as the new president and refused to implement the AU's sanctions. This was somehow linked with

ECCAS's disagreement with the AU's perceived dominance (Coe & Nash 2020). At the 2022 AU 9th High-Level Seminar on Peace and Security in Africa, members of the AU PSC agreed to have "fact-finding missions and extensive consultations with RECs/RMs prior to the imposition of sanctions against any AU Member State" to secure buy-in and effectiveness (AU High-Level Seminar 2022). In recent years, there has been a concerted effort by the AU to harmonise its decisions with those of RECs via sequencing of decisions.

Inter-REC Co-operation and Rise of Ad Hoc Coalitions

Among the RECs/RMs that make up APSA, there are rarely any joint mediation or peace support operations, despite some notable co-operations in economic areas (PSC Secretariat 2018). This has led to member states cherry-picking which REC attends to its issues while others form *ad hoc* mechanisms when none of the RECs address their interests. The case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) shows how the fluidity of member states' interests leads to poor co-ordination among RECs. The DRC, which geographically belongs to ECCAS, joined SADC in 1998. Subsequently, SADC played a key role in peace operations in the DRC, including its deployment to an Intervention Brigade with about 1 000 forces in 2013, in parallel with the United Nations Organisation Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). Recently, however, the DRC joined the EAC and advocated for a mission to fight the M23 rebels, which has been perpetuating a reign of terror in the country. The EAC approved the deployment of its regional force to the DRC¹⁰ – however, this was not conceived in co-ordination with SADC.

When the EAC forces arrived in the DRC and were reluctant to engage the M23 rebels, the DRC threatened to terminate the EAC mission due to inefficiency (The Independent 2023). It therefore resorted to SADC's assistance. On 8 May 2023, SADC approved the deployment of additional troops to respond to the threats in the DRC. It is uncertain whether the EAC will remain on the ground

10 Rwanda, which belongs to the EAC, is against military engagement with the M23, which it is accused of backing. Rwanda rather favours negotiations with the rebels.

when SADC deploys, and there is less clarity on how they will co-operate amid an ongoing call for co-ordination among them. In any case, there will remain a challenge in co-ordinating the forces on the ground.

The AU has an opportunity to co-ordinate the interventions of these RECs or manage the deployments via the broad ASF framework. However, the AU has taken a backseat in the ongoing security threat in the DRC, given the scourge of half-hearted measures when multiple actors are involved in a crisis. Weakness and half-heartedness is also evident in Cameroon where the UN, AU, and ECCAS are non-responsive and shifting the responsibility to intervene to one another. This reluctance is more evident in the context of cross-regional security threats leading to the formation of *ad hoc* coalitions to circumvent the bureaucracy of the traditional AU and RECs configuration. For instance, the G5 Sahel force (comprising Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger) was established in 2017 to address the threat of violent extremism following the delays of the AU-led Nouakchott Process in establishing a force. The conflict and threats of terror specifically affects the G5 – Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger (which belongs to ECOWAS), Chad (which belongs to ECCAS), and Mauritania (which pulled out of ECOWAS in 2000 but remains a member of the non-functioning AMU).

Initially, the AU had initiated the Nouakchott Process for the enhancement of security co-operation and the operationalisation of APSA in the Sahel-Saharan region (AU PSC 2015). Eleven countries – Algeria, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Chad – were part of the so-called Nouakchott Process. However, because other members of the process were not directly affected by the crises, they were reluctant to commit to the mission. This motivated the affected countries of the G5 Sahel¹¹ to establish the Joint Force of the G5 Sahel in February 2017, comprising up to 5 000 personnel to address the security threats. The AU is currently exploring options to establish a special unit for counter-terrorism within the ASF

11 In 2014, the G5 Sahel was established to foster economic co-operation and security in the Sahelian region.

framework to address the gaps that have led to the formation of *ad hoc* arrangements (AU PSC Report 2020).

Concluding Remarks

This chapter discussed some of the critical areas of convergence and fragmentation within APSA. APSA partners are deeply interlinked by Africa's integration agenda, which is rooted in Pan-Africanism. However, normative gaps and limited co-ordination attenuate APSA's efficiency. Firstly, APSA's legal frameworks do not provide operational guidance on the coexistence of subsidiarity and the AU's primacy. This has led to the AU and RECs engaging in rivalry over who leads or has the final say in a conflict situation. Funding and resource decisions also play a role in APSA convergence and divergence. When funding for peace operations is linked to APSA hierarchies, APSA institutions tend to converge through the AU, although the continental bureaucracies could limit swift response. When funding arrangements are individually administered, stronger RECs seek greater autonomy from the AU backstop and oversight.

Additionally, the AU tends to hold some comparative advantage in context with weaker RECs such as in the CAR, while the AU's role in Libya is constrained due to the lack of an active REC to anchor its interventions. Lastly, co-ordination gaps are at the heart of APSA's divergence. APSA institutions barely meet at the institutional level on issues relating to peace and security. Rather, the AU PSC relies on briefings by the representatives of the RECs within the PSC. There must be regular institutional retreats between the AU and RECs. This includes holding joint PSC meetings with similar organs at the REC level to promote shared understanding and effective response. Such co-ordination should also play out between RECs on cross-regional security threats. Poor co-ordination between RECs has led to the emergence of *ad hoc* mechanisms that fragment APSA's capacities and call into question the ideals of solidarity within APSA.

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Chapter 16

Interrogating the AU's Silencing the Guns in Africa

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Introduction

The African Union (AU) is embarking on its second decade, and it is apt to assess the challenges that it has confronted in terms of efforts to promote peace, security, governance, and the improvement of the livelihood of its constituent peoples. According to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), the African continent is afflicted by 35 conflicts, of variable intensity, which has led to the displacement of more than 40 million persons across the continent (ACLED 2023). The AU's Agenda 2063 identifies one of its objectives as the pursuit of "an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa, driven by its citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena" (AU 2015).

The AU's Silencing the Guns by 2020 campaign emerged out of the deliberations marking the launch of Agenda 2063 and in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which subsequently became the AU. The Silencing the Guns campaign is the flagship initiative of the AU to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts in Africa. It was adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, to ensure that the continent's disputes are not bequeathed to the next generations of Africans. Despite these noble intentions, the guns across Africa were not silenced by 2020.

There was a net increase in violent conflicts across the continent, and to make matters worse, there was a resurgence of military coups, notably across the Sahel region, as well as in Gabon and Sudan. There are 12 peacekeeping and peace support operations across the continent, and a substantial number of national and communal peacebuilding interventions, which utilise a significant number of resources. Therefore, the AU's efforts to silence the guns have not fulfilled the required outcomes. On this basis, the AU reviewed the initiative and adopted a revitalised 2030 Roadmap for Silencing the Guns. This chapter interrogates the limitations of the Silencing the Guns campaign and makes the case for reframing and reorientating the initiative. In particular, the chapter motivates the adoption of a regionalised approach to addressing conflicts across the continent, through regional reconciliation initiatives.

Agenda 2063 and the Silencing of the Guns Campaign

In January 2015, the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government adopted the Agenda 2063 Framework Document (AU 2015). This document outlined the organisation's forward-planning strategy for the next 50 years. In its Agenda 2063 Framework Document, the AU outlined a transformation programme for the next 50 years, including the following seven aspirations:

1. a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development;
2. an integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and
3. the vision of Africa's Renaissance;
4. an Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice, and the rule of
5. law;
6. a peaceful and secure Africa;
7. an Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics;

8. an Africa where development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people,
9. especially its women and youth, and well-cared-for children; and
10. Africa as a strong, united, and influential global player and partner (AU 2015:2).

The intention is to implement Agenda 2063 through a series of successive phases, intermediate benchmarks, and time-bound targets of achievement, in partnership with the regional economic communities (RECs), civil society, international partners, and the private sector. A key flagship initiative that was adopted by the AU was the Silencing the Guns campaign, a programme to prevent and resolve conflicts. In this regard, Agenda 2063 is a forward-looking document, and it is therefore timeously designed to provide a roadmap and the pathway for the pursuit of an “integrated, peaceful and prosperous” continent, which is driven by its citizens.

The African continent is afflicted by a crisis of identity and is still plagued by deep-seated Euro-centric civilisational agendas, which infiltrated its governance, economic, educational, and societal systems, and which were uncritically adopted by a sector of Africa’s political and economic elite. The majority of African countries are more aptly defined by the degree of colonial continuity, which prevents the guns from being silenced. The imposition of the nation state presaged its subsequent malformation and failure to deliver on the public goods, which are expected of state constructs (Davidson 1992). Specifically, African nation states were, and remain, programmed with the colonial logic of control, dominion, dehumanisation, subjugation, oppression, exploitation, and manipulation. In alignment with global trends, there was a resurgence of ethnic nationalism, xenophobia, gender-based violence, and religious extremism in several countries across Africa.

The pursuit of political integration as stipulated in Agenda 2063, through the internalisation of a commitment to constitutionalism, democratic governance, cross-border trade and the free movement of people is a necessary corrective to

the legacy of the colonially imposed state structures. Political integration can be achieved through the coalescing of RECs such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the East African Community (EAC). Both of these RECs have issued passports for their citizens, thereby creating an important vehicle for promoting regional integration and transcending the constraining straight-jacket of state sovereignty, which is hampering Africa's efforts to silence the guns.

The Elements of Silencing the Guns

Despite its initiation in 2013, the Roadmap for Silencing the Guns was only adopted following a retreat of the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) in Lusaka, Zambia on 7 November 2016, which left only a mere four years in the lead-up to the 2020 designated date for its fulfilment. This was not a practical timeframe, which led to claims that the Silencing the Guns campaign was more of a marketing gimmick to assuage the lack of action by the AU's leaders in taking on the responsibility for genuine action to promote peace. The AU PSC retreat acknowledged that Silencing the Guns was not just the act of collecting and disposing of physical guns but more about the creation of a culture of peace across the African continent. The AU roadmap enumerated 54 practical interventions that focused on political, social, economic, environmental, and legal issues (Nshimbi 2020). They also included the need and the case for funding the African Standby Force (ASF), which is a core pillar of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). However, in the intervening years, there has been a lacklustre approach to operationalising and strengthening the institutions of APSA, which are required to effectively pursue and achieve the silencing of the guns.

Key Policy Developments Relating to Silencing the Guns

To mark the end of the initial time frame designated for the Silencing the Guns initiative, the 14th Extraordinary Summit of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, was convened in December 2020. The summit instituted a biennial periodic review of the achievements towards Silencing the Guns by 2030.

Subsequently, in May 2021, the 13th Retreat of the AU Peace and Security Council requested the development of a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework for Silencing the Guns. The AU Silencing the Guns Unit developed the M&E and operationalised the framework which will guide the efforts to gauge the trajectory of developments towards the next extended timeframe of 2030.

Interrogating the Infrastructure for Silencing the Guns

Africa has endured the debilitating effects of cyclical violent conflict for several decades. Despite the existence of well-intentioned policy frameworks and the utilisation of significant resources to stabilise countries, conflicts in the region have remained resistant to resolution. The United Nations (UN) defines peacebuilding as “a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict” and laying “the foundations for sustainable peace and development” (UN Peacebuilding Support Office 2022). Peacebuilding includes the dimension of promoting reconciliation, which is a future-oriented process, even though it seeks to remedy the violations of the past; it is predicated on the construction of a new future for the victims, perpetrators, and the wider community.

From the outset, the AU elaborated a robust policy framework to address a broad range of continental challenges, including those relating to security, governance, and development. For example, the Principles of the Protocol establishing the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union of 2002 stipulate a commitment towards promoting the “peaceful settlement of disputes and conflicts” as well as ensuring the “respect for the rule of law, fundamental human rights and freedoms” (AU 2002). Subsequently, the AU PSC was established in 2004, with the mandate to co-ordinate peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding efforts on the continent. The PSC Protocol enumerated APSA, which includes a Panel of the Wise (PoW), composed of eminent African personalities. As part of APSA, the AU authorised the establishment of an African standby force (ASF)

and a Military staff committee (MSC) which will provide advice on deployment and security requirements.

The PSC protocol also established the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) and an AU peace fund. Specifically, as the over-arching co-ordinating institution, the PSC, has the mandate to authorise AU interventions in member states. In its period of operations, the council has demonstrated its ability to draw attention to the crises in Africa and will continue to function as one of the most important, powerful organs of Africa's evolving peace and security architecture. However, the council still has a lot to do to adopt a culture of prevention and proactive interventionism in situations of potential mass atrocities.

A security approach is necessary, but not sufficient, for Silencing the Guns and the gradual stabilisation of societies and regions across the continent. The challenging work of winning the hearts and minds of local populations through the transformation of societies through governance is an equally vital element of Silencing the Guns in these war-affected regions. The cyclical nature of conflict points to the critical need to move beyond temporary stalemates and ceasefires, peacekeeping deployments and military operations that are so common in this era, towards a regional policy informed by intentionally confronting the underlying grievances that have fuelled decades of animosity and violence on the continent.

Despite having been operational for more than 20 years, there is a persistent and recurring challenge relating to the troubled nexus between peacekeeping, peacebuilding, governance, and socio-economic transformation at the institutional level within the AU. This phenomenon also replicates itself at the UN, so it is not unique to Africa. Specifically, there is a lack of effective institutional interface at the level of decisionmaking. While all AU staff members were 'singing from the same song sheet' of interdepartmental collaboration, and despite efforts to initiate concrete activities to operationalise this rhetorical harmony, the effects on the ground in terms of APSA and African Governance Architecture (AGA) interventions did

not translate into a co-ordinated strategy to deliver as one to the victims and survivors of war and injustice.

This lack of effective APSA and AGA interface revealed the perils of actualising effective collaboration on the ground. Well-intentioned platitudes at the policy and decisionmaking levels about the urgency of promoting synergy between peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and governance processes became routine and banal. Consequently, this created a silo effect when it came to the interventions, with the AU peacekeepers, peacebuilders, governance, and development practitioners virtually operating in isolation from each other, even when they were in the same in-country mission. The merger of the AU Commission for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (CPAPS) will serve to address some of these issues. Still, it will take time to turn around the cultural barriers within the continental body to achieve this harmonised approach to address violent conflicts and their aftermath across the continent to achieve *Silencing the Guns*. The AU has come to the recognition that implementing effective peacebuilding and transitional justice processes is a necessary prerequisite to any exit strategy for a military intervention, which is at the heart of *Silencing the Guns*.

Unconstitutional Changes of Government and the Need to Operationalise the ASF

In 2021, it was evident that a culture of complacency had afflicted the APSA institutions. It is evident that the much-lauded AU APSA Roadmap 2016–2020 and the campaign to Silence the Guns by 2020 did not materialise as anticipated by the continental leadership. The key problem underlying this is linked to the internal leadership, operational challenges within the AU Commission, the AU member states' collective failure, and the continued outsourcing of Africa's peace and security processes and systems. The AU's slow pace in taking over the financing and implementation of APSA processes and institutions is at the heart of the failure to achieve *Silencing the Guns*, a stated policy objective of the AU.

The AU's Accra Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa, which was adopted on 17 March 2022 in Accra, Ghana, in paragraph 8 committed the union and all member states to:

strongly reject any form of internal or external interference on peace and security matters in Africa and warn those who finance coups, foreign fighters and mercenaries in member states that their nefarious actions will not be tolerated; encourage member states to address peace and security challenges through mutual support within the continent as well as ... underscore the need for the full operationalization and deployment of the African Standby Force (ASF) to effectively undertake its mandate" (AU 2022).

The epidemic of unconstitutional changes of governments exposes the self-evident weakness of African states, which is partly due to a failure to buttress and strengthen the continental and regional institutions that are mandated to protect and sustain peace and security across the continent. Corrosion of the structural integrity of states across the continent in this regard is a function of the weakness of intergovernmental institutions, which have been established to guide countries and their societies. In this regard, it is necessary to deploy the ASF to implement its mandate in contributing towards stabilising these crisis-ridden societies across the African continent.

The Politics of the Operationalisation of ASF

To reinforce this right to intervene, the PSC Protocol also stipulated the establishment of an African Standby Force, which was initially due to be operationalised in 2010. The ASF comprises five brigades from Africa's sub-regions: South, East, Central, West, and North. In addition, the initial intention was for the AU to operationalise its own Pan-African Standby Rapid-Reaction force composed of 15 000 troops by 2010. The ASF's Rapid Deployment Capability (RDC) concept was developed to frame how the AU would intervene in situations that required urgent attention, notably situations of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and

genocide, which would contribute towards Silencing the Guns. However, the further development of the ASF-RDC concept would require the development of a broad range of modalities so that the force could tailor itself to address the peacekeeping and peace-enforcement demands of the African continent. These barriers and obstacles relating to the process have hampered and continually accounted for the postponement of the official pronouncement of the full operational capability (FOC) of the ASF.

It gradually became self-evident that the African Standby Force could only be effective if there were the political will to operationalise it, which would require ensuring harmonised frameworks to ensure the close co-ordination and co-operation between the AU's defence and foreign affairs ministries. There is also a need to mobilise for a stable source of funding for the force. The slow pace of achieving this integrated approach is partly why the efforts to silence the guns have faced serious constraints and limitations. The intention was that the ASF would co-operate, where appropriate, with the UN and other international partners to enhance the deployment capability within the African continent.

In October 2010, the operational readiness of the ASF and the decisionmaking process utilised by the PSC were tested through the first of a series of command post exercises (CPX) called the AMANI Africa (AA) II Exercise. AMANI¹ conducted a simulation exercise on how the various pillars of APSA would interact with each other, including incorporating early warning information from CEWS to the decisionmaking processes of the PSC and, ultimately, the processes that lead up to the deployment of the ASF.

As of 2021, despite multiple 'dress-rehearsal' events, the ASF remained a work in progress. Whether the deployment of the SADC Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) constitutes an *ad hoc* activation of the Southern African Development Community Brigade (SADCBRIG) as the Southern African component of the ASF still needs to be clarified. Nevertheless, it is significant that the eight troop-contributing countries from the SADC region,

1 'Amani Africa' is a Kiswahili phrase that means 'peace in Africa'.

who compose SAMIM, would constitute the core of a SADCBRIG element within the framework of the ASF.

Despite the reluctance of AU member states to fully embrace the ASF, due to fears of its potential use to infringe upon their sovereignty, the policy arguments against such short-sightedness and political self-indulgence must continue to be made as the reason why the first iteration of the Silencing the Guns initiative was not successful across the continent. The insecurity in most crises in African countries, such as the civil war in Sudan which escalated in April 2023, the Tigray-Ethiopia conflict between 2020 and 2022, and the scourge of violent extremism in Mozambique, has had spill-over effects into neighbouring countries such as South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Eswatini and Lesotho, as well as to other parts of the continent. There is an absence of a dedicated framework for intervening and robustly securing countries and regions, as stipulated in the roadmap to Silencing the Guns. The AU Commission, in partnership with African civic society organisations, needs to scale up its advocacy agenda on the operationalisation of the ASF as a pathway to Silencing the Guns, notwithstanding efforts in states to place the issue on the back burner in the AU Commission perpetually.

Silencing the Guns through Regional Reconciliation: Mapping a Different Approach

An overriding challenge in Silencing the Guns is the need to recognise that Africa's conflicts tend to spill across borders, affecting communities in more than one country. These cases challenge the reductionist understandings of traditional interstate and intra-state wars across the continent, which remains a blind spot in the continuing framing of the revitalised 2030 Roadmap for Silencing the Guns. The regional nature of conflicts means that the notion of civil war is anachronistic, with increasingly limited descriptive utility if the guns are to be ultimately silenced across the African continent. Intra-state conflicts, more often than not, have an interstate and regional dimension in the way that they are resourced and executed. Studies show that more than half of violent conflicts in Africa can be linked to conflicts in

neighbouring states. Conflicts do not stop at the border, but spill over, and these linkages are evident in a range of “interconnected political, socio-economic and cultural factors” (Maina & Razia 2012:20).

Historically, interventions to promote peacebuilding and reconciliation have been overly state-focused and unable to address the cross-border dimensions of conflict in Africa. State-centric security interventions – such as conflict management and peace enforcement operations – merely address the symptoms rather than the deeper causes of Africa’s conflicts. Even more self-defeating, cross-border and joint peace and security operations focus resources on military operations – such as those targeting Boko Haram, Al Shaabab, or the South Sudan conflict system. These state-centric and over-militarised approaches overlook the structural origins of the conflicts that manifest themselves so violently across borders (Maina & Razia 2012:20). Military operations are only a temporary stopgap measure for containing violence and are ultimately doomed to fail, which is why the first iteration of the Silencing the Guns campaign failed within the designated time frame.

If the revitalised 2030 Silencing the Guns roadmap is to succeed, it must be anchored, among other interventions, in processes that address the violations of the past as a prerequisite for laying the foundation for future coexistence necessary for promoting stability. Specifically, as the African Union Transitional Justice Policy (AUTJP) stipulates, Silencing the Guns will only be able to achieve traction if “transnational conflicts that form mutually reinforcing linkages with each other across state borders” are addressed directly. This suggests that these regional linkages are so strong and interdependent that a change in dynamics in one conflict often affects neighbouring ones (Ramsbotham 2012:32). Specifically, networks of interdependence are evident in the cross-border supply routes for arms, illicit trade, and human trafficking. In some instances, ethnic groups living in different countries can serve as networks for this illicit trade, which can contribute towards fuelling conflicts.

Case studies from across the continent have provided insights into the regionalisation of violent conflict and how this can generate new disputes and enflame pre-existing tensions and forestall Silencing the Guns. For instance, the 1994 Rwandan genocide, often viewed in isolation, is a contributing and exacerbating factor to the conflicts and violence in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the tense security situation in Burundi's borders (Zounmenou & Kok 2012). Similarly, the conflict system generated by the crisis in Tigray in northern Ethiopia also drew in Eritrea and implicated Sudan. South Sudan has had a spillover effect into northern Uganda and Kenya, as well as affecting the Horn of Africa in terms of the displacement of victims and survivors. The military coup crises in the Sahel region harm the countries that have been affected, including Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Guinea. The protracted political tension in Zimbabwe, as well as the emergence of violent extremism in Mozambique, has precipitated refugee flows into neighbouring countries, which has implications for the regional stability of Southern Africa.

In effect, Africa's conflicts function through regional conflict systems, and the Silencing the Guns strategies deployed to confront them need to adopt a regional approach. As discussed above, in the Great Lakes, Horn of Africa, and Sahel areas, regional conflict systems are notoriously difficult to stabilise because state actors do not adopt co-ordinated regional strategies to promote and consolidate peace (Ramsbotham 2012:32). Since conflicts, atrocities, and violations straddle borders, regional reconciliation processes must be convened across borders to achieve Silencing the Guns. This would require implementing processes of truth recovery, accountability, and redress across borders as preliminary processes to the pursuit of regional reconciliation (Murithi & Opiyo 2014). In addition, this includes processes that provide transboundary psychosocial support and trauma processing among war-affected victims and survivors of gender-based violence, as a pathway to healing and the improvement of their wellbeing. These are cross-border processes without any precedent at the level of Africa's international relations, particularly about the implementation of Pan-African transitional

justice and reconciliation interventions. Therefore, we also need to consider which actors may be best placed to implement such processes.

Formal regional reconciliation processes tend to be facilitated by state actors. Typically, it will be necessary to utilise continental and regional institutions, including the AU and RECs, to promote regional reconciliation across borders. These institutions would derive their legitimacy, and hence formality, from the authority of the sovereign states that constitute them. Formal regional reconciliation processes could be facilitated by the state or by intergovernmental bodies, such as ECOWAS, the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), SADC, the East African Community (EAC), and the continental body, the AU.

Informal regional reconciliation processes would operate outside state structures. This would include civil society and social movement interventions in regional reconciliation. In addition, the Pan-African diaspora can also play a role in actively participating in and supporting regional reconciliation initiatives. Typically, informal regional reconciliation processes can complement the more formal processes, and ideally, they should proceed without the sanction and imprimatur of the affected states. In practice, state actors will want to be informed of potential informal regional reconciliation processes due to their claim of sovereignty over the territories.

A key challenge in implementing regional reconciliation will be the persistent tendency to seek recourse and to retreat into the cocoon of state sovereignty. Despite the consistent rhetoric by Africa's leaders about the importance of regional integration, the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the pending adoption of the African Union Protocol on the Free Movement of People, and the prospective issuing of an African Union passport to all citizens means that a retreat into the shield of state sovereignty is a short-sighted posture. This will ultimately be self-defeating and a key reason why the initial Silencing the Guns initiative had limited outcomes. Evidentially, the notion of regional reconciliation needs to be further developed to advance our understanding of how to frame and operationalise

efforts to achieve sustainable peace and security in Africa and fulfil the objectives of Silencing the Guns.

Citizen Participation in Silencing the Guns

Silencing the Guns in Africa will not be achieved without active and continuous citizen participation. Africa can move beyond the fraught relationship between citizens and its states, to forge an optimal continental force that proactively influences and shapes the global agenda. At the continental level, African citizens will need to become much more actively engaged in pursuing Silencing the Guns. In this context, citizenship relates to the rights and obligations that individuals are entitled to in a defined political community (Bereketeab 2012). The imposition of the nation state on Africa has also rendered citizenship a source of division, fragmentation, exclusion, and exploitation. The progressive trend towards a deepening continental integration can contribute towards the deterritorialisation of citizenship, as cross-border processes of political and socio-economic exchange reduce the saliency of traditional exclusivist state-centric political configurations. It is, therefore, necessary to inculcate a notion of continental citizenship, based on the principles of Pan-Africanism, which through citizens' agency can promote and agitate for Silencing the Guns.

The divisions, fissures, and exclusions created by the state can be transcended by forging a regional or Pan-African citizenship. This should be encouraged because, "types of citizenship proliferate continuously that it is possible to identify dual citizenship and transnational citizenship, corporate citizenship and global citizenship" (Bereketeab 2012). If it is effectively managed, the overlap of identities between Africa's neighbouring countries can become a focal point for forging a peaceful, unified, prosperous, and integrated continent, in line with the Silencing the Guns initiative, rather than reinforcing the institutions and structures that fuel exclusion, division, and conflict. Citizen mobilisation, engagement, and participation can contribute towards mitigating the violence that is afflicting societies across the continent, as well as the democratic reversals that are currently threatening to undermine the progressive gains

that the continent has achieved, in terms of consolidating the rule of law and the pursuit of human rights and gender equality.

The requirement to consolidate continental responsibility also invokes the need for active Pan-African citizenship in confronting self-defeating practices where they persist, and for holding Africa's so-called leaders to account through the self-ascribed promotion of 'Civic Pan-Africanism' as a vehicle to mobilise continent-wide leadership to pursue Silencing the Guns. This can be achieved by forging and building of solidarity networks with other societal actors from the diaspora around the world.

The AU's Silencing the Guns Unit, under the leadership of the AU High-Representative for Silencing the Guns, Ambassador Mohamed Ibn Chambas, convened an expert roundtable entitled: "A Decade of Silencing the Guns in Africa" from 30 August to 1 September 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya, which brought together analysts, researchers, and practitioners from across the continent. The objective of the expert roundtable was to critically examine the achievements, gaps, and challenges of the Silencing the Guns initiative to identify the strategic efforts that should be the focus of the next iteration of the campaign. In addition, the roundtable generated insights that would be utilised by the AU high-representative for Silencing the Guns to refine his vision for initiative, by assessing the tangible gains made in the period 2013-2020, as well as identifying shortcomings and difficulties and enumerating the baseline indicators for gauging the transition towards the five broad areas of the master roadmap towards the 2030 timeline.

Conclusion

This chapter assessed the AU's case for reframing and reorienting the African Union's Silencing the Guns initiative to achieve peace, security, and governance through transitional justice interventions. Looking ahead to the next two decades of the AU, the gradual implementation of the Silencing the Guns initiative and Agenda 2063 requires a more pronounced synergy between the processes of societal transformation through the effective

implementation of peace, security, governance, and trade policies that leverage the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). To achieve the spectrum of goals stipulated in Agenda 2063, it will be necessary to achieve or improve the trajectory towards Silencing the Guns across the African continent. The goals outlined in Agenda 2063 are mutually dependent and reinforcing because the absence of peaceful societies can lead to tensions which will systematically undermine the pursuit of the continent's aspirational goals.

This in effect means that it is crucial to pursue Silencing the Guns to enhance and strengthen efforts to attain the other spectrum of goals and objectives highlighted in Agenda 2063. In addition, a lesson emerging from the AU's 20 years of operations and efforts to operationalise Silencing the Guns is that the peace, security, governance, and transformation of any country on the continent can only be achieved by ensuring the security and governance of all. Thus, every African is a guardian of their fellow Africans, which reaffirms the notion of Pan-African solidarity. Without a genuine commitment across the entire AU system to facilitate and enable this synergy, the pursuit of the Pan-African vision of a peaceful and prosperous continent, as stipulated in Agenda 2063, will remain an elusive aspiration.

This chapter argued that, despite the growing acknowledgment of the regional nature of conflicts in Africa, there is still a lack of uptake of the AU Transitional Justice Policy and the promotion of regional reconciliation by AU member states. Therefore, during its first 20 years of operation, the AU's interventions relating to the promotion of peace and Silencing the Guns have only had a limited impact on the efforts to address the broad dimensions of regionalised conflict systems. This chapter assessed the case for reframing the Silencing the Guns approach and emphasised the need to implement the AUTJP through national ownership of transitional justice processes. It also involved identifying the role of RECs in leading and driving regional reconciliation through the enumeration of the practicalities and modalities of implementing cross-border redress and accountability processes. The self-sabotaging reluctance of nation states to devolve their sovereignty and

adopt processes that might be seemingly outside of their sphere of authority and control (through the establishment of cross-border institutions) will be the primary obstacle to implementing regional reconciliation and achieving Silencing the Guns. Indeed, this will ultimately further delay continental integration.

The chapter also assessed how, in the absence of a genuine belief in the intentions of neighbouring countries, it becomes difficult to achieve regional integration. This is currently the situation that bedevils Africa's sub-regions and undermines the continent's unity of purpose and the progressive fulfilment of the Silencing the Guns initiative. Regional integration requires a high degree of co-ordination and harmonisation of policy agendas, and the focused involvement of Africa's leaders and government co-operation as well as proactive citizen participation in engaging and supporting Silencing the Guns. The adoption of AfCFTA and the prospective implementation of the AU Protocol on the Free Movement of People are important vehicles that can guide the continent on its journey towards increasing peace through trade and an exchange of views.

As the AU continues its journey towards the next 20 years, it is evident that Pan-African consciousness will not emerge through wishful thinking, and it will still need to be proactively fostered through introspective work and processes which support African people to unlearn their propensity toward designating fellow human beings as the 'other'. Concretely, the work of building a Pan-African society and fulfilling Agenda 2063 needs to be further enhanced through open discussions in family settings, in schools, and at places of work, worship, and trade. Specifically, a degree of persistence will be required to continue to make the case for the Pan-African interconnectedness of the peoples of the continent, because centuries of confining Africans within Westphalian nation states has rendered the fictional nation state units 'real' in the minds of African citizens.

There are pockets of resistance to this statist straight-jacket, as citizens across the continent are already leading the charge of embracing their Pan-African identity. In this regard, the centrality of citizen participation in the shaping and framing of

an African future in which the guns are genuinely silent cannot be understated. African citizens are the essential and primary agents of the continent's state and regional structures, and the emphasis needs to be placed on their active engagement and participation in further deepening a revitalised sense of Pan-Africanism which will in turn serve as a key driver for transforming the African continent over the next 20 years, through Silencing the Guns.

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Chapter 17

Silencing the Guns in Africa from an Algerian Perspective

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Introduction

The report presented at the opening session of the annual African Union (AU) summit held in Addis Ababa in February 2020 under the theme ‘Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa’s Development’ painstakingly admitted “the failure of the engagement taken in 2013 to put an end to all the wars in Africa by 2020” (Algérie-eco 2020). The AU extended this initiative until 2030 during the 14th extraordinary session of its assembly on Silencing the Guns held in December 2020 in Johannesburg, South Africa because of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the failure to consolidate peace, prevent violent extremism, foster democracy, and boost economic progress, has greatly hampered some gains in achieving peace and security in Africa.

Such a bitter observation was not surprising, as Africa’s ambitions seemed overwhelming from the outset. Indeed, the Lusaka Roadmap to End Conflicts, adopted in 2016, pledged not to pass the burden of conflicts to the next generation. According to

a report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the consecration of Silencing the Guns (STG) as the flagship initiative of the AU's Agenda 2063 is emphatically initiated "to end all wars, conflicts, and gender-based violence, and to prevent genocide" (UNDP 2021:5).

Africa has accounted for 47% of the total armed conflicts in the world, with 15 conflicts since the Addis Ababa summit on STG. It accounted also for 42 socio-political crises out of 100 recorded worldwide in 2021 (Relief Web 2022). Africa continues to struggle with non-state armed violence and transnational organised crime, as non-state actors are responsible for more than 75% of these conflicts worldwide. As a result of these conflicts, African civilians and armed groups own over 40 million small arms and light weapons, while state institutions hold fewer than 11 million (Musau 2019). In addition, arms trade and circulation are widespread, due to the looting by militias of the huge arsenal estimated at 23 million arms left after the tragic downfall of the Libyan regime in 2011, the multiplication of terrorist groups, foreign military interventions, and the smuggling of weapons into the African continent.

State conflicts, tribal violence fuelled by 'ethno-religious' cleavages, political and economic tensions, as well as terrorism have not only been widespread, but have left thousands of human casualties in the Sahel-Sahara, Horn of Africa, and Great Lakes regions. As of 31 March 2023, there were approximately 11.71 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the region – mainly in Burundi, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan. This is despite sustained efforts displayed by African countries, the AU's Peace and Security Council, and foreign military assistance. For instance, the deadliest state-based conflict in Africa in 2021 – between the Ethiopian government and the rebel group Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) – caused more than 8 600 killed in the same year (Statista 2023). Moreover, a report released by the Global Peace Index in 2022 revealed that Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Somalia ranked among the top ten countries worldwide most impacted by terrorism (The Armed Conflict Survey 2022).

Definitions of armed conflicts are complex, varied, and somehow contradictory. However, the nature, impact, and logic of conflicts considered here are state-based conflicts. Such conflicts are characterised by contested disputes over government and/or territory, involving the use of armed force and with at least one party being a state, to use the definition proposed by Júlia Palik (2002). This categorisation falls within conflicts that erupted between African countries, usually over border disputes or regional leadership rivalries. Non-state conflicts, not involving the direct implication of states, refer to what we label “aggregate violence” (Iratni 2023). This notion pertains literally to a specific category that was formed by several separate elements. In sociological terms, this notion refers to a group, a class, or a cluster and broadly to socio-occupational aggregated individuals that share similar kinds of occupation. This aggregate category pertains to collective groups using non-peaceful means to attain political objectives, to impose ideological values and behaviours, or to seek economic interests and social advantages. Thus, tribal conflicts and terrorism fall into the category of violent aggregate interests.

Another type of conflict, omitted by Palik’s study and neglected by other researchers and writings engaging global conflicts in Africa, pertains to liberation struggles or the fight against colonialism, as highlighted by the case of Western Sahara. This issue has been the focus of Algeria’s concerns with the persistence of tensions and the potential risks of instability in the Maghreb-Sahel region. Thus, the growing insecurity in Africa that threatens the foundations of the states but also their citizens and undermines the economic and social progress of their peoples has incited AU, and other continental or regional institutions to strive for the eradication of arms from the African continent. From the Lusaka roadmap incepted in 2016 to the AU summit held in Addis Ababa in February 2020, the issue of Silencing the Guns has been imperative, and a source of hope for all African states, peoples, and civil societies to put an end to conflicts, violence, and political instability on the continent.

The objective of the AU’s initiative is ultimately to make Africa a hub for economic development and an active actor in the

world geostrategic configuration that is emerging from the rapid and deep international mutations induced by the destructive COVID-19, and the disastrous war in Ukraine. Africa has certainly the resources to meet these challenges, especially as this continent is witnessing a demographic bulge. In addition, the continent has recorded high rates of economic growth by some African countries in the last few years, and the world major powers may woo the African states in the light of the looming East/West confrontation.

It is noteworthy to recall that Algeria has incepted soft initiatives, through conciliation and reconciliation policies, offering opportunities for social and economic integration to those who took arms against the state. All these policies aimed to silence the guns in its territory for over a decade, following a violent upsurge that occurred in the late 1980s and fought terrorism alone, far from any support and in diplomatic isolation. In addition to operations intended to eradicate terrorist groups militarily, Algeria initiated the policy of National Reconciliation and Civil Concord in 2005 to permit the repentance of terrorist groups under some conditions (Algerian Ministry of Interior 2005). In parallel, it carried out a deradicalisation policy to prevent the brainwashing of youngsters by jihadist groups or their recruitment by terrorist cells based in the Middle East such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or Al-Qaeda.

Externally, Algeria has displayed intensive efforts to ensure peace and stability in the Maghreb region through its role as a decisive and responsible broker. It struck a peaceful settlement of the Malian crisis in 2015, and searched for a political solution to Libya's conflict, based on national reconciliation and inclusive dialogue, away from foreign meddling and military interference. Moreover, it has played a leading role in strengthening the Sahel-Sahara security mechanisms, consolidating the AU's Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), and inducing AU members to endorse its global strategy to fight terrorism, affiliated smuggling networks, and organised crime through military – but also political, economic, and cultural – means. As it appears, Algeria's perspective concerning the implementation of the AU's efforts to end conflicts and all forms of violence from the African continent yields somehow a coherent and persuasive approach, despite

the complexity of the security issues in Africa, their enduring character, and transnational impact.

This chapter encompasses three distinctive but intertwining analytical parts. The first part describes Algeria's conceptions of conflicts and organised transnational crime by focusing on Algerian criticisms against the propagation of radical Islam and its violent practices as well as against the colonial legacy, marked essentially by the long-standing and protracted conflict in Western Sahara. The second part reviews the contents, and the principles of the strategy Algeria has carried out to silence the guns through a combination of military approach and soft and pacific measures conducted through the policies of national reconciliation, youth deradicalisation, public awareness through education, and media dissemination. The third part delves into the appreciation and evaluation of the efforts invested by Algeria to reach a continent free of conflicts by consolidating regional and continental security mechanisms and implementing concrete measures to silence the guns in Africa.

Algeria's Perceptions of Conflicts and Organised Violence

Based on the perspectives of the Algerian leaders, religious extremism and its violent manifestations, and the issue of the decolonisation of Western Sahara, constituted the main sources of instability and tensions in the Maghreb region, as well as the main reason for the proliferation and the use of arms.

Religious Extremism and Jihadist Manifestations: Alien Ideologies

Given its Jacobin tendencies and social character, the Algerian state, ever since its independence in 1962, after a long-standing and bitter war against French colonialism, became omnipresent in the economic and cultural spheres. It retained a strict hold of religious public expressions, controlled the construction of mosques, and collected funds for charity purposes, notably by religious associations. Imams served as civil servants, and the conduct of Friday prayers came under the tight supervision

of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, while the assets (*habous*) of private religious associations were under public ownership and management.

When the violent rise of Islamist radicalism emerged in Algeria during the late 1980s, the authorities were caught off guard by the phenomenon. However, signs of religious extremism had already begun to surface subtly, spreading through proselytising discourse in educational institutions and the visible presence of Algerian youth adopting Afghan-inspired appearances. These public exposures were galvanised and influenced by the Islamist revolution in Iran (1979) and the return to Algeria of young Islamist militants who fought the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan that started in September of the same year. This was after their exposure to jihad precepts and guerrilla training from the Peshawar-based camps run by Taliban fighters. These Afghan-bred Islamists came to constitute the leading nucleus of the Algerian Islamic Groups (GIA), which engaged in violent actions in protest of the cancellation of the second round of the legislative elections in late 1991, according to the leaders of the Islamist movement (Boukraa 2009).

The Algerian rulers justified this cancellation by the declared intention of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) to set up a theocratic state and to ban secular expressions and democracy, which were regarded as 'impious' (*kufr*). The Algerian official perceived terrorism as the most serious threat to national security, a phenomenon alien to the religious and cultural values of Algerian society, without any similarities or links with the religion of the ancestors. From this perspective, the nature of the Algerian regime, illiteracy, youth unemployment, or economic crisis may not explain the causes of breeding terrorism. The ferment of terrorism lies in ideologies imported from the Middle East, whether through the elements who fought in Afghanistan and Iraq or through zealous preaching of Salafi theologians broadcasted by 'channel satellites' based in the Gulf countries. Salafism, deriving from Wahabism, a school of thought initiated by a Saudi Arabian preacher, a relative of the Saudi King, outlines an apparent attachment to the teachings of *salaf* (ancestors), and exalts an ascetic practice of religion. Many theorists of jihad

attributed the resort to violent actions to the precepts of this religious thought.

Algerian official rhetoric regarded Salafism as rigorous beliefs and rigid practices, not compatible with the Malikite rite familiar to the Maghreb people, ever since the arrival of Islam in this region in the late 7th Century. Malikism, a doctrine inspired by the teachings of Malik Ibn Anas (8th Century), sprung from the Muslim law practised in Medina during the era of the prophet Muhammad, which accords great importance to individual opinions. This ritual, which spread in north and sub-Saharan regions, and which expresses tolerance and simple religious practices, was melded with local culture, folklore, and way of thought, and mixed with *maraboutic* ritual teachings of brotherhood cells (Zawaya). Bouabdallah Ghoulamalah, Algerian minister of religious affairs, stated in 2012 that Algerians “are neither Salafi nor Shia” (Liberté 2012).

Moreover, the Algerian rulers accused foreign hands of being responsible for the intrusion of Salafism, and terrorist groups in their country, thereby undermining its stability. They elucidate why foreign powers singled out Algeria, citing its strategic geographical location and abundant oil and gas reserves, as well as its principled stance on global justice, anti-colonialism, and opposition to Western hegemony. Algeria has consistently advocated for just causes worldwide, resisting colonialism and condemning Israel’s aggressive policies against the Palestinian people.

The danger of Salafism does not consist in the radicalisation of the adepts of this ideology as such but in the risk of propagating intolerance, cultural regression, and ignorance that may undermine the foundations of Algerian Islam, which is considered as moderate and more open to other ways of thought. This type of obscurantism spread by Salafism seems worrying, as a survey conducted by the Arab Barometer revealed that 60% of those interviewed in selected Arab countries claimed their respect for sharia (Islamic law), and 55% would not approve the nomination of a woman to the position of president or prime minister (Iratni 2014).

The Western Sahara: A Remnant of Colonialism

During his call for thwarting the manoeuvres that seek to weaken the role of the AU in conflict resolution, Algerian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sabri Boukadoum maintained that “The non-elimination of the remnants of colonialism... still prevent us from achieving our goal, which consists in silencing guns in our continent” (Algerian Embassy 2021). In respect of colonial legacy, he referred to the issue of Western Sahara, the oldest colony in Africa (Ibid). Given its experience as a colony and its commitment to support the struggle of African peoples to recover their sovereignty, Algeria expressed its backing of the right of the Saharawi people for self-determination, following the declaration on decolonisation adopted by the United Nations in 1960 (Iratni 2015). It also strongly supported the resolution taken in December 1967, inviting Spain, as the colonial power, to take immediate measures, which led to the independence of Western Sahara.

After Spain’s refusal and denial to implement the UN mandate related to the referendum for self-determination in the Western Sahara, and Morocco’s takeover of this territory following the Madrid agreements of November 1975, Algeria – according to its principles – expressed its political support for the struggle of the Saharawi liberation movement, Polisario Front (PF). It also tried to help the Saharawi people to alter the *fait accompli* and claim the implementation of a referendum on the right of the Saharawi people for self-determination (Iratni 2014). For the Algerian leadership, the Western Sahara issue is a long-standing conflict between the Polisario Front and Morocco, and Algeria has nothing to do with this Spanish colonial legacy, as the Alawite Kingdom has repeatedly claimed in international forums.

Thus, they consider this conflict as a remnant of colonialism, which is contributing to the risks of destabilising the Maghreb region through armed clashes involving, intermittently, the Moroccan troops and the guerrillas of the Polisario Front, as occurred in 2021–2022. In addition, riots and violent clashes erupted between Saharawi youngsters and Moroccan security forces in the occupied territory of Western Sahara in 2005 and at the Gdeim Izik camp in October 2010. The well-known

American scholar Noam Chomsky considered this Saharawi long-month upsurge as the first manifestation of the “Arab Spring revolutions” (Democracy Now 2011). Algeria’s support for the Saharawi people’s cause increased after the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) officially recognised the self-proclaimed Saharawi Republic (SADR) in 1976.

Western Sahara may become a hot issue if Africa becomes the theatre of the looming East/West Cold War politics, as a possible consequence of the Ukraine–Russia crisis. Some compelling evidence for the renewal of Cold War hostility already exists, such as the renewed and ongoing violent skirmishes between the Polisario Front and the Moroccan forces that started in 2021. Thus, the international community should make more efforts to find a solution to the Western Sahara conflict. The AU, which has formally recognised the Saharawi Republic as a full member in its Constitutive Act, and which supports the role of the UN in achieving the decolonisation of Western Sahara, must urge the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to assume its full responsibility to implement the Saharawi people’s right to self-determination. It should also facilitate the empowerment of the mandate of the United Nations Mission Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), including the respect of human rights in parts of Western Sahara under Moroccan domination. Algerian Prime Minister Abdelaziz Djerad declared at the AU summit held in December 2020, that the objectives of “silencing the guns” cannot be actualised without “the eradication of the residues of colonialism in Africa” and “allowing the Saharawi people to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination through a free and fair referendum in the Sahara” (Hekking 2020).

A Global and Coherent Strategy Against Internal Violence

The strategy developed by Algeria to combat terrorism and its affiliated networks of smuggling arms, drugs, and human beings combines military means that are regarded as necessary, as well as soft measures that focus on eradicating the motivations for

terrorism and organised crime through socio-economic and cultural interventions (Iratni 2017).

An Imperative Military Option

Given the insurrection and violent terrorism that marked nearly the whole 1990s – which resulted in thousands of casualties, economic damages amounting to \$20 billion, and a traumatic experience for a whole generation – the Algerian leadership fought terrorism militarily and ‘with no mercy’ until its eradication, according to official rhetoric. This struggle proved strenuous because of a context marked by a serious and decade-long economic crisis, due to the dwindling of oil revenues, which constituted Algeria’s main source of foreign revenue. Algeria also fought terrorism alone, as its neighbours and foreign powers demonstrated no interest in the phenomenon.

Therefore, the fight against terrorism became continuous, through the mobilisation of Algerian security forces to mainly secure national borders and stop the incursions of terrorist groups from northern neighbouring countries (Libya and Tunisia) and from the Sahara (Niger, Mali, and Mauritania). Algeria confronted an ‘arc of fire’, constituted by the spread of terrorism in the Maghreb and the Sahel-Sahara region. It still faces some incursions from terrorist groups with links to Mali. These groups include the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara, and Jama’at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimeen, an umbrella group formed after the unification of the Sahara Branch of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Al-Murabitoun, Ansar al-Dine, and the Macina Liberation Movement.

In general, smuggling networks for goods, food items, and even substances like hashish are widespread in cross-border practices. However, the alarming trend indicates that terrorist groups are increasingly involved in the trafficking of arms and humans. The former (smugglers) have the expertise and knowledge of the location and benefit from local complicities, while the latter (terrorists) have gun power and money coming from ransoms obtained in exchange for the release of hostages, who are mainly Europeans. These smuggling networks threaten

the stability of the borders situated in the east of Algeria (Tunisia and Libya), in the western parts (Morocco), and in the Sahara (Mauritania, Mali, and Niger). Armed groups not only use weapons to protect themselves and sustain their illicit activities, but also significantly harm the national economy. Their actions diminish public funds allocated to subsidise essential household items such as milk, semolina, flour, cooking oil, and gasoline, which are critical for many citizens.

Algeria consolidates its military posts along its long and porous borders with troops, mobile patrols, electric surveillance devices, sophisticated cameras, and drones, to efficiently combat terrorist groups, the smuggling of arms and drugs, and human trafficking. Such measures enabled the Algerian security forces to eliminate or arrest jihadists as well as smugglers, and seize large quantities of arms coming from Sub-Saharan African countries. Since the January 2013 attack on the gas plant of Tiguentourine in the Saharan region of Algeria, the military reported the elimination of more than 6 000 terrorists between 2007 and 2021, of which 1 500 had different nationalities and diverse ideologies (Abid 2013).

According to statements issued by the Ministry of National Defence, Algerian security forces have eliminated 43 terrorists and arrested 593 elements involved in all kinds of assistance and support to terrorist groups in 2021-22. They also seized five batteries and a Strella 2M anti-aircraft missile system, 37 Kalashnikov rifles, 507 rifles of different types, 29 automatic guns, and five armatures for 60 mm-calibre mortar shells during the same period (Abi 2013). Arms used in terrorist operations in Algeria, Mali, and Côte d'Ivoire since 2015 were imported from Poland, Lebanon, Bulgaria, and the former Libyan military arsenal. These various and remote sources of supplies highlight the transnational dimension of arms smuggling, which dangerously threatens the security and stability of African countries. Nevertheless, according to the official rhetoric, only a very few remnants of terrorist organisations may still be operating in Algeria, without engaging in military operations. Thus, terrorist threat remains a challenge for the country, especially from the Sahel-Sahara-based AQIM. Indeed, in an interview in March

2023, the emir of AQIM, Mossab Al-Annabi, warned of an attempt to resume attacks in Algeria (Nasr 2023).

The Use of Soft Power

The Algerian authorities resorted to political, social, and cultural measures to efficiently counter terrorism and affiliated smuggling of arms, drugs, and human beings. Algerian media reported the surrender of terrorists after the enactment of the Law of Clemency (*rahma*) in 2005, while the civil concord law, approved by referendum in September 2009, granted amnesty to repentant terrorists who had not been involved in rape, massacres, or bombings in public places (Ikram 2015). The repentant terrorists have benefited from social integration and other financial inducements. In contrast, the victims of the national tragedy (designated as families of killed terrorists and victims of terrorism, as well as the beneficiaries of persons declared missing in that period) have also benefited from the financial compensation. The law on national reconciliation had a resounding international echo, since some countries threatened by terrorism have expressed their interest to learn from the Algerian experience. The former UN Secretary-general Ban Ki-moon declared during a visit to Algiers in March 2016, “What I learned from the policy of *rahma* has impressed me. Rather than remaining divided, Algeria has become united and supportive” (Relief Web 2016).

On the cultural level, the Algerian authorities initiated a deradicalisation programme aimed at propagating the precepts of tolerant Islam through educative, penitentiary institutions and media channels to prevent youngsters from being brainwashed by Salafist propaganda. In this vein, Abdelkader Messahel Minister of Maghreb African Affairs and the Arab League declared in 2016 that the strategy adopted by the Algerian authorities has permitted “to counter efficiently the extremist discourse and its insidious effects, and sensibly reduced its impact on the society, the youth in particular”. He cited this to support the fact that “a heavily reduced number of foreign terrorist combatants were issued from Algeria” (Radio Algerie 2016).

On the socio-economic level, the Algerian authorities initiated some projects, including loans with low interest rates and fiscal incentives for the youth to set up small enterprises and combat unemployment and idleness. These achievements became possible thanks to the increasing foreign revenues due to the spiral of oil prices in the 2000–2014 period. However, it is worth mentioning that the Algerian authorities implemented these soft measures in 2005–2006 as a complement to the imperative use of military instruments against terrorism, well before the AU endorsed them during the 2010 decade.

A 2021–2022 report released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) indicated that the Human Development Index (HDI) concerning Algeria has improved, as the country ranked 91 out of 191 countries, while the multidimensional poverty rate has decreased from 2.1% in 2013 to 1.4% in 2019 (AfDB 2023). The International Monetary Fund (IMF) expected the unemployment rate to reach 14.9% in 2022, according to the state-owned newspaper *El Moudjahid* (Demmad 2023). The Algerian government initiated a redundancy allocation for youngsters in 2021, which saw a regular increase in 2023. These facts concerned the period when Algeria, like other countries, faced harsh effects of COVID-19, and when the prices of oil (Algeria's main foreign earnings source) were dwindling, until a sudden rise resulting from the Ukraine–Russia war that started in March 2022.

Algeria's Contribution to Make Africa 'Free of Conflicts'

A statement from its foreign ministry confirmed that Algeria “subscribes to the realisation of the flagship project of the agenda 2063 on Silencing the Guns in Africa to achieve a continent free of conflict, and rid of the vestiges of colonialism” (MFA 2022). In this vein, Algeria participated actively in the implementation of this agenda, aiming at making Africa “integrated, peaceful and prosperous”, as well as a dynamic and influential actor in the world scene. Therefore, it contributed restlessly to consolidating regional as well as continental security mechanisms as developed

further below, and searching for specific measures to silence the guns in Africa. It contributed also to setting up and enhancing initiatives to ensure the economic and social development of the African continent.

Algeria did not send its army to intervene abroad or participate with contingents in the peacekeeping missions whether by the UN or the AU. This restriction referred to the Algerian security doctrine of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states. The amendment of the constitution in 2020 provided provisions for sending Algerian forces abroad under certain conditions, and in conformity with international legality (JORA 2020). However, Algerian troops participated in missions abroad, but only for strict humanitarian or logistic purposes.

Regional and Continental Security Arrangements

While regional co-operation in the security sector is imperative, Algeria appears resolute in utilising its capabilities without disregarding the contributions of the Sahel-Saharan countries. It also welcomes the participation of foreign powers as a complement, and not a substitution to the efforts of the Maghreb and Sub-Saharan States in fighting terrorism and transnational organised crime. Thus, Algeria has been the driving engine of co-ordinating the counter-terrorist operations in the Sahel-Sahara region through the Joint Command of the Chief of Staff set up with Mauritania, Niger, and Mali in 2021, and the Unity of Fusion and Liaison (UFL) to exchange information on terrorist groups.

Algeria tried to invigorate these structures to compensate for the weakness of the armies of its Sahel-Saharan partners in fighting terrorism, particularly in the context of the fragmentation of the G5 Sahel, comprising Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, and created under the auspices of France in 2015. In addition, a security vacuum has prevailed in the Sahel region following the progressive withdrawal of French forces, because they failed to eradicate terrorism despite the injection of more than 5 000 French troops, since their intervention in North Mali in 2013.

Algeria committed to the establishment and success of APSA, through its contribution to the North African Regional Capacity (NARC), a component of the African Standby Force.¹ This aimed at the rapid deployment of troops and a prompt response to crises occurring in Africa. Moreover, Algiers hosts the African Centre of Studies and Research on Terrorism (CAERT), which has provided the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) with valuable research on terrorism and religious extremism. Algeria also hosts the headquarters of African Police (AFRIPOL) to co-ordinate the actions of African Police institutions in the field of combating transnational crime. These two African institutions provide valuable information and data that contribute to peace and security on the continent. The country proposed to the AU 2021 summit a new approach to fighting terrorism, based on:

1. the completion of the second programme dedicated to fighting terrorism following the memorandum related to APSA, which Algeria proposed in its status of the AU's co-ordinator on security issues. The AU entrusted Algeria with this mandate because of the country's experience in fighting terrorism and transnational crime;
2. the activation of the African Fund to finance the fight against terrorism, and peacekeeping operations in Africa; and
3. the inducement of African countries to implement the resolutions adopted by the UN and AU through Algerian diplomatic impulse, which aims at criminalising the payment of ransoms to terrorist groups in exchange for the release of hostages, and freeing the sources that provide such financial and logistic facilities.

1 One of the authors of the chapter, Prof Iratni, was a member of a team of experts invited to attend a military parade carried out by NARC forces in Tripoli (Libya) in August 2010 in the framework of fieldwork to prepare a report on the African Union Liaison Officer in the domain of Peace and Security for the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC). The NARC forces 'were believed' to have moved to Egypt after the downfall of President Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, according to unconfirmed sources. In addition, this team of African experts visited, from April to August 2010, the headquarters, the military infrastructures, training centres, and the civilian components that were created.

Media reported that terrorists of the Movement of the Unicity and Jihad (MUJAO) had kidnapped seven Algerian diplomats in Gao, Northern Mali in April 2012 (*Al Jazeera* 2012), and requested Algeria to pay \$15 million and free Islamist militants detained in Algerian prisons in exchange for the release of the diplomats (*George Herald News* 2012). Media also reported that the terrorists killed two of the abducted diplomats and that Algeria refused to yield to blackmail and expressed its commitment to the principle of not paying ransom to terrorists. Algeria was also exasperated by the payment of ransoms to AQMI to liberate the French hostage Pierre Camatte in February 2010, and to Ansar Al Islam wa Al Muslimeen in 2022. Accordingly, Abdelaziz Djerad, the Algerian prime minister at the time, expressed Algeria's worries concerning "the pursuit of transferring huge funds to terrorist groups, based on the payment of ransoms in exchange for the liberation of hostages. This practice undermines our efforts to fight terrorism" (*Ambassade d'Algérie à Bruxelles* 2020).

Boosting Continental Integration

With other AU members, Algeria launched the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), now the African Union Development Agency (AUDA), to free the continent from conflict and poverty through development projects initiated in the framework of the Agenda 2063 horizon, to mark the centennial anniversary of the foundation of AU. It contributed to setting up voluntary self-assessment of governance, as prescribed by the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). It supported other AU members to establish the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), to facilitate the increase of trade exchanges between African countries and the emergence of a common African market. To deliver on continental integration, Algeria initiated projects such as the framework of APSA and assisted through the following interventions:

1. The Trans-Sahara Highway, otherwise called the African Unity Road, links Algiers to Kano in Nigeria.
2. The Trans-Saharan Gas Pipeline links gas fields in Nigeria to European markets through Algerian territory. Such a scheme, with a capacity of 30 billion cm/y of natural gas, proved

particularly vital in light of the European need for energy due to the loss of Russian supplies because of the Ukraine–Russia war.

3. The Trans-Saharan Optical Fiber Backbone network is an underground fibre-optic link connecting Algeria with its Sub-Saharan neighbours, such as Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Chad (Project Portal (AfDB 2023)).
4. Algeria also financed small projects for unemployed youth in the Sahel region.
5. It also provided debt relief to African countries and pledged 1\$ billion at the AU summit held in February 2023 to finance development projects in Africa.

Peaceful Settlement of Conflicts

During a gathering with lecturers from the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Algiers, Abdelkader Messahel, the Algerian minister of foreign affairs reiterated his popular saying, “We know how conflicts start, but we do not know how they end”. Given the complexity of conflicts, their acuity, unpredictable outcomes, and the multiplicity of belligerent parties, as reflected in Algeria’s security doctrine, the best way to solve them relates to the rejection of foreign meddling and their military interventions.

Tribal tensions, power rivalries, scramble over natural resources, border disputes, and contradictory stakes of foreign powers explained the eruption of conflicts, their violent aspects, and sometimes-perennial character in Africa, including Libya. In the case of the Libyan civil war, Algerian diplomacy displayed intensive mediation efforts, favoured a peaceful settlement, and called for national reconciliation between belligerent parties. Algeria encouraged a regional solution, preferably within the AU’s experts on Libya, which Algeria helped to set up. It also favoured mediation within the framework of the UN to avoid an internal power scramble and foreign interference in Libya (Iratni 2022). It also called for an embargo on arms provided by foreign powers to conflicting parties in the Libyan crisis.

In the quest to facilitate peace in Libya, a conference was held in Berlin in January 2020, “to unequivocally, and fully

respect, and implement the arms embargo established by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1970/2011, including the proliferation of arms from Libya, and call on all international actors to do the same” (The Berlin Conference 2020). While the foreign powers continue to transfer arms to Libyan factions, the UN Secretary-general has accused them of breaching this embargo. In addition, the IRINI operation, launched by the European Union (EU) to enforce the arms embargo on Libya, failed to contribute to finding a peaceful solution to the Libyan crisis.

Algeria continues to plead for a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Western Sahara, according to the provisions of the UN resolutions consecrating the rights of the Saharawi people for self-determination. It also encourages direct negotiations between Morocco and the Polisario Front to implement the UN resolutions. Algeria chaired an international committee charged with following up on the implementation of the Algiers Peace Agreements to maintain the territorial integrity of Mali, satisfy the demands of the populations in the northern parts of the country, and stem the social ferment for the proliferation of terrorist groups and transnational organised crime. The most resounding success achieved by Algerian diplomacy was the effort towards finding a peaceful solution to the Malian crisis, reconciling the belligerent parties, and striking the June 2015 inclusive dialogue in Algiers.

Cultural Initiatives

Algeria launched religious training for students from the Sahel-Sahara region at the University of Adrar, close to the Malian border. It also opened an Islamic Institute in Tamanrasset, close to the frontier with Niger. It helped to create the Sahel League of Ulema (comprising predicators of Muslim law, preachers, and imams) to extirpate religious extremism from African societies by promoting the precepts of tolerant Islam.

Silencing the Guns in Africa: The Need for More Relevance and Interactivity

The dissemination of arms in Africa exacerbates conflicts at the upstream level; however, there are deep-rooted structural factors involved. The Silencing the Guns initiative seems not enough to get rid of conflicts in Africa; there must be a concerted attempt at eradicating smuggling and illicit trade of weapons and imposing an embargo on arms through UN resolutions. The crux of the problem resides in the necessity to extirpate the ferment breeding these violent crises, as well as to initiate public awareness campaigns, media coverage, and educational programmes to reveal the danger arms may pose to the foundations of states, the cohesion of societies, and human security.

The Relevance of Factors Increasing the Proliferation of Arms

To silence the guns, countries with industrial and military establishments have the duty and the obligation to respect arms embargoes. In transferring arms to Africa, these countries only enable the language of guns to prevail for so long, at the expense of peace and stability in the continent. By the same token, the manufacturing of various kinds of small arms and light weapons as well as homemade and artisanal production of weapons by 22 African countries remains a serious obstacle to ending the proliferation of arms in Africa. Put simply, having even a small weapon is always a public danger and a threat to the security of people.

At the downstream level, African regimes should be committed to initiating democratic processes, conducting fair elections, efficiently managing national economies, fighting corruption, settling border disputes, and reducing financial and military dependence on foreign powers. These conditions may seem titanic, but guns are not an option. The Silencing the Guns initiative might make limited headway if African leaders do not consistently fulfil their commitment to initiate these reforms, even if gradually. There is an urgent need to 'silence' the causes that feed conflicts to avoid arms shooting.

African regimes have a great responsibility and duty to respect the AU's engagement and fulfil its resolutions and recommendations. They should be committed to reporting progress on the implementation of the first ten-year plan of Agenda 2063, and assess achievements made in the framework of Africa's Development (NEPAD) towards sustained development for African people. They must stick to voluntary self-assessment of governance as prescribed by the APRM, and respect the principle against unconstitutional changes of government in Africa. Given the sluggish progress made in implementing the AU's recommendations regarding good governance, human rights, and peaceful power transitions, many programmes initiated by the AU, such as the Silencing the Guns initiative, face delays in meeting their deadlines. Since August 2020, power has changed unconstitutionally eight times in seven African countries: Gabon (August 2023), Niger (July 2023), Burkina Faso (January 2022), Sudan (October 2021), Guinea (September 2021), Chad (April 2021), and Mali (August 2020 and May 2021).

Since April 2023, Sudan has been embroiled in conflict as a civil war broke out between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The conflict concerns a thirst for power by the leaders of the two factions of the military: General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and Mohamed Hamdan "Hemedti" Dagalo. The case of Sudan is particularly significant and appalling, not only because of the number of victims but also because of power rivalries that occurred at the expense of the political stability and economic development of this already poor country. In addition, competing interests of foreign powers may lead to external military interventions in Sudan, and a possible *de facto* fragmentation of this state, as it happened in Libya.

