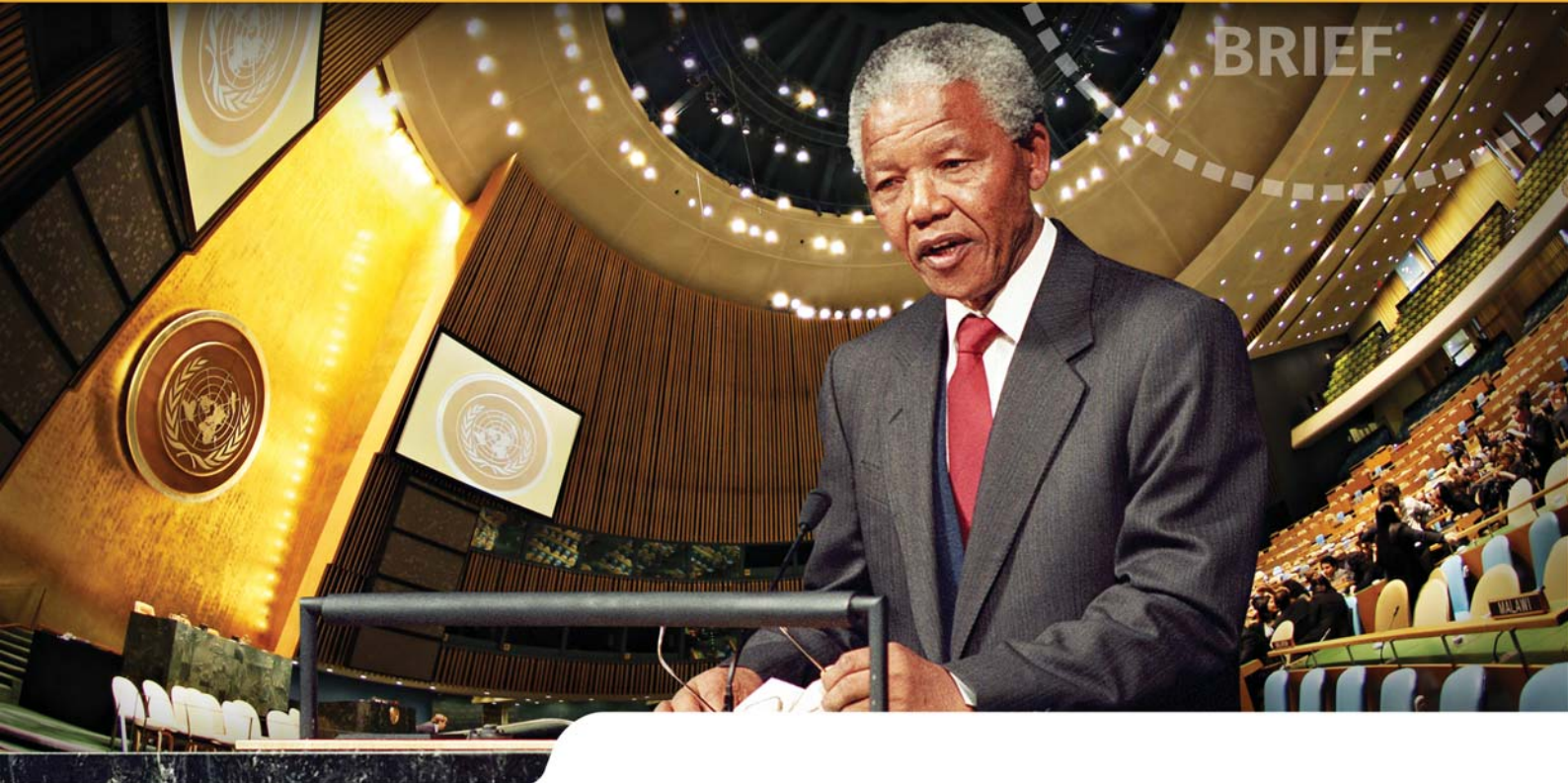


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POLICY BRIEF



CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

AFRICA, SOUTH AFRICA, AND THE UNITED NATIONS' SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

Erinvale Estate, Cape Town, South Africa

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Introduction

The Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR), Cape Town, South Africa, hosted a policy advisory group seminar at Erinvale Estate, Western Cape, South Africa, from 12 to 13 December 2012 on "Africa, South Africa, and the United Nations' (UN) Security Architecture".

In December 2012, South Africa completed its second two-year term (2011-2012) as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, after its earlier tenure in 2007-2008. The Cape Town seminar convened about 30 leading practitioners, civil society actors, and scholars, from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the United States (US), to assess South Africa's current and past performance on the Security Council. The meeting, which focused in particular on the institutional dynamics that help to shape the work of the Council, also crafted concrete policy recommendations for strengthening the diplomatic role adopted by Tshwane (Pretoria) and promoting Africa's interests at the UN and other international fora.

