Towards a Continental Early Warning System for Africa

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INTRODUCTION

Through the African Union's Constitutive Act and the Protocol on the Peace and Security Council (PSC), Member States have mandated the AU and its PSC to fulfil a substantially enlarged and much more robust role in the prevention, management and resolution of African conflicts than was the case with the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). One of the instruments through which the AU Commission is to operationalise this mandate is the yet-to-be-established Continental Early Warning System (CEWS). CEWS will link the AU Commission in Addis Ababa with the various Regional Economic Communities (RECs) such as Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), as well as with research institutes and civil society organisations.

This paper aims to provide an overview of CEWS essential characteristics as a continental system, and present a brief history of the development and current status of the System. This provides a useful background against which we can review and measure progress at the regional level, primarily looking at developments in West Africa, the Horn, Central and Southern Africa where early warning systems are in varying stages of development. The introductory section provides an essential backdrop to the subsequent discussions, explaining the key differences between intergovernmental early warning and national intelligence systems, and the relationship between early warning, conflict prevention and governance. A concluding section offers some thoughts on the challenges ahead and the way forward.

The Differences between Early Warning and Intelligence Systems

Perhaps the first point of departure in any discussion on the CEWS is to underline the fact that the concepts of early warning and conflict prevention are different to the concept of traditional intelligence and state security.

Early warning systems are rooted in new 'human security' thinking about the responsibility of leaders to protect ordinary people, and have traditionally been located within technical agencies that forecast food shortages and within the non-governmental sector where they found wide application among humanitarian relief agencies. By definition, early warning systems use open source material and generally aim to serve human security, not national or state interests. Ironically, it is this characteristic that makes early warning systems appealing to intergovernmental organisations such as the AU that would have great difficulty in accessing (or using) state intelligence from one member country vis-à-vis another member country.

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Intelligence systems rely primarily on secrecy, situation rooms and the encrypted communication of classified information. Early warning, on the other hand, depends principally upon transparent methods and the sharing of information, even though these exchanges and the communication of results may be classified and restricted to different levels of users.[1] It follows that early warning systems tend to be decentralized and dependent upon the involvement of sections of civil society for information input and analysis. Early warning can therefore be described as a 'disinterested intelligence system' within which collaboration and information sharing is cardinal. It requires a cooperative effort at international, regional, national and local levels; no single state or organization can do it alone or retain a monopoly over it.

Similar to traditional intelligence systems, early warning information needs to be timely, accurate, valid, reliable and verifiable. But different to intelligence systems, early warning implies a much closer linkage between analysis and action. In most state systems, intelligence and operations are highly compartmentalized for two

reasons. First, to ensure the integrity and objectivity of secret analysis (ie, based on information not available in the public domain) by the intelligence community without the benefit of external 'peer review'. Second, intelligence should be divorced from action/policy so that the analysis does not merely reflect 'his masters voice'. Intelligence should not be influenced by existing policy orientations, groupthink or vested interests.

Since the purpose of early warning (as apposed to intelligence) is the formulation of strategic options directed at taking preventive action in the common (regional or international) good as apposed to the national interest, it is possible and desirable to bring these components (early warning and prevention action) closer to one another. In a sense, the transparent nature of early warning systems provides a check and balance on the orientation of the analysis – a situation not possible in the secret world of traditional intelligence analysis.

Early warning needs to consist of more than just the timely provision and sharing of relevant information. Beyond the collection and verification of information relevant to the mitigation and prevention of violent conflict, early warning requires the analysis of that information and the formulation and communication of analysis and policy options to relevant end-users. At the continental level, the end-users are the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, the Peace and Security Council and other relevant policy organs of the AU and the PSC. In this sense, the aim of early warning is to strengthen the capacity of the Commission, the PSC and structures such as the Panel of the Wise to identify critical developments in a timely manner, so that coherent response strategies can be formulated to either prevent violent conflict or limit its destructive effects.[2]

Eventually, early warning is a precondition for timely response and, therefore, also for the development of the political will to respond – although the provision of early warning in itself is an insufficient precondition to effect response. Unlike risk assessment, which often uses quantitative models to calculate the likelihood and degree of crisis escalation, early warning must be designed to anticipate rather than predict possible outcomes. Early warning should therefore enable the responsible authority to initiate informed, reasonable response strategies.

Early Warning, Governance and Conflict Prevention

Practically[3] all conflict analysis and intervention approaches share three general steps: analysis,

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assessment, and action. First, the obvious requirement is to analyze and understand the conflict; second, the assessment of trends that would allow the development of scenario's to make a judgement of 'where things are going' prior to the formulation of intervention strategies for the third step, action. Some practitioners would argue that timely communication and engagement with policy-makers represents a fourth and final step needed to close the loop from analysis to action.

In its most basic form, early warning needs to tackle: (a) Which issues (manifestations, precipitating, proximate and root causes) underpin and drive the conflict? and (b) Which factors put a brake on conflict and serve as the basis for peace? (c) Who are the main stakeholders in the conflict? and (d) What are the practical options available to policy-makers who wish to affect the emerging conflict, avoid human suffering in the short term and move toward a sustainable settlement in the longer term? Beyond this simplified presentation of conflict and response analysis lie several different approaches, opposing methodologies and competing interpretations to conflict and the factors that can serve to deflect, ameliorate or reduce violence and deprivation. Rather than engage in that debate, this paper draws upon a substantive body of research that would indicate that good governance and conflict prevention are closely linked – a relationship recognized by the OAU in the introductory paragraphs of the Cairo Declaration of 1995: "We recognize and resolve that democracy, good governance, peace, security, stability and justice are among the most essential factors in African socio-economic development. Without democracy and peace, development is not possible; and, without development, peace is not durable."[4]

The key early indicators of intra-state conflict and regional instability in Africa as elsewhere have repeatedly proven to be the abuse of power (often culminating in a coup d'etat), ethnic politics and exclusionary practices (such as those relating to citizenship in Côte d'Ivoire and the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo), human rights violations, bad governance and institutional corruption (epitomized by the regime of Mobutu in the former Zaïre), proliferation of small arms (possibly most evident in the West Africa conflict system) and the like.

The famous fact that democracies seldom experience famine because the government in a democracy is responsive to the emerging needs of its citizenry, should remind us about the clear linkage between governance and insecurity. This was recently confirmed

by the findings of the Commission for Africa, namely that governance (in Africa and elsewhere) is a key determinant of (in)security and (in)stability. Thus, poor governance dramatically intensified much of the starvation experienced at various times in countries such as Ethiopia and Sudan and the lack of food security in countries such as Zimbabwe and Malawi.

Equatorial Guinea, a country notorious for its poor human rights record and recently made famous by Africa's latest mercenary coup attempt, has boosted gross domestic product (GDP) from $164m in 1995 to $794m in 2001 without any improvement in living standards for the vast majority of its people. They still live in abject poverty despite the massive wealth being accrued by a small elite. It requires little analysis to predict that instability and insecurity will continue to characterize the domestic polity of that country until there are substantial changes in internal governance practices and by international oil companies that seek to benefit from the opportunities presented by incoherent and weak governance.

The view supported in these pages is that conflict prevention, democracy and good governance are closely related and that this view needs to inform early warning and conflict prevention efforts.

Essentially a club of leaders rather than an association of Member States, the OAU was restricted to conflict management and resolution - usually at the invitation of an affected government - rather than conflict prevention. The OAU was built on consensus and the sanctity of the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of Member States, and found it difficult to respond to emerging crises until the clear warning signals were lost amidst armed conflict, widespread human suffering and open war. The AU promises to change this, although many of the expectations regarding the ability of the organization to undertake substantive conflict management and intervention activities, beyond limited Chapter VI (in terms of the UN Charter) observation missions, are probably exaggerated, except when these are undertaken by a lead nation with commensurate military and logistic capabilities. The AU has also made steady advances in framing its legal documents within the context of human, as apposed to state, security. Subsequent sections of this paper will, therefore, review recent progress at the continental level and within various regions.

The OAU and Early Warning

The establishment of a unit for conflict early warning at continental level was formally initiated in June 1992 when, at its 28th Meeting in Dakar, Senegal, the Assembly of the OAU decided to establish the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. This decision was put into effect in June 1993 with the adoption of the 'Cairo Declaration' that established the Central Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.[5] The Mechanism was charged with the anticipation and prevention of situations of armed conflict as well as with undertaking peacemaking and peace-building efforts during conflicts and in post-conflict situations. The Mechanism's operational arm, the Central Organ, was composed of nine and later 14 Member States who met annually and formed the Bureau of the Assembly, plus the country chairing the OAU. As would later be the case with its successor structure, the PSC, the Organ operated at Summit, Ministerial and Ambassadorial levels.[6]

In 1994, the Mechanism created a Division for Conflict Management and formalised an associated financial facility, the Peace Fund.[7] The Conflict Management Division was originally tasked with the development of policy options and the co-ordination of activities in support of the Mechanism's mission as described above. To this end, the Division was expected to:

a. Collect, collate and disseminate information relating to current and potential conflicts;
b. Prepare and present policy options to the Secretary general of the OAU;
c. Undertake or commission analysis and long-term research; and
d. Support and manage political, civilian and military observer missions, and co-ordinate regional training policies to support peacekeeping operations.

The establishment of the OAU's Central Organ and its Conflict Management Division reflected the OAU's desire to focus on conflict prevention (those activities undertaken primarily to reduce the risk of violent conflict eruption) - leaving the more expensive and complex task of conflict management, peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction to the United Nations.

Imbued with the spirit of their struggle for liberation and freedom from the formal shackles of colonialism, Africa's post-independence leaders guarded their independence jealously. Hence the emphasis in the 1993 Cairo Declaration that: "The Mechanism [on Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution] will be guided by the objectives and principles of the OAU Charter; in particular, the sovereign equality of Member States, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, the respect of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States, their inalienable right

Conflict prevention, democracy and good governance are closely related and need to inform early warning and conflict prevention efforts.

to independent existence, the peaceful settlement of disputes as well as the inviolability of borders inherited from colonialism. It will also function on the basis of the consent and the co-operation of the parties to a conflict."[8] In effect, this constraint made it impossible for the OAU to meet the primary objective of the Mechanism outlined in the very next paragraph of the Cairo Declaration, namely "the anticipation and prevention of conflicts." Bound by the principles and objectives of the OAU Charter, its focus on national sovereignty and the practice of solidarity politics, coupled with a critical lack of resources, the Organisation could not give effect to its preventive intentions.

In the aftermath of the United States' peacekeeping debacle in Somalia, the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and subsequent Western peacekeeping disengagement from the African continent, the OAU expanded its proposed role from conflict prevention to include peacekeeping responsibilities – even if commensurate capabilities and actual contributions by the organisation's Member States did not keep pace with demand.

Whilst the Cairo Declaration created most of the institutions (such as the Peace Fund) and practices (such as the use of eminent persons) that were subsequently included in the PSC Protocol, it did not explicitly provide for the establishment of a unit for early warning. This was despite a general authorization of the Council of Ministers, in consultation with the Secretary General (of the OAU), to "examine ways and means in which the capacity within the General Secretariat can be built and brought to a level commensurate with the magnitude of the tasks at hand and the responsibilities expected of the organization."[9]

The first specific reference to the establishment of an early warning system at the level of OAU Heads of State appears in the Yaounde Declaration of 1996.[10]

> "We welcome the creation in June 1993 of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution which is already contributing significantly towards improving the Organization's capacity to prevent conflicts and maintain peace in Africa; - We hail in advance the imminent institution within the said Mechanism of our early warning system (EWS) on conflict situations in Africa, convinced that its establishment should be able to further improve the action of the Organization in the area of preventive diplomacy by making it possible, notably through pre-emptive action in gathering and analyzing pertinent data, not

only to establish the existence of a threat to the peace, but also to look for a quick way to remove the threat. We exhort all potential data collectors to communicate same information in time and provide the OAU Mechanism regularly with any at their disposal on warning signs of imminent conflict."[11]

The Yaounde Declaration followed a June 1995 OAU Council of Ministers meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, that endorsed a proposal submitted by the Secretary General for the establishment of a continent-wide early warning system.

In January 1996, the OAU organized a seminar of experts in Addis Ababa to brainstorm the modalities and give effect to the decision on the early warning system. The aim was to establish new networks and formalize existing ones so as to meet the need for quality information gathering, analysis and presentation of policy options, as well as timely political action by the decision-making organs of the organization.

> ## The early warning system was to rely upon close cooperation and interaction with focal points located within Member States ... and other institutions.

During the subsequent deliberations, the participants agreed that the envisaged system would be based on a coordinating facility, located at the General Secretariat capable of gathering and analyzing information with a view to facilitating decision-making and early pre-emptive political action by the relevant organs of the Mechanism. In performing its role, the early warning system was to rely upon close cooperation and interaction with focal points located within Member States as well as within regional organisations and other institutions.

A similar meeting in 1998 proposed a rudimentary early warning system consisting of an Internet-linked situation room based in Addis Ababa and the development of a system of early warning focal points around the continent. The system discussed at that meeting included the use of non-governmental organisations, universities, journalists and others appointed by the OAU to act as providers of information. In addition, two sets of indicators were discussed but not finalized, for a) the prediction of impending conflict and b) to indicate ongoing conflict.