Not Enough Light on the Silencing the Guns Initiative

Although north African countries, especially Algeria, have been very active in searching for a peaceful solution in Libya, the media in the region has not shed enough light on the STG initiatives, as the people and even some of the warring factions did not get sufficient information about the issue. In the Algerian media, for instance, there are regular reports on the situation in Libya

and security aspects are widely covered, including the massive arms trafficking along the common borders. The media probably underestimated the STG initiative, and even considered it as lacking appropriate details; however, the devil is in the details. After all, the media have a substantial role in raising awareness and sensitising the public on important issues.

The media in North Africa has advocated peaceful solutions through articles and reports. It is important to remember the appalling role of Radio des Mille Collines in the Rwandan genocide in 1994. Although the concepts of peace media and peace journalism are very new in the culture of this region, they are, in practice, gaining ground and understanding. There are now several publications of articles and commentaries, and the broadcast of television and radio programmes, featuring experts and politicians, drawing public attention to the dangerous impact of this conflict on peace and security in the region.

At the continental level, the educational and informative side, through social media tools, media conferences, and press releases, seems narrowly focused and underdeveloped. One proposal involves creating a comprehensive contact list encompassing various forms of African media and subsequently providing it with the required content. Moreover, there is a need to inject regional pools for rapid information flows across the continent. Stories on the media platforms need to be more relevant, and powerful in highlighting the virtues of the state of peace as an opportunity for development, security, and development. Ahead of Agenda 2063, the African continent must indulge in ending images of conflict, deprivation, and violence. A united and strong Africa, utterly engaged in respecting democratic values, social justice, and press freedom, constitutes the best impetus for silencing the guns and launching a new era of Afro-optimism.

Conclusion

The former AU High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa, Algerian Ramtane Lamamra, whose unit is now chaired by His Excellency the Ambassador of Ghana Mohamed Ibn Chambers,

points out that “notable progress has been made in conflict prevention, management and resolution in Africa, but several African countries remain caught in the vicious circle of violent conflict and its deadly consequences” (UN 2020). This vicious circle remains fuelled by colonial legacy, the lack of democracy, bad governance, ill management of the national economy, corruption, as well as foreign meddling in African affairs.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine have exacerbated famine, which proved the most dangerous threat to the survival of millions of Africans, and perhaps the current catalyst for more violent conflicts, and more use of arms in Africa. Therefore, there is an urgency to tackle food crises and climate disasters. Otherwise, Africa would face a catastrophe and popular upsurges, which even guns would be impotent to calm down. As UN Secretary-general António Guterres, speaking at the Global Food Security Call to Action in May 2022, warned, “If we do not feed people, we feed conflict”. Keeping the guns silenced must not be the concern of the AU and African state actors alone, but it must be the leitmotif of African citizens, as they are the first to suffer from violent conflicts, and the first to make sacrifices – even the most sacred and vital of them, including the loss of human lives. Therefore, civil societies through youth, women, and corporatist organisms should participate in public awareness campaigns, disseminate information, and initiate their proper projects to contribute to consolidating peace and promoting economic development.

The Algerian perspective, as a positive contribution to the Silencing the Guns initiative, delivers instructive lessons which other African states may follow. The Algerian experience stems from a long and bitter fight against terrorism and affiliated networks of smuggling, trafficking, and organised crime. It was not the fruit of a utopian design, but an expression of a generous and voluntary contribution to make the African continent free from violent conflicts and economic backwardness. The nomination of Ahmed Attaf as the new Algerian minister of foreign affairs in March 2023 may be a good indication and an

enhancement of Algeria's engagement in the STG project because he held this post during the so-called 'Black Decade'.²

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Chapter 18

Prioritising Human Security by the African Union at the Emergence of the New Global Hegemony

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Introduction

Human security concerns are primordial in addressing the peace and security challenges that the African continent is facing today. Human security encompasses, firstly, the protection of individuals as a strategic concern for national as well as international security; secondly, it spells out that the security conditions for people's development are not bound to traditional matters of national defence, law, and order, but rather encompass all political, economic, and social issues enabling a life free from risk and fear. The world is characterised by insecurity and full of threats on many fronts. Natural disasters, tenacious poverty, violent conflicts, protracted crises, epidemics, and economic recessions inflict adversities and undercut prospects for peace, stability, and sustainable development (UN 2018). Such crises are intricate, necessitating numerous forms of human insecurity.

When these challenges intersect, they can expand rapidly, transcending into all ways of people's existence, destroying entire communities, and crossing national borders. As noted in the United Nations (UN) General Assembly Resolution 66/290, "human security is an approach to assist Member States in identifying and addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood, and dignity of their people"

(UN 2018). It calls for “people-centered, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented responses that strengthen the protection and empowerment of all people” (ILO 2020).

The current Russia-Ukraine war has demonstrated the dire need for the African continent to prioritise and harness human security to guarantee sustainable peace, by recognising the social, economic, and political grievances that are often the root causes of conflict and societal violence in the continent (Galliolo 2015:19). The UN definition of human security is driven by the belief that everyone deserves the right to live with freedom from fear and want. As such, there is a need to prioritise the six areas of human security through programming and activities in Africa, especially at these critical moments when the world is on the brink of a global security quagmire.

The human security approach regards people as objects of intervention but also as providers of security. The African Union (AU) thus seeks to promote a sustainable and peaceful continent in which knowledge sharing and knowledge transfer are encouraged as tools to meet the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), AU Agenda 2063, and grassroots level peacebuilding (AU 2022). The fragility of African states’ self-sustainability and continuous dependence on other countries as a lifeline seem at stake. Therefore, African leaders should prioritise the security of their people at the heart of peacebuilding, recognising the various gripes that are often the root causes of violence, to avert conflicts.

Contextual Analysis

The issue of human security has evolved along with changes in security threats in the world. These theories and perspectives on security have evolved to explain and sometimes rationalise and legitimise states’ actions through a security lens. Human security is a conceptual approach to national and worldwide security that gives dominance to human beings and their multifaceted social and economic relations.

The concept of human security presents a new and important facet to the security and human development debate. It places importance on the person, as opposed to the nation,

as non-military. The dangers presented to the individual in the human security context include diseases, environmental problems, the violation of human rights, and bad governance. The security of the state depends first on the security of the individual. Therefore, human security is fundamental to national security (Lautensach & Lautensach 2020:46).

The notion of human security epitomises a shift from the conformist security concept, which focuses on state security. The themes of the human security approach are meant to protect people from traditional and non-traditional threats such as poverty and disease. Moving the security agenda outside state security does not insinuate substituting it, but somewhat involves perfecting and consolidating it. Dominant to this approach is the understanding that human security deficiencies can dent peace and stability within and between states, while over-relying on national security can be damaging to human wellbeing (Hussein *et al* 2004:8). The state remains a pivotal provider of security, but national security is not a sufficient *sine qua non* for human safety.

Since the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 that ended the Thirty Years' War, the concept of security was linked to the state. Therefore, the state had the exclusive right to decide what security was and how to guarantee it (Croxtton 1999). The all-inclusive idea of protecting the security of individuals advances itself to a variation of elucidations fashioned by relative comprehension of what founds a threat to the security of individuals, how the intensity and impact of any given threat can be measured, and by what means the threat could be avoided. The impression of spreading the notion of security from national security to individual human beings was first expressed by the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues in 1982 (Walt 1991). The Common Security Report provided the first wide-ranging criticism of the military method as the sole route to security, while stressing the need to dedicate due attention to the relationship between security and the welfare of individuals.

The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union led to a shift in world hegemony, thus leading to the transformation of the OAU into the AU in 2002 (SAHO 2017).

The collapse of communism thus gave way to the restructuring of the African initiative to guarantee sustainable development through the advancement of participatory democracy and good governance. The development of the security treatise was also shaped by the need to address the global social problems at the threshold of globalisation (Frey 2008:46). The probable threats to individuals' lives and welfare were extended from being primarily military to broadly covering economic, social, environmental, and health apprehensions.

With the immediate post-Cold War era and the new development roadmap, the initial definition of human security was coined in 1994 when Mahbub ul Haq drew attention to the concept in the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Human Development Report. Beyond territorial and military concerns, the report argued that human security is fundamentally concerned with human life and dignity (Jolly & Ray 2006:14).

Lending credence to this premise, the AU working modality is based on principles rooted in the human security approach and focuses on people's aspirations to be free from fear, want, and indignity. What Africa envisages in Agenda 2063 is a prosperous continent where citizens feel safe in all aspects of their lives, have the income and opportunities to attain wellbeing, and know that their rights and dignity are entirely treasured. As such, the application of human security in the development of an index for advancing and monitoring progress towards Agenda 2063 and the Silencing the Guns in Africa initiative is a natural extension of venerable practice within the AU (UNTFHS 2019). To further galvanise the concept as a priority, the AU has come up with the African Human Security Index (AHSI), which is an initiative to provide a holistic valuation of human security through the seven dimensions of economic security, food security, health security environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security. This follows both Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda on the supremacy of human security as an enabler and prerequisite for sustainable and inclusive development (AU 2018).

The AU human security programme in the areas of peace and security is clearly expressed in Article 4(h) of the Constitutive

Act (CA) of the AU. Article 4(h), which empowers the union to intervene in the affairs of a member state to “prevent war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity”, was inserted into the CA, as several informed writers on the CA have eloquently argued, intending to protect ordinary people in Africa from abusive governments (AU 2020). To provide an operational arm to this specific human security element, the AU made room for the creation of an African Standby Force (ASF) charged with the task of intervening militarily in states for humanitarian purposes.

The condition put in place for human security intervention under the AU exceeds the establishment made for interference in the internal affairs of a country in the UN Charter. The CA has set fewer restrictions compared to those outlined previously in any global legal procedure. The conditions of war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity by the architects of the CA as grounds for intervention have made a clearer set of principles for the union to arbitrate in a state to protect human security (AU 2020). The AU, disparate from other international organisations, does not need the consent of a state to get involved in its internal affairs when populations are at risk.

Currently, Africa seems to stand at a crossroads as the East and the West struggle for supremacy at a theatre in Ukraine. Ukraine’s urge to join the European Union (EU) has been a clear demonstration of human security in earnest. Having dealt with the imperialist West and expansionist Russia, the African countries are constrained to adopt a cautious approach towards the Russia–Ukraine war by only pleading for the secession of aggressions (Harshé 2020). Understandably, despite their growing relations with Russia, African countries have had well-structured ties with the EU countries and the US for some decades.

If the West aspires to reduce its dependence on Russia for energy security, the African countries, endowed with energy, could well be used as an alternative source of energy to strike partnership deals with EU countries and the US in the long run. For instance, Tanzania has the sixth largest natural gas reserve in Africa, Senegal has recently discovered 40 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, and Nigeria is already a liquefied natural gas (LNG)

supplier to several EU countries. Along with Niger and Algeria, Nigeria is also embarking on a huge project, the Trans-Saharan Gas Pipeline, to enhance the energy supply to the EU markets (Harshé 2020). Thus, just like Russia, the EU countries and the US will also continue to see the importance of closer relations with the African continent.

Russia's violation of international law through its aggression in Ukraine has provoked several African countries to be on a very precarious course without siding with any of the contending parties. The positions of African states could be better understood through the prism of imperialism. Though in the past, to counter Western imperialism, the former United States of Soviet Republic (USSR) had supported the anti-colonial and anti-racist struggles in Africa, Russia has now emerged as one of the expansionist powers in Africa, with imperialist tendencies. Taking into consideration some African nations' dependence on the Russian Federation as well as the Western powers, several African nations have adopted a cautious style while serving their national interests in the process of navigating the conflict between Russia and Ukraine (Harshé 2020). Therefore, the AU should muster this cautiousness to prioritise the security of its citizens.

Conceptual Framework

The Commission on Human Security (2010) defines human security as the ability to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment. Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms – freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical and pervasive threats and situations. The General Assembly Resolution 66/290 (2012) holds that human security is “an approach to assist the Member States in identifying and addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood, and dignity of their people.”

It necessitates responses that are centred on people, comprehensive, tailored to the specific context, and focused on prevention, thereby enhancing the protection and empowerment of all individuals. The approach is a recognised analytical and

design framework that supports more inclusive and preventive responses by the UN, cutting across sectors, developing contextually relevant solutions, and adopting collaborations to help realise a world free from fear, want, and indignity. It gives primacy to people and their complex social and economic relations.

These understandings lay emphasis on the fact that human security places the individual at the centre of analysis and, therefore, take into consideration a broad range of circumstances that threaten survival, livelihood, and dignity, and identify the threshold below which human life is unbearably vulnerable. They also capture that human security is as well based on a multisectoral understanding of insecurities. So, human security necessitates an expanded understanding of threats, including causes of insecurity relating, for instance, to economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security (UNTFHS 2009). Therefore, the objective of human security is to protect the important fundamentals of all human lives from critical persistent threats, in a way that is dependable on long-term human fulfilment (Alkire 2003:2).

Many believe that, to guarantee human security, there is the need to deliberately be protective. This is by recognising that people and communities are fatally susceptible to inevitable events such as financial crises, violent conflicts, AIDS, national policies that undercut public and private investments in healthcare, terrorist attacks, water shortages, enduring penury, or pollution in a distant land (Alkire 2003:2). Many threats are far more destructive if they are unexpected. Thus, it becomes crucial to adequately prepare and safeguard for such occurrences. The human security approach desires institutions to offer protection which is institutionalised, not intermittent; receptive, not unyielding; and anticipatory, but not reactive. In this way, people will face inevitable downturns while maintaining a sense of security.

Other schools of thought believe that human security is contained in scope and that it does not cover all necessary, important, and profound aspects of human living. Rather, it

identifies and protects a limited vital core of human activities and abilities (Olufemi & Bello 2017). These may be described multifariously, taking into consideration fundamental human rights, elementary aptitudes, or absolute needs. The ‘vital core’ is a non-technical term for the concerns that lie behind human security. It may be defined in terms of capabilities – referring to the freedom individuals have to act and achieve their potential. Foundations of the vital core are fundamental to human rights, which all persons and institutions are obliged to respect or provide, even if the obligations are not perfectly specifiable (Alkire 2003:3). The rights and freedoms in the vital core pertain to survival, to livelihood, and to basic dignity. Persons who enjoy fundamental security in their survivals, livelihoods, and dignities, even during terrible circumstances like poverty, war, or disaster, would be in a more favourable position than billions are at present. The task of prioritising rights and capabilities, each of which is argued by some to be fundamental, is a value judgment and a difficult one, which proper institutions may best undertake. Yet the judgment is necessary if human security is to be genuine and operative (Alkire 2003:4; UNOCHA 2009:7).

To other researchers, human security is people centred. Thus, it focuses the attention of institutions on human individuals and their communities worldwide. This emphasis on human beings distinguishes human security from the objective of protecting state territories that dominated security policies in the 19th and 20th centuries. Human security shifts focus onto persons, regardless of gender, race, religion, ethnicity, or other distinguishing characteristics. In this way, the human security approach parallels the movement in economic development and international law to shift the emphasis from instrumental objectives such as growth, or state rights to human development and human rights. In doing so, the human being becomes the ‘end’ of development, not only as a ‘means’ to increased economic productivity or legal coherence, and these various activities in turn become “people centred” (UNOCHA 2009:7).

Some other people focus on the fact that human security is squarely on human lives. But to protect human lives successfully, stakeholders must consciously identify and prepare for discrete

threats. Threats to human security are critical in that they threaten to cut into the core activities and functions of human lives. Such terrorisation sometimes is unexpected for example in economic collapse. Furthermore, some threats are pervasive. That is to say, the threat is within the population under deliberation. The threat may be recurrent; it is not an abnormal event for which strategic preparation is impossible. Of course, persistent threats may not occur *en masse*; a man may be incapacitated by a work accident or by a wild animal, and his family may live henceforth in penury. This may seem to be an isolated rather than inescapable incident, yet it is multiplied millions of times over, making health insecurity qualify as a pervasive menace.

Human security focuses on a limited core of individual activities and abilities, on a minimal subset of human development and human rights. It is not sufficient for human fulfilment or flourishing, which is the ongoing process of seeking and realising values by people in groups and communities. It would be unfortunate or even tragic if institutions aiming to achieve human security were to accomplish their objective in such a way that weakened people's aptitude to be fulfilled and enjoy a far greater range of freedoms. People's lives must not only be protected *per se*; they must be protected in a manner that is consistent with their long-term good. The importance of processes – governance, participation, transparency, capacity-building, and institution building – can hardly be overestimated (OHCHR 2022). The appropriate way to affect this consistency between protection and longer-term development will vary. Rudimentary poverty programmes may attend to wider goals simply by encouraging deep participation; refugee camps may teach transferable vocational skills or may be sited where they will not degrade the local environment. In some places, dangers, climate, or the rhythm of grief may be such that longer-term considerations should be set aside for a while. But they should not ever fall entirely from view.

The well-known paradigm of the concept of sustainable development kindles governments to re-evaluate and redefine their policies so that they can address a wide range of current development issues more efficiently. The quest for sustainable

development changes the perception of the future by influencing decisions about process designs, product designs, and city configurations. In this sense, sustainable development offers both opportunities and challenges, but most importantly, it offers solutions (Roosa 2008). Considering that Africa has become the farmland for the West, developed countries have based their development on the exploitation of the natural resources of Third World countries, including the exploitation of people. According to the environmental drive, developed countries have propagated whatever practices will alleviate poverty and enhance peace and security. The present tug-of-war between the East and the West has shown the amber light that Africa must prioritise enhancing its human security, and this can only be done through sustainable development initiatives. Sustainable development is a development model that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Considering that Africa has become the farmland for the West, developed countries have based their development on the exploitation of the natural resources of the Third World countries, including the exploitation of people.

Prioritising Human Security Concerns

Human security challenges facing Africa are huge, extending from conflicts to poverty, food and health insecurities, refugeeism, bad governance, and environmental dilapidation (Akokpari 2007:46). They deal with the protection and expansion of the people's fundamental freedom. They need to shield people from severe threats and enables them to take charge of their lives with integrated policies that focus on people's existence, livelihood, and dignity, during downturns as well as prosperity (Etim *et al* 2018:1190). Geopolitical tensions are rising due to global power relations. Fanaticism and bigotry are rising among different groups, including ethnic and religious groups, and the numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons worldwide have hit record highs. Additionally, vital aspects of human dignities, such as the rule of law and freedom of speech, continue to be infringed.

Currently, when the world order is at a crossroads, African countries must rethink co-operation, development, and self-reliance in the face of the fight against global hegemony whose theatre is in Ukraine. The war is impacting African countries that rely on Russia and Ukraine, especially in terms of food supply and agricultural inputs, among others. African countries' overreliance on the developed countries for survival has been exaggerated despite the abundant resources that the continent is endowed with. The events unfolding in Ukraine mean that African countries must make meaningful use of their resources to enhance their sustainability, development, and self-reliance.

The nefariousness of these challenges necessitates the shared exertions of the AU, RECs, and individual African countries. The AU and the RECs must break down the repositories across sectors and institutions because g and people can no longer provide broken and disjointed responses. Africa must enhance wide-ranging partnerships that profit from the proportions of youth, women, and those whose contributions are hardly taken into consideration, such as the indigenous peoples like the Khomani San of South Africa. The focus of the stakeholders must shift, and resources allocated towards prevention to anticipate crises and act early to lessen their most distressing effects. Thus, the AU needs to harness and exploit resources and invest in human security challenges.

Developing Good Governance

Africa has thrown its doors open to the rest of the world and its resources are being carted away at the expense of its citizens in the name of globalisation. This unwarranted consumption and indiscriminate resource exploitation results in growing injustice and environmental degradation. Each of these above-stated factors magnifies the other, leading to a double exposure of spiralling insecurity, which calls for good governance. The mutual reinforcement between these trends can only be interrupted if active steps are undertaken toward environmental governance and security by the continental body, regional blocs, and nation states in Africa. Adherence to these steps will positively reposition the destinies of continental Africans. Countries like Botswana

and Mauritius are promoting good governance and investing a lot to guarantee the security of their citizens through rigorous sustainable use of their resources in a judicious manner.

Promoting Food Security

Africa is endowed with vast arable land and human capital to enhance the continent's quest for abundant food and development. The Russian invasion has taught Africans a veritable lesson that self-reliance and food self-sufficiency is indispensable. If the continent prioritised and invested in this sector, it would spur food security and improvement in livelihood, including sustainable development and enduring peace. Food security exists when all people always have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (FAO & UNTFHS 2016).

Prioritising Healthcare for Human Security

Health is an indispensable component of human growth and individual wellbeing, and this is increasingly being recognised at the universal level. Health has been documented in most constitutional documents as a basic human right. It is important to know that health security, human security, and human rights are hence closely interrelated. This obligation needs to be vitalised. The right to health was not adequately translated into special claims on available resources, nor did health status become the test of social and economic development. The commitment to this right depends on the value assigned to health by individuals, states, and the international community (WHO 2002:5). This commitment should also be a determining factor in the way African states should allocate resources to development priorities. However, the compelling force of the committee has not found concrete expression in continental and national policy.

Despite the challenges, the AU has made numerous efforts to enhance health-related human security. In 2007, the AU developed the first Africa Health Strategy (AHS) 2007–2015, supported by the 3rd Conference of African Ministers of Health

held in the same year and adopted by the 11th Session of the Ordinary Executive Council in 2008. In 2015, the meeting of the 1st African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Health, Population and Drug Control (STC-HPDC) recommended that a revised African health strategy be developed for the period 2016–2030, according to an appraisal of the early strategy the under consideration of the AU health policy instruments and integrating research and innovation for health (AU 2015).

The epidemics such as the Ebola virus and the COVID-19 pandemic that took the world by surprise in late 2019 have taught African countries that it is vital to build their healthcare systems for any eventualities. Thus, there is the need to prioritise equity of access to healthcare for every African country rather than depend on the developed world. Every national health scheme should safeguard universal access to adequate quality care and evade prejudicial and unfair acumen between individuals, groups, and communities. The need for equity in access to healthcare must be an ultimate objective of the health sector reform process. Health security can be significantly strengthened in Africa by its major creditors through the enablement of indiscrete conditionalities attached to assistance. While conditionalities play a crucial role in certain situations, like preventing aid intended for poverty alleviation from being redirected to military expenditures, it is unwise to apply them universally (Akokpari 2007:51). Health is one of the vital building blocks of every society (WHO 2002:7). It is essential for economic growth, poverty alleviation, and social justice. It is therefore a prerequisite for hope, peace, development, and tranquillity.

Human Security through Economic Development

The 1990s experienced sweeping changes in conflict around the world. The swift waning in interstate conflicts was matched in the opposite direction by the fast rise in intra-state disputes, conflicts, and emergencies. The economic ramifications of conflict are devastating. This is because, during a conflict, a society diverts some of its resources from industrious activities to demolition. For example, Somalia has been reduced to a failed state because of prolonged war in the country. Therefore, there is a double

loss: the loss of resources that contributed to pre-conflict production, and the loss from the damage inflicted (Lautensach & Lautensach 2020).

The active labour force is lost with the death and migration of people, and the damage to the country's infrastructure and environment encumbers economic development and activity. The impact of conflict on the economy of a nation is not limited to the country experiencing it. As countries are closely interwoven by the global economy, when conflict affects the economy in one country it often affects others, especially neighbours. For example, the Russian war in Ukraine has impacted not only Europe but the rest of the world, with Africa the most hit. From some of these ugly experiences experienced in Africa, the AU should continuously harp Silencing the Guns by 2030 while improving other human security challenges across the continent.

Prioritising Human Dignity

It is the absolute right of every human being to live a quality and valuable life with dignity and to make choices and seek opportunities that empower them. According to Mary Robinson (2002), the only long-term guarantor of security is through ensuring respect for human rights and humanitarian law. In that light, African leaders should make every effort so that every African has the right to exercise his or her civic rights, choose their leaders, worship, and belong to any association. Africa should be transformed into a continent where every person has access to justice, peace, and security.

African leaders should create an environment to sustain a healthy and productive life, where illiteracy and ignorance are reduced drastically, where people are free to live and to live freely, and where peace and justice is the order of the day. Human indignity and insecurity are threatened when some Africans are seen as strangers in the continent and their rights are threatened. Thus, breaking barriers in the continent should be a milestone to guarantee human security in a sustainable way in Africa. As the world navigates this critical moment, African leaders and lawmakers at the national, regional, and continental levels should

create the enabling environments for the implementation of self-reliant policy for the benefit of all.

Individual and Community Security Concerns

Studies on the protection of lives pay specific attention to the preservation of human lives and pressures that hamper the fulfilment of people's basic values. They aim to reorientate the essence of prioritising the concept of security, towards safeguarding the basic needs of ordinary and vulnerable people, thus answering the question 'whose security?' with: 'each of us and all of us'. The satisfaction of human wants and the art of living a happy life, free from wants, are what Africans all cherish. Therefore, it is plausible to advance an argument that human insecurity in Africa has killed many Africans, taking into consideration the increase of millions of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) over the past few decades. Between 1970 and 2020, for example, Africa suffered more than 40 wars, most of them stemming from, and aggravating, human insecurity (UN 2022). Of the 16 wars that took place in Africa between 1990 and 1997, only two were interstate; the other 14 were intra-state. In South Sudan and Somalia, for example, the civil war has killed about 382 900 people since 2013, while the violence in Somalia has killed more than 500 000 people since 1991 (Makinda & Okumu 2022).

If the AU, the RECs, and the respective African nations cannot protect their people and communities by providing their basic needs, there is no *raison d'être* for the state whose people are dying of basic needs. Therefore, in these moments of global geopolitical uncertainty, Africans should strive to put the interest of their citizens at the forefront by strategising earnestly to meet the basic needs of their people by judiciously making use of the abundant resources with which the continent is endowed for the interest of fellow Africans.

Therefore, policymakers in Africa must make every effort now to contribute immensely to the restructuring and concretising of continental peace, justice, and sustainable development initiatives to provide benefits to a broad share of

Africans. The efforts should meet the goals and objectives of the United Nations SDGs 2030, Goal 16 and Aspiration 4 Goals 13, 14, and 15 of the AU Agenda 2063 (AU 2020).

Environmental and Human Security Concerns

Environmental and human security concerns are crucial to states' security in Africa. This is because most people are involved in daily struggles to survive. Persistent and worsening resource inadequacies and deprivations fuel these individual struggles for survival, coupled with political conflicts among different groups competing to manage and benefit from scarce resources. Therefore, there are many concords on the importance of enlarging the theory of national security in African states, but there is no consensus on the best possible approach for improving environmental and human security challenges (Purkitt 2009).

African countries have been suffering too much from the unfavourable impacts of climate change and, as a result, the AU has been presenting their stance to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). African states and the AU have repeatedly insisted that richer industrial countries, which carry the greater responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions, should therefore take the initiative to solve the problems associated with climate change. According to the African parties involved in the UNFCCC, Africa's special destiny should be taken into account as far as reducing the exploitation of fossil fuels is concerned. Recently, the AU developed a comprehensive strategy to address climate change and its challenges. This strategy is meant to develop resource-efficient industry and make key sectors such as agriculture and food systems, water resources, energy, infrastructure, and transport more climate-resilient (Pichon 2022; UNFCCC 2020).

Even though there are some efforts to address climate change, they must ensure environmental security as a crucial factor of human security in a continent challenged by three pressing issues – climate change, environmental degradation, and migration. These environmental challenges have been the drivers of conflicts in Africa. A focus on climate change, environmental

degradation, and migration as separate but important subjects, the impact of these on human security, and the potential for conflict, has not received the required level of attention from the AU, RECs, and member states (IOM 2008).

Conclusion

In the current global landscape marked by a hegemonic struggle, the African continent is undergoing a process of strengthening its regional approach to security. This involves prioritising the security of individuals through a human-centred approach. The AU, at this critical moment, needs to take into consideration human security concerns at various levels in its strategy to build a continental security system, as demonstrated by its crisis prevention and peacekeeping mechanisms and other programmes in response to the present struggle, among major global powers, for the international balance of power.

Considering the war between Russia and Ukraine as an 'Armageddon' between the East and the West, African countries must not only be non-aligned, but create avenues for resilience by investing in their human security. The era of dependency should be over. Therefore, the battle for peace should be fought on two fronts. The first is the security front, where victory spells freedom from fear. The second is the socio-economic front, where victory spells freedom from want. Only victory on both fronts can assure the African continent of enduring peace through a sustainable development paradigm.

The adoption of a human security approach has the potential to greatly strengthen Africa's Peace and Security Architecture, reinforcing the AU's support to the RECs and member states in implementing Agenda 2063 and the SDGs, through a comprehensive and integrated strategy. This approach would contribute to more resilient societies, where people are safe from chronic threats such as abject poverty, hunger, disease, violence, and repression, and protected from sudden and hurtful disruptions in their daily lives.

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Section Seven

Democracy, Elections, and Governance

Chapter 19

The Role of the African Union in Elections

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Introduction

In 2002, a new organisation, the African Union (AU), replaced the Organisation of African Union (OAU). One of the objectives of the OAU was to “promote democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance” (AU 2000:5). This objective was based on the principles of “respect for democratic principles, human rights, the rule of law and good governance” (AU 2000:7) The objective and principles stated here as captured in the Constitutive Act of the organisation reveal its commitment to democratic principles which include regular, free, and fair elections. Before the AU was launched in 2002, the member states of the OAU had taken giant steps towards holding multiparty elections. For instance, from 1990 to 2001, about 175 presidential and parliamentary elections were held (see table below). Although most of its member states were already holding regular multiparty elections, there were fears that unconstitutional changes of governments would derail their efforts. In 2000, the OAU had to adopt the Lome Declaration on Combatting Unconstitutional Changes of Government (UCG) to guide against backtracking from the democratic path. Consequently, the new continental organisation had to carve a niche in terms of its role in promoting democratic elections.

This chapter examines the role that the new entity has played in achieving its objective of promoting multiparty elections

from 2002–2022, during the two decades of its existence. In doing this, the chapter examines the norm setting role of the AU, as well as the steps it took to promote credible, transparent, and peaceful elections. This chapter argues that, during the two decades of its existence, the AU took bold and commendable initiatives to establish the relevant norms and standards to guide democratic elections. However, what remains to be done is for the organisation to explore the enforcement of such norms and standards to ensure that elections conducted in its member states conform to agreed international, regional, and national standards.

Setting Norms: Towards Acceptable Standards for Democratic Elections

Pre-2002 norms

Before 2002, the OAU had developed some norms that related to constitutional democracy, human rights, and the rules of law, for the governance of the continent. These norms, however, did not make direct references to multiparty elections and democratic institutions. From 1963 to 2001, there were only two related norms: the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) in 1981, and the Lome Declaration on Combatting Unconstitutional Changes of Government in 2000. The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights focused broadly on human rights with subtle references to political rights to the effect that, "Every citizen shall have the right to participate freely in the government of his country, either directly or through freely chosen representatives in accordance with provisions of the law" (OAU 1981). The fact that most member states of the OAU were under military rule or one-party states prevented the exercise of such rights. On its part, the Lome Declaration on Combatting Unconstitutional Changes of Government was established at the time when most member states had started holding democratic elections. It sought to protect democratic institutions and guide against a return to the era of military coups and called for the "organisation of free and regular elections, in conformity with existing texts". The Lome Declaration was useful to the extent that it set the tone for the development of other norms from

2002 and thereafter ostensibly to promote democratic elections and institutions.

Norm setting: From 2002

The period from 2002 to 2022 can be characterised as an era of norm-setting during which the AU developed far more norms than its predecessor (OAU) did from 1963 to 2002. This reflected the urgency the AU attached to democratic principles and the desire of the organisation and its member states to build the needed foundation for democratic consolidation necessary for development. In direct relation to elections, three important documents were adopted. The first was the OAU/AU Declaration on Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa (2002), followed by the African Union Guidelines for Electoral Observation and Monitoring Missions (2002) and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (2007). During this period, the AU also adopted other norms that this author considers relevant to the democratisation process as they are aimed at providing a conducive environment for a peaceful and developed Africa, including:

1. the Protocol Establishing the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (2002);
2. the African Union Convention on Prevention and Combatting Corruption (2003);
3. the Conference on Stability, Security and Development Co-operation in Africa (CSSDCA) Memorandum of Understanding (2003);
4. the African Peer Review Mechanism (2003);
5. the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003);
6. the African Youth Charter (2006);
7. the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (2009)'
8. the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration on Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance (2013);
9. Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want (2013);
10. the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Older Persons (2016);

11. the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa (2018); and
12. the Protocol to the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment (2018).

For this chapter, the three key norms – the OAU/AU Declaration on Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa (2002), the African Union Guidelines for Electoral Observation and Monitoring Missions (2002), and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (2007) – are discussed.

The OAU/AU Declaration on Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa

Following the Lome Declaration on Combatting Unconstitutional Changes of Government in 2002, the AU, two years later, produced another declaration that focused primarily on principles of democratic elections. The declaration demonstrated the commitment of the AU to upholding the tenets of democracy and served as the foundation for the development of the African Guidelines for Electoral Observation and Monitoring Missions and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance.

For the first time in the history of the OAU/AU, this declaration focuses on an important issue, which is the fact that elections should be the basis of electing leaders and should be held regularly under democratic constitutions, managed by a competent election management body (OAU 2002). The declaration further emphasises the importance of member states establishing institutions to address critical issues such as citizenship and the compilation of voter registration. It also highlights the need for impartial bodies to resolve electoral disputes, protect civil and human liberties –including freedom of movement, assembly, association, and expression – and promote civic education, voter awareness, and the active participation of women in electoral processes (OAU 2002). Another important highlight of this declaration was the need to address electoral fraud as part of an effort to guide peace and security, provide

funding for political parties to enable them to take part in electoral processes, and provide protection for parties taking part in an electoral process and transparency of the elections (OAU 2002). While providing citizens with a wide range of rights, the declaration calls on citizens to refrain from actions that could contribute to electoral violence and fraud, and actions that would undermine the elections management body. Voters and citizens should also be sensitised to accept the final outcome of legitimate elections (OAU 2002).

This chapter holds that the declaration was very helpful in setting standards for democratic elections and the yardsticks by which the performance and behaviour of member states would be measured. The declaration duly marked the foundation of AU's critical role in elections. The standard set by the declaration is adequate and, if followed by member states, it would have addressed most of the election-related problems that would arise.

The African Union Guidelines for Electoral Observation and Monitoring Missions

The AU Guidelines for Electoral Observation and Monitoring Missions focuses on criteria for determining the nature and scope of AU election observation and monitoring missions, mandates, rights, and responsibilities of AU election observation and monitoring missions, and the code of conduct for AU observers and monitoring. On the criteria for determining the nature and scope of AU election observation and monitoring missions, the AUC is expected to assess countries preparing for elections, using the principles governing democratic elections as the basis or guide. In view of this, the assessment mission aims at determining if the right legal framework and independent institutions are in place for the conduct of credible elections. The level of freedom, the right of political parties to campaign freely, and the extent to which the general security environment allows for the conduct of polls are the other issues that need to be assessed (AU 2002).

With regard to mandates, rights, and responsibilities of the election observation and monitoring missions, the guidelines define election observation as “gathering information and

making an informed judgement”, and election monitoring as “the authority to observe an election process and to intervene in that process if relevant laws or standard procedures are being violated or ignored”, while technical assistance “takes the form of technical support and advice to Electoral Commission[s]” (AU 2002). The assessment team must determine the nature of the mission to be deployed. It needs to be emphasised that, in spite of the fact that the mandate allows for monitoring missions, the AU has never deployed them, because it could be considered as interfering in the electoral process of member states. The AU will need to explore the possibility of monitoring missions on case-by-case basis, in situations where there is a need for a more robust involvement in a member state’s electoral process beyond election observation. The practice has been that the AU has always deployed an election observation mission which only involves “gathering information and making an informed judgement” on the electoral process and advancing recommendations for improvement in future elections (AU 2002). Finally, the guidelines require that AU observers be guided by a code of conduct, which includes respecting the national laws of the host country, observing strict impartiality, being factual in reporting on the electoral process, and bringing irregularities to the attention of election officials (AU 2002).

The African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance

Five years after the Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa and the Guidelines on Electoral Observation and Monitoring Missions, the AU decided to initiate a more binding norm to safeguard democracy, elections, and governance standards; thus, the draft of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) was drafted. Like the previous document, the ACDEG is based on the same principles of the other declarations, including respect for human rights, democratic principles, national constitutions, and rules of law; promotion of representative government, popular participation, gender equality, political pluralism, regularity, and transparent elections; political pluralism; separation of powers; and condemnation and rejection of acts of corruption, related offenses

and impunity and total rejection of unconstitutional changes of government (AU 2007). The remaining chapters of the declaration are devoted to the role and responsibilities of state parties to democracy, the rule of law and human rights, the culture of democracy and peace, democratic institutions, democratic elections, sanctions in cases of unconstitutional changes of government, and political, economic, and social governance. For the purposes of this chapter, the section on democratic elections will be discussed further.

Under Chapter 7, Article 17 of the ACDEG, African political leaders reiterated their commitment to democratic elections as the only means of electing leaders and governments, and called for the need for national governments to put in place capable independent electoral bodies, effective and impartial measures for settling electoral disputes, and access to the state media by all contesting parties during elections. Article 18 then delineates the role of the Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit, under the executive council decision in 2006, to facilitate the needed assistance to member states who may be required to strengthen their democratic institutions and processes. In doing this, the charter provides practical steps for the organisation of credible elections. Further, Article 18 makes provision for the observation of electoral processes of members states by the AU to ensure that they conform to the standards set in the charter and other decisions before it.

Since its adoption, the charter remains the most comprehensive document for the promotion and protection of democracy and elections on the continent. It is also one of the most signed and ratified treaties of the AU, with 46 signatures and ratifications as of September 2022 (AU 2023). The full application of the charter will ensure that common standards of democratic practices and institutions exist across the continent. The three norms discussed above attest to the centrality of elections and the democratisation processes for the advancement of peace and security and ultimately the attainment of inclusive socio-economic development in Africa.

Elections in Africa: 1990–2022

This section focuses on the record of elections in Africa from 1990 to 2022. This is to understand and situate the role of the AU in elections since its inception. After the AU was formed in 2002, elections became more regular on the continent compared to the 1980s, when several countries were under military rules or one-party states. From 1990 to 2001, as many as 175 presidential and parliamentary elections were held across the continent, without any continental norms or standards guiding the efforts. The legal framework and the institutions charged to organise elections were often contested. At the same time, the environment within which elections were organised was not considered conducive by all electoral stakeholders. This chapter argues that although elections as a means of choosing political leadership have become increasingly acceptable in most countries, the standards leave much to be desired. This would explain why the principles governing democratic elections in Africa became the first document designed by the OAU/AU to guide how elections were held on the continent. Table 19.1 provides more insight into the numbers of elections held by OAU/AU member states between 1990 and 2022.

Table 19.1: Elections held in Africa 1990–2022¹

Country	Presidential		Total	National Assembly/Parliamentary		Total	Total
	1990–2001	2002–2022		1990–2001	2002–2022		
Algeria	1995, 1999	2004, 2009, 2014, 2019	6	1991, 1997	2002, 2007, 2012, 2017, 2021	7	13
Angola	1992	Indirect	1	-	2008, 2012, 2017, 2022	4	5
Benin	1991, 1996, 2001	2006, 2011, 2016, 2021	7	1991, 1995, 1999	2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019, 2023	9	16
Botswana		Indirect		1994, 1999	2009, 2014, 2019	5	5
Burkina Faso	1991, 1998	2005, 2010, 2015, 2020	6	1992, 1997	2002, 2007, 2012, 2015, 2020	7	13
Burundi	1993, 2020	2015, 2010, 2005	5	1993, 2020	2015, 2010, 2005	5	10
Cameroon	1992, 1997	2004, 2011, 2018	5	1992, 1997, 2002	2007, 2013, 2020	6	11
Cabo Verde	1991, 1996, 2001	2006, 2011, 2016, 2021	7	1991, 1996, 2001	2006, 2011, 2016, 2021	7	14

1 For ease of knowing the number of elections held during the period, where presidential and parliamentary elections are held on the same day, they were counted as two different elections, given their outcomes are also different. Where presidential or parliamentary elections had a run-off within the same year or beyond, they were counted as one and the same elections.

Country	Presidential		Total	National Assembly/Parliamentary		Total	Total
	1990- 2001	2002- 2022		1990-2001	2002 -2022		
Central African Republic	1992, 1993, 1999	2005, 2011, 2015/16, 2020/21	7	1992, 1993, 1998	2005, 2011, 2015/16, 2020/21	7	14
Chad	1996, 2001	2006, 2011, 2016, 2021	6	990, 1997, 2002	2011	4	10
Comoros	1990, 1996	2002, 2006, 2010, 2016, 2019	7	1992/93, 1996,	2004, 2009, 2015, 2020	6	13
Côte d'Ivoire	1990, 1995	2010, 2015, 2020	5	1990, 1995	2001, 2016, 2021	5	10
DRC (Democratic Republic of the Congo)		2006, 2011, 2018	3		2006, 2011, 2018	3	6
Djibouti	1993, 1999	2005, 2011, 2016, 2021	6	1992, 1997	2003, 2008, 2013, 2018	6	12
Egypt	1993, 1999	2005, 2012, 2014, 2018	6	-	2005, 2010, 2011/12, 2015, 2020	5	11
Equatorial Guinea	1996	2002, 2009, 2016, 2022	5	-	2004, 2008, 2013, 2017, 2022	5	10
Eritrea	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Eswatini	Monarch			-	2003, 2008, 2013, 2018	4	4

Country	Presidential		Total	National Assembly/Parliamentary		Total
	1990- 2001	2002- 2022		1990-2001	2002 -2022	
Ethiopia		Indirect		1995, 2000	2005, 2010, 2015 2021	5
Gabon	1993, 1998	2005, 2009, 2016	5	1990, 1996	2001, 2006, 2011, 2018	6
The Gambia	1992, 1996, 2001	2006, 2011, 2016, 2021	7	1992, 1997	2002, 2007, 2012, 2017, 2022	7
Ghana	1992, 1996	2002, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016, 2020	8	1992, 1996	2002, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016, 2020	8
Guinea	1993, 1998	2003, 2010, 2015, 2020	6	1995	2013, 2020	3
Guinea-Bissau	1994, 1999/2000	2005, 2009, 2012, 2014, 2019	7	1994, 1999	2004, 2008, 2014, 2019	6
Kenya	1992, 1997	2002, 2007, 2013, 2017, 2022	7	1992, 1997	2002, 2007, 2013, 2017, 2022	7
Lesotho		Monarch		1993, 1998	2002, 2007, 2012, 2015, 2017, 2022	8
Liberia	1997	2005, 2011, 2017	4	1997	2005, 2011, 2017	4
Libya	-	-	-	-	2012	1
Madagascar	1992/93, 1996, 2001	2006, 2013, 2018	6	1993, 1998	2002, 2007, 2013, 2019	6

Country	Presidential		Total	National Assembly/Parliamentary		Total	Total
	1990- 2001	2002- 2022		1990-2001	2002 -2022		
Malawi	1994, 1999	2004, 2009, 2014, 2019, 2020	7	1994, 1999	2004, 2009, 2014, 2019	6	13
Mali	1992, 1997	2002, 2007, 2013, 2018	6	1992, 1997	2002, 2007, 2013, 2020	6	12
Mauritania	-	2003, 2007, 2009, 2014, 2019	5	-	2006, 2013, 2018	3	8
Mauritius	Indirect			1991, 1995, 2000	2005, 2010, 2014, 2019	7	7
Morocco	Monarchy			1993, 1997	2002, 2007, 2011, 2016, 2021	7	7
Mozambique	1994, 1999	2004, 2009, 2014, 2019	6	1994, 1999	2004, 2009, 2014, 2019	6	12
Namibia	1994, 1999	2004, 2009, 2014, 2019	6	1994, 1999	2004, 2009, 2014, 2019	6	12
Niger	1993, 1996, 1999	2004, 2011, 2016, 2020/21	7	1993, 1995, 1996, 1999	2004, 2009, 2011, 2016, 2020	9	16
Nigeria	1993, 1999	2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019	7	1992, 1998, 1999	2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019	8	15
Republic of Congo	1992	2002, 2009, 2016, 2021	5	1992/93	2002, 2007, 2012, 2017, 2022	6	11

Country	Presidential		Total	National Assembly/Parliamentary		Total	Total
	1990- 2001	2002- 2022		1990-2001	2002 -2022		
Rwanda	-	2003, 2010, 2017	3	-	2003, 2008, 2013, 2018	4	7
Saharawi Republic	-	-	-	-	2008, 2012, 2016, 2020	4	4
São Tomé and Príncipe	1991, 1996, 2001	2006, 2011, 2016, 2021	7	-	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014, 2018, 2022	6	13
Senegal	1993, 2000	2007, 2012, 2019	5	1993, 1998, 2001	2007, 2012, 2017, 2022	7	12
Seychelles	1993, 1998, 2001	2006, 2011, 2015, 2020	7		2002, 2007, 2011, 2016, 2020	5	12
Sierra Leone	1996	2002, 2007, 2012, 2018	5	1996	2002, 2007, 2012, 2018	5	10
Somalia	Indirect				2016, 2021/22	2	2
South Africa	Indirect				1994, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014, 2019	6	6
South Sudan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sudan	1996, 2000	2010, 2015	4	1996, 2000	2010, 2015	4	8
Tanzania	1990, 1995, 2000	2005, 2010, 2015, 2020	7	1990, 1995, 2000	2005, 2010, 2015, 2020	7	14
Togo	1993, 1998	2003, 2005, 2010, 2015, 2020	7	1990, 1994, 1999	2002, 2007, 2013, 2018	7	14

Country	Presidential		Total	National Assembly/Parliamentary		Total	Total
	1990 - 2001	2002 - 2022		1990-2001	2002 -2022		
Tunisia	1994, 1999	2004, 2009, 2014, 2019, 2022/23	7	1994, 1999	2004, 2009, 2011, 2014, 2019	7	14
Uganda	1996, 2001	2006, 2011, 2016, 2021	6	1996, 2001	2006, 2011, 2016, 2021	6	12
Zambia	1991, 1996, 2001	2006, 2008, 2011, 2015, 2016, 2021	9	1991, 1996, 2001	2006, 2011, 2016, 2021	7	16
Zimbabwe	1990, 1996	2002, 2008, 2013, 2018	6	1990, 1995, 2000	2005, 2008, 2013, 2018	7	13
Total	85	169	254	90	215	305	559

Sources: AU Elections Calendar/African Elections Database/IFES Elections Guide

The Role of the AU in Elections in Africa

As clearly stated in the discussion above, the role of the AU in elections should thus be discussed from three interlinked thematic areas: (a) democracy promotion; (b) observation of election and monitoring; and (c) electoral assistance.

Democracy Promotion

The democracy promotion role of the AU should be seen from its norm setting or policy framing roles, which are ostensibly to guide national policymaking towards democratisation. With the norms in place, the organisation has succeeded in encouraging member states to establish multiparty democracies and the regular holding of elections as the new order of electing leaders. As the above table shows, a total of 559 presidential and parliamentary/national assembly elections were held across the continent from 1990 to 2001, 474 of which were held from 2002 to 2022.

The elections held from 2002 to 2022 took inspiration from the AU policy framework, which was meant to promote democratic elections. During the period, new models of independent elections management institutions/bodies were set up to manage elections. National laws that allow for freedom of the media and association were also enacted. The period also saw the growth and formation of new political parties/movements and vibrant media houses. Necessary to the democracy promotion efforts of the AU was the growth of civil society organisations (CSOs), such as the Centre for Democratic Development and the Institute for Democratic Governance in Ghana, as well as the Centre for Democracy and Development in Nigeria, which took advantage of the new political dispensations within member states thrive.

What the norms also emphasised was the creation of independent democratic institutions as the backbone of the democratisation process (AU 2007). Among the key institutions that emerged during the period were independent electoral commissions, independent media commissions, and independent judiciaries (special courts to handle election-related disputes in some countries), among others. The establishment of electoral management bodies (EMBs) at the national level, as well EMB

forums at both the regional and continental levels, are key for democracy promotion in most of the AU member states.

At the AU institutional level, given the expectations that the organisations needed to reinforce its democracy promotion role by ensuring that the elections were held under conducive environments and in conformity with national, regional, and international standards, the organisation in 2006, through its executive council decision, established the Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit (DEAU) and the Democracy and Electoral Assistance Fund (DEAF) (AU 2006). The DEAU, which became operational in 2008, was set up for “co-ordinating and implementing all African Union Commission (AUC) actions aimed at promoting democracy and democratic elections in Africa including the promotion of democracy in general, observation and monitoring of elections and electoral assistance” (AU 2006:1).

Election Observation

The AU election observation “involves gathering information and making an informed judgement” on an electoral process and making recommendations for improvements in future elections. Article 19 of their charter states that “Each State Party shall inform the Commission of scheduled elections and invite it to send an electoral observer mission.” The decision to set up the DEAU in 2006, and its subsequent operationalisation in 2008, was important from an institutional perspective, to support democracy building. Prior to the setting up of the DEAU, the OAU/AU from 1989 begun the deployment of election observation missions. These missions were composed mainly of diplomatic watchers instead of trained observers or electoral experts (Aniekwe & Atuobi 2016).

From 2008 onwards, the AU developed systematic training of observers, including keeping a database of experts and creating the checklists that observers would use to collect data during their development. With the institutional support in place, and mobilisation of funds under the DEAF and budgetary support from member states, the AU would be able to develop election observers in all member states under exceptional situations where logistic

preparation would not allow. By 2013, the AU long-term observers had been introduced to ensure the organisation was able to follow the most critical part of the electoral process. From the commencement of election observation activities by the OAU/AU, there is no African country that has not received an African Union Election Observation Missions (AUEOM), some having received AUEOMs several times.

Before the deployment of AUEOMs, pre-election assessment missions (PAMs) are deployed in line with the Article 20 of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance which requires that,

The Chairperson of the Commission shall first send an exploratory mission during the period prior to elections. This mission shall obtain any useful information and documentation, and brief the Chairperson, stating whether the necessary conditions have been established and if the environment is conducive to the holding of transparent, free and fair elections in conformity with the principles of the Union governing democratic elections (AU 2007).

In addition to assessing the conditions under which elections would be held, the PAMs also had to decide the scope or mandate of AUEOM and whether it should be on short- or long-term basis.

The objectives of AUEOMs, as stated in most of their observer reports, are to provide an accurate and impartial reporting or assessment of an elections or elections, including the degree to which their conduct meets regional, continental, and international standards for democratic elections; offer recommendations for improvement of future elections based on the findings; and demonstrate the AU's solidarity and support of democratic consolidation in its member states (AU 2019). The question that needs to be interrogated is the extent to which the AUEOMs contribute to the transparency and credibility of elections on the continent. The way AUEOMs contribute to electoral processes may not be obvious, but they are valuable.

First, the presence of observers contributes to transparency of an election process to the extent where those responsible for

electoral irregularities are deterred from committing them in their presence. The fact remains that, quite often, both the ruling party and the opposition parties would insist that the AU should send election observers to attest to the confidence that the electoral stakeholders have in AUEOMs and their potential to contribute to the transparency and credibility of an electoral process. In some cases, the absence of the AUEOM would be interpreted by some member states as a no-confidence vote in an electoral process. Second, the preventive diplomatic nature of AUEOMs under the leadership of an eminent African personality contributes to peaceful elections in most African countries. Often, the leadership of AUEOMs, working in consultation with other observer groups, engages in shuttling diplomacy between and among political parties and their leaders. This goes a long way to promote peaceful elections. This chapter argues that it is often difficult for the African public to appreciate the preventive diplomatic value of AUEOMs when, in fact, a lot of such activities are carried out without public knowledge.

Third, AUEOMs underline the AU's commitment to democratic consolidation within its member states. Fourth, the AUEOMs make a majority contribution to improvement in electoral processes in member states. This is because their recommendations form a major component of the final report, which the electoral stakeholders within member states can use to improve their electoral processes, including undertaking electoral reforms. It needs to be noted that election observation has become a norm over the years. This is not only for the AU, but for the RECs, which act as the regional blocs for the AU under election observation to help the consolidation of democracy in the concerned countries.

Electoral Assistance

Article 18(1 and 2) of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance states that "State Parties may request the Commission, through the Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit and the Democracy and Electoral Assistance Fund, to provide advisory services or assistance for strengthening and developing their electoral institutions and processes", and "the Commission

may, at any time, in consultation with the State Party concerned, send special advisory missions to help that State Party for strengthening its electoral institutions and processes” (AU 2007). It is based on the above that the AUC through the DEAU began providing technical assistance to African Union member states from about 2012, primarily to election management bodies.

The AU technical assistance takes the form of capacity-building for election management bodies and other electoral stakeholders, support for electoral operations, and the deployment of electoral experts to assist member states to prepare for elections.² This is to ensure that states can fill the necessary capacity gap to efficiently manage their electoral processes. AU technical assistance is on a demand-driven basis, meaning that countries need to ask for support before it is provided. To ensure that countries are aware of the available support, the AU uses the platform of the Association of African Electoral Authorities (AAEA) to reach out to its member states. The AAEA is made up of all African EMBs and meets regularly for peer learning, experience-sharing, and technical assistance (AAEA n.d.).

Lingering Gaps in the Elections and Democratic Arena

Despite committed efforts, there are lingering gaps in the AU’s quest for the consolidation of democracy and democratic election. First, although several norms have been developed as discussed above, there are still big gaps because the capacity of countries has not been built to translate these norms into national laws. Put differently, there is still the often cry of ‘lack of political will’. Most African states have not taken steps to domesticate and implement the norms that they have signed or made efforts to popularise them. The AU will therefore need to make concerted efforts to make sure that national laws are in sync with continental ones, as far as elections and democracy are concerned. Second, the quests for democratic consolidations have been ruffled due to the advent

2 Among the countries that has received AU technical assistance are Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Guinea, Lesotho, Mali, Madagascar, Malawi, Zimbabwe, etc.

of coups in several states, including Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, and Sudan. Niger and Gabon have also joined African countries under military dictatorships. This is really worrying. The fact that African countries are still grappling with coups at this stage, after 20 years of AU's existence, is a concern.

This chapter, however, argues that a coup d'état may not necessarily be because of the failure of democracy. This is because conditions that lead to a coup in one country may not necessarily lead to one in another. Therefore, discussion on the resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government should be thorough, to identify their underlying causes. Part of the reasons for coups may be due to the failure of governance that is evident in lack of development, corruption, and poor leadership. The third gap has to do with the lack of robustness of several national institutions – such as parliaments/national assemblies, human rights institutions, the media, and anticorruption bodies – to defend African democratic values and ensure that democracy bears fruit for the benefit of citizens. While elections are fundamental to democratic societies, their value extends beyond being free, fair, credible, and peaceful. For them to truly serve their purpose, they must translate into development and address the needs of citizens; otherwise, they may lead to discontent. It takes robust democratic institutions with sustained capacity to respond to the needs of citizens for democracy to be meaningful to them.

There are still challenges relating to norm enforcing and monitoring. For instance, what can the AU do if the standards of elections in a member state do not meet AU and international standards for democratic elections? With so many norms or standards set by the AU and RECs, efforts now need to focus on how these would be enforced. While the AU is not a supranational institution with authority over its member states, the regional institution may use its influence to record compliance to its protocols, declarations, and norms on elections and democratic consolidation. Thus, focusing on reports and monitoring the compliance of members states to normative frameworks need to be institutionalised and consistent in a manner that makes them useful tools for member states. Lastly, while in comparative terms, the quality of elections has improved from what they used to be

in the 1990s, elections in some countries are still characterised by tensions and uncertainties, creating the potential for violence, with negative impact on the socio-economic development and political stability of African states.

Conclusion

This chapter has offered insight into the roles of the AU in African elections, and highlighted many instruments established by the AU to promote its goals of achieving free and fair elections on the continent. The chapter notes that the normative frameworks developed since the advent of the AU have been the major contributing factors to the promotion of democracy. Even in countries that are yet to ratify the Africa Charter for Democracy, Election and Governance, citizens and civic groups still demanded that elections be held in conformity to the promotion of the AU Charter. Even where there have been challenges, the normative framework continues to be the basis for demanding improvement and action. It also constitutes the basis on which the continental body and the RECs are held accountable when citizens call on it to invoke the norms. Over the last two decades, the growth of political parties has been encouraging compared to the early 1990s or the period before that. From 2002, political parties proliferated, and the media and CSOs were given more conducive environments in which to operate.

Specifically, the AU has changed the conduct of elections in Africa. While this may be debatable, the quality of elections has also improved in comparative terms in the post-AU epoch. There has been a shift from the days of opaque ballots and ballot snatching to the contemporary hosting of elections in a more open and protected environment. The development of technology has also contributed to the improvement in the conduct of elections. Thus, a move from the time of pictureless voting cards to biometric voter registration to improve the credibility of the voters' roll has been well received by the regional body. For example, by 2012, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Kenya, and Nigeria had taken steps towards biometric voter registration systems to enhance credibility of their voters' register (Voice of America 2012).

Furthermore, the vote counting processes are more transparent with the involvement of citizens and citizen observers, to the extent that, in some countries, citizen observers can carry out parallel voter tabulation. During the 2020 General Elections in Ghana, the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) deployed a total of 4 000 non-partisan rapid observers in 4 000 selected polling stations. Of the 4 000, 1 502 were parallel vote tabulation (PVT) observers (Coalition of Domestic Election Observers 2020).

This chapter finally submits that the plethora of norms that emerged during the last 20 years, at the continental and regional levels, gives impetus to the call for democratic elections and accountable institutions. Yet, the norms have not been adequate in addressing gaps in building the required capacity of national institutions to respond to the needs of their citizens. As the AU continues to commit to achieving the priorities of Agenda 2063, it must be focused on what happens between one electoral cycle and another. Ultimately, governance and the behaviour of politicians after election determines whether the next elections will meet democratic standards and electoral integrity. Continental and regional organisations in Africa need to build the capacity of member states to implement democracy norms, which are necessary for more improvement in the quality of elections and the consolidation of democracy on the continent.

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Chapter 20

Democracy, Governance, and Peacebuilding in Africa: Technology, Cybercitizens and Kenya's Post-2022 Election Jitters

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Introduction

There have been genuine concerns in public debates regarding the questions of democratic transition, democratic installations, and democratic consolidation in Africa, with varied responses. Of course, it appears that there are two dichotomies, driven by specific epistemic positions regarding ways of being African and attendant democracy in Africa or African democracy (Bah 2020; Ajulu 2022; Chitanga 2023; Ogenga 2021; Bah & Ogenga 2020; Maweu & Mare 2021). On the one hand, views that champion Pan-African positions in this debate are not in short supply. On the other, some align with the Western narratives that are still influenced by coloniality that seek to see democracy 'flourish' in Africa the Western way (Kobuthi 2023.) The latter view has taken centre stage by celebrating liberal democracy. This can always be fingered for the problematic trajectory that democracy in Africa has assumed in the recent past. Nyere (2022) and Chitanga (2023), for example, demonstrate how democratic institutionalisms thrive on institutions that project coloniality of power *par excellence*, influencing the universal epistemic frames of global power configurations with those on the receiving end being

those in the Global South. Abubakar Bah, in his book *Post-conflict Institutional Designs*, observes that,

Since gaining independence from colonial rule, most African countries have been struggling to build democratic and peaceful states. In most cases, this has not yet been achieved. Too often, African countries have been plagued by dictatorship or multi-party politics that generate major political violence, and in worst cases, civil war...while those multi-party-political systems may be viewed as democratic systems of governance they were beset by ethnic and regional political grievances that made meaningful democracy very problematic (Bah 2010:2)

Bah further argues that early democratic countries in West Africa, such as Nigeria, were plagued with ethnic violence. There were incidences of political violence, coups, and one-party regimes in countries like Sierra Leone, with similar problems in Ghana and Liberia. In Eastern and Central Africa, ethnic politics (leading to political violence) was witnessed in countries such as Rwanda (leading to genocide) and Kenya (over control of the state and land issues), with similar problems experienced in Uganda and Burundi. Sudan and Ethiopia experienced separatist wars due to regional politics and secession, and problems persisted even after the secession of Eritrea and Southern Sudan (Bah 2010). Clan politics in Somalia has led to instability and created a breeding ground for one of the most sophisticated terror groups in the world (Al-Shabaab). In South Africa, race has been a central driver of oppression and political violence. In Zimbabwe, ethnic politics led to a deadly ethnic massacre through Operation Gukurahundi (Chitanga 2023) and political chaos through events such as state-sponsored *jambanja* (intensive invasion of White-owned land) and or Operation Murambatsvina (Get rid of filth/slums') in urban centers, which was a strategy to disenfranchise the followers of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) – the opposition party – in the urban centres.

This chapter argues that, before the dust settles on the right path that democracy should take in Africa, problems of ethnicity/racism, regional politics, secession, and political violence have

been compounded by digital systems. Social media platforms have transformed natives into digital subjects unaware of their digital rights but ready to exploit these platforms without caution, thereby inciting violence. Further, electoral technologies adopted by many aspiring democracies in Africa have transformed these digital citizens into zombies whose voting rights have been hijacked by foreign integrated electoral management systems (IEMS) such as Kenya Integrated Electoral Management System (KIEMS) – a technological import. The latter has successfully installed autocratic leaders and led to the rise of illegitimate authority in Africa, sanctioned by a politicised judiciary (such as the Supreme Court of Kenya), the judicialisation of elections, and many other parts of the so-called leading democracies (Chomsky & Polychroniou 2023; Mutua 2023).

Nevertheless, technology through social media platforms, for example, has widened citizen's participation and the democratic space. However, it has also led to controversial elections polarised around ethnic cleavages online, spilling into offline violence due to the rise of misinformation, disinformation, and fake news in the context of ethnic political competition, calling for social media literacy programmes to depolarise ethnic divisions both online and offline (Ogenga 2021). Drawing from Kenya's 2022 elections, this chapter asks whether the 'peaceful' electoral transition was an opportunity for democratic consolidation in Africa or whether democracy was, indeed, on trial.

A Pan-African Approach to Democratic Institutionalism

This approach looks at relations between democracy, governance, and peacebuilding, with a contention that they are complexly related. This implies that democracy in Africa does not emerge from a vacuum, but in a political and economic system that determines how African society is organised. While African political systems have been adulterated by colonialism, postcolonial realities injected new lifelines into Africa's politics and economy and allowed them to adapt democracy in a manner

that pays attention to African realities, ecology, and context. Therefore, the assumption that the best and tested versions of modern societies and how they are structured are found in democracy should not be taken for granted. The latter are more likely to exploit the strength of civic liberty through encouraging participation in creating united federations that shun conflict through working together and, therefore, are bound to be more peaceful (Ogenga 2023).

The African political-economy landscape harbours this reality, but it has often been dotted with pockets of violence around political transitions or democratic transitions, leading to shaky paths toward democratic installations due to the ‘winner takes it all’ system of governance. This is where the work of civil society and pressure groups come to the fore, evidenced in peacebuilding efforts that would restore the rapidly eroding public trust in democratic governance in Africa due to consequences of misgovernance that have led to other widespread problems such as violent extremism, corruption, and marginalisation. This approach, therefore, explores the centrality of multiple actors and institutions (institutional designs) in this context. The Pan-African approach to democratic institutionalism presents the possibility of thinking differently by generating local knowledge (the local turn) that would be supportive of peaceful democratic transitions in Africa. This is achievable through interventions championed by critical stakeholders (a civil society that includes human rights groups, faith actors, policymakers, and academics) and institutions of democracy (electoral bodies, judiciary, legislature, law enforcers, and the media/technological companies) (Ogenga 2023).

