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SADC ORGAN ON POLITICS, DEFENCE AND SECURITY: FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

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INTRODUCTION

The Declaration and Treaty of the SADC, signed by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Heads of State and Government in Windhoek in 1992, expressed confidence that recent developments such as the independence of Namibia and the transition in South Africa "... will take the region out of an era of conflict and confrontation, to one of co-operation; in a climate of peace, security and stability. These are prerequisites for development ..." The Declaration called, among others, for "... a framework of co-operation which provides for ... strengthening regional solidarity, peace and security, in order for the people of the region to live and work together in peace and harmony ... The region needs, therefore, to establish a framework and mechanisms to strengthen regional solidarity, and provide for mutual peace and security." The subsequent establishment of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security has given some effect to these ambitious intentions. Given the recent elevation of South Africa to the chair of SADC and the obligations that this position bestows upon the country, it is time to take stock of the progress made in this regard some 12 months down the line.

As chair of SADC, South Africa is responsible to operationalise and realise the ambitions of the Organ. President Mandela has recently engaged in an intensive series of regional consultations in an effort to mitigate emergent sources of conflict in Lesotho and Swaziland, as well as in assisting to find a solution for the ongoing humanitarian and political tragedy in Zaire. These recent initiatives by the South African president are a welcome departure from the apologetic diplomacy that the region's dominant power had been engaged in previously. Prior to these developments, SADC member states had been reluctant to exercise regional leadership in issues related to preventive diplomacy and conflict management. One reason for this reluctance may be that certain heads of states have themselves been under intense pressure to allow a greater degree of transparency, freedom and democracy in their own countries. Too obvious a programme to facilitate democratisation and elections in another country may backfire on regional leaders who themselves face criticism for a perceived increase in authoritarianism and intolerance. A second reason is that the Organ is still in its infancy, although it does draw from the extensive memory of the previous Front-Line States, and is able to build on the existing Inter-State Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC).

Of greater importance is the fact that many of the participant countries of SADC do not share, to a sufficient degree, a common consensus around the political values which are reflected in the SADC Treaty. These values are also explicit in the aims and objectives of the Organ.

The greatest deficiency within SADC arguably relates to the absence of integrated systems, processes and methods to deal with the issues of human rights and the advancement of democracy and good governance. This is clearly a contentious issue and one about which many SADC member countries are sensitive, not only due to the fact that a country such as Swaziland is perceived to be non-democratic, while others, such as Angola and Mozambique, are in slow transition from a state of devastating civil war. Countries, such as Zambia and

Zimbabwe, have been accused of being undemocratic in election-related practices, while some see South Africa drifting towards one-party dominance in the absence of an effective political opposition to the African National Congress. In other countries, such as Malawi and Lesotho, military and para military intervention in politics remains a real threat. Clearly, the region suffers from a lack of consensus regarding the political values which the SADC Treaty so obviously endorses.

This paper does not question the decisions surrounding the creation of the Organ, nor the objectives that have been accepted for the Organ, although there are a number of serious problems and inconsistencies readily evident in both. It rather presents, very briefly, the macro-structure of SADC, before looking more closely at the future of the Organ measured against its aims and objectives. The paper includes various suggestions for the structuring of the Organ, including the replacement of the ISDSC Ministerial Committee with a new council at ministerial level, called the Political Co operation Council. The establishment of an Institute for Democracy and Human Rights, accountable to the SADC Heads of State and Government is another proposal, together with the establishment of a small permanent multinational secretariat for the Organ.

A TWO-LEGGED SADC

SADC has wisely decided to separate political and security considerations from 'SADC proper' (i.e. regional economic development) through the creation of a separate structure for the Organ, which should arguably also not be co-located with the SADC Secretariat in Botswana. Since its inception in January 1996, the intention was to maintain the flexible approach of the old Front-Line States grouping which the Organ effectively replaced – at least at the level of Heads of State and Government.

