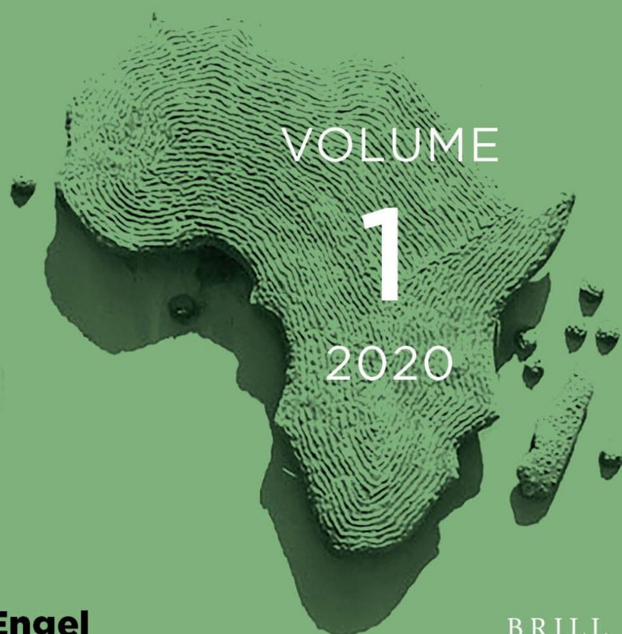
YEARBOOK ON THE AFRICAN UNION



Edited by **Ulf Engel**

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Yearbook on the African Union

Volume 1 (2020)

Yearbook on the African Union

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Foreword

This is the first edition of the *Yearbook on the African Union* (YBAU). It is first and foremost an academic project that will provide in-depth evaluation and analysis of the institution, its processes, and its engagements. It seeks to be a reference point for evidence-based policy-making and decision-making. It is a tall order to establish a yearbook as an academic resource, wishing to reach both scholarly communities as well as policy-makers and practitioners. The YBAU seeks to be the first port of call for bureaucrats, diplomats, practitioners, 'outinsider' experts, intellectuals, and consultants to have access to reliable information and analysis on the African Union (AU) that is also able to support policy- and decision-making. Yearbooks are excellent sources of 'instant' expert knowledge that scholars can tap into to comprehend long-term trends and patterns, but, by the same token, may be limited by the narrow time frames in which these patterns are encompassed. We firmly believe that this *Yearbook* is highly relevant and needs to be taken seriously as a source of information on an important African institution. Its systematic approach, historicity, and organisational sociology will help it to continue to provide much-needed analysis and perspective even as institutions face challenges, adapt, and transform. Three strengths really stand out.

1 Contribution to an Evidence-Based Project

The *Yearbook* emphasises the policy-makers and the policy-making of the AU, in contrast to other similar volumes that focus much more on structures, pillars, and institutional actors or on singular policy fields. This is significant because we get a rare glimpse of the insider perspectives and the daily struggles of those agents that really give the institutions life. For us, as long-standing researchers of the AU, we know just how hard it can be to access reliable data that grasp the origins and interstate patterns of decision-making and how power operates. This is also the case for AU policy-makers, and with increasing pressure to also strengthen the evidence basis behind proposals, position papers, and draft policies, the challenges become enormous. The contributors are all familiar with the work of the AU in their domains of expertise through regular interactions with policy-makers and research communities. They are able to speak authoritatively and in lucid terms on these subjects. It is against this background that the YBAU can make an incremental positive contribution by making reliable information easily accessible, supporting the longer-term

aim of a 'data driven' AU Commission. In a way, the YBAU seeks to 'speak reason' with AU policy-makers and members.

2 Shaping Global Policy

The chapters of the YBAU help illustrate in great detail an important finding of research on the AU and African regionalism in recent years. That is the role that African actors play in shaping norms, policies, and global affairs. The volume establishes the AU as a change agent of global affairs, even if it also scrutinises where this agency is performed in an uneven and sometimes not so desirable manner. This promises to provide us with systematic analysis of AU agency, which provides us with insights from multiple policy fields, criss-crossing 'levels of analysis', as well as acknowledging their transnational form.