Democracy, Governance, and Peacebuilding

Therefore, this chapter uses the theory of democratic peace or liberal peacebuilding and the Kantian concept of perpetual peace in the context of the local approach to peacebuilding to argue for a homegrown democratic transition system. Democratic peace posits that societies are more peaceful if they are democratic. This view largely emerged after the end of the Cold War, when democratic governance became broadly accepted as the central

political framework for post-conflict peacebuilding, with a central presumption that democracies are more peaceful both domestically and internationally. The United Nations Secretary-general Boutros Boutros-Ghali embodies this thinking in his *An Agenda for Democratization*, observing that,

Because Democratic Governments are freely chosen by the citizens and held accountable through periodic and genuine elections and other mechanisms, they are more likely to promote and respect the rule of law, respect individual and minority rights, cope effectively with social conflict, absorb migrant populations and respond to the needs of marginalised groups (Bouros-Ghali 1996).

In the latter, minimalist democratic principles found in democratic institutionalism that allow for periodic elections through civic participation, respect for constitutionalism, the rule of law, human rights, and civic liberties allow individuals to subscribe to the ideas of a federation voluntarily. This is in a manner where they feel part and parcel of the system, as opposed to the Hobbesian ‘man in the bush’ arrangement characterised by conflict and survival of the fittest taking centre stage. In this context, humans are self-driven by their will to achieve peace as an end and not a means to an end (perpetual peace). The latter, although idealistic, is considered non-utopian, for it can be practically realisable if a deliberate effort is made towards its actualisation. This effort then becomes a spiritual/personal duty that can be practically used to that ideal end. Nations or societies that are democratic and liberal are less occasioned by conflict because they can collaborate and negotiate themselves out of possible conflict since they see themselves as collaborators and not competitors in the balance of power (Wolff 2022; Crane 2022). They therefore embody the aspect of collective security (Wolf 2022; Crane 2022).

The theoretical approach, however, does not romanticise liberal peace, especially in the Pan-African contextual reality. The approach adopted in this chapter recognises the shortfalls of the minimalist contentions to peacebuilding that often emphasise peaceful electoral power transitions, constitutionalism, and

human rights where the civil society is given a safe space for active participation in political processes leading to peaceful elections and democratic installations (Chitanga 2023). The shortfalls are occasioned by the periodic violence that characterises democratic transitions in Africa, often leading to death, destruction of property, and economic downturn. These call for the need to adopt a transitional maximalist view of democracy that accommodates other historical and contextual variables embedded in Pan-African cultural traditions (values), which help midwife democratic transitions through periodic elections (Chitanga 2023). This is particularly found within certain approaches that speak to 'the local turn' (Wolff 2022) in peacebuilding, such as mediation, dialogue, and power sharing to move the conversation to critical postcolonial questions of inclusivity, especially economic inclusivity, and to address marginalisation, ethnicity, and questions of citizenship and belonging.

The local turn therefore brings to the fore local infrastructures for peace in support of democratic installation through institutional designs that speak to the African reality. One of these infrastructures is technology. Technology that is borrowed from outside (the West and elsewhere) has failed to do justice and deliver credible elections in countries like Kenya, Burundi, and Nigeria. Is it not time for African countries to have a national conversation on adopting locally produced integrated election management systems? The local turn in peacebuilding studies represents an explicit and important attempt to transform both the research and the practice of international peacebuilding to incorporate views, experiences, and practices from the Global South. This is in a bid to overcome the predominance of Northwestern concepts and templates in the practice and scholarship of international peace operations and democratic installations (Wolff 2022).

This means that local efforts, processes, and solutions are prioritised in democracy and peacebuilding efforts as opposed to conventional liberal peacebuilding approaches. Faith actors (religious leaders), other civil society groups, judiciary, legislature, as well as digital subjects/cybercitizens constitute the local infrastructures for peace in democratic peacebuilding.

Therefore, they ought to play a critical role in peacebuilding and governance in the context of the local turn, especially around the pursuit of Kantian's perpetual peace. The latter revolves around the moral question of human free will (spiritual question) and the agency to make the pursuit of peace an everyday duty both at the individual and collective level of spiritual commitment (*Ubuntu/Utu* or collective responsibility).

Illiberalism and Populist Authoritarian Regimes

Liberal peacebuilding is also currently threatened by the emergence of illiberalism and populist authoritarian regimes (age of the strongman) in Africa and elsewhere (Crane 2022) that lack respect for human rights and inclusivity. The latter pokes holes into Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man*, which claims that Western liberal democracy is the final form of human governance. He relies on the democratic peace theory, which states that most democratic countries are reluctant to engage in armed conflict with another republic or democratic country, the key motivator being the desire for peace. This notion was largely sustained by the United Nations paradigm that lasted for over 70 years but later changed due to growing pessimism about a peaceful world, brought about by events such as the 9/11 terrorist attack in the US. It made the US more rigid and absolute in its foreign policy and domestic affairs, considering the larger picture of where the world is headed (Crane 2022).

Fukuyama considers this democratic turnaround the intellectual crisis of Western rationalism. Liberal democracy lacks the proper mechanism to defend itself as a governing mechanism. Sensing this shift, politicians around the world began to turn to nationalism and populism as alternatives to democracy. Today, liberal democracy is being challenged on all fronts by strongmen who seek a more controlled, nationalistic governance (Crane 2022). This could explain the recent wave of electoral conflicts in many countries in Africa, agitating for more rights through mass protests, especially around civil liberties and electoral justice, with uprisings in countries like Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Morocco, and Senegal.

Influencing Kenya's 2022 Elections

Kenyans went to the ballot on 9 August 2022 to elect their next president in a controversial election that was disputed by the opposition, contested, and upheld at the Supreme Court of Kenya (SCOK) in a familiar script like the 2017 elections, albeit with no violence. So, what happened? A few weeks before the elections, the US issued suspicious travel advisories warning its citizens to avoid Kisumu (a city in Kenya) since it is one of the known hot spots for electoral conflicts. This was in a move that was widely criticised by the public, especially the governor of Kisumu, Peter Anyang Nyong'o, and other elected leaders, prompting the US embassy in Nairobi to clarify the advisories as routine practice all over the world, and not meant in any way to profile Kisumu as a violent area. In fact, as a show of support, the US ambassador, Meg Whitman, visited Kisumu days later and paid a courtesy call to the governor in a show of solidarity, but failed to guarantee that no other such advisories would be issued against Kisumu soon. But this is how the coloniality of power operates at the mediation level, where certain epistemic frames about African elections, in this case, Kenyan elections, are given prominence by being widely circulated and supported through the media as the taken-for-granted true versions of reality. After all, elections in Kenya, like any other elections in Africa, are typically violent and are expected to be so.

Before the dust had settled on the first advisory, the Supreme Court of Kenya was set to rule on a petition by the opposition regarding who won the elections (judicialisation of elections) when the US embassy in Nairobi issued yet another travel advisory. In this latest advisory, Kisumu was singled out as a violent hot spot that US citizens should avoid. Many Kisumu residents thought that the advisories either amounted to dangerous ethnic profiling of the city and its predominant Luo community as violent, or signalling a bigger threat that many city dwellers did not understand, such as terrorism, as has often been traditionally the case with their past advisories, often centred on Nairobi. What later emerged, though, was the fact that Kisumu residents were seemingly already tired of the post-election violence tag in Kenya every electoral cycle, and were

silently determined to rewrite the script to shame US intelligence (Alal 2022).

Supreme Court Presidential Petition Blockbuster: Episode III

As it would have been least expected, on Monday 15 August 2022, the chairman of the Independent Electoral Boundaries Commission (IEBC), Wafula Chebukati, announced William Ruto as the president-elect (Lynch, 2022). Ruto had a slim margin of victory on live TV amidst chaotic scenes of violence at the National Tallying Center in Nairobi (Bomas of Kenya). This was punctuated by dramatic choruses by the choir invited to entertain guests on the day. Paradoxically, they were singing patriotic songs that would make a keen observer wonder whether it was a coincidence or a well-calculated propaganda procedure. It was obvious that things went wrong with the elections.

Moments before the announcement of the winner, a breakaway faction of the IEBC, consisting of four dissenting commissioners led by Juliana Cherera (some have since been sacked by the president and others resigned), called a press conference disowning the results announced by their co-staff and chairman of the IEBC, Wafua Chebukati, in a different location. These happenstances marked the beginning of yet another contested election in Kenya that seemed to unfold like a familiar Hollywood movie. You may want to call it: *Kenya's Supreme Court Presidential Election Petition Episode III Blockbuster*, starring Wafula Chebukati (IEBC), Raila Odinga (Azimio la Umoja or Declaration of Unity), William Samoei Ruto (One Kenya Alliance), Marther Koome (Supreme Court of Kenya) and others (Wangui 2023). Episodes one and two featured in 2013 and 2017 respectively (Okoth 2023). Indeed, in Kenya, all presidential elections are usually controversial by nature, fitting into the colonial tag that 'nothing good ever comes from Africa'.

The opposition Azimio La Umoja or Declaration of Unity, which is a coalition of many affiliates' political parties, rejected the verdict of the Supreme Court that upheld William Ruto's victory and subjected the Supreme Court, the IEBC, William Ruto,

and Chebukati to the court of public opinion currently christened People's Public *Barazas* or dialogues. The dialogues have been exercised through political rallies across the country, dovetailing into mass protests in major cities. The dialogues led to bipartisan talks between the government and the opposition that included – among many contentious issues – an audit of the 2022 elections. Before the bipartisan talks, the countrywide mass protests or actions conducted every Monday and Thursday were largely about the cost of living, christened the *Unga* Revolution or maize meal revolution. The *barazas* largely called for electoral reforms, dubbed electoral justice, and suspension of the recruitment process of new IEBC commissioners. Interestingly, the demand for the reduction of the cost of living that entailed lowering the cost of basic food commodities such as *unga* or maize meal (the *Unga* Revolution) did not feature in the agenda of the talks as both parties failed to reach a consensus over the rising cost of living, which is a paradox given that the cost of living seemed to be what led to street protests.

Nevertheless, the opposition remained adamant that results in the IEBC servers were doctored, and they therefore called for the resignation of William Ruto as president on illegitimacy grounds. It is important to observe that the same concerns were recently witnessed in the Nigerian 2023 elections where similar accusations of vote rigging using electronic electoral infrastructure were made. Electoral peace or the absence thereof in African elections not only demonstrates the lower threshold ascribed to democratic standards applied in Africa, but also the abuse of the idea of peace through misplaced desire for peace. This is pursued through political blackmail, which is then further used to create anxiety and scare people into silence, therefore going against their fundamental freedom of expression through the vote (coloniality of power).

The construction of the discourse of peace during and after elections in Africa and using it as the only yardstick for determining freeness and fairness of elections deserves a deeper inspection. The discourse of peace is often constructed irrespective of open electoral malpractices orchestrated by state agents, electoral commissions in Africa, and technological

service providers that oversee voter biometric registration. These malpractices, coupled with electoral offences such as bribery, voter suppression and intimidation, ballot stuffing, and electronic vote tampering, are the reasons behind democratic retrogression in Africa. The malpractices are designed to breed new dictators in Africa. Mutua (2023) calls these the populist illiberal authoritarians who masquerades as democrats but are authoritarians opposed to freedom of thought and behaviour, and acting on the behest of the West and other foreign powers.

Even though views on freeness and fairness of elections are given by internationally recognised or Western-backed institutions, commonly known as electoral observer missions (EOMs), such as the Commonwealth, the African Union (AU), and the European Union (EU), electoral happenstances in Africa paint a gloomy picture of the future of democracy in the continent. Observer missions' views that could be sympathetic to Western interests about the health and future of elections in countries like Kenya are done at the expense of local agencies. They are also meant to safeguard foreign interests with the sole purpose of controlling and exploiting resources on the continent, both human and natural. For example, in whose interest is the introduction of genetically modified organisms in Kenya, if it is not for foreign multinationals' desire to expand their market share at the expense of the health of Kenyans?

Model of Democracy

Now that the 2022 elections are concluded in one of Africa's 'models of democracy', it remains to be seen whether these elections mark a turning point in Kenya's democratic consolidation – and, by extension, Africa's democracy – or if they will follow the familiar pattern of flawed elections that characterise many African countries. If the latter is true, it would further support the myth that 'there can never be anything good from Africa', a juicy catchphrase for international media reporting of events in Africa, especially elections that must be rejected explaining why villagers in Kisumu were mocking the CNN and BBC that had no report or news on violence.

While it is worth celebrating the fact that Kenya shrugged off the tag of a country burdened by post-election violence, emerging as a more tolerant society that respects its democratic institutions, it should be noted that Kenya's foreign friends, like those who issued the suspicious travel advisories, had expected a violent election. After all, it is 'un-African' to hold peaceful elections anyway. Indeed, the only meaningful impact that such travel advisories had in Kisumu and Kenya at large was the creation of anxiety and risk, which disturbed the prevailing peace prevalent in the lakeside city to date. This fear came to pass since Kisumu has been rocked by violent protests recently as the opposition mounts pressure on the government, demanding the opening of the election technology servers and an audit of the results of the 2022 elections, among other demands such as reducing the cost of living, reinstating the 'Cherera Four' and revoking ethnic appointments in public service.

Self-appointed Custodians of Liberal Democracy

Issuing suspicious travel advisories without consulting local intelligence is akin to playing God in the lives of others (coloniality of power *par excellence*), a reality that often evokes bad vibes about the West's self-appointed role as custodians of global liberal democracy and human rights. The West also believes that they indeed have the moral authority to export peace, human rights, and democracy to other parts of the world that lack these 'universal' values. In the case of Africa, the West did not understand how such actions would work against their 'good' intentions locally. Of course, it is such beliefs that give credence to the understanding that election is a process rather than a means towards achieving higher standards of morality on the questions of human dignity and the good life. The mere fact that the 2022 electoral process in Kenya was peaceful does not call for celebration, as done by EOMs, until the products of the electoral process become materially and morally useful. This is determinable through genuine representation, inclusivity, respect for human rights, participatory governance, and development that would advance the welfare of ordinary *wananchi* (citizens) (maximalist approach to democratic institutionalism).

Elections in Kenya – being what they are – attracted more than 70 observer missions who ‘observed’ the ‘peaceful process’, but apparently the product of the process was beyond the scope of their mandate. As a result, the conclusions drawn were primarily based on visible aspects, highlighting the significance of critically evaluating reports that overlook unseen factors. Often, these reports tend to oversimplify or distort the electoral process, emphasising the need for a deeper and more nuanced perspective. Of course, reports from the many observer missions that witnessed the 2022 elections were taken for granted and, therefore, disputing those electoral results for the third time in a row at the Supreme Court of Kenya was in fact ‘hot air’ as the court erroneously observed (politicisation of the judiciary).

This reveals aspects of the Kenyan elections that are not immediately apparent. There is a unique understanding or insight that only Kenyan voters know what institutions are meant to support democratic transitions in the country, which warrants close examination. If properly inspected, then there is the problematic question of ethnic belonging and rights *versus* that of trust, which includes the ability of different ethnic communities to trust one another (ethnic political competition) and their institutions (already captured by the state) such as the IEBC and the Supreme Court of Kenya. Many Kenyans have posted very nasty comments about these institutions of democracy regarding the 2022 presidential elections.

This speaks to the gains made on freedom of speech in the country, but also pours cold water on democratic transition, installation, and consolidation. Over the years, democratic freedom in Kenya has been expressed through Articles 33 and 35, which protect freedom of expression and freedom of the press, fundamental human rights that are well captured in the Bill of Rights and the 2010 Constitution. These are now under serious threat, as demonstrated by the outlawing of the ongoing post-election picketing and demonstrations, demanding the auditing of IEBC servers to determine the real winner of the 2022 elections (The Watchman 2023).

‘Peaceful’ Electoral Transition in Kenya

This sub-section uses the term ‘peaceful’ in quotemarks to signify negative peace or uneasy calm about the peace that prevailed during the electoral process. If the 2022 elections were a golden opportunity to showcase democracy in Africa or African democracy characterised by its ‘peaceful’ nature, then that opportunity could have been missed. Genuine democratic transformation should bank on the ability of the citizens to feel respected and included in an environment where their vote counts and does not need to be contested. At the same time, if it reaches a point where an election is determined through supreme court petitions, then the decision of the court should be binding and able to earn the court’s respect. Kenya’s 2022 election missed these two opportunities.

While there was no electoral violence, a conversation with ordinary Kenyans, especially those in the opposition, would highlight their tiredness of contesting Kenyan elections as every electoral cycle signals voter apathy. Cases of voter apathy were highly witnessed in the 2022 elections, which recorded one of the lowest voter turnouts in Kenya’s democratic history (Nation Team 2022). Less than 30% of young Kenyans registered as voters in the 2022 elections and only 14 million of the approximately 22 million registered voters participated in the elections (Anami 2022). It is now feared that political apathy will increase and be more worrying in the future, considering public discussions on social media where many young Kenyans indicated their intentions never to vote again, and subsequently burned their voters’ cards on TikTok videos.

There was also no violence because a concerted effort was deliberately made to prevent the conventional violence that marred Kenyan elections, through civic education, peace campaigns, and legislation. For example, The Peacemaker Corps Foundation Kenya, a local non-governmental organisation (NGO) based in Kisumu that aims to build peace through technology, in collaboration with the Center for Media, Democracy, Peace and Security-Rongo University, organised a music, art, and cultural

festival for peaceful elections¹ in Kisumu. This was one of the efforts and campaigns led by civil society organisations (CSOs) or NGOs in Western Kenya to sustain peace. This is what it takes to build democracy in Africa – allowing the active participation of CSOs in decisionmaking.

In addition, legislation like the Political Parties Amendment Bill 2021 by parliament has instilled political discipline among Kenyan political candidates notorious for their frequent party switching, often just days or hours before elections. This practice, termed political opportunism, has historically caused significant challenges. This bill is still haunting such politicians (See Collins 2022). It introduced discipline in political parties around political party funds, membership, and even capping the duration of time needed for forming coalition parties ahead of elections.

Issue-Based Ethnic Coalitions

The latter was the real game changer because political aspirants understood that no single ethnic bloc could win elections. Therefore, politicians had to shop for like-minded individuals beyond their ethnic background to form coalitions before the prescribed deadlines as spelled out in the Political Parties Act. This was good news for Kenya because, for the first time in its history, there were issue-based ethnic coalitions as opposed to empty ethnic-based coalitions. The latter was witnessed through public narratives of cost of living and the economy since the pressing issues during the 2022 elections were more economic, characterised by high cost of living, unemployment, and poverty, especially among the youth. So, both coalitions – Azimio-One Kenya Alliance and Kenya Kwanza – campaigned on an economic liberation platform, styled as hustlers *versus* dynasties. The latter, as advanced by Kenya Kwanza presidential candidate William Ruto, now the incumbent president, appealed to hustlers, predominantly youthful voters, to reject leaders who are descendants of the dynasty. Former president Uhuru Kenyatta backed his former arch-rival and veteran opposition leader Raila

1 This is called the Karibu Kanaan Music and Arts Festival for Peace.

Odinga after he broke ranks with his deputy, William Ruto, on principles. The two, Uhuru Kenyatta and Raila Odinga, are sons of Kenya's first president and vice-president respectively.

Which Way Democracy?

At face value, democracy seems to have won the battle in Kenya due to peaceful elections, but when examined critically, democracy has been on trial in the country. It seems to have failed dismally due to the public rejection of decisions made by two critical institutions that should nurture and midwife democracy into becoming a culture in the country (the IEBC and the SCOK). Another concern, which is troubling for Kenyans, arises when freedom of expression loses its impact, where voiced opinions lack the power to bring about change. It appears that, in Kenya, public discourse in the media, especially in social media, allows for dissenting voices, giving an illusion of inclusivity and citizen participation in vital national discussions. However, this inclusivity often remains superficial, with no substantial action resulting from these expressions. Consequently, the existing situation persists without meaningful transformation.

What is the point of having voices without action and just in the name of liberal democracy? Ideally, legitimate dissenting voices should be those that lead to action and those that would improve the lives of ordinary citizens. Based on this assertion, the dissenting voices on the 2022 elections, including those of the four dissenting IEBC commissioners led by Julian Cherera, and Kenyans in the court of public opinion criticising the Supreme Court verdict that upheld President Ruto's electoral victory are merely allowed so that those dissatisfied can vent their frustration and eventually accept and move on, caring less about the legitimacy of their concerns in addressing the moral question of human dignity and attainment of a good life.

Institutional Designs

Currently, there are discourses on social media about the idea of a rotational presidency in Kenya to break the Kikuyu-Kalenjin presidential monotony that started in the 1970s. The fears of

dissenting regions breaking away through self-determination (cessation), calls for a parliamentary system of governance to decentralise power and introduce the office of the prime minister (the official leader of the opposition) and an electoral college in Kenya. Some of these views have now been captured by the bipartisan parliamentary team that negotiated a deal to end opposition protests, touching on electoral justice, governance, cost of living, and skewed ethnic appointment, among others. These are of course valid discussions that demonstrate how democracy in Africa should be approached. This can be achieved through the maximalist view that recognises the multi-ethnic composition of Africa, regional politics, and Pan-African approaches to dispute resolution that includes dialogue, mediation, and governments of national unity. Bah and Ogenga's (2020) compelling book chapter on 'Institutional Designs, Democracy and Peacebuilding in Africa' argues that African democratic systems should not emerge from elsewhere. They should be a product of local contestation and negotiation to the point where Africans sit and agree on how they want their democracy to work for them, by redesigning it to suit their local context, particularly due to the multi-ethnic nature of African societies.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the status of elections in Africa through the lens of Kenya. It engaged the diverse challenges of the liberal democratic and peace architectures and concluded that, for democracy in Africa or for African democracy to work, it must take a maximalist view of democratic institutionalism. This demands the adoption of a decolonial approach towards conceptualising African democracy or democracy in Africa. The chapter argued for innovative institutional designs that work for multi-ethnic societies in Africa, like Kenya. It calls for rethinking democracy beyond minimalistic underpinning to maximalist views and approaches therein. Doing so requires accommodating Africa's historicity, traditionalism, agency, and technological ambitions in democratic transitions, conflict transformation, and peacebuilding. Power-sharing in Kenya, as witnessed in 2007/08 after the deadly post-election violence and the 2023 bipartisan

talks has sought to address the ‘winner takes it all’ political system. These initiatives aim to mitigate the recurring post-election conflicts seen across Africa by fostering inclusivity and political stability. These terminologies should be actualised and institutionalised because they are critical to the operationalisation of conventional democratic institutionalism.

Moving from short-term concerns of democratic installation, peaceful power transitions, and stability to questions of democratic transition and consolidation ‘the African way’, calls for broadening the conversation beyond the winners of elections by whatever means possible, using locally available, African-centred peacebuilding infrastructures, such as the ‘African Solutions to African problems’ slogan. In the latter, African states must devise homegrown technological solutions to electoral management and devolve or decentralise the electoral process for transparency and accountability. Apart from the responsibility imposed on state governments to be proactive on electoral issues, regional and continental institutions have important roles to play in ensuring free and peaceful elections, and democratic consolidation.

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Chapter 21

Election-related Violence in Africa: A Reflection of the African Union's Response

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Introduction

Postcolonial Africa has struggled in operationalising liberal democracy, marked by recurring incidents of electoral violence leading to significant loss of lives and destruction of property throughout the continent. This has imposed a responsibility on continental and regional actors, such as the African Union (AU) to intervene. Thus, the AU has made significant strides in creating several frameworks that foster peace and security on the continent. For instance, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG), which was proposed in 2007 and enacted in 2012, has been instrumental in the governance and conduct of African elections. Most countries have adopted electoral democracy, with elections held cyclically every four to five years. Despite these initiatives, African elections are marred with election-related violence (ERV) ranging from protests to civilian deaths.

During the Zimbabwean post-election period in 2018, six people were shot dead by the army during unorganised protests while waiting for the announcement of election results (Human Rights Watch 2018). In the 2021 presidential election in Uganda, the opposition party, National Unity Platform, led by Robert Kyagulanyi, experienced electoral violence in the pre-election

period. This ranged from arrests of the party candidates, the disruption of political rallies with tear gas in some areas, and, on the extreme, the murder of a party supporter. As a result, Kyagulanyi suspended his campaigns at a point during the electoral race (The East African 2020). In 2017, during the pre-election period, Cameroon faced election violence that led to 400 civilian deaths, as the predominantly English-speaking regions announced the boycott of the poll (Maclean & Kiven 2018). These incidences have become a norm in many countries. According to Chikwanha and Masungure (2012:1), the AU “has often arrived at the scene rather late and without much coercive authority to enforce its prescriptions”.

Thus, this chapter aims to evaluate the AU’s role since the enforcement of the ACDEG on election-related violence in 2012. It commences by conceptualising election-related violence and providing an overview of Africa’s democratic experiences and democratic reversals by specifically highlighting the causes and consequences of electoral violence. It analyses the AU’s role in resolving electoral violence through tools, such as early warning systems and preventative diplomacy, election observation and monitoring, mediation, and the Panel of the Wise. Lastly, it concludes and outlines important recommendations on how the AU should effectively respond to ERV. This chapter utilises process tracing¹ to assess the AU’s role, including data provided by the Armed Conflict Location and Events Data (ACLED) to operationalise ERV. To calculate the incidences of ERV (number of occurrences of ERV and fatalities related to ERV) from the ACLED data set, ERV falls under the category of political violence, and the sub-types include violence against civilians, protests, and abductions or forced disappearances.

Conceptualisation

ERV has become a common phenomenon in Africa, prompting an interest in different aspects of the concept. Multiple factors

1 Process tracing is a causal mechanism using details within case empirical analyses of how a causal process plays out in an actual case. In the methodology, there is no co-variation to show causality (Brady & Collier 2010)

trigger ERV, which leads to numerous definitions/explanations of ERV. According to Fisher (2002), election-related violence is the threat of harm to individuals and property during the electoral cycle. Moreover, Laakso (2007) views election violence as an event that occurs to impact election results by manipulating electoral procedures and interrogating the legitimacy of the electoral results. Hoglund (2009:417) succinctly holds that electoral violence is separated from other forms of political violence by a combination of timing and motive. The time aspect relates to violence carried out during the election period. The objective of election violence is to influence the electoral process and its outcome. Hoglund's (2009) understanding of election violence combines both Laaskso (2007) and Fisher's (2002) standpoints, which all allude to timing and motive.

Furthermore, some scholars have presented more detailed definitions of election violence, such as Sisk (2009), who defines ERV as acts that threaten, intimidate, or perpetrate physical harm to others, which is motivated by elections. Kehailia (2014) categories election violence into eight different forms: 1) party-on-party electoral violence; 2) party-on-voter electoral violence; 3) party-on-state electoral violence; 4) voter-on-voter electoral violence; 5) voter-on-state electoral violence; 6) state-on-voter electoral violence; 7) state-on-party electoral violence; and 8) state-on-state electoral violence. In his article titled 'Voices, Votes, and Violence: Essays on Select Dynamics of Electoral Authoritarian Regimes', Bardall (2016) infers that election violence is a sub-type of political violence. He maintains that "political violence controls and suppresses an individual or group's right to participate in political processes through emotional, social, or economic force, coercion or pressure, and physical and sexual harm. It may occur in the public or private sphere, including in the family, the general community, online, and via media, or be perpetrated or condoned by the State (Bardall 2016).

ERV has a specific timeframe that motivates 'who did what and to whom', which is called the electoral cycle. As shown in Figure 21.1 below, the electoral cycle or the electoral process

involves three periods: the pre-electoral, the electoral, and the post-election periods.



Figure 21.1: The Electoral Cycle

Source: EISA (n.d.)

The pre-electoral period occurs before the election day and involves various preparations. These preparations include voter registration, registration of political parties, and registration of electoral observers. Additionally, the electoral commission sets a budget to allocate funds to each political party for campaigning purposes. This stage provides only a glimpse into the activities of the pre-electoral period (Norris *et al* 2014). Moreover, the election period encompasses campaign activities by different political parties before the election day. It further includes when people cast their votes on this day, and subsequently, followed by the announcement of the election results. Lastly, during the post-electoral period, the elections undergo a review process with which an audit takes place to assess the fairness and integrity of the election results (Norris *et al* 2014). This phase aims to ensure that the elections are free and fair.

Concerning African elections, violence has occurred in all three stages of the electoral cycle for different reasons and based on the timing of election violence. For example, in the pre-electoral period, acts of election violence include the 'disappearance' of opposition leaders and their candidates when the incumbent party feels primarily threatened. It may also involve the disruption of the political rallies of the opposition party. This is a form of coercive campaigning (Birch *et al* 2020). Zimbabwe has a reputation for inciting electoral violence during the pre-electoral period, as manifested during the 2008 election. In that timeframe, the ruling party, Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU–PF), adopted a slogan that implied the use of force, not dialogue. Opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai reported that, during this period, 86 civilians had been killed and 10 000 injured in the ensuing violence (Mail & Guardian 2012).

The ruling parties can unleash this type of violence because they have the state security forces at their disposal. During the electoral period, there are instances whereby the opposition political parties have protested at polling stations to demonstrate electoral irregularity and sway international election observers in their favour. According to Sisk (2008) and Hoglund (2009), violence on election day is often an attempt to influence election outcomes as a form of fraud. During the post-electoral period, election-related violence could be perpetrated by the opposition parties, particularly if election results are not favourable to them. For example, in the 2020 Tanzanian election, the two main opposition groups, the Party for Democracy and Progress known as Chadema and the Alliance for Change and Transparency commonly referred to as the ACT Wazalendo, called for their supporters to protest the re-election of President John Magufuli, who was declared the winner of the election by 84% of the votes (Blandy 2020). To squash these protests, governments viewed as autocratic may use excessive force.

The timing of election-related violence has different motives, and there is equifinality when it comes to what motivates electoral violence at different stages of the electoral cycle. The following section offers a synopsis of the African political

landscape. Unpacking Africa's history lays a solid foundation for the current political situation in the quest for democratisation.

Africa's Experience of Democracy and its Reversals

Africa's colonial history has shaped its political landscape. Predominantly, the francophone countries experienced direct rule, and their colonial power, France, has continued to actively influence its former colonies. In the case of Mali, as much as it has become an independent state, France still had a military base in the country until after the military coup in 2021, when the military sacked President Conde and ordered France out of the country. African countries subjected to indirect rule were primarily English-speaking countries under British colonial rule. After these countries gained independence, Britain had little influence or presence in these states. The francophone countries have a history of military coups to remove underperforming or oppressive governments, while in anglophone countries, this has waned over the years.

Democracy is a paradoxical ideology with several characteristics, depending on the context. For most African countries that have had to fight for democracy due to their colonial history and years of autocracy, the most befitting definition is a "government of the people, by the people, and for the people" (Lincoln 1863). Mainwaring (1993) views democracy as a combination of three aspects, which include open, competitive elections; the presence of universal suffrage; and lastly, the guarantees of traditional civil liberties such as freedom of organisation, and due process of law. Linz (1996:139) posits that "democracy is a government *pro tempore*, a regime in which the electorate at regular intervals can hold its governors accountable and impose change". These definitions all point to some form of representation through elections. Irrespective of this critical aspect of democracy, the question of why elections matter lies in the promise of electing representatives into government.

The third wave of democracy in Africa occurred between the 1960s and early 1990s, with one-party states being the norm in many African countries. For example, the Democratic Union of

the Malian People held on to power between 1976 and 1991; Niger was ruled by the Nigerien Progress Party–African Democratic Rally between 1960 and 1974; the Socialist Party of Senegal was in power between 1966 and 1974; and Tanzania was governed by Chama Cha Mapiduzi between 1977 and 1992. In the late 1990s, the rise of democratic movements led to transitions of many autocratic regimes, while single-party states embraced multiparty democracy (Cyllah 2010). Since this wave, most African countries have held elections every four or five years, which highlights the success of periodic electoral democracy. While there have been power transitions through multi-party elections on the continent, the majority of them have been marred with ERV

According to Merilainen (2012), “a fifth of the elections in sub-Saharan Africa” result in ERV. As of 2020, Africa saw a rise in political violence in comparison to the previous year (Raleigh & Kishi 2021). In 2020, there were more than 17 200 events of political violence, which accounted for 37 600 fatalities (Raleigh & Kishi 2021). The question remains: why did these events occur, especially during the electoral cycle? Undoubtedly, the occurrence of ERV and political violence in Africa is linked with the failure of democratisation.²

Democracy is associated with governance by the majority through voting, but this principle has been eroded in Africa over time. Most constitutions highlight that a president cannot rule for more than two terms (African Center for Strategic Studies 2018). However, illegal or illegitimate changes in constitutions have been occurring, with incumbent presidents elongating their terms in office. Consequently, elections have failed to preserve the people’s will, as incumbent leaders have been manipulating the constitutions to remove term limits. For instance, in Cameroon, Paul Biya, who has been in office for 41 years, eliminated the two-term presidential limit, enabling him to consolidate power for decades.

2 Democratisation refers to the inception and expansion of citizen privileges and the establishment a democratic nation. The concept of citizenship rights involves the introduction of fundamental individual liberties like the right to gather, religious autonomy, unrestricted journalism, and the ability to run for governmental positions (Makombe 2022).

Similarly, Yoweri Museveni, who has been in power for 37 years, abolished Uganda's constitutional term limit clause in 2005. Djibouti's Ismail Omar Guelleh, who has been in power for 24 years, influenced the lawmakers to approve a constitutional amendment in 2010 that paved the way for his third term bid and allowed him to be in power since (Africa News 2019). As a result, these countries have witnessed electoral violence due to the people's strong desire for a change in leadership. Even though they participate in regular elections, the outcomes often do not meet their expectations, indicating a challenge in the democratisation project.

Mainwaring (1993) maintains that democracy involves open, competitive elections that determine who will govern. However, there has been a growing phenomenon of national unity governments, whereby the incumbent governments decline to relinquish their positions following fiercely disputed elections. To avert tensions between the competing political parties, the opposition factions are often included in the government (Makombe 2018). While power-sharing agreements are a gap measure to mitigate conflicts between competing political parties, they do not tackle the root cause of the problem.

Power-sharing agreements primarily aim to diminish majoritarianism, thereby reducing the risk that a single party or ethnic group might pose to the security of a country's citizens (Miti *et al* 2013). It is crucial to highlight that the democratic process is compromised, increasing the possibility of instability, when specific parties gain power, particularly through illegitimate electoral processes. Kenya in 2007 and Zimbabwe in 2008 are examples of elections that could have determined who was to govern. However, the formation of a government of national unity or coalition government is evidence of democratic reversals, which may be viewed at the time as an opportunity cost to foster peace and stability.

In addition to the political freedoms inherent in the democratic process, there are other socio-economic prospects for democracy. As argued by Matlosa (2017), the social-structuralist interpretation of democracy broadens the scope of democratic

theory and practice, transcending the procedural, electoral, and institutional aspects. In a democratic state, socio-economic development and structural power distribution fall under second-generation rights to be enjoyed by the citizens. In Africa, these rights and liberties remain an unfulfilled aspiration. Across Africa, citizens have almost resigned to the increasing poverty rates. Such high levels of multidimensional poverty and hopelessness explain why a young vegetable vendor in Tunisia, harassed by the police in the central business district, resorted to setting himself on fire in 2010 (Lageman 2020). This became one of the main sparks for the Arab Spring, as waves of protests and public revolts against authoritarian regimes, corruption, and poverty spread across Northern African countries such as Tunisia and Libya.

Following this occurrence, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated poverty rates in Africa, highlighting the impact of poor governance. During the pandemic in 2020, nearly 30 million more Africans slid into extreme poverty (living on less than US\$1.90 a day) and before the pandemic, over 445 million people (34%) of Africa's population lived below the poverty line (Aikins & McLachlan 2022). The increase in poverty, even before COVID-19, has led to riots and calls for a change in governments, mainly in the Central and West African regions, which recorded 54.8% and 36.8% poverty, respectively (Aikins & McLachlan 2022).

It is not a coincidence that between 2019 and 2023, Central and West Africa experienced unprecedented military coup d'états. Table 21.1 illustrates the occurrence of successful military coups in Africa since 2019. The reasons for these military coups differ from one country to another. However, they all stem from poor governance, insecurity, abuse of power, and tenure elongations. Apart from poor governance, there are other immediate causes of democratic reversals, including greed of the political elites, personalising the state by the ruling class, corruption by the ruling elites, and mismanagement of state resources.

Table 21.1: Evidence of Democratic Reversals through Military Coups in Africa Since 2019

Year	Country	Reasons
2019	Sudan	protests for the removal of President Omar al Bashir who was in power since 1989 dramatic rise in the cost of living and the deterioration of the economy
2020	Mali	protests calling for the resignation of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita who had been in power since 2013 insecurity and proliferation of insurgent groups corruption, souring economic conditions, and dilapidating healthcare facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic
2021	Tunisia	President Kais Saied seized power in July 2021, dismissing Prime Minister Hichem Mechichi and suspending the parliament, due to what Saied called a deteriorating economy and inability to effectively manage the COVID-19 pandemic
2021	Guinea	former president Alpha Conde wanted an extension of his term after a two-term tenure. He allegedly manipulated the election results and declared himself the winner, leading to massive protests that claimed 12 lives Guinea's natural resource wealth was personalised by the elite and the general population continued to suffer economically tax was increased between 13% and 15% in 2019 an increase in petrol prices was followed by a second tax hike in 2021
2022	Burkina Faso	in January 2022, the military removed President Roch Marc Christian Kabore in a coup, and installed Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damba, citing rising insecurity in September 2022, President Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damba was also removed by the military. Ibrahim Traoré became the interim president.
2023	Niger	insecurity and rising cost of living in the country and governance challenges President Bazoum's plans to replace the head of the presidential guard

Year	Country	Reasons
2023	Gabon	the military, under General Brice Oligui, removed President Ali Bongo after his 14-year rule poor governance electoral malpractices. President Ali Bongo was removed a few hours after his government announced his re-election. Continuous degradation of social cohesion, risking pushing the country into chaos

Source: Author's compilation

Overview of Election Violence in Africa

According to Mares and Young (2016), 48% of all voters from 33 African countries in the fifth round of the Afrobarometer expressed fear of violence during elections. Moreover, Daxcecker (2012) reveals that 81.48% of elections conducted between 1997 and 2009 experienced at least one incident of pre-election violence, and 65.7% had at least one incident of post-election violence. Thus, election violence in Africa is highly prevalent and associated with the type and expression of democracy in the country. Theoretically, most advanced democracies rarely face election violence because of the institutionalisation of competition. After all, the governing party usually fulfils a significant part of its social contract, unlike the case in Africa.

On the other hand, authoritarian civilian regimes stifle the presence of opposition parties, and their elections are not competitive (Huntington 1991). For example, Cameroon's president, Paul Biya, who is the second longest-serving president in Africa, "has remained in power by selecting elites who do not challenge his authority, corrupting state institutions to his will, including but not limited to electoral bodies and the courts, and discrediting already fragmented opposition parties" (O'Donnell & Gramer 2018). However, states with hybrid regimes are more prone to electoral violence because of their inability to democratise, which is very prevalent in most African countries (IDEA 2019).

Levitsky and Way (2002:52) posit that hybrid regimes have what they coined 'competitive authoritarianism', which is defined as "formal democratic institutions widely viewed as the principal means of obtaining and exercising political authority while the incumbents violate the rules so often that the regime fails to meet conventional minimum standards for democracy". As a result, they have weak electoral institutions like the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, which claimed to be ready for the August 2023 election. However, they needed more ballot papers in the metropolitan cities of Harare and Bulawayo on election day. Hence, the elections failed to meet the Southern African Development Community (SADC)'s standard of holding elections (Garber 2023). As a result, an authoritarian environment flourishes within a multiparty system. The ZANU-PF has been in power since Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980 and had a national unity government in 2008, in its quest for regime consolidation.

In addition to the type of regime in each African country, the type of electoral system also contributes to electoral violence. Countries like South Africa, which have proportional representation as their electoral system, are less likely to experience election violence, as all the political parties have seats in parliament depending on the percentage of votes they receive. On the other hand, countries with a 'first past the post' electoral cycle, and a 'winner takes it all' attitude, are more likely to experience election violence. Nigeria, Kenya, Eritrea, and Uganda are examples of the latter.

Primarily, when significant ethno-political groups are denied political representation, elections held under majoritarian systems are more susceptible to violence. The propensity arises because an opposition that possesses a substantial electoral base can pose a more convincing challenge to the ruling party, potentially driving both sides to adopt violent tactics in the pursuit of victory (Fjelde & Hoglund 2016). Furthermore, majoritarian institutions will notably adversely impact countries characterised by substantial economic disparities. In such contexts, the stakes of electoral contests may rise significantly, and the costs associated with electoral defeat will become more pronounced, especially

when both political influence and economic prosperity impact each other.

With all the differences and lack of compliance with democratic norms in Africa, it is questionable why African countries continue to aspire for democracy and interesting to identify their motivations. In 2011, the African Union Commission (AUC) introduced the concept of 'shared values', as the norms, principles, and practices developed to provide the basis for collective actions and solutions (Omozuafoh 2021). These shared values seek to address the political, economic, and social challenges that hinder Africa's integration and development. Thus, the AU is a major instrument in promoting democracy and combatting electoral violence on the continent. After the ratification of the Constitutive Act of the Africa Union (AUCA) of 2000, the provisions of the Act became legally binding on African states. Hence, the AU plays a fundamental role to foster democracy and end election violence through different institutions and instruments.

The Role of the AU in Electoral-related Violence

In 2002, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was transformed to the AU, with the mandate to increase co-operation and enhance integration among African states. The vision of this continental organisation is "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena" (AU n.d.). The AUCA is the founding treaty that commits AU member states to democratic, representative, and responsive governance, under conditions of peace and stability (AU 2000b). Articles 3 and 4 of the AUCA state the unequivocal embrace of a popularly elected government and outright rejection and condemnation of unconstitutional government changes, which the Lome Declaration elaborates on in 2000. Thus, the AU enforces the democratic principle that elections are legitimate to express popular sovereignty. In addition, the AUCA recognises that sustainable democracy on the continent requires an environment that fosters political stability, peace, and security.

The AU establishes extensive normative frameworks to foster sustainable democracy. These include the Lome Declaration of 2000, the African Charter on Democracy Elections and Governance (ACDEG) of 2007, the Ezulwini Framework of 2009, and the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). As the AU has reached its 20-year milestone, this chapter analyses the AU's frameworks to manage electoral conflict. The AU operationalises APSA with the guidance of the AU's Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) Protocol, which was adopted in July 2002 and entered into force in 2003. All these frameworks represent the founding aspirations of the AU to promote peace and security as far as ERV is concerned. On the other hand, achieving this aspiration is costly, and one of the consistent barriers the AU has is raising enough internal funding for their projects. A significant part of their budget is funded by the EU and European states, which provide 75% of their running costs as of 2021 (ISS 2021). The inability of the AU to fund its projects has hurt their effectiveness. This section will focus on the AU's progress through the following initiatives: i) early warning system and preventative diplomacy; ii) election observation and monitoring; iii) mediation of post-election disputes; and iv) the Panel of the Wise.

Continental Early Warning System

Election-related violence is not a spontaneous occurrence. The underlying issues that predate its occurrence is the motivation for the establishment of the Continental Early Warning Systems (CEWS). Early warning systems, by definition, use open-source material and generally aim to serve human security, not national or state interests (IGAD 2021). As a result, the AU intended to monitor these situations, especially during election seasons. In some countries, conducting elections can incite violent conflicts due to long-standing political rivalries among the candidates, particularly within political parties, negatively impacting peace, stability, and security (AU 2010). Thus, during the pre-electoral cycle, the AU usually dispatched fact-finding and pre-election assessment missions to the country holding the election.

Beyond the fact-finding aspect, the relevant information is used to mitigate and prevent violent conflict by communicating

the analysis and policy options to relevant end-users. At the continental level, the end-users are the AUC chairperson, the PSC, and other relevant policy organs of the AU and the PSC. In this context, early warning aims to enhance the latter and former institutes and entities like the Panel of the Wise's ability to recognise significant developments promptly and formulate effective response strategies to prevent or mitigate violent conflict (Cilliers 2005).

Thus, the PSC introduced the CEWS to facilitate the early warning systems mechanism. The CEWS falls under Article 12 of the protocol establishing the PSC. It was envisioned that the CEWS would consist of a "situation room", which is "the observation and monitoring centre" found explicitly in the Conflict Management Directorate of the AU and "responsible for data collection and analysis based on appropriate early warning indicators module" (PSC 2002). The CEWS would have an established link with existing regional economic communities (RECs) across regions. As such, under Article 12(2)(b), "specific provision was made for the observation and monitoring units of the Regional Mechanisms (RMs), which are to be linked directly through appropriate means of communications to the 'Situation Room', which shall collect and process data at their level and transmit the same to the Situation Room" (PSC 2002).

However, the CEWS could not be effectively activated in the 2007 Kenyan case, leading to devastating electoral violence that claimed more than 1 000 fatalities (Gettleman 2008). In the case of Kenya, the CEWS had a porous country network, which made it difficult to access information relating to the development of the conflict at an earlier stage (Kungu 2018). Furthermore, the CEWS did not have links to non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which would have been able to capture instances of pre-election violence. For example, the Kenya Human Rights Commission documented 36 incidents of political violence that led to the fatalities of 20 individuals and left 60 others wounded across 79 constituencies (Amao *et al* 2014). These findings could have been invaluable for the CEWS in anticipating the conflict, and it was only on 10 January 2008, when the AUC Chairperson, His Excellency Alpha Oumar Konaré, issued a statement relating to

the conflict and calling for the Kenyan leaders to end the conflict (Moody 2008). Unfortunately, the conflict had already started, and the CEWS failed to prevent it.

The CEWS's failure in the 2007 Kenyan election led to a coalition between the CEWS and the EU's Joint Research Centre to strengthen their research capacity. They increased their staff members to include analysts, enabling them to act more efficiently and timely (EU Commission 2017; Noyes & Yarwood 2013). The 2012 election in Guinea-Bissau presented the CEWS with the chance to test the increase in its operational capacity. Early warning signs were evident in early March 2012, when a joint mission of the Economic Community of West African States/ African Union/United Nations monitored the election and prevent electoral conflict in Guinea Bissau. However, it was too late, as a military coup occurred while the joint mission was present in the country on 12 April 2012 (African *et al* 2012). Overall, this mission was unsuccessful due to poor timing and the occurrence of a military coup d'etat.

These two incidents reinforced the failure of the CEWS in Africa. While the CEWS had made strides in enhancing its data collection in 2012, there was a further need to enhance its operational capabilities. According to Engel (2018), some of the challenges included the limited connection between the CEWS and civil society organisations operating within AU member states, financial overdependence on external partners, the underperformance of some organs and institutions, and the ambiguous working relations between the AUC and regional entities and member states (Engel 2022). Ultimately, these challenges led to its redundancy. Further to this, the CEWS was "unfortunately obliterated under the broad AU reforms in 2021 that created a new Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security", and it is unclear how they will revive this system under the new department (Engel 2022). Despite the collapse of the CEWS, the AU has managed to monitor and observe most African elections. However, the AU should revive the CEWS and make it operational to prevent the outbreak of conflicts and unconstitutional changes of governments on the continent.

Election Observation and Monitoring

Since its inception in 2002, the AU has developed frameworks for election observation and monitoring. The framework guiding this includes the 2002 Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa, the 2002 Guidelines for Election Observation and Monitoring Missions, and the ACDEG. These three instruments guide all election observer missions of the AUC and the Pan-African Parliament. According to the AU (2010:51), election observation relates to “information gathering, or on-site fact-finding aimed at assessing the electoral process’s credibility, legitimacy, and transparency. External agencies often carry out observation missions but cannot intervene in the voting and counting operations”. The term ‘monitoring’ refers to information gathering, examination, and evaluation of the electoral process (AU 2010:51–52).

Election observation and monitoring missions in Africa include conducting technical evaluations of election processes and addressing and managing political tensions. This is important because of the significant connection between elections and potential conflicts. Consequently, as a continental organisation, the AU has consistently approached election observation with a preventive diplomacy perspective to avoid the potential outbreak of conflict. Notably, the head of mission in election observation and monitoring (EOM) missions encompasses diplomatic efforts to prevent electoral violence and conflict.

Makombe (2018) reveals a causality between the longevity of an election observation mission and the level of election violence perpetrated. In a paper titled, ‘Election Observation and Monitoring in the Midst of Kenyan Elections: The Case Study of 1997 to 2013 Elections’, Makombe (2018) suggests that the presence of international observers in all three stages (long-term election observation) of the electoral cycle lessens the severity of violence. Countries are more likely to witness increased electoral violence when there are short-term observer missions, which occur during the week of election day and a few days post-election day. Kenya experienced very violent elections in 1997 and 2007, and the presence of election observers was

short-term. Conversely, in Kenya's 2002 and 2013 elections, the elections experienced less electoral violence, as the election observer mission stayed longer. This conclusion was drawn based on the longevity of EOM periods as significant outliers, despite significant pre-existing conditions that were constant factors which created grounds for the occurrence of election violence. These pre-existing conditions included high poverty rates, corruption, poor service delivery, and high inflation (Makombe 2018). Figure 21.2 illustrates the severity of election violence in Kenya.

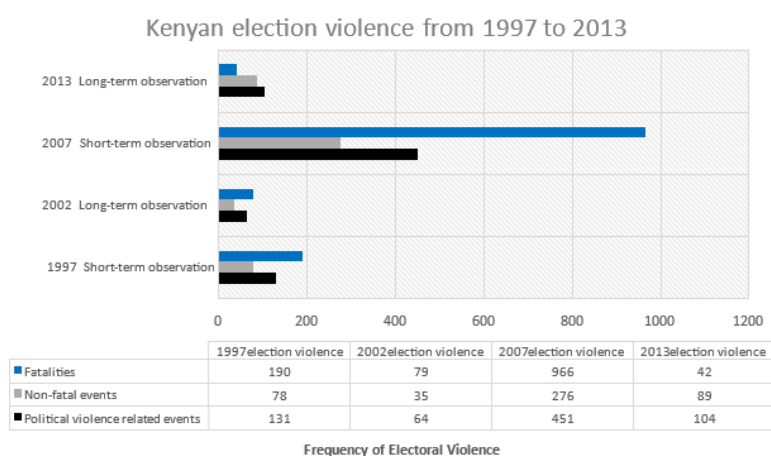


Figure 21.2: Election Violence in Kenya in Correlation with the Longevity of the International Election Observers

Source: Customised by Author from ACLED³

The two main findings mentioned earlier were supported by additional factors, such as state legitimacy conferred by other nations when they endorse the election. Consequently, the ruling party tends to be more cautious about inciting violence, seeking legitimacy in the eyes of observers (AU 2010). Election observation and monitoring are essential as they ensure the credibility of elections, transparency, integrity of the electoral process, and legitimacy of the outcome by key electoral stakeholders.

3 Available online at <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>.

Hence, when election violence occurs, it raises concerns about the election's credibility, especially if there are pre-existing conditions.

The process of election observation and monitoring takes place upon invitation from the country hosting the election. In most cases, the AU is invited to observe several presidential elections. Their role as a continental body is to observe and monitor elections within a country, which results in the submission of two reports on whether the elections were free and fair and if the country holding the election has adhered to the provisions of the ACDEG. Overall, the AU has endorsed most of the elections on the continent, while disputing electoral violence and contentious elections. For example, the continental body endorsed the Kenyan election of 2007, which later ended up as a government of national unity. In Malawi's 2019 election, the AU endorsed the election as well, and the victory of the president-elect was later overturned by the Malawian courts, giving power to the opposition party.

Mediation of Post-election Disputes

Election observation and monitoring ends with the publishing of the final report by observer missions. In cases where election disputes or election violence occurs post-election day, there is a need for mediation by a neutral external party. Mediation plays a significant role in the contingency model, particularly concerning the mediator and their approach. There is an ongoing debate regarding which mediation style leads to the most favourable outcomes. Elangovan emphasises that the mediation strategy is a crucial factor in evaluating mediation results (cited in Bercovitch & Houston 2000), while Beardsley *et al* (2006) argue that the mediator's style substantially impacts the strategic bargaining environment. The three primary styles are facilitation or communication, formulation, and manipulation. Brown and Shraub (1992) describe the first style as "completely procedural" and involving a "passive" role in facilitating information exchange. This approach also entails the mediator perceiving the conflict as a breakdown in communication, making it the mediator's primary task (Zartman 1996:279).

Conversely, formulation sees the mediator taking on a more substantive role in negotiations, including suggesting practical solutions to disputes (Brown & Shraub 1992). Manipulation goes further by actively and fully engaging and integrating the mediator with the solution (Brown & Shraub 1992). The mediator wields significant influence in this approach to drive the process toward a specific outcome (Brown & Shraub 1992). The AU has played the role of mediator in multiple instances to mitigate conflict between incumbent and opposition parties.

The continental body relies on the RECs to handle electoral-related disputes. In 2008, the AU reluctantly made use of the SADC political leadership to mediate the post-election dispute between the ruling party, ZANU-PF, and two opposition parties, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) factions MDC-T led by Morgan Tsvangirai, and MDC-M led by Arthur Mutambara. According to Borger (2008), “Kenya, Nigeria, Zambia, Senegal, and Botswana all questioned Mugabe’s legitimacy in the wake of a government-backed campaign of violence that forced Tsvangirai to withdraw from the election. They argued that the AU should live up to its charter that aspires towards democratic government”. Hence, the international community assigned former South African president Thabo Mbeki the task of mediating the political tensions in the country. Mbeki’s role was to normalise the political environment, which included the right of political affiliation and public protest (Anstey 2007).

A vital aspect of this mediation process was the mediation style used to negotiate peace and stability in Zimbabwe. In the 2008 Zimbabwean election crisis, the mediation style used was quiet diplomacy. According to scholarly and theoretical points of view, ‘quiet’ or ‘soft’ diplomacy possesses several characteristics, as elucidated by Graham (2006:117):

1. personal or direct diplomacy between heads of state or government or senior officials;
2. little (or no) media involvement;
3. the appearance of limited action or even inaction;
4. calm and tactful but persistent negotiation or dialogue in a non-threatening atmosphere;

5. constructive engagement with the target country to help solve the problems as quietly as possible; and
6. these can be carried out in the context of bilateral or multilateral efforts.

During Malawi's election in 2019, the Malawi Electoral Commission announced the incumbent President Peter Mutharika as the winner, securing 38.6% of the votes. In a closely contested race, opposition candidate Lazarus Chakwera from the Malawi Congress Party received 35.4%. At the same time, Saulos Chilima, Mutharika's vice-president and the leader of the United Transformation Movement, garnered 20.2% of the vote (African Centre for Strategic Studies 2020). According to the ACLED (2023) and as illustrated in Figure 2, there were 26 incidences of ERV during the first election in 2019. The AU (2019) stated that its "mission had not noted any serious concerns with the process, either witnessed or observed".

In addition, former president Thabo Mbeki, a noted Pan-Africanist, endorsed this election in the Commonwealth Observer Group (Gruenbaum 2020). However, the Malawian constitutional court rejected these results due to election fraud. President Mutharika also had less than the required percentage of votes to assume power. As provided in the Malawian constitution, a president can only assume power if the candidate wins the election by 50% +1 of the total votes (African Centre for Strategic Studies 2020). Due to these factors, Malawi held a second round of elections, and Lazarus Chakwera won the presidential seat by 55% after allying with the two main opposition parties and other smaller parties.

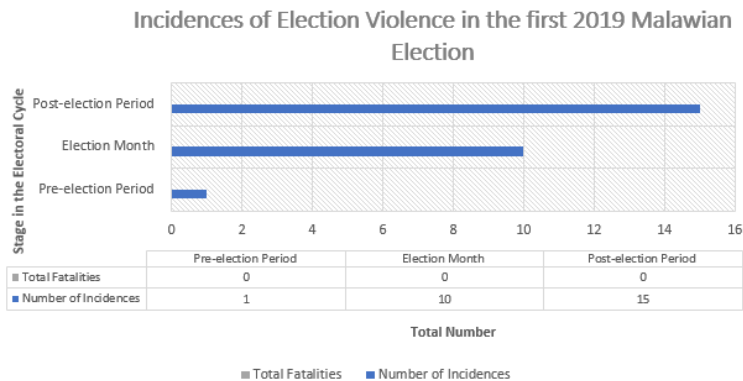


Figure 21.3: Election Violence in the First 2019 Malawian Election

Source: Customised by Author from ACLED⁴

Regarding the AU, their lack of “any notes” for the first election in Malawi highlights the institution’s need for more practical engagement with their instruments of electoral conduct and the required knowledge of the constitution of the country. As a result, it makes the institution’s credibility questionable when they endorse flawed election results and seem to have supported illegitimate power consolidation, as was the case in the Zimbabwean election in 2008 and the 2019 first Malawian election.

The Panel of the Wise

The Panel of the Wise (PoW)⁵ is the AU’s most esteemed structure for conflict prevention, on-the-ground and fact-finding instruments, and agreement brokering mechanisms. It comprises five highly respected African personalities (representing each of Africa’s five regions) who leverage their experience and moral influence to promote peace (AU 2010). Examples of appointed members include Ahemed Ben Bella from Algeria, whose tenure was from 2007 to 2010; in the second tenure, Salim Ahmed Salim from Tanzania was reappointed and his tenure ended in 2013;

⁴ Available online at <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>.

⁵ The AU consultative body comprises of five members for a three-year tenure.

Marie Madeleine Kalala-Ngoy from the Democratic Republic of the Congo was part of the third panel appointed from 2013 to 2018; and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was part of the fourth panel, which ran from 2018 to 2022 (AU 2018). The panel can act at the request of the AU council, chairperson or at its initiative on any issue “relating to promoting and maintaining peace, security, and stability in Africa” (Harbeson & Rothchild 2018).

The first two tenures of the panel, 2007–2010 and 2010–2013, framed essential themes for the AU, including election-related disputes and political violence (AU 2010). During these terms, the panel undertook numerous missions. For instance, in 2007, it facilitated talks between rebels and then-president Françoise Bozize of the Central African Republic. In subsequent efforts, the PoW mediated a truce between President Joseph Kabila and opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi, following contentious elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (AU 2013). To accomplish these objectives, the panel collaborates extensively with RECs, including the ECOWAS Council of the Wise, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)’s Mediation Contact Group, the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA)’s Committee of Elders, and the SADC’s Mediation Reference Group.

However, the PoW has faced several challenges as a mediating body for the AU. First, its secretariat is located within the Political Affairs, Peace, and Security Department (formerly Peace and Security). This arrangement has impacted its autonomy, as the PoW members rely on the co-operation of the Peace and Security commissioner to carry out their duties. Secondly, the panel needs a budget. Thus, they must seek external assistance whenever they want to engage independently. This became more problematic and evident in the third and fourth panels (2014–2017 and 2017–2020), because of the decline in funding (The Conversation 2022). As a result, they became less effective and somehow marginalised. Based on their experience and charismatic dispositions, the members of the panel could have been more functional in resolving several conflicts on the continent, especially regarding unconstitutional changes of government and tenure elongations.

Concluding Reflections

This chapter has interrogated the AU's response to elections and electoral violence on the African continent. The AU has made significant strides to create instruments that support democratic principles, from the ACDEG to the Ezulwini Framework. These mechanisms highlight a well-thought-out plan aligning with 'African Solutions for African Problems'. However, ERV poses a threat to peace, security, and democracy in Africa. When electoral processes involve violence, the AU fails to take decisive action against perpetrators, as seen in the case of Malawi, Zimbabwe, and Kenya. It establishes a hazardous precedent and undermines the consolidation of democracy. The presence of ERV and the reinforcement of autocratic systems has adverse effects on the human rights of African citizens, making it imperative for the AU to prioritise addressing these issues.

There is a pressing need for enhanced co-ordination among the AU organs to tackle these challenges across the continent. Instead of reacting to violence and its consequences, the organs should concentrate on proactive methods of mitigation. Moreover, the AU needs to acknowledge that ERV takes different forms in each African country due to diverse histories and socio-political statutes; hence, the AU must embrace a multilevel approach, targeting all stakeholders that uphold the electoral process. The AU needs to uphold democratic principles and values within its structures, ensuring a clear separation of powers and functions. This approach will foster a conducive environment.

To successfully combat ERV, the AU needs to revive the CEWS, increase its capacity for information gathering, and allocate a separate budget for this instrument. While the increase in its capacity was germane, there is also a need to decentralise the CEWS system. Researchers and monitoring teams should not only be sent to states to monitor political tensions and report back to the AU, similar to how they conduct election monitoring and observation. The AU should establish dedicated offices in each country that understand the local culture thoroughly, enabling them to provide timely and accurate information to the AU. This hands-on approach will facilitate early mitigation efforts to

ease tension, rather than waiting for mediation processes after violence has erupted, as witnessed in cases like Kenya in 2007, Zimbabwe in 2008, and the CAR in 2021.

The AU needs to play a more active role on the continent based on a well-structured and widely consulted principle, and not on loyalty to the leaders of its member states, who are decisive actors within the continental body. Understandably, the shared history of colonisation experienced by the member states binds them together. However, this has created a breeding ground for the personalisation of the state's power and resources by the ruling elites, the majority of whom have failed in their respective countries. The AU needs to follow through with the instruments they have put in place when incumbent presidents who have lost elections refuse to step down. The PoW has the potential to negotiate with leaders who refuse to step down from power. A good example is the case of The Gambia's 2017 election, when former president Yahya Jammeh refused to step down. It forced the Nigerian president at the time, Muhammadu Buhari, and a mediation team to intervene. This eventually led to Jammeh's resignation and restoration of peace and stability in the West African country. The AU truly has the potential to eradicate ERV in the continent. However, a lack of consistency in following through with its self-established mechanisms remains its main hindrance.

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Chapter 22

Governance, Contested Legitimacy, and the Resurgence of Military Coups in Africa: The Role of the African Union

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Introduction

Over the decades, African countries have experienced governance crises and what others have tagged governance deficit. The potential for African countries to draw lessons from their histories of inadequate governance and alter the trajectory of development in both politics and the economy appears to be a subject open to debate. Personal rule and personalisation of politics have created a situation whereby democratic institutions are impaired the most at the expense of the collective good. Indeed, there has been an emergence of big personalities who have occupied the political spaces of their societies – legitimately or illegitimately. The narrower the political space, the heavier the toll of misgovernance on the citizens who suffer most of the brunt of leadership failure, caused by a lack of political legitimacy. These tendencies manifest themselves more in the continent's history of state formation and political processes.

One of the legacies of colonial rule, which has exposed the barrenness of the continent, is the inability of postcolonial states to allow democracy to nurture and blossom as a veritable system of peaceful transfer of power. This is the outcome of the politics of identity, social group alienation, neopatrimonial relationships,

and the promotion of a rentier economy. These have deepened the culture of primitive capitalist accumulation to the exclusion of citizens. These have inhibited attempts at building peaceful and stable political organisations and institutions even in countries with the most promising foundations.

Recently, the resurgence of military coups on the continent has created fresh debates about the ability of African states to sustain democracy. Of particular interest has been the interrogation of the commitment and capacity of the continental body, the African Union (AU), to combat the coups and restore constitutionalism to the affected countries. While it is true that the organisation cannot prevent the occurrence of military interventions, nevertheless, it can condemn the forceful takeover of power and ensure the return to constitutional order. The legitimacy of the AU to carry out this role has been clearly stated in its legal frameworks, such as the Lomé Declaration of July 2000 on the framework for an OAU response to unconstitutional changes of government (AHG/Decl.5, XXXVI). Despite this, the performance of the organisation in addressing the trend of coups leaves much to be desired.

Therefore, this chapter examines the phenomenon of military intervention in African politics from the context of governance conundrum, which has invariably created a contested legitimacy and further ruins the continent's prospects of establishing strong democratic institutions. As used in this chapter, governance relates to the process of overseeing the direction of government policies through the institutional mechanisms of a given state. It includes the patterns of rule or practices such as public accountability, responsive and responsible leadership, the expansion of democratic space for public participation in decisionmaking and electoral process, the flourishing of the rule of law, and transparency in the conduct of public affairs. Governance may be good or bad, depending on the conduct of governments. It is good when it yields compromise and accommodation, peace and security, unity, and economic development, as well as the sustenance of democracy based on its noble tenets. Governance is said to be bad when it falls short of providing the attributes of its flip side.