The objectives of SADC, i.e. of its regional economic development and political co operation, defence and security legs, as derived from the SADC Treaty, are represented diagrammatically in Figure 1 below.

The Organ is a subsidiary part of SADC and therefore it abides by the same principles as those of SADC, including the sovereign equality of all member states, the peaceful settlement of disputes, and the observance of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. It is these principles that provide content to the intention to move to a common system of political values, systems and institutions – a commitment which has thus far been sadly lacking among a number of SADC member states. In Article 21 of the SADC Treaty (which deals with areas of co-operation), member states also explicitly agree to co-operate in the area of "*politics, diplomacy, international relations, peace and security.*"

SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY	
REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INTEGRATION	POLITICAL, DEFENCE AND SECURITY CO-OPERATION
achievement of development and economic growth	evolution of common political values, systems and institutions
alleviation of poverty	promotion and defence of peace and security
enhancement of the standard and quality of life	
support for the socially disadvantaged through regional integration	

Figure 1: SADC OBJECTIVES

The regional economic development leg of SADC is generally well established, although in urgent need of streamlining and reinvigoration. An independent consulting group will shortly present its findings on the restructuring of this part of SADC, which is at present composed of a Council of Ministers, a Standing Committee of Officials, Sectoral Committees of Ministers, Sectoral Committees of Officials, Sector Co ordinating Units/Commissions, Sector Contact Points and the SADC Secretariat in Gaborone. The remainder of this paper will therefore

concentrate on the other 'leg' of SADC – the embryonic Organ on Politics, Defence and Security.

FOCUS AREAS OF THE SADC ORGAN

INTRODUCTION

The content of the political and security 'leg' of SADC was established/formalised through a *communiqué* following the 28 June 1996 Summit Meeting in Gaborone. The *communiqué* listed an impressive number of objectives of the Organ for Politics, Defence and Security. Ignoring, for the moment, the feasibility of the stated objectives of the Organ, it is possible to group these objectives into five broad categories as depicted in Figure 2 (p. 3).

It is evident from the above division that there are, in certain instances, objectives (or functions) which resort under more than one category. For example, while Foreign Affairs may have primary responsibility for early warning on regional conflict, intelligence agencies would also provide valuable inputs. The monitoring of human rights may similarly make a valuable contribution to the objective of early warning. Other objectives, such as the commitment to develop a common foreign policy and to conclude a mutual defence pact, are simply unrealistic and are unlikely to be achieved in the medium to long term.

At present, the Organ essentially exists only at the level of the Heads of State and the Inter-State Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC). The ISDSC is composed of a ministerial council with three sub-committees, respectively on defence, security and intelligence. Below the level of the defence sub-committee, there are three functional committees: the Operations Sub-committee, the Standing Maritime Committee and the Standing Aviation Committee. The various departments of Foreign Affairs are therefore excluded from the present functioning of the Organ as it exists at present, while the attitude of most governments (with the exception of South Africa in most cases) towards the involvement of any non-government actors – either NGOs, research organisations or academics – is generally hostile.

Although the ISDSC has no permanent structure, it is making a marked contribution to build confidence among member countries, meeting on a rotational basis in the various SADC countries.

The pre-eminence of the military, security and intelligence departments within the ISDSC, which is chaired by the ministers of Defence of SADC countries on a rotational basis (presently Malawi), presents SADC with an anomaly. The focus of the Organ is on preventive action, which clearly places the responsibility for interaction and liaison primarily within the domain of the various departments of Foreign Affairs. Given the categorisation of the aims of the Organ into the five areas listed in Figure 2, the formalisation of the Organ must clearly impact upon the way in which the ISDSC presently operates, including the issue of who its chairperson is (presently Defence). There is also a need to look at the manner in which the ISDSC has been structured and has operated in the past. Within its structures, the ISDSC also includes, for example, a standing sub-committee on maritime affairs and one on aviation, both of which include non-military agencies and concerns. Finally, and most controversial, there is neither room, nor tolerance for the involvement of non-state actors in areas, such as the monitoring of human rights, early warning, research, etc. This runs counter to Article 23 of the SADC Treaty, which states that the organisation will "*seek to involve fully the peoples of the Region and Non-Government Organisations.*"