Because the YBAU treats the AU as the multidimensional organisation that it is, there is the added value of showing agency across areas that less often gather much interest. We seek to move beyond the narrow fixation with political and security affairs in an effort to broaden the analytical envelope to capture the whole array of areas at the core of the AU's mandate. This is also important, for instance, to students who seek to cast a multidimensional eye on the AU's *Agenda 2063*. Similarly, in 2020, African agency on public health through the work of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) in coordinating the Covid-19 response was an area that attracted a lot of regional and also global attention. The more knowledge we can shed on the inner working of all AU activities, the more we can appreciate the scale and enormity of pan-African integration. The annual interview of the YBAU can highlight such timely cases. At the same time, the many other chapters will cover both high-profile and low-profile facets of what the AU does.

3 Disconnects and Discontents

Several of the chapters in the YBAU also have another overarching theme, that being that in a great many places on the African continent it remains unclear and unknown what the AU is and stands for. In different ways, across the key substantive work areas of the AU that the volume covers, a cross-cutting ambition of becoming a 'people's Union' is falling short. On the one hand, the AU does govern. Its policies, interventions, and programmes do have an impact on the lives of citizens across the 55 member states. On the other hand, the diplomatic positioning of governments in the AU and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), as well as what shared principles and rules that these

governments will or will not abide by, are very hard for citizens to decipher. Very few non-governmental organisations (NGOs) succeed in being accredited to attend meetings or summits, and there are very few channels of popular participation in AU affairs. Institutions envisaged for popular participation, such as the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) and the Economical, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), have been slow in fulfilling their objectives, but in future YBAUs we need to understand why their growth remains stunted. This volume of the YBAU is focused on institutional and financial reforms and reflects in how far the AU has progressed with reforming the organisation, meeting the objectives of *Agenda 2063*, and achieving its ambition to be people-centred. The YBAU will indirectly and over time help document where the disconnects and discontent become particularly troubling.

Linnéa Gelot, Cheryl Hendricks, Gilbert Khadiagala, Paul Nugent, and Thomas Kwasi Tieku (Editorial Board)

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At Brill's Joed Elich has taken the publisher's risk to launch the *Yearbook on the African Union*. Although looking back at more than 15 years of cooperation with him and the publishing house (on the book series launched by the organisation of European centres of African studies, AEGIS), by no means I took this for granted. I am much obliged that Joed shares my belief in the future of this project. My sincere thanks are also to Franca de Kort who, in her usual unagitated manner, made sure that the Yearbook has come into the world.

My deepfelt thanks go to the members of the editorial board – Linnéa Gelot, Cheryl Hendricks, Gilbert M. Khadiagala, Paul Nugent and Thomas Kwasi Tieku – for keeping an eye on quality and guiding me when necessary. I do appreciate that you are an active editorial board, and I am looking forward to our post-mortem analysis.

Amidst fighting the corona pandemic and building back better African public health systems, Dr John N. Nkengasong found some time to answer my questions on how the continental body and its specialised technical institution, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), have dealt with the numerous challenges caused by the pandemic. I would like to thank him wholeheartedly for availing himself. I also would like to thank Sergut Dejene, senior communications officer in the Office of the Director Africa CDC, for handling the interview with the Dr Nkengasong.

The book review section has been managed by Katharina P.W. Döring and Jens Herpolsheimer. I owe them for a great selection of titles and reviewers, and the companionship along this journey. And Forrest Kilimnik has copyedited with consistency and imagination. Pleasure working with all of you! And as always, all remaining typos and glitches are mine and mine alone.

Convinced that the *Yearbook on the African Union* will provoke critical responses of various kinds and hopefully also stimulate academic debate, I would be most grateful if these responses could enable the editorial team to improve on the product and contribute to making this endeavour a sustainable and intellectually fruitful one. Any constructive feedback is most welcome at: uengel@uni-leipzig.de