1. The Political Dynamics of the UN Security Council

The UN Security Council's decision-making remains driven by the parochial interests of its five veto-wielding permanent (P-5) members – the United States, China, Russia, France, and Britain. Although the US plays a leading role on the Security Council, Washington and Paris have differed in their approaches to crises in Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Syria, with France favouring more interventionist responses. Tensions between the P-3 (the US, France, and Britain) and the P-2 (Russia and China) have become more pronounced since the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) intervention in Libya in 2011, with Moscow and Beijing thrice vetoing Western-sponsored draft resolutions on Syria in 2011-2012.

Although eight out of 15 UN peacekeeping operations are currently deployed in Africa, the Security Council has been reluctant to establish clear modalities for engagement with the African Union (AU) on such interventions. Annual consultations between the 15-member AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the 15-member UN Security Council are presented as meetings with individual members of the UN Security Council rather than with the organ as a whole. Africa's influence on the Security Council is also inhibited by a lack of consensus and coordination among the AU's 54 member states. In March 2011, South Africa, Nigeria, and Gabon voted for Security Council Resolution 1973 authorising the use of force against Libya in the absence of clear AU guidance. In 2013, Morocco, Rwanda, and Togo are unlikely to constitute a sufficiently strong African presence on the Council. Rwanda has also been accused of intervening in the DRC, while Morocco's presence could obstruct progress on Western Sahara, a territory which it has occupied since 1975.

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UN PEACEKEEPERS IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO IN FEBRUARY 2013.

Photo - AFP
Image source - Mail and Guardian
<http://mg.co.za/article/2013-02-15-00-tanzanian-led-anti-rebel-force-in-drc-given-teeth>

2. Africa and the Reform of the UN Security Council

It is extremely unlikely that negotiations on UN Security Council reform – ongoing since 1994 – will end soon in a grand bargain on composition and membership. About 75 percent of the UN's 92,541 peacekeepers are deployed in Africa, while 60 percent of the UN Security Council's deliberations are focused on the continent. Yet, it remains one of only two regions in the world (the other being Latin America) without permanent representation on the world's most powerful diplomatic body. Africa has arguably become hostage to its own maximalist position – reflected in the 2005 Ezulwini Consensus – in favour of two additional African permanent members with veto power to add to its existing three rotating seats.

African governments could leverage their membership of the Council's various working groups and sanctions committees to exert greater influence over its decisions. However, countries have been generally reluctant to exploit such opportunities. The P-5 control the penmanship of Council resolutions and have used discussions on working methods to delay any serious reforms. There has also been a tendency towards outsourcing crisis management to informal groups and expert panels that lack proper accountability to the full membership of the Council. In addition, there has been an overemphasis on the enforcement powers of the UN Security Council. African countries should advocate use of the full repertoire of tools in the world body's Charter to address conflicts on the continent. The African Group could also coordinate better with other regional blocs to advance the continental agenda for UN reform.

“The permanent five members of the UN Security Council control the penmanship of Council resolutions and have used discussions on working methods to delay any serious reforms”



THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL MEETS IN APRIL 2012.

Photo - UN Photo
Image source - UN Tribune
<http://untribune.com/post/22342764801/the-nuclear-armed-un-security-council>

3. The African Group at the United Nations

The 54-member African Group at the United Nations accounts for over a quarter of the 193-member UN General Assembly, enabling African countries collectively to punch above their weight while providing an opportunity for the continent to pursue its interests at the world body more effectively. The Group is also in a position to brief and influence the three African non-permanent members of the Security Council, as well as African representatives on other UN bodies. However, the African Group's members are occasionally treated as little more than “voting cattle”. The Group lacks a clearly defined common purpose, and its cohesiveness has often been challenged by the lack of a mechanism to ensure continuity of leadership.

Although the African Group is mainly comprised of all the AU member states at the UN, it is not an arm of the continental body, and includes Morocco, which never joined the African Union. Consequently, the role of the AU at the Group has been confined to one of influence rather than control. Furthermore, the Group's recommendations are non-binding and are not always respected by individual African member states, even though decision-making is consensual. The accountability of the three African non-permanent members on the UN Security Council to the African Group is also weak, while the AU and the UN secretariats sometimes bypass the Group in their consultations.

6 Africa lacks a core group of the “able and willing” at the AU Peace and Security Council, which could act in coalition and with the consensus of others to draft key initiatives and to drive security cooperation with the UN



A UGANDAN SOLDIER SERVING WITH THE AU MISSION IN SOMALIA (AMISOM) KEEPS WATCH IN MOGADISHU IN FEBRUARY 2012.