Apart from the Summit of Heads of State and Government itself and the ISDSC, no clear mechanism is therefore available for the pursuit of the objectives related to the area of foreign policy and human rights. This is particularly cogent, since SADC has become widely accepted as a regional arrangement of the United Nations, as envisaged in Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. In this context, it is essential that SADC links its efforts to deal with conflict avoidance, management and resolution with both the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the UN.

MILITARY/ DEFENCE	CRIME PREVENTION	INTELLIGENCE	FOREIGN POLICY	HUMAN RIGHTS
protect against instability	close co-operation to deal with cross-border crime	close co-operation	promote co-operation and common political value systems and institutions to deal with cross-border crime	develop democratic institutions and practices
develop a collective security capacity	promote community-based approach	early warning	develop common foreign policy	encourage observance of universal human rights
conclude Mutual Defence Pact			conflict prevention, management and resolution	encourage and monitor international human rights conventions and treaties
develop a regional peacekeeping capacity			mediate in inter- and intra-state disputes	early warning
			preventive diplomacy	
			early warning	
			encourage and monitor international arms control / disarmament conventions and treaties	
			co-ordinate participation in peace operations	
			address extra-regional conflicts which impact on the region	

Figure 2: ORGAN OBJECTIVES

The fact that the Organ functions only at summit level, where the roles of the SADC chair (President Mandela) and the Organ chair (President Mugabe) are unclear, presents it with a number of problems. Confusion as to leadership roles may prove to be an insurmountable barrier to the "addressing [of] extra-regional conflicts which impact on peace and security in Southern Africa." An Organ operating solely at summit level also means the exclusion of vital diplomatic and technical inputs from SADC ministers of Foreign Affairs, and line functionaries in departments, such as Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Security. Without such contributions, the Organ will not be able to operate effectively and pro-actively, but will be relegated to a 'fire brigade' role, with the Heads of State and Government reacting to, rather than pre-empting crises which affect the region.

Clearly, any development of the Organ should be based on the principles and objectives of SADC, as embodied in the Treaty, as well as those objectives that have been formulated for the Organ itself. This is the underlying approach to the discussion and proposals which follow.

STRUCTURAL GUIDELINES

Like the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the SADC Organ is potentially an organisation with a comprehensive approach to security and peace, based on military confidence, economic development (SADC 'proper'), social justice, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and the rights of minorities. The region clearly still has a long way to go in this regard. Furthermore, the active, ongoing and meaningful pursuit of such an inspiring list of objectives cannot occur only at an annual meeting of Heads of State and Government and a system of ad hoc and informal arrangements. It requires the regular engagement of member states at ministerial and technical levels. In organisational terms, this is the major challenge for the structural development of the Organ.

The following guidelines pertaining to the institutional framework for the Organ were included in the *communiqué* of the 28 June 1996 Gaborone Summit:

- the Organ shall operate at the Summit level, and shall function independently of other SADC structures;
- the Organ shall also operate at ministerial and technical levels;
- the chairpersonship of the Organ shall rotate on an annual and on a troika basis;
- the Inter-State Defence and Security Committee shall be one of the institutions of the Organ; and
- the Organ may establish other structures as the need arises.

CHAIRPERSONSHIP OF THE HEADS OF STATE SUMMIT

The most vexing, and possibly most intractable issue, is the present system of dual chairmanship of SADC and the Organ, since this is at the same level (Heads of State). A confusion of the respective roles at this level could confound initiatives relating to the structure and functioning of subordinate levels of both the Organ and of the rest of SADC. According to the SADC Treaty, "[t]he Summit shall elect a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman of SADC from among its members for an agreed period, on the basis of rotation." As mentioned previously, South Africa is at present the chairperson, with Mozambique as vice-chairperson. Since the Organ is part of SADC, the country which heads SADC should also provide some direction with regard to the Organ.