Ulf Engel

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Acronyms

ACDEG	African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance
ACERWC	African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
ACHPR	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (Banjul)
ACIRC	African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises
ACLED	Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project
ACP	Africa, Caribbean, Pacific countries
AEC	African Economic Community
AfCHPR	African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (Arusha)
AfCTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AfDB	African Development Bank (Abidjan)
AFISMA	African-led International Support Mission to Mali
Afreximbank	African Export-Import Bank (Cairo)
Africa CDC	Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Addis Ababa)
AfSEM	African Single Electricity Market
AfSol	African Solutions to African Problems
AFTCOR	African Taskforce for Coronavirus Response
AGA	African Governance Architecture
AGA–YES	AGA–Youth Engagement Strategy
AGF	African Governance Facility
AGP	African Governance Platform
AIDS	acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
AMA	African Medicines Agency
AMISOM	AU Mission in Somalia
AMOT	African Ministers of Trade
AMSP	Africa Medical Supplies Platform
ANWIN	African Network for Women in Infrastructure
AOSTI	African Observatory in Science, Technology and Innovation
APF	(EU) African Peace Facility
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
ARNS	African Regional Nutrition Strategy
ASEOWA	African Union Support to Ebola Outbreak in West Africa
ASI	African Solidarity Initiative
ASF	African Standby Force
ASRIC	African Observatory in Science Technology and Innovation
ATO	African Trade Observatory
AU	African Union (Addis Ababa)

AUABC	AU Advisory Board on Corruption
AUC	AU Commission
AUCIL	African Union Commission on International Law
AUDA	African Union Development Agency–NEPAD
AUTSTG	AU Technical Support to The Gambia
AU CIEFFA	AU International Centre for Girls and Women Education in Africa
AU OYE	Office of the Youth Envoy
AU YVC	AU Youth Volunteers Corps
AWA	AIDS Watch Africa
A3	the three African non-permanent UNSC members
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
CAMH	Conference of Ministers of Health
CAR	Central African Republic
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan States (Tripoli)
CEO	chief executive officer
CESA 16–25	Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016–2025
CEWS	Continental Early Warning System
CID	Council for Infrastructure Development
CODESRIA	Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (Dakar)
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (Lusaka)
COVID-19	coronavirus disease
CPLP	Community of Portuguese Language Countries (Lisbon)
CSOS	civil society organisations
CSSDCA	Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa
C10	committee of ten ministers of finance
C10	ministerial group of 10 EST champions
DDR	disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration
DIRCO	Department of International Relations and Cooperation (Pretoria)
DPA	Department of Political Affairs
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DREA	Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture
DSA	Department of Social Affairs
DSSI	Debt Service Suspension Initiative
DTS	Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020–2030)
EAC	East African Community (Arusha)
EAP	Encyclopaedia Africana Project
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States (Libreville)
ECOSOCC	Economic, Social and Cultural Council
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States (Abuja)

EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
EST	education, science, and technology
EU	European Union (Brussels)
EUTM	EU Training Mission in Mali
EU ITF	EU Infrastructure Trust Fund for Africa
EU PSC	EU Political and Security Committee
FOCAC	Forum for China-Africa Cooperation
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
FMS	(Somalia) Federal Member States
FTA	Free Trade Area
FY	financial year
F15	Fifteen Ministers of Finance
GBV	gender-based violence
GDP	gross domestic product
GERD	Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam
GNWP	Global Network of Women Peace Builders
GIZ	German development agency GIZ (Eschborn, Germany)
G5	G5 Sahel Joint Force
G6	Group of Six (re AfCFTA)
G7	Group of Seven (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States as well as the European Union)
G8	Group of 8 (G7, plus Russian Federation)
G20	Group of Twenty
HIV	human immunodeficiency viruses
HSGIC	(NEPAD) Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee
HSGOC	(NEPAD) Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee
IAIDA	Institutional Architecture for Infrastructure Development in Africa
ICA	Integrated Corridor Approach
ICJ	International Court of Justice (The Hague)
ICT	information and communication technologies
IDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (Stockholm)
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development (Djibouti)
IMF	International Monetary Fund (Washington DC)
IPED	Pan-African Institute for Education for Development (Abidjan)
IPRS	intellectual property rights
IPSS	Institute for Peace and Security Studies (Addis Ababa)
ISCAP	Islamic State Central Africa Province
ISS	Institute for Security Studies (Pretoria)