Photo - AU/UN IST Photo / Stuart Price
Image source - AMISOM
<http://amisom-au.org/2012/02/ugandan-troops-serving-in-somalia-celebrate-ugandan-peoples-defense-forces-31-years-in-existence/>

4. The African Union and the United Nations

Notwithstanding Chapter VIII of the UN Charter on regional arrangements, cooperation between the AU and Africa’s sub-regional organisations and the UN Security Council on issues affecting the continent has been perfunctory. Without proper engagement, peacekeeping missions in Africa risk losing their value and credibility, as demonstrated by the continuing deficiencies of the UN Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). Hybrid peacekeeping, as embodied by the current African Union/UN Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), could improve the legitimacy and effectiveness of peacekeeping operations in Africa, though powerful members of the UN Security Council and the world body’s Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) remains hostile to such missions. For its part, the AU, too, needs to take its oversight of operations conducted jointly in its name more seriously to ensure their effectiveness.

Neither the UN Office to the AU in Addis Ababa nor the AU Permanent Observer Mission at the UN in New York possess the capacity and remit to create a genuine partnership between the two organisations. Moreover, to build proper synergy between the continental and world bodies, the dominance of the P-5 has to be addressed. Africa lacks a core group of the “able and willing” at the AU Peace and Security Council, which could act in coalition and with the consensus of others to draft key initiatives and to drive security cooperation with the UN. African governments must also forge and adhere to common positions on key issues, and strengthen their own domestic polities, sub-regional bodies, and the AU, in order to increase their leverage over the international security agenda.

5. South Africa, Africa, and the UN Security Council

During its two terms on the UN Security Council (2007-2008; and 2011-2012), South Africa promoted the broader African peace and security agenda with some success. In January 2012, South Africa promoted the adoption of Security Council Resolution 2033, which reiterated the Council’s commitment to more effective collaboration with the AU. However, continuity on this issue will depend on the political will and ability of the Council’s current African non-permanent members .

While South Africa attracted criticism for its apparently shifting positions on the crises in Côte d’Ivoire and Libya in 2011, both cases also revealed fault lines in Africa’s peace and security architecture, including the AU’s failure to articulate a clear position on Libya in a timely manner, and the lack of a common position on Cotê d’Ivoire. In addition, recourse to deferral of the International Court’s (ICC) arrest warrant against Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir in 2011-2012, risks losing the gains that South Africa and Africa have made in the fight against impunity and for accountability of human rights violations on the continent.

Furthermore, South Africa's experience on the Security Council demonstrates that African countries have to leverage different groups at the UN on different issues in order to strengthen their influence within the Council. Even in configurations such as the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS) bloc, homogeneity is lacking: while the five countries were eventually united in criticising NATO's use of Security Council Resolution 1973 to achieve "regime change" in Libya, differences emerged over their responses to Syria.

6. Africa and the UN Peacebuilding Commission

The UN Peacebuilding Commission, which was created in 2005, was crippled at birth by its founding mandate which excluded a wider definition of peacebuilding to prevent conflicts from arising in the first place, as this was seen by the P-5 as encroaching on the Security Council's role. All six countries on the Commission's current agenda are African: Burundi, Sierra Leone, the Central African Republic (CAR), Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, and Guinea. The body's engagement with these states is shaped by the principle of national leadership of the process, although the resulting initiatives have proceeded in fits and starts, particularly when the government concerned has been unstable. By December 2012, the UN's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) had raised \$500 million. However, critics have noted that the Commission has no influence over the market-driven approaches of larger donors such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which can sometimes undermine peacebuilding efforts. The Peacebuilding Commission has also been criticised for promoting a "liberal peace" model that emphasises democratic elections and market liberalisation rather than tackling underlying causes and changing the "bitter minds" that often sustain conflicts. However, others have argued that expectations that the Commission could successfully address the root causes of conflicts were inflated, given that even civil societies in the countries themselves often cannot resolve such issues. The Peacebuilding Commission's effectiveness is further circumscribed by its isolated position within the UN: neglected by the UN Security Council, and disconnected from the world body's preventive diplomacy and peacekeeping efforts.

“The Peacebuilding Commission has been criticised for promoting a model that emphasises democratic elections and market liberalisation rather than tackling underlying causes and changing the “bitter minds” that often sustain conflicts”



CAMPAIGN POSTERS FOR INCUMBENT PRESIDENT ERNEST BAI KOROMA, IN FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE IN NOVEMBER 2012.