With the assistance of key donors, the capacity of the Conflict Management Division steadily expanded to eventually include a situation room, a small library and documentation centre, regional desk officers and a 'Field Operations Unit' tasked with the organisation of the deployment of military observer missions'.[12] The situation room has not changed much in subsequent years and consists of a single large office with several

workstations for interns, maps against the walls and a number of televisions to monitor CNN, BBC and SABC Africa.

Although the Central Mechanism theoretically provided for a more systematic and institutional approach to conflict management, the Organisation's performance remained, at best, uneven.[13] In fact, a 1999 OAU report entitled 'A Comprehensive Framework for Strengthening the Mechanism' summarised progress as follows: "More than five years after the adoption of the Declaration establishing the Mechanism, the Central Organ still lacks adequate information to effectively predict, plan for, prevent and manage the complex and numerous conflicts that have plagued the region. It also lacks the capacity for in-depth analysis of strategic options on which to base its decisions."

Despite these shortcomings, the Conflict Management Division had, by 2000, become the most important arm of the OAU,[14] even though it was inordinately dependent on funding by non-African donors who supplied roughly 70% of contributions.[15] By mid-2002, just before the transition process brought about by the Constitutive Act of the African Union, the Division had 41 staff positions (of which 15 were clerical and the rest professional). Of these, 13 were financed by the OAU, 11 by the UNDP and 16 directly by donors.[16]

As part of the effort to enhance the Situation Room, a team from the UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) also visited the Situation Room in 2002 and 2003 to make an overall assessment of its existing capabilities and envisaged operational requirements, and submitted recommendations to be implemented in two phases over a period of three years. Some of its recommendations have been implemented. The Situation Room now operates on a round-the-clock basis and acts as point of contact for the AU and field operations.

The UNDPKO also called for further improvement and upgrading of the communications equipment as well as the training of the Situation Room personnel.

At the July 2003 Summit of the AU in Maputo, Heads of State and Government approved a new staffing structure for the AU Commission in line with the changed mandate of the organisation approved through the adoption of the Constitutive Act. The structure of the Commission now provided for 10 Commissioners – the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and eight Commissioners. A key change was that the previous Department of Political Affairs was divided into two separate departments: one for Peace and Security and a separate department for Political Affairs.

The overall objective of the Department for Peace and Security is the maintenance of peace, security and stability through the coordination and promotion of African and other initiatives on conflict prevention, management and resolution within the context of the UN. The Maputo Summit approved a staff complement of 53 including a Conflict Management Division, the Secretariat to the Peace and Security Council Secretariat, a division for peace support operations and two units dealing with various thematic issues and project management. However, this number excludes the various Special Envoys, Special Representatives, AU Field Missions and other initiatives (such as the 32 person office for the AU mission in Darfur) that the Department will technically support.[17]

Included in the staff complement of the Conflict Management Division within the Department for Peace and Security were three professional staff,[18] a secretary and six interns (a total of 10 staff) for the situation room. The interns provide an electronic clipping service and staff the situation room after regular office hours. The unit also produces in-house reports on an ad hoc basis.[19]

The PSC Protocol and Early Warning

In order to strengthen the AU's capacity in respect of the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts, the Constitutive Act provided for the establishment of a PSC that included conflict prevention as a *principle* of the Council.[20] The subsequent Protocol explicitly requires the PSC to perform functions regarding "[e]arly warning and preventive diplomacy".[21] Opened for signature during July 2002, the Protocol establishing the PSC entered into force during December 2003 when 27 of 53 AU Member States had deposited their instruments of ratification.[22]

Article 2(1) of the PSC Protocol defines its nature as "… a standing decision-making organ for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts. The PSC shall be a collective security and early-warning arrangement to facilitate timely and efficient response to conflict and crisis situations in Africa."[23] Article 2(2) provides that "…the Peace and Security Council shall be supported by the Commission, a Panel of the Wise, a Continental Early Warning System, an African Standby Force and a Special Fund."[24] The Commissioner in charge of Peace and Security is responsible for the affairs of the PSC and a Secretariat for the PSC "shall be established

> The PSC shall be a collective security and early-warning arrangement to facilitate timely and efficient response to conflict and crisis situations in Africa.

within the Directorate dealing with conflict prevention, management and resolution".[25]

The structure of the PSC is reflected in Figure 1 below.

Article 12 (1) of the Protocol stipulates that a "Continental Early Warning System to be known as the Early Warning System shall be established"[26] as "one of the five pillars of the PSC". The CEWS is tasked with providing the Chairperson of the Commission with information in a timely manner so that he/she can advise the Council on "potential conflicts and threats to peace and security" and "recommend best courses of action".[27] "[T]he Chairperson of the Commission shall also use this information for the execution of the responsibilities and functions entrusted to him/her under the present Protocol".[28] The PSC has a number of formal and informal systems and structures through which to effect preventive action including the Panel of the Wise and the Chairperson of the Commission, "particularly in the area of conflict prevention."[29]

The Protocol further stipulates that the CEWS shall consist of "an observation and monitoring centre, to be known as the 'Situation Room', located at the Conflict Management Directorate of the Union, and responsible for data collection and analysis".[30]

The structure of the CEWS implied in the PSC Protocol is presented graphically in Figure 2. Although early warning touches upon many aspects of the work of the eight divisions within the Commission of the African Union,[31] prevention and response affects the

> An indicator's module would, in theory, trigger some type of red light report and compel the provision of an alert to the Commission and possibly the PSC.

Directorates dealing with Peace/Security and Political Affairs most directly.

Various aspects related to Figure 2 are discussed below.

First, the diagram makes a distinction between the situation room and the process of collation and interpretation although the Protocol appears to imply that interpretation occurs within the situation room. The latter should probably be undertaken by analysts and occurs through the processes of desk research, fieldwork, networking, discussion and debate, facilitated by the necessary electronic systems. For its part, the situation room is more realistically a common gathering place for discussions, meetings and briefings, complete with up-to-date maps and other graphical displays of information and could double as the operations/communications room of the AU, as indeed recommended by the UNDPKO and the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) during separate evaluation missions to the OAU.[32]

As regards methodology, the Protocol determines that the collection and analysis of data must be based on the development by the Early Warning System of "an early warning module based on clearly defined and accepted political, economic, social, military and humanitarian indicators".[33]

Over the years, many commercial proposals have been made to the OAU and the AU about the use of cutting-edge technology by a variety of consultants, often acting through NGOs, seeking to convince the OAU to follow a particularly commercial route for real time, three-dimensional data display as an ostensible key requirement for effective early warning. Thus far, common sense has prevailed and the OAU and AU have resisted approaches that would have been patently inappropriate for an organization that only recently achieved a moderate level of external e-mail connectivity.

Gadgets and gimmicks aside, the political intent of such a module is clear. The use of some type of automated electronic process (as apposed to an approach based only on human deductive reasoning) would provide a degree of objective automation to the work of early warning. Having decided on particular indicators of emerging conflict, an indicator's module would, in theory, trigger some type of red light report and compel the provision of an alert to the Commission and possibly the PSC. In this manner, the inherent suspicion of the political manipulation of data as part of early warning could be averted and the staff of the CEWS would be provided with some level of 'technical protection'.[34]

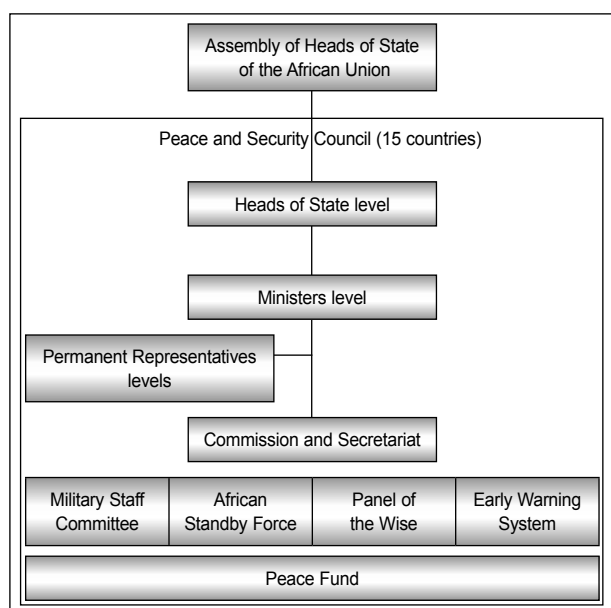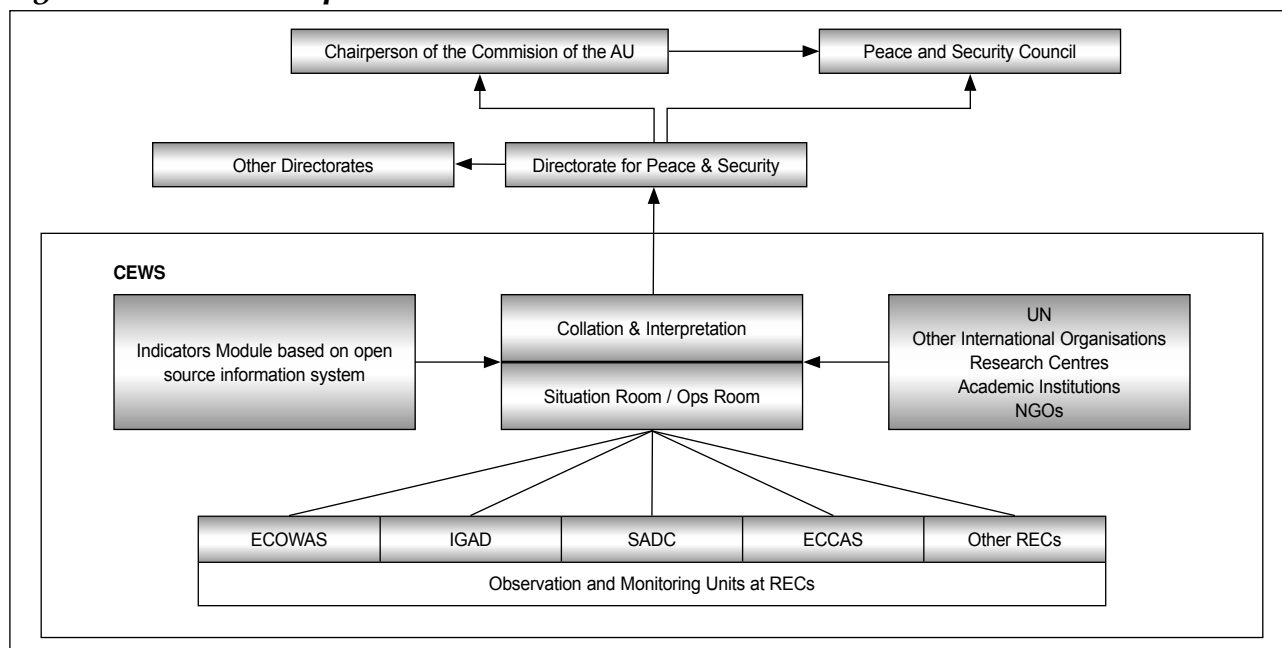**Figure 1: Broad Structure of the Peace and Security Council**

Figure 2: Schematic representation of the CEWS

Visualise, for example, the reaction should the CEWS have warned the PSC that it needed to consider preventive action on the basis that the 2005 general elections in Zimbabwe might trigger substantial internal violence. The government of President Robert Mugabe would inevitably react strongly to such a recommendation, rally its friends and allies, question the methodology and assumptions upon which the analysis was based, and place substantial pressure on the Commission and its staff to desist from 'political meddling'. What would happen if the CEWS warned that violence in the Niger Delta region and amongst communities in the northern states threatened to push Nigeria over the brink into civil war? The reaction within the Commission and from President Obasanjo, the current Chairperson of the AU Assembly, would most likely not be a welcoming one.

All of this illustrates the point that indicators module or not, the CEWS will need to be politically astute and its analysis will have to be informed by sound political judgement.[35]

Practically, the AU could adopt any one of a number of off-the-shelf existing 'indicators modules' for violent conflict and there is little objective reason to invest in the development of a complex, new, tailor-made system. At best, the AU may need to subscribe to one or two selected existing databases and news services and outsource its current news clipping service.