ISWAP	Islamic State West Africa Province
JAES	Joint Africa–EU Strategy
JPA	Joint Programme Agreement
LCBC	Lake Chad Basin Commission (N'Djamena)
LDCS	Least Developed Countries
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexuality plus
LPDF	Libyan Political Dialogue Forum
MAP	Millennium Africa Renaissance Programme
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MINUSMA	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali
MNJTF	Multinational Joint Task Force (N'Djamena)
MNLA	National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad
MONUSCO	UN Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the DR Congo
MOUACA	AU Military Observers Mission to the CAR
MUJAO	Mouvement pour l'unicité et le jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest
MYCM	Mid-Year Coordination Meeting
NAI	New African Initiative
NAP	National Action Plan
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGOS	non-governmental organisations
NHRIS	National Human Rights Institutions
NPCA	NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency
NPoA	National Programme of Action
OAU	Organisation of African Unity (Addis Ababa)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (Paris)
PAP	Pan-African Parliament (Midrand, South Africa)
PAPR-CAR	Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the CAR
PAPS	Political Affairs, Peace and Security
PAU	Pan-African University (Yaoundé)
PCRD	Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development
PICI	Presidential Infrastructure Champion Initiative
PIDA	Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa
PMPA	Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan for Africa
PRC	Permanent Representatives Committee
PSC	Peace and Security Council
PSD	Peace and Security Department
PSHMS	public health and social measures
PSOS	Peace Support Operations
RECS	Regional Economic Communities
RHOS	Regional Health Organisations

RMS	Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution
RSS	Regional Stabilisation Strategy
R&D	research and development
SACU	Southern African Customs Union (Windhoek)
SADC	Southern African Development Community (Gaborone)
SAIIA	South African Institute of International Affairs (Johannesburg)
SARS-CoV-2	severe acute respiratory syndrome – coronavirus
SDGS	Sustainable Development Goals
SDGEA	Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Stockholm)
SNA	Somali National Army
SRSG	Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General
STISA 2024	Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa
STCS	specialised technical committees
STC-EST	STC on Education, Science and Technology
STC-HPDC	STC on Health, Population and Drug Control
STC-ICT	STC on Communication and Information Communications Technology
STC-TIIIET	STC on Transport, Intercontinental and Interregional Infrastructures, Energy and Tourism
STDS	sexually transmitted diseases
STG	Silencing the Guns
STP	Somalia Transition Plan
TB	tuberculosis
TFTA	Tripartite Free Trade Area
TGONU	Transitional Government of National Unity
TPLF	Tigray People Liberation Front
TRIPS	Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
TVET	Continental Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UCG	unconstitutional change(s) of government
UMA	Arab Maghreb Union (Rabat)
UN	United Nations (New York)
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (Geneva)
UNAMID	AU–UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur
UNCTAD	UN Conference on Trade and Development (Geneva)
UNECA	UN Commission for Africa (Addis Ababa)
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Paris)
UNICEF	UN Children's Emergency Fund (New York)

UNOAU	UN Office at the African Union (Addis Ababa)
ONOWAS	UN Office for West African and the Sahel (Dakar)
UNSC	UN Security Council (New York)
UNSG	UN Secretary-General
UNSCR	UNSC Resolution
WAHO	West African Health Organisation (Brazzaville)
WGDD	(AU) Women and Gender Development Directorate
WHO	World Health Organisation (Geneva)
WHO ROA	WHO Regional Office for Africa (Bobo-Dioulasso)
WPS	Woman, Peace and Security
WTO	World Trade Organisation (Geneva)
YPS	Youth, Peace and Security

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Ulf Engel

1 Why a *Yearbook on the African Union*?

The main reason for starting this yearbook project is the lack of easily accessible, reliable, contextualised, and continuous information on the activities of the African Union (AU) – an intergovernmental organisation that was founded in 2001 as successor to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU, established in May 1963). Arguably, the AU and its various actors may be living in a diplomatic bubble in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, with a considerable disconnect from 'the African people'. But, at the same time, in the few years since being established the Union has become a major actor in global affairs that is aggregating the interests of its 55 members. For the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU), the AU Commission (AUC) has become the main intermediary between AU member states and the world outside the continent. The practical relevance of the continental body can be felt in many policy arenas, from peace and security to climate change to trade – to name but a few. In early 2020, the African Union's public health agency, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), was invaluable in terms of preparing national health systems to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic. Yet, despite the increased agency in recent years of the African Union in general, and the AUC in particular, little is known – outside expert policy or academic circles – about the Union's activities. The editor-in-chief and the editorial board hope that, with gaining breadth and depth over the years, a *Yearbook on the African Union* will help to address these needs and become a reliable source for those with a deeper interest in the African Union.

