



Peace and security: Success of African union

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Abstract

African Union was introduced in 2002 with the vision of to build an *Integrated, Prosperous and Peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena. To implement its work, the AU established some organs to make decisions for the welfare and development of Africa* and the structure of African union were built in such a manner that it could ensure the active participation of African citizens as well as civil societies. From the starting of its beginning the main motive of the AU is to maintain the peace and security in various part of Africa which can be noted in the matters of Burundi, Darfur and Somalia. To establish and maintain the peace and security in the continent AU established the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) outlined in Constitutive Act, 2000 and the Peace and Security Protocol, 2002. In this research article, the peace and security of the Africa is highlighted. In the first part of article, the aim and background of the African Union is mentioned. The second part of chapter tells about the structure of African Peace and Security. Different organs of peace and security architecture are described in this part. Third part of the article mentions the threats to the peace and security of the continent which are hindering the growth of Africa. These threats are not only affecting political and economic developments but also the social growth of the continent. This part also focuses on the success of the African Union to promote and maintain the peace and security in Africa with the help of the APSA Roadmap 2016-2020 and also the Agenda 2063. At last, the challenges which are being faced by the African Union, are discussed. According to the 2019 Global Corruption Barometer (GCB) for Africa, based on a survey in 34 countries, about 55% of people perceived levels of corruption in their country to have increased in the previous 12 months (Transparency International 2019: 9). The article is finished on a conclusion that strict provisions should be implemented to eliminate the corruption which is the hindrance in the path to achieve a "Peaceful Africa".

Keywords: peace and security, organization of African unity, socio economic threats, APSA roadmap 2016-2020, agenda 2063, failing states

Introduction

African Union (hereinafter as AU) was introduced in 2002 by replacing Organization of African Unity (OAU) to bring a major change in the continent. Headquarter of AU commission is in in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The vision of African Union is "*An Integrated, Prosperous and Peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.*"^[1] The aims of AU are to unite the African countries and achieve solidarity between them, to develop the political integration of the continent, to promote peace, stability and security, to promote and protect human rights of African people, financial development and focus on trade and foreign relations etc. The Main Focus of the AU was on five areas i.e. Peace and security; Good governance and migration; Regional economic integration; Education or youth or employment; Agriculture and land governance.

To implement its work, the AU established some organs to make decisions for the welfare and development of Africa:

- The Assembly of Heads of State and Government,
- The Executive Council,
- The Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC),
- Specialized Technical Committees (STCs),
- The Peace and Security Council
- The African Union Commission.

The structure of AU was built in such a manner so that it could ensure the active participation of African citizens as well as civil societies; this is why the Pan-African Parliament and the Economic, Social & Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) was established by the AU. To protect the human rights and judicial/ legal matters in Africa, the organs are - African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (AFCHPR), AU Commission on International Law (AUCIL), AU Advisory Board on Corruption (AUABC) and; African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

To promote financial development to the continent, the AU established some continental financial institutions i.e. the African Central Bank, the African Investment Bank and the African Monetary Fund. Along with these organs, the AU also established the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the African Peer Review Mechanism to constitute the structure of AU. In 2013, the AU set its agenda to develop the Africa in next 50 years i.e. Agenda 2063 to achieve its aims and objectives of Pan African vision for a prosperous and peaceful Africa.

Background

The organization of African Unity (OAU), a political international organization, was established in 1963.^[2] OAU

was constituted when many African leaders wanted to speed up the process of European decolonization and achieve independence for the new nations. The objectives of OAU were to promote the unity and solidarity of African States, territorial integrity and independence, promote international co-operation, get rid of all forms of colonialism, human rights for African citizens as per the United Nations, to achieve a better life for Africans. Indeed, OAU as a continental organization provided a productive forum which enabled member states to participate actively in the matters of common international concerns and about defending the interests of continent.

The greatest achievement of the OAU was the assistance which it provided in liberation movements. Further, the eradication of all forms of colonization from the continent was the most successful achievement of OAU. In addition, the trade and financial development of Africa and the social achievements such as human rights of the citizens of Africa and refugee convention are some praiseworthy achievements of OAU. However, the organization was criticized for its failure to protect the rights and liberties of African citizens. The organization was also criticized to work as a dictator club; this is why the OAU was dissolved in AU which shifted the dictator club to people based group.

Promotion of Peace and Security

The agenda of Peace and Security by the OAU can be traced to the summit of 1990 in which a declaration had been issued to identify the negative effects of disputes on the development of Africa. The declaration came up with a framework to promote peace and resolve the conflicts between African countries^[3]. The OAU also embraced the Cairo Declaration in 1993 which generated a mechanism for the management, resolution and prevention of the conflicts in Africa^[4]. After two years of the establishment of AU, the decision to introduce ASPA was taken. From the starting of its beginning the main motive of the AU is to maintain the peace and security in various part of Africa which can be noted in the matters of Burundi, Darfur and Somalia in which the Somalia conflict can be considered the most successful operation to maintain peace^[5].