The design of the CEWS as reflected in the Protocol reflects the realities of a global village where most

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information is freely and readily available from open sources, as apposed to a system reliant upon confidential government sources. Hence, the CEWS is specifically mandated to collaborate with the United Nations, its agencies, other relevant international organisations, research centres, academic institutions and NGOs.[36] Such collaboration is meant to "facilitate the effective functioning of the Early Warning System".[37]

The commitment to sourcing analysis and information from more than just government sources is further evident when looking at the modalities for meetings of the PSC. Although the Protocol requires that meetings of the PSC be closed,[38] the Council may decide to hold open meetings during which "civil society organisations involved and/or interested in a conflict or a situation under consideration by the Peace and Security Council may be invited to participate, without the right to vote, in the discussion relating to that conflict or situation".[39] The PSC may also hold informal 'consultations' with civil society organisations "as may be needed for the discharge of its responsibilities."[40]

Towards a CEWS

Having approved staff for the situation room, the Maputo Summit mandated the Commission of the African Union to take the necessary steps to establish the CEWS as reflected in the PSC Protocol, in anticipation of its entry into force later in 2003. To that end, the Commission organized yet another expert workshop in Addis Ababa in October 2003 to "brainstorm on the practical modalities and steps, drawing lessons from

existing regional and international experiences on the establishment and functioning of an early warning system."[41] Despite coming up with a number of pertinent recommendations, the workshop's findings, like the preceding ones in 1996 and 1998, were not implemented and early warning at the AU remained limited to the small staff in the situation room.

Organisationally, most analysts would probably argue that the CEWS should be a separate unit within the Department of Peace and Security or Political Affairs or located within the office of the Chairperson, tasked with understanding, interpreting and providing analysis and policy options. Despite the requirement of a relatively close relationship between the provision of early warning and conflict prevention action, it is debatable whether members of the CEWS should be engaged in executing AU interventions, although advice on policy options is an integral task of early warning. While there should be constant interaction between information collation/analysis/interpretation and preventive action, there should ideally be a clear separation between these two functions if the AU wishes to avoid being trapped in its own groupthink. Early warning is vital to effective conflict management but it has to be a separate activity. If not kept separate, initiatives in conflict analysis may pay selective attention to information and analysis in an effort to see any peace initiative in the most favourable light. By the same token, unless the early warning unit is independent there will be a temptation to shape the analysis to support the preferred mode of action to be taken. Finally, the skills involved in early warning and conflict management are quite distinct from each other.[42]

That being said, for practical considerations, a strong argument can be made for the physical co-location of early warning and response activities and the dual use of a single situation room for both. Practically, the primary command and control functional capabilities of the AU situation room (or indeed at regional level) can be divided into:

- Situation monitoring, consisting of the collection and correlation of information from state and non-state sources;
- Situation assessment, consisting of the evaluation of potential and actual conflict situations;
- Information distribution and report generation, consisting of the preparation and distribution of messages to internal and external clients as well as the provision of reports and briefings for senior AU authorities;
- Planning, consisting of the preparation of action plans for assignment of resources in response to crisis situations;

- Database management, consisting of the generation and updating of databases that are important to conflict prevention/peacekeeping activity. Examples include logistics and standby rosters.

Apart from the separation between analysis and implementation, a second basic point of departure is that the primary resource for the provision of information and policy analysis within the CEWS should be a team of highly qualified and competent analysts, each an expert in his/her field and dedicated to the monitoring of a specific geographical region and/or thematic area.

Neither the Maputo decision nor recent developments regarding the staffing structure within the AU appear to cater for this requirement.

The current practice within the AU is to combine the work of desk officers on specific areas/countries with the provision of information and analysis. In other words, early warning and response is provided by the same staff and it would appear that this will remain the case despite current changes envisaged in the staffing of the Conflict Management Division.
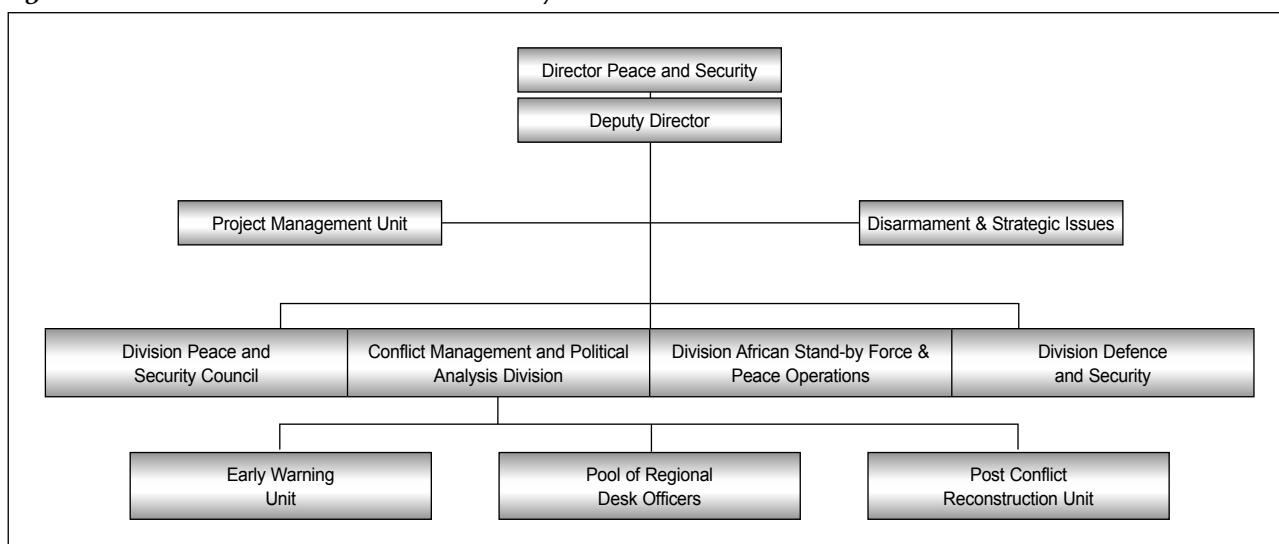
At the end of last year, the meeting of the Executive Council that concluded on 7 December 2004 blew fresh winds into the sails of the Commission when Member States agreed to a four-fold increase in the budget of the Commission from US$43 million for 2004 to US$158 million (including US$75 million for peace and security and US$63 million for the AU's administrative costs) for 2005.[43] Apart from permission for some immediate restructuring of posts within the ceiling set by the Maputo Summit, this may eventually see the Peace and Security Department expand from its current staffing level of 53 to a figure of around 80,[44] grouped into three divisions. One divisions will consist of the Conflict Management Division, a second will provide the Secretariat for the PSC and a third will deal with peacekeeping.[45] Most recently, the European Union has provided the Peace and Security Department with funding for an additional 32 positions that will provide considerable additional expertise and capacity to the organization. Included in that list is one additional position for the early warning system and recruitment is currently in process. This new staffing structure means the early warning unit is now one of three units within the Conflict Management Division.

The preceding analysis would seem to indicate that the AU will struggle to translate its obligations on early warning into practice if it does not provide for sufficiently senior and capable staff to perform a

> Unless the early warning unit is independent there will be a temptation to shape the analysis to support the preferred mode of action to be taken.

Figure 3: Structure of the AU Peace and Security Division

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│ Peace and    │ │ and Political      │ │ Stand-by Force &   │ │ Defence      │
│ Security     │ │ Analysis Division  │ │ Peace Operations   │ │ and Security │
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│ Unit         │  │ Regional     │  │ Reconstruction   │
│              │  │ Desk Officers│  │ Unit             │
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separate early warning function. In particular, the head of the CEWS should be a senior analyst/diplomat with the stature of director or deputy director within the AU staffing structure if he/she is to be able to adequately present and defend independent analysis that may be controversial.

As far early warning and conflict analysis methodologies are concerned, it would be ideal for the staff composition to be inter-disciplinary. In order to adequately perform its mission, the CEWS would have to harness the skills provided by analysts with different profiles. In a recent submission to the Commission,[46] the ISS proposed a structure orientated to serve the five regions of the AU, given the requirements in Article 16 of the PSC Protocol. The Institute proposed the creation of three positions for each of the five regions: one military analyst, one political ana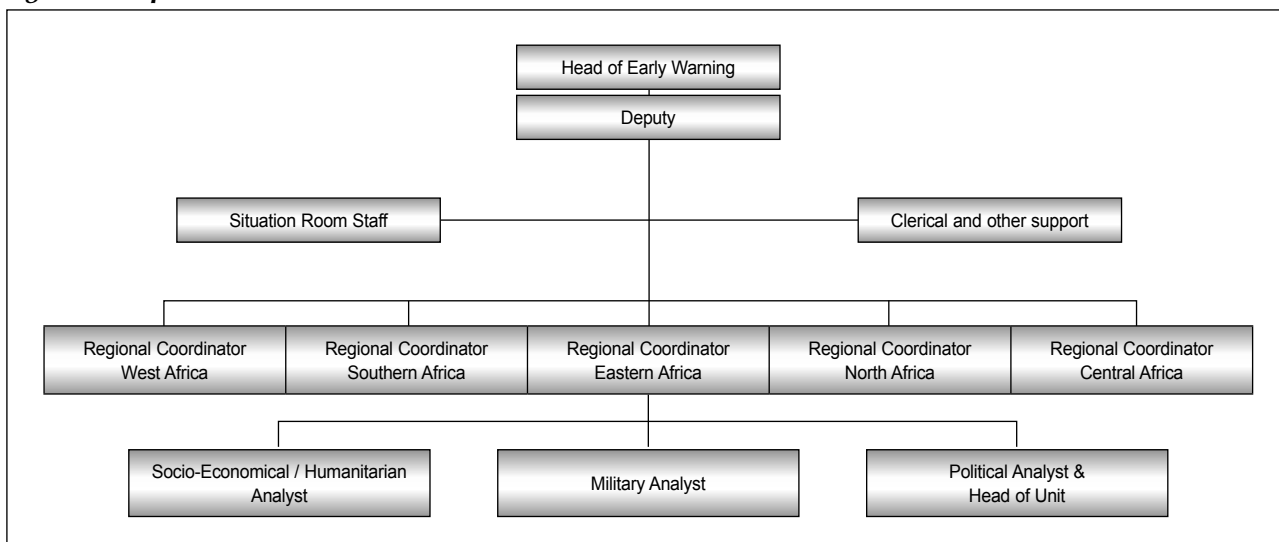lyst and one socio-economic/humanitarian analyst. The ISS also proposed that the political analyst should head up the regional section. [47]

> As far early warning and conflict analysis methodologies are concerned, it would be ideal for the staff composition to be inter-disciplinary.

Developments at the Regional Level

In line with the recommendations from earlier experts meetings and the view of a 'layered' response to conflict prevention and management, regional organisations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) are considered integral to the overall security architecture of the Union. The PSC is mandated to harmonize, coordinate and work closely with the conflict prevention and management mechanisms established at these levels. Thus the situation room in Addis Ababa is to be linked to regions, and the Protocol on the PSC creates the following obligations in this regard:

Figure 4: Proposed structure for the CEWS in Addis Ababa

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                          ┌──────────────────────────────┐
                          │     Head of Early Warning     │
                          ├──────────────────────────────┤
                          │            Deputy             │
                          └──────────────────────────────┘
                                        │
      ┌─────────────────────────────────┼─────────────────────────────────┐
┌─────────────────────┐                                        ┌──────────────────────────────┐
│ Situation Room Staff│                                        │ Clerical and other support    │
└─────────────────────┘                                        └──────────────────────────────┘
                                        │
   ┌──────────────┬──────────────┬──────────────┬──────────────┐
┌──────────────┐┌──────────────┐┌──────────────┐┌──────────────┐┌──────────────┐
│ Regional     ││ Regional     ││ Regional     ││ Regional     ││ Regional     │
│ Coordinator  ││ Coordinator  ││ Coordinator  ││ Coordinator  ││ Coordinator  │
│ West Africa  ││ Southern     ││ Eastern      ││ North Africa ││ Central      │
│              ││ Africa       ││ Africa       ││              ││ Africa       │
└──────────────┘└──────────────┘└──────────────┘└──────────────┘└──────────────┘
                          │
      ┌───────────────────┼───────────────────┐
┌──────────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐
│ Socio-Economical │ │ Military     │ │ Political Analyst │
│ / Humanitarian   │ │ Analyst      │ │ & Head of Unit    │
│ Analyst          │ │              │ │                  │
└──────────────────┘ └──────────────┘ └──────────────────┘
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a. "Observation and monitoring units of the Regional Mechanisms are to be linked directly through appropriate means of communications to the Situation Room, and which shall collect and process data at their level and transmit the same to the Situation Room."[48]

b. "The Peace and Security Council shall, in consultation with Regional Mechanisms, promote initiatives aimed at anticipating and preventing conflicts and, in circumstances where conflicts have occurred, peace-making and peace-building functions".[49]

c. "The Chairperson of the Commission shall take the necessary measures, where appropriate, to ensure the full involvement of Regional Mechanisms in the establishment and effective functioning of the Early Warning System and the African Standby Force."[50]

Probably the most developed and functional regional early warning units can be found in West Africa (ECOWAS) and in the Horn of Africa (IGAD). In Southern Africa, the plans of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) are also slowly bearing fruit while developments in North Africa remain stalled as part of the stalemate within the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU). In East Africa the East Africa Community (EAC) does not, at present, plan to establish an early warning system.[51]

The ECOWAS Peace and Security Observation System

On 10 December 1999, ECOWAS adopted the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security. The Protocol specifies the criteria and objectives of ECOWAS actions in conflict management in West Africa including: the promotion of free movement of persons; the linkage of economic and social development to security; the promotion of democratic forms of government; and the protection of human rights.[52] The Protocol also underlines the necessity to strengthen the cooperation between Member States in the fields of preventive diplomacy, early warning, prevention of cross border crimes, peacekeeping, and equitable management of natural resources.[53] The Protocol also details concepts such as peace-building (Chapter IX), early warning (Chapter IV), and humanitarian assistance (Chapter VIII).