At the 28 June 1996 Summit it was decided that the Chair of the Organ shall rotate on an annual and on a troika basis. This implies a difference between the term of office of the chairperson of SADC and the Organ. Whereas the Summit decided to appoint the SADC chairperson for a period of three years, the Organ chair is supposed to rotate on an annual basis. For the sake of congruency, a first recommendation would therefore be to change the tenure of the Organ chairpersonship to be the same as that of SADC, i.e. three years.

A second recommendation would be to establish a linkage between the SADC chairperson, the vice-chairperson of SADC and that of the Organ. This could be done by using the troika model which, in turn, is based on the chair of the Central Organ of the OAU. A troika of Heads of State could therefore consist of:

- the current chairperson of SADC (presently South Africa);
- the vice-chairperson of SADC (presently Mozambique) who serves as alternative chairperson of the Organ where issues affecting the country occupying the chair of the Organ are to be discussed; and
- the incoming chairperson of SADC who also serves as the chair of the Organ. This would then be a role that Zimbabwe fulfils.

At present, the identity of the incoming chair of SADC only becomes known when the SADC chairpersonship ends and a new chairperson is elected. It was for this reason that President Mandela expressed his surprise when he was unceremoniously and without prior consultation 'elected' by his fellow Heads of State to serve as chairperson of SADC. By combining a formal system of succession to the chairpersonship of SADC and the Organ, the dual leadership dilemma of SADC and the Organ could be largely resolved. Admittedly, this implies revisiting the agreement which was reached in Gaborone last year. However, the proposed arrangement may be seen as a question of refinement rather than contradiction. It also gives effect to the troika notion decided in the June 1996 Summit.

The proposed additional rule of succession to the SADC chair would also ensure that the two 'legs' of SADC are not at odds with each other.

The implication of this is, of course, that Zimbabwe will succeed South Africa as chair of SADC in three years' time at which point a new chair of the Organ will be identified. If, in the interim, Zimbabwe is embroiled in a dispute with its neighbours, or experiences a problem similar to that which a country such as Swaziland finds itself in at the moment, it will have to recuse itself from the Organ chair for the duration of that meeting. It is within this context that the OSCE principle of consensus minus one should regulate Organ discussions, resolutions and motions, as well as those of the Summit of the Heads of State and Government.

INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

SADC has to deal with the issue of democratisation and the advancement of human rights in a politically sensitive manner. Clearly, heads of states will not readily accept any mechanisms or institutions which threaten or potentially question their internal practices in too rigorous a manner. This being said, commitments undertaken in the realm of democracy and human rights in terms of the SADC Treaty and protocols, are collectively matters of direct and legitimate concern to all states party to the SADC Treaty.

It is therefore not appropriate, nor possible, to advance the cause of democracy and human rights through secretive discussions between government leaders. The nature of the instrument should match the ends. Thus, any organisation/ structure or process that relates to these aims and objectives should be transparent, not be under too close political control, and include and provide for interaction with civil society – the NGO sector in particular.

We therefore propose the establishment of an Institute for Democracy and Human Rights which receives its mandate directly from the annual meeting of the SADC Heads of State and Government. This Institute would give recognition to the four essential objectives which have been set for the Organ, but which cannot be effectively pursued by the other Organ structures suggested elsewhere, namely to:

- promote political co-operation among member states and the evolution of common political value systems and institutions;
- provide early warning of humanitarian and military crises within and between SADC states and countries which border SADC member states;
- promote and enhance the development of democratic institutions and practices within member states; and
- encourage the observance of universal human rights as provided for in the charters and conventions of the OAU and the UN.