AU established the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) related to peace and security in Africa outlined in Constitutive Act, 2000 and the Peace and Security Protocol, 2002. These include the Peace and Security Council (PSC), the Panel of the Wise (PoW), the African Standby Force (ASF), the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), and the AU Peace Fund. The APSA is a key or a bluebook to prevent conflicts, for peacemaking and peace building, preventive diplomacy, humanitarian action and disaster management and promotion of democratic practices and intervention^[6]. Interconnection between the PSC and other AU organs such as the Pan-African Parliament and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, as well as with civil society organizations, is necessary for the promotion of peace, security and stability in African continent. Furthermore, the PSC Protocol synchronized the provisions of AU according to the provisions of United Nations (UN).

The APSA supports a broad agenda for peace and security in African continent which includes - Early warning and the prevention of conflicts; Peace-making, peace building, peace support operations, post-conflict reconstruction and development; Promotion of good governance, democratic

practices and respect for human rights; and Humanitarian action and disaster management.

To promote and maintain the peace and security in continent, the African leaders wanted to establish an operational structure to accomplish their decisions as per Article 5(2) of Constitutive Act of AU. In result, the APSA came into existence. The main motive of this architecture is to promote and maintain the continental peace and preventive diplomacy, mediation, and peace support operations.

Structure

The institutional framework of ASPA is depended upon the establishment of PSC Protocol, 2002. Article 2 describes the main five organs of ASPA i.e. –

▪ The Peace and Security Council (PSC)

It is the decision making organ of AU to prevent, manage and resolve the conflicts^[7]. There are 15 members in PSC in which 10 members are elected for a term of two years while five members are elected for three years. The PSC is established for a collective security and control and prevent the conflicts with the help of early warning arrangements in the continent^[8].

▪ The African Union Commission

It is the organ which is responsible for the implementation of all the decisions PSC and also provides operational support.

▪ The African Standby Force (ASF)

It is the multi-dimensional force of APSA which covers police, military and civilian dimensions. It was established under Article 13 of PSC Protocol, 2002. There are five regional and multidisciplinary brigades in AFS. It includes police, military and civilian elements, which are expected to synchronize with each other to implement PSC decisions successfully in Peace Support Operations (PSO)^[9].

▪ The Panel of the Wise (PoW)^[10]

It is a consultant body of AU which provides opinions on the issues related to peace and security of Africa such as prevention, management and resolution of the conflicts. This body consists of five members for the term of three years. The members work or provide their opinions on the invitation of PSC, the Chairperson or Commission or on their own initiative. PoW is the organization, inaugurated in 2007 to resolve the conflicts of Madagascar, Egypt and Kenya.

▪ The Peace Fund^[11]

The Peace Fund is established under Article 21 of the PSC Protocol, 2002. It is a financial body which provides financial resources to the AU's operations related to peace and security. The fund is provided to the PoW by member states, donors, civil societies, private sectors and individuals.

▪ The Continental Early Warning System (CEWS)^[12]

It is one of the important organs of AU. Its objective is to warn PSC and AU Commission timely about the developing conflicts in Africa and outbreaks of violence. Its task is to monitor the activities of the continent and collect the data accordingly and timely warn the PSC or AU Commission.

Threats to Peace and Security of Africa

There is no doubt that with the efforts of AU/OAU the African Continent is developing in every manner but there are so many threats in the continent which are hindering the growth of Africa. These threats are not only affecting political and economic developments but also the social growth of the continent. These threats are:

- Socio Economic Threats– extreme poverty, income inequality, low human development.
- Demographic Threats– youth unemployment, population burst.
- Environmental Threats– drought and flood in the continent.
- Deficiency in Governance– irresponsible nature of states, corruption, lack of accountability, violence, election related disputes.
- Border Disputes and Weak Governance – cross border disputes, weak cross border governance and weak defense infrastructure of continent.
- Organized Crimes and Transnational Threats– terrorism, human and drugs trafficking, smuggling and unsafe route for migrants.
- Unwanted external interference – countries like Yemen and Libya affect the continent.

Success of AU to promote Peace and Security

In 2002, the AU started implementing the APSA as per the PSC protocols. Since then, the AU has achieved tremendous success not only to establish APSA organs but also used them for the prevention of conflicts, manage conflicts and resolve them with the objective to promote and maintain peace and security in the continent. To achieve the success the APSA Roadmap 2016-2020 was presented showing the continued resolution of further development by addressing security issues and a contribution to make a peaceful Africa.

^[13] The roadmap (2016-2020) is a document which creates a strategy on the challenges and achievements resulting from the execution of earlier APSA Roadmap (2011-2013) ^[14]. The foundation of this roadmap is “Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation related to Peace and Security in 2008. The Roadmap was accordance with the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration adopted by the 21st ordinary session of the assembly of heads of States and Governments of AU on 26.05.2013 ^[15].

Another achievement of the AU is to Agenda 2063 which aim is to eradicate all the violence and war conflicts from the continent. To fulfill this objective, the union promotes “Dialogue Based Mechanisms” for the prevention of conflicts and resolution. In this regard, it is mandatory to reduce military resources from the continent and handle the functioning mechanism in such a manner that promotes peace and tolerance among the people of Africa. To achieve this, the AU adopted the theme for 2020 i.e. ‘Silencing the Guns - Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa's Development’, the lead project of Agenda 2063 ^[16].