The Mechanism relies on three main institutions:

• The Authority of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government that "shall have powers to act on all matters concerning conflict prevention, management and resolution, peace-keeping, security, humanitarian support, peace-building, control of cross-border crime, proliferation of small arms, as well as other matters …"[54]. Unlike the situation in other regions, the Authority has mandated the nine members of the "Mediation and Security Council to take, on its behalf, appropriate decisions for the implementation of the provisions of this Mechanism"[55]. Equivalent to the PSC at the continental level, the Council meets at Ambassadorial, Ministerial and Head of State level. Meetings at Ministerial level include the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Internal Affairs and Security.

• The Executive Secretariat that "shall have the power to initiate actions for conflict prevention, management, resolution, peace-keeping and security in the sub-region. Such action may include fact-finding, mediation, facilitation, negotiation and reconciliation of parties in conflict"[56]

• The Deputy Executive Secretariat that "shall initiate and undertake all activities relating to the implementation of the Mechanism"[57]

To assist the Mediation and Security Council under the Mechanism, three organs were established[58]:

• The Defence and Security Commission comprising the Chiefs of Defence Staff of ECOWAS[59] that "shall examine all technical and administrative issues and assess logistical requirements for peacekeeping operations"[60]. The Commission therefore formulates the mandates and terms of reference of peacekeeping forces, appoints the Force Commander and determines the composition of the force.

• The Council of Elders. Following a well established African tradition, "the Executive Secretary shall compile a list each year of eminent personalities who, on behalf of ECOWAS, can use their 'good offices' and experience to play the role of mediators, conciliators and facilitators".[61]

• ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG).[62] This "is a structure composed of several stand-by multi-purpose modules (civilian and military) in their countries of origin and ready for immediate deployment"[63]. ECOMOG is now being transformed into the West African Standby Brigade as part of the African Standby Force.

The criteria and objectives of the Mechanism became more detailed with the adoption, in December 2001, of the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance supplementary to the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism.

> Probably the most developed and functional regional early warning units can be found in (ECOWAS) and (IGAD).

Figure 5: The ECOWAS Structure
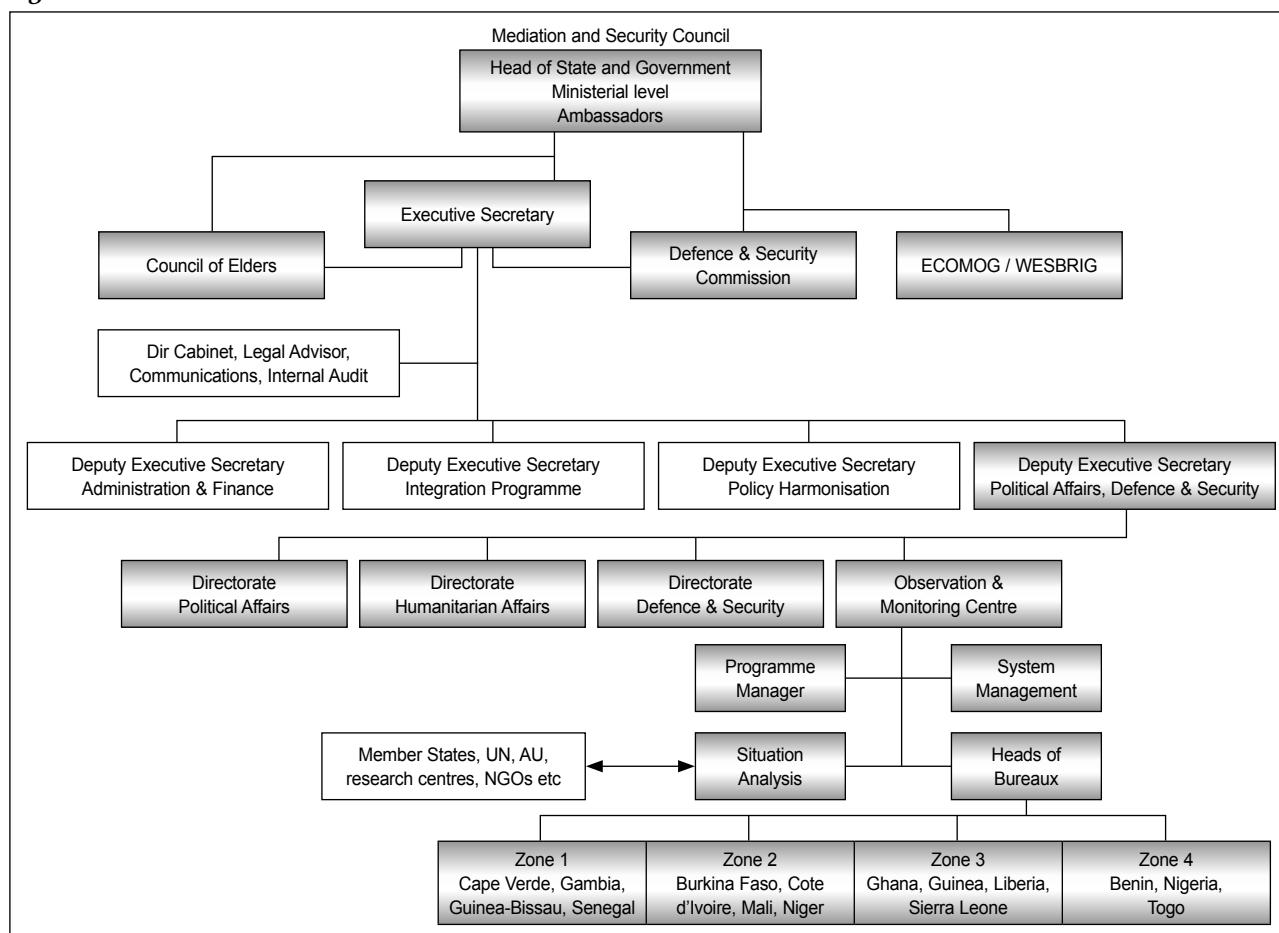
The Office of the Deputy Executive Secretary for Political Affairs, Defence and Security is the primary implementing structure, within the ECOWAS Secretariat, of the Mechanism.[64] It is therefore this structure that must operationalise the Protocol, and Article 16 foresees the creation of four departments: the Department of Political Affairs; the Department of Humanitarian Affairs; the Department of Defence and Security; and the Observation and Monitoring Centre (OMC).

Additionally, two independent offices report directly to the Deputy Executive Secretary: the Programme of Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development (a UNDP-sponsored activity to support the implementation of the Moratorium on small arms)[65], and a Child Protection Unit.

Reporting to the OMC are four Observation and Monitoring Zones within the sub-region that serve to gather information from their focal area on a daily basis through contact with government authorities, local citizens, public media and other news agencies. Each zone has an identification number and a zonal centre.

- Zone 1 includes Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau and Senegal with the zonal capital in Banjul.
- Zone 2 comprises Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali

and Niger and a zonal capital in Ouagadougou.
- Monrovia is the zonal capital of Zone 3 which is made up of Ghana, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone; while
- Cotonou is the zonal capital for Benin, Nigeria and Togo.

In 2001 the West Africa Regional Program of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID-WARP) entered into a cooperative relationship with ECOWAS in order to strengthen its capacity for conflict prevention and good governance. Following a tendering process, a civil society partnership led by the West-Africa Network for Peace-building (WANEP) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with ECOWAS for a two-year grant to achieve three strategic objectives:

- Increase the effectiveness of ECOWAS' conflict prevention capacity;
- Strengthen the coalition of civil society organisations to promote peace-building, conflict prevention and good governance; and
- Build a functional relationship between ECOWAS and civil society organisations in West Africa.

During July 2002 the ECOWAS Secretariat reported the completion of a US$5.3million communication system that linked (via satellite) the ECOWAS observation and

monitoring centres with communication stations in Member States.[66]

The OMC is responsible for data collection and analysis, and the drafting of up-to-date reports on behalf of the Deputy Executive Secretary for the Executive Secretary that identify/outline possible emerging crises, monitor on-going crises and post-crisis transitions. Currently, the ECOWAS team is tasked with producing three types of reports: Situation Reports, Incident Reports and Country Profiles but it only produces daily Situation Reports and occasionally, Incident Reports. The Country Profiles are meant to provide the situational context and background for analysis, thereby presenting the structural mapping of potential causes of conflict. At the ECOWAS Secretariat, the Director of the Centre compiles the Situation Reports and Incident Reports.[67] The OMC also has responsibilities regarding establishing and maintaining collaboration with the Member States, the African Union, the UN, research centres, major NGOs active in the sub-region, and all relevant international and regional organisations.

The ECOWAS system is at an early stage of development but represents the most comprehensive and logically integrated system for conflict prevention and management on the continent although the low level of ratification of the associated protocols must be a cause of concern. The conceptual maturity of the regional system also reflects a commitment by West African leaders to engage with the extensive regional conflict systems in the region. They have institutionalised (on paper if not always in practice) the linkage between good governance and conflict prevention through the adoption of a supplementary protocol on democracy and good governance.

Many challenges to peace and security in West Africa are beyond the scope of this paper. Practically, early warning in ECOWAS remains hampered by a lack of adequate equipment to enhance and facilitate the process of data collection, processing and dissemination, although substantial donor assistance is being provided to the Secretariat. Perhaps the most important short-term challenge for the system is the development of a shared analysis framework (or model-indicator) based on more than situational Country Reports. Such a development will help the information collection process, the analysis of information, as well as the preparation of reports in a more sustained and useful manner.

Summarizing their findings, WANEP completed a capacity and training needs assessment in 2004 (recently done again by the UNDP through their office

in Addis Ababa), and wrote as follows:

> "The ECOWAS study revealed a number of weaknesses that undermine the operationalisation of the ECOWAS Mechanism signed since December 1999. First, ECOWAS has not agreed on the type of early warning model to be used by its Observation and Monitoring Centre (OMC); second, it remains unclear what types of conflict the OMC considers political and which are humanitarian emergencies; and third, the Observation and Monitoring Centre lacks the technical expertise, well defined communication infrastructure, and easy-to-use automated early warning data base management system. Since the basics are not yet in place, the Observation and Monitoring Centre has not produced real time evidence based early warning reports."[68]

After a recent workshop at the Institute for Security Studies, the ECOWAS team was again prompted to consider the importance of introducing a level of quantitative analysis (based on the assumption that systematic early warning requires a time-series of event data which is consistent and uninterrupted). ECOWAS is now negotiating with a Massachusetts-based company, Virtual Research Associates Inc (VRA), about the purchase of a system similar to that used by CEWARN in the Horn of Africa, to which we now turn.

The Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism in the Horn of Africa (CEWARN)[69]

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is the other region that can boast an early warning system. Although very localized in its application, the IGAD system represents the most sophisticated system available among the RECs.

The creation of IGAD,[70] originally known as the Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD), came on the heels of the prolonged drought of 1984–85 and at a time of increased regional instability affecting its original six constituent members: Sudan, Somalia, Uganda, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Kenya. Eritrea was admitted as the seventh member of the Authority[71] although it is not currently participating in all Authority activities due to its border dispute with Ethiopia. The IGAD Secretariat, based in Djibouti, is the executive body of the Authority, headed by the Executive Secretary. Early warning is practically coordinated through the Directorate of Political and Humanitarian Affairs, one of three directorates.

> The ECOWAS system represents the most comprehensive and logically integrated system for conflict prevention and management on the continent.