From an academic point of view – and here I also reflect on my own experience of being the supervisor of more than two dozen PhDs on the African Union and related peace and security topics as well as the director of master's studies and a PhD programme on peace and security in Africa[1] – it can be rather challenging, if not quite frustrating, to do research on the African Union. Often

1 Since 2012, the programmes have been offered jointly by the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) at Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia, and the Global and European Studies Institute (GESI) at Leipzig University, Germany.

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times, important sources are not easily available. Just think of the minutes of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government (AU Assembly), the AU Executive Council of, usually, Foreign Ministers (AU Council), or the Peace and Security Council (PSC) – in contrast to the UN or the EU, their minutes are not accessible. Almost all meetings are held in camera. One may learn about the outcome of a certain meeting (through printed decisions, communiqués, or press statements), but verbatim records, which would allow one to see who has said what, are either not publicly available or even do not exist at all.[2] As much as the various communication efforts of the AUC are really appreciated (and given the human resources and financial constraints, these cannot be valued highly enough) – from the website to the archives (see Molefe 2021) – serious empirical research on the African Union remains laborious and cumbersome, in particular in policy fields beyond peace and security, which tends to dominate the continent's agenda and much of how it is externally perceived.

Of course, since 2014, there has been the laudable joint initiative by the AUC and the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade to publish an *African Union Handbook* (see AUC and MFAT 2021).[3] The handbook focuses on factual overviews as well as on memberships, offices, and institutions – but not on policies. In contrast, the *Yearbook on the African Union* aims at providing detailed and contextualised information on the development of important policy fields. Its aspiration is to be both documenting *and* analytical. In addition, since 2016 the AU's Directorate of Information and Communication has been publishing *AU ECHO*, which has become an entertaining and informative annual magazine around core Union policies (African Union 2021a).

And then there are also two yearbooks edited by institutions belonging to the AU orbit. In 2017, the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (AfCHPR), and the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) joined forces to launch the *African Human Rights Yearbook* (ACHPR 2017). Four bilingual volumes (in English and French) have been published since with Pretoria University Law Press. This effort is financially supported by the German development agency, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). The yearbook brings together experts in law from Africa and beyond. The quality is high, academically rich in perspective, and robustly analytical. Starting with volume two, the editors gave the publication a yearbook-like character by introducing regular sections of articles

2 *ISS PSC Insights* [Pretoria], 20 November 2020.

3 Actually, the AU/MFAT handbook echoes earlier, and in the end futile, attempts by Oxfam (2014 [2012]) to provide regular insights into the continental body.

talking to the African Union's 'Theme of the Year' as well as 'case commentaries'. Furthermore, there is also the *Africa at the United Nations Yearbook*, which has been published since 2019 by the Union's Permanent Observer Mission in New York. This is a glossy, richly illustrated 112-page booklet that is 'inspired by the necessity to capture some of [the mission's] memorable moments and key achievements' (AUNY 2019: 5). It is produced with assistance from the UN Department of Global Communications. The 2020 edition has not yet been published.