Contested legitimacy arises when leadership falls out of favour with citizens due to a history of poor governance or weak institutional capacity to stem the tide of insecurity, economic hardships, or sliding into a state collapse. In some cases, contested legitimacy becomes evident when a government comes into power through a flawed election. Usually, civil society challenges the government's legitimacy through protests and, in response, the government represses the society to secure obedience. Put differently, the severe crisis of confidence in leadership, or disputes over the legitimacy of leaders to govern, often results in contested authority and challenges to their mandate to steer governmental affairs. Thus, the governance crisis in Africa is the consequence of a weak performance in the conduct of public policy, which puts a question mark on the authority of a leader and eventually results in social tensions and insecurity that sometimes prompt the military to take over power. The officer corps usually hides under the pretence of salvaging the eroding government legitimacy and breakdown of order.

This chapter argues that the AU has not been performing efficiently as the umbrella organisation to stem the tide of military putsches on the continent. Instead of taking a hard posture on defaulting members, the organisation's responses have been contradictory and not always principally governed by its legislative frameworks. This chapter tries to respond to important questions such as: What are the reasons for the resurgence of military interventions on the continent? What has been the role of the AU in addressing the spate of military coups among its member countries? And what can be done to strengthen the capacity of the organisation to effectively respond to military takeovers and restore civilian rule in the affected countries?

To address these issues, the chapter is divided into six sections. Section one contains the introduction, followed by Section two, which discusses the framework of analysing unconstitutional changes of government in Africa. Section three examines the trends of military interventions in Africa, while the subsequent section (four) highlights the factors that influenced the resurgence of military coups on the continent. In Section five, the chapter examines the role of the AU, and the challenges it

faces in addressing the question of military coups in Africa, and Section six concludes.

Africa and Military Coup Epidemics

Africa is the cradle of military intervention. In comparison to other continents, Africa has the highest number of coups d'état in its immediate postcolonial period and contemporary epoch. The coup drama unfolds periodically and sometimes in quick succession like a wildfire that defies any extinguishing means. Thus, apart from military mutinies that did not mutate as successful coups, the actual military intervention in Africa started in 1963 in Togo, followed by Congo and Dahomey (now called the Republic of Benin). Guttridge (1975) christened the 1960s-1970s a “decade of coups” on the continent and pointed out that between January 1963 and the end of February 1966, Africa had experienced 14 cases of military coups, and by early 1968 there had been about 19 successful military coups. By the end of 1970, the total number of coup incidents in eight years was nearly 30 (Gutteridge 1975:1). As of 1999, Africa had experienced more than 70 successful coups, as well as a significant number of attempted coups (Amadife 1999). Duzor and Williamson (2022) paint a grim picture of military coups in Africa as shown in Table 22.1. They maintain that, of 486 attempted coups carried out around the world, Africa has over 214.

Table 22.1: Success Rates of Coups in Previous Decades

Decade	Total Coup Attempts	Successful	Success Rate
1950-1959	6	3	50%
1960-1969	41	25	61%
1970-1979	42	18	42.9%
1980-1989	39	22	56.4%
1990-1999	39	16	41%
2000-2009	22	8	36.4%
2010-2019	17	8	47.1%
2020-2022	8	6	75%

Source: Powel and Thyne (2022)

The table above shows that, out of 242 successful coups in the world, a total of 106 are from the continent. The apprehension over the spectre of military coups in some parts of the continent has always been a cause for concern. This has been reinforced by the fact that, out of 54 sovereign nations in Africa, 45 have experienced a military coup d'état, and the occurrence of coups has become a regular phenomenon in 13 African countries (Duzor & Williamson 2022). Furthermore, two other countries – Niger and Gabon – experienced military takeovers in 2023. It is important to note that the coups that took place in Africa between 1950 and 1999 fall under the Cold War dispensation. A period of respite came during the last two decades (2000–2019), when military coups profoundly declined, largely as a result of the democratisation process that swept through Africa at the end of the Cold War.

Until the 2000s, when civil society organisations became strengthened in their agitation for democratisation across African countries, the continent was under the siege of military coups. The third wave of democracy was characterised by the reintroduction of a multiparty system, which replaced the orthodox one-party states. Military regimes also became unpopular largely because of the support of the West for the promotion of democracy and civil rights. These developments gave the impression that military intervention was no longer possible in Africa's political landscape. On the contrary, although the period in question had witnessed a relative decline in the number of military takeovers, only 12 coups were recorded from 2000 to 2012 (Felter 2021); however, military takeovers became rampant at the end of the 2010s and through to 2020s.

The turn of events since 2012 attests to the resurgence of military overthrowing of civilian governments in the following countries: Zimbabwe (November 2017), Mali (August 2020), Chad (April 2021), Guinea (September 2021), Guinea-Bissau (February 2022), Sudan (October 2021), Burkina Faso (January 2022), Niger (July 2023), and Gabon (August 2023). The experience of military coups in Myanmar, Southeast Asia, and in Africa – particularly in Sudan and the West African sub-region, where serial coup plots led to the overthrow of constitutional governments in four

countries within 18 months (two of them in Mali within nine months) – prompted United Nations’ Secretary-general Antonio Guterres to criticise what he described as an “epidemic of coups” (Nichols 2021). Nowhere has this epidemic become as dreadful as in Africa. This situation further raises a lot of concerns about the reversal of the little gains some African countries have achieved in the past decades of democratisation. At the core of this concern is the chilling fear that, unless extra caution is taken to reverse the undemocratic trend, the contagious effect of coups could easily lead some countries into the egregious days of military authoritarianism, with its attendant suppression of civil society and denial of human rights and freedoms.

Although in terms of African countries with the most coups, both attempted and unsuccessful, Sudan tops the list with 17 (out of this number, six were successful), while Burkina Faso takes the lead with the highest number of eight successful coups (these were staged in 1966, 1974, 1980, 1982, 1983, 1987, 2014, and 2022). This was followed by Nigeria, with eight coup attempts, six of which were successful (1966, 1975, 1983, 1985, 1993 and 1998). Other countries on the top of the list are presented in the table below.

Table 22.2: Countries and Number of Coups

Countries	Coups
Sudan	21
Nigeria	8
Chad	7
Ghana	6
Burundi	6
Comoros	6
Mauritania	6
Ethiopia	5
Libya	5
Sierra Leone	5
Central African Republic	5
Benin	5

Mali, Guinea, and Guinea Bissau have also experienced coups, ranging from four to five times (Kazeem 2017; Duzor & Williamson 2022). In Africa, the balance sheet of military putsches shows that very few countries are fortunate not to have experienced military coups in their polity. Except for Lesotho (which has had two coups) and recently Zimbabwe, Southern African states are immune from the spillover or contagion of coups. Clearly, this shows that, of all the African countries, only Botswana, South Africa, South Sudan, Cape Verde, Malawi, Namibia, Eritrea, Senegal, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, and Mauritius have not experienced a military coup d'état. A few other countries have only experienced one military coup (Morocco and Mozambique) or two coups (Angola, Kenya, Cameroon, and Djibouti). These countries have since enjoyed political stability.

The AU and the Military Coup Hullabaloo

The most appropriate entry point to understanding the AU's commitment to regional peace, sustainable democracy, and political legitimacy for its member countries, is the Lome Declaration of 2000. This declaration, which was enacted by the organisation's predecessor, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), against the background of the urgent need to retreat from the much-criticised policy of non-interference in the affairs of member states, aimed to foster democracy on the continent. Its central target was to outlaw unconstitutional governments and confer legitimacy to governments that come into power through a credible and competitive electoral process. The declaration was also augmented by more elaborate provisions in the AU's Constitutive Act, which not only emphasises the need to overcome Africa's incessant conflicts through peacebuilding, but also identifies unconstitutional changes of government as the chief source of instability and insecurity on the continent.

More than any other AU document, the Constitutive Act has also committed the organisation to the promotion of the rule of law, democratic governance, and culture (Phakathi 2018). As elaborated in Article 30, it provides that "government which shall come to power through unconstitutional means shall not be allowed to participate in the activities of the Union" (Phakathi

2018:131). Similarly, of all the ten legal instruments of the AU, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG), which was adopted on 30 January 2007, is the most lucid in defining what constitutes the unconstitutionality of government. Article 23 of the charter has unequivocally operationalised what the AU considers as unconstitutional change of government in the following terms:

1. any putsch or coup d'état against a democratically elected government;
2. any intervention by mercenaries to replace a democratically elected government;
3. any replacement of a democratically elected government by armed dissidents or rebels;
4. any refusal by an incumbent government to relinquish power to the winning party or candidate after free, fair, and regular elections; or
5. any amendments, which infringe on the principles of democratic change of government (AU ACDEG 2007:9-10).

Despite these provisions, the AU is arbitrary in its condemnation of coups and calls for sanctions against the forceful overthrow of constitutional governments. It suspended Mali, Guinea, and Sudan on grounds of military interventions, but did not act similarly when the military 'covertly' overthrew President Robert Mugabe's administration in Zimbabwe in 2017 and also in Chad after the death of President Deby in 2021. As argued by Omorogbe, in some cases, the responses of the AU were not only indecisive but overly inconsistent and contradictory, as evidenced by the experience of Togo (2005), Mauritania (2005-2008), Guinea (2008), Madagascar (2009), and Niger (2010) (see Phakathi 2018:134). Generally, the AU's responses to unconstitutional change of government produce five scenarios. These are tough stance (Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso); tough stance at first glance, but receptive afterwards (Egypt, Togo, Mauritania); instant denial but acceptance afterwards (Zimbabwe); divided perception about coups and balancing act afterwards (Chad); and finally, receptive to constitutional coups (Cote d'Ivoire). The following sub-sections conceptualise these five stances.

Tough Stance

The military coup in Mali was prompted by rising public anger against President Boubacar Keita's civilian government, over his inability to combat the jihadist reign of terror in the country, and due to accusations of corruption. The military capitalised on the state of insecurity in Mali and staged a coup in August 2020. The military government that seized power made it clear that it would work with the regional bloc, the AU, and even the UN on its proposed transition timetable, which implies extending its rule until 2025. This plan was rejected by the regional body. The AU was non-tolerant of the military, and decided to immediately suspend the country from participation in all its activities until normal constitutional order had been restored in the country. The AU's effort to showcase its stance on military regimes culminated in the draft and publication of the 'Africa Governance Report 2023 – Unconstitutional Change of Government in Africa'¹ by its agency, Africa-Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). Besides Mali's suspension from the AU, sanctions against the country include border closures and restrictions on financial transactions. At the peak of the AU and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) sanctions, a second military coup occurred in May 2021, when Colonel Assimi Goita (who orchestrated the first coup) toppled the interim civilian government and took over power. The coup leaders arrested Interim President Bah Ndaw and Prime Minister Moctar Oualla. They pressured them to resign, thereby derailing a transition to democratic election that was underway after the August military takeover.

The AU's reaction was swift and its decision to condemn and continue with the suspension of Mali following a second coup in nine months was contained in a statement which called the military "to urgently and unconditionally return to the barracks and to refrain from further interference in the political process in Mali" (Africanews 2021). It also warned that, in the event of not handing over power to civilian transitional leaders, "the Council will not hesitate to impose targeted sanctions and other punitive

1 For more information, see <https://aprm.au.int/en/documents/2023-07-12/africa-governance-report-2023-unconstitutional-change-government-africa>.

measures” against the country (Africanews 2021). Although Goita bowed to pressure and assured that the planned election dates set out by the previous transitional authorities in February and March 2022 for presidential and legislative elections would remain sacrosanct, he subsequently reneged on his pledge.

Despite defying AU measures, Mali’s experience indicates that, if the organisation were equally bold and proactive, confronting situations as it did in the West African state, the prevalence of what is commonly referred to as contagious coups could be significantly diminished. Apart from the sanctions imposed on the country, the AU’s communique for Mali demanded that none of the current leaders be allowed to run in the upcoming elections. It also called for the lifting of restrictions on all political actors, including the leaders of the interim government under house arrest. Similarly, the AU also planned to carry out an assessment mission to Mali to review the situation in the country and its measures (Africanews 2021).

It is important to highlight that ECOWAS lifted the sanctions imposed on Mali as a response to the military junta’s commitment to establish a definitive February 2024 election deadline. Earlier, tough measures were also imposed on Burkina Faso when the presidential guard of the ousted president Compaore overthrew a transitional government and arrested President Kafando and Prime Minister Zida, alongside other ministers, in December 2015. This was also the case in Guinea in September 2020, when Colonel Mamady Doumbouya overthrew President Alpha Conde. In the case of Burkina Faso, the coup leaders had to eventually bow to the pressure from the AU and ECOWAS and restore the deposed interim leaders. Roch Marc Kabore’s victory in the election made him the country’s first president to rule through a democratic process (Phakathi 2018). President Roch Marc Kabore was later deposed by the military in 2022.

Tough Stance at First Move, But Receptive Afterwards

The case of Egypt was worrisome as it illustrated a particular case of the AU’s double standards. No sooner than the democratically elected government of Mohamed Morsi was overthrown, a

year after it was elected to power in 2012, than the coup leader, General Abdel Fattah El-Sisi set in motion a marathon transition which saw him transmuted to a civilian president. Following the coup and in the spirit of the AU's Constitutive Act, Egypt was immediately suspended from the continental body, but it was later readmitted after the sham elections that brought the general into power. That was not all. The fact that El-Sisi ascended to the position of chairmanship of the AU from 2019 through 2020 testifies to the point made by Maluleke & Bennette (2022) that the organisation prioritises power over justice.

The metamorphosis from military to civilian leaders has been a concern in Africa. Furthermore, the inability of many African leaders to surrender themselves to constitutional process and order, as well as steer the mantle of leadership with legitimacy, has become more worrisome. Egypt, under El-Sisi, has remained a military state despite his civilian garb after he was elected civilian president in March 2018. To cap it all, a 2019 constitutional change has allowed El-Sisi to extend his reign of power from 2022 to 2030. This is a serious blow to democracy and serves as a motivation for other military heads of government to use the same trick and engage in power consolidation.

The experience of Egypt also shows that the election of military officers as civilian presidents does not guarantee good governance in Africa. On average, as Rose and Peiffer (2019:v) observe, "more societies are subject to bad governance than to good governance" and the major cause for this is corruption. Conversely, in an African context, political corruption begets odious proclivities that bequeath bad legacies of neopatrimonial rule. The situation makes democracy on the continent akin to personal rule in countries where leaders have refused to adhere to its tenets, particularly in the face of weak democratic institutions. Military takeovers are principally informed by the dialectic of social forces that are mainly ingrained in the political economy of societies. Although there is no clear-cut explanation for military interventions, it is evident from the recent coups that weak institutions engender poor governance and political instability. When such a condition has heightened the abuse of the democratic process and insurrection, it blossoms into a dangerous climate

for military takeovers. This also calls for assertive actions by the continental and regional bodies, including heavier penalties to punish military governments to avoid frequent incidences of coups and their spillover to other countries.

Indeed, Togo's experience of military incursion into politics in 2005 betrayed the country's constitutional provisions. In case of any vacuum created either because of ill health or death, the president of a country is generally expected to be succeeded by his vice-president or the president of the national assembly in a parliamentary system of government. But in Togo, the death of President Gnassingbe Eyadema in February 2005 did not see the country's President of the National Assembly Fabrice Quattara succeeding the deceased president in line with the Togolese Constitution. Instead, what transpired was the intervention of the Togolese army, which capitalised on the situation and imposed the son of the deceased, Faure Gnassingbe, as president. Although Togo's suspension from the activities of the AU paid off when Faure Gnassingbe bowed to pressure and stepped down as president, he later contested and won the country's presidential election in April of the same year. Like the AU's response to Egypt on the elections that brought El-Sisi as civilian president, Togo was treated in the same way by the AU's Peace and Security Council (PSC). The council felt that a constitutional order had been restored, and it thereby lifted the ban on Togo.

Even in the case of Mali, where the AU's response was tough, a window for military intervention was still left open. ECOWAS had succeeded in pushing for the dissolution of the transitional military council and replacing it with a civilian-led transitional government. However, the action did not fundamentally change the political narrative in the country, as Assimi Goita, who led the coup, became the country's interim president, and other military men occupied the positions of cabinet ministers. This lapse gave the military the leverage to manipulate the transitional government at will, and offered the junta a breathing space to the extent of reneging on its earlier pledge to return power to civilians by February 2023 (France24 2021). In an announcement made by Colonel Goita, the regime signed a decree which extended the duration of the transition to 24 months from 26 March 2022.

Instant Denial of Coups and Acceptance of Unconstitutional Government

In what can be described as a total breach of its legislative framework, Phakathi (2018) has amply discussed the complicit responses of the AU to coups in Zimbabwe. The response was not only appalling, but also a major obstacle to the credibility of the organisation in its onerous task of instituting democracy through a credible leadership selection process in Africa. The coup in the country was essentially prompted by the conflict between President Robert Mugabe and Vice-president Emmerson Mnangagwa after the July 2013 election, which the former won. Mugabe's victory was widely acclaimed as free, fair, and credible, regardless of Morgan Tsvangirai's petition to the Constitutional Court of Zimbabwe, which subsequently affirmed that the election "was a true reflection of the will of the people of Zimbabwe" (see Phakathi 2018:136). By this verdict, Mugabe's ruling Zimbabwean National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) claimed to have defeated Tsvangirai's Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), which quit the election in protest. Despite the dispute over the election, the incumbent, Mugabe, was declared winner and sworn in. Subsequently, an internal political impasse reared its ugly head between President Mugabe and his vicepresident, Emmerson Mnangagwa, which led to the firing of the latter on the grounds of disloyalty and neglect of duties, among others (Phakathi 2018).

Thus, what started as a political feud between the two leaders turned out to be heavily politicised, and brought the country's military into the equation. General Constantino Chiwenga, a spokesperson of the military, not only criticised Mugabe's decision to expel Tsvangirai, but also castigated him for betraying party comrades. However, whatever reasons the Zimbabwean military gave for detaining Mugabe and putting him under house arrest, and his eventual forceful resignation were flimsy because the power to remove the vice-president by the president of Zimbabwe was constitutional. The response of the AU to the situation was bizarre. The organisation's chairperson, President Alpha Conde, refused to categorise the occurrence as a coup; rather he said, "It seems like a coup" (BBC News 2017). Thus, as Phakathi (2018:136) aptly observed, "By refusing to call

a coup a coup, the AU lost an opportunity to assert its position on constitutional changes of government in Africa”.

Furthermore, the Southern African regional body, SADC, did not consider the Zimbabwean case a coup, and neither did the national political leaders in the region. They accepted the deceit by the Zimbabwean military through its army officer, Major General Sibusiso Moyo, who announced that the military did not stage a coup and only acted against “criminals” around President Mugabe (BBC News 2017). The only loud voice of the AU on the Zimbabwean unconstitutional takeover was its call for the parties in conflict to sheathe their swords and embrace peace through the country’s constitution and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. This position was contradictory to Chapter 8, Article 23(1&2) of the ACDEG, which provides for “sanctions in cases of unconstitutional changes of government” (ACDEG 2007:9). It was highly unbecoming for a continental body that is the custodian of regional order, and a continental instrument expected to restore and sustain democracy wherever it is eroded to play such ostrich when at a critical point where a collective voice is much more needed.

In what may be considered the biggest contradiction to the charter, Alpha Conde was quoted to have said, “We demand respect for the constitution, a return to the constitutional order and we will never accept the military coup d’etat” (Oluwagbemi 2017). This statement was an indictment of his earlier stance and pronouncements on the coup. The point is, why is there a need to return to constitutional order if it was not breached? Besides, how could the charter’s principles be adopted without enforcement by the organisation? After all, Zimbabwe was not a signatory to the charter; thus, it sounds surprising to expect the country to respect it. Eventually, Mugabe was forced to resign as the president, and the AU Commission chairperson, Moussa Faki Mahamat, applauded Mugabe’s action as the best recourse to preserve his political legacy (Phakathi 2018). Mugabe’s resignation ended his 37-year rule at the age of 93. The vice-president, Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, earlier sacked by Mugabe, was immediately sworn in as Zimbabwe’s president for the first time in November 2017, and for the second time after winning the July

2018 general elections with nearly 51% as against the 44% votes for his rival, Nelson Chamisa (DW Live TV News 2018).

Similarly, despite the chairman of the AU's statement, the organisation would not accept a military coup in Zimbabwe. Therefore, the country's new president attended, for the first time, the 30th Ordinary Session of Assembly of Heads of States and Government of the AU Summit held in Addis Ababa on 28 January 2018. Meanwhile, a decision on the Zimbabwean coup should be regarded as a catch-22 question on the part of the AU. First, accepting it without condemnation could be seen as a collective perjury against the enabling legal and democratic frameworks of the regional body. Second, its outright rejection was tantamount to endorsing a cruel leader who put his country on the precipice of collapse. Thus, the option left to the African leaders was to accept the coup, and to celebrate in silence what could be regarded as a 'good riddance to bad rubbish'. Mugabe was among the longest-leading African dictators.

Undoubtedly, member countries have had their grudges against Mugabe's authoritarian rule for decades, and internal political opponents, CSOs, the academic community, and the public were in one way or the other victimised by President Mugabe, whose repressive actions were unbearable. Zimbabwe represented the country most associated with brain drain, and its economy was one of the worst in the world. His human rights record was unimaginably negative. He personalised the office to the extreme. The country's misrule had also prompted the AU members to hammer strongly in support of the change of government. For example, in contrast to the role of the AU and the ECOWAS bloc in Mali, where the democratic process was defended through sanctions and deterrent measures, the Zimbabwean coup was indirectly welcomed by the AU and SADC. In particular, SADC did not see the removal of Mugabe as an act of military coup.

Divided Perception about Coups and Balancing Act Afterwards

The case of Chad (2021) provides a unique experience of the AU's reaction to an unconstitutional change of government because members of the union perceived the country's coup from different

lenses. The situation not only exposes the double standards of the AU and the absence of shared values concerning governance in Africa, but it also bastardises the legitimate instruments of the organisation for dealing with a breach of the constitutional process in power succession. The PSC's decision not to sanction Chad for Mahamat Deby's power grab under the canopy of a *de facto* government following the death of his father, President Idriss Deby, in April 2021 was an aberration. However, the AU's response was neither proactive nor predicated on the logical precepts it set for its member countries as contained in the ACDEG. The organisation was divided on Chad's military coup, with some of its members calling for the country's immediate suspension, while others treated Chad's experience as an exceptional case due to the peculiar security situation that required a special response (Handy & Djilo 2021).

Given the two opposing views, the AU's PSC eventually endorsed Chad's military council, but with some caveats. These included the immediate review of the hastily designed transition charter and the rejection of any possible extension of the 18-month transition. Other prescriptions by the PSC include "the establishment of a national transitional council as the interim legislative body, inclusive national dialogue, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms" (Handy & Djilo 2021).

Receptive to 'Constitutional Coups'

Article 23(5) of the African Charter states that "any amendment which is an infringement on the principles of democratic change of government" is unconstitutional. Unlike military takeover, which for all intents and purposes employs the threat or actual use of force to change a government, 'constitutional coups' are carried out shrewdly to achieve a sinister objective of power consolidation by a civilian president or manipulation of the constitution to legitimatise tenure elongation (Mbaku 2020). This type of coup is defined by Camara (2016) as, "a way to cement presidential power – and do so with the appearance of legality". A constitutional coup is unconstitutional when a leader hatches its process and influences the relevant political actors to execute it. It

may also be single-handedly orchestrated by incumbents against any significant form of resistance by the citizens.

Constitutional coups are based on constitutionalism, when it is overwhelmingly backed by a constitutional referendum. Countries amend their constitution to reduce or increase the term limits of the president and parliament, as demonstrated in Burkina Faso (Comapaore in 1997), Burundi (Nkurunziza in 2015), Chad (Deby in 2005), Congo-Brazzaville (Sassou-Nguesso in 2015), Djibouti (Guelleh in 2010), Niger (Tandja in 2009), Senegal (Wade in 2012), Sudan (Al-Bashir in 2005), and Uganda (Museveni in 2005) (Denis & Claudia 2017:86; LeBas 2016:169-171). Posner and Young observe that most of these countries did not opt to violate their constitutional rule, but the incumbents “changed or circumvented constitutions” to satisfy their desire for tenure elongation (cited in Denis & Claudia 2017:3). In some cases, there were well-controlled referendums to legitimatise the attempt to manipulate the constitutions. These referendums are not an antithesis to democracy but a process towards its consolidation to avoid any further opening for sliding to autocratic rule and to ensure good governance (Camara 2016).

Constitutional coups are informed by the ulterior motives of a leader to elongate his power beyond the stipulated terms enshrined in the constitution of a country. It is usually pursued corruptly, by force, or through the inducement of the relevant democratic institutions. This type of unconstitutional means of consolidation of power has become a recurring phenomenon in African politics, which is expected to be addressed by the AU’s charter because it infringes on the principle of democratic succession of power. It has been pointed out that, since the 1990s, there have been at least 30 presidents in Sub-Saharan African nations who have attempted to extend office term limits by changing the constitutions of their countries (Camara 2016). Some presidents were met with resistance from civil society and a cross-section of the citizens, while others faced little or no opposition in their attempts to tweak constitutions for power elongations.

For its part, the AU seems to be a mere onlooker with no tacit response other than the conventional calling for the

observance of constitutionalism. Sometimes, the continental body seems to have accepted the strategy of taking over power through unconstitutional means and then holding elections to legitimise the political impostors. This explains why constitutional coups are becoming the norm and leaders that benefit from them do not feel convicted of any wrongdoing on assumption of power. It is not surprising, therefore, that most African countries have rulers that stay in power through what Decalo (1985:220) calls “civilian coups”. This is usually achieved through the manipulation of the constitutions to secure tenure elongation and has been one of the motivations for military interventions in politics. Table 22.3 presents many of these leaders and the number of years that have spent in office.

Table 22.3: Authoritarian Presidents in Africa

Names of Presidents	Countries	Years
Teodoro Nguema Mbasogo	Equatorial Guinea	42
Omar Bongo	Gabon	42
Paul Biya	Cameroon	39
Jose Eduardo dos Santos	Angola	38
Robert Mugabe	Zimbabwe	38
Republic of the Congo	Republic of the Congo	37
Yoweri Museveni	Uganda	35
Omar al-Bashir in Sudan	Sudan	30

Source: Felter (2021)

The AU and the Quest to Curtail Military Coups in Africa

The AU’s 20-year existence has made it a matured organisation that should be fully committed to peace, security, stability, and development for African states. Most of the countries that have experienced unconstitutional changes of government are, paradoxically, the ones that are plagued with instability and bad governance. The lack of a consistent and all-inclusive response

to unconstitutional change of government and military takeovers is central to the AU's ineffective performance. For it to be taken seriously on the issue of democracy and good governance, the organisation must confront military coups against constitutional governments and illegitimate changes of constitutions with all the seriousness needed to deepen democratisation and restore democratic governance to societies under authoritarian regimes.

As enshrined in the elaborate Constitutive Act of the AU, popularly called 'the Charter', tough measures to sanction infringement of regional frameworks on democracy should commence immediately against any unconstitutional changes of governments. The Charter has covered various areas of interest to good governance, but the main challenge lies in selective response in its implementation. A situation whereby the organisation gives a soft landing to governments that are formed unconstitutionally through the legitimisation of their sham electoral outcomes serve as an impediment to the union's goal of achieving its well-thought-out Agenda 2063. This becomes important because the agenda is primarily expected to fulfil the continent's dream of rejuvenating African values as part of the African Renaissance. These values include changes in attitudes, transparency, focus, honesty, and integrity (Swart 2014).

With shared values, the AU is more positioned to respond to the challenges of governance, but the lack of this key principle could further deepen the frustration of its committed members and citizens. Maluleke and Bennette (2022) perceptively note that the vacuum that the absence of shared values poses to African unity is monumental. Unlike the European Union (EU) and other regional organisations which not only set democratic values as a key precondition for membership but also track the performance of each state, the AU is bereft of such effective performance. While other regional institutions attach criteria for membership, the only criterion for joining the AU is for the nation to belong to continental Africa. However, it is vital to recognise the fact that the AU, an intergovernmental organisation, continues to aspire to become a supranational organisation like the EU, with the required authority to enforce compliance.

There is a need to carry all the members of the organisation along on the issue of a common approach and unified voice to implement the AU's legal frameworks, particularly with the State of the Union (SOTU) Coalition programme to track the performance of African governments. Under this programme, the AU Assembly has been charged with the responsibility "to monitor the implementation of policies and decisions of the Union as well as ensure compliance by all Member States" (Swart 2014:8). The dilemma relates to the reluctance of member states to ratify the AU Charter, which was adopted in 2007 and came in force in 2012 (Maluleke & Bennette 2022). Of the 55 African countries, only 30 member states have ratified it. Obviously, part of the dilemma that the AU faced amidst the complicit role of the AU after the Zimbabwean coup was the fact that the country did not sign the AU Charter. This is a serious blow to a continent that intends to review the progress of its member states regarding their compliance with its policy frameworks and protocols.

Most of the experiences of unconstitutional changes of government in recent times suggest that governance deficit was at the centre of the crises that afflicted the affected countries. This also explains why it is necessary to take a proactive measure to address the issue of poverty, insecurity, underdevelopment, and the crisis of legitimacy on the continent, through collective action. The prospects of galvanising AU members to take proactive measures on the state of the erosion of governance on the continent have started. At its 35th Ordinary Session of the African Union, Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta identified political instability and an absence of good governance as the main cause of coups in Africa (Dawt 2022).

To further suggest the readiness of the AU to abhor any unconstitutional change of government, there is a need for the organisation to do some internal reality checks. One wonders why unpopular leaders with track records of human rights violations and other undemocratic credentials at home ascend to the position of the AU's chairperson. It toys with the sensibilities of Africans to know that Alassane Quattara was part of the team that represented ECOWAS to negotiate with the Guinean coup plotters for a return to democratic rule, or that Alpha Conde was the

chairperson of the AU. This explains why President Conde, as the chairperson of the AU, had to outrightly announce that Mugabe's unconstitutional change of government was not a coup. Even in the case of the West African sub-region, cases abound where condemnation of a military coup by some of its leaders could be construed as the pot calling the kettle black.

Conclusion

African leaders must realise that there is no better alternative to democracy and that the system must be safeguarded to ensure good governance and political legitimacy for the attainment of sustainable development and the AU's Agenda 2063. Where the system has failed in Africa, it has not done so in a vacuum, but due to the lack of political actors' readiness to learn the rudiments of democracy and sustain stability based on compromise and accommodation of opposing views and parties. The role of the AU in this regard is very crucial. It should be strengthened to become a supranational organisation with more capacity and authority to enforce its positions for the common good. The continental body has advertently or inadvertently not been fully utilising its frameworks and mechanisms on politics, peace, and security to ensure the required commitment to the basic principles of good governance as stipulated in the documents. As noted by Phakathi (2018:129), the AU "is seen to be lenient in some cases and harsh in others".

Consequently, democratic development in Africa is beset with a myriad of challenges, particularly the phenomenon of incessant unconstitutional changes of government, which has been retarding the process of consolidating democracy. The Agenda 2063 projects are ambitious and a step towards making the continent mutually inclusive with forward and backward economic, social, and policy linkages. Democratic consolidation and good governance are some of the strongest projects in the chain, but their impact will be harnessed if military coups are abolished, and African constitutional governments work together to address the common goals for democratic sustenance. Therefore, ensuring a coup-free Africa requires African leaders to support, sustain, and consolidate good democratic governance,

where the military is loyal to the elected civilian leaders. Similarly, in most cases, there is a mismatch between governance and independence of African countries from external influence. If African leaders encourage the control of their countries by foreign interests, as the experience of most francophone African countries showcases, the situation is often capitalised on by the military officers, who use it as their cheap reason for intervention to liberate their countries. It is in the context of this scenario that the AU needs to strongly and unequivocally sanction members whose misfit in governance endangers good governance and the sovereignty of their state.

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Section Eight

Youth Empowerment, Women Inclusivity, and Gender Equality



Chapter 23

African Union at 20: Gender Relations in Africa and Agenda 2063

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Introduction

Celebrating its 20th year, the African Union (AU) has made significant strides in improving gender relations and addressing gender gaps in its various policies and structures. These efforts are evident in its Gender Parity Project, Gender Policy, Agenda 2063, and Ten-Year Implementation Plan, and continental reports on the implementation of Agenda 2063. Agenda 2063 comprehensively presents the various dimensions of Africa's political, socio-economic, and security landscapes and situates gender within it through its various provisions and implementation plans. Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063 clarifies the position of the AU and its member states on gender equality, with its primary goal of achieving “full gender equality in all spheres of life” by prioritising women's and girls' empowerment and preventing discrimination and violence against them (AU 2015a). Its Ten-Year Implementation Plan, published in 2015, notes the transformational goal of reducing violence against women by a third and normalising gender parity by 2023 in all its organs and regional economic communities (RECs). The union's review of national and RECs' strategic plans identified gender and women's development as a priority area (AU 2015b).

There is a general acknowledgement by the AU, RECs, and member states that gender is a fundamental human right central to economic growth, regional integration, and social development. This is essential in understanding how rights favour

men and not women. The African Union Gender Parity Project 2025 holds that gender is a “socially and culturally constructed difference between men and women, boys and girls, which gives them unequal value, opportunities, and life chances (AU 2020)”. The reflections of the meaning of equality or inequality between men and women then come into question. Some argue that gender equality connotes that women must be treated like men, while others argue that a recognition of the different situations men and women face must be considered; for example, giving equal job access to men and women is impossible, since women are often responsible for childcare as well (Oluwole 1997). The discourse on gender inequality is evident in the disparities that shape how men and women are perceived and included in various spaces. For example, entrenched “inequalities in childcare and household work still restrict opportunities for women and impact career possibilities and working patterns” (Hicks 2010). Drawing from the case of South Africa, while income earning has increased between men and women, there are still considerable gaps in types of employment between them; thus, women find themselves working in part-time positions or the informal sector (Hicks 2010).

The importance of gender cannot be understated, as it examines men’s and women’s roles in society and how these are understood and applied in communities, institutions, and governments. This is important because of the female demographics on the continent and their contributions to the continent. According to World Bank (WB) 2021 data, Sub-Saharan Africa is home to an estimated 1.18 billion people, with the female population constituting about half of that, sitting at 50.2%. Some countries with over 50% female population include Rwanda (51.1%), Botswana (50.6%), Malawi (51.4%), Namibia (51.7%), and Zimbabwe (52.8%), with countries like Equatorial Guinea sitting at the lower end, with 47.2% (WB 2021). With these estimated statistics, women significantly contribute to the continent’s human population and capacity.

They are not a homogenous group, as they represent various social, economic, and educational backgrounds. Beyond their demographics and diversities, women have played critical

roles in the continent's liberation movements and contributed to the emancipation of the continent. For example, Funmilayo Ransome Kuti used her status to spearhead and drive resistance efforts against colonialism in Nigeria. Bibi Titi Mohammed was also considered a freedom fighter leading the women's wing of the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) in their struggle for Tanzania's independence and sovereignty (Asiedu 2019). Women have contributed as political theorists shaping political security, economic, health, and governance discourses, and others have become activists in driving political change and transformation in Africa's communities and societies.

Women in Africa have been involved in protests and movements that promote their rights and those of everyone in society, including men. For example, in Nigeria's political history, many pressure groups organised by women in Yoruba society (the western part of the country) became human rights organisations promoting democratic principles for both men and women (Oluwole 1997). Ekeh (1992) identifies traditional women's movements as one of the four core civil society organisations (CSOs) that emerged in postcolonial Africa. Women's movements rose significantly in the 1990s as with other civil society movements, including churches, trade unions, ethnic-based groups, and youth movements, contributing to African society's development and the political landscape's expansion (Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Chambati 2013).

Against this backdrop, this chapter is constructed on the main argument that the need for women's inclusion in all facets of the African polity is integral to the success and the securing of the future of the AU, RECs, its member states, and the many communities across the continent. Within the context of the last 20 years, this chapter examines some of the conceptual debates regarding gender relations and gender equality on the continent, and the implications of this in achieving Agenda 2063. It also explores some of the more practical implications and policy challenges in achieving gender equality within Africa's political, socio-economic, and security contexts required to achieve the goals outlined in Agenda 2063.

This chapter is divided into five parts. After the introduction, the second section explores gender, Pan-Africanism, and decoloniality as critical lenses for understanding gender relations in Africa. It does this to provide the history and context of how gender equality and gender relations have played out in Africa. The third section presents an argument for gender equality, considering recent developments around the COVID-19 pandemic. Section four interrogates gender relations and gender equality with 2063 in view, and proffers some ideas on achieving that as the continent advances toward its goals. Finally, it reflects on women as a central component of the African agency and what this means in a gender-inclusive, decolonial, Pan-African continent. In conclusion, some critical arguments are summarised.

Gender, Pan-Africanism, and Decoloniality

The intersections between gender, Pan-Africanism, and decoloniality provide an understanding of the gender dynamics and relations on the continent and how these have been foregrounded in Africa's colonial and postcolonial experiences. The current state of gender relations on the continent is, therefore, a consequence of the colonial experience and is reflective of the current global system, which has filtered into the postcolonial state in Africa (Nkenkana 2015; Ekeh, 1975; Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Chambati 2013). While African countries have gained their independence, the colonial-designed power structures remain. Building on the work of Maldonado-Torres (2007), Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2012) captures the term coloniality as "an invisible power structure that sustains colonial relations of exploitation and domination long after the end of direct colonialism". In other works, Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Chambati (2013) describe the coloniality of power as how the West has dominated and exploited the non-Western world in four broad areas: resources and economies, political and traditional authority, gender and sexuality, and African epistemologies (Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Chambati 2013). Citing GC Spivak's work, Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Chambati (2013) present the idea of a "global gender hierarchy

that privileges males over females and Western patriarchy over other forms of gender relations”.

Coloniality has, therefore, shaped and constructed how gender roles are perceived, idealised, and normalised in Africa. Nkenkana (2015) aptly points out that the coloniality of gender digs deeply into women’s liberation from various forms of oppression. These forms of oppression were reflected in Africa’s colonial experience, where women were subjugated and discriminated against. These ranged from the kidnapping and raping of women to horrific experiences that marred their human dignity and constrained their freedoms. Korieh (2001) outlines the conditions in Nigeria and other parts of Africa where the colonialists “discriminated between men and women and made the former the primary target of local development policy”. The colonial systems emerged by establishing institutions based on European ideas of gender, which constrained and went against Africa’s pre-colonial agricultural systems and women’s vital roles (Korieh 2001). The critical role of women in Africa’s pre-colonial societies supports the perspective of Sudarkasa (1986) that a “neutral complementarity, rather than a superordination/subordination, more accurately describes the relationship between certain female and male roles in various precolonial African societies.”

Gender-inclusive forms of Pan-Africanism emerged historically in the United States within Pan-African and Black nationalist movements and with the remarkable role of key political actors like Thomas Garvey, Audley Moore, and Dara Abubakari (Farmer 2016). These individuals solidified the idea of Pan-Africanism through a gendered lens. For example, both Moore and Abubakari persistently recommended “gender-conscious interpretations of Pan-African organising” and were “progenitors of late twentieth-century Black Power and Pan-African thought” (Farmer 2016:286). This idea of gendered Pan-Africanism opposes Western ideas, traditions, and values like patriarchy and establishes and argues for the role of women while disproving racism. (Farmer 2016).

Furthermore, it involves questioning frameworks that promote masculinity and the idea of a “male, global, political

black subject” (Farmer 2016:290). Citing UY Taylor,¹ Farmer (2016:287) points out that the “gender-inclusive model of community Pan-Africanism” was developed to call for “reparations, black nation building, and African liberation while expanding women’s political roles and options”. This requires a shift from defining Pan-Africanism through a masculinist frame, as in early 20th-century society and organisations (Leeds 2013). This involves being conscious of gender dimensions and dynamics when interpreting various policies, programmes, and institutions, and ensuring that the women and men leading these processes are gender-conscious. This is important because men are equally essential players in building a gender-inclusive Pan-African society.

A gender-inclusive Pan-African decolonial lens requires a total shift and independence from colonial Africa, characterised by the subjugation of the African² but also of African women through slavery and other cruel forms. Furthermore, it requires a systemic transformation from the postcolonial state, which continues to subjugate and discriminate against women in many ways, to one that fully emancipates women from the systems which historically and currently sideline, inferiorise, and oppress them. In doing so, Nkenkana (2015) argues for the decolonial feminist ideas of Thomas Sankara that “women’s liberation struggle should not be reduced to efforts of incorporation of women within the patriarchal, colonial, and imperial modern systems women seek to reject”. Decoloniality becomes more relevant in understanding the shift away from colonial structures described as “racial, patriarchal and hegemonic” (Grosfoguel 2007).

1 For more information, see Taylor, U.Y. (2002). *The Veiled Garvey: The Life and Times of Amy Jacques Garvey*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

2 While colonialism had its effects on women mainly, it had an impact on men as well. Korieh (2001:117) points out that “as a systematic exploitation of colonised peoples, colonialism affected both men and women. But as a gendered process, it affected men and women in both similar and dissimilar ways”. She also notes that colonialism created inequality for both men and women, as only a few local and political elite benefited in positions created by the colonial entities (Korieh 2001).

Ndlovu-Gatsheni presents decoloniality as “the deepening and widening of decolonization movements in those spaces that experienced the slave trade, imperialism, colonialism, apartheid, neocolonialism, and underdevelopment” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2015). Nkenkana (2015) relates to decolonising gender as a necessity, citing Maldonado-Torres who writes that decoloniality is a “family of diverse positions that share a view of coloniality as the fundamental problem in the current modern age” (Maldonado-Torres 2007). Decoloniality means freedom from the structures that promote and strengthen patriarchy, as well as dominate, exploit, and exclude women. Decoloniality then usurps these structures and endorses a gender-conscious Pan-Africanism when trying to ground and situate women to men.

Essentially, gender, decoloniality, and Pan-Africanism are a fight against patriarchy, capitalism, and hegemonism. Ensuring a gender-inclusive, decolonial, Pan-African society is also about capitalising on the capacities of local communities. Africa’s pre-colonial societies showcase the hierarchy and involvement of women and the value they bring. Africa’s story, then, is one where men and women contribute to society, power structures are not patriarchal, and structures that subjugate women are transformed. It is crucial that the continent is not restricted or constrained by coloniality, but that new ways of being and thinking continue to be adopted where women are included. This aptly captures the African context.

The Argument for Gender Equality

As discussed in the previous section, history has shaped the views and ideas of women and their role and place in society. Oluwole notes that men, theologians, and philosophers have justified why females are physically and intellectually inferior to the male species from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance (Oluwole 1997). These views birthed sexism as the lens through which social organisation was seen in Western culture and society. In reflecting on gender equality in the context of Agenda 2063, the following hard facts need to be re-emphasised:

Firstly, the examples and gains of gender equality have been embedded in Africa's history. A historical examination of African society and cultures depicts women's inclusion and importance. In her review of proverbs and language from the Yoruba³ culture, Oluwole (1997) notes that motherhood is more highly regarded than fatherhood, matrilineal relationships are more substantial and more profound than patrilineal ones, and males and females are regarded as partners and that society must recognise both of them. Furthermore, historians, ethnologists, sociologists, anthropologists, and other students of Yoruba culture attest that Yoruba women play critical roles in the political and economic life of traditional society, with accounts of women holding very prominent roles as chiefs and rulers (Oluwole 1997). For example, in the old Ibadan Kingdom, the position *iyalode* was created in the 1950s, giving holders of this title significant involvement in traditional governance, and they possessed similar qualities to their male counterparts, called *baale* (Familoni 2012). The "iyalode" was described as "a chief to whom all the women's palavers are brought before they are taken to the king. She is, in fact, a sort of queen, a person of much influence and looked up to with much respect" (Falola 1984:108-109).

Women in Yoruba culture contribute significantly to trade and economic life, which include owning property, engaging in multiple businesses and trades, and practising multiple occupations (Oluwole 1997). Sudarkasa (1986) maintains that, in pre-colonial Sub-Saharan Africa, "women were conspicuous in high places", sitting as members of the royal family, holding key official positions, performing roles as occasional warriors, and, in one case, as a supreme monarch wielding significant influence. This also was the case in farming, trade, and craft production (Sudarkasa 1986). Korieh (2001) asserts that in the culture, women were complementary and not inferior to men. From the above, it can be inferred that the achievement of Agenda 2063 cannot be a reality if gender exclusion continues to persist.

Women are central to achieving its critical goals at every stage. This will require their representation and full participation

3 The Yoruba language is spoken in countries like Nigeria, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, and Sierra Leone.

in designing and implementing relevant policies, developing appropriate programmes, building relevant institutions, and monitoring, evaluating, and assessing these. Their track records on the continent speak for themselves. As an example, former president Joyce Banda of Malawi's successes are noteworthy: from introducing various austerity measures to organising a national dialogue to develop a national economic recovery plan for Malawi, which identified key sectors like agriculture, mining, and energy and three key priority projects in each sector (Njoku 2013).

Furthermore, former president Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia successfully maintained peace and embraced inclusivity, appointing women in leadership positions like the finance and justice ministers and the chief of police (Hunt 2007). She ensured that the youth held key roles in various ministries, including foreign affairs, finance, transport, and commerce (Ettang 2014). Both women, before stepping into power, had impressive accomplishments and roles at national and international levels, thus bringing significant expertise and knowledge.⁴ Asuako (2020) notes that evidence shows that, the more women are involved in decisionmaking at the private and public levels, the higher the effectiveness and accountability in a country's public sector.

Secondly, gender inequality is most visible and felt during emergencies and economic problems on the continent. This is the case with climate-related threats like floods, food insecurity, and high food prices due to global warming and economic instability. The COVID-19 pandemic highlights glaring gender inequality during challenging times on the continent. For example, there were reports of disruptions in health services in reproductive, sexual, maternal, child, newborn, and adolescent health in 40% of African countries due to COVID-19 (WHO 2022). These disruptions remained for two years after the pandemic (WHO 2022). The pandemic hit women harder on the continent as 74% of them were engaged in the informal sector as domestic workers and street vendors, in the hospitality, service, and tourism industries,

4 See Ettang, D. (2014) "Female Presidents in Africa: New Norms in Leadership or Reflection of Current Practice". In Jallow, B. (ed.) *Leadership in Postcolonial Africa: Trends Transformed by Independence*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

and subsistence farming and informal cross-border trade – all of which were restricted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Violence against women increased at the onset of the pandemic in Africa, with an estimated 15 million additional cases for every three months of lockdown (UNFPA 2020). While the COVID-19 pandemic was devastating for the continent due to the loss of lives and the impacts on communities, women were disproportionately affected, as it threatened to reverse the progress made in achieving gender quality and upholding women's rights.⁵

From the above, post-pandemic recovery efforts that target women are essential. Gender-sensitive approaches that can build the resilience of women and better prepare them before and during pandemics are still required. The continental, sub-regional, national, and local efforts to combat the pandemic and other large-scale emergencies cannot be successful if gender inequality persists. In line with this, the threats on the continent, like food insecurity, climate change, the effects of COVID-19, sexual and gender-based violence, displacement, and inter-communal violence, cannot be resolved if there are limited efforts in place to assist women who have been disadvantaged and excluded for lengthy periods. The understanding is that the gains made on the continent could have been more advanced if the embedded institutions, systems, and mindsets that exclude women were transformed to the point where the issues that predominantly affect women and girls are not considered *ad hoc* or an add-on in some instances. Thus, ensuring gender equality should be the starting point in policymaking and implementation, community-based action, budgeting, resource allocation, governance structures, infrastructural development, and

5 See "African Union Commission – Women, Gender and Development Directorate" (AUC-WGDD); United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women); Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). (2020). "Gender-Based Violence in Africa During the COVID-19 Pandemic". https://africa.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20Africa/Attachments/Publications/2021/Policy%20Paper-%20GBV%20in%20Africa%20during%20COVID-19%20pandemic_EN%2018%20Feb_compressed.pdf.

capacity development. All these are very important for improved preparedness during emergencies.

Thirdly, the advances made by the AU present a strong argument for gender equality as the regional institution continues to prioritise this. Some of the efforts in achieving the inclusion of women within the AU are noteworthy. Its staff regulations and rules give priority to less-represented genders who hold equal qualifications. The AU insists on the inclusion of the Women's Gender and Development Directorate in the Joint Advisory Committee on Administrative Policies and of the Appointment, Promotion and Recruitment Board (APROB). Its ethics office, inclusive of its female employees, expedites investigation into cases involving sexual harassment, abuse of power, nepotism and insubordination, and it has "[neutralised] gender-based language in job advertisements including a statement on gender equality and a pledge to gender equality in all job descriptions" (AU 2020).

The argument for gender equality remains very important, as evidenced by the discussions above. Essentially, gender equality calls for more than just blending women's issues into the mainstream, but a complete change of structures that contribute to gender inequality. Nkenkana (2015) thus asserts that "a fundamental problem resulting in the misinterpretation of systematic and structural conditions perpetuating gender inequalities is a focus on women as the subject of change in gender transformation and/or mainstreaming and a focus on fitting women into the status quo rather than transforming the status quo". This will require not only reporting on the progress of gender but also a critical examination of the "fundamental systematic and structural transformation of patriarchy" (Nkenkana 2015). This form of transformation that addresses the roots and foundations of gender inequality should be the focus for all Africans.

Gender Equality and Africa in 2063

Agenda 2063 presents the clear realisation that Africa's full potential will be determined by how much it can include and empower women and how it can rapidly remove the obstacles

to their full participation. A review of the human capacity on the continent reflects one that remains largely untapped, with women making up a significant proportion of it. Thus, as the continent advances, the contribution of women needs to be acknowledged and their liberation is sought after. ‘The Africa We Want’ cannot be a reality without women’s liberation and a rigorous system change. This must occur across the board, including governance structures, the private sector, community-based organisations (CSOs), and law enforcement. In achieving gender equality before 2063, the following issues need to be reviewed.

Representation versus Participation

In its Gender Parity Project 2025, the AU presents gender parity as “the statistical measure that provides a numerical value of the men-to-women ratio” (AU 2020). The project’s goal “seeks to have a 50/50 representation of women and men’s representation and to have 35% of youth (between 15 and 35 years) in the staff component of the AU by 2025”⁶ (AU 2020). As of March 2020, there were equal numbers of men and women commissioners in the AU Commission and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), while 53% of the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights (ACHPR) staff population are female (AU 2020). While these are noteworthy, there is an acknowledgement that gender gaps remain in most of its organs (AU 2020). These gaps are equally present within the governing structures of AU member states.

While there have been many efforts to increase the number of women and meet representation quotas of 50%,⁷ more is needed to translate this into genuine participation. Women’s participation is “the process and an outcome related

6 The Gender Parity Principle is also reflected in key legal and policy frameworks of the African Union like the Modalities of Elections of Officials; The Staff Regulations and Rules; The 2009 Gender Policy; The Charter on Democracy, Governance and Elections; and The Maputo Protocol and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa.

7 Increasing women’s active participation does not negate the goal of achieving 50% inclusion of women; this should continue to remain a priority.

to women's engagement in political and economic institutions by participating in bureaucracies, policymaking bodies, and representative organisations" (Msoka & Muya 2018). These under-listed practical steps can enhance women's participation:

1. Women should preside over and lead decisionmaking and policymaking processes in different institutions and structures where they can drive and develop responses to Africa's persistent challenges at the continental, sub-national and national levels.
2. More women should be appointed as special envoys, chairpersons, chief mediators, heads of AU peacekeeping missions and their various components, and heads of security and defence. These are positions where they can actively input into designing strategies and policies and allocating resources, not only fulfilling administration-related roles.
3. Work culture and environments should be aware of women's complex societal roles beyond their work and career.⁸ This also involves providing support⁹ structures that enable their active participation.
4. Training and capacity development initiatives for women should be provided to help them to participate in the workforce actively and advance in their fields. These include mentoring programmes, capacity development skills in leadership, facilitation, and presentation, and skills that can allow their total immersion and participation in various decisionmaking and strategic positions.
5. Women's groups should be included as a critical requirement in all African Union and state governments' engagements with civil society organisations.
6. Peer support should take the form of female candidates being nominated and supported by men and their fellow women

8 Women's roles as mothers are integral to their identities, which is evident in their role in providing childcare. Because of this, many women cannot work or gain an income actively.

9 The ideas of childcare facilities in the workplace and providing flexible work hours are essential in creating a space for women to balance both their work and domestic responsibilities (Hicks 2010).

- when vying for leadership positions from the local to the national, regional, and continental levels.
7. Women should be appointed as heads of key departments in all sectors, including the security and private sectors.
 8. Women should be a first point of reference in developing responses in national security, defence, policing, and criminal investigation.
 9. Resources and incentives should be provided for women to be involved in knowledge production, from data collection to analysis and outcomes.
 10. All data should be gender-specific and inclusive, and data analysis should be grounded in gender awareness.

Some of the measures by the AU to achieve the full implementation of its gender parity project include: ensuring gender-supportive administrative systems that allow for women's capacity development, developing a mentoring system for young women, establishing a platform/roster of women to assist new women employees in Addis Ababa, and developing an expatriate guide (AU 2015). Representation also does not mean women's liberation as the efforts by state organs to increase the number of women in parliaments and high-level positions in its governance structures have failed to ensure or guarantee their liberation. This is because women are incorporated within a patriarchal system. A process of the "menisation" of women, "whereby men and their roles in societies are used as a benchmark to measure the transformation of women" (Nkenkana 2015:44). Hicks (2010) argues that gender transformation is beyond a numbers game and requires further addressing the institutional cultures that limit women's representation and promotion. The following section reflects on the mindsets that drive gender relations.

Changing Mindsets and Unlearning Gender Relations

While there have been efforts to improve gender equality, there are persistent mindsets and ideas that negatively impede further progress on the continent. These mindsets are constructed by patriarchy, male centrism, and masculinity. These are not just

experienced in private spaces but have filtered into African systems of governance and state structures, becoming widely shared and dominant. These ideas relate to narratives and actions on who holds power and has access to resources and how and where they should be allocated. I employ the term used by Hicks (2010), “invisible elements”, to represent those that marginalise working women continuously and to depict the institutional cultures that are male-centric and dominated by men. In South Africa as an example, this institutional culture is characterised by “internal policies and practice, access to skills training, harassment, and a sense that men are taken more seriously, and women have to ‘earn their stripes’ – a situation that is even harder for black women” (Hicks 2010). As is seen from the case of Ghana, customs, laws, and religions have been used to validate and justify these actions, such that even women have accepted these as the norm (Asuako 2020).

Thus, Nkenkana (2015) posits that achieving gender transformation involves understanding the order that designs and prescribes the oppression of women and, in doing that, it offers the opportunity to create better alternatives for the future. The idea is to refrain from forcing women into systems that fail to recognise or include them, but to engage in the process of self and group awareness, where the sources and knowledge systems that deem them inferior and restrict them from active participation are interrogated, and new ways of engaging are learnt. Unlearning in an organisational context is not about “forgetting but the ability to choose an alternative mental model or paradigm”, and “stepping outside the mental model to choose a different one” (Bonchek 2016). A different model will shift from the patriarchal model and way of thinking to newer ways of action. Therefore “the challenge of gender transformation is enmeshed in power, knowledge and notions of being shaped by colonial and patriarchal orders” (Nkenkana 2015:45). These old, colonial-style knowledge systems must be removed to make way for more innovative ways of women’s inclusion and political participation.

If African systems have been shaped in such a way that restricts gender inclusion, and the idea that men and women can contribute equally to the continent, then these structures have to

be transformed to ensure a future that includes women. The role and influence of patriarchy need to be removed, as they inhibit a change of mindsets and ideas that limit their roles and involvement. Nkenkana (2015), in noting the patriarchy that exists, presents Thomas Sankara's argument¹⁰ that the first step is to understand how it functions, have a clear meaning of its real nature, and develop clear actions that can produce true and full liberation of women in all its entirety. While policies are well drafted and comprehensive, they cannot achieve maximum results if the structures perpetuating women's subjugation remain. The AU Gender Policy is one of many efforts to transform these structures of patriarchy as it goes beyond increasing quotas, but it acknowledges the diverse ways women are excluded and how to transform these (AU 2009). The policy acknowledges that "a paradigm shift is inevitable" in bringing the policy to life (AU 2009). In changing these mindsets, social roles and power dynamics must embrace women as co-creators, leading the creative process in every aspect of society and community.

This process of unlearning also applies to value systems that entrench the inequalities between men and women and the inferiority of and subjugation of women to newer values that uphold the protection and support of women. For example, the increase in child marriage and sexual and gender-based violence, more recently on elderly women as seen in cases like South Africa, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe, requires more emphasis on existing values like *Ubuntu*,¹¹ respect for human life, respect for others, selflessness, and compassion.

Transforming a Patriarchal System

Scholars have written extensively on the nature of the colonial and global system as patriarchal (Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Chambati

10 For more information, see Sankara, T. (2007). *Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle*. New York: Panaf.

11 Found in most of South Africa's African languages, *Ubuntu* is defined as a "spiritual foundation, an inner state, an orientation, and a good disposition that motivates, challenges, and makes one perceive, feel, and act in a humane way towards others". (Mnyaka & Motlhabi 2005:218). Its nature and characteristics include "respect for persons and the importance of community, personhood, and morality" (Mnyaka & Motlhabi 2005:218).

2013; Korieh 2001). Patriarchy in Africa has emerged in multiple ways: men being of a higher status than women and women being relegated to the home and domestic matters; thus, it is reflected in many aspects of society. The AU Gender Policy also presents the need to consider Africa's societal context regarding gender equality, mainly because gender roles are linked to status, relationships between genders, and power relations in public and private spaces (AU 2009). Patriarchy, as conceptualised in this policy, defines gender roles and relationships, noting that the different contexts, value systems, and structures within the continent must be considered in achieving gender equality (AU 2009). At the nation-state level, Ghana provides an example of how patriarchy and male dominance have limited how much women can participate in political decisionmaking and other spaces (Asuako 2020). Transformation then will involve establishing the complementarity of men and women in decisionmaking and not seeing women as inferior or less able to take on any position, especially if they are qualified.

While changing mindsets is vital in breaking down the dominance of patriarchy, more practical actions are critical to achieving it. The AU, in its gender policy, speaks to this transformation through initiatives like creating the African Women's Trust Fund, reorientating existing institutions, and paying better attention to gender equality (AU 2009). For example, in tackling inequalities in agriculture and food systems, gender transformative approaches involve a methodology that engages both men and women as agents of change and taking responsibility for equality, "removing barriers in various structures, preventing gender norms that constrain women, and revisiting the unwritten rules about who can do what kind of work, control what types of assets and make what level of decisions" (Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers n.d.) In the workplace, gender transformation is indicated by girls, boys, men, and women sharing the same opportunities, benefits, contributions, and rights (AU 2009). The transformation of a patriarchal, women-exclusionary system requires the following:

1. At the grassroots level, women's agency and ability to contribute successfully to the continent's future must

- be promoted. This involves tackling patriarchal ideas, raising awareness, and educating communities on the complementarity of men and women and the historical contributions of women in African pre-colonial societies.
2. Community conversations and engagements about patriarchy, its effects on development, and how to shift away from it must increase. Community-level engagement creates the space for context-specific change at the local level.
 3. Engaging in discourses around transforming patriarchal systems and how to do it is essential. Academic institutions of learning can become the spaces for doing this by engaging both men and women in the process.
 4. Grassroots engagement with institutions that support and teach patriarchal ideas can help to inform, enlighten and raise awareness about its ills and knowledge sources.
 5. Programmes that continue to empower women in entrepreneurship, education, digital technology, and other relevant fields must be created so they can successfully compete for work in those areas.
 6. Girls must have the same access to opportunities as boys. Family choices of who should gain an education should not exclude girls. This is an important message that should be filtered to family and community structures.
 7. We need to criminalise and prohibit practices that limit women from thriving as members of their community and society, ranging from sexual and gender-based violence to forced exclusion from capacity development opportunities, and low pay for work.
 8. Gender considerations should be the starting point for job opportunities, promotions, and capacity development initiatives.
 9. There should be regular reviews of economic, political, social, health, and security policies and implementation processes at grassroots level and in community structures, to determine how women are excluded or included.
 10. Aspects of laws, cultures, and customs that prohibit women from owning property and land must be eradicated.

11. Legislation is needed that prohibits and criminalises child marriage, child labour, and female genital mutilation, and that improves in the reporting and tracking of these activities.
12. Measures must be instituted to prevent the trafficking of women and children.

Policy Development and Implementation

Africa is not devoid of policies that address gender disparities in various sectors. There are comprehensive policies on sexual harassment, promotion, parity, and equity, but these are not implemented extensively. Implementation is a persistent challenge that requires attention for complete transformation and change to occur toward 2063. Regular policy reviews should be part of every institution's standard operating procedure, and these must focus on interrogating the utility of these policies. Furthermore, there should be critical review processes on implementation, focusing on how they can redress inequities and the exclusion of women. Existing policies that promote patriarchy, subjugation, and discrimination of women need to be discarded in favour of developing newer policies. Continental, national, and local monitoring and evaluation processes must involve academic institutions, civil society organisations, research institutes, and advocacy groups to ensure that change occurs regularly and produces results.

In developing new policies, it is essential to reflect and ensure that gender equity is considered, integrated, and included in the initiation and formation stages of policies, programmes, and institutions. Gender planning is a “process of planning and designing the implementation phase of policies, programmes, or projects from a gender perspective, and it takes place in the second stage of the policy cycle” (European Institute for Gender Equality 2019). This process is essential in shaping and ensuring gender-inclusive policies, programmes, and institutions. Progress reports are essential, particularly in tracking developments in policy and action, and member states must provide these. According to the Second Continental Report on The Implementation of Agenda 2063 (2022), only 38 African countries submitted their progress reports (AUDA-NEPAD 2022). When states fail to provide progress

reports, the AU can also employ other stakeholders to obtain progress reports and verify the reports submitted by states.

Reflections on Women as African Agency

The Africa of the future must include and involve African agencies. In this chapter, African agency refers to governance driven by grassroots initiatives, decentralised structures, citizen-focused approaches, and inclusive and participatory engagement led by citizens. This notion of African agency is resolute and firm in including women in these processes. The AU Gender Policy establishes the importance and contribution of women in all sectors and at the national, regional, and international levels (AU 2009). Africa's history is filled with narratives and experiences of how women have transformed their families, communities, and societies for the better.

Women are a critical component of African agency because they are the most informed about issues of war, armed violence, intimate partner violence, and criminality because, in many instances, they experience it the most. Furthermore, they have been the recipients of longstanding cultural, social, and religious thought practices and ideas that have subjugated, oppressed, and excluded them. They have found ways to remain resilient amid remarkable resistance and diverse limitations. They contribute to health, economic, security, and political discourses and research. They have expertise in conflict resolution, trauma support, and community development. They also understand the continent's political landscape and bring various perspectives and innovative ideas. They are heads of households, community providers, and first responders. They are specialists on local, societal, national, regional, and global issues and dynamics and how these are linked. They are the bridge and link between men, children, youth, refugees, communities, and minority groups. Indeed, they are sources of information and huge resources to society.

There are well-documented sources on the contribution of women in the African agency. These include their roles in leadership as envoys and representatives of the AU, RECs, and member states. For example, the chairperson of the AU appointed

three women as special envoys for youth, COVID-19, and women, peace and security (AU n.d.). These women have brought significant attention to these portfolios across the continent by raising awareness of these issues at multiple levels and engaging various stakeholders at the national and regional levels, while working to reform relevant policies and develop appropriate responses and programmes. Women have contributed to post-conflict environments in resolving conflicts, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and helping with post-conflict reconstruction, transitional justice, and reconciliation efforts.