The Institute should be a small, independent organisation headed by an Executive Director appointed by the Summit for a fixed, renewable term. The Institute, for example, could focus on the following activities:

- election monitoring;
- protection of minorities;
- political and human rights (basic freedoms and rule of law); and
- research/provision of information.

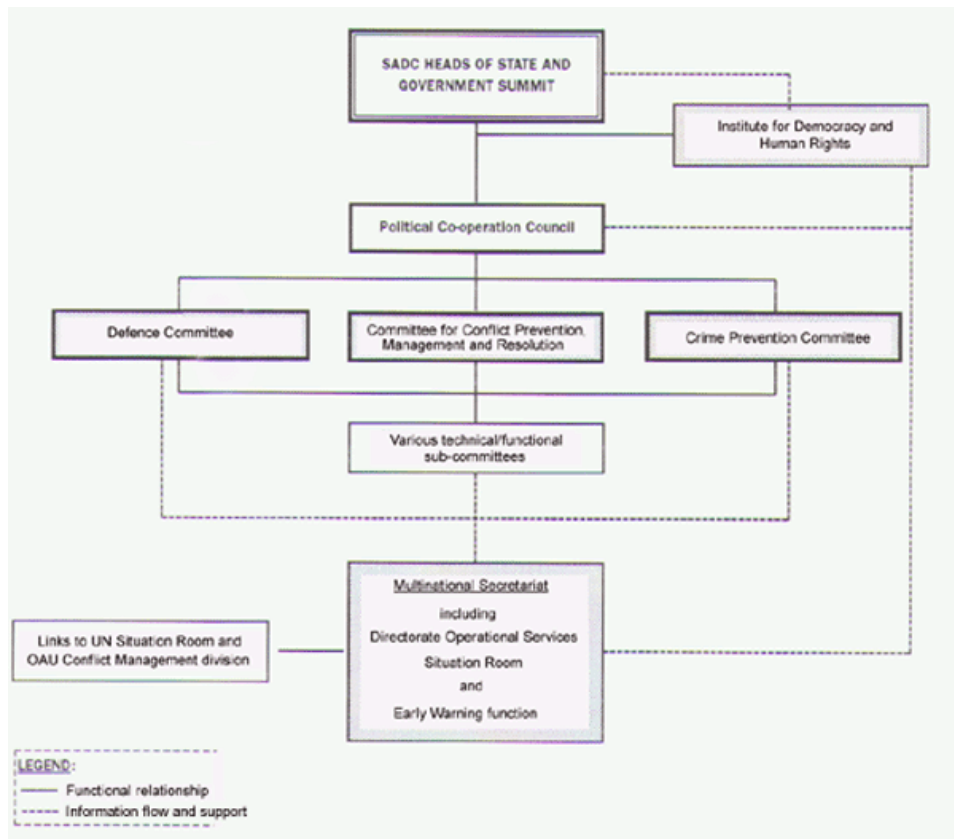


Figure 3: Proposed Structure of the SADC Organ

The overarching mission of the Institute would be derived directly from Article 5 of the SADC Treaty, and could be formulated as follows: to evolve common political values, systems and institutions in order to promote and defend peace and security. This is obviously not a mission which can be pursued through prescription. It is one which will involve a long term process of engagement, building of trust and informed debate. The Institute should therefore engage in the following:

- convening conferences and seminars on issues pertaining to the activities of SADC's departments;
- monitoring trends through the management of information provided by data bases, personal visits, the media, NGOs, academics, and other informed representatives of civil society;
- analysing tensions arising from its areas of concern; and
- disseminating information *via* publications, reports, conferences and the media.

In the process, the Institute would interact closely with its parent body, NGOs, research organisations and academics in the region.

The Institute would therefore be responsible for bringing any issue which may require mediation or the urgent use of preventive diplomacy in order to defuse a conflict situation, to the attention of the chairpersons of SADC and the Organ. Possibly funded by various donor or member countries, one could accept that the Institute would report annually to the Summit of Heads of State and Government.