In fact, there are few international organisations producing official yearbooks that cover the whole spectrum of their respective activities; basically, it is only the UN and the EU. The voluminous *Yearbook of the United Nations* is slightly running behind; the latest issue, published in 2019, covers the year 2014 (United Nations 2019). In comparison, the European Council is more up to date; the latest *European Yearbook* was released in 2018 (European Council 2018). Content-wise, the UN's yearbook follows in a very detailed way the work of the body's committee structure. And the *European Yearbook* concentrates on the 19 European supranational organisations as well as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

In addition to official yearbooks, there are also academic yearbooks – often relating to the field of international law. *The Max Planck Yearbook of United Nations Law* (Lachenmann and Wolfrum 2019) contains 16 chapters on topical issues (e.g., the reform of the UN Security Council) and one book review. The *Yearbook on European Integration* (published in German by Weidenfeld and Wessels 2019) systematically takes stock of political developments in the EU, including over 90 (an impressive number in itself) brief entries on EU institutions, political infrastructures, EU domestic politics, EU foreign relations, the EU and its neighbours, the EU and other organisations, as well as the respective Europe policies of member states. In addition, there is a semi-official, topical, and rather detailed *Yearbook of European Security* published by the European Union Institute for Security Studies (cf. Fiott and Theodosopoulos 2020). And with regard to the African continent, there is the *African Yearbook of International Law*, launched in 2003, with the latest issue covering the period 2017/2018 (Niyungeko 2020).[4]

So, by way of conclusion, outside the fields of human rights there are neither official yearbooks from or about the African Union nor academic yearbooks

4 In 2012, a *Pan-African Yearbook of Law* was started in Arusha, Tanzania. It was edited by the Pan-African Lawyers Union (PALU 2012), with financial support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). A call for abstracts for a second edition way launched in July 2015, but it seems it was a short-lived undertaking.

that discuss the dynamics of an institution whose 55 members constitute more than a quarter of the membership of the UN. (With a focus on the dynamics within many AU member states, since 2004 Brill has been publishing the *Africa Yearbook. Politics, Economy and Society South of the Sahara*. For the latest issue, see Awedoba et al. 2020).

2 The *Yearbook*'s Approach

Mind you, the present volume is not the *Yearbook OF the African Union*, but a *Yearbook ON the African Union*. It cannot be emphasised strongly enough that the editor-in-chief and the editorial board are not pretending or claiming to speak on behalf of the African Union – far from it. This is an academic project: nothing more, nothing less. The *Yearbook* brings together a group of scholars that have previously published not only on African Union policies, but oftentimes also in interaction with AU officials, even sometimes working as consultants for the Union over many years. The editors and contributors share an interest in the agency of the African Union, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and other African actors.[5] In terms of methodological background, we do so from a perspective of historical institutionalism and organisational sociology. Thus, we nurture the development of an understanding of the various interests playing out in the African Union in a historical perspective, of the dynamics between its actors and within particular institutions, as well as of the impact these activities have (had) in global politics. The approach is inductive, rather than deductive. This *Yearbook* is not guided by specific theories but interested in what actually is happening in the corridors of the African Union and beyond.

Against this background, the target audience of the *Yearbook on the African Union* is imagined as fairly broad and diverse. It ranges from fellow academics as well as journalists, both based on the continent and abroad, who are covering the African Union and related policies on a regular basis, to post-graduates of various kinds who are making their first steps into the orbit of this exciting institution and may be in need of some guidance. But we also hope that the very people working in the institution and the RECs as well as their 'international partners', i.e., members of the donor community, may consider this publication to be of some value for their own work.

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5 For the debate on African agency in global politics, see, among others, Brown and Harman (2013), Murithi (2014), Bischoff et al. (2015), and, more recently, Warner and Shaw (2018), Coleman and Tieku (2018) as well as Munyi et al. (2020) and Bischoff (2020).

3 Features of the *Yearbook*

The *Yearbook on the African Union* comprises four parts: (1) the Year-in-Review, (2) chapters on African Union policy fields, (3) book reviews, and (4) three appendices. In the first part, the *Yearbook* is opened by three pieces: *The Annual Interview on the African Union*, an overview on *The State of the Union*, and a reflection on the role of the Union's chairperson. The rationale for the interview is to discuss in an in-depth manner a topic that has dominated Union debates and activities in the previous year by reflecting upon it with a key actor. Deliberately, for 2020 *The Annual Interview* does not follow the Union's 'Theme of the Year' (in 2020, it was 'Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa's Development'; see AU Council 2019).