Figure 6: CEWARN in IGAD
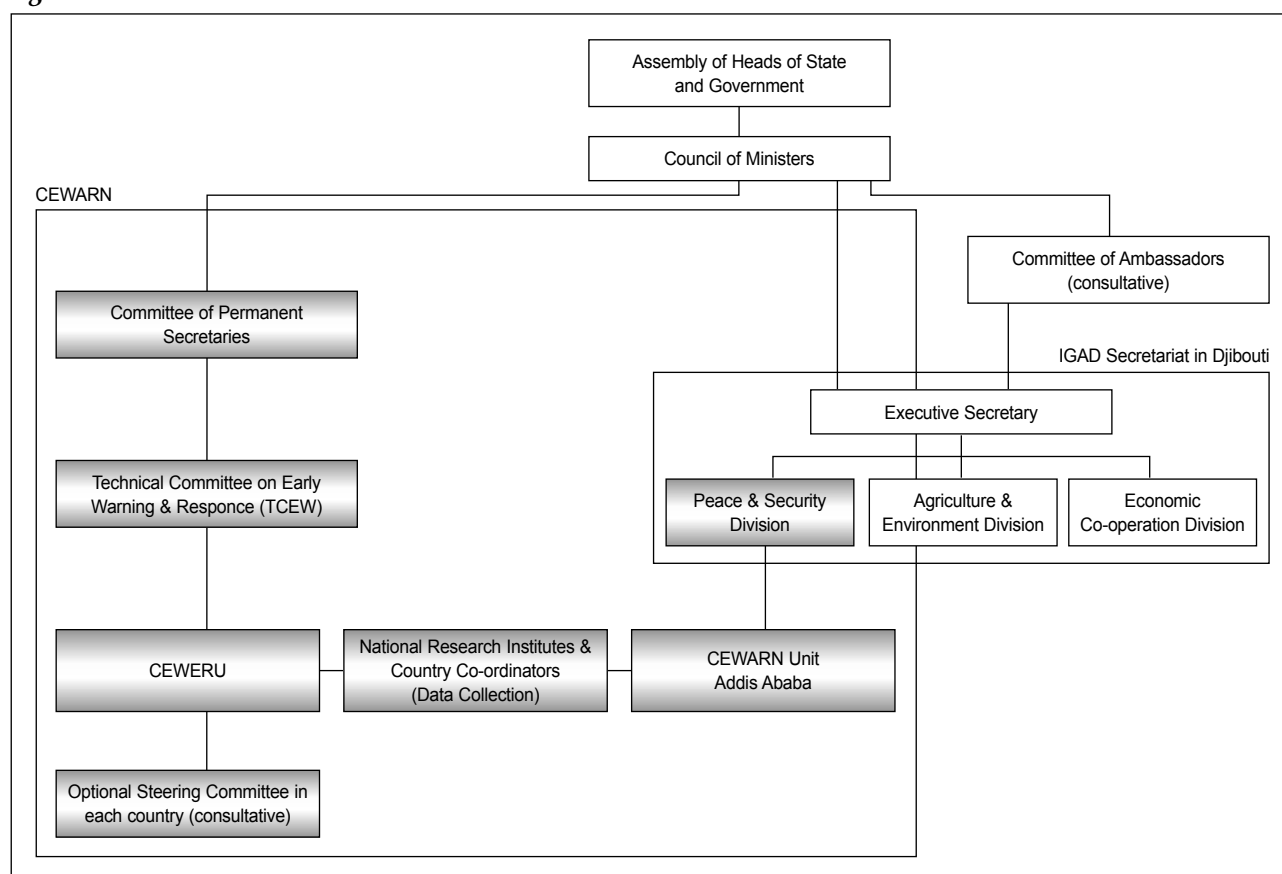
In terms of Article 7, the aims and objectives of IGAD include a commitment "...to promote peace and stability in the sub-region and create mechanisms within the sub-region for the prevention, management and resolution of inter and intra-State conflicts through dialogue." Article 18 states that Member States "shall act collectively to preserve peace, security and stability which are essential prerequisites for economic development."

IGAD[72] decided to establish an early warning unit in 2000 and gave effect to that decision at the 9th Summit in Khartoum in January 2002 when IGAD Heads of State and Government signed the Protocol on the Establishment of a Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN).[73] Following a consultative process, the subsequent central hub of the CEWARN Unit, set up in June 2003 with funding from Germany and the United States,[74] is located in Addis Ababa. The Unit now has four professional staff and a resource centre. It is intended to act as the hub and clearing house for early warning within that part of the region where CEWARN is operational. Apart from secretarial and other duties, it must also create and manage the databases on information, provide shared internet communication for the national units, develop guidelines for users, sets standards and harmonize information policies and systems, provide training and recommend mechanisms for regional responses to cross-border and trans-border conflicts.[75]

The CEWARN Unit in Addis Ababa is responsible for the actual exchange of information, encoding of information and support of the national units, known as CEWERUs (Conflict Early Warning and Response Units). Once fully mature, each IGAD member state will have a CEWERU and an optional operational steering committee that could include a wide range of stakeholders.[76]

The aim of CEWARN is to tackle the instability in the region by identifying the areas and issues that can potentially lead to conflict. Part II of the Annex to the Protocol stipulates that,

"CEWARN shall rely for its operations on information that is collected from the public domain, particularly in the following areas:
a. livestock rustling;
b. conflicts over grazing and water points;
c. smuggling and illegal trade;
d. nomadic movements;
e. refugees;
f. landmines;
g. banditry".

On its website CEWARN lists its functions as follows:[77]

• To collect information and data using specific indicators and standardized reporting (setting standards and developing common practices for

collecting, reporting and documenting.
- To analyze and verify information and recognition of crisis development.
- To promote the exchange of and collaboration among Member States on early warning and response.
- To establish and manage databases on information for early warning and response including information sharing with other organisations.
- To formulate best/worst and most likely case scenarios and response options.
- To communicate recommendations on policy and response options to decision-makers through CEWERUs.

Reflecting the difficult balance of a system that is based in civil society, yet operates within the context of an intergovernmental organization, CEWARN has three lines of authority. Decisions on political issues are taken within the normal IGAD structure (Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Summit of Heads of State and Government), via a Committee of Permanent Secretaries from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs who report to the IGAD Council of Ministers. Where CEWARN receives information "concerning potentially violent conflicts as well as their outbreak and escalation"[78] it is mandated to bring that information, through the Executive Secretary, to the immediate attention of the Committee of Permanent Secretaries who "shall review the options, and made immediate recommendations to the Council; [and] decide what parts of this information or analysis should be made available in the public domain."[79]

The Technical Committee on Early Warning and Response (TCEW) is responsible for the technical coordination of the National Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanisms (CEWERUs) in the various IGAD Member States. The TCEW reports to the Committee of Permanent Secretaries and includes "one representative from civil society or one representative from an independent research institution of each member state"[80] in its membership.

CEWARN uses a sophisticated methodology and reporting tool originally developed by Virtual Research Associates Inc (VRA). With funding from Germany and the United States, and assistance of the Swiss Peace Foundation who had been using much of this since 1998, the technology was embedded and customized at the CEWARN Unit in Addis Ababa.[81]

The CEWARN system includes alternative news-feed from local information networks or field monitors that log relevant information according to a common set of coding rules.[82] The composite measures of conflict

and cooperation used by CEWARN are based upon a unique set of indicators (currently numbering 52) designed specifically for monitoring pastoral conflict in the IGAD region.[83] The result is a set of baseline measures across a range of phenomena, including alliance formation, exchange behaviour, mitigating behaviour and peace initiatives as well as armed interventions, behavioural aggravators, environmental pressure and triggering behaviour. These baselines are derived from regular and structured field observations.

Subsequent graphs show fluctuations depending on the current numerical value of events coded as well as the number of events within a given time period.

Intention and current reality are, however, very different since CEWARN has necessarily taken an incremental approach. The entry point for CEWARN's current focus is cross-border pastoral conflict and the intention is to fully implement and expand the CEWARN mechanism across IGAD for all types of conflict over the next five years. Its current areas of responsibility are restricted to Karamoja and Somali clusters that include Uganda, Kenya, Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia. In each country, IGAD has identified research institutions or civil society organisations,[84] which in turn appoint an individual to coordinate the early warning information on conflicts and ongoing resolutions for a nominal payment.[85] The approach emphasizes comparable, data-driven analysis. The periodic structured reports are based on the precursor, and the incident-outcomes data[86] collected in the field, supplemented by background structural information when appropriate, as interpreted by the country coordinators. This is presented in text, tables and maps. During its inception phase (just over 2 years), CEWARN focused on qualitative assessments and reportage of the trends. The current focus of the Network is that of developing response options. CEWARN will then have to confront real political as oppose to technical challenges.

> CEWARN has necessarily taken an incremental approach. The entry point for CEWARN's current focus is cross-border pastoral conflict.

Given the recent and ongoing conflicts and tensions in the region, actual and vibrant information sharing between CEWARN and the IGAD Member States, a key component of the protocol, is still lacking in practice – and the Protocol is necessarily circumspect regarding the public dissemination of its analysis and results.[87]

Technically, the CEWARN system is complex and authoritative and has not yet closed the gap between analysis, options and actions. It is difficult to see how this will be possible in the longer term without the co-location of CEWARN (in Addis Ababa) and IGAD (in

Djibouti) and the development of an integrated conflict prevention, management and response system similar to that working in West Africa and under development in Southern Africa. Without the mechanisms to harness and focus political will to action by IGAD Member States, the danger is that CEWARN may not be able to operationalise its conflict prevention ambitions at the regional level. It is also relatively expensive: about US$600,000 per annum in its current configuration, although the subsequent expansion of its cover would not require the start-up costs incurred by CEWARN.[88] If CEWARN is to continue to expand, it probably has to demonstrate, to donors, its ability to engage in conflict prevention (given its substantial dependence on donor funding) and, to Member States, its practical and political utility. Once again, this requires that the region move rapidly towards the establishment of a single, integrated and comprehensive conflict prevention, management and reconstruction framework. Finally, the system also requires transparency if it is to be sustained (by external or internal funds) and given the nature of its work, it can only operate within the context of open sources and civil society involvement.

Although the utility of the CEWARN methodology remains to be proven at a regional level, (i.e. beyond the local level), ECOWAS is looking at purchasing a similar system. This would present an additional testing ground for what is ultimately an innovative and bold practical approach to early warning and conflict prevention.

The Early Warning Observation and Monitoring System for Central Africa (MARAC)[89]

In Central Africa, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) is composed of 11 Member States: the Republic of Congo, Gabon, Angola, São Tomé and Principe, the DRC, Rwanda, Burundi, Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, the Central African Republic and Chad. In 1999, ECCAS decided to establish a mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution, peace and security in the sub-region, known as "Peace and Security Council for Central Africa" (COPAX) because they realised that there could be no economic development without real and lasting peace.[90]

COPAX aims to:

- Prevent, manage and settle conflicts;
- Reduce the sources of tensions and prevent the eruption of armed conflicts;
- Develop confidence-building measures between Member States;

Without the mechanisms to harness and focus political will CEWARN may not be able to operationalise its conflict prevention ambitions.

- Promote peaceful dispute resolution measures; and
- Facilitate mediation efforts in cases of crises and conflicts between Member States and with third parties.

In June 1999, COPAX was formally integrated into the ECCAS structure, and the Heads of State and Government agreed (during February 2000) on a Protocol regulating its structure and functioning.[91] Two main particularities emerge from this Protocol:

- The establishment, within the General Secretariat of ECCAS, of the Commission for Defence and Security (CDS), a consultative organ composed of all institutions concerned with peace and security matters within each Member State;
- The attribution to COPAX of the means necessary for it to implement ECCAS's decisions in the areas of peace and security, namely:
  – A Multinational Peace Keeping Force in Central Africa (FOMAC); and
  – An Early Warning Observation and Monitoring System for Central Africa (MARAC).

MARAC is conceptualised as an Observation, Monitoring and Conflict Prevention Mechanism and tasked with the collection and analysis of data with the primary purpose of assisting ECCAS in conflict prevention, management and resolution activities.[92] Article 22 of the Protocol defines the composition of MARAC as follows:

- One observation and analysis centre;
- Zonal observation and analysis offices.

On 17 June 2002[93], ECCAS' Heads of State and Government adopted the 'Standing Orders of the Central African Early Warning Mechanism (MARAC)'. According to these standing orders, "the Central African Early Warning Mechanism (MARAC) is a mechanism for the observation, monitoring and prevention of crises and conflicts, which shall work within the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)" and that "shall be responsible for data collection and analysis in order to prevent crises and conflicts".[94]

Article 2 of the same decision defines the structure of MARAC as follows:

- A central structure based at ECCAS' Headquarters in Libreville to be composed of three offices/departments:
  – One office responsible for the collection and monitoring of information in the sub-region;

- One office responsible for analysis and evaluation of information gathered; and
- One office responsible for all matters pertaining to archives and distribution of information when necessary.

• Decentralised structures made up of national networks called 'national bureaux' to be formed in each Member State.

The decision also stipulates that "in the performance of its activities, MARAC shall collect and manage the data supplied spontaneously or at its request by Member States, international organisations, NGOs, independent experts, academic institutions and research institutions" and that "MARAC shall be granted all facilities so as to have access to the sources of information available in Member States". [95]

According to Article 12 of MARAC's internal regulation, the mechanism must submit detailed monthly reports to the serving Chairman. These reports will cover all matters pertaining to the political, economic, social, military, health and environmental situation of Member States, which could have a direct or indirect impact on the stability of the Community. The mechanism must also submit a similar annual report to the President in office.

Finally, and with regard to the complex regional and political environment in which MARAC must fulfil its mandate, multi-sector collaboration with all those working in this field at sub-regional level, as well as international level, is regarded as essential. This collaboration is defined in Article 4, which states that the co-ordinator of MARAC "shall work in close co-operation with national networks, as well as UNO, AU and other agencies, which may assist him in accomplishing his missions".

Currently MARAC suffers from a number of staffing, financial, logistic and other problems and the system is, for all practical purposes, not yet operational although it has its own building and limited infrastructure. Following a recent gathering and discussion at the Institute for Security Studies,[96] a structure and capacity-building process was suggested that envisaged, amongst others, a core staff composed of four researchers (including the coordinator), with a focus as follows:

• One researcher for Angola and São Tomé and Principe;
• One researcher for Cameroon, Chad and the Central African Republic;
• One researcher for Congo, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea;

• One researcher for Burundi, DRC and Rwanda.