While highlighting the important roles of women, it must be noted that men are also essential contributors to the African agency and are important in achieving the gender-inclusive Pan-African agenda. The AU acknowledges that men and women are not in an “unhealthy competition”, and that men have the same rights to equal job opportunities within the AU and should be equally free from discrimination and harassment (AU 2020). Oluwole (1997) also recognises that “male-female complementarity cannot be ignored in creating a healthy civil society”. This complementarity must be harnessed, as both men and women are agents of change in transforming the continent. One clear point is that their abilities and capacities have not been maximised, thus limiting the continent from benefitting from their expertise.

Conclusion

Gender equality is vital in rebuilding Africa and important for the attainment of sustainable development and economic integration in Africa. Thus, there needs to be an unlearning of norms and thought processes that give men advantages over women with no basis, present women as lesser and inferior humans, and normalise patriarchy. Systematic and individual transformations are required in creating new knowledge systems that constitute a shift from coloniality, patriarchy, capitalisation, and Western-centric models. This requires self and group awareness and reflections on how gender inequality is created consciously and unconsciously. This is important in genuinely benefitting from the representation and participation of women on the continent.

The contribution of women in Africa and their successes have been well documented and should not be questioned or interrogated. Their track record is extensive in how they have helped to improve relationships, build social cohesion, achieve social change, represent vulnerable groups, contribute to food security, develop restorative justice processes, promote the need for reparations, assist minorities, implement anti-poverty programmes, develop social assistance programmes, improve healthcare, and contribute to Pan-Africanism and decoloniality discourses. The AU's stance on gender issues has been used to inform action in achieving gender equality within the AU Commission, its organs, and member states, and in clarifying the continental stance on gender equality. Grounded in the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, its gender policy highlights the role of the AU and how it commits to gender mainstreaming in addressing gender-related issues and concerns.

This chapter advanced the idea of a gender-inclusive, Pan-African, decolonial lens which shifts attention away from men as the primary political subject and foregrounds the role of women as key political players. While the AU has made strides to do this, there must be continuous reviews of Agenda 2063, its implementation plans, and continental progress reports through a gender-inclusive, Pan-African lens. These rigorous reviews should include member states' representatives, AU personnel from the field and commission, academic institutions, research institutes, CSOs, and local communities. Furthermore, the goals of its Gender Parity Project to become a preferred employer for African women, including their families, and achieve gender parity in all available positions and organs, should continue to be pursued with the deadline of 2025 fast approaching.

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Chapter 24

African Women Labour Migrants: Assessing the African Union Free Movement of Persons Protocol

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Introduction

In the contemporary world, the trend of women's migration has grown increasingly prominent. In 2020, the global international migrant stock included approximately 135 million female migrants, accounting for 48.1% of the total, meaning nearly half of the world's migrants are women and girls (UN DESA 2020). This increasing visibility of women in international migration is often referred to as the feminisation of migration. This term captures the rising prevalence of women who travel independently in global migration patterns (IOM 2021).

Historically, men have been the primary labour migrants in Africa. However, in recent times, there has been a noticeable shift, with women assuming a prominent role in the dynamics of labour migration. This emerging reality illustrates a broader societal shift where women are increasingly more active in the labour force despite the entrenched structural and systemic inequities of a gendered world. African women labour migrants represent a particularly interesting demographic within this context. Their stories are detailed with the hopes of improvement in their socio-economic status and are often overshadowed by the harsh realities of vulnerability and exploitation. As these women navigate borders in search of employment and security, they carry

with them not just the promise of their labour, but the potential to capitalise on the opportunities offered by regional economic developments and integration. Push factors, such as abject poverty, gender inequality, climate change, political instability, and the scars of conflict, force these women to leave their homes; while pull factors such as economic opportunities and higher standards of living drive them to seek opportunities beyond their native borders. The need to survive, coupled with the ambition to strive, reflects the dichotomy of migration. For some, it is a compulsion, whereas, for others, it is a choice.

Against this backdrop, the 2018 Protocol to the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment (AU FMP) becomes relevant in this discourse. The protocol reflects the continent's ambition to support the free movement of persons between countries and labour migration. The African Union (AU)'s Agenda 2063 vision for integration places the free movement of people as a critical element in its quest to "accelerating Africa's economic growth, trade and development as well as promoting [its] common identity by celebrating [its] history and [its] vibrant culture" (AU 2023a). Within the AU FMP, 11 labour mobility-migration provisions have been stipulated; however, it is unclear whether these provisions are gender inclusive or whether they acknowledge the vital role women play in the pursuit of the AU's Agenda 2063. Thus, this begs the question: What tangible prospects does the AU FMP offer for African women migrant workers? This becomes important because they serve as a cornerstone of economies, yet their wellbeing is frequently marginalised.

This chapter seeks to unpack the intricate layers of this question by assessing the responsiveness of the AU FMP to the multifaceted challenges faced by African women labour migrants on the continent, drawing from the South African case. It critically examines the labour migration-mobility-related provisions within the protocol through a gendered lens, probing their depth, reach, and efficacy. Furthermore, it proposes forging robust, gender-responsive policy frameworks that recognise and safeguard the interests and rights of women labour migrants. It is

through such dedicated policies that the AU FMP can truly become an instrument of empowerment and protection for women labour migrants, thereby fulfilling its promise and potential as a cornerstone of the AU's broader vision for an integrated and prosperous continent.

The Feminisation of Migration in Africa: Challenges and Policy Perspectives

Although the media is saturated with reports of Africans migrating to Europe, the reality is that over 80% of migration occurs within Africa and across its regions (Ardittis 2017). Indeed, between 1960 and 2000, more Africans migrated within the African continent than from Africa to other parts of the world (Flahaux & de Haas 2016). In 2019, the majority of Africa's migrant population resided in East Africa and West Africa. Combined, these two regions accounted for 58% of the continent's international migrants, hosting over 7 million migrants each. The distribution of the remaining migrant population across other African regions included 23% in Southern Africa, 12% in Central Africa, and 7% in Northern Africa (AU 2021:23). Indeed, "These flows include increasing numbers of migrant women, rural to urban migration, migration for seasonal work and labour migration, and a rise in search of decent work and educational opportunities as well as irregular migration and large numbers of refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons" (AU 2018a:9). African women migrants are increasingly participating in the formal and informal labour market with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) indicating that in the Sub-Saharan Africa region, the labour participation rate of female migrant workers stood at 47.3% (ILO 2018). Many studies indicate that various factors account for women's intra-regional migration in the continent.

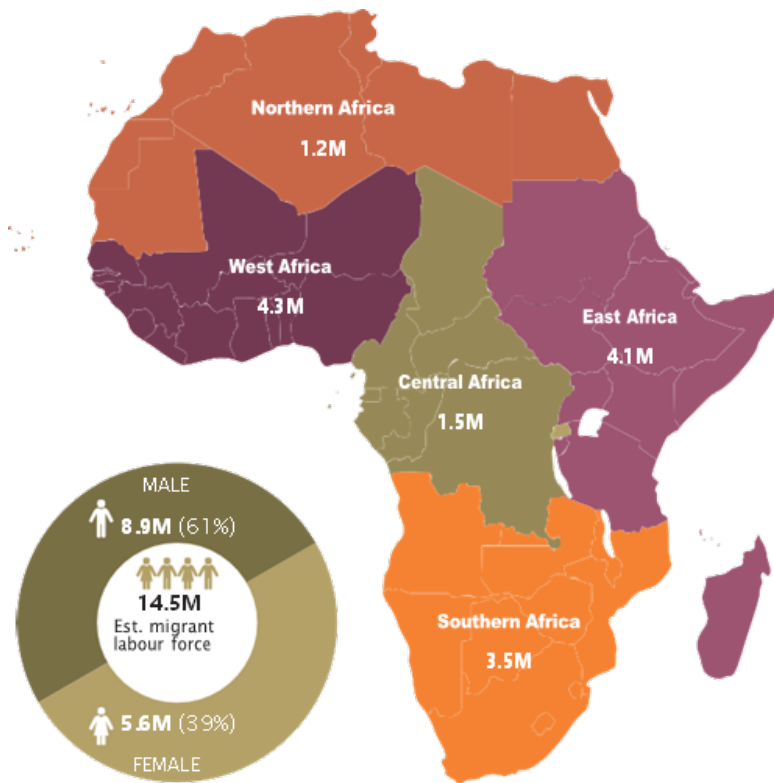


Figure 24.1: Distribution of International Migrant Workers in Africa Across Geographical Sub-regions, 2019 (millions)

Source: STATAFRIC Migration Database

The West

As of mid-2020, it was estimated that approximately 7.6 million international migrants were living in West Africa. Nearly 34% (2.6 million) resided in Côte d'Ivoire, while 17% (1.3 million) were in Nigeria (IOM 2020). Historically, migration was a response to population pressures, environmental catastrophes, poor economic conditions, conflicts, and the negative impacts of macroeconomic restructuring. During the 1970s oil boom, Nigeria

was a major immigrant country, however, recently, countries such as Senegal have served as a transit route for migrants aiming to reach Europe, and Côte d'Ivoire has welcomed migrant workers in the agricultural sector (Adepoju 2003:37). Contemporary migration trends in West Africa are deeply influenced by socio-economic, political, and historical-cultural factors that have directed development paths, economic activities, and significantly impacted international migration patterns.

Movement within and from the sub-region encompasses a range of migrants, including temporary cross-border workers, female traders and farm labourers, professionals, undocumented workers, and refugees. These movements are predominantly intra-regional, short-term, and male-dominated, reflecting the interconnected economies of neighbouring countries (Adepoju 2003:37). For many, the harsh economic conditions in the region have largely influenced the trajectory of migration (Horwood *et al* 2018). Afrobarometer (2019) reveals that between 70% and 90% of respondents from all 14 surveyed Western African countries identified economic factors such as 'finding work', 'economic hardship', 'poverty', and 'better business prospects' as the primary reason for contemplating emigration.

Over time, the migration patterns in the region have evolved, marked by an increase in the 'feminisation' of migration, commercialisation of migration, and a diversification of migration destinations across the West African region (Ikwuyatum 2012). For women, the search for better economic opportunities is the primary motivation to migrate (MMC 2018). Notably, commercial migration has mainly been driven by women, who play a pivotal role in bolstering the economies of smaller countries like Benin, Togo, and The Gambia through interregional trade. (Adepoju 2003:37–38). Women from Nigeria, Senegal, and Ghana are increasingly participating in the formal and informal labour markets as a survival strategy to supplement meagre family incomes (Awumbila *et al* 2014).

Most employment opportunities available to women migrants are in domestic work, trade, and commerce (Adepoju 2005:38). It has contributed to an increase in women migration

and has been the driving force behind the rise in child and women trafficking across the sub-region. This includes the trafficking of children from Togo, Nigeria, and Mali to the plantations of Côte d'Ivoire and for domestic work in Gabon, as well as the trafficking of women from Ghana, Nigeria, Mali, and Sierra Leone as sex workers in various European Union (EU) countries (Yaro 2008:10–11; Manby 2015). Currently, estimating the number of women migrant workers in West Africa is challenging due to limited data on this demographic. This is further exacerbated by the predominance of women migrants in the informal sector, where data collection is more difficult, and thus a significant number remain undocumented.

National laws and policies in the region are not sufficiently aligned with continental, regional, and sub-regional frameworks that are designed to protect women migrant workers, and there is a notable lack of effective enforcement. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) adopted the Protocol on the Free Movement of People and the Right of Residence and Establishment in 1979 to facilitate interstate migration within the West African region.¹ The three phases of the protocol included abolishing entry visas, the right of residence, and the right to establishment. In 2018, “the Migration and Development Common Approach” was annexed to the protocol with the assistance of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the IOM to address the rising negative impacts of migration, particularly that of West Africans on Europe (Kabbanji 2017:110). Progress has been slow due to “the absence of adequate mechanisms to control the infiltration of criminals, perverse corruption of

1 Article 3 of the Protocol on the Free Movement of People and the Right of Residence and Establishment of 1979 gives nationals of member states of ECOWAS the right to “respond to job offers, to move freely in the territory of member states, to spend time and to reside in a member state in order to carry out a job conforming to the legislative, regulatory, and administrative arrangements governing domestic workers, to remain in conditions defined by legislative, regulatory, and administrative provisions of the host member state, on the territory of a member state after having worked there”. The protocol further outlines the right of the host country to expel migrants and their families “for reasons of national security, public order, and accepted standards of behaviour” (Article 14).

border officials, [and] diverse and incompatible national laws and policies on migration and labour” (Amadi 2019:82). Further, these existing migration labour-related provisions mainly apply to men and women in the formal economy, yet remain inadequate for informal women migrants (Rueda 2020)

The East and the Horn

In the East and Horn of Africa, the migration landscape is irregular, forced, and highly reactive to sub-regional shocks, which has resulted in the displacement of civilians, many of whom are women and children. Of the half a billion people living in the region, 8.5 million are migrants. Labour migration is a significant aspect of the mobility landscape, encompassing 4.7 million migrant workers. Additionally, the region hosts 22.3 million displaced individuals, comprising 16.9 million internally displaced persons alongside 5.4 million refugees and asylum seekers (Abebe & Mukundi-Wachira 2023:17).

Asylum seekers, refugees, and economic migrants move within and beyond their regions, driven by violent conflict, environmental issues, and political oppression and persecution in countries such as Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan. Somalia has been involved in a protracted conflict since the early 1990s, leading to state collapse, and the two-year Ethiopia-Tigray war claimed the lives of approximately 600 000 people (Pilling & Schipani 2023). Economic factors have further driven migration in countries such as Uganda and Kenya. Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, and Uganda are characteristically identified as countries of origin, transit, and destination, while Kenya and Sudan predominantly function as transit and destination countries for irregular migrants. Human smuggling and trafficking have become significant problems, leading to sexual exploitation and forced labour, including child soldiers. Tragically, women and children are the most susceptible to these practices. The situation is further aggravated by government officials who, through bribery and corruption at border posts, are complicit in these activities (Marchand *et al* 2017). For those who attempt the treacherous movement to the EU illegally via the sea and the Sahara Desert, reports of violence, rape, and forced

disembarkation from overcrowded boats are rampant. Women and girls are particularly at risk, as they are often on deck and are frequently subjected to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) (Horwood 2015).

Article 104 of the Eastern African Community (EAC) treaty makes provision for the implementation of strategies to facilitate the free movement of individuals, labour, and services, while guaranteeing the rights of citizens within the community to establish and reside (Treaty for Eastern African Co-operation 1979:79). Partner states are also mandated to “harmonise their labour policies, programmes and legislation including those on occupational health and safety” (Treaty for East African Co-operation 1967:79). Despite the regional initiative for free movement of persons and labour, stringent national policies relating to work permits, employment contracts, and processing fees have hindered progress. Some argue that the EAC framework insufficiently addresses the gender aspects of labour migration and focuses on occupations biased towards men, thereby restricting migration opportunities for women seeking employment.

Additionally, the EAC policies maintain a gender-neutral stance, with the assumption that labour migration is predominantly male activity and that women’s experiences of migration mirror those of men (Masabo 2015). Women migrants face gender disparities in the labour market, often encountering abusive working conditions, particularly in the informal sectors. The current EAC framework has not explicitly acknowledged that both genders migrate in search of improved economic prospects. Thus, the EAC actors should incorporate occupations predominantly assumed by women into the scope of the EAC Common Market Protocol and address gender disparities within domestic labour markets (Masabo 2015).

The Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) has been commended for its efforts towards prioritising migration on its policy agenda,² through its adoption of the 2019 Kampala

2 IGAD’s policy agenda was inspired by the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (NYD) and the 2018 Global

Declaration on Jobs, Livelihoods, and Self-Reliance for Refugees, Returnees, and Host Communities; the 2018 Declaration of the 10th IGAD Health Ministerial Committee Meeting on Refugees and Other Cross Border Health Programs; the 2017 Nairobi Declaration on Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees; and the 2017 Djibouti Declaration of the Regional Ministerial Conference on Refugee Education (Ahimbisibwe & Nkiko 2023:3). Despite these efforts, IGAD's policies and frameworks have been constrained due to the large number and prolonged presence of refugees, limitations of member states, IGAD's authority constraints due to non-legally binding declarations, capacity shortcomings, and insufficient consultation with member states (Ahimbisibwe & Nkiko 2023:3).

The Southern Part

The Southern African region was home to 363.2 million people in 2020, with 6.4 million migrants (Migration Data Protocol 2023). Migration trends in the region are characterised by a vast array of patterns, including permanent, temporary and contract migration, asylum-seekers, refugees, and irregular migration (UN 2008). While the history of colonialism and apartheid in the region has influenced current labour migration trends, the post-apartheid dispensation has witnessed shifts in regional migration patterns, especially in relation to movement to and from South Africa. Several factors have influenced the long-standing migration patterns and dynamics in the region; notably, the abolition of apartheid opened avenues for both internal and cross-border movement, the majority of which were for long-term relocation.

Moreover, the SADC member states have a history of forced migration. For instance, the ongoing social and economic effects

Compact on Refugees (GCR), who encourage a comprehensive, multistakeholder approach to refugees and migration such as “national and local authorities, international organizations, international financial institutions, regional organizations, regional co-ordination and partnership mechanisms, civil society partners, including faith-based organizations and academia, the private sector, media and the refugees themselves” to protect and assist refugees and to support the host states and communities (UN, GCR 2018:43).

of civil conflicts in Mozambique and Angola, alongside unrest in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and economic turmoil in Zimbabwe, continue to have profound impacts on the pattern of migration. The region also faces challenges related to a high number of refugees and the emergence of new asylum-seeking demographics, due to ongoing conflicts in various African locales (Crush *et al* 2005:177). The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2019) reported that natural hazards such as cyclones and flooding affected the migration patterns of countries like as Madagascar, Malawi, and Mozambique. The migration trends of countries like Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia, and Zambia were impacted by slow-onset disasters, such as drought (SADC 2019).

The unique characteristic of Southern Africa, compared to the other regions, lies in its historical reliance on labour migration, particularly the movement of contract workers across the region. In South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Namibia, workers were primarily employed in the mining industries, largely from Botswana, Mozambique, and Lesotho. Commercial agriculture also played a significant role in drawing labour migrants to Southern Africa, with thousands, especially women, finding employment on farms in Zimbabwe and Mozambique. The history of labour migration in this region highlights its critical economic role for receiving countries like South Africa, which have depended on low-skilled foreign labour for many years (Kitimbo 2015:5). Labour migration in the region has always been heavily gendered. Women were restricted from migrating during the colonial era; however, in more contemporary times, there is a growing trend of women joining the class of skilled migrant labour (Dobson 2008:1).

The SADC Protocol on the Facilitation of the Movement of Persons of 2005 was established to formulate strategies aimed at gradually removing barriers to the unrestricted flow of capital and labour, goods, services, and the general populace within partner states. This includes provisions to allow individuals to enter member states without a visa for lawful reasons for up to 90 days, and to enable permanent and temporary residency in another state. It further encompasses settling and seeking employment in other member states. Additionally, the protocol outlines the

stages of implementation and addresses the need to harmonise state laws and immigration procedures (SADC 2005). The protocol is enhanced by the 2014 SADC Protocol on Employment and Labour, which urges member states to guarantee that migrant workers and their families are granted essential rights concerning labour, employment, and social protection. To further aid the implementation of prioritised areas, an updated SADC Labour Migration Action Plan covering the period 2016–2019 was approved in May 2016. Criticisms of the protocol relate to slow implementation, limited ratification by member states, inadequate protection for migrant workers, focus on high-skilled migration, and the insufficient harmonisation of national laws to regional policies (Dodson & Crush 2015; Segatti 2017).

Women labour migrants in the region are primarily employed in sectors of domestic work, agriculture, and informal cross-border trading. Despite their significant contributions, these women persistently encounter obstacles, including exploitation and abuse, lower wages compared to men, and limited employment prospects. The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development of 2008 was established to address these issues by eliminating gender inequalities and enhancing women's participation in the socio-economic development of the region (SADC 2008). The protocol has been criticised for implementation inconsistencies between member states, duplication of the AU Protocol on the Rights of Women, rising incidences of gender-based violence, cultural transformation challenges, and monitoring and evaluation insufficiencies (Munalula 2011; Forere & Stone 2009; van Eerdewijk & van de Sand 2014; Kanengoni-Malinga 2016; Zongwe 2008).

Despite the differences in the circumstances across the different regions, African women share comparable reasons to migrate and face comparable challenges. Poverty, political instability, and conflict are principal drivers of the growing need to supplement low-income households. Many fall victim to abuse in several forms and, upon reaching their destination countries, face further hardships, including poor working conditions and insufficient social protection. The problem is particularly acute for women working in informal economies,

where labour practices often go unchecked due to ineffective policy implementation. In this context, labour practices evade scrutiny, allowing exploitation to flourish in the absence of regulatory oversight, leaving women migrant workers gravely vulnerable and lacking protection. Additionally, African women, whether native or migrants, tend to be positioned at the lower echelons of the occupational ladder in both formal and informal labour sectors. Since the current regional protocols seem to have yielded unfavourable outcomes, it may be important to shift our focus towards evaluating continental frameworks for a potentially more optimistic perspective. Further, the AU FMP could provide the missing link.

The African Union's Vision for Migration: A Continental Approach

Established in 2002 as the successor to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the AU represents the collective ambition of its 55 member states to accelerate economic, social, and political integration towards achieving a peaceful, prosperous, and integrated continent (AU 2023b). The AU's vision for migration is encapsulated in several key documents, including the Lagos Plan of Action of the 1980s, which laid the foundation for an integrated continent with the free movement of people and goods, and the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (AEC) – also known as the Abuja Treaty – of the 1990s. The Abuja Treaty further elaborated on this vision by setting a roadmap towards a unified market, highlighting migration as a critical component for economic integration (AU 2023b).

In 2006, the African Union Commission (AUC) collectively endorsed the African Common Position on Migration and Development (African Common Position) and the Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA) during a meeting in Banjul, The Gambia. The frameworks were developed as a comprehensive guide for AU member states, providing a set of principles, policy guidelines, and recommendations aimed at managing migration effectively, enhancing its positive impacts, and minimising its negative consequences. The endorsement of the migration policy

frameworks in Banjul marked a pivotal moment for migration governance in Africa, highlighting the continent's commitment to a co-ordinated and coherent approach. The frameworks addressed various aspects of migration, including labour migration, irregular migration, forced displacement, rights of migrants, integration policies, and the nexus between migration and development (AU MPFA 2006).

By adopting the frameworks, AU member states acknowledged the importance of migration in achieving socio-economic development and regional integration. The policy encouraged member states to harmonise their national migration policies with the framework's guidelines, aiming for enhanced mobility, protection for migrants, and leveraging migration for development. The framework further emphasised the importance of collaboration between AU member states, regional economic communities, and international partners. It advocated for strengthening the capacities of African states to manage migration more effectively and called for improved data collection and research to inform evidence-based policies (Abebe & Mudungwe 2018; Dinbabo & Badewa 2020).

The literature emphasises the predominance of the regional economic communities (RECs) such as ECOWAS and SADC, with limited research acknowledging the AU as a significant migration actor. Further, the EU's stance on migration related to Africa continues to be the focus, particularly on how "the EU's system of multilevel governance significantly limits its capacity for international migration co-operation" (Hampshire 2015:3). The lack of specific institutional frameworks to oversee or ensure compliance by AU member states, and the minimal support in delivering data-driven suggestions for tangible policy measures to assist member states to apply human rights, accordingly, are also highlighted (Achiume & Landua, 2015). South Africa, being a key destination country, has implemented progressively more restrictive and xenophobic migration management practices to curtail the growing number of migrants (Mbiyozo 2018:5-7).

The African Union Free Movement Protocol

In 2016, the AUC initiated a review of the 2006 AU's migration protocol and engaged member states and RECs to identify required amendments. Following this, a revised draft was distributed, establishing the Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment at the AU Assembly in Addis Ababa in 2018. This protocol is central to the AUC's vision for a borderless Africa and reflects the AU's long-standing vision of a more integrated Africa, where the movement of people across national borders is seamless, enhancing development through employment, trade, tourism, and technology transfer (AU 2018b). Possibly the most significant alteration is the incorporation of the Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA) and Plan of Action (2018-2027), which outlines measures for implementing the recommendations presented in the 2018 MPFA for Africa. Eight fundamental pillars related to migration are emphasised, related to migration governance, labour migration and education, diaspora engagement, border governance, irregular migration, forced displacement, internal migration, and trade (AU MPFA 2018). The 2018 MPFA refocuses its attention on intergovernmental co-operation and "increased inter-State co-operation and enhanced dialogue" (AU MPFA 2018:8). As highlighted by Knoll and de Weijer (2016:14), it further draws attention to the frequently neglected southern migration route. It also the impact of intra-African migration on South Africa (AU MPFA 2018:5). As envisaged by the AU:

The free movement of persons, capital goods and services will promote integration, Pan-Africanism, enhance science, technology, education, research and foster tourism, facilitate inter-African trade and investment, increase remittances within Africa, promote mobility of labour, create employment, improve the standards of living of the people of Africa and facilitate the mobilisation and utilisation of the human and material resources of Africa in order to achieve self-reliance and development (AU 2018b:4).

The protocol further outlines several guiding principles for its implementation, including non-discrimination,³ respect for laws and policies on the protection of national security, public order, public health, the environment, and any other factors that would be detrimental to the host state, and transparency.

These principles are further highlighted as part of the 11 flagship projects of AU's Agenda 2063, which includes the African passport and the free movement of people. Despite the protocol's significant potential to drive continental integration and development, its ratification and implementation processes have encountered obstacles, with a relatively low number of countries ratifying it since its adoption. Currently, of the 55 AU member states, only 32 have signed the protocol, with just four countries (Mali, Niger, Rwanda, and Sao Tome and Principe) having ratified it, thus failing to meet the necessary 15 ratifications needed for the AUC MPFA to become effective (Tralac 2022). In September 2023, The AU's Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) held its third and concluding session of national dialogues for the year on the AU MPFA. At the session, supported by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the German government, it was concluded that, despite the establishment of migration policy frameworks, the adoption and familiarisation of these policies among AU member states and within African civil society have been limited, failing to produce the anticipated outcomes.

William Carew, ECOSOCC's head of secretariat, said:

I implore all of you to use your voices as non-state actors to help popularise, ratify, and adopt the Free Movement Protocol. I call on you to push member states to take action whenever they drag their feet. Everyone in this meeting is to be an ambassador of change around the FMP conversation. Let us go beyond just talking but push the messages to the right stakeholders so that we properly influence change (AU 2023c).

3 For more information, see AU (2018b).

Some scholars have questioned the ability of the AU MPFA to be a panacea in reducing border porosity due in part to member states' reluctance to adopt a paradigm shift towards recognising the distinction between border security and border defence (Okunade & Ogunnubi 2019). Others question the protocol's ability to address issues of Afrophobia and mass expulsion following the deficiencies of similar provisions by several regional economic communities (RECs), such as ECOWAS, the EAC, and IGAD (Chime & Nwogu-Ikojo 2022).

Regarding labour migration and mobility, the AU MPFA outlines eleven specific provisions listed in Articles 5, 14, 15, 18, 19, 23, 24, 25, and 26 of its protocol. They encompass a broad spectrum of critical issues, from the right of entry, residence, and establishment to the mutual recognition of qualifications, transferability of social security benefits, and protective measures for migrant workers and their families. Through these comprehensive provisions, the protocol endeavours to foster a more inclusive, equitable environment for labour migration within the continent.

The African Union and Women

Alongside the 2006 AU MPFA and the revised 2018 AUC MPFA, specific policies on women migrants are integrated within broader migration and gender equality frameworks. In 2000, the AU initiated the Women, Gender, and Development Directorate (WGDD), which has since evolved into the Women, Gender, and Youth Directorate (WGYD). This organ was created to enhance and integrate gender equality across the union and its member states. Key initiatives have been introduced, such as the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa in 2004, serving as a monitoring mechanism for gender equality and women's empowerment. The 2003 Maputo Protocol also lays down a comprehensive legal foundation to protect the rights of African women across various domains, including civil, political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental areas.

Furthermore, the 2013 Pact for Youth and Women Employment in Africa advocates for enhancing labour mobility

across regions and sub-regions. It urges the development of a labour migration plan by the AU and regional economic communities (RECs) (Anichie & Moyo 2019:77). These foundational efforts have led to further regional commitments, including the integration of gender equality and women's empowerment within Agenda 2063 and the formulation of the 2018–2028 AU Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. This strategy aligns with Agenda 2063's objectives and promotes gender mainstreaming across the AU's activities (AU 2023). Despite these efforts, women across the continent continue to fall victim to trafficking for prostitution and forced labour (MOAS 2018; Rohweder 2016).

The AUC MPFA potentially offers a policy framework that could significantly improve the migration landscape for African women labour migrants by addressing gender-specific challenges and promoting equal opportunities in the pursuit of economic and social integration across the continent. The prospects and challenges of these provisions are examined through a case study in the following section, for a detailed assessment of their potential impacts on the experiences of African women labour migrants.

South Africa as a Choice Destination Country: Case Studies

In mid-2020, an estimated 2.9 million migrants lived in South Africa (UN 2020). This makes the country the leading host of immigrants in Africa, and the primary choice for labour migrants due to its middle-income economy, stable democratic institutions, and relatively advanced industrial sector (ReliefWeb 2021). South Africa has had a growing appeal to African women seeking better opportunities. In 2019, South Africa was home to a significant population of migrant women, with estimates indicating up to 1 875 588 individuals, representing 44.4% of the migrant population (UN DESA 2019). A 2007 study conducted by the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW) and the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) revealed that

the South African informal sector plays a crucial role in providing employment opportunities for African women labour migrants, who commonly engage in vending, street trading, or hawking (Hughes 2007). The study revealed a pronounced representation of female labour migrants from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Nigeria (Ferraro & Marinda 2020).

Despite South Africa being a popular destination for migrants, the journey is often an uncertain and challenging experience, particularly for women migrants. Migrant women frequently endure physical violence, blatant discrimination, social alienation, and economic manipulation. Such unfavourable conditions adversely impact wages, work conditions, work security, and, as a result, the number of remittances sent (Hughes *et al* 2007). A more recent report by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) revealed that migrant women in South Africa confront a triple form of discrimination, which encompasses xenophobia, racism, and misogyny, including gender-based or sexual violence, which constitutes one of their primary concerns (Mbiyozo 2018).

Zimbabwean Women Labour Migrants in South Africa

Many women from Zimbabwe have migrated to South Africa, a pattern that has been particularly noticeable between 2005 and 2010. Several detrimental policies in Zimbabwe – including the political unrest surrounding President Robert Mugabe’s 2009 re-election, the 2005 Operation Murambatsvina aimed at clearing slums, and the poorly executed Fast Track Land Reform Program in 2000 – compelled millions of Zimbabweans to seek a better life in South Africa (Sisulu *et al* 2007:555). Thus, this migration trend was largely driven by desperation caused by the economic meltdown and escalating poverty levels in Zimbabwe. A Zimbabwean woman (39) migrant in Durban, South Africa recounts her motivations to travel to South Africa: “I came here because of three things: *mari*, *nzara*, *nhamo chaiyo* (money, hunger, and poverty – I mean extreme poverty. That kind of

poverty that leaves you with nothing to cook for meals made me leave. When I decided to leave, I left my kids without enough food to sustain them for a long period” (Mutambara & Maheshvari 2019:1781). For others, the declining economic landscape resulted in the shrinking of formal employment sectors where women were previously employed, thus propelling them to seek better employment opportunities (Crush *et al* 2015:367).

Twenty-eight-year-old Joyce expresses her experience:

I came here to South Africa in 2008, when things got difficult. When I left, things were not okay, there were no jobs, most of the companies had shut down and there was a cash crisis. Before I came here, I was involved in buying and selling of different products. However, it was difficult to sustain the business as many did not pay in time because of the cash crisis. I started to plait hair when I came here to South Africa; as it is right now with the little that I can manage to get from my job, I am able to take care of my family back home, as well as take care of my wellbeing (Mutambara & Maheshvari 2019:1782).

These differences in the motivations above highlight the push and pull factors of migration, including the duality of migration; for some women, the situation is one of necessity, while for others, it presents an option for betterment. Based on this assessment, Zimbabwean women migrants to South Africa are labelled as economic migrants.

Migration to South Africa is most challenging for non-professional women, with physical and bureaucratic hurdles. This includes the difficulties and costs (logistical, material, and financial) of crossing borders in the face of stringent immigration policies and the risks associated with undocumented travel. While some of these women crossing to South Africa possess legitimate immigration documents, a significant portion are undocumented. This lack of proper documentation increases their susceptibility to various forms of violence (Rutherford 2020:172). According to Human Rights Watch (HRW) (2006), undocumented Zimbabwean migrants, in particular women, encounter extremely

harsh conditions, especially when crossing the crocodile-infested Limpopo River or navigating corrupt law enforcement at border posts. Women traders from Taka Village in Zimbabwe, working in South Africa, relayed experiences of harassment from border officials and police seeking bribes, including degrading body searches and incidences of sexual assault from soldiers. For women, especially those carrying infants, this hardship is compounded, differentiating their experience significantly from men's (Hlatshwayo 2019:6-11). They experience discrimination, social isolation, xenophobic attacks, and violence, and are often labelled as the "other" (Akinola 2014). These conditions are shaped by the intersectionality of their identities, notably their gender, race, and immigration status (Von Kitzing 2017).

Undocumented migrants find employment primarily in the agricultural, domestic, and hospitality sectors, where they regrettably experience exploitation and unfair labour practices through low remuneration and unpaid work. Some "felt that employers took advantage of their desperation and that their legality was unclear" (Rutherford & Addison 2007:627). Therefore, although migration presents an opportunity for Zimbabwean women to improve their livelihoods, it also tends to perpetuate traditional gender roles that place women in subordinate roles in their destination countries. Challenges in the informal sector also emerged from the absence of protective regulations for women's work and struggle to navigate extremely restrictive regulations reserved for citizens or those with valid permits.

Yomella, a Zimbabwean woman street vendor in South Africa, explained: "If jobs are limited, you are obliged to try selling on the road. But you need a permit even for selling on the road. If you don't have your permit, the police will come, and they will take your things and go with them to the court. You have to go pay a fine because you are using state soil for free. You are supposed to pay the state" (Erwin & Marks 2022:270). Professionals recruited for critical skills positions have the advantage of work permits being processed through the South African High Commission in Zimbabwe, yet they too are not immune to the struggles of labour migration. Despite this, women commonly receive lower wages than men. Among male agricultural labourers, 22% earned R700

or more monthly, but only 14% of women achieved this earning level (Bloch 2008:12).

South Africa's migration policies, particularly those concerning Zimbabwean nationals, underscore a nuanced alignment with broader continental and regional frameworks, notably the AU MPFA and the SADC migration protocol. The ease of acquiring a visitor's visa for Zimbabweans⁴ and the establishment of specific permits through the Dispensation of Zimbabweans Project (DZP) reflects a commitment to facilitate mobility, uphold human rights, and ensure the regularisation of migrants in line with the AU MPFA's objectives. These actions are aimed at regularising undocumented Zimbabwean nationals, reducing deportations, easing the strain on the asylum and refugee system, and granting amnesty to those with fraudulent documents. The revisions and eventual expiration of these permits, including the non-renewable nature and restrictions on seeking permanent residency, reveal the complexities of harmonising national migration laws with the aspirations of the AU MPFA and SADC frameworks.

While South Africa's migration policies towards Zimbabweans exhibit regional solidarity and adherence to continental migration frameworks, they also highlight the challenges of fully aligning national interests with regional and continental integration goals, prompting some criticism regarding the limitations imposed on migrants. There is no specification of any measures or policies that directly address Zimbabwean women within the context of South African migration laws. Addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by women – including protection, access to services, and legal rights – is crucial for ensuring gender-sensitive approaches.

4 Visitors' visas are issued to any eligible Zimbabwean at all points of entry into the country. Zimbabweans can have visitor's visas validated from one day to three months (South African Immigration Act 13 of 2002, as amended in 2014).

Congolese Women Labour Migrants in South Africa

Unlike Zimbabwean women such as Yomella, many women from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) flee their country seeking asylum in South Africa due to ongoing political unrest and economic instability that has plagued the country for decades. By April 2022, South Africa was home to more than 242 988 people of concern individuals seeking refuge and asylum, predominantly from various African states such as Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, South Sudan, Somalia, and Zimbabwe (UNHCR 2023). Of these people, 75 511 are refugees and 167 477 are asylum seekers. There is scarce documentation on asylum seekers and refugees from the Congo in South Africa, but estimates suggest that their population might be around 600 000 (Alfaro-Velcamp 2017). Although asylum seekers in South Africa are permitted to work, they do not benefit from the same rights as individuals with refugee status. The permits issued to asylum seekers are only valid for brief periods, typically ranging from three to six months, creating difficulties in seeking employment opportunities. Dina from the DRC recounts her experience:

The kinds of jobs you are getting are the ones that pay a meagre salary. When you go to look for a job, you are told you need an ID [Identity Document] . . . they say ‘here we don’t hire foreigners without an ID’ . . . My first job here was as a security guard at New Germany. They paid us one month and then they started telling us that no, they had to deduct for our uniform, our shoes, this and that. They first told us that they will be paying us R2 500. Then they changed and started paying us R1 500. This was a disservice to us. I worked for three months and then I stopped (Erwin & Marks 2022:271).

The South African Refugee Act 130 of 1998 grants an individual the right to stay in South Africa lawfully and to move within the country without restrictions while awaiting a decision on their refugee status. This determination process assesses if the individual is escaping persecution based on factors like race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, political beliefs, membership

in a particular social group, facing external aggression, or disturbances to public order. Despite this, the South African Department of Home Affairs (DHA) is plagued by administrative inefficiencies and corruption, leading to prolonged delays in the processing of asylum applications. These delays often extend into years, with the appeals process also experiencing significant holdups. Notably, the rate of rejection for all asylum applications soared to 96% in 2019, highlighting the challenges faced by asylum seekers in obtaining approval (Moyo 2021).

For Congolese women, obtaining proper documentation is a critical challenge. This lack of documentation is frequently cited as a major hurdle affecting their daily lives, including their poverty status and limitations in accessing healthcare, education, and employment opportunities. Even after obtaining refugee status or other legal documentation, refugees and migrants often face challenges, with their permits often disputed and denial of access to employment, healthcare, and education. They also frequently encounter police harassment, discrimination, insecurity, and threats. However, possession of documents does not guarantee financial security and stability, as exclusionary policies of the government and dispositions of some of the ruling elites and anti-migration groups effectively criminalise all asylum seekers and refugees, irrespective of their documentation status (Crush & Tawodzera 2017; Walker 2021; Walker & Vearey 2022).

Prospects of AU MPFA for African Women Labour Migrants

The AU FMP (2018) and its provisions on labour mobility offer a critical lens through which to examine the experiences of Zimbabwean and Congolese women labour migrants in South Africa. While these provisions may offer significant opportunities for empowerment, the effectiveness of their implementation is contingent on various factors, including political commitment, harmonisation of policies, and the capacity of the South African state. An assessment of these provisions reveals both the potential and the challenges in realising the objectives of the AU FMP for women labour migrants in South Africa. The following sub-

sections attempt to illuminate the gaps between policy intentions and actual outcomes, the role of gender in migration experiences, and the broader socio-economic implications for South Africa and its migrant communities.

Phase Implementation and its Impact on Women Labour Migrants

Article 5 outlines a phased approach to the realisation of free movement, residence, and establishment rights. It provides for the free movement of persons, right of residence, and right of establishment, which shall be achieved progressively through the following phases:

1. Phase 1, during which states parties shall implement the right of entry and abolition of visa requirements;
2. Phase 2, during which states parties shall implement the right of residence; and
3. Phase 3, during which states parties shall implement the right of establishment.

The initial phase focuses on entry rights and visa abolitions, crucial for women labour migrants from countries like Zimbabwe, where stringent visa requirements often pose significant barriers to mobility. The subsequent phases, emphasising residence and establishment rights, could significantly benefit women from regions like the DRC, offering them greater security and stability in host countries. However, the progressive nature of this realisation might delay the actualisation of these benefits, especially in regions with slow implementation rates. In regions where the implementation of such policies and frameworks is slower, the expected opportunities for migrants might not materialise as quickly as envisaged. Furthermore, some may argue that South Africa's immigration policies have become more restrictive and securitised, focusing on border controls. This reality is reminiscent of the challenges experienced within the SADC region.

Equal Employment Opportunities and Challenges

This provision promises equal employment opportunities without discrimination. Article 14 on the free movement of workers holds that,

1. The nationals of a member state shall have the right to seek and accept employment without discrimination in any other member state in accordance with the laws and policies of the host member state; and
2. A national of a member state accepting and taking up employment in another member state may be accompanied by a spouse and dependents.

For women from Zimbabwe working in South Africa, this should result in improved access to job markets and reduced discrimination. However, the clause “in accordance with the laws and policies of the host member state” leaves room for varied interpretations, potentially limiting the effectiveness of this provision in practice. Additionally, the inclusion of family members in migration, while beneficial, requires host countries to provide adequate social and educational services, which might not always be feasible. The provision in the AU FMPA for free movement of workers does not parallel South Africa’s critical skills visa and general work visa policies, which allow foreign nationals to work in the country. These visas are subject to strict criteria and do not fully embody the non-discriminatory spirit of the AU FMPA, often requiring an employment agreement to be issued. Greater harmonisation with AU FMPA could involve easing these requirements for African nationals to support more inclusive labour mobility.

Regulatory Frameworks and Women’s Access to Work

The issuance of permits and passes as per Article 15 is a cornerstone for operationalising the free movement of labour migrants. It states that:

1. A host states party shall issue residence permits, work permits, or other appropriate permits or passes to nationals

- of other member states seeking and taking up residence or work in the host member state;
2. Permits and passes shall be issued in accordance with the immigration procedures applicable to persons seeking or taking up residence or work in the host member state; and
 3. The procedures referred to in paragraph 2 shall include the right of a national of another member state to appeal against a decision denying them a permit or pass.

The AU FMP provision for the free movement of workers, although not aligned with South Africa's specific visa policies, offers a structured pathway for women labour migrants to achieve legal employment and residency. However, the effectiveness of such provisions in promoting equitable opportunities for women migrants must be considered within the context of South Africa's domestic realities, particularly regarding gender relations. In a setting where gender discrimination is prevalent among the local population, foreign women are likely to encounter similar, if not exacerbated, gender-based challenges. This intersection of migration status and gender discrimination can significantly hinder the actualisation of the AU policy's objectives for women labour migrants, underscoring the necessity for South Africa to address gender biases not only among its citizens but also in its treatment of migrant populations.

The prevalence of systemic gender discrimination thus poses a critical barrier to the empowerment and integration of female migrants. It becomes imperative for policy practitioners to be sensitive to these gender dynamics to truly support the aspirations of women labour migrants in South Africa. The promotion of a gender-sensitive migration policy for women labour migrants can provide a structured pathway to legal employment and residency. However, the dependency of continental protocols on the host country's immigration procedures can lead to inconsistencies in application and potentially discriminatory practices, especially in countries like South Africa, with stringent immigration policies.

Economic Contributions of Women Migrants

Remittances are a vital aspect of labour migration, especially for women who often send earnings back to their families in their home countries. Article 23 on remittances holds that, “States parties shall, through bilateral, regional, continental, or international agreements, facilitate the transfer of earnings and savings of nationals of other member states working, residing, or established in their territory”.

Facilitating this process can significantly contribute to the economic empowerment of women migrants. However, the efficiency of such transfers is dependent on the banking and financial systems of member states, which can vary widely in accessibility and reliability.

Vulnerable Groups and Special Considerations

This article recognises the need for specific procedures for vulnerable groups, which include women facing specific challenges such as human trafficking or seeking asylum. Article 24 on the procedure for the movement of specific groups states that:

1. A states party may, in addition to the measures provided for by international, regional and continental instruments, establish specific procedures for the movement of specific vulnerable groups, including refugees, victims of human trafficking and smuggled migrants, asylum seekers, and pastoralists; and
2. Procedures established by a member state under this article shall be consistent with the obligations of that member state under the international, regional and continental instruments relating to the protection of each group of persons.

The article acknowledges the unique vulnerabilities faced by women, which is crucial for Congolese and Zimbabwean labour migrants to South Africa. Many of these women are fleeing economic hardship and political instability, while some are seeking asylum, which places them in situations of heightened vulnerability to exploitation, violence, and discrimination. However, the implementation of these guidelines in South Africa – as evidenced by the hardships faced by these women, ranging

from bureaucratic hurdles to outright exploitation and abuse – highlights a dissonance between policy and practice.

Collaborative Border Management

Enhanced co-operation in border management is essential for facilitating smooth intra-regional movement. Article 25 holds that:

1. States parties shall, in accordance with the AU Convention on Cross-Border Co-operation, co-ordinate their border management systems to facilitate the free and orderly movement of persons; and
2. States parties shall record, document, and upon request, make available all forms of aggregated migration data at the ports or points of entry or exit from their territory. States parties shall, through bilateral or regional arrangements, co-operate with each other by exchanging information related to the free movement of persons and the implementation of this protocol for women labour migrants. Streamlined border processes can reduce vulnerabilities to exploitation and abuse. However, effective implementation requires robust bilateral and regional co-operation, which might be hindered by varying levels of capacity and political will among member states.

This provision is especially pertinent to the safety and security of women labour migrants, for whom streamlined border processes could significantly mitigate vulnerabilities to exploitation and abuse. However, the realisation of this provision's objectives encounters substantial challenges, primarily due to the disparate levels of capacity and political will among member states. While the protocol advocates for robust bilateral and regional co-operation to ensure effective implementation, the reality often reflects a patchwork of compliance and collaboration. The heterogeneity in border management practices among states complicates the establishment of a coherent regional migration regime and creates gaps that can be exploited, thus exposing women labour migrants to greater risks.

Harmonisation of Policies

Harmonising national policies with the AU FMPA is pivotal for its success. Under Article 26, it states that:

1. In accordance with Article 881 of the Abuja Treaty and guided, as appropriate, by the implementation roadmap annexed to this protocol, states parties shall harmonise and co-ordinate the laws, policies, systems, and activities of the regional economic communities of which they are members which relate to free movement of persons with the laws, policies, systems, and activities of the union; and
2. States parties shall harmonise their national policies, laws, and systems with this protocol and be guided, as appropriate, by the implementation roadmap annexed to this protocol.

For women labour migrants, consistent policies across states can ensure a predictable and secure migratory environment. Notwithstanding, the challenge lies in reconciling national interests with regional commitments, a process that can be complex and politically sensitive. The call for the harmonisation of continental, regional, and national migration policies addresses a fundamental challenge within the AU, which often leads to inefficiencies and obstacles in achieving the free movement of persons. Moreover, the effectiveness of such harmonisation is contingent upon robust co-operation among member states, and political commitments of the AU actors.

Conclusion

The chapter attempts to reflect on the impact of the AU MPFA on women's labour migration in Africa, drawing from the case of South Africa. The AU's ambitious framework was designed to facilitate the movement of persons, labour, and services across the continent; yet the lived experiences of African labour migrants reveal a stark contrast. There is a conflict between the envisioned free movement initiatives and the realities of migration, characterised by bureaucratic hurdles, exploitation, and gender discrimination. Migration policy in most African states, such as South Africa, underscores a significant gap in the implementation

of the AU MPFA, particularly in addressing the gender-specific challenges faced by women migrants.

While the protocol outlines progressive steps towards free movement and employment rights, the actual benefits for women labour migrants remain limited. The issues of short-term permits, lack of recognition of qualifications, vulnerability to exploitation, and inadequate protection against gender-based violence highlight the need for a more nuanced approach to migration policy and practice. Furthermore, the challenges encountered in the informal sector and the precariousness of undocumented migration further highlight the urgency of implementing comprehensive and inclusive frameworks that address the specific needs of women labour migrants. The following recommendations are offered:

1. The migration landscape on the continent is characterised by gender inequality and inequity. Therefore, there is a critical need for the inclusion of specific protections against exploitation of women and gender-based violence experienced by women labour migrants by acknowledging the unique vulnerabilities faced by these vulnerable women. Targeted measures must be implemented to enhance the protection of female migrants by establishing legal frameworks that specifically address and mitigate the risks of exploitation and gender-based violence.
2. It is essential to enhance legal frameworks to safeguard these women's rights, ensure fair labour practices, and provide equal access to justice and social protection. These protections should extend beyond the workplace to include healthcare, education, and social security benefits for migrants and their families.
3. By simplifying the processes for obtaining necessary documentation and legal status, states can significantly reduce the vulnerability of women migrants, who are usually subjected to exploitation and abuse (sexual, physical, and psychological), facilitating their safe and legal migration.
4. It is crucial to foster co-operation among AU member states and invest in the collection and analysis of gender-specific

data to better inform policymaking and effectively address the needs of women labour migrants.

5. A comprehensive approach to identifying the root causes of migration – such as political instability, economic distress, and gender inequality – is central to developing targeted interventions that address these issues effectively and mitigate forced migration.
6. By engaging with migrant communities, civil society, and local governments, states can create supportive environments for women migrants.
7. The AU should mobilise its member states to provide access to legal aid, health services, and social support networks, which would assist women migrants in navigating their new contexts more successfully.
8. There should be a review of national migration policies, such as South Africa's emphasis on economic protectionism, nationalism, and migration securitisation, to better align with the AU MPFA objectives for seamless borders and unrestricted labour mobility.
9. Active dialogue and co-operation among AU member states are crucial to overcoming policy non-alignment challenges and pursuing a vision of a united and prosperous Africa collectively.

The experiences of Zimbabwean and Congolese women migrants underscore the urgent need for policies that not only facilitate free migration but also ensure the protection and empowerment of those who undertake these journeys. Therefore, the AU must impress on its member states the important place of free mobility in continental integration and the attainment of Agenda 2063.

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Chapter 25

Theorising Women's Inclusion in Peace Processes Towards the Actualisation of Agenda 2063

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Introduction

For centuries, conflict of various shades has taken over nations of the world. As one country is coming out of war, another is on the verge of war. War is divided into two categories: interstate (country(ies) against country(ies)) and intra-state (wars within countries); however, intra-state wars have become popular in recent times. Expectedly, Africa is not exempt from this destructive and disruptive menace. In recent years, the African continent has witnessed genocide, ethnicism, terrorism, and other forms of unrest and political instability, leading to the loss of millions of lives and property, leaving people homeless, and straining the socio-political and economic fabrics of many African countries.

In Nigeria, governance, development, and peace have been disrupted by insurgent groups such as Boko Haram, armed banditry, killer herdsmen, and youth unrest like the #EndSARS protest.¹ Apart from the operation of the dreaded Boko Haram in other countries like Niger and Cameroon, there has been an insinuation that the global terrorist group, Islamic State in Syria (ISIS), has been active across these countries. Furthermore, waves of military coups have hit Niger, Mali, Sudan, Tunisia, and Burkina Faso (Adeduyite 2023). Decades of war and relapses of war have curtailed developmental initiatives in South Sudan, and natural disasters such as drought and floods have aggravated instability in Somalia, leading to the death and/or displacement of people. For instance, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR 2023), about 11.71 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) are now occupying East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes (EHAGL) region, not to mention other African regions experiencing displacement because of the diverse disasters cutting through different parts of Africa.

Although the effects of the above occurrences in African nations are felt by the general populace, viewing it from a gender stance reveals more complications for one gender than the other. Literature reveals that the prolonged war affects the status of women differently, such as having to become the breadwinner of the family (without much preparation) at the sudden loss of husbands and sons to war. Women are also displaced with their children, seeking refuge in bordering nations or within their nations. This leaves them more vulnerable to hunger, rape, and epidemic.

Given the above and many other issues, women began to embrace peaceful approaches to conflict resolution, such as dialogue, awareness, diplomacy, and mediation. This further resulted in the agitation of African women to become a substantial and effective part of a workable peace agreement in their

1 The popular #EndSARS protest was led by the youth to show their displeasure against police brutality and poor governance in Nigeria. It was a decentralised social movement aimed at pressurising the government to disband the special anti-crime police unit called the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) in February 2021.

respective countries, to build a sustainable peaceful environment. The quest for women to be inclusive in peacebuilding has generated a lot of discourse on the continent.

According to Ghali (1992), peacebuilding can be described as processes put in place to prevent war or the reoccurrence of war. Also, it is a “political process in which conflicts are resolved by peaceful means” (Saunders 1999:31). This includes diplomacy, negotiation, dialogue, and mediation. Another concise definition is that of Nicole Ball (cited in Burgess 2004). Ball divides the peace process into two: one aspect deals with negotiation and cessation of hostilities, and the second aspect relates to peacebuilding, which can be transitional. This chapter refers to peacebuilding as a gradual process which involves stages that are transitional and mostly take place after a ceasefire, to put an end to violent conflict.

Women’s Inclusion: Negotiating Tables vs Grassroots Peacebuilding

Women’s inclusion should not only be numerical, but descriptive, that is, a process whereby women’s interests (both practical and strategic) are fully and effectively represented at all decisionmaking levels. It can also be seen as a platform where gender equality transcends mere legal documentation into reality while also doing away with gender biases and stereotypes with women’s representation at the negotiating tables (Annan 2006).

Women’s organisations at the grassroots level have made significant contributions to peacebuilding, with notable examples such as the Unity Club in Rwanda. In the aftermath of the devastating genocide in Rwanda, this organisation played a crucial role by engaging in concrete efforts. It showcased commendable levels of women’s activism and organisational effectiveness, particularly in responding to the genocide and addressing concerns related to potential relapses. Putting their own lives at high risk, the women started a campaign in which they acted as intermediaries between their relatives and the government troops to slow down and ultimately stop the genocide (Adeogun & Muthuki 2017). By peaceful and inconspicuous means, women

negotiated peace successfully between the two parties. This is one of the major roles African women's organisations perform at the grassroots level for the sustainability of peace and security.

Furthermore, women are more noticeable at grassroots peacebuilding (which can be referred to as the bottom-up approach) than at negotiating tables (the top-down approach) for many reasons. Firstly, they do not contend with political powers which are synonymous with man's area of autonomy and the natural levels of authority, as displayed in family settings (the husband being the head while wives and the children are sometimes seen as his subjects) and fully embraced by a large part of African society. In the context of women engaging in discussions on national issues alongside men, a subtle power struggle is evident, portraying women as subordinates vying for positions traditionally held by men. Despite the gradual fading of such beliefs in the physical realm, they persist prominently within the subconscious minds of many, influencing perceptions and attitudes toward women's participation in significant matters. Additionally, women at the grassroots level often face limitations due to religious and cultural prejudices. There is a prevailing belief that women should maintain a reserved demeanour and avoid being overly assertive, particularly in public settings. The grassroots are perceived as their immediate community, where they are expected to be content with the contributions they make towards peacebuilding, further reinforcing these biases.

Peacebuilding includes peace processes both at the top and bottom of the spectrum. The 'top-down' symbolises the decisionmaking arena for peace agreement ratification, while the 'bottom-up' represents the society, grassroots, and localities. Women are more visible in the 'bottom-up' peacebuilding approach, and very few women are located at the 'top'. It therefore can be argued that this pattern domesticates women's peacebuilding efforts, such as mediation, negotiation, and diplomacy at the grassroots level while reserving the 'top' level for men.

Despite this view, UNSCR Resolution 1325² of 2000 and other protocols and legal instruments have stated specifically that women have equal rights with men.

Therefore, women should be substantially represented in the peace agreements and decisionmaking arena. This non-adherence to these instruments has kept women at the base of the peace processes and limited them to the grassroots level. Indeed, Resolution 1325 marked a significant milestone as the inaugural Security Council resolution addressing women, peace, and security. This resolution recognises the profound impact of conflict on women and emphasises the crucial need for women's complete and equitable involvement in conflict resolution, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian response, and post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

Furthermore, despite member states of the African Union (AU) being signatories to Agenda 2063, which has sections 4 and 6 for women's equality and inclusion, African women's inclusion in peace processes still faces challenges. Moreover, with many failed peace agreements and relapses of violence in African post-conflict zones, African women are recently clamouring for more inclusion in peace processes. Indeed, there has been an improvement to a certain extent in women's representation. Therefore, this chapter is grounded in the theory asserting that the involvement of women in peace processes is crucial for the long-term sustainability of peace agreements. It delves into the actual roles of women in peace processes, and assesses the progress African women have made in alignment with Agenda 2063, which advocates for women's equality and inclusion. The research utilises desktop data collection methods and employs thematic analysis to explore these aspects comprehensively.

2 See https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/SC_ResolutionWomenPeaceSecurity_SRES1325%282000%29%28english_0.pdf.

African Developmental Goals and the Global Space (Agenda 2063 and SDGs 2030)

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the AU's Agenda 2063 present vital ideas and considerations on development that traverse the local, national, regional, and global spaces. They also explore the links between peace, security, and development, and how these can be achieved in an inclusive, equitable, and sustainable manner. As important action plans, these two documents are critical in setting out processes and tracking the efforts to ensure development, peace, and security while ensuring that vulnerable groups are included and are active participants in that process. While the SDGs take a global focus, Agenda 2063 highlights the importance of Pan-Africanism in the development of the continent.

Building upon the foundation laid by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the SDGs are focused on enhancing the efforts to build a sustainable world. With 17 key goals, the SDGs reflect the current realities, challenges, and priorities for achieving a more developed and stable world. Through annual reports, the initiatives developed to attain these goals are outlined. The SDGs document is critical to understanding the global need to achieve sustainable development.³ These needs and priorities include ending poverty, hunger, and food insecurity, reducing inequality, and ensuring good nutrition, healthy lives, inclusive education, lifelong learning, and gainful employment for all, and creating spaces for sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

It is worth noting that the SDGs focus on inclusivity in each of its goals. Acknowledging that the globe comprises multiple groups – including women, children, minorities, refugees, older people, and people with disabilities – is critical to developing relevant programming for these diverse groups. The effects of climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Russia-Ukraine war are some of the impediments to efforts to meet these goals. These key global occurrences have contributed to increasing food insecurity, skyrocketing fuel costs, and high tax rates, thus

3 For more understanding, see <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>.

leading to further unemployment, increased poverty, and – in some cases – high levels of criminality as individuals and groups try to survive.

The SDGs have seen various countries commit to achieving these goals, all of them at multiple stages. One of the positive developments about the contents of the SDGs is that, compared to the MDGs, they are deemed more holistic and inclusive of both the North and South dynamics and unique contexts. Horner and Hulme (2017) posit that while the developed countries exclusively set the MDGs, the development of the SDGs has included the Global South more strongly. The SDGs are also seen as holistic, where issues like climate change, health, and migration have taken on a more global focus, rather than a Global South focus (Scholte & Soderbaum 2017). Piper (2017) notes how the SDGs have increasingly focused on migration, a theme that has been generally pushed under the umbrella of human rights violations by both national and global policymakers. Piper also notes that the SDGs bring attention to not just the safe transit of migrants, but other rights, like access to decent work and their inclusion in decisionmaking, from a gendered perspective.

Struckmann (2018) acknowledges, however, that while the SDGs are much broader in scope than the MDGs by including environmental, social, political, and economic issues and engaging much more with civil society, both documents adopted liberal feminist and neoliberal frameworks. The author argues that this impedes gender justice and fails to reflect gender realities on the ground, and argues for a postcolonial feminist framework (Struckmann 2018). Battersby (2015) argues that the goal of food needs to be revised and considered as a critical development in Africa, particularly because of the urbanisation of food insecurity and the nutrition transition on the continent. These critiques reflect how important global frameworks must be in reflecting the grassroots realities and the developments in the Global South.

Moving on to Agenda 2063, five critical areas of importance are outlined, namely: peace, prosperity, partnership, people, and planets. The document notes that all stakeholders aim to achieve peaceful, just, and inclusive societies free from fear and

violence. It also emphasises the interrelation between peace and sustainable development; one fosters the other and *vice versa*. This sets a clear foundation that everyone is central to the success of peacebuilding, which can only occur with the perspectives, voices, and involvement of all the members of the society. The agenda focuses on essential factors like improving access to education for all, and ensuring that everyone can access economic resources and that individuals can participate in various political processes at different levels. The agenda further highlights how increasing investment and support from multiple organisations helps to empower individuals, prevent violence, and address poverty. The document acknowledges the importance of men and boys in efforts and processes to end all forms of sexual and gender-based violence.

The agenda⁴ is also critical in pointing out key priorities and actions in achieving development in the world and Africa, namely: ending poverty, providing education, promoting mental and physical health, and empowering vulnerable groups like refugees, the disabled, the elderly, children, youth, and those living with HIV/AIDS. It also acknowledges various efforts to ensure the implementation of these multiple goals, including the need for an increase in global partnerships and collaboration around finance, technology, capacity-building, and trade.

More importantly, Agenda 2063 is grounded in the “Pan-African vision of an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa, driven by its citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena” (AU 2015:1). The ideas of Pan-Africanism⁵ are integral to the success of peace, security, and development efforts on the continent as they contribute to building a common voice and strengthening the African community among Africans across the continent. These Pan-African ideals are evident in initiatives such as the African Union-led peacekeeping missions, the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), the African Peer

4 For more information on Agenda 2063 and its link with the SDGs, see <https://au.int/agenda2063/sdgs>.

5 This is advocacy towards political union of all indigenous inhabitants of the African continent.

Review Mechanism (APRM), and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

The broad nature of Agenda 2063 and the comprehensiveness of the document is a welcome development in building an inclusive and broad-based approach to development in the continent. In this context, however, the AU's commitment to the goals of the agenda will determine how effective and successful Agenda 2063 is in meeting the different needs of the continent's diverse groups. For instance, Amupanda (2018) notes that, while Agenda 2063 has successfully mainstreamed the youth perspectives and conditions, there is a need for effective regional initiatives to include youth in policy development, institutional development, and economic empowerment. Other challenges that can hinder the implementation of Agenda 2063 include poor integration and weak motivation, inadequate enforcement mechanisms, a lack of political will, and the absence of strong institutions, all of which require serious attention to ensure a shift towards a people-driven focus that is inherent in the framework.

As earlier reiterated, Pan-Africanism is the pivotal force behind Agenda 2063. In other words, peaceful cohabitation of people, despite their diverse ethnic and religious affiliations, is essential, hence the sustainability of this peaceful cohabitation and the general goals of Agenda 2063 will entail gender equality across the continent. As the 2030 deadline for Silencing the Guns, an element of Agenda 2063, draws close, collaborative efforts of both men and women are required to guarantee socio-economic stability and peacebuilding.

Meanwhile, the effort made by African women to reach the goal of Silencing the Guns on the continent by 2030 cannot be overemphasised. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (2021), recorded an increase in children's school enrolment, especially before COVID-19 and after. This could be put down to rural women being empowered financially to start businesses, develop skills, and attend adult literacy schools to be able to enrol their children in school, especially in war-ridden zones where the fathers have died because of war or insurgencies of various kinds.

African Women in Agenda 2063 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030.

The year 2023 marked the 10th year since the AU adopted a blueprint document called Agenda 2063. In 2023, seven more years remain until the 2030 SDG milestone is reached (Ntlama-Makhanya & Lubisi-Bizani 2021). The aspirations of Agenda 2063, as well as the 17 SDGs 2030, have direct implications on women's rights and development across the continent. The agenda is Africa's blueprint and master plan for transforming Africa into the global powerhouse of the future, and its strategic framework for delivering on its goal for inclusive and sustainable development. It is a manifestation of the Pan-African drive for unity, self-determination, freedom, progress, and collective prosperity. It speaks about "the Africa We Want", without leaving anyone behind.

The AU Agenda 2063 builds on the AU Maputo Protocol on the rights of women in Africa (Ntlama-Makhanya & Lubisi-Bizani 2021). The seven aspirations of the AU Agenda 2063 are all relatable to meaningful inclusion, empowerment, and participation of women. The key priority for women in Africa is gender equality, as stipulated in Aspiration 6, and Goals 17, 18, and 19. The priorities, as stipulated, are: women and girls' empowerment, and addressing violence and discrimination against women and girls. (AU 2013). The full implementation of the AU's Agenda 2063 would likely enable the fulfilment of women's rights across economic, socio-cultural, and political spheres.