Photo - Associated Press/Rebecca Blackwell
Image source - Yahoo! News
<http://news.yahoo.com/sierra-leone-election-key-moving-beyond-war-090942500.html>

The case of Somalia shows that peacebuilding is a fluid and continuous endeavour that seeks a shift in attitudes on the ground in order to prevent a renewal of hostilities. The creation of an inclusive, ongoing Somali-Somali dialogue, within a secure environment provided by the 17,000-strong AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) has been integral to beginning the long-term process of political reconciliation in the fragile country. However, the continuing ad hoc nature of the relationship between the key African and international actors engaged in the peace process, does little to support its sustainability.

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Policy Recommendations

The following 10 policy recommendations emerged from the policy advisory group seminar.

1. African states must find sustainable ways of funding peacekeeping missions on the continent, as well as of operationalising the African peace and security architecture (APSA), and should reduce the continent's dependence on external donors, who fund 97 percent of its security operations. The African Union, as well as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), could learn from the example of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which has used a community levy to raise resources for its peacekeeping and related activities;
2. Although there is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that governs the relationship between the AU and Africa's sub-regional organisations, problems have persisted in implementing the principle of subsidiarity, and greater clarity is required from African governments on the relationship between sub-regional organisations, the AU Peace and Security Council, and the UN Security Council. The recommendation of the Romano Prodi-led 2008 joint African Union-United Nations panel on peacekeeping, for the world body to provide funding for AU-led, UN-authorized missions for up to six months and then take them over, must be urgently implemented;
3. Given the current political stalemate in negotiations on reform of the UN Security Council's composition and membership, it is important for African countries to revisit the 2005 Ezulwini Consensus and consider removing the insistence on the veto (as Nigeria and South Africa had argued in 2005, and as accepted by Germany, Japan, India, and Brazil) in order to be able to enact reform;
4. African countries – in particular, the three African non-permanent members on the UN Security Council – must make a more concerted and proactive effort to chair important Council committees and working groups, and to have a substantive role in drafting the resolutions that emanate from them; in order to ensure a strong and consistent African voice on the UN Security Council, African countries need to agree on a formal mechanism for selecting non-permanent members that possess the power and capacity to serve the interests of the continent on the Council;

“The AU and Africa's sub-regional blocs are important producers, as well as consumers, of peace and security”



A NIGERIAN PEACEKEEPER WITH THE AU/UN HYBRID OPERATION IN DARFUR (UNAMID) PREPARES FOR A NIGHT PATROL IN MARCH 2008.

Photo - UN Photo/Stuart Price
Image source - flickr
http://www.flickr.com/photos/un_photo/5857079488/

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“ The African Group at the UN must identify and agree on a mechanism to improve the accountability of Africa’s three non-permanent members on the UN Security Council to the Group ”



THE 67TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY CONVENES IN NEW YORK IN SEPTEMBER 2012.

Photo - AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais
Image source - AL.com
http://blog.al.com/wire/2012/09/obama_summons_world_leaders_to.html

5. The African Group must identify and agree on a mechanism to improve the accountability of Africa’s three non-permanent members on the UN Security Council to the Group, which usually endorses their election to the body. The African Group should be given a place within the structure of the AU - including through the appointment of an advisor to the AU Chair on issues affecting the continent at the UN. The AU Commission in Addis Ababa needs to provide a stronger lead to forge common African positions on key issues and communicate them in a timely manner to African delegations in New York;
6. The intellectual capacity and technical knowledge of the African Group’s member states needs to be improved to increase the effectiveness of their participation across various UN bodies. African non-governmental organisations (NGOs) can play an important role in this by advocating the appointment of competent and activist ambassadors to the world body, and by offering research and training support to members of the African Group to enhance their decision- and policy-making capacity, and to improve their negotiation strategies in advance of crucial meetings at the UN;
7. Africa’s heads of state must capacitate and revise the mandate and role of the AU’s New York-based Permanent Observer Mission to make it more effective. The annually appointed Chair of the AU Assembly (rotating heads of state) should keep the African Group informed about the decisions being made by the organisation in Addis Ababa;
8. The AU should strengthen its secretariat-to-secretariat relations by according the Chair of the AU Commission the power to appoint her/his own Commissioners - just as the UN Secretary-General appoints Undersecretaries-General;
9. Given the growing role of civil society groups in new and emerging powers such as Brazil and India, and their desire to make international organisations more responsive to particular issues and challenges, South Africa should consider expanding its ongoing engagement with these groups. Working with this expanding “global” civil society could help Africa leverage its voice at the UN, could incentivise the P-5 to act more consistently in the continent’s interests, and could build popular support in the longer term for reform of the UN; and
10. The UN Peacebuilding Commission should seek to deepen its relationship with the UN Security Council and its Secretary-General to increase its influence within the world body, and should co-ordinate more effectively with national governments and civil society to promote wider understanding of its work.