In addition to the monthly report required by MARAC's internal regulation, it is advised that a daily record of gathered data be kept, and a weekly report prepared for the attention of the Secretary General and Member States.

Similar to CEWS, ECOWAS and IGAD, MARAC is designed as an open source early warning rather than an intelligence system, although time will tell how early action is to be effected in a region composed entirely of weak states. Inevitably, the invigoration of MARAC also requires the operationalisation of ECCAS.

Southern Africa

Although SADC Heads of State agreed to the establishment of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation on the 28th June 1996 in Gaborone, Botswana, the Protocol was several years in the making before being signed by SADC leaders on the 14th August 2001 in Blantyre, Malawi. Beyond sometimes bruising regional divisions and differences, the finalization of the Organ and its associated structures was also delayed by the decision, in August 1999, to restructure all SADC institutions including the Organ. This process was completed in 2001.[97] The extent of divisions that had to be overcome between Member States in the development of a regional conflict prevention and management structure, is reflected in SADC's complex arrangement. SADC established a two-track system with conflict prevention/intervention and economic integration issues as two separate legs within a single structure, each consisting of consecutive layers of ministerial committees (see Figure 7).

The general objective of the SADC organ is to promote peace and security in the region. Working from the top, the SADC peace and security architecture consists of:[98]

• A chair (currently South Africa);
• A troika, consisting of the chair, previous and incoming chairs;
• A (plenary) Ministerial Committee of Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Defence, Public Security and State Security from all SADC countries that have signed and ratified the Organ Protocol.[99]
• An Inter-State Politics and Diplomacy Committee (ISPDC) consisting of all Ministers for Foreign Affairs;[100]
• An Inter-State Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC) consisting of all Ministers for Defence, Public Security and State Security with three

> Similar to CEWS, ECOWAS and IGAD, MARAC is designed as an open source early warning rather than an intelligence system.

Figure 7: SADC Structure
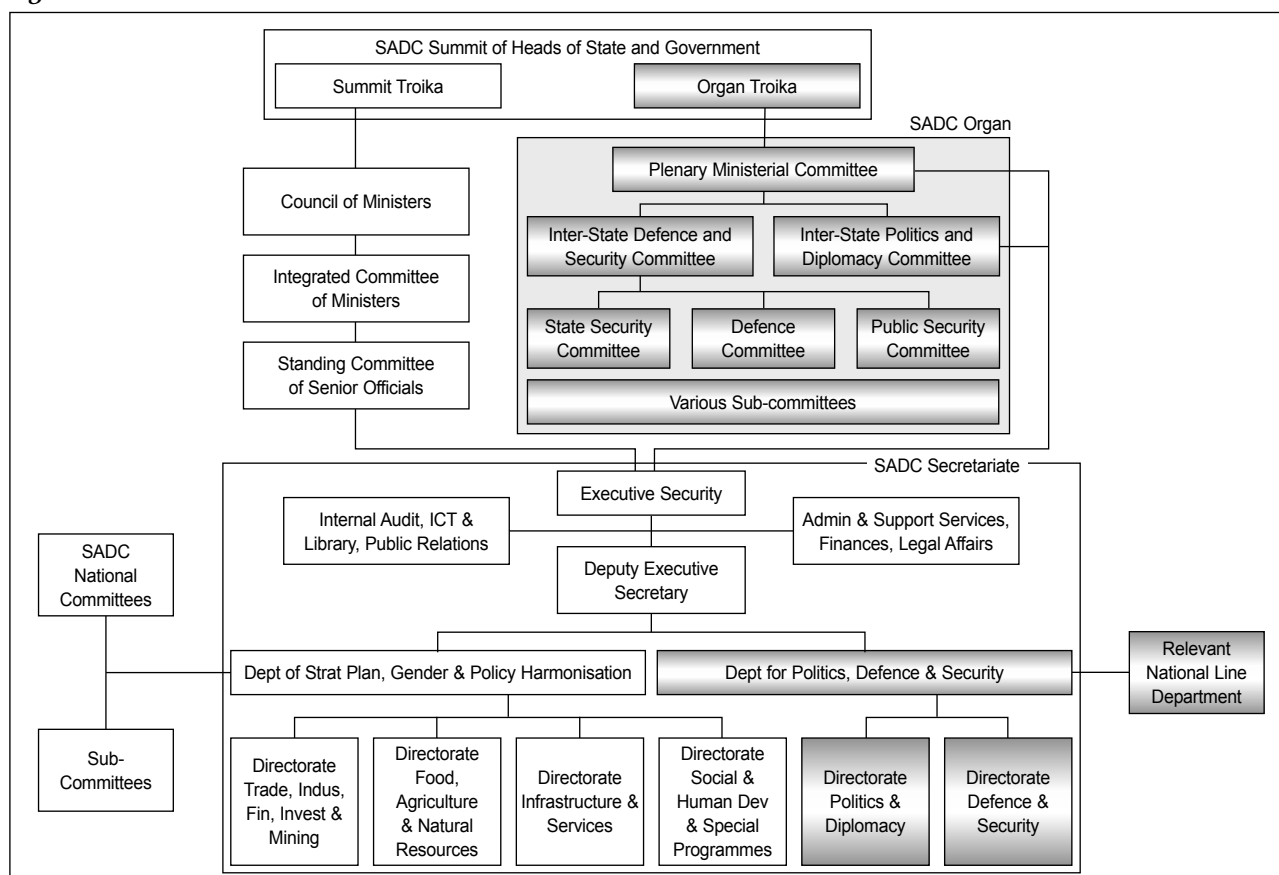
sub-committees on Defence, State Security and Public Security.[101]

• Various substructures at ministerial and functional level.

While only three heads of State are engaged in peace and security matters, SADC ministers from all Member States are involved at all three subsidiary levels. At the same time, the structure of the Organ is still relatively new and various practices already serve to streamline meetings and consultations. Unlike the AU and ECOWAS, SADC does not, therefore, have a Peace and Security Council or committee with reduced membership that acts on behalf of Member States. Instead, all countries are involved within its peace and security framework below Heads of State level. The function of the SADC and Organ troikas is to serve as a 'steering committee' so that decisions ultimately depend upon agreement at Summit level.[102]

The SADC Organ Protocol provides, in Article 11(3)(b), for the establishment of an "early warning system in order to facilitate timeous action to prevent the outbreak and escalation of conflict." In this sense, the mandate of the early warning system could be interpreted as being quite restrictive (given the overt link to violence) compared to that of other regional organisations. Practically, the interpretation of the mandate does, however, appear to go beyond a legalistic and narrow view, including issues such

as natural disasters, drugs, small arms trafficking, disease, food security and 'foreign interference' within its purview.[103]

At its extraordinary meeting held in Blantyre, Malawi, on 14 January 2001, the Summit mandated the SADC Organ to prepare a Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ (SIPO) that would provide guidelines for the implementation of the Protocol for its first five years. The SIPO was eventually approved during August 2003 and, although very general in its provisions, does provide for the establishment of an "early warning unit in each Member State"[104], largely as a function of the state security (intelligence) sector of Member States.[105] Elsewhere, the SIPO does encourage the contribution of civil society to conflict prevention, management and resolution and time will tell to what extent, and how, this will happen.[106]

The SADC Council recently adopted a new structure, which is anchored on the six Directorates reflected in Figure 7 for which recruitment will continue during the 2005/06 financial year. Apart from a new (expanded) staffing and organizational structure, a new building is under construction in Gaborone and the budget of the organization has more than doubled in the past year to US$37 million.[107]

Within the SADC Secretariat, the newly established Department for Politics, Defence and Security, headed by a Chief Director reporting directly to the

Executive Secretary, will be composed of three sub-divisions, namely:

- A Directorate for Politics and Diplomacy that will work towards the Organ;
- A Directorate for Defence and Security that will largely be engaged with the SADC standby brigade; and
- A Strategic Analysis Unit, consisting of two senior officers, one to deal with political and security threats and another to deal with socio-economic threats, augmented by seconded staff. All staff are to come from Member States, ie, they will be civil servants. The Unit will also be responsible for the early warning Situation Room.[108]

The SADC regional peacekeeping training centre of excellence in Harare, Zimbabwe, will also fall under the Chief Directorate.

While the SADC Treaty establishes a system of SADC National Committees to engage with non-security issues,[109] the structures through which Member States are to address peace and security issues are left to the line departments (such as foreign affairs, defence, home affairs/police and intelligence) within each SADC member state.

South Africa, the current chair of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, has made the establishment of a regional early warning system (and the SADC peacekeeping standby brigade) a priority for 2004/05 although progress with both remain shrouded in secrecy. Following an instruction from the Ministerial Committee of the Organ meeting in Maputo during July 2003, the ISDSC approved[110] the conceptual principles on which the SADC early warning system is to be based. During July 2004, the 25th meeting of the ISDSC mandated a team of experts from the SADC and Organ troikas to initiate the establishment of the regional early warning system. This was followed by an experts' meeting in October 2004[111] and, more recently, by a meetings, in Pretoria, of the State Security Sub-Committee during March 2005. More recently, in March 2005, a two-day technical workshop in Boksburg sought to finalize arrangements for SADC's early warning system as a prelude to a meeting of the ISDSC in Cape Town following the announcement by the Executive Secretary of SADC that the system would be established in 2005.[112] Within South Africa, the preparations to operationalise the regional early warning system are run by the National Intelligence Coordinating Committee (NICOC), part of the Ministry of Intelligence.

Although the SADC State Security Committee (and subsequently the Integrated Committee of Ministers) had apparently agreed that SADC would utilise the UNOCHA model (adopted for African specificities) for early warning and conflict assessment, all indications are that the methodological debate has not been settled.[113] The UNOCHA model presents a set of seven basic 'clusters' of variables and indicators to assess the risk of emerging/worsening crises in countries and is "designed to yield quick and robust results."[114] Each cluster is accompanied by several relatively straightforward guiding questions that seek to capture the main trend the analyst should be looking for and the impression is that of a checklist rather than a systematic methodology. Most important is the fact that the model is very much a rapid analysis tool and currently under review by UNOCHA.[115]

In summary, once established, the SADC hub of the early warning system will be located in Gaborone and, as currently envisaged, will be based on linkages with national intelligence agencies in Member States. Rather than allowing for a direct exchange of information and analysis with the African Union, the SADC system will apparently only disseminate its strategic reports through the office of the President that chairs the SADC Organ to the African Union. In many respects the proposed SADC early warning system is therefore different in character and operation to the 'open system' prescribed for CEWS and that adopted by ECOWAS, or the parallel system run outside of national governmental control in IGAD.

Southern Africa has only recently emerged from violent anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggles, and it should come as no surprise that these memories inform current practice. Practically, this translates into quite a narrow interpretation of security – largely equating security with the state rather than with human security. The result is that the Organ is dominated by the various departments of defence and intelligence in the region (or interface with Heads of State) rather than through the traditional linkage of foreign ministries. This, and a Secretariat afforded only very limited autonomy, means that officials negotiate cautiously around the stark divisions within the region and that early warning is necessarily a function of government interests. Undoubtedly, many of these problems will need to be ironed out in the years that lie ahead as the region moves forward in translating intention into reality.

Conclusion

This paper started off by highlighting the differences between the nature of a regional early warning system

> The SADC hub of the early warning system will be located in Gaborone and based on linkages with national intelligence agencies.

and those services traditionally provided by national intelligence agencies. Earlier sections contrasted the two approaches and pointed to the fundamental difference between an intelligence system (necessarily premised on the provision of national security and pursuit of national objectives) and an early warning system (working on the basis of shared regional interests). A number of practical implications arise. One example is that staff working within the CEWS at continental or regional levels should probably be recruited directly by the Commission or regional Secretariat. They should not be seconded from Member States, and should also not be serving (or have recently served) in the security agency of a Member State. The functioning of the early warning system should be insulated from executive influence (or any formal engagement with national intelligence agencies) through the negotiation of a detailed protocol or memorandum of understanding with Member States that is approved at the most senior level and that sets out the standing operating procedures, recruitment and modus operandi. Once formally sanctioned by their respective countries, this agreement will help protect the early warning unit from national interference.

A second conclusion arising from this paper is the requirement that the early warning systems, at whatever level, should develop a methodologically sound but simple and clear system for ongoing monitoring to help establish a baseline for conflict analysis. At the continental level, the PSC Protocol refers to the requirement for an indicators module. Some mention has been made of one such system (that of CEWARN) at the regional level (and thinking within SADC to adopted the UNOCHA model) but the applicability of the CEWARN system beyond the local level remains untested.

This paper has not given many details on what happens to the output (reports) from the early warning system. If we accept that the function of the PSC at continental level (Mediation and Security Council in ECOWAS, Council of Ministers in IGAD and Summit in SADC) is to monitor and recommend action, a strong argument could be made for a relatively wide dissemination of reports to these bodies. Any conflict prevention system is only as strong as its weakest link and inevitably, conflict prevention and response will be the Achilles heel of the CEWS at continental and regional levels.