The following chapter, *The State of the Union*, is designed as a discussion of important internal developments of the African Union as an institution. The AU itself is the result of a negotiated transformation from one international organisation to another. And in its short history since 2001, the Union has continuously changed, with structures and policies coming under scrutiny and in turn leading to modifications and reformulations. In this edition of the *Yearbook*, two issues stand out: the Union's finances and the plan for institutional reform. In the past, the African Union has been described has a heavily donor-dependent institution. For this reason, member states in 2015 and 2016, respectively, agreed on a number of ambitious aims to increase ownership and sovereignty of the institution. Closely linked to the debate on the financial reform, in 2017 the Union also decided on reforming its institutions. The objective has been to increase efficiency, thereby strengthening the AU as an actor in global politics.

The third chapter is focused on the activities of the chairperson of the African Union. In accordance with Article 6 (4) of the 2000 *Constitutive Act of the African Union* (OAU 2000: 6[4]), the 'Chairman of the Assembly' is 'elected after consultations among the Member States'. In contrast to the powers and functions of the AU Assembly and that of the chairperson of the AUC, the role of the chairperson of the Union is not detailed in the Constitutive Act. It was only with the 2003 *Rules of Procedure for the Assembly* (African Union 2002: §16) as well as the 2003 *Protocol on Amendments to the Constitutive Act of the African Union* (African Union 2003: §7) that the – fairly limited – procedural and managerial functions of the chairperson were detailed. This makes it a very interesting office that has been carried out in varying ways since its establishment. In February 2020, South African president M. Cyril Ramaphosa took over this position for a 12-month period. In this chapter, the aims, activities, and achievements of the chair for the year 2020 are reviewed.

But first and foremost, the *Yearbook on the African Union* aims to review major developments in key policy fields of the continental body that took place in the calendar year of 2020. With an interest in the historicity of the institution, these policy fields do not necessarily mirror 1:1 the up-to-the-minute policy priorities of the Union but rather look into policy fields that have emerged and are being developed over a longer period of time. So, longue durée trumps 'discourses of newness'. Over the coming years, this approach hopefully also makes the Union's policies more commensurable across time. Looking at the African Union's website, the continental body, following its long-term guiding *Agenda 2063* (AU Assembly 2013), is currently pursuing 15 so-called flagship programmes (African Union 2021b), from the African High Speed Train Network to the Encyclopaedia Africana, from the African Commodities Strategy to the African Continental Free Trade Area, and from 'Silencing the Guns' to the Pan-African E-Network. In addition, on a day-to-day basis the Union is prioritising activities in 14 key programme areas. Among others, these are ranging from 'conflict resolution, peace and security' to 'agricultural development', from 'democracy, law and human rights' to a 'visa free Africa', and from 'migration, labour and employment' to 'gender equality and development'.

However, by looking into the history of the organisation, more long-term priorities can be identified. Based on an analysis of all the decisions taken by the OAU and AU Assemblies, Executive Councils, as well as the PSC between 1963 and today (see Engel 2021), nine key policy fields have been identified. They may have been framed in different ways over the years, but these policy fields are the substantive issues the Union has been dealing with. These policy fields are at the heart of the second part of the *Yearbook*. In alphabetical order, they are (1) 'development', (2) education, science, and technology, (3) governance, (4) health, (5) infrastructure, (6) peace and security, (7) regional integration and trade, (8) strategic partnerships, and, last but certainly not least, (9) women and youth. Over time, other topics may develop into fully fledged policy fields – climate change is an obvious candidate.

Three themes may cut across chapters. The first is the evolving and in many fields constantly renegotiated relationship between the African Union and the RECs, i.e., the 'division of labour in practice'. The second cross-cutting theme is the gap between the Union's ambition to be, or to become, 'a people's Union' and the reality of a disconnect that can be observed in most policy fields between the Union's headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on the one hand, and the citizens, parliaments, and private sectors in AU member states, on the other. And the third theme, obviously, is the SARS-CoV-2/Covid-19 pandemic. However, the cross-cutting themes are only featured in chapters when there was substantial empirical dynamics to report upon.

For the first edition of the *Yearbook*, there is a need to establish some sort of baselines for the chapters on policy fields. Thus, contributors have been asked not only to review the dynamics of the previous year, but also to provide as much background information as necessary to guide the reader into the respective policy field. The character of the chapters in part 2, therefore, is expected to progressively change in coming years.