POLITICAL CO-OPERATION COUNCIL

The SADC Treaty provides for a 'Council of Ministers', which allows for one minister from each member state to be included in this council. In the case of South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mauritius, SADC involvement is co-ordinated by the Foreign ministries. The responsibility for other countries generally lies with the relevant ministers for Economic Development, or their equivalent. With the Organ committed to peace, preventive

diplomacy and security issues, liaison is increasingly also through other departments, such as Defence, Security and (potentially) Foreign Affairs. Therefore, SADC would either have to:

- continue with the practices of accepting that all liaison occurs through a single department, such as Trade and Industry, which would be enormously impractical when dealing with a crisis requiring rapid reaction;
- move to a system where the various government departments increasingly work together on a direct basis with the co-ordination of national policies occurring within each country on an inter-department basis; or
- accept that liaison with SADC occurs through one department on issues concerning development, and through another (Foreign Affairs) in the case of the Organ.

At present, South Africa already has a ministerial committee on SADC which co-ordinates all South African interaction with SADC on an interdepartment level. At the level of SADC, the ISDSC already has a second ministerial council, composed of ministers dealing with Defence, Security and related issues. It is proposed that the ISDSC Ministerial Committee (which includes the ministers for Defence, Safety and Security, Home Affairs, and National Intelligence) should be dissolved in favour of a more appropriate structure at this level, once the structure of the Organ has been finalised.

Given the mandate of the Organ (i.e. the objectives articulated by the June 1996 Summit), we further propose that SADC formally establish a second ministerial council composed of the ministers of Foreign Affairs in a so-called Political Co-operation Council. This would then replace the defunct ISDSC Ministerial Committee. The Council should consist of the ministers responsible for Foreign Affairs from each member state, with those from Defence, Security and Intelligence available on a co-opted basis.

The Political Co-operation Council should be responsible for:

- overseeing the functioning and development of the Organ;
- overseeing the implementation of the objectives of the Organ and the proper execution of its programmes;
- advising the Summit on matters of common foreign, defence and security policy;
- approving policies, strategies and work programmes of the SADC Organ;
- directing, co-ordinating and supervising the operations of the institutions of the SADC Organ subordinate to it;
- creating its own committees when necessary;
- recommending persons for appointment to the post of Principal Secretary to the Summit (see proposed structure of a multinational secretariat below);
- determining the terms and conditions of service of the staff of the institutions of the Organ; and
- convening conferences and other meetings where appropriate, for purposes of promoting the objectives and programmes of the Organ. In convening such conferences and meetings, the Council should "*seek to involve fully the peoples of the Region and Non-Government Organisations*", in accordance with Article 23 of the SADC Treaty.

The posts of chairperson and vice-chairperson of the Political Co-operation Council could be allocated to the member states holding the chairpersonship of SADC and the SADC Organ respectively. The Council should meet at least once a year, and report and be responsible to the Summit. Decisions of the Council should also follow the rule of 'consensus minus one'.

Apart from overall responsibility for more specific objectives of the Organ which are delegated to subordinate organ structures as indicated below, the Political Co-operation Council would itself be responsible for managing the following Organ objectives:

- the full co-operation in regional security and defence through conflict prevention, management and resolution;
- the avoidance of conflict and, where such means fail, the recommendation of punitive measures as a last resort (these responses would be agreed in a multilateral Protocol on Peace, Security and Conflict Resolution);
- political support to the organs and institutions of SADC;
- the promotion of peacemaking and peacekeeping in order to achieve sustainable peace and security; and

- the promotion of the political, economic, social and environmental dimensions of security.