Unlike any other region, the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, the highest decision-making body of the West African mechanism, has delegated substantive powers, without prejudice, to the Mediation and Security Council – an approach not replicated by other sub-regions where intergovernmental agencies are typically much weaker.[116] As a result, ECOWAS Executive Secretary Mohamed Ibn Chambas has the

power to initiate fact-finding, mediation, facilitation, negotiation and reconciliation actions in order to prevent and manage conflicts in the sub-region. In terms of Article 30 of the Protocol, the ECOWAS Executive Secretary is even responsible for the training and preparation of composite standby units through regional peacekeeping training centres. In other regions, different approaches have been adopted but West Africa clearly has its own history and peculiarities that militate against the slavish adoption of this arrangement in, for example, IGAD and SADC. Yet, it is difficult to envisage substantive progress in these regions if Member States do not give practical effect to their rhetorical commitment towards regional integration by giving the regional Secretariats substantial authority and commensurate resources.

During the October 2003 workshop on the establishment of the CEWS, the then Director of Peace and Security at the African Union, Ambassador Sam Ibok, presented some of the difficulties encountered over the preceding years. These included:

- "The barrier of national sovereignty, which often hampered efforts to collect reliable data and information, as well as timely intervention;
- The issue of data ownership, which often created problems on the flexibility of the use and dissemination of data collected;
- The issue of defining early warning modules and their ownership by the OAU;
- Lack of adequate technological infrastructure;
- Limited financial and human resources; and
- Lack of political will on the part of Member States."[117]

That African leaders have a renewed determination to engage in conflict management is demonstrated by the robust engagement by the AU in the crisis in Darfur, Western Sudan, and the unprecedented censure that has been applied to the Sudanese leadership in public and in private. Darfur reflects the nightmare of genocide – a repetition, if not in scale but in purpose, of events in Rwanda in 1994. The problem is that the AU sought to play a leading role in Darfur by the time the crisis had escalated beyond the means or the ability of the continental organization to affect it (since the African Standby Force does not yet practically exist) despite several months of intense media focus and reporting. It also occurs at a time when the interests of the government in Khartoum (to avoid an effective peace mission in Darfur), those of the international community (to avoid Security Council action given the divisions within the Council) and Africa (reflected in the slogan 'African solutions to African problems')

> Early warning systems, at whatever level, should develop a methodologically sound but simple and clear system for ongoing monitoring.

unhappily coincide to the detriment of the long-suffering people of western Sudan.

The obvious point is that the African Union should be in the business of preventing Darfur and similar crises (such as that in Côte d'Ivoire and developing in Swaziland) from spiralling out of control. That, in turn, requires a commitment by the AU and African leaders to engage on matters of governance, human rights, and democracy; issues that extend well beyond traditional security concerns. For weak states and developing democracies, this is surely the most difficult of challenges and it is also the most serious problem that will be faced by the AU during the operationalisation of the CEWS and with its primary task of conflict prevention. Each of Africa's regions and their views on early warning and conflict prevention are, of course, functions of that region's recent history and current problems. On the one side we have ECOWAS with an advanced regional system on conflict prevention and management, reflecting a more confident region, but also one where open armed conflict and military intervention in Member States is much more prevalent than elsewhere. On the other side, in Southern Africa, we see a very cautious approach to anything but the most narrow interpretation of security, and one that seeks to build a regional early warning system as an extension of national intelligence agencies; an irony in a region less threatened by military intervention in domestic affairs than elsewhere.

An alternative argument is, of course, that SADC Member States are relatively strong and consolidated compared to those in West Africa. This relative strength allows them to resist what is increasingly seen as a (Western) donor agenda of human rights, democracy and human security that is deemed inappropriate for Africa by a worrying number of leaders. Modern day Pan-Africanism is, therefore, taking a different form in Southern Africa than in West Africa where it arguably originated. It needs to be repeated that African leaders have repeatedly committed themselves to universal human rights and a common view of democracy and at every level. Ultimately, it would appear that SADC's views on sovereignty, foreign interference and security are largely a function of the region's recent history, rather than any objective interpretation of the challenges that confront the region.

Conceptually, the PSC Protocol is clear in providing that the continental system should obtain its information from a variety of sources and be able to test its analysis through discussions and exchanges with others – both governmental and non-governmental. The CEWS is not, therefore, envisaged as a closed, government-to-government system, dependent at the continental

> The African Union should be in the business of preventing Darfur and similar crises from spiralling out of control.

level on information provided only by Member States. Its work should be complemented by other views (from African research institutes, academia, reports emanating from outside Africa and the like) that would strengthen the hand of the Commission and encourage action through the Peace and Security Council.

There are many challenges in moving forward, the most apparent of which is what the AU Commission refers to as the 'cacophony' of overlapping regional structures. Technically the AU has long acknowledged five 'building blocks' of African integration: AMU, IGAD, SADC, ECOWAS and COMESA. The Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), whose five members encompass all of North Africa, is largely dormant and its future arguably within the Mediterranean rim rather than Africa. Recently, overriding the arguments of the AU Chairperson of the Commission, the East African Community (EAC) was acknowledged as the sixth pillar of the AU, further complicating an already complex system. The EAC is made up of COMESA and IGAD members Kenya and Uganda and SADC member Tanzania. Although Chapter 23 of the Treaty establishing the EAC provides for a clear role by the Community in peace and security matters, it makes no reference to the establishment of an early warning system for the region and members have not yet demonstrated an extra-regional peace and security engagement.

The situation in West and Central Africa is least complicated. The three members of the Manu River Union and the eight members of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) all also belong to ECOWAS. More important, from the perspective of the operationalisation of an integrated continental system on early warning, both acknowledge the regional leadership of ECOWAS in the establishment of conflict prevention and management systems such as panels of eminent persons, a regional early warning system and the establishment of peacekeeping forces. In Central Africa, the members of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC)[118] and the Economic Community of the Great Lakes States (CEPGL)[119] are all also ECCAS Member States.

Not all regional organisations have commitments or indeed ambitions to engage in peace and security issues. A prime example is the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), whose 20 members include all east African countries, except Tanzania, and seven countries in Southern Africa. Although it is the largest regional economic grouping, COMESA has remaining largely unpoliticised and has avoided peacemaking, conflict prevention and mitigation. COMESA has, however, benefited through the steady progress towards trade liberalization and

facilitation. Members of COMESA have, of course, also been reluctant to allow the Secretariat to discuss security issues since its membership overlaps with that of a number of other organisations such as EAC, SADC, UMA, COMESA and IGAD, some of which have do engage in peace and security matters.

A system of overlapping reportage (rather than strict separation) on countries that are part of different regional groupings may strengthen rather than weaken the continental early warning system. In practice, the CEWS would therefore receive reports on events in Tanzania from and through SADC and EAC. Arguably, receiving two views rather than one, presents the continental situation room with advantages rather than disadvantages. The problem only becomes a serious matter when considering conflict prevention and responses at the regional rather than the continental level. This issue is probably most serious in the greater Horn of Africa where the establishment of the east African brigade (as one of the five regional African Standby Brigades) complicates matters. EASBRIG's membership (11 countries)[120] is almost double that of IGAD. In itself this is not a major problem because regional collaboration will initially occur through a Memorandum of Understanding (as apposed to a legally binding treaty or protocol). The problem is rather that the deployment of EASBRIG would eventually require agreement by participating Heads of State, creating an impetus for the establishment of a hierarchy for EASBRIG purposes. Inevitably, the commander of EASBRIG will require that deployment considerations be informed by information, including intelligence, and EASBRIG will need a command and control operations centre (typically doubling up as an early warning situation room). And thus we return to where we started: the limited geographic scope (and nature) of CEWARN discussed earlier in this paper.[121]

These challenges lie in the future, however, and should not overshadow the steady progress being made at the continental level regarding the establishment of some capacity at the central hub of an integrated CEWS in Addis Ababa, and at regional level to develop systems that can serve the AU and region. Eventually, conflict prevention is a much cheaper and more appropriate role for the African Union than conflict intervention and in this context, the role of the CEWS, the Council of the Wise, the various courts, election observation and the role of the Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights are sure to play a dominant role.

In the meanwhile, every effort should be made to remain true to the essential character of African early warning and conflict management systems to "verify information within Member States only through overt means"[122] and to specifically exclude intelligence systems from engagement in early warning, as is the case with CEWARN in IGAD. Early warning and intelligence systems are different from one another

and efforts to combine the two (or have the one rely on the other) will not succeed. Similarly, difficult as it may be to operationalise, governance and conflict prevention cannot be divorced from one another and Member States, the AU and the various regional organisations will have to confront this matter on a continual basis.

Notes

1   R Cornwell, Early Warning: some techniques and other thoughts, unpublished paper, Institute for Security Studies, 2001, p 3.

2   Viz the IGAD definition: "Early warning is the process of collection, verifying and analysing information and communicating the results to decision-makers." Protocol on the Establishment of a Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism for IGAD Member States, Article 1.

3   According to the Conflict Prevention and Post-Conflict Reconstruction (CPR) Network, an informal network of senior managers of bilateral donor countries and multilateral agencies. References here are taken from their 'Early Warning and Early Response Handbook', version 2, published in July 2004 available at <www.cprnet.net>.

4   Relaunching Africa's Economic and Social Development: the Cairo Agenda for Action, AHG/Res.236 (XXXI), par 10, Assembly of Heads of State and Government, 31st Ordinary Session, 26-28 June 1995, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

5   See Organisation of African Unity, Declaration of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government on the Establishment within the OAU of a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, 29th Ordinary Session, Cairo, 28-30 June 1993. Document available on <www.iss.org.za>.

6   The Central Organ of the Mechanism consisted of the countries that were members of the Bureau of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government. The Bureau was elected annually based on the principles of equitable regional representation and rotation. In order to ensure continuity, the outgoing Chairman and the incoming Chairman were also members of the Central Organ. In between Ordinary Sessions of the Assembly, the Bureau assumed overall direction and co-ordination of the activities of the Mechanism. According to a 1995 Summit decision, the number of countries in the Bureau was increased from 9 to 14. Resolution on the Increase on the Membership of the Bureau of the Assembly, AHG/Res.239(XXXI), 31st Assembly of Heads of State and Government, 26-28 June 1995, Addis Ababa, 1995.

7   6% of the regular membership contributions of Member States are currently allocated to the Peace Fund, up from the original amount of 5%. The annual budget of the OAU was roughly $42 million in 2003, indicating that the peace fund would receive about US$2 million per annum from membership fees if all members were paid up.

8   Declaration of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government on the Establishment within the OAU of a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, AHG/DECL.3 (XXIX), par 14, Assembly of Heads of State and Government, 29th Ordinary Session, 28-30 June 1993, Cairo, Egypt.

9   Par 22.

10   Yaoundé Declaration (Africa: Preparing for the 21st Century); 32nd OAU Summit, July 1996, Yaounde AHG/Decl.3 (XXXII).

11   Par 25

12   The unit, staffed with a small core group of civilian and military officers, was subsequently equipped with communication resources.

13   For example, while the OAU was deeply involved with the UN, the US and EU in attempts to prevent war between Ethiopia and Eritrea and, with France and Senegal in Madagascar, it was largely absent from Somalia, Sudan (until Darfur), Angola, the DRC, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

14   In this regard, see the report written for SIDA by Katarina Engberg, Impact Study of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Management, Swedish Embassy, Addis Ababa, 25th June 2002, p 5.

15   The USA was the largest contributor to the Peace Fund, particularly during the early years of the Clinton administration.

16   Engberg, op cit, p 39.

17   J Cilliers, From Durban to Maputo – a review of 2003 Summit of the African Union, ISS Paper no 76, August 2003, Pretoria, p 6. The December 2004 Executive Council have now agreed on an expanded budget for the Commission but with the proviso that the Commission should first expand to the Maputo level of staffing before seeking approval for additional staff. The Commission may reorganize itself within the levels approved by Maputo.

18   One P3 and two P2s.

19   At the time of writing, the Commission is again revising its staffing structures.

20   "…early responses to contain crisis situations so as to prevent them from developing into full-blown crises." Article 4 (b).

21   Article 6 (b) and (f). Also see Article 3.

22   The 15-member PSC was inaugurated on 25 May 2004 in Addis Ababa. Gabon, Ethiopia, Algeria, South Africa and Nigeria are members of the Council for three years, while Cameroon, Congo, Kenya, the Sudan, Libya, Lesotho, Mozambique, Ghana, Senegal and Togo all serve for a term of 2-years.

23   Article 2 (1)

24   Article 2 (2).

25   Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the AU Peace and Security Council, 9 July 2002, Article 10 (4)

26   Article 12.

27   Article 12 (5).

28   Ibid.

29   Article 11.

30   Article 12 (2, b). The Conflict Management Division is currently a division within the Directorate of Peace and Security – on the same level as the Secretariat of the Peace and Security Council, the Peace Support Operations Division and the Strategic Issues Division. The latter falls under the Commissioner for Peace and Security.

31   Including disputed elections, poor governance, large refugee movements, human rights abuses, crime, competition over natural and other resources, natural disasters, acts of terrorism and the like.