The 17 SDGs 2030 were adopted by UN member states in 2015. They provide a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for all people. The actualisation of these goals calls for urgent action to end poverty and fast-track women's development while striving for a peaceful world. Like the AU Agenda 2063, the UN SDGs 2030 urges all states to empower women in all areas of life – political, economic, and socio-cultural aspects – and to strive for the protection of women's rights. This is explained in detail under SDG 5 on gender equality. Goal 10 focuses on the reduction of inequalities, and Goal 16 reinforces the need for peace, justice, and strong institutions (UN 2015a).

Therefore, all the gender-specific goals mentioned above represent significant progress in accomplishing other objectives before the designated time, emphasising the pivotal role of gender equality in these pursuits.



Figure 25.1: Women's Inclusion in Peacebuilding

Source: <https://www.connect4climate.org/sites/default/files/images/WPS-infographic-peacemakers-675px.jpg>

There have been questions on the importance of women's role as signatories in peace processes, especially after a ceasefire had been maintained, perhaps through peacekeeping missions or other soft power mechanisms. For instance, what evidence supports the idea that the involvement of women as signatories in peace agreements contributes to their durability?

Over the years, African women have been clamouring for inclusion in the decisionmaking arena, most especially in the peace agreements process, engaging key instruments such as the Beijing conferences, which brought gender equality to global attention (UN Women 2020). The drafting of the UNSCR 2242 and 1325 expressly describe the inclusion of women in peacebuilding as very important for sustainable peace across the globe. Given the progress of women's inclusion in peace agreements, the former executive director of United Nations (UN) Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, noted the significant progress in

women's active participation in peace processes over the years. Comparing the period from 1990 to 2010, when women were seldom acknowledged in peace agreements, to more recent years, where they have gained greater recognition, it is believed that this advancement positively influences the outcomes of peace agreements (UNWA 2021).

Radu (2016) assumes that the contributions of women at the negotiating table and the grassroots level may contribute to sustainable peace. After considering 13 peace agreements with women signatories in six peace processes – the DRC (2003), El Salvador (1992), Guatemala (1996), Liberia (2003), Papua New Guinea (2001), and the UK/Northern Ireland (1998) – Krause *et al* (2018) maintain that there are statistical records which prove that women's inclusion in the peace agreement, especially as signatories, increases its chances of durability. This is also reflected in Image 5.

Moreso, the content analysis of the agreements – reached in Liberia in 2003, Sierra Leone in 1999, Côte d'Ivoire in 2003 and Niger in 1995, including a supplementary in-depth comparative case study – reveals compelling evidence suggesting that women do impact peace agreements, especially in the provision of social and security infrastructures to increase durability (Krause *et al* 2018). Given the above, it can be said that the increase in women's descriptive and substantial participation in peace agreements can affect the longevity of peace agreements.

Women in Peace Processes, Pre- and Post-Agenda 2063

Research shows that between 1990 and 2014, out of 130 peace agreements that were signed globally, women signed only 13 (Krause *et al* 2018). Also, in the global peace negotiations between 1990 and 2017 (a little beyond SDG 2030), women who were present during peace processes during this period comprised 2% of the mediators, 5% of the witnesses and signatories, and 8% of the negotiators (Olofsson 2018).

Table 25.1: African Women in Peace Processes 1992 to 2015

Countries	Years	Negotiators	Mediators	Signatories
Burundi	2000	2%	0%	0%
Central African Republic	2008 2011	0% 0%	0% 0%	0% No Data ⁶
Darfur	2006	8%	0%	0%
DR Congo	2002 2008	12% No data	0% 20%	5% 5%
Kenya	2008	25%	0%	0%
Liberia	2003	No data	No data	No data
Mali	2015	5%	No data	15%
Sierra Leone	1999	0%	0%	0%
South Sudan	2015	15%	0%	0%
Sudan	2015	15%	0%	0%
Uganda	2008	9%	0%	0%
Zimbabwe	2008	17%	0%	0%

Source: *cfr.org*

The above Table 25.1⁶ highlights the roles of African women in some of the peace processes that took place before and shortly after the adoption of Agenda 2063 by member states. As reflected in the table, women appear mostly as negotiators while, they were signatories to the agreements only on three occasions. In all, 50% of women were not involved in many of these peace processes, either as a negotiator, mediators, or signatories. Although Liberia had no data on the three roles that are selected, it was recorded that 17% of the witnesses were female heads of civil society. This means that they just watched the agreement proceedings without fully participating in them.

⁶ No data means non-availability of data on *cfr.org*, where the information was gathered.

Table 25.2: African Women in Peace Processes from 2016 to 2022

Countries	Years	Negotiators	Mediators	Signatories
Central African Republic	2019	21%	11%	6%
Ethiopia–Ogaden	2018	14%	No data	0%
South Sudan	2018	33%	0%	20%
Sudan	2018	15%	No data	0%
Western Sahara	2018	20%	43%	N/A ⁷
	2019	0%	40%	N/A

Source: *cfr.org*

According to Table 25.2, after the adoption of Agenda 2063, women's level of representation as mediators and signatories increased. Comparison of the two tables reveals the level of increase in the percentage of women as negotiators, mediators, and signatories, especially with the Central African Republic and South Sudan. Also, Western Sahara in the last column of the above table includes the combination of these countries: Mauritania, Algeria, Morocco, and Polisario in 2018; and Mauritania and Algeria in 2019.

Lastly, in the above tables, the South Sudan peace agreement comes to mind when discussing the sustainability of the peace agreement based on the effective inclusion of women as signatories. The 2018 peace agreement, where 15% of signatories were women, lasted longer (extended till 2024) than the peace agreement of 2015, with no women representation as signatories, which collapsed almost immediately (Human Rights Watch 2022). Even though the peace agreement signed in 2018 has not fully been implemented due to challenges like insecurity, it represents a significant milestone in the efforts of African women to enhance the durability of peace agreements on the continent.

7 Not applicable (N/A) indicates that this is not a comprehensive agreement, but a peace talk that needs no signatories.

Major Challenges of Women's Exclusion in Formal Peace Processes

Even though Africa has made progress and hopefully will keep making progress in this regard, however, there are reasons put forward for women's exclusion in peace processes:

1. Lack of education and skill: In South Sudan, girls' enrolment in education increased from 39% in 2013 to 49% in 2021 (Windle Trust International 2023). In Nigeria, girls' enrolment in education has recently increased by 64% (UNICEF Nigeria 2023). However, it is surprising that, despite great improvement in girls/women's education in Africa, lack of education has still been used as an impediment to women's participation in decisionmaking or peace processes. Many times, African women still must go through rigours to prove their skills much more than their male counterparts to be fully engaged in decisionmaking and peacebuilding. The dominant culture of patriarchy in many African countries, which instigates gender stereotypes could also contribute to this effect.
2. Sexism: Gender stereotype is also another constraint on the part of African women. Women are still considered weak and emotionally unstable, and are stereotyped as domesticated beings in various ways. That is, no matter how educated or skilful they are, there are positions they cannot occupy. These positions are male-dominated and when women contest for such positions or are even nominated, they are stigmatised by society. For instance, the position of president is still far from the reach of women in some African countries. Also, African women face a lack of organisational strength (Chhabra 2005), hindering their ability to advocate for increased representation in decisionmaking spheres, particularly in peace processes, where their unique concerns could be addressed with sustainable solutions.
3. Economic inequality: Economically, women are not empowered, especially in war-ridden zones, where the effect of war could affect their source(s) of income in an irrecoverable manner. Since men are more likely to become casualties during wars, many women would have lost their

husbands and sons to war, and they suddenly assume the position of breadwinner. This situation can cripple them economically and their enthusiasm to actively contribute their quotas towards peacebuilding (especially in the formal peace processes axis) becomes rhetorical.

4. Victim-centred feminism: This puts fear into the hearts of girls and women who want to represent their gender in public spaces. In other words, this feminist idea is victim-centred. The focus on women as victims of circumstances can only hinder them from assuming more relevant positions as far as formal peace processes are concerned. Another aspect of this feminist idea, sometimes referred to as trauma-centred feminism, tends to exaggerate the potential harms that women in public positions and their families might face. This perspective stems from the perception of women as vulnerable, reinforcing the notion that women cannot attain public positions without male assistance. This belief has the potential to discourage aspiring girls and women from pursuing such roles.
5. Selfish and self-centred feminism: This new idea is being generated after keen observation of the few women who were selected or elected to the decisionmaking arena. Once these women find themselves in this domain, they often lose sight of the initial reasons for their election or selection, leading to the abandonment of plans to establish an inclusive peace process. Hence, it is of great necessity for women to scrutinise those who are selected to represent them at higher helms of affairs and the processes that get them there. In many cases, women may find themselves compelled to comply with the agendas of those who facilitated their positions, thereby impeding the advancement of African women in formal peace processes.

Conclusion: Reimagining the Prospects for Women's Representation

This chapter has attempted to locate the position of women within the framework of Agenda 2063 and SDGs. It noted the limitations of women's participation in the peace process, which contradicts

the objectives of both regional and global developmental and peace frameworks. The chapter argued that high-quality women's representation in peace processes is of great importance to the longevity of peace agreements. As noted in the main text, women should not just be at the negotiating table as subordinates but should be part of signatories to peace agreements. This enhances accountability and responsibility in implementing such agreements, as shown by the 2018 South Sudan peace agreement. In conclusion, the chapter highlighted the following important key points:

1. The importance of Agenda 2063: The agenda is achievable if the AU can enforce the implementation or adoption of its protocol or policy templates, particularly on gender equality and women's inclusion in peace processes. Harnessing the potential of women in peacebuilding and developmental endeavours is important for achieving "The Africa We Want" in 2063.
2. Moving beyond rhetoric to reality: To see a more peaceful Africa, African states should abide by the policies to which they are all signatories, especially when it comes to women's equality and inclusion in peace processes.
3. A combination of descriptive and substantive women's inclusion: Descriptive and substantive women's inclusion should follow due processes. Women should not only increase numerically, but be effectively represented at the helm of societal affairs. This will give African women more voice in decisionmaking and increase the AU's goals towards sustainable peace on the continent. Also, women should be allowed to select or elect their representatives through free and fair elections.
4. The utilisation of women's peacebuilding efforts at the grassroots level in formal peace processes: Since African women are very experienced in peacebuilding at the grassroots level, the government of each African country should liaise with grassroots women organisations and get feedback to improve on policies that will help further sustain peace in the country.

5. Eradication of gender inequality: Gender inequality has become Africa's culture and indoctrinated into the mentality of both men and women. This must change. This change will be evident in the way women's inclusion in peace processes is handled. Gender equality should therefore be included in school curriculums, where notions such as 'boys are superior to girls' can be easily nipped in the bud.
6. The system that denies half of its population from taking part in decisionmaking perpetrates injustice. Hence, all stakeholders, irrespective of their genders, must be well represented at the negotiating tables.

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Chapter 26

The African Union at 20: Youth Inclusivity and Agenda 2063

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Introduction

Africa is endowed with innovative and inventive dynamism that should not be relegated to the margins of statistics. Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2019) findings indicate that Africa is currently experiencing a massive youth bulge, with approximately 60% of Africa's population less than 25 years old, and this population is expected to grow by more than 180% by the end of the century. On the other hand, Europe's youth will shrink by 21% and Asia's by 28%. Projections by the same study project that by 2100, Africa's youth population will be equivalent to twice Europe's entire population.

However, against this backdrop of a growing human capital, Africa still faces a myriad of challenges in harnessing transformative leadership, consolidating social cohesion, peacebuilding, economic development, and good governance in the pursuit of "The Africa We Want", as enshrined in Agenda 2063, African Union (AU)'s long-term development plan. The challenges faced by Africa can be mitigated if the youth, who form Africa's demographic majority, are strategically included in the drive towards a peaceful, secure, and developed Africa in line with the AU's development agenda.

The president of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, once remarked at the annual Transform Africa Summit YouthConnekt session that, "We need a new generation of problem solvers, who see

further and work smarter” (UN-Habitat n.d.). This statement captures a fundamental truth: the future of Africa hinges on the active involvement of its youth, who make up the continent’s demographic majority. Therefore, for Africa to progress and thrive, the youth must be integral to the renewal and revitalisation of the continent’s development agenda as envisioned in the AU’s Agenda 2063. Aspiration 6 of the AU agenda highlights the place of the youth in the continental development initiatives: “an Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential offered by African people, especially its women, and youth, and caring for children” (AU 2015:12).

The concept of youth inclusivity is etched in African history such that the contemporary calls to action have become a revival more than a conceptualisation. Late paragons such as Tafawa Balewa of Nigeria, Ahmed Sekou Toure of Guinea, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Nelson Mandela of South Africa, Patrice Lumumba of Congo, Amilcar Cabral of Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde, Ntsu Mokhehle of Lesotho, Sam Nujoma of Namibia, and numerous others were in their youth when they bolstered movements for freedom, liberation, and independence. Additionally, figures like Abdel Nasser of Egypt and Thomas Sankara of Burkina Faso assumed power as youth. They spearheaded radical and transformative changes that left indelible marks on their nations and the continent.

This chapter aims to conduct a thorough examination of the AU’s policies and programmes on young people. This analysis underscores the essential and deliberate inclusion of young people to attain the AU’s strategic objectives of Agenda 2063. To substantiate this argument, this chapter commences by providing a brief overview of the state of the youth in Africa, which is a critical element in Agenda 2063’s quest for inclusivity. It then critically assesses the policies and programme the AU has implemented over the past two decades to foster youth inclusion, before concluding with recommendations for enhancing the reform pathways that can amplify the AU’s youth agenda.

Understanding Youth and Youth Participation

The AU defines youth as persons between the ages of 15 and 35, as outlined in the African Youth Charter (AYC). This age-based definition, although important for measurement, begins to fall short when context-based classifications of youth are applied, as discussed in the situational analysis below. Scholars focusing on African youth, such as Gebremariam (2017), have previously requested African governments and relevant institutions to adopt a more nuanced understanding of youth beyond the age-based category.

Hart (1992) explains that the term “participation” holds a variety of meanings, including the right to express oneself and take part in the arena of decisions and actions that are concerned with one’s life and society. In line with this understanding, it is noteworthy that international organisations, such as the AU and its regional economic communities (RECs), have been progressively enabling participation through various normative frameworks that open up spaces for the youth to participate. Despite this, young people have called for meaningful participation, which is largely a political phenomenon that appeals to those who traditionally wield administrative power to dispense some of their controls, including listening to the purported dissenting voices of the youth. Oliver *et al* (2006) argue that “whilst youth participation may occur in recognition of young people’s rights to be involved in all decisions that affect them, meaningful participation can itself enhance a young person’s sense of connectedness, belonging and valued participation, and thereby impact on mental health and wellbeing”.

Beyond any definitions and efforts to deliberately contextualise this to Africa, the African Charter for Human and People’s Rights advocates for the promotion and protection of all human rights regardless of age or sex, and for everyone to have equal access, which intuitively becomes participation (OAU 1981:3). Crucially, the Constitutive Act of the AU mandates the AU to build partnerships with all segments of society, including women and youth.

State of the Youth in Africa – a Situational Analysis

The youth in Africa have been branded as the group with the worst quality of life. Although this might come across as desperate and forlorn, the observation that they constitute a demographic majority, yet lack equal access to participation, validates and justifies this assertion. Several other labels have been given to this demographic, including ‘stuck in waithood’, which connotes a somewhat sedentary existence.

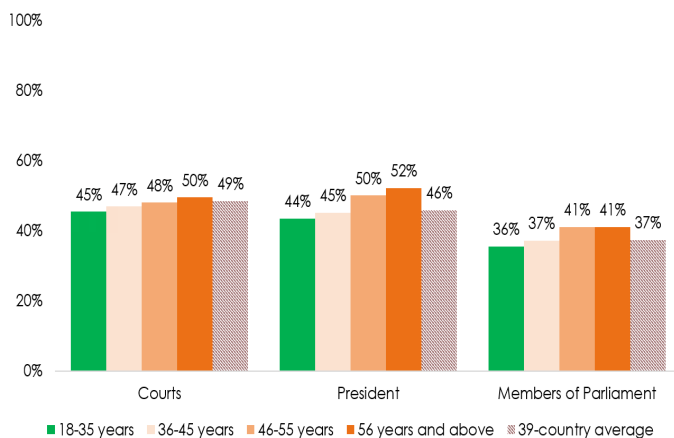
Honwana and Boeck (2005) describe this waithood as the lack of opportunities to be actively involved in mainstream economics and governance towards the attainment of basic living conditions and escaping the cycles of poverty. Findings from the Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2019a) indicate that waithood has been compounded by the inescapable socio-cultural expectations that assume a fluid course of progression from education to work, starting a family, and retirement; however, this order has been rearranged due to exogenous factors within the continent. Added to this is the scourge of irregular migration to Europe through the Mediterranean Sea in a desperate attempt to attain an undefined, elusive improvement in their circumstances (AfDB 2023:6).

Despite this, there are outlier youth who have managed to navigate the socio-cultural circumstances and record a modest and ‘normal’ course of life without the barriers afflicting the majority. Regardless, having a new generation of problem solvers requires a shared objective for the emancipation of all. Data from Afrobarometer (2022) in Round 9 Survey of 39 African countries reveal the following about the state of youth:

1. Unemployment is the biggest problem that youth are facing.
2. African governments are poorly rated for their efforts in creating jobs for young people.
3. The youth are more likely than elders to express dissatisfaction with democracy, mistrust in elected leaders, and to be willing to access military intervention of elected leaders who abuse power.
4. The youth report lower rates of political engagement than their elders across various indicators, including voting in national elections.

5. Young women's political engagement lags behind their male peers across all the indicators under consideration.

Trust in government and social institutions | by age group | 39* countries | 2021/2023



Respondents were asked: How much do you trust each of the following? (% who say "all" or "most")

*Note: Parliament excludes Guinea and Tunisia.

Figure 26.1: Trust in Government and Social Institutions

Source: Data for Governance Alliance/Highlights of Afrobarometer Data on the Youth's Perspectives

Findings from Afrobarometer indicate that the outlook of young people in democracy and state institutions is increasingly nudging towards a state of distrust. As illustrated in Image 6, youth trust in courts, the president, and parliament are lower than that of the older generation. Therefore, it is not surprising that civic and political participation amongst the youth has dropped in nearly 39 Afrobarometer-surveyed AU member states and voter apathy is on the rise. Considering the above, it becomes important to understand that when policies are instituted for youth development, they seek to (and should) address the

needs and perils of the majority, thereby ensuring inclusive good governance.

A Critical Assessment of AU Youth Policies

The following policies have been utilised by the AU in attempting to bring about an inclusive development framework while implementing Agenda 2063: the AU Constitutive Act (2000), the African Youth Charter (2006), Decade of African Youth and its Decade Plan of Action (DPoA 2009–2018), the AU Theme on Youth (2017), and the African Plan of Action on Youth Empowerment (APAYE 2019–2023), amongst others.

The African Youth Charter

The African Youth Charter (AYC), which was ratified in 2006 and came into force in 2009, holds a paramount position as the cornerstone of all normative frameworks for guiding youth development and fostering their inclusive involvement in the pursuit of African development. The AYC is the foundation of all AU policies and programmes, including the youth and attainment of the AU's Agenda 2063 goals.

This political and legal document serves as a comprehensive strategic guide, offering direction for the advancement of youth empowerment and development. It is noteworthy that the AYC was adopted three years after the establishment of the AU, underscoring the organisation's commitment to prioritising youth development within its broader strategy. The African Union Commission (AUC) further emphasised the significance of the AYC by making it a central focus of its work plan during its strategic plan for 2004 to 2007. Out of the 55 African countries, only 41 have ratified the African Youth Charter.

As highlighted earlier, the African Youth Charter plays a central role in being a conduit for the effective and inclusive engagement of youth in inclusive governance and African developmental agendas. Article 26 of the AYC provides that every young person shall have responsibilities towards his family and society, the state, and the international community. It further states that youth shall have the duty to:

1. become the custodians of their own development;
2. protect and work for family life and cohesion;
3. have full respect for parents and elders and assist them anytime in cases of need in the context of positive African values;
4. partake fully in citizenship duties, including voting, decision making and governance;
5. engage in peer-to-peer education to promote youth development in areas such as literacy, use of information and communication technology, HIV/AIDS prevention, violence prevention and peacebuilding;
6. contribute to the promotion of the economic development of states parties and Africa by placing their physical and intellectual abilities at its service;
7. espouse an honest work ethic and reject and expose corruption;
8. work towards a society free from substance abuse, violence, coercion, crime, degradation, exploitation, and intimidation;
9. promote tolerance, understanding, dialogue, consultation and respect for others, regardless of age, race, ethnicity, colour, gender, ability, religion, status, or political affiliation;
10. defend democracy, the rule of law, and all human rights and fundamental freedoms;
11. encourage a culture of voluntarism and human rights protection, as well as participation in civil society activities;
12. promote patriotism towards and unity and cohesion of Africa;
13. promote, preserve, and respect African traditions and cultural heritage and pass on this legacy to future generations;
14. become the vanguard of representing cultural heritage in languages and in forms to which youth are able to relate; and
15. protect the environment and conserve nature.

The AYC is one of the most progressive legal frameworks adopted by AU member states, because not only does it provide youth with rights, but it is also inclusive in its recognition of African youth in the diaspora, and protects the mentally and physically challenged youth, young girls and women (AU 2006:20–21).

Globally, the AYC and the Ibero-American Youth Convention are the only regional normative frameworks adopted

by regional multilateral institutions with domestic implications for member states. Therefore, the AU can be commended for being a norm setter in youth development policy formulation in the broader international community.

On the African continent, the AYC has achieved notable success in fostering policy commitments to youth development at both national and regional levels. It has served as a valuable framework for African nations to craft policies and initiatives that consider the unique needs and aspirations of their young populations. However, despite these achievements, the AYC has fallen short of ensuring equitable access to resources for young people and actively involving them in decisionmaking processes. Remarkably, the AYC, often regarded as a Magna Carta document for youth empowerment in Africa, has faced challenges in its implementation. It is equally perplexing to observe that some countries that have yet to ratify the AYC appear to be more closely aligned with its principles than some of those who have officially pledged their commitments to the effective implementation of the AYC. For example, Botswana remains the only Southern African Development Community (SADC) member state that has not yet signed the AYC; however, its youth policies appear more progressive than some of its counterparts in the region.

AU Youth Decade Plan of Action (2009–2018)

Under the leadership of the Gabonese chairperson of the AU Commission, Jean Ping, the regional body adopted the Youth Decade Plan of Action (DPoA) (2009–2018), focusing on five key priority areas, namely: education and skills development, youth employment and entrepreneurship, governance, peace, and security (SADC, 2019). The Assembly of Heads of States and Governments of the AU declared 2009–2018 the “African Youth Decade” and endorsed the DPoA as the roadmap for the implementation of the AYC. Subsequently, in 2017, the AU Assembly dedicated the theme of “Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth” and a roadmap was developed to outline the key actions for empowering young people in Africa from 2017 and beyond (AU 2017:9). The AU theme was influenced and driven by prior youth empowerment normative

frameworks and decisions, particularly Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063. As contained in Aspiration 6, the AU wanted “An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children” (AU n.d.).

The specialised technical committee (STC) of AU member states responsible for youth affairs, with the backing of development partners, donors, and civil society, engaged in consultations and endorsed the DPoA. Essentially, the implementation of the DPoA was designed to adopt a grassroots approach while also considering the importance of augmenting support from the RECs and development partners. At the heart of the DPoA was the principle of comprehensive youth involvement in all facets of Agenda 2063, encompassing peace and security, the removal of barriers hindering youth participation in leadership roles, addressing exploitation and discrimination, and ageism. Through this ten-year action plan, the AU established youth empowerment and inclusivity as a key priority within its scope of work.

When the DPoA expired in 2018, the AU made a strategic and forward-looking choice to strengthen its initiatives for youth development and empowerment by appointing a youth envoy. A much-needed boost was received by the African youth ecosystem when the AU Assembly passed the declaration on the 2017 AU theme ‘Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth’ (AU 2017:3). The attention by policymakers, bureaucrats, and diplomats to the plight of African youth during the AU Year of Youth culminated in the noteworthy appointment of Ms Aya Chebbi from Tunisia as the first-ever African Union Special Envoy on Youth in the AUC chairperson’s cabinet (2018–2021).

The establishment of the Youth Envoy Office was a testament to the political will of the AU to take young people seriously; however, serious concerns were raised over the lack of administrative and financial support for this newly established office. Indeed, the office of the youth envoy, upon its establishment, became a rallying point for the voice of youth and

was successful in bringing much-needed advocacy and lobbying for youth issues within the AU system and beyond. Records from the first youth envoy's two-year mandate indicate that she had achieved the following:

1. lobbying for the operationalisation of the AU Youth Fund;
2. advancing the youth, peace, and security (YPS), agenda leading to the briefing of the United Nations Security Council in 2019 and 2020 as well as the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) briefing in 2019 and 2020;
3. collaborating with over 170 private sector partners to raise financial and administrative support for AU youth programmes and initiatives;
4. supporting the establishment of youth engagement programmes i.e. Saleema Youth Victorious Ambassadors and African Youth Ambassadors for Peace; and
5. working with 35 AU member states in all African regions in organising intergenerational dialogues through town halls, meetings, and consultations for youth.

Regardless, critics have emphasised that the appointment of the youth envoy was primarily symbolic and a continuation of tokenism in the youth development ecosystem, given that the Youth Envoy Office lacked the financial and administrative backing necessary to effectively implement its projects at the onset.

One can argue that the DPoA had mixed success, as some goals were achieved, while others were left unfulfilled. Achievement of the indicators set in the DPoA could have been aligned with the achievement of Agenda 2063 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this way, reporting and tracking progress of the set goals would have been incorporated into existing tracking tools such as the Voluntary National Reports (VNRs). Member states of the AU already have development reporting responsibilities to various national and international organisations. Integrating monitoring and evaluation into existing mechanisms could have prevented the underreporting of DPoA achievements, mitigating development reporting fatigue.

The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), a monitoring and evaluating institution of the AU, was mandated to track progress and maintain accountability. Unfortunately, the DPoA lacked clear financing or budget lines to fund the ten years of its implementation, and this shortfall affected the monitoring and evaluation of the plan.

Funding for the ten-year implementation of DPoA was left to the member states of the AU, without finding alternative ways of sourcing resources to drive the DPoA. The plan was for member states to explore innovative ways of raising the required funds internally, including the mobilisation of resources from the private sector. The plan did not explicitly explain the model for sourcing the funds. The initiative seemed ‘dead on arrival’, as the majority of African countries already have serious challenges with financing for development. Since the AU was launched, member states have had arrears in their annual contributions to support the activities of the continental institution, which is an indicator that financing for youth programmes could have been a non-priority.

African Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (APAYE)

Following the conclusion of the Youth Decade Plan of Action (2009–2018), the African Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (2019–2023) was introduced by the AU. APAYE, a policy for youth development at the AU, is an attempt to consolidate and streamline all the activities and programmes under the African Youth Division within the AUC. Moreover, the AU’s guiding programmatic document influences all efforts and contributions of youth empowerment actors on the continent.

APAYE’s primary motivation stemmed from the 1 Million by 2021 initiative, launched in 2019 by AUC Chairperson Mousa Faki. This programme aimed to provide 1 million young Africans with opportunities in education, employment, entrepreneurship, engagement, and health. The project was driven by the African Union Youth Division and gained momentum at a continental level with launches at different platforms. Ugandan President Kaguta Yoweri Museveni launched the initiative on the margins

of the third APRM International Youth Symposium in 2022, which was hosted in Kampala under the theme, “AU @20: Repositioning the Youth Agenda for Transformative Continent”. The symposium was attended by over 800 international and local delegates to bring youth and decisionmakers together for an intergenerational dialogue to upscale youth participation in democracy and good governance.

Since the launch of 1 Million by 2021 – now rebranded as 1 Million Next Level – there has been slow ownership at a national level. Very little has been achieved at the national level by the African states as far as the 1 Million by 2021 is concerned. Uganda is the only country that has made noticeable strides in implementing the initiative, with President Museveni having made pledges and national taskforces for implementation established. More can be achieved with this initiative if African heads of state provide support and if more support is solicited from local stakeholders such as ministries of youth, national youth councils, and the private sector. Without national-level ownership of ‘1 Million Next Level’, the initiative will not succeed.

Moreover, the assertion that 1 million youth were impacted by the programme from 2019 to 2021 cannot be easily verified, as there were no proper tracking mechanisms for verification. In essence, while the political will to initiate the programme for youth was impressive, the appetite by the AU member states to domesticate and financially support the AU’s initiative has been relatively low. Much more can be achieved by streamlining and building the required political and financial support ownership and domestication of the AU youth programmes at the regional and national levels, for maximum impact.

Analysis of AU Policy and Normative Frameworks

When the AU emerged from the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 2002, it was evident that African leaders had intentionally agreed to reshape the new institution’s focus on political affairs, peace and security, economic integration, and bolstering the African continent’s global influence. Importantly, the AU was intended to represent the interests of African people,

rather than prioritising the concerns of national political elites. It was designed to increase the performance of the multilateral institution, especially around responsiveness to the mirage of the challenges confronting contemporary Africa. The AU also spelled out a division of labour towards a more effective working relationship between the AU, RECs, the regional mechanisms (RMs), the member states, and other continental institutions, following the principle of subsidiarity. The extent to which this vision and strategy has been achieved through the implementation of youth policies and programmes remains questionable.

The AU boasts a wealth of impressive and forward-thinking youth development instruments, including the AYC, the DPoA, and APAYE. However, the effective execution of these continental interventions at the national level has faced several shortcomings. There have been significant gaps in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of these programmes, with irregular reporting and, in some cases, a complete absence of reporting on their progress. For example, since the inception of the AYC, there has been no regional or continental study or feedback mechanism to assess its impact on improving the lives of young people. An appraisal of the AYC before its 20th anniversary in 2026 is necessary for the AU to take stock of its achievements and shortcomings.

In the realm of youth development and empowerment, it is crucial to prioritise evidence-based approaches. Africa's future and leadership largely hinge on its youth, who form the backbone of its human and political capital. By relying on evidence-based indicators, Africa can improve its outcomes in key areas, such as quality education, skills development, and healthcare service delivery. These pillars are fundamental to both national and continental development. Indeed, data-driven strategies play a pivotal role in achieving progress in these domains.

Reflection on AU Key Programmes

The AU, through Agenda 2063, has made strides and noticeable progress towards advancing the vital role of youth in Africa's socio-economic development, peace, and security. This

commitment is acknowledged and emphasised by various African institutions, including the RECs, RMs, and their respective member states. There has been growing momentum on the role of youth in the actualisation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), which is one of Agenda 2063's flagship projects. The AU, through the AfCFTA secretariat based in Accra, Ghana, has taken a positive step by introducing the AfCFTA Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade, which will aim to broaden inclusiveness through interventions that address constraints and barriers women and youth face when trading on the continent.

In response to the AU's attempts to include them in AfCFTA policy formulation and implementation, young people have come to the party by being at the forefront of popularising the Agenda 2063 flagship project. Youth have also gone further by advocating for the Free Movement of Persons Protocol, which remains a barrier to trade and travel for all Africans. Young creatives such as Nigerian David Akwara have begun showcasing the benefits of AfCFTA through films like the *The Rise Documentary*.

Over the past two decades, Africa has achieved noticeable progress in enhancing youth representation in governance spheres, particularly within the AU system. Efforts are in place to implement the AU assembly decision on gender parity and youth quotas by 2025. By 2025, the AU aims to have 50% of the AU workforce made up of women, and 35% made up of young people. Special provisions and assignments have been created for young individuals at the national, regional, and continental levels. These include roles such as the AU Youth Envoy, youth advisory panels, and youth ambassadors in various international entities. At a national level, some heads of state, such as President Museveni of Uganda, President Hage of Namibia, and President Akufo-Addo of Ghana, have appointed special aides in charge of youth affairs.

RECs have established platforms and initiatives for engaging with youth, such as the East African Youth Ambassadors and the co-convened You lead Summit organised by the EAC and MS Training Centre for Development Co-operation in Arusha, Tanzania. However, these platforms are mainly in areas of democracy and political governance, and areas such as

entrepreneurship, sports development, and creative arts need to be developed. Importantly, young people should not only be relegated to be representative tools that fill quotas, but they should also be the epicentre of driving Agenda 2063.

While recognising the AU's progress in youth representation, it is imperative to acknowledge that there is still much work to be done to mobilise and secure the active participation of youth in achieving Agenda 2063, especially in the area of economic development. Here, AfCFTA – a flagship of Agenda 2063 – should be the backbone of African youth's contributions to continental development. The ease of doing business, particularly through easing up visa restrictions through the implementation of the Free Movement of Persons Protocol is central and cannot be overstressed. Moreover, the cost of travelling could be reduced – air travel remains disproportionately expensive on the African continent, compared to other regions in the world. The latter is taking place without any progress in the implementation of the Single African Air Transport Market, a flagship project of Agenda 2063.

Youth are the custodians of Agenda 2063 and the implementation and success of AfCFTA, the Single African Air Transport Market, the Integrated High Speed Train Network, the Pan-African E Network, the African Virtual and e-University, and others will have a profound impact on continental peace, cohesion, stability, and prosperity, directly influencing sustainable peace and reconciliation efforts across the continent. Ultimately, it is young people who will be beneficiaries of Agenda 2063. Without the effective implementation of AU policies and programmes by AU member states, development partners/donors, the private sector, and civil society organisations, urgent issues such as youth unemployment and underemployment, climate change, youth exclusion from democratic projects and good governance, education, peace and security, skills depletion, lack of entrepreneurship, dilapidating health infrastructures, as well as adolescent youth health, will continue to hinder the achievement of Agenda 2063.

African Governance Architecture and Youth Engagement Strategy (Regional and Continental Youth Consultations)

Over the past decade, the secretariat of the African Governance Architecture (AGA) – now merged with the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) – has been at the forefront within the AU system, spearheading the efforts to promote youth inclusivity, particularly in the realms of democracy and good governance. This endeavour is realised through the AGA Youth Engagement Strategy (AGA YES), which involves regional and continental consultations preceding high-level dialogues. During these dialogues, the findings from youth consultations are presented to senior AU officials and hosting member states' heads of state for their consideration. The youth also are provided with an opportunity to co-create solutions to emerging challenges. For instance, the 11th edition of AGA, hosted in Cotonou, Benin in 2022, had themes that focused on youth perspectives on the resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government in Africa. The latter was in response to the rapid increase of coups in the predominately francophone zone and Sudan.

The AGA youth consultations, now in their 12th edition, have been conducted in various African capitals with a diverse participation of the youth. These consultations primarily focus on advancing the implementation of the principles enshrined in the African Charter for Democracy, Elections, and Governance (ACDEG). They consistently engage youth stakeholders from diverse backgrounds, often leveraging the participation of popular African musicians and celebrities to amplify key messages in favour of youth empowerment.

The AGA YES has achieved notable success and serves as a model for other AU institutions seeking innovative ways to engage with young people. This model has been embraced by various AGA platform institutions, including the APRM, the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC), and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSSOC), which also have the mandate to mobilise and engage with young individuals.

African Union Youth Volunteer Corps (AU-YVC)

In 2010, the heads of state and government of the AU mandated the AUC to establish a continental volunteer initiative. The African Union Youth Volunteer Corps (AU-YVC), in its 12th cohort in 2023, has played a crucial role in providing skills and knowledge to university graduates across the African continent. Importantly, the AU system has been the primary beneficiary of the AU-YVC, as a significant number of volunteers ultimately find employment within various AU organs where they serve. This programme has effectively connected and integrated African youth with continental initiatives, contributing to increased people-to-people relations and fostering robust networks and cultural exchange.

The RECs, such as SADC, should consider replicating this model to promote the development of stronger regional youth networks. At the national level, the National Youth Service is being utilised by various AU member states. Ironically, the National Youth Services have often been politicised, thereby losing their relevance.

AU Youth Ambassadors

Over the past decade, the AU has significantly increased its practice of appointing young individuals as ambassadors to advocate for the integration of the youth into regional initiatives such as Agenda 2063 and to mobilise the youth for developmental actions across the continent. Notably, the AU has designated Youth 4 Peace ambassadors and an AUC chairperson youth envoy. This selection of young individuals for crucial ambassadorial roles reflects a strong belief in their capability to take the lead in essential matters, marking a significant step towards incorporating youth perspectives into the mainstream of continental, regional, and national policymaking.

Youth for Peace

The Youth for Peace (Y4P) Africa Programme was launched in September 2018 in Lagos, Nigeria, as part of the efforts to implement Article 17 of the AU Youth Charter, the 665th

Communiqué of the Peace and Security Council (PSC), United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR 2250 and 2419). This initiative was undertaken by the Peace and Security Department in collaboration with the Youth Division and African Governance Architecture of the Department for Political Affairs of the AU. The activities and programmes, led by the youth ambassadors for peace under the Peace, Security, and Political Affairs Department of the AU, have significantly contributed to a better understanding of Africa's peace agenda.

The inception of Y4P Africa aimed to actively engage, involve, and collaborate with young African boys, girls, women, and men. The Y4P ambassadors have already begun making strides toward changing the narrative that often portrays the youth as potential instigators of violence. Some notable achievements that can be scaled up are training trainers and the popularisation of AU manuals for youth participation in African political and electoral processes. These trainings provide national trainers with the capacity to disseminate tools aimed at fostering increasing youth involvement in elections through voting, electoral observation, and monitoring. The Gambia, Sierra Leone, and Zimbabwe have already benefited through the training of trainers through the manuals and the outcome of youth participation in their general elections would indicate if the trainings had an immediate impact.

APRM Youth Programme

In 2017, the APRM embarked on a youth mainstreaming agenda, following a request from the late President Idriss Derby that the youth be integrated into the APRM's activities. The APRM's youth mainstreaming initiative aligns with the Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic, and Corporate Governance, and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance (ACDEG) as well as its expanded mandate on tracking and monitoring the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The annual youth symposium organised by the APRM secretariat with the support of hosting member states aims to fulfil the APRM's mandate of being an African-owned and African-led platform for self-assessment, peer learning, and experience sharing in democracy and good

governance. This is done while upholding democratic principles, human rights, and the rule of law, and promoting political, social, and economic integration in Africa.

Building on the success of three previous international youth symposiums held in Chad, Kenya, and Uganda, the 2022 Youth Symposium Outcome Report was presented at the AU Heads of States Assembly. This led to the adoption of Assembly/AU/Dec.851(XXXVI), which calls for the continuation of the annual youth gathering and the training of youth leaders at the national level. The stakeholders of this initiative include members of the APRM national secretariat, national youth councils, leaders of political parties' youth wings, and civil society organisations.

Namibia joined the APRM in 2017 as its 37th member state and immediately volunteered to undertake a targeted review on youth unemployment. The Namibia Targeted Review was undertaken and peer-reviewed in 2009 and aimed at addressing the scourge of youth unemployment. Youth unemployment is a cross-cutting issue in Africa's governance and remains an urgent issue in nearly all the AU member states. Therefore, Namibia's initiative to open up its governance to APRM reviewers made the country the first APRM member state to undertake a review that focused on the youth. This is an important endeavour; it deserves recognition and can be replicated by other AU member states struggling with youth unemployment.

Youth Programme by RECs: Case Studies

Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)

In 2019, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), one of the RECs, covering Eastern and Southern Africa, initiated a collaborative project with AGA, aimed at enhancing youth inclusion in Agenda 2063. This joint effort has already begun to yield positive results by boosting youth engagement in democratic processes and socio-economic development in Africa. One notable accomplishment of this project is the election of 11 young individuals who now constitute the COMESA Youth Advisory Panel (COMYAP). Their roles and responsibilities include,

among other things, offering advice to the COMESA Council of Ministers regarding youth governance, through the submission of bi-annual reports with recommendations.

The East Africa Community (EAC) launched its EAC Youth Ambassadors programme in 2012 to engage and empower youth to enhance their contribution to the EAC integration agenda. The EAC has focused on peer training and establishing EAC youth clubs in universities across the EAC. Other RECs have also established similar platforms for the youth to thrive. Through debates and public meetings, youth learning exchange programmes, and university debate programmes, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) has orchestrated initiatives aimed at enhancing the skills and knowledge of the youth in its member states. These programmes focus on areas such as peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and leadership development. Notably, in 2022 IGAD conducted a training programme specifically for the Council of the IGAD Youth Peace Forum, aiming to bolster its expertise in peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

Moreover, IGAD introduced the IGAD Youth Forum for Peace, serving as a dedicated platform for youth involvement in discussions concerning regional peace and security. This platform is firmly rooted in a shared vision for fostering peace and security within the region. Furthermore, IGAD actively participates in regional consultative forums dedicated to shaping youth policies. The goal is to ensure meaningful engagement and participation of all stakeholders in the region's youth policy development. For instance, in 2021, IGAD took part in a regional consultative forum focused on youth policy matters (IGAD 2022:2)

Nexus between Continental, Regional, and National Youth Policies

This section creates a linkage between the continental, regional, and national initiatives for empowering the youth, through the national youth councils (NYCs). In 1962, the Pan-African Youth Movement (PYM) was founded as a youth organisation comprising the youth wings of various liberation movements across the African continent. The PYM was established before

the formation of the OAU in May 1963 and is currently located in Rabat, Morocco. The creation of the PYM as the first continental youth organisation before the establishment of the OAU underscores the argument that young people have been actively and purposefully contributing to African affairs and development since time immemorial.

Amapunda (2018) explains that the PYM has changed its name to the Pan-African Youth Union (PYU) and underwent the relocation of its headquarters several times. The continental youth organisation has moved from Conakry, Guinea to Algiers, Algeria in 1967; to Khartoum, Sudan in 2008; and, most recently, to Rabat, Morocco in 2022. It is important to note that the PYU is the amalgamation of all national youth councils in Africa.

However, the AU has not made significant progress in institutionalising the PYU, resulting in several misalignments and gaps. Regrettably, in 2017, the AU distanced itself from the PYU. Organisations like the PYU and NYCs could be instrumental in advancing Agenda 2063 at the national level and utilising state resources for its implementation. The responsibility for promoting, implementing, and monitoring youth-related issues, as outlined in all AU development policies and programmes, including the targets for Aspiration 6, lies with youth structures such as the NYCs at the member state level.

In South Africa, the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) was established through the National Youth Development Agency Act of 2008 (South African Government 2023). It subsequently receives significant budgets to support youth development. In many African countries, youth structures possess substantial resources and capacity to reach young people in urban, suburban, and rural communities. Additionally, they maintain direct lines of communication with government structures, including the presidency. However, not enough has been done to leverage NYCs to play their rightful roles in educating young people about Agenda 2063, its vision, and how the youth can inclusively participate at the local and national levels to achieve the goals of the agenda. Young Africans often relate more to the global UN SDGs; thus, this highlights the need to bridge this gap.

To enhance youth inclusivity and bring young people closer to the AU, the AU must consider formalising the institutional status of the PYU. Structures such as the PYU ought to be professionalised, capacitated, depoliticised, and made fit for purpose to lead in advancing the interest of the youth. The AU could potentially work towards making the PYU a specialised agency of the AU, rightly positioning the youth-led organisation to play a more prominent role in supporting the implementation of Agenda 2063.

Conclusion

The chapter has engaged the place of the youth in continental initiatives within the 20-year lifespan of the AU. As highlighted in the chapter, the AU has established different platforms, instruments, and policies for the integration of the youth into governance, peace, and developmental programmes, including Agenda 2063. The first ten-year implementation phase of Agenda 2063 has concluded, and the AU is now gearing up to implement the next phase. This presents an opportunity for the AU to reconsider how the youth have been incorporated into the broader strategy for implementing Agenda 2063. It is also essential to assess the effectiveness of the African Youth Charter and determine whether certain areas require reviews and further intervention. These interventions should focus on priority areas such as the enhancement of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges, sports development, the prevention of drug abuse, the promotion of mental health, and the 4th Industrial Revolution. These issues are integral to many AU policies and should be given more attention.

While recognising the significance of governance issues, which are often at the root of challenges faced by young people, there is a pressing need to expand economic-oriented policies and programmes at all levels. Initiatives like the implementation of AfCFTA, the development of an Africa commodity strategy, the African passport, the free movement of people, and the Pan-African e-Network – as well as cybersecurity measures, as contained in Agenda 2063 – should be championed by young

people who directly benefit from their implementations at the domestic level.

Youth inclusivity is not just an option, but a necessity in the implementation of Agenda 2063. The active participation and empowerment of young people are essential for the success of this ambitious agenda and the realisation of a prosperous, united, and sustainable African continent by 2063. Africa's so-called demographic dependence has already started showing signs of being a 'ticking time bomb' through young people's support for coups and unconstitutional changes of government in the Sahel region of Africa. Africa needs to inject vibrancy into its youthful population for effective and positive contribution to its development.

As the common phrase says, "an idle mind is the devil's workshop"; therefore, the AU needs to influence its member states to keep their youthful population actively involved in productive endeavours. Any contrary disposition of the political elites to this will be disastrous for Africa.

Recommendations for Inclusive Youth Contributions towards Agenda 2063

1. The AU, through its member states, can begin to involve the youth more in governance issues and create enabling environments for more meaningful and robust political participation. Africa's youth political participation has been relatively low compared to other regions of the world. The AU and its organs could therefore design mechanisms to enhance the engagement of the youth in the political processes of its member states and RECs through inclusive governance structures to foster a sense of ownership and responsibility. Scaling youth participation could result in the emergence of a new generation of leaders and youth population who are more attuned to responding to the needs and aspirations of the continent.
2. The AU can consider identifying areas for fostering accountability in youth leadership, particularly those in public administration. Dynamic youth leaders with strong

- Pan-African ideology can be identified and integrated into regional and national political institutions through structures such as the NYCs, the Office of the Youth Envoy, the PYU, and ambassadorial positions.
3. The AU can consider the reinforcement of Aspiration 6 in Agenda 2063 and its goals by consolidating a continental vision for leadership. This can be implemented through engagement with national schools of government, which will recognise potential leaders.
 4. The AU may promote frequent dialogue between the youth and institutions of governance (state and non-state), which will drive accountability and create trust between the youth, government officials, and other political representatives. Youth leaders on the African continent, especially those working with national governments, require capacity-building and more platforms to share experiences, benchmark, and peer-learn. Institutions such as the APRM can play a more dynamic role in providing spaces for young people to exchange ideas and share best practices.
 5. The AU youth programmes could focus on upscaling programmes and activities such as the promotion of TVET colleges for skills development, entrepreneurial education, and adoption of skills in line with the 4th Industrial Revolution. The AUDA NEPAD, AfCFTA secretariat, African Union Commission Department of Trade and Industry, and other relevant institutions will need to work closely with technology hubs and the private sector. In this way, youth unemployment will be curbed.
 6. While the focus has been on the AU, it is also important for member states to partner with the continental institution in enhancing the potential of the youth in the attainment of Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063. Member states of the AU need to upscale their domestication and support for programmes by the AU. The '1 Million Next Level' initiative is a good opportunity to showcase this support.
 7. Continental and regional institutions should consider a turnaround strategy for boosting science, technology and innovation investments amongst the youth to harness the benefits of the digital and creative economy – an area in which

Africa has great potential. The AU could consider investing in a proactive research and development entity focused on African youth's comparative advantage in introducing emerging technology and innovation happening at the edge, such as synthetic biology, nano technology, blockchain, AI, quantum computing, nuclear fusion, genome editing and geo-engineering and 3D printing, amongst others.

8. The operationalisation of the AU youth fund is overdue and needs prioritisation as funding for youth programmes remains a bottleneck within the AU.
9. The AU should enhance skills development initiatives by expanding government and AU programmes to include opportunities for students to attend leading global universities, fostering a more comprehensive and globally competitive learning experience. African students should be provided with the opportunity to compete with the best of this world.
10. Africa's culture – especially the creative arts – is in high demand. South Africa's *amapiano* and Nigeria's afrobeats could be used to reach the youth and sensitise them to key messages. Influencers such as musicians and sports personalities could be solicited to influence young people to support the implementation of Agenda 2063 and its flagship projects.

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Section Nine

Cross-Cutting Issues (ICT, Education, Health, and Climate Change)

Chapter 27

The African Union's Strategy for Digital Transformation in Africa: Maximising Opportunities and Overcoming Challenges

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Introduction

Scholars and practitioners of African politics and African Union (AU) studies have been bedevilled by intersecting crises in the 2020s, including faltering democratisation (Fomunyoh 2020; Xolani, Nkosingiphile & Muzi 2022), growing insecurity (Obadare 2023; Siaplay & Werker 2023), and lopsided economic development patterns that originated during colonialism and further deepened during the Cold War (Cogneau, Dupraz & Mesplé-Somps 2018; Cramer, Sender & Oqubay 2020). Despite the efforts of national and regional actors to redress the dwindling economic performance of African states and rising insecurity as well as political instability, the failure to sprint towards continental integration has circumvented the ability to effect change, amidst the prospects for digital transformation.

The impetus towards digital transformation offers both opportunities and challenges for all stakeholders. However, the risk-to-benefit ratio is exceptionally high on a continent with a young population and an essentially green market still burdened by poor infrastructure, struggling economies, and a lack of effective co-ordinating mechanisms to bolster the digital economy. By 2030, it is estimated that more than 42% of the global youth will be African (El Habiti 2022). These numbers present an opportunity and a possible crisis if African leaders fail

to appropriately plan (and implement the plans) to harness the demographic shift. Africa's young population and potential for innovation and commercial success have made it an attractive destination for investors. This is evidenced by the exponential multinational investments in information and communication technology (ICT) projects across the continent between 2003 and 2020, and the success of approximately 624 FinTech¹ companies (Tafese 2022; Kiyondou 2023). However, the continent still faces challenges, such as a high commercial failure rate and weak infrastructure (Liu 2019). Moreover, digital transformation in Africa has been hindered by a lack of material infrastructure and affordability constraints (Sumatra & Lanvin 2020).

The introduction of the African Union's Digital Transformation Strategy (AU's DTS) of 2020 provides an opportunity for the continent to reverse its fortunes and integrate itself with the global economy, which is being pivoted towards digital technologies. The DTS promises to provide inclusive and sustainable development across the African continent. Still, its success hinges on many factors, which include being able to harness its relationships with the private sector and other external partners, as well as enhancing intra-regional collaborations.

This chapter examines the AU's DTS and suggests ways to maximise the available opportunities and overcome some of the endemic challenges to digital transformation on the continent. The discussion proceeds in the following steps: first, the chapter engages the features of the AU digital transformation strategy; second, it highlights the current state of digital transformation on the continent, including an examination of the policy environment; third and fourth, it assesses the risks and opportunities available, such as the ability to tap into geopolitical contestation between the current technology standard bearers like the United States (US), the European Union (EU), and China, for Africa's benefit; and, the fifth step, which is the concluding section, reflects on how to ensure that Africa's vision for a digitally transformed society comes to fruition.

1 FinTech is the word combination, or portmanteau, of 'Financial Technology'. It refers to the use of digital technologies to offer financial services.

The African Union Digital Transformation Strategy

In the evolving global digital economy, the lexicon grows in tandem. While often used interchangeably, terms such as digitisation, digital transformation, and digitalisation carry distinct connotations. Digitisation refers to converting analogue items (like documents) or processes into a digital format. Digitalisation, however, involves modifying existing processes or developing new ones. Digital transformation is a broader concept that includes altering processes and systems through digital technologies. It's a comprehensive approach to conducting government business, influencing everything from future work trends to public service administration.

Digitalisation efforts in Africa have long fallen behind the rest of the world for several reasons, including politics and history. With the global economy becoming increasingly digitalised and the rising importance of digital trade, it is essential that African countries are no longer behind the curve. Africa's digital transformation is supported by strategic plans such as Agenda 2063, connectivity targets within the sustainable development goals (SDGs), the EU project, the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), and UNICEF's Giga Project. The AU Commission (AUC) developed the DTS for 2020–2030 to harmonise continental and international efforts to close the digital divide. The continental frameworks were anchored on the Policy and Regulatory Initiative for Africa (PRIDA), the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), and the Free Movement of Persons (FMP).

The DTS is the result of regular consultations with several internal and external stakeholders, including the EU, the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), Smart Africa, the African Union Development Agency's New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD), the various regional economic communities (RECs), the African Development Bank (AfDB), African Telecommunications Union (ATU), Africa Capacity Building Foundation, International Telecommunication Union

(ITU) and the World Bank. The foundational pillars of the DTS are the availability of an enabling environment, policy and regulation, digital infrastructure, digital skills and entrepreneurship, innovation, and research.

Yet, despite developing a comprehensive multistakeholder plan, the AU is still struggling with ratifying and implementing crucial policy pieces. The late ratification of the Malabo Convention on Cyber Security illustrates the gap that bogs the AU's best-laid plans (see Table 13). The convention is a legal framework developed by the AU to provide general rules and principles on three broad themes: personal data protection, cybersecurity, and electronic transactions. It took nine years for the convention to come into force after it was signed in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea in 2014. It was supposed to be operational in 2020 but only came into force in June 2023 after Mauritania became the 15th state to ratify the convention in May 2023. Similarly, the AU developed a digital technology and ICT framework to support digitisation on a continental level, but it risks suffering the same fate as the Malabo Convention.

One of the DTS aims is to develop an African Single Digital Market (SDM). Its potential rests on the assumption that the continent's digitalisation can move steadily enough to support its development. Yet, the basic building blocks for this to happen, basic infrastructure such as electricity, is not widely available. For example, Central and West Africa are the regions in Africa with the lowest levels of electrification, with only 30% and 47% of their respective populations having access to electricity. In contrast, East and Southern Africa have slightly higher levels of electrification, with 53% and 51% of their populations having access to electricity. North Africa stands out as the region with the highest level of electrification, with a remarkable 98% of its population having access to electricity (Statista 2023). Moreover, the slow progress in negotiating and implementing an AfCFTA protocol on e-commerce also jeopardises the feasibility of an SDM.

Table 27.1: List of Countries that have Ratified the Malabo Convention

Country	Date of Ratification
Senegal	16 August 2016
Mauritius	14 March 2018
Guinea	16 October 2018
Namibia	1 February 2019
Ghana	3 June 2019
Rwanda	21 November 2019
Angola	11 May 2020
Mozambique	21 January 2020
Congo	23 October 2020
Zambia	24 March 2021
Cape Verde	5 February 2022
Niger	16 March 2022
Togo	19 October 2021
Côte d'Ivoire	3 April 2023
Mauritania	9 May 2023

Source: Adapted from African Union, 2023

Out of 55 African countries, only 15 were needed to ratify the Malabo Convention to come into force as per the stipulation of Article 36 of the convention, but even that took many years. This speaks to the disconnect between the stated vision and objectives of the AU, specifically the AUC, and its ability to get buy-in from individual member states. The reasons for the convention's delayed entry into force can be attributed to several factors. Moctar Yedaly, former head of the Information Society for the AUC and Mauritania's minister of digital transformation, innovation and modernisation, and Abdul-Hakeem Ajijola, Chair of the African Union Cybersecurity Experts Group (AUCSEG), have highlighted the difficulties encountered in the process of adoption and ratification by member states (Carnegie Endowment 2023). Through informal engagements with member states and other

stakeholders, the AUCSEG discovered significant challenges, such as a lack of awareness of the convention's significance and misunderstandings of its implications for local decisionmaking. For instance, many government representatives were unaware of the opt-out clauses available where sovereignty concerns arose. As the convention's text aged, calls emerged to abandon it and draft a new one (Carnegie Endowment 2023). In other words, the AU and country-level bureaucracies have prolonged this journey.

It is important to note that this phenomenon is not unique to the African context. Ajijola pointed out that the Budapest Convention (The Convention on Cybercrime) was initially conceived in the 1990s, adopted in 2001, and only went into effect in 2004. This underscores the complexity of adopting and implementing international conventions (Carnegie Endowment 2023).

What Are the Challenges?

A challenge for digitalisation and digital transformation in Africa is that much of the process is externally driven, which can often counter development mandates. The profit-driven private sector often owns the hard infrastructure, and the continent's regulatory framework is ill-equipped to support the digitisation process. Additionally, Kathure (2021) points out that too many bilateral and multilateral agreements work outside the ambit of a Pan-African strategy and notes a lack of a concluded e-commerce protocol. Yet, as Pawalk (2022) underscores, the overall dynamics brought forward by the digital age mean that African countries and the AU must reconsider their positionality concerning their participation in the digital ecosystem. Africans are not simply recipients of technology; there is a broader dynamic at play, which includes geopolitical competition and the battle for who sets the standards for the global digital future concerning infrastructure, systems, and overall governance of the digital ecosystem.

The EU, the US, and China are currently competing standard-bearers for the global digital ecosystem and competitors for broader control of the global digital economy. Their battles for dominance affect everything from the rules on data protection

to contestation over whose infrastructure should be the gold standard. Their level of competition is rooted in the geopolitical desire for dominance and ideological differences in how the future global economy should be run. The US approach is liberal and gives a lot of power to corporate entities, compared to the EU, which is more co-ordinated in its approach but keeps its citizens' privacy central to its concerns. As crystallised in its Digital Silk Road (DSR) strategy, the Chinese approach revolves around deploying infrastructure, such as data centres, sub-sea cables, etc., in line with its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Like the US, the EU has been forced to re-evaluate its engagement with Africa in response to China's growing influence. Despite China's dominance in the global ICT hardware market, with companies such as Huawei operating in 170 countries, the EU is attempting to counter this by strengthening its soft infrastructure. This includes the development of data protection standards such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)² and advancements in 5G and 6G technologies. At the same time, the EU and the US have strengthened their partnership around the digital economy and digitalisation. Establishing the EU-US transatlantic partnership and the EU-US Trade and Technology Council (TTC) in June 2021 demonstrates a commitment to curbing Chinese influence. At its inaugural meeting in September 2021, the TTC agreed to collaborate on regulating global semiconductor supply chains and adopting a unified approach to technology standards while respecting each other's regulatory autonomy.

These developments have significant implications for African countries, increasingly forced to choose sides in the battle between the EU, the US, and China. At the same time, relations between the EU and Africa are evolving, shifting from development co-operation to partnerships. However, this is complicated because the EU has multiple bilateral relationships with AU member states and regional economic communities (RECs).

2 EU regulation aims to protect the privacy and personal data of individuals within the EU.

Moreover, the EU's regulatory power has already had a significant impact on Africa's digital infrastructure landscape, and this is set to continue as Africa's planned SDM interfaces with the EU's SDM (which largely informs its closer push towards Africa). It is impossible to view geopolitical partnerships, as well as the ensuing competition, outside of existing frameworks. For instance, with regards to the EU, there was already a European neighbourhood policy for North Africa and the ACP-EU Cotonou Agreement for Sub-Saharan Africa that informed the engagement on EU-Africa relations, including digital concerns. The EU proposes that Africa model its digital environment on the EU model, using its dominance in the regulatory environment and tight development partnerships to shape Africa's digital ecosystem.

However, there are concerns about the potential dangers of mimicking the EU model, given that Africa's digital development is at a different stage. Georgieva (2021) suggests that a simultaneous adoption of protectionist telecommunications and digital regulation might be a step in the right direction for Africa's development. The pressure for liberal market conditions from the Global North will continue to be an issue as Africa seeks workable solutions.

Pawlak (2022:53) puts forward an interesting query: "The question that African countries need to confront is no longer how to close the digital divide and provide access for their citizens but, more importantly, which vision of the digital space they wish to pursue". Ultimately, the hope for Africa is to develop and implement a comprehensive digital transformation framework that considers contextual challenges. To address these challenges, the AU must confront several gaps, particularly concerning infrastructure and addressing the deficiencies in its policy environment.

The Infrastructure Conundrum

Closing the digital divide means that AU member states must seriously provide soft and hard infrastructures. But taking such steps does not only mean that countries would individually and

collectively take innovation more seriously; it would also address what digital future they want to embody. Yet, there is a disconnect between what future AU member states profess and what they individually pursue. In real-world terms, this means that the digital transformation will continue to be shaped by an external (often commercial) impetus rather than internal needs. Moreover, the asymmetry of infrastructure deployment, particularly regarding broadband and under-sea cables, even down to the sophistication of available mobile phones, will continue and perhaps even intensify.

In the 21st century, South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt, Rwanda, and Kenya are outliers on the continent concerning their focus on the digital future. South Africa has continued to be ahead of other African countries on the Global Innovation Index (GII)³ – despite its internal challenges in 2022 (Global Innovation Index 2022:19).

China has become a dependable partner for Africa in the last two decades, particularly in the technology sector. A considerable portion of Africa's digital infrastructure comprises Chinese components, with Chinese giant Huawei's components making up as much as 70% of Africa's 4G network (Feldstein 2020; Ehl 2022). In response, in 2023, the US House of Representatives launched a resolution (H.Res.145) calling for a review of its relations with South Africa due to the country's use of Chinese technology and its close ties with China, which included joint naval exercises between China, Russia, and South Africa (United States Congress 2023). Some members of the US administration have been advocating for the Biden administration to apply pressure on South Africa to comply with their demands. At the time of writing, the House Committee on Foreign Affairs was reviewing the resolution (US Congress Bill Tracker 2023). This is not an isolated incident, as the US and EU have previously attempted to limit China's influence in Africa's developing digital ecosystem.

However, it may be too late for the US to significantly change its relationship with Africa regarding technology. To

3 The Global Innovation Index (GII) is a yearly assessment that ranks countries based on their innovation capabilities and the performance of their innovation ecosystems. This index is published by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

counter China's investment in Africa's digital ecosystem, the Biden-Harris administration launched the Digital Transformation in Africa (DTA) initiative to improve digital access and literacy on the continent. Nonetheless, this initiative and Prosper Africa⁴ still fall short of the level of investment and influence China already established on the continent. It is instructive to note that external stakeholders cannot solely address Africa's infrastructure issues, which is a call to the AU to be more proactive as an institution and become more involved in the technology race. In other words, it needs to 'put its money where its mouth is' about bringing the DTS to life.

Strong public institutions are essential for building regional and world-scale infrastructures. As Edwards (2003:200) explains, "building regional to world-scale infrastructures requires large institutions with long lifespans, enormous political, economic, and social power, and (on the private-sector side) great wealth". In the African context, this means that regional institutions such as the AU and the RECs must ensure that the building blocks for an SDM are in place, as they continue to reform and adapt to implement AfCFTA.

Weak Co-ordination and Harmonisation

The lack of harmonisation and coordination between the AU and the RECs hampers the successful implementation of the DTS. This has implications for successfully integrating the continent's digital ecosystem. The long delay in ratifying the Malabo Convention illustrates the failure to galvanise member states to enact necessary legislation. Arguably, the ultimate success of the DTS hinges on creating an attractive regulatory environment that is developmentally responsive and not just market driven. While private investment is necessary to build infrastructure and distribution capabilities, the regulatory and policy framework must be driven towards enhancing the developmental aspirations of the AU and its member states. Otherwise, the digital divide

4 This is a US government initiative to connect US and African businesses in order to facilitate two-way trade.

will deepen, as poorer people cannot access or benefit from increased connectivity.

The overall purpose of the DTS is to buttress the policies of the existing RECs and African states. However, there is a disconnect between the various RECs concerning developing an appropriate policy and regulatory environment. For instance, as Jan Hofmeyr, Ndeapo Wolf and Deon Cloete highlight, the existing laws that govern digital spaces in the SADC region are often marked by constitutional clauses that are both wide-ranging and shallow, such as the right to privacy for citizens (Hofmeyr, Wolf & Cloete 2023). They argue that policymakers must focus on incorporating ‘privacy-by-design’ and human rights principles into digital governance policies. Additionally, they emphasise the urgent need to strengthen regulatory competencies in this area. Regional harmonisation and co-ordination are necessary to ensure interoperability and shore up the sectoral components of the DTS, particularly the digital economy, including digital trade, financial services, digital governance and digital education, health and agriculture. However, not all RECs have a regional framework around any part of the digital ecosystem – from privacy protection to e-commerce.