In 2017, the AU Border Programme (AUBP) was produced as a part of African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) to prevent the border conflicts and to maintain the peace and security. There was also constituted and established the African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL) ^[17] to promote and maintain the peace and security in the continent.

In 2020, several civil conflicts arose and the AU tried to end the conflicts and unite the nations.in this regard, “AU has

been actively involved in negotiations around the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam in order to achieve a ceasefire in Libya and promote peace in South Sudan.” ^[18]

Another success for the Union is the political, technical and strategic support to the operations which is being given by the AU and PSC Council and executed by the member states in partnership with Regional Economic Communities (RECs)/Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RMs). The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) can be cited here as an example of success for AU.

Overall, AU is successful to boost cooperation, unity and democracy in the continent including making efforts to diminish conflicts. Africa is not only developing in the areas of culture and education but also flourished in the area of trade nationally and globally. In this regard, the trade between Africa and China is notable: “trade between China and Africa almost doubled between 2020 and 2021, and over the last 20 years trade between China and the region has increased twenty-fold.” ^[19] AU is also made commitments to promote gender inequality and the empowerment of women in the continent. Mostly countries have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); and in Africa more than half states have ratified the African Union’s Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa. Other milestones is the African Union’s declaration of 2010–2020 which has been announced as the African Women’s Decade. The remarkable achievement of AU is the establishment of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) ^[20] to develop good governance in the African continent. APRM was introduced in 2003 by the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC) for self-monitoring the performance of governance ^[21]. There is a big participation of the African Peer Review Mechanism, a self-assessment tool which evaluates the member states on the basis of their successes and failures ^[22]. The aim of the APRM is to encourage member countries to get expertise in governmental practices so that inclusive, sustainable and economic development/growth and integration can be achieved.

Challenges

The African Continent was continuously suffering from the crisis and conflicts. The violent conflicts affected badly not only the political and social development but also the economic development of the continent. Mostly the disputes were about the cross border dimensions and can only be resolved through the arbitration and mediation, with mutual cooperation. Despite the success of Burundi mission, no lessons were learned to tackle the peace support operations (PSO) and to make the AU more effective. The main reason of failure to prevent the conflicts in Africa is slow classification, lack of funds, poor coordination between the organization and the countries, poor arrangements, poor coordination between the military and the political units, overall a poor management of AU headquarters which can be considered a big reason for not fulfillment the motive to maintain peace and security by the AU. Unfortunately, beside of all the efforts of AU, Fifty two recognized violent conflicts took place in more than 30 African countries in 2017 ^[23]. These threats impose the danger of life and integrity of the citizens and destabilize the Governments.

A big challenge for Africa is “Failing States” such as

Somalia, Chad, Sudan, Zimbabwe and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The weak governance of these countries along with irregular arms conflict between non state rebellion groups on the basis of religion and custom are a real problem of Africa. Furthermore, the large portions of state territories and the weak defense system and policing allowed the insurgent group such as the Lord's Resistance Army to illegally enter in the premises which are a threat against the governments and the humanity. The main challenge before the AU is the lack of funds. The Union's success is always overshadowed by the weak financial circumstances. Dependency on the donors made the Union weak and slow and this is why the AU is lagging behind to maintain peace and security in the ratio it was expected.

The corruption of African leaders and executive officers like police is increasing day by day. "According to the 2019 Global Corruption Barometer (GCB) for Africa, based on a survey in 34 countries, about 55% of people perceived levels of corruption in their country to have increased in the previous 12 months (Transparency International 2019: 9)." [24]

The GCB reported that these perceptions were higher in the countries such as DRC (85%), Sudan (82%) and Gabon (80%). There are groups and institutions which are more corrupt across the Africa included the corruption ratio of police 47%, government officials 39%, parliamentarians and business executives 36% and offices of the president or prime minister 34%.

As per the UN women Organization [25] the poverty rates in Africa s still high and the women in the continent feel themselves insecure. Poorly paid jobs and fewer opportunities to grow for women create hindrance in the development of Africa. no doubt, that number of women in Africa are contesting in elections but the electoral based violence is also increasing and a big issue of today for AU.

Conclusion

The AU established APSA to promote and maintain peace and security in Africa. Unluckily, the AU received improper and insufficient financial resources and weak governance which proved to be a big barrier for the union in the way to promote peace and security in continent. Further, the uncontrolled corruption did not provide a chance to Africa to flourish which is a great concern for AU today. Making delays in decisions by PoW, unsynchronized data and late implementation are also the reason of failure of AU. The focus of the AU is to make plans on papers but implementation of those plans on the ground of practicality is not resulting in the expected outcome. The AU need to between its field working and plans on papers. AU should make the straight, quick and easy provisions for PoW to imply with their warnings, suggestions and ideas. Furthermore, AU Commission should make strict provisions to eliminate the corruption against the police, leaders and any person who is becoming a part to spread corruption and creating a hindrance in the path to achieve a "Peaceful Africa".

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