COMMITTEES ON DEFENCE AND CRIME PREVENTION

The existing ISDSC sub-committees provide forums for discussions and negotiations on public security, defence and state security matters at the technical level. We propose that this forum be reconstituted as a Defence Committee and a Crime Prevention Committee, consisting of equal representation of heads or deputy heads of departments of member states dealing with defence and crime prevention.

These committees should be responsible for the pursuit of the following Organ objectives:

- the protection of the people and safeguarding of the development of the region against instability arising from the breakdown of law and order, inter-state conflict and external aggression;
- the development of close co-operation between the police and security services of the region, with a view to address cross-border crime, as well as to promote a community-based approach on matters of security; and
- the development of a collective security capacity and the conclusion of a Mutual Defence Pact for responding to external threats, and a regional peacekeeping capacity within national armies that could be called upon within the region, or elsewhere on the continent.

Representatives from the intelligence community could be co-opted onto either or both committees where appropriate and/or form a functional sub-committee(s).

COMMITTEE FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION, MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION

This additional committee should consist of equal representation of directors-general and senior officials from the Foreign Affairs departments and intelligence agencies of member states and should function in a similar manner as the existing sub-committees of the ISDSC.

The committee would meet for discussions on issues pertaining to peace and security, with a view to pursuing the following objectives of the Organ:

- the development of a common foreign policy in areas of mutual concern and interest and lobbying as a region, on issues of common interest at international forums;
- the promotion of peacemaking and peacekeeping in order to achieve sustainable peace and security;
- the encouragement and monitoring of the ratification of UN, OAU, and other international conventions and treaties on arms control and disarmament, human rights and peaceful relations between states;
- the co-ordination of the participation of member states in international and regional peacekeeping operations; and
- the addressing of extra-regional conflicts which impact on peace and security in Southern Africa.

Representatives from the intelligence community could be co-opted onto the committee where appropriate and/or form a functional sub-committee(s).

MULTINATIONAL SECRETARIAT

Thus far the Organ has not established a permanent secretariat – in contrast to the SADC Secretariat for regional economic development which is located in Gaborone. Should the Organ wish to interact with the OAU and the UN in areas such as peacekeeping or simply to co-operate in a structured manner, the establishment of a small permanent secretariat is imperative. Such a secretariat would clearly have to be staffed on a multinational basis and should ideally not be co-located with the SADC Secretariat in Gaborone in order to avoid competition and overlap between the two 'legs' of SADC. The Organ Secretariat and the various sub-committees could, in time, replicate the way in which the Central Organ works at the OAU, i.e. where the regular, and by far the majority of decisions are made at ambassadorial level and the need to consult at the levels of ministers and Heads of State is limited to an annual meeting. SADC ambassadors to the country where the Secretariat of the Organ is located would therefore have accreditation both to that country, and to the Organ.

Harare may be an appropriate venue for such a secretariat, because the Regional Centre for Peacekeeping Studies and the regional headquarters of Interpol are to be established in that city.

The Secretariat would be the principal executive institution of the Organ, and should be responsible for:

- strategic control, planning and management of the programmes of the Organ;
- implementation of decisions of the Summit and of the Political Co-operation Council;
- organisation and management of Organ meetings;
- financial and general administration; and
- representation and promotion of the Organ.

The Secretariat would be headed by a Principal Secretary and supported by other staff, such as may be determined by the Political Co-operation Council from time to time. The Principal Secretary would have similar duties and responsibilities to that of the SADC Executive Secretary, on matters pertaining to the functioning of the Organ. Where Summit meetings are concerned, the Principal Secretary would have to liaise closely with the Executive Secretary. In addition, the Principal Secretary should be responsible for co-ordinating the activities of the Organ at the level of the OAU and UN secretariats.

We argue that one of the main structures of the multinational secretariat that is required is a directorate for operational services, including a situation room. The Directorate will have to be structured and appropriately staffed to meet the challenge of:

- managing early warning information systems to sensitise the Organ (where appropriate) regarding developments within SADC (see below);
- supplying the Organ and its various structures with information; and
- co-ordinating with the Conflict Management Division at the OAU, and the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UN DPKO) situation room.