There have been various approaches to legislation and regulation of the digital economy across Africa. According to UNCTAD (2021), only 61% of African states have legislation that deals with electronic transactions. Table 2 presents the state of e-commerce legislation in e-transactions, consumer protection, data protection/privacy, and cybercrime adoption among the 54 African member states of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

Table 27.2: Adoption of e-Commerce Legislation in Africa

Type of Legislation	Percentage
Privacy and data protection	28 (52%)
Cybercrime	39 (72%)
Electronic transactions	33 (61%)
Consumer protections	28 (52%)

Source: UNCTAD (2021b) Summary of Adoption of E-Commerce Legislation Worldwide – adapted by author.

The PRIDA, one of the building blocks of Africa's DTS, aims to improve affordability and access to the digital economy. A joint initiative of the AU, the EU, and the ITU, one of PRIDA's three tracks focuses on harmonising spectrum utilisation and regulation. However, achieving regulatory harmonisation remains challenging, as individual states have different approaches to the digital economy and telecommunications infrastructure. The concept of regulation is contentious due to fears that it may stifle innovation and growth. Andile Ngcaba, South Africa's former director-general of communications, warns: "We need to move away from regulation to enabling growth and the future. Regulating too early may stunt the development of digital economies, especially in Africa. We need to rather think of models and systems to enable innovation and investment" (Resha 2021:6).

Table 27.3: Regional Digital Policies/Frameworks

REC	Digital Strategy/ Policy
East African Community (EAC)	Eastern Africa Regional Digital Integration Project (EARDIP) – developed to support a regional SDM, including digital identity management and digital financial services Digital Regional East African Community Health (REACH) Initiative – integrating ICTs to improve health services, including disease surveillance
Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)	Developed Digital Free Trade Area which has several implementing mechanisms to ensure digital trade, including e-certificate of origin Draft Model Policy for The Digital Payments Platform for MSMEs in COMESA and the Digital Financial Inclusion Programme COMESA has an €8m regional ICT programme aimed at enhancing the governance and enabling environment in the ICT sector in Eastern Africa, Southern Africa, and the Indian Ocean region
Community of Sahel–Saharan States (CEN–SAD)	No regional strategy
Arab Maghreb Union (UMA)	No regional strategy

REC	Digital Strategy/ Policy
Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)	Regional Strategy (2021–2025)
Southern African Development Community (SADC)	Plans for ‘Digital SADC’ fall under the Regional Infrastructure Master plan SADC Model Law on Electronic Transactions e-commerce strategy
Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)	Developing e-commerce strategy
Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)	No regional strategy

Source: Authors Compilation

Further illustrating the lack of continental and regional co-operation and harmonisation between individual member states, the AUC and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report that,

[m]ost national strategies aim at turning a country into a ‘regional digital hub’ but do not prioritise regional and continental co-operation. National regulatory agencies cannot deal with technology-related challenges in isolation. Suppose governments do not fix the issues at the regional and continental levels. In that case, they may not be able to realise the full potential of digital transformation for African firms and job creation (AUC/OECD 2021:30).

Successful policy harmonisation and interoperability are essential to successful digital transformation and plug potential vulnerabilities on various issues from intellectual property (IP) protection to data protection and cybersecurity. For instance, if a country like Nigeria does not have adequate digital policy harmonisation in ECOWAS, how would regional digital trade be

possible? Moreover, poor harmonisation hampers the negotiating power with external powers such as the EU and the US.

What are Some of the Pathways to Successful Digital Transformation?

The DTS is one of the most significant strategies developed by the AUC. In the 21st century, digital transformation represents a chance for significant and sustainable socio-economic development outcomes for the African continent. The continent still lags behind other regions concerning internet access – a fundamental component of the digital ecosystem. In 2022, the internet penetration rate on the continent sat at approximately 43% compared to the global average of approximately 67% (Internet World Statistics 2023). Moreover, there is still a significant digital divide between African countries. For instance, Morocco has the highest penetration rate, at approximately 88%, with the Central African Republic sitting at barely 10%; worse still are countries like Burundi and South Sudan, not even reaching the 10% penetration rate (Statista 2024; Meltwater 2023). To bridge these gaps at a continental, regional, and national level, concerted efforts must be made.

It is important to note that the leading digital powers are broadly battling to shape the global digital future. This global struggle encompasses everything from discussions on the future of the internet to standard-setting, as seen with the recent debates around 5G and infrastructure deployment. Right in the middle of these battles are African countries still playing catch-up with the rest of the world. The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the importance of ramping up investments in digital transformation worldwide, particularly in Africa.

One of the most significant efforts to harmonise the efforts of the public and private sectors at a continental level is the AU Data Policy Framework, published in June 2022, to bolster the DTS and set a comprehensive agenda for accomplishing its goals. The competing agendas, particularly amongst the leading powers, necessitate that the AU reflect on what the various digital partners are offering, and whether what is being offered progresses

Africa's vision for itself. The policy framework, particularly around sovereignty, is arguably more inward-focused, stating that, "Member States, AUC, RECs, African Institutions and International Organisations shall cooperate to create capacity to enable African countries to self-manage their data, take advantage of data flows and govern data appropriately" (AUC 2022:19).

However, the framework does not offer a set definition of data, leaving this to the various data protection authorities on the continent. Arguably, this is a double-edged sword; on the one side, it gives the authorities a lot of flexibility, and on the other side, it offers room for external parties to offer up a definition where there is none. The major challenge is that it offers room for African interests to be further shaped by external concerns.

Indeed, digital transformation is an economic and political exercise with high-stakes geopolitical implications. Put simply, the market opportunities presented by the continent are immense, with billions of dollars at stake. However, digital and frontier technologies are the lynchpins of the future global system, affecting everything from health to the economy to governance. Being able to shape the world's digital future is highly attractive and leads to competition between the current digital powers on every issue, from the regulatory environment to the infrastructure.

Relations with China

The DSR is an interesting concept because it is not a clear policy, but a relatively nebulous one. As Cheng and Zeng (2022) point out, the DSR did not initially have an implementation plan. Rather, its "meaning and substance happened in an incremental and subsequent manner, one that was not only driven by competing interests among Chinese state actors but also in a way that allowed considerable room for Chinese digital – often private – companies to shape the meaning of the Digital Silk Road for their own corporate agendas" (Cheng & Zeng 2022:3). Indeed, the DSR appears to be more of a public relations mechanism or 'slogan'

that domestic actors jumped on the bandwagon to put forward their commercial agenda (Cheng & Zeng 2022).

Moreover, as Tugendhat and Voo (2021:2) reveal, even on the part of the Chinese government, funding for technology projects was greater before the launch of the DSR in 2015. The more profound question then should be: What is the real purpose of the DSR, if it is not a clearly defined policy and does not have the financial muscle as is portrayed? It has galvanised its geopolitical competitors, and it is undeniable that Chinese involvement in the continent has intensified. One of the critical areas of involvement is in telecommunications infrastructure, which was part of the original conception of the BRI, which by 2021 had the AUC and the 46 countries as signatories (Impiombato 2022:49). Importantly, and as dreaded by the EU and the US, this degree of dominance allows for “data and intelligence gathering” (Impiombato 2022; Greene & Trollo 2020). Moreover,

financing channels create a closed loop between China’s technology companies and government investment. Chinese companies in the telecommunications sector are fundamentally different from their Western competitors. In particular, they are subject to Chinese laws on national security, including cybersecurity, intelligence, and counterespionage (Greene & Trollo 2020:51).

Ultimately, China’s DSR facilitates Chinese companies’ investments in ICTs; many African countries’ telecommunications ecosystems have significantly benefited from DSR-linked investments (Agbebi 2022), one of the significant beneficiaries being Huawei rather than Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOEs) (Tugendhat & Voo 2021:2).

Relations with the US

Managing these relationships is paramount for Africa, which is still shaping the normative principles and regulatory frameworks concerning data governance, digital sovereignty, and cybersecurity. However, African countries (individually and regionally) should not be compelled to adopt strategies that fail

to address their needs regarding infrastructure development and financial support. It is crucial to ensure that any adopted measures align with the unique socio-economic contexts of each country. It is also critical to remember that Africa's digital transformation offers an unbeatable opportunity because there is still so much room for growth and a young population.

For instance, even though US investment in the continent has declined over the last few decades for many reasons (Meltzer 2016), the continent's opportunities have reawakened. The US-Africa Leaders' Summit in 2022 was a critical turning point when President Joe Biden's administration launched the US\$800 million DTA initiative. The DTA was born partly because of concern about China's growing influence on the continent and awareness of the continent's digital transformation opportunities. It rests on three pillars: digital economy and infrastructure, human capital development, and building a digitally enabling environment (The White House 2022).

For the US and its private sector, there is plenty of scope to leverage its investments in support of the DTS and other existing initiatives on the continent. A key area for investment and partnership can easily be around tech start-ups in Africa (Boa-Guehe 2023:2-3). In 2022, there were 3 360 start-ups on the continent, mainly in Nigeria, Egypt, South Africa, and Kenya (Fintech Times 2022; Omoniyi 2023). This illustrates the sector's vibrancy; however, many of these start-ups still struggle, including a lack of access to appropriate financing, a lack of infrastructure, and a rigid domestic regulatory environment (Quadri 2022; Okoye 2020). Boa-Guehe (2023:4) argues that the US could engage with African policy "to usher African policy options necessary to fully integrate technology into the economy, encourage innovation, and support start-ups to thrive". Such a partnership would undoubtedly benefit African states, provided it adheres to the frameworks established by the African Union. Allowing external partners without these safeguards risks exposing Africans to the exploitative practices of the private sector.

Relations with the EU

The partnership with the EU is a logical extension of previous initiatives. However, the AU and its member states must evaluate whether such collaborations align with the broader needs of the continent. As highlighted by Bhorat *et al* (2023:4), it is crucial to comprehend the concept of digitalisation and digital economies within the larger framework of structural economic transformation. Despite the EU's stated ambitions, the regional body is not a leading digital power (Erforth & Fritzsche 2022:5). Nevertheless, its infrastructure drive in Africa, particularly its push to solidify its digital partnership on the continent, for the most part, has been galvanised by the inroads made by China. The EU's infrastructure investment falls under its Global Gateway strategy, closely aligned with the PIDA.

Moreover, the EU has instituted several initiatives to align Africa's digital future with the EU. One of these is its Digital4Development (D4D) approach. Thus,

D4D rests on the idea that the key principles of the European Digital Single Market strategy can be translated and applied to other regions of the world. From early on, the EU focussed on Africa as a priority region and was quick to link the benefits expected from digital growth with the European Agenda on Migration. As an enabler of the Sustainable Development Goals and economic growth broadly speaking, D4D was also framed as a European answer to the "Global Connect Initiative" launched by the U.S. Department of State in 2016 (Erforth & Fritzsche 2022:8).

Unlike the industrialised countries that have primarily pursued a manufacturing-led growth trajectory, developing countries have not been able to attain comparable levels of growth. Consequently, Bhorat *et al* (2023) argue that digitalisation and digital transformation present a unique opportunity for these countries to experience new economic growth. This could potentially enable them to 'leapfrog' stages of development, thereby fostering structural changes that lead to job creation and improved living

standards (Bhorat *et al* 2023:5). Considering this perspective, it would be strategically sound to capitalise on existing geopolitical tensions to drive positive economic outcomes. What is clear, however, is that all the key players have a digital transformation plan for Africa. Through the AU, it is up to African countries to use whatever leverage is available to ensure that the digital transformation investments and partnerships are in Africa's best interests.

Conclusion

One of the defining features of the 21st century is the emergence of a digitalised global economy. This has meant the increasing importance of digitalising traditional trade and services in content or delivery. Moreover, the digital economy is data-driven, such as using big data and advanced analytics, and the effects have been seen everywhere, from traditional commerce to diplomacy (Ashbrook 2020; Kurbalija 2022). Yet, African countries have been on the periphery of the shift and, therefore, risk being left out of the new economy – or, even worse – being relegated to a source of data (arguably a commodity), minerals for components, or simply a secondary market.

A vital aspect of a digital economy is the ability of states, businesses, and citizens to connect on a granular level. This level of interaction requires mobility, interoperability, and a political will not to leave anyone behind. For African countries, it also requires concerted efforts to bridge the gaps in internet access, infrastructure, and financing. What has become clear is that rapid digital transformation enables the continent to achieve significant and lasting socio-economic development outcomes. Africa's ability to integrate into the digital economy requires harnessing external relations and collectively harmonising policies and efforts to benefit the continent ultimately.

The DTS and the Data Policy Framework are concrete steps in ensuring that the public and private sectors are harmonised at a continental level. Yet, it is crucial that more work be undertaken by national and regional actors to address issues around data governance, digital sovereignty, and cybersecurity in African

countries. The failure to harmonise, ratify, or implement critical protocols and conventions has impeded socio-economic and digital development in Africa. One such example is the delayed ratification of the Malabo Convention on cybersecurity. Another example is the unequal creation and implementation of legislation supporting digital transformation across the continent, which affects the ability of African countries' systems to interface, not to speak of the significant infrastructure gaps between countries.

Amid this, several players are baying to influence Africa's digital future. Apart from the private sector and intergovernmental organisations, Africa's digital transformation has also captured the attention of geopolitical powers. However, their interest is not altruistic; they are interested in shaping the global digital economy, which means that Africa is just a spoke in a larger wheel. African countries should leverage all these relations, under the auspices of the AU, to ensure that the best possible outcome is achieved. This will enable Africa to fully integrate into the digital economy and become a significant actor, not just a periphery player. While digitisation is promising in Africa, both from within the continent and from external actors, there are also significant challenges and gaps in its implementation. A more co-ordinated and continent-owned approach to digital transformation is necessary to ensure its success and its subjection to Africa's aspirations.

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Chapter 28

Africa and the Curriculum Transformation Project: Towards the Epistemic-Independent Africa We Want¹

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Introduction

As stakeholders reflect on the African Union (AU)'s 20 years of existence, it must be re-emphasised that decolonisation is not an event, but a set of interlinked and dependent processes. These processes are meant to respond to the mutation of the empire from its founding as a political empire to its adaptive mode as an economic empire and to its current survival mode as an epistemic/cognitive empire. Decolonisation processes must be able to continuously respond to this mutation of colonialism which has given rise to coloniality. One of the ways Africa can respond is through transforming the curriculum, especially the university curriculum, in the quest for epistemic independence in Africa.

Addressing the question of knowledge and its institutions, Mignolo & Walsh (2018:135) aptly note that ontology frames epistemology. That is, knowledge creates reality. Hence the AU

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must consciously lead the processes of producing knowledge that creates “the Africa We Want”.² Without rethinking and reformulating the African curriculum as a continental project, the knowledge used to create “the Africa We Want” will have the opposite effect, perpetuating “the Africa We Do Not Want”. Stated differently, the curriculum in Africa must be a vehicle for the realisation of cognitive justice as transitional justice. Continuing to use the Western-imposed curriculum in Africa constitutes cognitive injustice, which by definition is “social injustice that cascades from the denial of other people’s humanity and, by extension, a refusal to recognise their epistemic virtue” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2020:887). Without the recognition of Africa’s epistemes and epistemic virtues through a crafted curriculum, coloniality will remain unchallenged, perpetuating “the Africa We Do Not Want”.

The rationale for this chapter is based on the fact that modernity, stemming from Euro-North American influence, gave rise to colonialism and coloniality, extensive and enduring processes that led to globalisation and the diverse forms of empires that are evident currently. Spanning over 500 years, globalisation and its empire not only produced material wealth for the imperial powers, but most importantly, they produced epistemic imperialism, which continues to benefit them by privileging Western knowledge as the authentic knowledge and other forms of knowledge as subservient and reliant on their Western epistemic prototype. Epistemic imperialism accounts for the contestation of knowledge production and why Africa remains a consumer and not the producer of knowledge. This status quo must be challenged, and the decolonisation of the curriculum is one viable option in this endeavour.

2 “The Africa We Want” is the goal of the African Union’s Agenda 2063. “Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want” is a strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the African continent. It was adopted by the African Union (AU) in 2013 as a long-term vision for Africa’s development over the next 50 years, with the goal of achieving a prosperous, peaceful, and integrated Africa by the year 2063. The Agenda 2063 framework is built on a set of aspirations, goals, and strategies aimed at addressing the continent’s numerous challenges and harnessing its vast potential.

What is the decolonisation of the curriculum? The decolonisation of the curriculum is a process of re-evaluating and transforming educational curricula to address and rectify the historical biases of Eurocentrism and colonial legacies in traditional educational materials and approaches. It seeks to make education more inclusive, equitable, and reflective of diverse perspectives, cultures, and knowledge systems, particularly in regions or countries once colonised by European powers. Stated differently, decolonising the curriculum is a Global South project shifting away from Western centrism towards universalism. The AU recognises the need to place epistemology as a prerequisite to creating a decolonised autonomous future for Africa. This endeavour is ingrained in the AU's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want.

Agenda 2023 and 'The African University We Want'

This chapter is evaluative of both the AU's 20-year existence and the AU's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. In this chapter, I characterise Agenda 2063 as an alternative *within* a problematic Western-centric paradigm, as opposed to the desired alternative to a problematic Western-centric paradigm. The Africa that is desired as espoused in this canonical document is based on the same problematic episteme that brought the problem of epistemic dependence on the West. What is required is epistemic independence anchored in a transformed curriculum that starts at early childhood learning, cascading to primary, secondary, and finally to university education. For Ndlovu-Gastheni, "Epistemic freedom is fundamentally about the right to think, theorise, interpret the world, develop own methodologies and write from where one is located and unencumbered by Eurocentrism" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018:3). Decolonisation of the curriculum is part of the larger project of the formerly colonised people regaining their right to think and act in their best interest. It is the right to challenge and change the current colonial epistemology and make it relevant and not harmful to Africa.

One of the goals of Agenda 2063 is to transform Africa into a society with "well-educated citizens and [a] skills revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation" (AU 2015:15).

Under the sub-heading “Well-Educated Citizens and Skills Revolution Underpinned by Science, Technology and Innovation”, Agenda 2063 states categorically the importance of accessible and quality education in the following terms:

A key driver of Africa’s prosperity will be its world-class human capital developed through *quality education* focused on *achieving 100 percent literacy and numeracy*, and clear emphasis on science, technology and engineering. Universal access to quality, accredited education at all levels will be enshrined in law... Africa of 2063 will have harmonised education and professional qualifications systems, with the Pan African University and several centres of excellence across the continent, a Pan African Virtual university that uses technology to provide mass post-secondary school education and indeed Agenda 2063 the university sector and intelligentsia playing an instrumental role. Millions of Africans will have been trained, educated and skilled with special emphasis on science, technology, research, and innovation, as well as vocational training in every sector. Unlike in the past, this human capital would choose to remain on the continent, rather than migrate, thus contributing to the continent’s socio-economic development. By 2063, the mass out-migration of talented, educated, innovative Africans that characterised the brain-drain of earlier years will change to a situation where Africa is the centre of convergence of the world’s best and brightest; akin to the role and status, in ancient times, of the famed city of Timbuktu in the empire of Mali (AU 2015:31–32).

Aspiration 1 of Agenda 2063 is very specific on the role of education and, by extension, the curriculum in formulating Africa’s future. It describes “developing Africa’s human and social capital (through an education and skills revolution emphasising science and technology and expanding access to quality health care services, particularly for women and girls)” AU 2015:13). Aspiration 6 focuses on “creating opportunities for Africa’s youth for self-realisation, access to health, education, and jobs; and

ensuring safety and security for Africa's children and providing for early childhood development" (AU 2015:14). This attests to the realisation by the AU of the centrality of intergenerational cognitive and epistemic justice, which is key in addressing fairness and equity in the production, dissemination, and recognition of knowledge and epistemic practices. Intergenerational epistemic justice extends this idea to the interplay between generations, emphasising the need to address historical injustices in knowledge production and recognition that continue to affect future generations. It seeks to correct biases and imbalances in whose knowledge is valued and recognised, ensuring that marginalised voices and perspectives are included, respected, and used as equal pieces of knowledge.

Under Agenda 2063, the AU expresses a commitment to revitalise African higher education to develop new knowledge and innovation. This presents an opportunity for the AU to establish epistemic independence in Africa by utilising the envisaged Pan-African Virtual University (AU 2015:16). This university was planned to be operational by 2023, and to date (October 2023), there are no visible moves towards establishing this envisioned institution for higher education. The AU was clear on what needs to be done during the Second Decade of Education, especially at the tertiary level. The AU's Second Decade of Education, also known as the Second Decade of Education in Africa (2016–2025), is an initiative aimed at promoting education and skills development in Africa. It is a follow-up to the First Decade of Education in Africa (2006–2015). Listed below are the deliverables for the AU's second decade.

The zenith of Agenda 2063's focus on tertiary education is contained in a section titled, "AU Second Decade of Education: Tertiary Level", which aims to:

1. encourage greater mobility of academics, researchers, staff, and students and recognition of qualifications from different regions through harmonisation of degree structures;
2. establish an African higher education and research space that will pay serious attention to institutional and national quality assurance systems and promote high-level, relevant research

- and post-graduate training tailored towards solving Africa's problems;
3. adopt and adapt open and distance learning as instructional delivery mechanisms in Africa as other continents have done, for Africa to significantly raise its tertiary education enrolment from the current 6% (face-to-face mode) to at least 50%;
 4. use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) effectively for instructional delivery and professional communication to develop, acquire, produce, and distribute knowledge, skills, and competencies across the continent; and
 5. create centres of excellence within regions of the continent to develop robust post-graduate studies and a strong research base and global competitive advantage (AU 2015:57).

This makes solid and positive promises; however, based on the AU's track record of policy non-implementation,³ there is genuine pessimism that this policy may not be fully implemented, or even implemented. The AU is inflicted with political challenges that always play out when it comes to the adoption and subsequent implementation of common African positions, common points or ideas of interest agreed upon by AU member states. There is scepticism that the common AU agenda will struggle to guide and inform national positions on key issues affecting Africa.

There is a multitude of complex endogenous and exogenous power dynamics at play between the AU and the many actors around it, which gives rise to multilayered challenges and shortcomings that inhibit the AU from delivering on its ideals, policies, goals, and programmes, such as Agenda 2063's Second Decade of Education: Tertiary Level. First, there are implementation challenges. The education goals call for greater mobility of academics, researchers, staff, and students, but achieving this across diverse regions with varying levels of infrastructure, political stability, and economic conditions can be challenging. Implementation may face bureaucratic hurdles, visa restrictions, and funding constraints.

3 Policies, agreements, and protocols that were not implemented by the AU include, but are not limited to, the July 2016 historic Kigali Decision on Financing the Union.

Secondly, there are quality and quality assurance issues. While emphasising the importance of quality assurance systems is commendable, ensuring uniform standards across all institutions can be complex. National and institutional variations in quality can persist, potentially diminishing the intended impact of these measures.

Third, there are issues with the open and distance learning goals. The goal of increasing tertiary education enrolment through the open and distance learning (ODL) programme is ambitious and depends on many preconditions that do not currently exist in most African regions. While ODL can increase access, it also requires substantial investment in ICT, curriculum development, and harmonised staff training. Ensuring the quality of education in these settings is crucial to avoid diluting academic standards and veering off the AU's goals. On the contrary, a rapid rollout of ODL can enhance the digital divide and heighten the risk of leaving the digitally deprived behind for good.

Fourth, and linked to the above, there are ICT utilisation challenges. Effective use of ICT in education and research is vital, but it demands significant infrastructure and resources, which are currently unavailable in sufficient numbers, extent, and coverage in most of Africa (Benyera 2021). Many African regions still lack access to reliable electricity and internet connectivity, posing obstacles to the widespread adoption of ICT. Some countries, such as South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique, are regressing in terms of their connectivity and electricity availability. Without reliable and sustainable connectivity, power, and ICT infrastructure, rolling out ODL will remain a pipe dream.

Fifth, the establishment of centres of excellence is viable but unrealistic, given the current political and economic conditions in Africa. Creating centres of excellence is an admirable objective, but it may have the undesired consequence of exacerbating disparities in research and education quality across regions. There is also the risk of uneven resource allocation and the resultant competition for limited funding, which could end up marginalising institutions outside these centres of excellence. Additionally, given the corrupt, unethical, and unjust leadership in Africa, the choice of

these centres could be politicised, and underserving institutions and regions will most likely end up undeservedly being the beneficiaries, thereby defeating the ideals of the project.

Sixth, enhancing Africa's global competitiveness in the tertiary education sector is unrealistic, given the huge dependency of Africa on the West not only for epistemology and resources but also for material, financial, and technical support. Enhancing Africa's global competitiveness is counterproductive while Africa is still epistemically dependent on the West. Indeed, focusing on global competitiveness is essential, but it might inadvertently perpetuate a hierarchy in which a few institutions are prioritised over others. A more balanced approach that prioritises local and African epistemologies, and considers local and regional needs is more appropriate.

Seventh, setting enrolment targets is welcome if the targets are realistic. Raising tertiary education enrolment to 50% is a lofty goal. It may require expanding access and also addressing the issue of employability and the relevance of education to local job markets. Tertiary enrolment must not be seen as an isolated target but as one interlinked to the quality of the students, feeder secondary school capacity, employment and employability capacity, and the ability to fund such huge enrolments. Setting random quantitative targets such as 50% without considering the nuances of local realities, which exist across Africa will demotivate those who genuinely believe in decolonising the curriculum in Africa.

Eighth is the key issue of financial sustainability. The goals do not extensively address funding mechanisms and sources of funding. Sustainable financing for higher education and research in Africa is essential for long-term success, but it often faces budget constraints and competing priorities, especially in resource-poor countries. Many well-meaning projects in Africa are shelved because of a lack of sustainable funding and, without such, this programme risks being shelved. Attracting funds from external donors may be an option; however, this creates opportunities for the funders to determine the design of the programmes, which may not be in Africa's best interest. This

has been the case with many donor-funded programmes in Africa which have proven to perpetuate dependency and create a donor funding expectation when there is a programme to be executed in Africa.

Ninth and lastly, the issues of co-ordination and collaboration remain highly problematic. This may bedevil this project in the process of its implementation. Achieving these goals necessitates effective co-ordination and collaboration among African nations. It becomes important for countries to work together, share resources, and avoid duplication of efforts, which will be key to the success of the AU's initiative. This is a huge ask for African countries, some of which are technically almost at war with each other over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), or over the control of the mineral wealth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). When countries are acting in their national interest and a typical realistic fashion, collaboration on issues such as tertiary education becomes a far-fetched possibility.

There was an effort by the AU to address some of the shortcomings listed above by developing targeted action areas for Agenda 2063. The action areas are listed as follows:

1. investing in early childhood education;
2. building critical skills through expanded access to primary education for all, addressing the issue of school dropouts and improving quality issues;
3. improving the quality and relevance of technical and vocational skills development to address the needs of both cutting-edge skills and training the majority who are involved in the informal economy;
4. revitalising tertiary education through expanding access, improving quality and relevance;
5. building human capital for knowledge and innovation-driven economies; and
6. harnessing regional and continental resources to significantly scale up human capital formation (AU 2015:57).

The action areas for Agenda 2063 are laden with the right action words (verbs) such as invest, build, improve, revitalise,

and harness, and they reflect a commitment to addressing crucial challenges on the continent. However, like any set of policies and initiatives, they are not without potential criticisms and challenges.

First, Africa has challenges with low investment in decolonised early childhood education. Additionally, while investing in early childhood education is essential, there may be concerns about the equitable distribution of resources and access, particularly in Africa's remote, rural, and deserving areas. A significant challenge is how to ensure that early childhood education reaches all children, regardless of their socio-economic background. Second, building critical skills through expanded access to primary education is undeniable as a warranted key action area. However, simply increasing enrolment numbers may not guarantee improved educational outcomes as long as the curriculum remains colonial and, therefore, counter-productive to the goals of Agenda 2063. In addition to a decolonised curriculum, other prerequisites include quality of education, improved teacher training, and better accessible infrastructure. Furthermore, addressing the issue of school dropouts requires comprehensive strategies that go beyond access, such as addressing socio-economic factors by having bottom-up, targeted learner retention policies.

Third, the goal of improving the quality and relevance of technical and vocational skills development is key in addressing especially the shortage of artisans, skilled, and semi-skilled labour force. However, enhancing technical and vocational skills is important for workforce development, and ensuring the relevance of these skills to the challenges of local communities and national needs can be challenging. The curriculum needs frequent updates to keep pace with rapidly changing societal needs. Fourth, the revitalisation of tertiary education to enhance access is critical, but this must be balanced with maintaining high standards of quality and relevance. Rapid expansion without adequate infrastructure and academic and support staff members can lead to substandard institutions that offer questionable qualifications.

Fifth, building human capital for knowledge- and innovation-driven economies is needed and apt in order to shift the biology and the geophagy of knowledge production. This will enable African countries to transform into knowledge- and innovation-driven economies. However, this requires not only decolonised education but also African-centred, robust research and development ecosystems, intellectual property protections, and investment in innovation hubs. Transitioning to such economies can be slow and may require a significant mind shift and better just and ethical leadership in Africa.

Lastly, the harnessing of regional and continental resources for human capital formation is laudable. Unfortunately, while regional and continental co-operation is essential, co-ordinating efforts across diverse countries with varying levels of national interest, development, and political stability can be challenging. Ensuring equitable resource distribution and effective collaboration is a complex task that has proved daunting for the AU since its formation. Additionally, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be in place to ensure that these actions lead to tangible improvements in education and human capital development across the continent. The AU's monitoring and evaluation mechanisms remain its Achilles heel, together with the development of early warning signs.

I now address the issue of what constitutes the university and why focus is placed on the university and its curriculum as an integral component in the realisation of the goals of Agenda 2063.

The Meaning and Reason for the Establishment of the University

The university is a very complex term and institution, one very contested and contestable, laden with history, politics, and a lot of misunderstandings. The prefix 'uni' in university denotes a singular – in this case, a community of pieces of knowledge. It is a singular body where faculties, departments, and research centres come under one management for a single purpose, that of bettering the lived experiences of both the local and international community. While the 'uni' in university represents

the amalgamation of different epistemes, others contest this apparent oxymoron and advance the argument for a 'pluriversity', as they see no need for the amalgamation of epistemes, but rather the accommodation and recognition of ecologies of knowledge (Boidin, Cohen, & Grosfoguel 2012; Escobar 2007; Fox & Sneddon 2019; Grosfoguel & Cervantes-Rodriguez 2002; Mignolo 2000; De Sousa Santos 2007).

The word 'university' comes from the Latin *universitas magistrorum et scholarium*, which translates to "community of teachers and scholars". The suffix 'versity' comes from the Latin word *versitas*, meaning a turn, or a change, variety. Hence, when the word university is broken into its two constituent parts, 'uni' and 'versity', 'uni' means one or single, and 'versity', by extrapolation from its Latin origins, arguably refers to a change or variety. In the context of the whole world, a university denotes the idea and practice of many people (students, teachers, researchers, and support staff), fields of study, and varieties of pieces of knowledge and epistemes that are unified into one institution, one community. A university is a community within a community that diagnoses, analyses, and prescribes possible solutions.

Elsewhere, I note that the university, contrary to common belief, did not originate in ancient Greece but in Fez, North Africa, from where it was then exported to Greece and then re-exported to mainland Europe, especially the United Kingdom and France (Benyera 2018). As it moved away from its African origins, the university as an institution was enhanced, but it was also abused, instrumentalised, politicised, and rendered an instrument of statecraft. Instead of being efficacious in improving the lives of the nation and the people, it became an instrument at the disposal of the state and the elites. This was more pronounced when the university took a capitalist turn. The capitalist turn is one of the many turns endured by the university in its history. These turns are explored in subsequent sections of this chapter.

By colonising the curriculum and establishing colonial universities, the empire in its various forms ensured that it faced no existential challenge as the knowledge and students produced at these institutions were compliant with their needs.

This is why movements such as Rhodes Must Fall were met with three actions. Either the student leaders were absorbed into the state institutions, or they were disciplined, or simply ignored. Rhodes Must Fall and similar defiant endeavours represented a direct challenge to the epistemic/cognitive empire by demanding decolonised education and the recognition of other knowledges, especially epistemologies of the Global South, which were victims of epistemicides committed as part of the colonial processes. It is no coincidence that this is the same method that the former colonial powers generally used to deal with those who challenged it. By colonising the curriculum and the university, the colonial project invaded and took control of the colonies' 'software'. The occupation of the land signifies the control of the 'hardware'.

What is Wrong with the Current Curriculum in Africa?

An apt entry point to this section is to begin by reposting the question: What is the purpose of the university? As argued by Plato in *The Republic*, the purpose of the university was to impart the following virtues: prudence, courage, temperament, and justice (Plato 1961). These virtues were not an end in themselves but a means towards an end – that of, according to the individual and the collective, a better lived experience, a life worth living.

Thus, what is the general state of the university and the curriculum in Africa? The university is now commercialised and aims to produce market-ready students, generate profits, or at least break even and retain commercial viability, favourable rating, and ranking. First, the current situation in most African universities is that of a commercialised curriculum, commodified education, and Western education system which is not aligned with local histories and realities.

Second, and linked to the above, is an additional challenge of the mass production especially of social science and humanities graduates, and an increase in their unemployment – which, actually, is unemployability, because the graduates being produced do not have the required skills to fit in an ever-evolving environment, including the workplace (Wagner 2009). Ironically,

these graduates also lack the skills to solve society's most pertinent problems.

Third, the situation in Africa's universities is that of very weak scholarship, which can be attributed to many factors which are beyond the scope of this chapter (Mutula 2009; Omobowale *et al* 2014).

Fourth, there is the problem of fake, false, and doubtful university degrees being churned out in Africa (Awuzie 2017; Brown 2006; Jimu 2018; Ndlovu & Leslie 2022). These lead to aspersions being cast on hard-earned degrees.

Last, there is a proliferation of questionable universities and degree-offering institutions, also known as 'diploma mills' (Creasy 2013; Deming, Goldin & Katz 2013). While there is nothing wrong with having private universities, there is a general challenge in Africa where capital is taking advantage of this space to establish pseudo-universities which are money-making schemes and 'diploma/degree mills'. All these factors contribute to the devaluing of the university and the curriculum in Africa. However, these challenges are not only confirmed to Africa but a global challenge which is more pronounced in Africa given the poor regulation and general laxity of policy implementation.

Generally, the current curriculum in Africa is part of the colonial processes and was meant to disempower the colonised people by giving them inferior education, which Ibekwe characterised as miseducation. Ibekwe used the analogy of a cat and a rat to emphasise the toxicity of colonial education to the colonies thus:

If you take a rat and train it to see the world in the way the cat sees the world, you have not educated the rat, you have mis-educated it for life in a world with rats killing cats. You have actually made it an easier prey for the cats because the natural instincts of a rat would have told it how to deal with cats, or how to avoid cats. But after you have given the rat the education of a cat, it loses those instincts. It might even think of itself as a cat! And that is what this colonialist education has done to Africans for the last two centuries.

We have been fundamentally miseducated, and we cannot even see the world from our own point of view, let alone from our own interest (Ibekwe 1975:1993).

Miseducation is the deliberate imparting of inferior education. Inferior education does not confer epistemic independence (which is the ability to practice thinking and acting in one's best interest). Epistemic independence allows one to think from where they are located. Currently and generally, the curriculum in Africa is Western-centric and forces learners, students, and teachers to think from the Western point of view, hence the great misalignment where Africa has thousands of unemployed graduates coexisting with multiple problems. Ideally, the graduates were supposed to solve these societal problems, thereby solving the double problem of unemployment and unemployability on the one hand, and societal problems on the other. The high number of unemployed university graduates in Africa is indicative of a major structural misalignment between the needs of their communities and what they are learning in universities.

University curricula are living documents that should evolve as society evolves. For Africa, the curriculum was supposed to evolve from its colonial origins to catering for and assisting in fighting the political empire to assisting in fighting the economic empire and to the current phase where Africa is struggling with the ruthlessness of the epistemic/cognitive empire. It must be admitted that universities in Africa have struggled to delink from Western universities, on whose template they were founded. Without epistemic delinking from Western universities, universities in Africa will continue to act like the proverbial poisoned chalice. The many attempts, especially by students, through movements such as #FeesMustFall and cries for decolonised curricula, must be seen as bottom-up calls by students for curriculum transformation. The #FeesMustFall movement is a student-led protest movement that originated in South Africa around 2015 with the primary purpose of advocating for affordable, quality, and accessible higher education for all, particularly for disadvantaged and marginalised communities.

The next section reinterrogates the issue of the geology of the Western university in Africa by historicising the many turns the university took since its founding in Al-Anzhar in 970 and Al Quaraouiyine in 859. This section recognises the efforts of Fatima bin Muhammad Al-Fihriya Al-Qurashiya in pioneering university education in the world. Fatima bin Muhammad Al-Fihriya Al-Qurashiya, also known as Fatima al-Fihri, was a Muslim woman who is credited with founding one of the world's oldest existing and continually operating educational institutions. She is renowned for establishing the University of Al-Quaraouiyine (or Al-Karaouine) in Fez, Morocco in the 9th century (Benyera 2018:146).

Historicising the Western University in Africa: The Turns of the University

Indeed, Africa's university curriculum is generally not in tandem with the postcolonial needs of Africa. This begs the question: how did we get here? I respond to this question by tracing the genealogy of the Western university in Africa from its ironic African origins in Fez, Morocco. The university was founded in Africa as an institution predominantly for religious instruction. From its origins in North Africa, it was exported to Greece. Like Edward Said's Travelling Theory (Said 1983), the university's curriculum underwent constant adjustments to align with the unique requirements, preferences, and political dynamics of each new environment it entered.

From its origins in Africa, the university first took a Western turn, where it was exported to Greece. In Greece, the university or academy became heavily philosophical compared to Africa, where it was predominantly religious. From Greece, the university took an intra-European turn, where it was re-exported to mainland Europe, to countries such as France and the United Kingdom, where universities such as Sorbonne University and Oxford University were established. Already problematic at this stage of the university was the influence of the elites over the form, content, and structure of the curriculum. In Britain, the landed gentry, for example, played a significant role in the establishment

and development of universities, particularly during the late medieval and early modern periods. Their contributions and influence were intertwined with the broader historical context of the evolution of universities in Britain. The landed gentry, composed of wealthy landowners and nobility, often provided financial support to universities, its members frequently served on the governing bodies of universities, such as university councils and boards of trustees.

Additionally, many universities received endowments, benefactions, and bequests from the landed gentry. These contributions were often designated for specific purposes, such as establishing chairs in various academic disciplines, funding research, or supporting libraries and collections. This shaped not just the universities but also the curriculum and also influenced what areas of research were deemed fundable and unfundable. In other words, the money and resources from the landed gentry determined the direction of the curriculum and research in Britain, and this practice was extended to the British colonies when the university took a colonial turn.

When colonisation began in Africa, the university was also instrumentalised and used as part of the mechanisms to subjugate the colonised people. When the university took this colonial turn, it was in the form of the imposition of Western universities and curricula in Africa. The French and the British Empires not only imposed their political will on their African colonies, but they also imposed their episteme, while annihilating local epistemologies. Indeed, the colonisers committed epistemicides. When the university assumed the colonial turn, it became integral to the colonial project.

From the colonial turn, the university in Africa took a racial, tribal, sexist, and patriarchal turn. In South Africa, this was in the form of the establishment of racially segregated universities. At independence, the university in Africa was inherited by the predominantly Black, postcolonial governments that subsequently turned the university into a patriotic historiographical asset, thereby giving the university a nationalistic turn. During this nationalist turn, the university in

Africa was an asset for nationalist aspirations. As finances to run the universities began to dwindle in the postcolonial dispensation, universities in Africa took a corporate turn. This was the period when the postcolonial African states faced a lot of neoliberal and globalised external pressures, such as – but not limited to – the implementation of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs). During this corporate turn, universities started to establish public relations departments, and students slowly turned into customers; thus, the need to impart prudence was overtaken by the necessity to meet certain targets, particularly concerning graduating students.

From the corporate turn, the university took the professional turn. This heightened the call for curbing non-profit-making degree programmes, such as those offered in the social sciences and humanities fields. A consultancy culture crept into the university, with many academic members also doubling as external consultants. The system thereby celebrates numbers, while using several templates became the order of the day. The calls to decolonise the university gave rise to transformation calls, such as the #Feesmustfall and #Rhodesmustfall movements. The call was to deracialise, decolonise, Africanise, feminise, and indigenise the curriculum and the university system. This call coincides with the efforts to attain the AU's Agenda 2063, which is also in tandem with the quest for curriculum transformation.

However, without deliberate efforts at decolonising the curriculum, the university in Africa will remain largely a colonial project, serving colonial ends. In its current form, the Western university system in Africa is predominantly complicit in the oppression, subjugation, and dehumanisation of Africans for the following three reasons. Firstly, the university is supposed to be a crucible for solving society's most pertinent problems. If the university exists for that purpose, what then explains the coexistence of thousands of unemployed graduates with multitudes of societal problems? This situation is untenable and indicative of an epistemically structural problem. Secondly, the university is supposed to champion societal transformation, providing the blueprints for the advancement from a troubled past and distorted present to a possible peaceful and autonomous

future. In other words, the university is supposed to be the cartographic office where the future of Africa is debated, re-debated, and mapped.

Finally, the university in Africa, as an intellectual collective, is supposed to facilitate thoughts from African perspectives, thereby contributing to the larger movements of decentring the West and recentring Africa. The current form of the university is representative of an institution that thinks from the West and operates in the Global South. This creates an epistemic misalignment where the knowledge that is generated and regurgitated in Africa is not efficacious in explaining and solving the African problem. The result is that the 'produced' knowledge perpetuates the African problem instead of solving it.

The Seven Models of the University

The role of the university has been ever-changing in response to societal needs, from its origin as a place of religious instruction to the modern-day platform of cutting-edge technology and higher-order thinking. Efforts to decolonise the university and the curriculum in Africa are not new and can be traced most recently to the Association of African Universities' (AAU)⁴ 15th Quadrennial General Conference of African University Leaders which was held from 5 to 8 July 2021. The AAU, a continental organisation and umbrella body for universities on the continent, serves as a representative body for higher education institutions in Africa. The AAU is the apt body to lead and co-ordinate the decolonisation of the university and its curricula in Africa. At its inception in 1967, the thinking was to formulate a university that responds to Africa's decolonisation needs. There was a lot of interaction between the AAU and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), as evidenced by the AAU's inaugural conference held in Kinshasa in September 1969, under the theme, 'The University and Development'. A follow-up workshop was held in Accra, Ghana, from 10–15 July 1972, on 'Creating the African University: Emerging Issues in the 1970s', where a decision was undertaken

4 It was founded in 1967 and is headquartered in Accra, Ghana.

to rethink and reformulate the very idea of the university in Africa (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2020:891).

There are seven types of universities in Africa. In this section, I adopt Ndlovu-Gatsheni's seven models of the university to propose the imperativeness and the pillars upon which the reconstitution and decolonisation of curricula in Africa can be erected. He refers to the first as the Alexandria/Timbuktu model of the university. This university is modelled around the University of Qarawlyine/Karawiyyin in Fez in Morocco (859 CE), the University of Al Azhar in Cairo in Egypt (972 CE), and the Sankore University/University of Timbuktu (982 CE). The second represents the Western model, with examples such as the Bologna (1088), Oxford (1096), Sorbonne (1150), Salamanca (1218), and Coimbra (1290) universities.

The third, the colonial model of the university, was established as a metropolitan university in Africa, with a clear channel of reporting to their European head offices. Examples of such include the University College of the West Indies (1946), University College, Ibadan (1948), University College of Rhodesia (1956), Nyasaland, Royal College Nairobi (1961), and the University of East Africa (1963). The fourth model is the African developmental university, otherwise termed the inherited university. This type of university was the subject of Africanisation and some efforts at transformation. The fifth model is the popular university. These universities offered popular education, and were non-elitist, people's universities that privileged the interests of the proletariat.⁵ Some examples include the Popular University of Turin (1900) and the Universidad Popular Gonzalez Prada (1921). The sixth model is the neoliberal-bureaucratic-corporate-managerial model, which saw the establishment of universities of technology and entrepreneurial universities. The seventh and last model of the university, according to Ndlovu-Gatsheni's typology, is the decolonised model of the university. This is the desired model for Africa. It also aligned to the AU's Agenda 2063. The model is indigenous-compliant, activist-inclined,

5 This is a term usually used to describe the working class.

accessible, multilingual, polyphonic, relevant, responsible, and culturally anchored.

Active Citizenry and the Decolonisation of the Curriculum in Africa

This section, the prescriptive part of this chapter, is anchored on the need to adopt a non-state intervention in African higher education, given the failures of the postcolonial states to improve the quality of life for citizens. It is certain that the state cannot be trusted with leading the process of transforming the curriculum in Africa because the state has remained predominantly colonial since the inception of foreign domination in Africa. Active citizenry, which is the bottom-up action of local communities, is one of the most viable mechanisms for rethinking, reconstituting, and decolonising the curriculum.

There are many prospects of using active citizenship to decolonise the curriculum in Africa. This allows universities to be epistemically locally situated, thereby enabling local solutions to local problems to become a reality. It understands local realities and histories better and can assist in positioning the university to solve society's most pertinent problems. Furthermore, active citizenry is efficacious in ameliorating some of the challenges faced by Western universities in Africa, such as the commodification and commercialisation of knowledge. It also gives voices and agency to local communities that have been crowded out by Western-centric epistemologies. Local pieces of knowledge that were on the verge of extinction can be resuscitated and used in local universities, both as a medium of instruction and a source of knowledge. Lastly, universities will cease to exist as outposts of colonialism, as they will resonate with local communities since the locals will have a key stake in what happens at these institutions.

However, the active citizenry can play a vital role in decolonising the curriculum in Africa by fostering inclusivity, critical thinking, and empowerment, as well as the following:

1. It can start conversations and raise effective and sustained awareness of the need and urgency to decolonise the

- curriculum. This can include highlighting marginalised voices, discussing historical perspectives, and challenging Eurocentric biases in various facets of life.
2. Active citizenry enables effective grassroots advocacy. Active citizens can advocate for curriculum reforms by engaging with policymakers, educators, and community leaders. This can involve organising campaigns, writing petitions, and promoting dialogue to ensure that local epistemologies and marginalised narratives and perspectives are integrated into the curriculum.
 3. It can aid in the quest for review and decoloniality of the curriculum. Active citizens can participate in curriculum review processes, offering input and feedback to ensure a more inclusive and decolonised curriculum. This includes promoting the inclusion of the correct forms of African history, literature, and indigenous knowledge systems.
 4. It empowers local communities, educators, and students. Active citizens can support professional development programmes for educators, providing them with resources, training, and tools to address decolonisation in their teaching practices. This can involve sharing best practices, organising workshops, and creating networks for collaboration.

Despite these promises, active citizenry has its challenges, especially as the marginalised communities lack the requisite craft competency and craft literacy to effectively participate in the decolonisation of local universities and the curriculum. Given the fact that universities have been elitist for years, suddenly roping up local communities will be a huge challenge in some communities. There are other challenges associated with using active citizenry as a vehicle for decolonising the university and the curriculum in Africa. The major challenge emanates from the colonial legacies of divisiveness and lack of social cohesion. Africa has a rich diversity of cultures, nations, and languages. This means that what is relevant and appropriate to one group may not be to another, potentially leading to disagreements in the decolonisation process.

Additionally, the coloniality of knowledge remains pervasive and ever-threatening. There are individuals in Africa

who still uphold colonial perspectives and resist changes to a more African-centric curriculum. There is the challenge of political manipulation and interference, where politicians might manipulate the process for their gains or to favour certain groups. Another impediment is the persistent influence of the colonial curriculum. Generally, education systems tend to resist change due to entrenched systemic structures and processes. A concerted effort to decolonise the curriculum, thus, may be confronted with institutional barriers, especially in countries that have strong and organised labour movements, such as South Africa.

Several originations are already decolonising the curriculum in their various spaces. These include Decolonising Education South Africa (DESA) a South African group that promotes an African-centric curriculum. The Black Students Movement (BSM) at the University of the Free State, South Africa another pro-curriculum transformation organisation. This group aims to decolonise education and create a curriculum free from Eurocentric bias. Then there is the Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR). Based in Uganda, the MISR strongly emphasise decolonising knowledge and methodologies in social research and education. This centre has produced significant and cutting-edge decolonised scholarship under the leadership of Mahmood Mamdani. The African Curriculum Association (ACA) is another such project, which aims to develop and implement African-rooted curricula in schools across the continent. The ACA aims to provide a platform for all curriculum practitioners in Africa.

Also, South Africa hosts the Africa Decolonial Reading Network (ADERN), which was founded at the University of South Africa as a brainchild of Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni. ADERN has strong links with the South American decolonial scholars who were instrumental in its establishment. The project introduces readers to the decolonial framework and incubates mainly their theoretical thinking by highlighting the existence of African theories and scholarship more aligned with their work. The idea of ADERN is to accord African scholarship recognition and, in a way, reverse the epistemicides perpetrated by the colonial project. Other movements to decolonise the curriculum include #RhodeMustFall, originated at the University of Cape Town,

South Africa. It was a movement that sparked international conversations around decolonised education. #FeesMustFall, which aims at broadening access to higher education and decolonising the curriculum, is a larger nationwide movement in South Africa that went beyond fighting for fair fees to demand an education that was not misaligned to the needs of the Black races.

The list of organisations, groups, and movements listed above, which are already involved in the decolonisation of the curriculum, reveals how local committees are taking active citizenship to design or instigate institutions to redesign curricula that are in line with their histories and decolonial needs. This presents a propitious starting point for the AU in implementing Agenda 2063.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the curriculum transformation project in Africa represents a pivotal endeavour in the pursuit of the independent and prosperous Africa envisioned by the continent's leaders and scholars. However, the AU, thus far, has struggled on various key issues, such as policy development, regional collaboration, funding and investment in tertiary education, leading and co-ordinating research and innovation, and improving access and inclusivity. There are areas where some strides have been made, such as skills development and knowledge exchange. As the AU celebrates its 20th anniversary, there are several key actions it should consider taking to advance tertiary education on the continent. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. encouraging member states to increase funding for tertiary education, preferably as a percentage of either their gross domestic product (GDP) or annual budgets;
2. initiating scholarship and exchange programmes among member states, managed by a dedicated division within the AU secretariat; and
3. developing regional and continental quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms aimed at addressing the proliferation of 'diploma mills', fake and doubtful

qualifications – and, in the process, enhancing the credibility of Africa’s tertiary qualifications.

Most importantly, the AU must lead the reimagination and rethinking of the curriculum away from the current colonial model to a decolonial model of tertiary education which confers epistemic and cognitive independence to Africans. This way, research and innovation can be done that address African problems. Digital learning can also be incorporated to enhance access and promote the use of technology in education. However, this must be undertaken with cognisance of the challenges posed by technology in enhancing the digital divide, and, in the process, creating further marginalisation of already marginalised communities.

Additionally, the AU must pursue private–public partnerships to enhance the quality of tertiary education. In the same vein, the issue of gender and intergenerational balance is key in delivering efficacious education. There is no successful programme that negates more than half of the population, i.e. women, youth, and other minority groups. The AU must be bold and deliberate in putting youth and women at the forefront of its endeavours to deliver a transformed curriculum in its member states’ tertiary institutes.

Curriculum transformation is an ambitious undertaking that seeks to address historical injustices, promote inclusivity, and empower future generations with the knowledge and skills required to shape Africa’s destiny. The transformation of educational curricula is not merely an academic exercise, but a profound reimagining and rethinking of the continent’s identity, values, and purpose. It is about epistemic and restorative justice. It is also an acknowledgement of the rich and diverse African epistemes, which deserve recognition and utilisation as knowledge that is equal to other pieces of knowledge. Curriculum transformation is an emblematic journey toward the epistemically independent “Africa We Want”. It is a testament to the continent’s determination to break free from the shackles of the past and forge an autonomous decolonial future that is defined by African voices, histories, agencies, perspectives, and aspirations. The

path ahead may be challenging, but it holds the promise of a more equitable, prosperous, and self-reliant Africa.

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Chapter 29

African Union at 20: Health Systems Strengthening for Post-COVID Dispensation

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Introduction

In January 2014, the former chairperson of the African Union (AU) Commission, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, presented Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want as a blueprint and master plan for transforming the continent into “The Africa of the Future”. As a strategic framework, this agenda is also founded on an approach for inclusive and sustainable development, which represents, “a concrete manifestation of the Pan-African drive for unity, self-determination, freedom, progress, and collective prosperity pursued under Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance”. Through its broad flagship programmes that aim mainly to transform the continent into the global powerhouse of the future, Agenda 2063 also provides clear direction for the continent’s plans for ensuring healthy lives and promoting the wellbeing of all people. Incidentally, this is the exact focus of the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are key to the theme of the chapter, as revealed in the table below.

Table 29.1: Alignment Between Agenda 2063 Goals, Priority Areas, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals

Agenda 2063 Goals	Agenda 2063 Priority Areas	UN Sustainable Development Goals
A high standard of living, quality of life, and wellbeing for all citizens	Poverty, inequality, and hunger Social security and protection, including persons with disabilities; modern, affordable, and liveable habitats and quality basic service	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.
3. Healthy and well-nourished citizens	Health and nutrition	Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages.
17. Full gender equality in all spheres of life	Violence and discrimination against women and girls	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
18. Engaged and empowered youth and children	Youth empowerment and children's rights	

Source: *African Union Commission*¹

Thus, the chapter examines the state of health systems in Africa post the COVID-19 era. This is done by unpacking and evaluating the African Union's Africa Health Strategy (AHS) and the utilisation of its objectives by member states of the AU in determining their health plans and policy strategies or frameworks. The chapter also outlines a comprehensive analysis of health systems strengthening (HSS) in the region to provide premises for the facilitation of improved performance for sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the attainment of Agenda 2063 objectives on health and wellbeing. An emphasis is placed on HSS, which is seen as one of the key strategies for the survival of health systems in the continent.

1 It is available at <https://au.int/en/agenda2063/overview>.

The Africa Health Strategy (AHS)

In pursuit of a healthier African continent, the AU Specialised Technical Committee on Health, Population, and Drug Control (STC-HPDC) proposed the Africa Health Strategy (AHS). As mentioned earlier, the AHS responds to the health-related objectives of Agenda 2063 and the UN SDG 3 by fostering strong health systems, scaling up effective and efficient health interventions, promoting intersectoral action, and empowering communities through African-driven responses (AHS 2016). As a result, all AU member states are expected to align with the strategy's objectives and incorporate its approaches in their national health planning and budgeting. However, the issues of health have often taken a back seat in many AU member countries, since the continent has continued to experience huge challenges in addressing poverty and insecurity. Thus, it is not surprising that, although the current AHS (2016–2030) is an updated version of the first-ever AHS (2007–2015), very little attention is given to the evaluation of these strategies by the AU.

During the initial decade review report, the AU's evaluation predominantly focused on issues of regional integration and broader global politics. Although the AHS had been in existence for six years at the time, its objectives were not reflected in the contents of the AU's meeting agenda (Paterson 2012). Over the last 20 years, the AU has developed many institutions that are expected to assist the organisation in functioning as an effective international actor on the continent (Mileski & Dimitrijević 2022). However, Chris Saunders holds that some of the work of these organisations has not been very effective (Mileski & Dimitrijević 2022). This could also be the reason why the continent is behind in the attainment of most of the objectives of SDG 3 (Cohen *et al* 2013; Heiby 2014).

Moreover, since the report was compiled in 2022, after the COVID-19 era, it exposes the continent's pathetic state of health, including how the pandemic threatened the provisions of the AHS on the continent. This included huge delays in the number of people who were tested to determine their status and the lack of sufficient vaccines in some African countries

(Mileski & Dimitrijević 2022). Furthermore, it is not surprising that the continent's COVID-19 experience was characterised by shortages in the health workforce, testing kits, health facilities, personal protective equipment, and sanitisers. These shortages demonstrate the required commitments by regional and national actors for the achievement of the objectives of the AHS, which clearly state that adequate health financing and the strengthening of the health systems ought to be the pillars for improving health facilities and creating equitable access to health services (AHS 2016).

Utilisation of the AHS by AU Member States

The exposure of Africa's dilapidated health infrastructure during the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates the need for AU member states to start apportioning the goals and objectives of the AHS the attention they deserve. This calls for the member states to also pay attention to the pillars of health offered by the Africa Centre for Disease Control (Africa-CDC), amongst which are i) emergency preparedness and response, ii) disease control and prevention, iii) laboratory systems and networks, iv) national public health institutes and research, v) public health information systems, and vi) surveillance and disease intelligence (Africa-CDC 2019; Amukele 2017).

Further guidance and support are also offered to member states through the African Union Development Agency's (AUDA) COVID-19 Response Plan of Action, which encompasses and resembles targets of the SDGs (education and training; skills and employability; food and nutrition security) and the WHO Building blocks (health service delivery; human resources for health; research & development innovation). Hence, the AUDA mandate of providing technical advice to the member states in driving and harnessing domestic health financing mechanisms is also key for the strengthening of health systems (AUDA 2022). These entities and other actors in the African health sector can assist in prioritising the health agenda, translating it to key discussions within the AU platform, as has been done for other life-threatening diseases within the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Furthermore, African countries have also accessed a lot of funding for the combating of life-threatening diseases such as tuberculosis (TB), human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), malaria, and cholera, thereby causing them to lean more towards disease management and investing less resources and attention on the successful implementation of health system strengthening (HSS) (Gautier & Ridde 2017; Mills *et al* 2012) user fee exemption, and results-based financing policies as relevant instruments for achieving UHC in Sub-Saharan Africa. The “donor-driven” push for policies aiming at UHC raises concerns about governments’ effective buy-in of such policies. Because the latter has implications on the success of such policies, we searched for evidence of government ownership of the policymaking process. Methods: We conducted a scoping review of the English and French literature from January 2001 to December 2015 on government ownership of decision-making on policies aiming at UHC in Sub-Saharan Africa. Thirty-five (35). Such a shift can only be achieved through a commitment and consistent efforts to improve service delivery and health outcomes in the region (Gold & Ejughemre 2013).

In 2015, the AHS was evaluated, amongst other things, for determining the extent to which national and regional health policy frameworks had utilised the AHS 2007–2015’s key seven strategic directions. The key findings were presented by how they aligned with what the AU calls Africa’s health situation. In line with the aims of this chapter, the summary included in this report focuses on one of the objectives for health sector weakness. This summary depicts the slow utilisation or application of strategic directions about:

1. developing national health policy frameworks (only 39%);
2. health systems strengthening (56%);
3. creation of clear, integrated, multisectoral policy linkages and improving health governance harmonisation and alignment (33%);
4. resource mobilisation for sustaining health sector finances (28%); and

5. reflecting the strategic direction for enhanced investments and focus on strengthening health-related research systems (19%) (AU 2015).

In this way, these findings imply that the African health agenda is being undermined by a lack of health planning, health financing, and health governance (Asante *et al* 2020; Sambo *et al* 2011). Thus, there is an obvious need for the member states to focus on the promotion of equitable health care for all, which could be achieved through practices, instruments, and policies that aim to strengthen the continental health systems (Gilson & Daire 2011; Heiby 2014).

Health Systems Strengthening in Africa

According to the WHO, a health system consists of all the organisations, institutions, resources, and people whose primary purpose is to improve health. This institution delivers holistic packages of health needs from preventive, promotive, curative, and rehabilitative interventions. The delivery of the services is dependent on a combination of actions and facilities that may be provided by both state and non-state actors (WHO 2010). Since 2005, there has been more attention on issues around HSS. Most countries around the world are engaged in HSS because of the interventions of the global HSS actors, such as the WHO, the Global Fund, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the Rockefeller Foundation, and the World Bank. At that period, a focus on HSS was inspired by several concerns around progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), global health initiative, and the standpoints that weak health systems had hampered the attainment of organisational objectives and growing criticism of the adverse effects of these initiatives on the health system (WHO 2010).

Inequality, complex humanitarian emergencies, low vaccine coverage, and fragile health delivery systems can offset the progress of health development and health goals as contained in the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs) (Tangcharoensathien *et al* 2022) reforms in LICs should focus on efficiency through health resource waste reduction. Targeting the

poor even with low level of health spending can make a significant health gain. Investment in primary healthcare and health workforce is the foundation for realizing UHC which cannot be postponed. Innovative tax on health hazardous products, conditional debt relief can increase fiscal space for health; while international collaboration to accelerate coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). This was especially evident in some parts of the world that were characterised by low SDG performance (Gold & Ejughemre 2013). The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in more than 170 million confirmed cases of the disease. Over 4 928 439 cases of COVID-19 disease were recorded in Africa as of 10 June 2021 (Elebesunu *et al* 2021).

Notwithstanding the efforts employed by different countries and their health systems, this virus claimed more than 3.7 million lives until June 2021 (Androutsou *et al* 2021) accessibility, effectiveness and sustainability. A review of policies and actions related to health systems' challenges and responses considered as opportunities are presented and discussed. The key challenges are boosting the way towards optimising health systems' capacity, ensuring access to healthcare, promoting R&D focused on the accelerated development of diagnostics, treatments and vaccines, improving health data digitalization as well as monitoring individual behaviour along with the socioeconomic impact. Numerous health policy recommendations, synergies and funding initiatives have been launched as responses to these challenges. EU is constantly obtaining lessons from the pandemic with coordination being the key component for response and for building in opportunities that will strengthen health systems' preparedness and management of cross-border health threats. Governments need to ensure that the health systems are equipped with the critical capacities to promptly respond to future health crises.", (Androutsou *et al.*, 2021), although the average death rate across many African countries was lower than 3% (Seydou 2021). This was significantly lower than the casualties in developed countries like the United States (US) or the United Kingdom. Availability and access to COVID-19 diagnostics and treatment, regulatory barriers, and the health system's capacity are among the major challenges that international bodies,

national governments as well and regional health authorities had to cope with during the pandemic (Androutsou *et al* 2021; Sambo *et al* 2011)accessibility, effectiveness and sustainability. A review of policies and actions related to health systems' challenges and responses considered as opportunities are presented and discussed. The key challenges are boosting the way towards optimising health systems' capacity, ensuring access to healthcare, promoting R&D focused on the accelerated development of diagnostics, treatments and vaccines, improving health data digitalization as well as monitoring individual behaviour along with the socioeconomic impact. Numerous health policy recommendations, synergies and funding initiatives have been launched as responses to these challenges. EU is constantly obtaining lessons from the pandemic with coordination being the key component for response and for building in opportunities that will strengthen health systems' preparedness and management of cross-border health threats. Governments need to ensure that the health systems are equipped with the critical capacities to promptly respond to future health crises. Even though Africa has the highest disease burden compared with other regions, it has the lowest per capita spending on health. In 2007, 27 (51%).