32   As the AU moves ahead with the operationalisation of the African Standby Force (ASF) and becomes even more deeply engaged with peacemaking and peace-building, the requirement for an operations room staffed at all hours to refer urgent messages and information to key members of the Commission, becomes ever more relevant.

33   Article 12 (4).

34   Developing such a module is potentially a complex technical undertaking and, depending upon the approach adopted by the Commission, could be extremely expensive since most consultancies have viewed this as carte blanche to propose the development of sophisticated databases that would demand substantive data coding and capturing.

35   A strong case could be made that CEWS reports should all be public since this would by itself serve as an important indication of possible PSC intent and contribute to conflict prevention.

36   Art 12(3).

37   Ibid. There are sufficient information on African governance and conflicts. For a useful summary of a number of governance indicators see UNDP Bureau for Development Policy and the Eurostat division of the European Commission publication, Governance Indicators: A users guide, 2005.

38   Art 8(9).

39   Art 8(10).

40   Art 8(11).

41   African Union, Report of the Workshop on the Establishment of the AU Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), 30-31st October 2003, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

42   Early Warning: some techniques and other thoughts, op cit, p 4.

43   Member states will finance US$63 million and the Commission will seek US$95 million from discretionary payments by Member States and from Western partners.

44   Down from the figure of 107 originally proposed by the Commission.

45   Two other sections will deal with disarmament and strategic issues (terrorism, disarmament, small arms) and project management.

46   Institute for Security Studies, Non-Paper on the Operationalisation of the Continental Early Warning System, Pretoria, November 2004. Available at <ww.iss.org.za>.

47   The staffing structure proposed implies a total number of 21 staff members: the head; a deputy head, 2 secretaries, 2 clerks and 15 analysts, five of whom (the

political analysts) serve as the head of the five regions. Based on these assumptions, the AU would require fairly modest means to establish its own early warning system, less than US$1 million to establish (if building costs are excluded) and roughly US$1 million to run on an annual basis.

48 Article 12 (2, a, b).

49 Article 16 (2).

50 Article 16 (5).

51 Chapter 23 of the EAC Treaty is entitled 'Co-operation in Political Matters' and includes matters relating to regional peace and security, and defence but makes no explicit mention of an early warning system.

52 Article 2.

53 Article 3.

54 Chapter ll, Article 4 of ECOWAS 'Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security'.

55 Ibid, Article 7. Also see Article 10. The Council was officially launched in Monrovia during May 2000.

56 Article 15.

57 Article 16.

58 Article 17.

59 Article 18. Membership of the DSC also includes: officers responsible for Internal Affairs and Security, Experts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and, depending upon its agenda, heads of Immigration, Customs, Drug/Narcotic Agencies, Border Guards and Civil Protection Force, who may be invited.

60 Article 19.

61 Article 20. The first Council of Elders was inaugurated in July 2001 in Niamey, Niger. Originally composed of 32 members, the Council now consists of 15 people, one from each member state of ECOWAS.

62 ECOMOG operations predate the adoption of the Protocol in 1999 and already started in Liberia in 1990 to enforce the peace in the wake of the violent conflict following the invasion of the country by Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). The ECOWAS Foreign Ministers recommended, on 3 March 1998 in Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, that ECOMOG formally become responsible for peacekeeping operations in West Africa and sought to provide a clearer command chain in the light of the complex relationship of the past. Recently ECOMOG has deployed troops in Côte d'Ivoire (ECOMICI) and in Liberia (ECOMIL). Although the 1981 ECOWAS Protocol Relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence Matters provided for the establishment of an Allied Armed Forces of the Community (AAFC), these did exist in 1990. See Institute for Security Studies, Profile: Economic Community of West African States, <ww.iss.org.za>, accessed on 18 March 2005.

63 Article 21. Regarding the stand-by modules, Article 30 of the Protocol states that: "The Executive Secretary, through the departments concerned and, in consultation with Member States, shall contribute to the training of civilian and military personnel that shall be part of the stand-by units".

64 Currently Col Yoro Kone.

65 A Regional Convention on Light Weapons, will, by December 2005, replace the 1998 Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons.

66 Lagos, 26th July 2002 as reported by IRIN from ThisDay, "… made possible by financial and technical assistance from the European Union and the United States." It does not appear as if ECOWAS is entirely happy with the US system and creating its own ICT system/modifying the system installed by the US.

67 Institute for Security Studies, Workshop Report, Training to ECOWAS on Early Warning and Conflict Prevention Systems, 28 November – 4 December 2004, Pretoria, pp 10-11

68 West Africa Network for Peace-building (WANEP), Operationalizing the Observation and Monitoring System of the ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, Background document to the sub-regional consultative Workshop, Elmina, Ghana, 17-21st May 2004, p 4.

69 The author would like to acknowledge the kind comments and input received from Dr Doug Bond from Virtual Research Associates, Mr Niels von Keyserlink and Ms Simone Kopfmüller, both from the German Agency for Technical Cooperation in Djibouti and Addis Ababa as well as Ms Hanelore Wallner from Swiss Peace.

70 The IGADD Heads of State and Government met on 18 April 1995 at an Extraordinary Summit in Addis Ababa and resolved to revitalise the Authority and expand its areas of regional co-operation. On 21 March 1996, the Heads of State and Government at the Second Extraordinary Summit in Nairobi approved and adopted an Agreement Establishing the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

71 At the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government in Addis Ababa, in September 1993.

72 The supreme authority of IGAD is the Assembly of Heads of State and Government. The subsidiary Council of Ministers is composed of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and one other Minister designated by each member state. Heads of State meets at least once a year, taking decisions by consensus only. Council also acts on the basis of consensus but may take decisions by a two-thirds majority of the members present, voting by secret ballot. The Council may establish ad hoc sectoral ministerial committees to deal with issues in their respective sectors. A Committee of Ambassadors advises the Executive Secretary of IGAD on the realisation of the work plan approved by the Council of Ministers.

73 Protocol on the Establishment of a Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism for IGAD Member States. Done at Khartoum on 9th January 2002.

74 Through their development agencies, GTZ and USAID respectively.

75 CEWARN Protocol, Art 7.

76 Including representatives from government, parliament,

provincial administration, police, military, civil society, academic institutions, research institutions and others. See Article 11(3) of the CEWARN Protocol.

77 <ww.cewarn.org>, accessed 8 March 2005.

78 Addendum to the CEWARN Protocol, Part 1: Mandate, Article (1)(a).

79 Ibid, Article (3).

80 CEWARN Protocol, Article 9(5)(c)

81 The software was developed after earlier systems based on news monitoring technology and later automated news monitoring was set aside in favour of the field reporting approach actually taken by CEWARN.

82 Data collection occurs on the basis of weekly situation report and incident reports. The system uses the Integrated Data for Event Analysis (IDEA) approach for coding and analyzing data.

83 These events feed in as raw data but also as composite measures. The numeric value of events is derived from the indices, which are in turn derived from weights applied to each of the situation report questions that are addressed each week by the field monitors for a particular area of reporting.

84 The partners are: Kenya - the Africa Peace Forum in Nairobi; Uganda - the Centre for Basic Research in Kampala; Ethiopia - the Inter Africa Group (IAG).

85 Known as the country co-ordinator, now each also with an assistant.

86 The former are from the situation reports and the latter from the incident reports.

87 See, for example, Article 5(1)(d)(v) that reads that one of functions of CEWARN is "disseminating such information as it is authorized, to those who are authorised, and in a manner that Member States prescribe".

88 Issues of relative cost are admittedly contested and it is important to point out that the software costs do not constitute the major expenditure item.

89 This description of CEMAC was compiled by Dr João Porto, Institute for Security Studies.

90 See in this regard Decision 001/Y/Fev of Heads of State and Government taken on 25 February 1999 which creates a mechanism for the promotion, maintenance and consolidation of peace and security in the sub-region named 'Conseil de Paix et de Securite de l'Afrique Centrale' (COPAX).

91 See in this regard the Protocol on the Central African Council for Peace and Security (COPAX), 24 February 2000.

92 Section I, Article 21, Ibid.

93 Decision N09/ECCAS/CHSG/X/02.

94 Article 1, Section I, Definition and Missions of the Central African Early Warning Mechanism (MARAC), Decision N09/ECCAS/CHSG/X/02 of 17 June 2002.

95 Article 10, Section IV, Functioning of MARAC, Decision N09/ECCAS/CHSG/X/02 of 17 June 2002.

96 See S Hakizimana, Towards the Rational Implementation of MARAC: A key challenge for the survival of ECCAS, report from a one month fellowship at the Institute for Security Studies, 2004, pp 8-9.

97 The Extra-ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government, in Windhoek, Namibia, on the 9th March 2001, approved the Report on the Review of the Operations of the SADC institutions.

98 See Articles 3 to 8 of the Organ Protocol.

99 This is roughly equivalent to the ECOWAS meetings of the Mediation and Security Council at Ministerial level.

100 The first meeting of the Interstate Political and Diplomatic Committee opened in Maputo on 17th May 2002.

101 The Inter-State Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC) was established as a substructure of the Front Line States by Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia in 1975. The ISDSC therefore predates both SADC and SARPCCO structures and therefore has a degree of historical salience that continues to infuse its existence to this day.

102 Article 9A(6) of the SADC Treaty as amended

103 SADC already has a drought-monitoring centre based in Harare, Zimbabwe, which also monitors the weather and since food shortages and since drought is a regular feature of the region, a linkage would have to be established between this centre and the early warning system.

104 SADC, Strategic Indicative Plan for Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation (SIPO), p 19

105 Ibid, p 31.

106 As an activity under the Political Sector. SIPO, p 18

107 Post-Council Media Briefing Note by the Executive Secretary of SADC Dr Prega Ramsamy on 25th February, 2005 Grand Baie, Mauritius. At this meeting SADC also agreed to established a Committee of Ambassadors and High Commissioners accredited to Botswana. This Committee will play an effective advisory role to the SADC Council of Ministers through the Standing Committee of Officials and facilitate interaction and consultation between Member States and the Secretariat. Other functions to be undertaken by the Committee include: Advise to Council on issues related to the implementation of SADC programmes and activities; Facilitating interaction and consultations between Member States and the Secretariat; Participating in the preparations for meetings of Council and the Integrated Committee of Ministers, including in the preparation of the agenda; Handling matters related to the implementation of the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) and the Strategic Plan of the Organ (SIPO) and make appropriate recommendations to Council; and Following-up the implementation of Council decisions.

108 SIPO, par 8.3.1

109 Specified as: trade, industry, finance and investment; infrastructure and services; food, agriculture and natural resources; and social and human development and special programmes in Art 12(2)(a) of the SADC Treaty. The SADC National Committees are part of the SADC structure. See Art 9(1).

110 Meeting in Maseru during June 2004.

111 From 11 to 17th October 2004 a team of South Africans visited ECOWAS, IGAD and the African Union as part of their fact-finding process.

112 On 2nd March 2005.

113 The UNOCHA Early Warning Indicators and Methodology was developed by the UN in response to the June 2001 report by the UN Secretary general on the prevention of armed conflict. That report emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach encompassing "short-term and long-term political, diplomatic, humanitarian, human rights, developmental, institutional and other measures". UNOCHA Framework Team, Early Warning Indicators/ Methodology (final), Thursday 13 December 2001, p 2.

114 The clusters are: Socio economic conditions comprised largely of structural preconditions for conflict, or the background conditions/root causes that make violent conflicts more likely; State and institutions consisting of both the structural and proximate factors affecting the capacity of a society to deal with the conflict in a peaceful manner and to deliver necessary services to citizens; Regional/international structural and proximate factors. It focuses on how a crisis might spill over and in turn how external actors may influence the development of a crisis; The security cluster focuses almost exclusively on proximate causes of conflict and in particular on the overall level of security in any particular country; Public discourse, ideological factors and elite behaviour; Human rights and civil liberties; Actors that seek or are capable of mobilising popular support.

115 Telephone interview with Ivan Lupis, UNOCHA, 30th March 2005

116 Arguably, this reflects an approach that sees Nigeria exercise its power through ECOWAS whereas, in Southern Africa South Africa exercises its power by keeping the SADC Secretariat subservient.

117 African Union, Report of the Workshop on the Establishment of the AU Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), 30-31 October 2003, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, p 5.

118 Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Central African Republic and Chad

129 Burundi, DRC and Rwanda.

120 Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda.

121 IGAD currently serves as interim coordinating organization for the establishment of EASBRIG.

122 Addendum to the CEWARN Protocol, Part III: Verification and Analysis, Article 1

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About this paper

This paper aims to provide an overview of the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) envisaged by the African Union. The introductory section provides an essential backdrop to the subsequent discussions, explaining the key differences between intergovernmental early warning and national intelligence systems, and the relationship between early warning, conflict prevention and governance. Subsequent sections presents the essential characteristics of CEWS, and present a brief history of the development and current status thereof. This provides a useful background against which to review and measure progress at the regional level primarily looking at developments in West Africa, the Horn, Central and Southern Africa where early warning systems are in varying stages of development. A concluding section offers some thoughts on the challenges ahead and the way forward.

About the author

Dr Jakkie Cilliers is the executive director of the Institute for Security Studies and has published widely on regional security issues.

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