The specific functions of the Directorate of Operational Services within the multinational secretariat would therefore be to gather, process and distribute information to member states. It is neither feasible nor appropriate to recommend detailed tasks, structures and processes of either the Secretariat or the Directorate in this paper. We believe that this should be the focus of a specific investigation, and that such an investigation should be commissioned as soon as a decision is made on the establishment of a secretariat for the Organ.

EARLY WARNING

Building upon recent comparative research which the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) has undertaken both in New York (at the situation room of the UN DPKO), South Africa (the Directorate Operational Services at the Department of Foreign Affairs), and in Addis Ababa (the nascent situation room at the OAU's Conflict Management Division), we believe that any formal early warning system should be in line with the recent proposals of the Political Affairs Department of the OAU – where the Conflict Management Division is the instrument responsible for providing formal early warning and conflict management services. In line with the general functions of the Office for the Protection of Minorities within the OSCE, the proposed Institute for Democracy and Human Rights would also partly serve as an early warning and conflict mediation mechanism (see Figure 3).

Given the existence of massive data bases, such as the Humanitarian Early Warning System (HEWS) of the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs and other information systems, the Organ should establish agreements to enable it to tap into these, rather than attempt to replicate them.

Furthermore, an intelligence sub-structure is already in place within the present ISDSC, which provides for the sharing of information and the exchange of data. This function should continue, in our opinion, but possibly not as a single committee at the same level as the three committees on Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Defence, and Crime Prevention, but rather with the appropriate intelligence sub-structures supporting each committee. If so required, the committees can co-opt intelligence functionaries or establish a dedicated sub-structure. From the level of the three committees, information would then be fed to the political level, i.e. the Political Co-operation Council.

Given the traditional reluctance of intelligence agencies to share information on a multilateral basis, we do not believe that the Organ, in the short to medium term, should attempt to establish a separate, dedicated early warning system for SADC. As an interim measure, the proposed multinational Secretariat of the Organ could serve as a nodal point for collating and disseminating information. In summary, the various intelligence sub-structures and the Institute for Democracy and Human Rights would therefore constitute a loose early warning network for the Organ.

CONCLUSION

This paper is tentative and provocative. The suggestions made above are not exhaustive, nor are the arguments in support of the various proposed structures. For example, since the 1994 elections in South Africa, the ISDSC has been focusing on issues such as vehicle theft and cross-border crime (apart from discussing the exchange of military personnel, collaboration in training, etc.). As such, it would follow that the implementation of the recently signed Protocol on Combating Illicit Drug Trafficking would become a responsibility of the Organ and not of SADC in Gaborone. This reinforces the argument for a permanent structure to implement and monitor progress. Furthermore, the implications for SADC member states of the establishment of a second multilateral secretariat in Harare would further strain the limited resources that SADC receive from its member countries. As a result, the existing equal membership fee structure, which has South Africa and Swaziland pay an equal amount towards SADC, will also have to be revisited.

Article 6 of the SADC Treaty provides that "*Member States undertake to adopt adequate measures to promote the achievement of the objectives of SADC, and shall refrain from taking any measure likely to jeopardise the sustenance of its principles, the achievement of its objectives and the implementation of its provisions of this Treaty.*" Consideration of the proposals outlined above would help the Heads of State and Government to honour this undertaking. As chair of SADC, South Africa has an obligation to review not only the functioning of SADC 'proper', but also the development and functioning of the Organ for Politics, Defence and Security. We hope that these proposals do not only provide some concrete guidelines for such development, but that they would also lend impetus to the process of creating a meaningful structure for the pursuit of the political and security objectives of SADC.

ENDNOTES

1. We would like to thank colleagues Jean Lausberg, Hussein Solomon, Virginia Gamba and Jakkie Potgieter for comments on earlier drafts.