Factually, the pandemic exposed the fragility of many health systems and then emphasised the cruciality of adequate HSS efforts (Elebesunu *et al* 2021; Sherr *et al* 2013)hence, this paper emphasises the need for African policymakers to improve healthcare quality in their countries. Through a brief review of various online literatures concerning health systems strengthening in Africa, this paper focuses on the nature of healthcare in Nigeria amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The major stress areas include COVID-19 testing capacity, health workforce, infection prevention and control, health information and surveillance systems, health insurance, public-private partnerships, and governance. The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified several challenges ravaging Africa's already fragile healthcare systems, leaving the health sectors of most African countries ill-prepared to deal with the pandemic. If Nigeria and many other African countries had invested sufficiently in strengthening their healthcare systems prior to COVID-19, their

pandemic response efforts would have been more effective. Health systems strengthening is necessary to ensure steady progress toward universal health coverage and global health security. Through health systems strengthening, Nigeria and other African countries can greatly improve their infection prevention and control measures (Elebesunu et al., 2021; Sherr et al., 2013). Pandemics such as Covid 19 pose a huge threat to public health systems as they expect a highly co-ordinated and resourced approach. In Africa, the existing fragile health systems crumbled in the face of the pandemic (Elebesunu *et al* 2021; Ogunkola *et al* 2021) hence, this paper emphasises the need for African policymakers to improve healthcare quality in their countries. Through a brief review of various online literatures concerning health systems strengthening in Africa, this paper focuses on the nature of healthcare in Nigeria amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The major stress areas include COVID-19 testing capacity, health workforce, infection prevention and control, health information and surveillance systems, health insurance, public-private partnerships, and governance. The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified several challenges ravaging Africa's already fragile healthcare systems, leaving the health sectors of most African countries ill-prepared to deal with the pandemic. If Nigeria and many other African countries had invested sufficiently in strengthening their healthcare systems prior to COVID-19, their pandemic response efforts would have been more effective. Health systems strengthening is necessary to ensure steady progress toward universal health coverage and global health security. Through health systems strengthening, Nigeria and other African countries can greatly improve their infection prevention and control measures. Many Sub-Saharan African countries have been known to suffer various challenges which threaten the quality of health services that are offered to the population. With the emergence of COVID-19 outbreak, it is not impossible that access to quality antenatal care services would be further threatened in the region due to the competition for limited health care resources. This paper seeks to highlight the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on antenatal healthcare services in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is imperative for all African countries to put up measures to ensure antenatal care services, which

are just as important and needed, are not disrupted due to the urgent need to shift limited resources to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. For most countries, the pandemic also forced health systems to prioritise some services over others. As governments redirected their focus, finances, and resources towards fighting the spread of the virus, services such as sexual and reproductive health services took a back seat (Nyasulu & Pandya 2020) cases have constantly increased and the pandemic has taken a toll on the health system. This requires extra mobilisation of resources to curb the disease and overcome financial losses whilst providing social protection to the poor. Assessing the effects of COVID-19 on South African health system is critical to identify challenges and act timely to strike a balance between managing the emergency and maintaining essential health services. We applied the World Health Organization (WHO). For example, a 2020 survey of women of reproductive age in the US found that one in three (33%) reported that they had to delay or cancel visiting a healthcare provider for sexual and reproductive healthcare because of the pandemic (Pillay *et al* 2021) including lockdowns, have had various consequences for lives and livelihoods. South Africa (SA).

Similar reductions in consulting health practitioners were recorded in South Africa, Nigeria, and Bangladesh. In the case of South Africa, it accounted for some of the high rates of teenage pregnancies and births by adolescents, between the ages of 10–19 years (General Household Survey 2021). Mother and child health indicators have always been the worst performing, yet the Covid era brought about a 30% increase in institutional maternal mortality, teenage pregnancy, and gender-based violence cases (Nyasulu & Pandya 2020; Ogunkola *et al* 2021) it is not impossible that access to quality antenatal care services would be further threatened in the region due to the competition for limited health care resources. This paper seeks to highlight the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on antenatal healthcare services in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is imperative for all African countries to put up measures to ensure antenatal care services, which are just as important and needed, are not disrupted due to the urgent need to shift limited resources to contain the COVID-19 pandemic.

In South Africa, the health system grapples with a quadruple burden of chronic diseases which includes high maternal, new-born, and child health illnesses; the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and tuberculosis (TB) pandemics; high rates of non-communicable diseases (such as cancers, high blood pressure, diabetes); and the growing effect of violence and injuries (Kathard & Pillay 2013; Mbanda 2020)Wylie, McAllister, Davidson, and Marshall (2013. Moreover, the already concerning national HIV prevalence rate of 14% in the country (Simbayi *et al* 2019), was relegated to the back seat, as most chronic services were disrupted during the pandemic. This meant that fewer people were able to access health facilities, including less testing and diagnoses and less attention to those who required treatment for other diseases (Pillay *et al* 2021)including lockdowns, have had various consequences for lives and livelihoods. South Africa (SA).

During this period, the country survived through the support of health-related partners and NGOs that intervened through them in partnership with the National Department of Health (NDoH). They were able to continue roving service to clients on chronic treatment, especially antiretrovirals (ARVs), whilst the NDoH staff remained at the forefront of the COVID response. They were able to assist in triaging, coding, testing, diagnosis, and treatment of clients with symptoms (Pillay *et al* 2021)including lockdowns, have had various consequences for lives and livelihoods. South Africa (SA. The case was different in Nigeria, where the biggest challenges were seen with the health workforce and the struggle with infection prevention and control measures (Elebesunu *et al* 2021; Sherr *et al* 2013) hence, this paper emphasises the need for African policymakers to improve healthcare quality in their countries. Through a brief review of various online literatures concerning health systems strengthening in Africa, this paper focuses on the nature of healthcare in Nigeria amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The major stress areas include COVID-19 testing capacity, health workforce, infection prevention and control, health information and surveillance systems, health insurance, public-private partnerships, and governance. The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified several challenges ravaging Africa's already fragile

healthcare systems, leaving the health sectors of most African countries ill-prepared to deal with the pandemic. If Nigeria and many other African countries had invested sufficiently in strengthening their healthcare systems prior to COVID-19, their pandemic response efforts would have been more effective. Health systems strengthening is necessary to ensure steady progress toward universal health coverage and global health security. Through health systems strengthening, Nigeria and other African countries can greatly improve their infection prevention and control measures (Elebesunu et al., 2021; Sherr et al., 2013). In general, medicine security on the continent was threatened because over 70% of the prescribed medications are produced from active ingredients (API), which were primarily sourced from firms in China and India. With the restricted travelling and import prohibition, access to medicine was hugely compromised (Akande-Sholabi & Adebisi 2020) one could have heard of how dangerous it is to be virtually reliant on medicine supply from other countries. Nonetheless, no action was taken because it seemed to many that the global trade system was operational and Nigerians as well as citizens of African countries appear to have sufficient supply of the medications required at quite appealing cost. Currently in 2020, this apprehension has revolved from an imaginary problem to an actual challenge that might have consequences for millions nationwide due to COVID-19 pandemic. Now, African countries can realize that putting all our eggs in one basket was not such a good idea. In Nigeria, over 70% of the prescribed medications are produced from active ingredients (API).

It is thus evident that many health infrastructures need optimal health systems to improve their resilience, ensure accessibility to healthcare, as well as ensure effectiveness and sustainability through the accelerated development of diagnostics, treatments, and vaccines (Androutsou *et al* 2021) accessibility, effectiveness and sustainability. A review of policies and actions related to health systems' challenges and responses considered as opportunities are presented and discussed. The key challenges are boosting the way towards optimising health systems' capacity, ensuring access to healthcare, promoting R&D focused on the accelerated development of diagnostics, treatments

and vaccines, improving health data digitalization as well as monitoring individual behaviour along with the socioeconomic impact. Numerous health policy recommendations, synergies and funding initiatives have been launched as responses to these challenges. EU is constantly obtaining lessons from the pandemic with coordination being the key component for response and for building in opportunities that will strengthen health systems' preparedness and management of cross-border health threats. Governments need to ensure that the health systems are equipped with the critical capacities to promptly respond to future health crises (Androutsou et al., 2021). Recovery of the health systems post-COVID is of paramount importance (Androutsou *et al* 2021) accessibility, effectiveness and sustainability. A review of policies and actions related to health systems' challenges and responses considered as opportunities are presented and discussed. The key challenges are boosting the way towards optimising health systems' capacity, ensuring access to healthcare, promoting R&D focused on the accelerated development of diagnostics, treatments and vaccines, improving health data digitalization as well as monitoring individual behaviour along with the socioeconomic impact. Numerous health policy recommendations, synergies and funding initiatives have been launched as responses to these challenges. EU is constantly obtaining lessons from the pandemic with coordination being the key component for response and for building in opportunities that will strengthen health systems' preparedness and management of cross-border health threats. Governments need to ensure that the health systems are equipped with the critical capacities to promptly respond to future health crises (Androutsou et al., 2021). This is especially in the face of a gloomy economic recovery and poverty that has been worsened by inflation, job losses, and restrictions on the movements of goods and people across international borders (Tangcharoensathien *et al* 2022) reforms in LICs should focus on efficiency through health resource waste reduction. Targeting the poor even with low level of health spending can make a significant health gain. Investment in primary healthcare and health workforce is the foundation for realizing UHC which cannot be postponed. Innovative tax on health hazardous products, conditional debt relief can increase

fiscal space for health; while international collaboration to accelerate coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

In the post-COVID-19 era, countries' reasons for the improvement of the health system should be driven by a commitment to determine influences on health financing, national priority, and policy approaches. To unpack the importance of HSS and its core activities, the WHO derives and monitors its progress against six building blocks. The building blocks, as reflected in Image 7, comprise i) leadership and governance, ii) health care financing, iii) health workforce, iv) medical products and technologies, v) information, and vi) research and service delivery (Manyazewal 2017; WHO 2010). They provide a monitoring framework that allows countries to monitor HSS at the national level and enhance the incorporation of HSS into the existing global health initiatives that are already supported by various countries' health systems (WHO 2012).

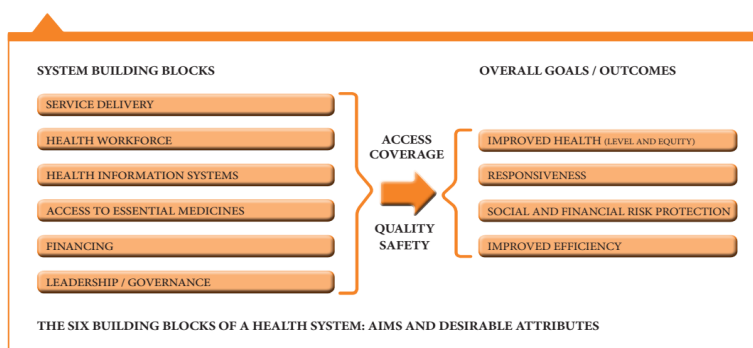


Figure 29.1: The World Health System Framework

Source: WHO (2010).

It becomes very important to discuss the pillars of HSS under the following different themes:

Leadership and Governance

Having established the underutilisation of the AHS, leadership and governance are of paramount importance for HSS (Elebesunu *et al* 2021; Shoman *et al* 2017) Liberia and Sierra Leone and lessons

learned. The WHO health system building blocks were used to evaluate the performance of the health systems in these countries. Methods: A systematic review of articles published from inception until July 2015 was conducted following the PRISMA guidelines. Electronic databases including Medline, Embase, Global Health, and the Cochrane library were searched for relevant literature. Grey literature was also searched through Google Scholar and Scopus. Articles were exported and selected based on a set of inclusion and exclusion criteria. Data was then extracted into a spreadsheet and a descriptive analysis was performed. Each study was critically appraised using the Crowe Critical Appraisal Tool. The review was supplemented with expert interviews where participants were identified from reference lists and using the snowball method. Findings: Thirteen articles were included in the study and six experts from different organisations were interviewed. Findings were analysed based on the WHO health system building blocks. Shortage of health workforce had an important effect on the control of Ebola but also suffered the most from the outbreak. This was followed by information and research, medical products and technologies, health financing and leadership and governance. Poor surveillance and lack of proper communication also contributed to the outbreak. Lack of available funds jeopardised payments and purchase of essential resources and medicines. Leadership and governance had least findings but an overarching consensus that they would have helped prompt response, adequate coordination and management of resources. Conclusion: Ensuring an adequate and efficient health workforce is of the utmost importance to ensure a strong health system and a quick response to new outbreaks. Adequate service delivery results from a collective success of the other blocks. Health financing and its management is crucial to ensure. The COVID-19 pandemic has proven the need for countries worldwide to implement strategies that promote health systems strengthening and ensure epidemic preparedness. Many African countries are burdened by fragile healthcare systems, hence, this paper emphasises the need for African policymakers to improve healthcare quality in their countries. Through a brief review of various online literatures concerning health systems strengthening in Africa, this paper focuses on the nature of healthcare in Nigeria amidst the

COVID-19 pandemic. The major stress areas include COVID-19 testing capacity, health workforce, infection prevention and control, health information and surveillance systems, health insurance, public-private partnerships, and governance. The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified several challenges ravaging Africa's already fragile healthcare systems, leaving the health sectors of most African countries ill-prepared to deal with the pandemic. If Nigeria and many other African countries had invested sufficiently in strengthening their healthcare systems prior to COVID-19, their pandemic response efforts would have been more effective. Health systems strengthening is necessary to ensure steady progress toward universal health coverage and global health security. Through health systems strengthening, Nigeria and other African countries can greatly improve their infection prevention and control measures (Elebesunu *et al.*, 2021; Gilson & Daire, 2011; Shoman *et al.*, 2017). However, there is a need for transformational leadership and effective governance, which requires leaders with integrity and ethics of accountability in terms of managing the finances allocated to the health sector (Asante *et al* 2020; Sambo *et al* 2011). Such planning can only be possible if the National Department of Health not only acknowledges but also changes the general perception that leaders are corrupt and poor planners, who mismanage and launder government funds. Although many health ministries have invested funds, staff, and resources into the health systems, they rarely monitor nor account for whether this investment translates into quality of care and wellbeing.

Hence, it is not surprising that the Transparency International Survey revealed that out of 42 of the 102 countries surveyed, over 52% of the citizens in those countries believed that their health systems were corrupt (Hutchinson *et al* 2019) with considerable evidence that this has serious adverse consequences for patients. Yet this issue is far from prominent in the international health policy discourse. We identify five reasons why the health policy community has been reluctant to talk about it. These are the problem of defining corruption, the fact that some corrupt practices are actually ways of making dysfunctional systems work, the serious challenges to researching corruption, concerns

that a focus on corruption is a form of victim blaming that ignores larger issues, and a lack of evidence about what works to tackle it. We propose three things that can be done to address this situation. First, seek consensus on the scale and nature of corruption. Second, decide on priorities, taking account the importance of the particular problem and the feasibility of doing something about it. Third, take a holistic view, drawing on a wide range of disciplines (Hutchinson et al., 2019). Therefore, citizens tend to have very little confidence in their public health systems. This is a trend that many African countries have demonstrated through the scepticism of misinformation (Nguyen & Catalan-Matamoros 2020), and also experienced in the form of political mistrust during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly with respect to government response and vaccination rollouts (Abayomi 2022). There has also been a certain degree of vaccine hesitancy, which is also linked to citizens' mistrust of their health ministries and their capacity to administer the programme with integrity (Seydou 2021). This resistance and the prevalence of corruption undermines the prospects of effective, equitable, and responsible healthcare, thereby impeding the progress of many SDGs, not just SDG 3 (Hutchinson *et al* 2019) with considerable evidence that this has serious adverse consequences for patients. Yet this issue is far from prominent in the international health policy discourse. We identify five reasons why the health policy community has been reluctant to talk about it. These are the problem of defining corruption, the fact that some corrupt practices are actually ways of making dysfunctional systems work, the serious challenges to researching corruption, concerns that a focus on corruption is a form of victim blaming that ignores larger issues, and a lack of evidence about what works to tackle it. We propose three things that can be done to address this situation. First, seek consensus on the scale and nature of corruption. Second, decide on priorities, taking account the importance of the particular problem and the feasibility of doing something about it. Third, take a holistic view, drawing on a wide range of disciplines (Hutchinson et al., 2019).

Health Financing

Given that health systems rely heavily on their resources and face challenges due to the detrimental effects of corruption, it is crucial to focus on collaborative efforts in health financing. As already demonstrated, the lack of the required financial allocation and misuse of resources is directly linked to poor health outcomes. A report by Gold and Ejughemre (2013) attests to the poor health finances that were allocated by African governments towards the health sector. This shows that only six out of the 55 AU member states spend about 15% of their national budgets on health issues.

The biggest problem with African health systems is the huge number of citizens who have no access to free health facilities but must spend their savings on health services. This is called 'out-of-pocket sources', which is due to the inability of countries to meet the basic health needs of all their citizens (Gold & Ejughemre 2013). HSS is thus seen as a viable vehicle through which to attain steady progress toward universal health coverage. This would enable everyone to obtain the desired quality of health services without utilising their income, thereby aggravating people's financial hardships (Elebesunu *et al* 2021; Evans *et al* 2013). In turn, the closer a country is to attaining universal health coverage, the better their chances are at achieving desirable progress in their SDG targets.

Health Workforce

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the extent to which society depends upon essential and frontline workers, as well as the importance of a strong and skilled healthcare workforce for epidemic response and control (The Lancet 2020). As the world experienced the lockdowns, essential and frontline workers could not be locked in the comfort of their own homes, watching the news updates and being alarmed about how the virus was claiming lives across the world (Blau *et al* 2021)we exclude industries that were shut down or running under limited demand at that time (Vavra 2020. This cadre of labour was forced to continue with their regular supply of labour even in the face of the high possibility of

being infected by the virus as they served many people at their homes and in various health facilities.

However, the poor working conditions and low salaries earned by them escalated their anxiety, which resulted in mental health issues and added to the already existing high rates of emigration² from the African continent to higher-income countries (Ikhurionan *et al* 2022). This scenario was like salt to the wound, as Africa already has limited human resource capacity; thus, the losses of the productive labour force and essential workers during COVID-19 further undermined the current state of the health systems. Consequently, a healthy system requires a strong and skilled healthcare workforce to be effective in epidemic response and control (Shoman *et al* 2017) Liberia and Sierra Leone and lessons learned. The WHO health system building blocks were used to evaluate the performance of the health systems in these countries. Methods: A systematic review of articles published from inception until July 2015 was conducted following the PRISMA guidelines. Electronic databases including Medline, Embase, Global Health, and the Cochrane library were searched for relevant literature. Grey literature was also searched through Google Scholar and Scopus. Articles were exported and selected based on a set of inclusion and exclusion criteria. Data was then extracted into a spreadsheet and a descriptive analysis was performed. Each study was critically appraised using the Crowe Critical Appraisal Tool. The review was supplemented with expert interviews where participants were identified from reference lists and using the snowball method. Findings: Thirteen articles were included in the study and six experts from different organisations were interviewed. Findings were analysed based on the WHO health system building blocks. Shortage of health workforce had an important effect on the control of Ebola but also suffered the most from the outbreak. This was followed by information and research, medical products and technologies, health financing and leadership and governance. Poor surveillance and lack of proper communication also contributed to the outbreak. Lack of available

2 While there were restrictions of movement at different times during the pandemic, health workers – with critical skills – were able to emigrate easily during COVID-19.

funds jeopardised payments and purchase of essential resources and medicines. Leadership and governance had least findings but an overarching consensus that they would have helped prompt response, adequate coordination and management of resources. Conclusion: Ensuring an adequate and efficient health workforce is of the utmost importance to ensure a strong health system and a quick response to new outbreaks. Adequate service delivery results from a collective success of the other blocks. Health financing and its management is crucial to ensure (Shoman et al., 2017).

Essential Medicines

Additionally, no health system can function without an adequate supply of its medicine and health products. There is a general concern about the fact that the African continent is heavily reliant on medicine supplies from foreign countries (Akanke-Sholabi & Adebisi 2020; Saied *et al* 2022)one could have heard of how dangerous it is to be virtually reliant on medicine supply from other countries. Nonetheless, no action was taken because it seemed to many that the global trade system was operational and Nigerians as well as citizens of African countries appear to have sufficient supply of the medications required at quite appealing cost. Currently in 2020, this apprehension has revolved from an imaginary problem to an actual challenge that might have consequences for millions nationwide due to COVID-19 pandemic. Now, African countries can realize that putting all our eggs in one basket was not such a good idea. In Nigeria, over 70% of the prescribed medications are produced from active ingredients (API. This dependence extends to equipment for diagnostics, medicine supplies, vaccines, and personal protective equipment. Indeed, Africa imports about 99% of their vaccines and 95% of their medicine supplies, which was one of the major obstacles during the COVID-19 pandemic (Saied *et al* 2022)millions of Africans contract tuberculosis, malaria, and many other diseases. Malaria kills hundreds of thousands of children under the age of five years annually. More than 11,000 people died during the 2014-2016 Ebola outbreak in West Africa; still, occasional cases of Ebola, as well as monkeypox, periodically appear in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Since most of the African countries gained

their independence during the 1960s, the continent has relied heavily on the outside world for diagnostics, medicines, vaccines, personal protective equipment, and other medical supplies. Africa consumes nearly 25% of the globally produced vaccines but imports 99% and 95% of its vaccines and medicines, respectively. The 55 African countries were not able to ensure the health of 1.3 billion Africans during the COVID-19 pandemic but had to rely on other global initiatives and other countries for help and support. However, the pandemic and the shortage of vaccines may have been the much-needed trigger for this situation to change. \”When misfortunes increase, they erase each other.\” Naguib Mahfouz (1911-2006). The continued dependence on medicine supply from foreign countries is antithetical to health security on the continent (Akande-Sholabi & Adebisi 2020)one could have heard of how dangerous it is to be virtually reliant on medicine supply from other countries. Nonetheless, no action was taken because it seemed to many that the global trade system was operational and Nigerians as well as citizens of African countries appear to have sufficient supply of the medications required at quite appealing cost. Currently in 2020, this apprehension has revolved from an imaginary problem to an actual challenge that might have consequences for millions nationwide due to COVID-19 pandemic. Now, African countries can realize that putting all our eggs in one basket was not such a good idea. In Nigeria, over 70% of the prescribed medications are produced from active ingredients (API. Therefore, the continent needs to generate its own capacity to produce and distribute medicines and vaccines for its teeming population.

Health Information Systems

Health information is quite important since no government can plan, budget, and monitor health issues without the availability of accurate, timely, and reliable data. Despite the significant funding by external donor organisations towards HSS, most African systems have struggled to provide the quality data required for policymaking (AbouZahr & Boerma 2005). This funding also provides opportunities for health ministries and departments

to invest in internal capacity-building and strengthening of health systems.

The lack of adequate data on relevant indicators has also generated inequities within the systems, as well as undermining the success of the MDGs, which later transformed into the SDGs (See Nolen *et al* 2005)middle- and high-income countries have consistently shown inequalities in health among socioeconomic groups and by gender, race or ethnicity, geographical area and other measures associated with social advantage. Significant health inequalities linked to social (dis. This is why Nolen *et al* (2005)middle- and high-income countries have consistently shown inequalities in health among socioeconomic groups and by gender, race or ethnicity, geographical area and other measures associated with social advantage. Significant health inequalities linked to social (dis proposed that health ministries need to pay due attention to their national Health Information Systems (HISs). They should also be able to assess the effectiveness of the Routine Health Information Systems (RHISs) for improving health system performance (Aqil *et al* 2009). This exercise was crucial as it would also help the health departments to ascertain whether the systems can address health inequities through reliable, longitudinal, and representative data.

This is important for linking health measures to their social and structural determinants, and social status at the individual or small-area level. Sufficient measurement of health equity also paves the way for universal health coverage because it outlines the gap between socially advantaged groups (Nolen *et al* 2005)middle- and high-income countries have consistently shown inequalities in health among socioeconomic groups and by gender, race or ethnicity, geographical area and other measures associated with social advantage. Significant health inequalities linked to social (dis. For many African countries, such as Eastern, Western, and Southern African countries, provided healthcare services are the only source of healthcare for most of the citizens. However, about 20% of Africans have health insurance cover (Barasa *et al* 2021) we assessed the level and inequality of population coverage of existing health insurance schemes in 36 SSA countries. Methods Using secondary data from the most recent Demographic and

Health Surveys, we computed mean population coverage for any type of health insurance, and for specific forms of health insurance schemes, by country. We developed concentration curves, computed concentration indices, and rich-poor differences and ratios to examine inequality in health insurance coverage. We decomposed the concentration index using a generalised linear model to examine the contribution of household and individual-level factors to the inequality in health insurance coverage. Results Only four countries had coverage levels with any type of health insurance of above 20% (Rwanda-78.7% (95% CI 77.5% to 79.9%). The main reason for the slow progression is the inequality between different classes in the society which means that health services are entirely dependent on one's class and level of affordability (Barasa *et al* 2021)we assessed the level and inequality of population coverage of existing health insurance schemes in 36 SSA countries. Methods Using secondary data from the most recent Demographic and Health Surveys, we computed mean population coverage for any type of health insurance, and for specific forms of health insurance schemes, by country. We developed concentration curves, computed concentration indices, and rich-poor differences and ratios to examine inequality in health insurance coverage. We decomposed the concentration index using a generalised linear model to examine the contribution of household and individual-level factors to the inequality in health insurance coverage. Results Only four countries had coverage levels with any type of health insurance of above 20% (Rwanda-78.7% (95% CI 77.5% to 79.9%).

Research and Service Delivery

The provision of adequate finances, and the provision of human resources, programmes, medical products, and vaccines, are some of the outputs that are critical for the effective functioning of the health system. Moreover, improved service delivery and quality of healthcare are two indications of a system that functions effectively. In other words, service delivery is an immediate output of the development of the health system.³ Increased

3 The health system comprises the workforce, procurement and supplies, and financing.

healthcare facilities should lead to outcomes such as improved service delivery and enhanced access to services (WHO 2010). Before COVID-19, African health systems would have raised a very key question to assess whether the volume of funding equates to the delivery of essential health services and the desired outcomes. However, some researchers in South Africa have argued that a key question post-COVID should be directed at identifying the existing gaps in the delivery of quality health services (Nyasulu & Pandya 2020) cases have constantly increased and the pandemic has taken a toll on the health system. This requires extra mobilisation of resources to curb the disease and overcome financial losses whilst providing social protection to the poor. Assessing the effects of COVID-19 on South African health system is critical to identify challenges and act timely to strike a balance between managing the emergency and maintaining essential health services. We applied the World Health Organization (WHO). They further suggested that countries should respond to these questions through the provisions of the WHO 6th building block framework.

The HSS in the Post-COVID-19 Dispensation

The WHO health systems framework offers a viable approach for assessing and prioritising services by health systems and allows a systematic and comprehensive approach to the identification of these gaps (Nyasulu & Pandya 2020) cases have constantly increased and the pandemic has taken a toll on the health system. This requires extra mobilisation of resources to curb the disease and overcome financial losses whilst providing social protection to the poor. Assessing the effects of COVID-19 on South African health system is critical to identify challenges and act timely to strike a balance between managing the emergency and maintaining essential health services. We applied the World Health Organization (WHO). Firstly, the health ministries and departments need to be motivated considering the misalignment between the inputs and health outcomes. It is important to deal with certain corrupt practices, if required, to facilitate good health financing practices. HSS cannot be implemented without a well-structured continuity with timely and accurate data (AbouZahr & Boerma 2005; AHS 2016; Building & Park 2010). There is a need for

governments to take the initiative to rely on the use of information for planning since they are now aware of all the challenges experienced by their routine health information systems (RHISs). They need to ascertain the possibility of feeding the required information to their national health information systems (HISs).

Without a deliberate effort from the national structures, the currently available data and systems enhance the capacity of the health ministries to support the effectiveness of health systems and the provision of quality healthcare. The WHO has developed some mechanisms which can be utilised to assess the HIS. This framework can be used or adapted to suit African situations to allow countries to monitor the quality of their HISs. The question of adaptation becomes necessary because several policies and frameworks originated from the WHO.

Understudying the WHO templates and applying them to different circumstances may motivate African countries, whose contexts are very different, to modify some elements of the tools. However, even if these adaptations are required, the WHO frameworks should remain the model for all AU member states. Moreover, the AHI, a common evaluation framework that is already being implemented in five African countries (Ghana, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Zambia), can be used as a standard way to catalyse significant advances in strengthening the health systems to address key challenges, and improve service delivery and health outcomes (Bassett *et al* 2013; Bryce *et al* 2013; Sherr *et al* 2013)Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Zambia.

The issue of universal coverage has been a priority for so long for countries to have obtained some sort of progress in this area. Therefore, the AU member states need to be forthcoming with the various challenges they face regarding health governance and constitutionalism. Lessons learned should be shared so that these may help countries that are still struggling with these challenges and should learn from the universalisation of health interventions and frameworks to enhance health service delivery across the world. It is also important for countries to interrogate the different bills, protocols, and universal health insurance plans they have developed and start addressing the bottlenecks that

threaten the progression to the next level. This is not to force the concept down the throats of the leadership nor its citizens, but rather to recognise that an effective HSS guarantees a steady and promising move toward the attainment of quality services for all. Incidentally, the UHC offers this opportunity.

Multisectoral partnerships are crucial in the implementation of UHC. However, the activity should also be an opportunity to appreciate the effects of socio-economic and environmental determinants of health, which affect different classes of people. Where possible, health operational planning should involve civil society, so that the views of the utilisers of the health systems are heard and incorporated into the quest for a functional approach to service delivery. Good health information is also useful in planning for universal health coverage, as a deep dive and analysis of granular data can outline the various inequalities that characterised universal health coverage. Lessons can be learned from countries which have been able to establish health insurance schemes for over 20% of their citizens, such as Rwanda (78.7%), Ghana (58.2%), Gabon (40.8%), and Burundi (22.0%) (Karamagi *et al* 2021; Sambo *et al* 2011).

The African states should rethink the way they treat their essential workers. Of course, national economic inequalities on the continent will always drive emigration to the West; however, the continent needs to improve the working conditions of its employees and motivate them for more productivity. The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly shown the need for Africa to invest in health, including a commitment to human capacity-building, which will lead to the development of internal mechanisms for the prevention and control of epidemics, as well as outstanding research on vaccines. The continent should refrain from its dependence on the West for health information and medical supplies and create its capacity for producing medicines within the continent. With so many emigrations of skilled practitioners, scholars, and researchers to the West, Africa may continue to be at the mercy of foreign countries for the supply of medicines.

Considering the proper emergency preparedness and response, HSS is the key for African countries. With the right

energy and attention directed at achieving this task, the continent can move from a reactive position to a pragmatic response to the pandemic, systematically and proactively. The healthcare sector should operate with top-level commitment, stewardship, accountability, and transparency, which are the key principles guiding a successful AHS. The continent's dependency on the West for solutions to global challenges is a huge concern for the AU, hence strong political commitments that are driven by the Africa-CDC to derive momentum for the manufacturing of about 60% of vaccines within the continent (CDC 2021). Progress for this commitment is being closely monitored.

Moreover, the Africa-CDC remains committed to the capacity and capability of Africa's public health institutions in the development and testing of multi-hazard and multisectoral preparedness and response plans for public health emergencies at national and regional levels, supporting the establishment of functional national public health emergency operation centres (PHEOC) as part of national public health institutes (NPHIs). This focus also includes the recharacterisation of the known burden of disease and other health concerns from a continental and/or regional perspective. This is particularly important as it will allow countries to direct funds and health priorities to the relevant health programmes and needs.

Conclusion

The AU aims to improve health and wellbeing for all through important initiatives which are in alignment with Agenda 2063, the SDGs, and the AHP. However, the extent to which the member states have utilised the AHP to inform effective health planning and financing is not only questionable but accounts for the continent's poor performance on the SDGs and the unimpressive health outcomes. Despite the quests to enhance the health capacity in the continent, neither regional nor national institutions are doing enough to demonstrate a concerted effort to improve health within the continent. Africa is not lacking in important health policies and frameworks; however, the absence of a well-structured monitoring and evaluation mechanism is indicative of their struggles.

It is important for the AU to allocate a much bigger space to health within their agenda and also to reflect on the issue during continental meetings. Although Africa continues to experience serious challenges in the areas of poverty and the quest for peace and security, the outbreak and destructive nature of COVID-19 have left the continent with no choice but to advance in its pursuit of HSS. HSS should not be seen as an emergency response, but an initiative that the member states must pursue for the sake of service delivery.

The WHO has introduced a framework comprising six building blocks. However, considering the unique context and growing concerns about providing Africa with an opportunity to showcase its knowledge contributions to global health and wellbeing, the continent should leverage initiatives like the AHI. The Africa-CDC, which played an important role during COVID-19, should continue to monitor various political commitments made by the member states in 2021 – and these should be more than just a focus on vaccination. The pillars of the Africa-CDC offer a good framework to support HSS together with the AHS to devise a well-defined monitoring plan, tools, and designated reporting periods to track the progress of health and wellbeing across the continent.

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Chapter 30

Africa, Climate Change, and Development: Towards A Strategic Balancing Posture

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Introduction

Over the decades, Africa has been at the receiving end of climate change. In the context of the global fight against climate change, Africa must act given its vulnerability and the threats to its development projections. Understood within the meaning of the United Nations Framework Convention as mutations attributable directly or indirectly to anthropogenic activities modifying the constitution of the global atmosphere and adding to natural climate variability, climate change is a major challenge for the world. No region is spared, least of all Africa, which is more than ever under the influence of extreme climatic phenomena likely to compromise its development trajectory, although it is anchored in a regional vision of economic emergence (AU 2015). This mutation is linked to an additional greenhouse effect caused by a model of planetary society mainly dependent on fossil fuels (Ngono 2022). This warming thus causes a sudden change in the climate which manifests itself through variations in climatic characteristics by establishing extreme phenomena such as rising sea levels, droughts, floods, cyclones, weakening of forests, threats to freshwater resources, agricultural crises, desertification, reduction of biodiversity, and the spread of tropical diseases.

Based on the latest projections from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Africa is threatened with more pronounced global warming compared to the global average (IPCC 2022). The level of warming is correlated with the extent of extreme phenomena; it is therefore the geographical area which will suffer the most from the horrors of climate change, with various implications. Climate change can reinforce inflationary pressures over a more or less long period. More broadly, extreme climatic phenomena can affect infrastructure, population health, and the productivity of different economic sectors (Trisos *et al* 2022).

When it comes to extreme drought, the regions of North, West, and South Africa are the most exposed. Over the past six decades, for example, Morocco has suffered a 20% decrease in precipitation. The filling rate of dams has also fallen from 60% in 2018 to less than 30% in 2022 (AFD 2022). Algeria and Tunisia are facing the same problem of water scarcity. Added to this water stress is the increase in extreme temperatures. In West Africa in particular, the number of days with a temperature above 40.6°C could double from around 60 to a range of 105 to 196 days by the end of the century, compared to the beginning of the year 2000 (AFD 2022).

According to pessimistic climate scenarios, an increase in land temperature of 4.3°C would be a catastrophe for the countries of the Gulf of Guinea, where the number of days of life-threatening heat is likely to be 250 to 350 days per year. This would constitute immense risks to the rise in sea level. If this rise is currently 20 cm, according to IPCC forecasts we must expect a rise of 50 cm to 1 m between now and 2100 (GIEC 2022). For such a projection, Nigeria, Egypt, Angola, and Mozambique would be subject to both erosion of their coasts but also a risk of flooding. The situation would be particularly worrying in the Nile Delta and Lagos in Nigeria, where there is an increased risk of land subsidence (AFD 2022).

Africa's economic prospects are more threatened than ever by climate risk. This is why Africa must be part of efforts to resolve the climate crisis while ensuring the pursuit of sustainable and

inclusive economic growth. With its potential in renewable energy sources (IRENA 2019), and the infrastructure facilities on which its future economic progress depends not yet built (Birol 2022), it has relatively easy room for manoeuvre to define a societal model that reconciles climate protection and economic expansion. What should be called here the in-between climate-development nexus is therefore a position conceivable by Africa. It should be structured around strong, coherent, and pragmatic African action (Ngono 2022). It is likely to break with the growing emissive dynamics of the last three decades and lay the foundations for a low-carbon and competitive model of society (Jayaram *et al* 2021; WB 2020).

Because of the stakes, it is a question of how Africa can build a model between climate and development. In other words, how can Africa reconcile climate and development imperatives? This chapter is an attempt to address this concern. There is a need, through a geopolitical approach that mobilises economic, political, cultural, or geographical factors, to understand the foundations of such an approach (Moreau-Defarges 2002). It presents Africa as a single entity composed of states with specific realities managed by common institutions within the framework of a Pan-Africanism of integration.

Under a constructivist reading of the resolution of the climate crisis, it first analyses Africa and the double interest of safeguarding the climate and continuing its development trajectory. Second, it sketches the operationalisation of an in-between climate development as a question of multiscale harmonisation. It examines and analyses four themes in the chapter, namely: the foundation of an African posture between climate and development, the necessary reconciliation between climate imperatives and development in Africa, the multisectoral organisation of a climate-development policy in Africa, and the consolidation of the climate-development approach at the sub-regional and national levels.

Africa and the Dual Interest of Safeguarding the Climate and Pursuing its Development Trajectory

In a context marked by climate change and a strong regional desire to improve the lives of a population that grows exponentially, Africa is faced with a dual interest. It is then a question of how it can contribute to the protection of the climate while pursuing a dynamic of economic progress. This strategic posture is part of the climate–development question, noting the threats that the disruption of climatic changes represents for the African continent.

Foundation of an African Posture of Climate–development Nexus

The in-between posture is timely in the face of the threat posed by high-warming scenarios to the African continent. It is based on Africa's vulnerabilities to climate change and its development trajectory, more than ever under the influence of its impacts. This section seeks to unravel the two-part question through the lens of two themes: the vulnerability of the African continent to climate change, and a regional development trajectory under the influence of climate risks.

The Vulnerability of the African Continent to Climate Change

The vulnerability of geographical areas depends on climate change, their sensitivity, and their capacity for resilience. This sensitivity is very high in Africa insofar as a large part of the activities on which people depend are backed by natural resources which themselves depend on the state of the climate. This is the specific case of agricultural and coastal resources from which African populations derive most of their livelihoods (Bank of France 2020). By way of illustration, seven out of ten Africans survive on agriculture, while coastal communities live mainly from fishing (AfDB 2015). While some regions of the world can better respond to some of the impacts of climate change, Africa remains in a state of worrying exposure. This situation is because the adaptive capacity of territories depends on a set of factors asymmetrically distributed throughout the world. Thus,

the wealth of states, their level of technological advancement, the information at their disposal, the skills they have, and the accessibility to financial resources determine their response capacities (Francois & Taabni 2012).

Given these determinants, it is difficult for African countries, as they stand, to cope with climate change (UNESCO 2014). They have fewer resilience factors and make the continent as a whole the most vulnerable geographical area. Of the ten countries in the world considered to be the most vulnerable, seven are from Africa. These include the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Sierra Leone, Chad, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Eritrea (SoAR 2018). Climate change is already manifesting itself in Africa with gravity and will continue to exert pressure on water resources, disrupting the renewal of underground resources, food security (by reducing agricultural yields), cross-border security (by transnationalising water stress and climate migration), and public health (by exposing populations to infectious diseases and displacing malarial areas) (AfDB 2015). Because of the extreme events, between 2.6 million and 3.4 million people had to move to Sub-Saharan Africa from 2018 to 2019.

This migratory dynamic could affect 17 million to 40 million by 2050 for an average temperature increase of 1.7°C (Trisos *et al* 2022). In terms of food security, Africa is already taking a hit, with agricultural productivity that has declined by 34% since 1961 (Trisos *et al* 2022). This downward trend could accelerate dangerously, with warming between 1.5°C and 2°C, while 10 million people will be exposed to infectious diseases at the same temperatures. Over the next two decades, for example, it is estimated that climate change will cause around 250 000 additional deaths per year. This situation will be mainly due to food insecurity and related toxic infections, malaria, an increase in zoonoses, water-borne or vector-borne diseases, as well as heat-related stress (WHO 2021).

Africa is therefore highly exposed to climate risk. Large-scale droughts, floods, and their human and material tolls, considered today as episodic climatic extremes, could become the daily lives of future generations (AfDB 2015). Indeed, the trend

of precipitation in a year could vary widely from one sub-region to another. This worrying dynamic suggests increases in rainfall in East Africa, while the Mediterranean part of the continent, the western façade of southern Africa, and the north of the Sahara may face a decrease in rainfall. Highly urbanised coastal areas will be particularly vulnerable to the effects of rising water levels.

By 2030, between 108 million and 116 million people on the African continent will be exposed to rising water levels, twice as many as in 2000 (Trisos *et al* 2022). Coastal erosion would lead to the weakening of human activities rooted in ancestral practices (Bernoux & Mazurek 2015). The practice of agriculture carried out by rural areas on the African continent, as well as traditional medicine – which is based on ancient, local know-how and a particular relationship with the environment – will be impacted (Benoit 2008).

The great concern is that these impacts will not occur separately or in isolation. They will tend to reinforce each other by creating very precarious living conditions through interaction (AfDB 2015). Acting cumulatively, they are likely to undermine the development efforts undertaken so far by widening the gap between Africa and other regions of the world. Although climate change is a global phenomenon, its adverse effects are most acutely felt by developing countries in general and Africa in particular. Their strong dependence on natural resources and their limited capacity to cope with climate variability and extreme weather phenomena are the main reasons for this (Trisos *et al* 2022).

A Regional Development Trajectory under the Influence of Climate Risks

Climate change is already taking a definite hold on African economies. They influence most of the continent's productive sectors by eroding their performance. This negative impact on economic determinants is expected to increase with high-warming scenarios. Regardless of the rise in global surface temperature, the continent would face significant development risks (ECA 2017). It sets out a set of additional threats and

constraints to Africa's economic expansion in terms of security issues, scarcity of natural resources, and widening inequalities.

If the related impacts are not internalised in regional planning, they will likely jeopardise Africa's development trajectory. These impacts will be likely to reduce economic growth and widen inequalities within the continent, as is already the case. It was estimated that between 1991 and 2010, the gross domestic product (GDP) *per capita* in Africa was 13.6% lower than it should have been without climate change (Trisos *et al* 2022). This loss of growth is worrying for a continent that aspires to lift an important part of its population out of poverty, with an estimated 490 million people living below the poverty line in 2021 (UNCTAD 2021). For a decade, the prowess of agriculture, tourism, manufacturing, and infrastructure has been significantly reduced in their contribution to regional GDP. In a longer time range, from 1974 to 2008, maize and wheat yields declined 5.8% to 2.3% respectively in Sub-Saharan Africa (Trisos *et al* 2022).

These losses could be even greater in the coming years, with high-warming scenarios. For a warming level of 2°C, in the livestock sector, net rangeland productivity is expected to decrease by nearly 42% in West Africa by 2050, with vector-borne diseases and recurrent severe heat stress durations (Trisos *et al* 2022). In the fisheries sector, which is the main source of protein for 200 million people and the livelihood of about 12.3 million people, the threat is also of concern. A warming of 1.5°C would cause a decrease in the fishing potential of about 3% to 41% between 2081 and 2100, and 12% to 69% for a warming of 4.3°C for the same period regarding the level from 1986 to 2005. Tropical countries would be the most affected, with obvious socio-economic consequences.

Climate change has the potential to create the conditions for endemic poverty in Africa. For example, concerning the standard of living of African populations, high-warming scenarios will lead to a decrease in GDP *per capita* of about 15% for West and East Africa, about 10% for North and Southern Africa, and 5% for Central Africa by 2050 (ECA 2017). Based on statistical projections, a warming of 2.3°C would cause a 12% decrease in GDP in Sub-

Saharan Africa by 2050 (Baarsch *et al* 2020) and an 80% decrease in GDP above 4°C in 2100 (Burke *et al* 2015b). By 2030, it is estimated that nearly 40 million Africans will find themselves in extreme poverty because of climate change, adding to the high number of poor people on the continent.

The labour force in sensitive sectors – such as agriculture, which is 90% dependent on rainfall – is under serious threat, as is the informal sector, which accounts for 85.8% of total employment in Africa (71.9%, excluding the agricultural sector) (Trisos *et al* 2022). Besides its other values, rainfall contributes to the vitality of certain socio-economic activities and the wellbeing of the populations. While the entire population may be affected by the effects of climatic change, like drought, vulnerable groups in society (including women, young and old people who have found refuge in various survival professions) will be more affected. These groups are usually based in unsafe environments, operating mainly in the construction, transport, housework, and street sales sectors (Trisos *et al* 2022).

In general, a future with additional warming will negatively impact regional economic growth and jeopardise the continent's development efforts (Acevedo *et al* 2017). Moreover, the need for adaptation would be so great that it would divert the continent from its original strategic vision of long-term development. These projections require immediate and ambitious action to avoid reaching the point of no return. They invite Africa to further integrate the climate variable into its development trajectory.

The 'Climate-development' in-between: The Quest for the Construction of the African Model of Society

The climate issue is more important than ever in the context of exploding greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. GHG is a concern that influences all the economies of the world in general and African economies in particular in terms of impacts and new development dynamics that it imposes. It is, therefore, at the heart of contemporary issues: an inescapable reality around which country strategies are to be structured. Africa is an ecological power in the geopolitics of carbon with a low GHG emission rate representing

4% of global emissions (Ngono 2022), and a sequestration capacity now surpassing that of Amazonian forest massifs (Hubau *et al* 2020). It becomes vital to make efforts around mitigation. There is an urgent need for action if the goal of addressing climate change is to keep warming below 2°C by 2100 according to the Paris Agreement, knowing that since the pre-industrial era, the average temperature at the surface of the globe has increased by about 1.2 °C (IPCC 2019).

According to the optimistic scenarios of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the challenge is not the least. It requires a significant reduction in global emissions (between 40% and 70% by 2050), using the 2010 emission level to establish a model of an emission-free society at the end of the century (IPCC 2019). This is the responsibility of all regions of the world, regardless of their level of emissions. There is a high-carbon energy mix based mainly on gas, coal, and oil, at 40%, 21%, and 19% (IEA 2018). The continent's GHG emissions have almost doubled since 1990 (World Bank 2020); thus, the African continent is set to begin its greening while developing.

The continent's infrastructure deficit, which amounts to between 130 and 170 billion dollars per year and the development prospects that will logically consume energy, should be part of a break with the emissive dynamics observed in recent decades (AfDB 2018). It is a question of preventing the development trajectory dear to the continent from being at the expense of the climate and *vice versa*. In other words, in the face of the climate emergency, Africa must continue to grow economically in a certain sobriety in carbon and be able to meet the needs of a population – expected to double by 2050 to reach 2.5 billion inhabitants (Magrin & Ninot 2018).

This perspective is realistic insofar as Africa is a continent under construction. It is up to its leaders to make strategic choices to reconcile industrialisation and green growth (Jayaram *et al* 2021). If half of the regional industrial infrastructure responsible for the continent's future economic expansion has not yet been built (Jayaram *et al* 2021), then there is relatively easy room for manoeuvre for a climate-development orientation (Ngono 2022).

Unlike some industrialised regions of the world, for which the ecological transition is understood as the deconstruction of a productive model that has proven its worth, the industrialisation of Africa can be done with a technological leap favouring solutions with a low carbon footprint, without significant dismantling of its existing infrastructure park. In particular, it would make it possible to replace the dependence on fossil fuels with a gradual and decisive shift towards renewable energy sources, whose potential on the African continent is the largest in the world (IRENA 2019b).

A duty to act on climate and development means that the decarbonisation process must be in line with the economic growth and industrialisation of the African continent. Building a climate-development gap means moving towards a strong, competitive, and resilient African economy, part of global GHG mitigation efforts. It becomes necessary to create the conditions for such structural transformation. This should avoid risky transpositions, and be executed rationally and coherently. It would be appropriate to take the full measure of regional issues by crossing the needs, the mobilisable means, and the development trajectory of the African continent in the light of “The Africa we want”¹ (AUC 2015).

Priority Sectors for Restructuring a Regional In-between Development Model

Climate change does not leave much choice and requires a transformation of the current model of society. In this context, Africa is the most vulnerable and economically backward continent. It is therefore more solicited by challenges that are more than ever linked. Indeed, the consequences of climate change are a source of various fragility. They are already amplifying in some territories the socio-economic, political, and ecological difficulties facing the African continent. This situation should lead it to increase its ambitions and define an in-between position that protects it from climate risks and promotes its

1 “The Africa We Want” is linked to Agenda 2063 – the long-term development blueprint of the African Union which was developed between 2013 and 2015 through an inclusive and consultative process culminating with seven aspirations.

economic emancipation. This positioning should be accompanied by an ability to rethink its development trajectory and involves a review of production and consumption processes to align them with sustainability requirements.

By questioning the various emissive sectors and restructuring them, issues around climate change place the continent at a crossroads by allowing it to initiate an economic and ecological transition (Jayaram *et al* 2021). Through this climate-development question, the energy and manufacturing sectors are called upon to get a makeover. On the energy issue, Africa has a comparative advantage over the rest of the world in greening by hosting the most significant renewable energy resources. For illustration, Central Africa is renowned for its hydraulic potential; East Africa, for its part, spreads its geothermal potential along the Rift Valley; North and West Africa stand out for their strengths in terms of solar energy, while coastal areas are characterised by their wind potential (IRENA 2019b).

By choosing renewable energies, Africa could record fewer constraints on energy transition and establish global leadership on the issue. Projections by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA n.d.), as well as those of the International Energy Agency (IEA n.d.), share the optimism that Africa will be nearly 70% powered by renewable energies in a sustainable transition scenario by 2030 (Birol 2022).

The low carbon content in the energy sector is expected to be consistent with the 7th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG7) and the regional development goals. The imperative of energy transition should then meet that of development in a logic that fills the optimal conditions at different stages and times. This means that Africa should move towards a volume of substantial investments estimated at more than \$190 billion per year in the energy sector between 2026 and 2030, two-thirds of which would be based on renewable energies (Birol 2022). The share of investment in the projected energy sector on regional GDP would reach 6.1% in a scenario of sustainable transition of the continent, a level slightly above the average of emerging and developing economies (Birol 2022). To prevent any challenges, capital

markets and international and local financial institutions must be mobilised by creating an adequate investment framework for Africa's energy transition (Berahab 2019). The AU should be alert to this responsibility and respond effectively.

The African manufacturing sector accounts for about 40% of regional emissions. These may double in the absence of decarbonisation efforts. Although it is low in emissions compared to other regions, the status quo cannot be maintained. Under this assumption, African emissions would increase from 440 megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (Mt eq. CO₂) currently, to 830 Mt eq. CO₂ by 2050 (Jayaram *et al* 2021). This dynamic would have far-reaching consequences for African economies for two main reasons. On the one hand, it would be rowing against the current global emission reduction objectives; and on the other hand, it would be disadvantageous for the continent in terms of competitiveness when international markets are gradually integrating sustainability requirements in terms of standards to be respected (Jayaram *et al* 2021).

This sector must then be part of a dynamic of green growth. It could develop by keeping a low-carbon profile while consolidating its competitiveness on a global scale. This posture assumes that African countries align their nationally determined contribution (NDC) commitments with the global average. This ambition is followed by additional public policies and private actions to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. In this logic, the Pan-African dynamic based on the Common African Vision of climate change, the AU Action Plan for Green Recovery, and the recent institution of African climate summits take on their full meaning to raise the African climate ambition and significantly influence international governance. In this proposition, the African manufacturing industry would tend towards a reduction in its emissions of 56% or even towards carbon neutrality in 2050 compared to 2018 (Jayaram *et al* 2021). However, this dynamic of low-carbon development driven towards virtuous neutrality is expensive. It would require a colossal additional investment of nearly \$2 trillion in the energy and industrial sectors by 2050 (Jayaram *et al* 2021).

Operationalisation of a 'Climate-Development' In-between: A Question of Multi-scale Harmonisation

The structuring of this model of society with the task of preserving both the climate and the development trajectory of Africa requires the consolidation of a Pan-African vision on the issue while harmonising the scales of governance. That is why it should be coherent and co-ordinated at all levels.

The multiscale organisation is expected to be strengthened at the regional level by considering the specificities of the different geographical areas of the continent and being the subject of sub-regional and national variations. This sub-section will be approached from two themes: Towards strengthening a Pan-African climate-development vision, and the climate-development question of harmonising actions at different levels of governance.

Towards the Strengthening of a Pan-African Climate-development Vision

The Africa Progress Panel's report, 'Energy, People, and Planet: Seizing Africa's Energy and Climate Opportunities', shows that the continent does not have to choose between economic growth and a low-emissive development model (Africa Progress Panel 2015). On the contrary, it can very well reconcile these realities, which are far from ambivalent, and define an ambitious climate-development model. By favouring an offensive approach to ecological transition and intensifying the necessary investments, Africa should succeed in moving the lines. This structural transformation will be primarily the result of a regional vision and the means that Africa will want to give itself to achieve such objectives. This vision should become Africa's societal choice, given the sustainability requirements imposed by climate change, the continent's potential for transition, and its development trajectory (Ngono 2022).

The challenge of a united Africa in this in-between is to be a locomotive in a context of international climate governance renowned for its complexity. If the climate is more than a major geopolitical issue (Gemenne 2013), Africa must act and address

climate challenge for its interests. Alongside the United States and Europe, various emerging powers often prioritise global economic leadership, focusing on interests that are frequently disconnected from the expectations of an Africa increasingly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change (Aykut & Dahan 2015).

It must be assumed that this geopolitics is not devoid of the expression of state rationalities and that even the evocation of a certain international solidarity cannot be enough to put on the back burner. The expectations of financial and technological transfers can be attractive, but should not ignore the fact that a reconfiguration of the world can be made through climatic changes. This is why African action, caught in this in-between, must be structured and consolidated at the regional level in a contextualised way by freeing itself from external prescriptions. In other words, Africa should build a virtuous and sustainable model of society in its image. This is why it is necessary to be avant-garde and to initiate a proposal that ensures the preservation of the interests of the continent in the dynamic of transition as the world continues to react to climate change. The AU should position itself strategically to be the most potent African agency in the climate change conversation, both within and outside Africa.

Africa's transition policy should then be clearer, highlighting the actions to be taken to combat climate change while being part of the regional development agenda. It should strengthen regional initiatives with clear and quantified objectives. This is the direction taken, for example, by the African climate summits and the group of African negotiators working collegially under regional co-ordination, but we still need to go further by further harmonising African positions towards an African climate plan.

There is more talk of operationalising this transition with a strategy for mobilising funds and allocating them in the short, medium, and long term. This strategy should draw from the climate plans of other regions for better results on a global scale (Mohohlo & Camdessus 2015). It should then follow the logic of burden-sharing, defined by the new universality of responsibilities that recommends the efforts of all parties to

the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in line with the spirit of the Paris Agreement. This Pan-African vision must therefore be based on the African Common Vision on Climate Change and the African Union's Action Plan for Green Recovery for the 2021–2027 time range. However, it must go further. Indeed, if five areas of intervention are quite clear and justified in the Action Plan for Green Recovery and avenues for mobilising funds are mentioned (AU2021), the AU must evaluate the cost of such a vision over time, to indicate its sequencing and the possible evaluation and adjustment periods.

It is therefore a proactive action freed from ideological apprehensions about sustainable development in Africa. Thus, in addition to the dynamic that Africa should stimulate by its means, external support ramps should be established on the financial and technological aspects, with allocation timetables that will make it possible to easily structure African action. This co-operation should lead to political convergences between the different geographical areas. It is timely, as the climate is affected on a global scale, with unevenly distributed impacts that make Africa the most vulnerable space (CARE International 2015).

‘Climate-development’ Question of Harmonising Actions at Different Levels of Governance

Addressing the ‘climate-development’ in-between requires well-planned and executed harmonising actions at different levels of governance. To move towards an in-between position is to transform the African continent structurally and gradually over a long-time horizon at all levels. The major challenge facing leaders – national and regional – is the ability to pursue public policies that have a grip on time. In other words, a sustainable economic transition for Africa presupposes that the long-term vision is based on multiscale short- and medium-term actions that consolidate it (Ngono 2022). This must be thought of at the regional level and declined at the sub-regional and national levels. They would provide a roadmap for the greening of the African economy by addressing issues of mitigation, adaptation, and competitiveness at different levels of governance. It could take the

meaning of a plan for carbon neutrality and economic emergence based on Agenda 2063.

Even with emissions approaching 4% of global volume, Africa, with its current development projections and climate commitments, remains below the expectations of the Paris Agreement (Jayaram *et al* 2021). An ambitious in-between on climate and development issues should therefore take shape to lay the foundations for stronger action, which will also increase African demands on the other parties to implement the global framework convention. Once this strategic vision is decided in coherence with Agenda 2063 and the spirit of the Lagos Plan of Action, the sub-regional entities in the continent will be able to rely on it to define general and sectoral community policies that member countries will have to operationalise. Africa's disappointing performance in clean development mechanisms and their unequal distribution within the continent legitimise this harmonisation of scales of intervention by limiting intra-African competition and promoting co-operation between sub-regions and countries (Alioui 2011). Indeed, some territories need more urgent action than others, but cannot set up attractive projects or are originally less attractive according to international standards and rankings; they are harmed by international financing and climate governance instruments (Alioui 2011).

It then becomes appropriate, through an African policy that would operate in a staircase, to start from a regional vision with broad lines of intervention, to develop sub-regional policies defining community actions that are themselves part of the regional vision, and to set up national public policies that implement sub-regional policy at their level. For fair and equitable continental action, priority areas for intervention should be defined. This logic would be appropriate to situate all African countries in a dynamic of in-between. It should ensure that the specificities of the different territories are considered to move the continent towards harmonious development. It would also allow Africa to be stronger on the international scene on issues of climate and economic governance, since it operates as a block and in a structured way.

Strengthening the Climate-development Approach at the Sub-regional and National Levels

The operationalisation of the climate-development approach at the sub-regional and national levels should follow a staircase logic by drawing from the Pan-African vision and materialising it at the lower levels of governance.

Climate-development Approach at Sub-regional Levels

At the sub-regional levels, climate change policies are not new. These regional economic commissions (RECs), with an economic and monetary vocation, initially having no line of ecological public policy, have gradually embarked on these concerns in line with the ambition of the 1992 Earth Summit. Over time, they have gained importance at the level of this stratum of governance by being the subject of abundant codification. The measures that even have binding force emanating from certain bodies testify to the place taken by environmental issues within these sub-regional organisations (Ouro-Bodi 2014). It is therefore quite logical that mitigation initiatives have been particularly seized by these entities. Many are codifying them by putting in place a range of legal instruments that are slow to root out the continent of laborious energy integration frameworks. On the other hand, forest governance has been further consolidated in recent years with a fruitful concerted management of the forests of the Congo Basin (Karsenty 2020). It has enabled the forest massifs of Central Africa to become the first planetary lung in terms of carbon sequestration (Hubau *et al* 2020)

Concerning the energy issue approached through the prism of preserving the environment, this has been dealt with for decades in connection with economic development, which remains an imperative for the continent. Thus, it has always been a question of favouring an integrated approach in which the triple concern for environment, energy, and development is maintained. According to these initiatives, energy co-operation, environmental protection, and economic development must be a mutually reinforcing foundation (Ouro-Bodi 2014). Since energy occupies a central place in economic development for

many common policies, climate concerns have had no choice but to follow this logic. In other words, they have been addressed following the constitutions and other legal texts that recall the need to co-ordinate and/or harmonise energy-related policies with a view to the development of sub-regions.

To this end, the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), in consolidating its integration, has set itself the objective in its Article 4(d) of co-ordinating national sectoral policies in the field of energy. It is the same spirit that guides the member countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) that have agreed in Article 28 of the revised ECOWAS Treaty to harmonise their policies in the fields of energy. Reference may also be made to Article 13A of the Agreement Establishing the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which recommends that parties co-operate in the sustainable use and development of energy resources in the sub-region.

In North Africa, a case can be made of the 1968 Algiers Convention, which was revised in 2002 and inspired the member countries of the East African Community (EAC) to devote the exploitation of energy resources without losing sight of environmental protection. This provision is responsible for the shift towards renewable energy in East Africa. In Central Africa, energy issues are linked to two visions: a first of a general nature and a second of a specific nature. The first defines a strategy based on the Central African Energy Pool (CAEP) set up in 2003, while the second focuses on a system of green economy and renewable energies, adopted in 2012 by the ministers of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) in charge of ecology, natural resources, and sustainable development at the Conference on the Green Economy (CEEAC & CEMAC 2014).

The African sub-regional order is then addressed on these issues, even if the African productive sector is not yet the subject of special treatment in this desire for greening. By combining development and the environment in its various legal provisions, it already shines through this in-between, which enshrines that the ambitions of development and preservation of

the environment are not contradictory. However, these various provisions are not always accompanied by effective enforcement. It is then necessary to review this aspect for coherence between the texts and the actions in a position of preservation of the climate and pursuit of economic progress. This dynamic should be part of a regional vision that sets the course for African action between climate and development.

Application of the Climate-development Approach at National Levels

At the national level, African countries are gradually mobilising their capacity to protect the climate. Thus, policies are being pursued to contain global warming and to prepare territories for adaptation. In terms of mitigation, decarbonisation projects are more focused on the energy sectors and forest management. On these issues, some countries have developed ambitious strategies, while others face the problem of defining clear strategies to position economies toward sustainable dynamics.

Some countries on the continent – such as Kenya, Ethiopia, and Namibia – are doing well in the green shift through their potentialities and vision, and are becoming global references in public policies in favour of sustainable development (Birol 2022). This is the case, for example, in East African countries that exploit the geothermal potential of the Rift Valley and other renewable energy sources. Central African countries are exploiting their hydraulic potential and present low-carbon energy mixes while playing an active role in carbon sequestration through their forest massifs (Ngono 2022). The North and Southern African countries are also embarking on processes to green their energetic mix, which is mainly carbon-based. The same dynamic can be observed in West Africa and testifies to the fact that many African countries want to embark on economic models that are not necessarily carbon-intensive.

However, while these initiatives are legion and encouraging, many are not yet part of the logic of structural transformation. They are more isolated and punctual initiatives that are not part of a reformist policy (Ngono 2022). Unlike some East African

countries that are moving towards carbon neutrality in the next decades with clear strategies, other African countries still seem concerned about trade-offs between fossil fuels and renewable energy sources (Berahab 2019). Even if these trade-offs are understandable from the point of view of countries' economic competitiveness, a well-thought-out climate-development initiative is also capable of guaranteeing sustainable and inclusive economic growth that contributes to the resolution of the climate crisis. In other words, national initiatives that meet sustainability requirements should leave the framework of spontaneous sectoral policies. The in-between that African countries should be moving towards is by no means a fad. Such a posture would only be an institutional 'greenwashing' without any real impact on contemporary and future issues. Rather, it should be rooted in a real and proactive political ambition.

Conclusion

The convergence between climate and development have become a challenge for an African continent that has all the potential to start a green shift. It is part of a context directed at addressing climate change through global governance that is structured around the objectives of limiting GHG emissions. For Africa, which is low in emissions and economically lagging behind the rest of the world, it is a question of building and consolidating a model of society that reconciles economic development and climate preservation. It is based on the vulnerability of the African continent to climate change, and its development trajectory threatened by climate risks. It is envisaged through a structural transformation of the continent's highly emissive sectors and a strong and pragmatic regional vision at sub-regional and national levels.

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Since its official launch on 9 July 2002 in Durban, South Africa, the African Union (AU) has taken on the complex mantle of promoting peace, governance, development, and continental integration—building on the legacy of its predecessor, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). While the OAU championed the liberation and unity of African states, the AU expanded this vision under the broader framework of Pan-Africanism, aligning it with modern challenges and aspirations. As the AU marked its 20th anniversary in 2022, there emerged a critical need to evaluate its performance, particularly in relation to *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*—a strategic vision for Africa’s long-term transformation adopted in 2013. Understanding the AU’s trajectory requires reflection on the historical struggles that shaped Pan-Africanism, including colonialism, apartheid, and racial injustice. Key milestones such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) reflect progress, but limited advancement in flagship projects like the Free Movement of Persons and “Silencing the Guns” initiative highlights persistent challenges. This book, *African Union and Agenda 2063: The Past, Present, and Future*, undertakes a critical assessment of the AU’s 20-year record, aiming to reinvigorate Pan-African consciousness and examine the structural and political constraints hindering the Union’s effectiveness in achieving lasting peace, prosperity, and unity across the continent.



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