Third, the *Yearbook on the African Union* also contains a book review section. It is edited by Katharina P.W. Döring (Södertörn University, Stockholm) and Jens Herpolsheimer (Leipzig University), two early-career scholars who have done incredible academic work on the African Union and the RECs thus far. The aim of this section is to critically highlight important academic contributions to the debate on the African Union, the RECs, and their entanglements in continental and global politics.

And fourth, the *Yearbook* provides a service section. It comprises three appendices: a chronicle of key events, an index of key African Union decisions, and an overview on selected office holders. The chronicle very briefly gives a chronological summary of the most important meetings and other key events. The index contains all decisions documented and available online by the AU Assembly, the AU Council, the AU/REC Mid-Year Coordination Meeting (MYCM), and the AU PSC. Unlike the UN, the AU does not provide an index function on its website. Usually, the AU Assembly takes about 40 to 50 decisions at its annual gathering, and the PSC roughly meets 35 times a year. And in addition, there is an equal number of decisions taken by the AU Executive Council and the AU/REC Mid-Year Coordination Meetings. The index is meant to provide quick guidance and access to those important AU documents that are in the public domain. Needless to say, that there are, undeniably, many more documents available on the websites of the Union and its various entities. The overview on key office holders provides information on the chairperson of the African Union, the chairperson of the AUC and the commissioners, the countries serving on the PSC, and the members of the Panel of the Wise.

4 Structure of the 2020 *Yearbook*

The first part of the *Yearbook on the African Union*, the Year-in-Review, features *The Annual Interview*, a chapter on *The State of the Union*, and a contribution discussing the Union's chairperson. For the first edition of the *Yearbook*, the choice for the interview is obvious and unavoidable: the Covid-19 pandemic has gravely struck all African countries and, in most societies, exacerbated

existing cleavages and social inequalities. As of 31 December 2020, some 2.7 million had been infected by the virus and 65,000 people had already died. The first confirmed Corona case on the continent was registered on 14 February 2020, in Egypt. Right from the beginning, the AU PSC treated Covid-19 as a non-traditional security threat (AU PSC 2020a; see also PSC 2020b and UNSC 2020). And on 13 April 2020, a Covid-19 Response Fund was set up (AU Council 2020). Throughout the year, Africa CDC – in close collaboration with the World Health Organisation's Regional Office for Africa (WHO ROA) – has informed the African public and tirelessly coordinated responses to the pandemic. The institution was only created in January 2017. *The Annual Interview* was held with John N. Nkengasong, the founding director of Africa CDC. The interview is followed by a review of *The State of the Union* (Ulf Engel). Part 1 then moves on to analyse the aims, activities, and achievements of the chairperson of the African Union for the year 2020, South African president Cyril Ramaphosa. This chapter is written by Elizabeth Sidiropoulos from the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA).

Part 2 of the *Yearbook* is made up of nine topical chapters that highlight the dynamics in the Union's substantive policy fields.[6] The debate on 'development' and the role of *the New Partnership for Africa's Development* (NEPAD) is at the fore of chapter 5. Henning Melber (Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala) critically deconstructs notions of development and focuses on the transformation, starting in 2019, of NEPAD into the African Union Development Agency. The chapter traces the current policies and impacts of this initiative. In chapter 6, Ulf Engel reviews dynamics in the field of education, science, and technology. Among others, this chapter revisits a number of strategies which are meant to support the establishment of knowledge societies on the continent. In chapter 7, Annie Chikwanha (University of Johannesburg) looks at the implementation of the African Governance Architecture (AGA), which is based on the *African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance* (ACDEG). The African Charter was adopted in 2007 and became operational in 2012. She takes stock of the implementation of the agenda in terms of the domestication of human rights and democracy standards and, to this end, the transformation of the practices of AU member states. Because of the merger of the AU departments in charge of political affairs, one the one hand, and peace and security, on the other, which is planned for 2021, this chapter also delves into some of the historical

6 Two chapters turned out to be force majeure. Both chapters 6 and 11 did not materialise as planned. In one case it was a quality issue, in the other the author originally scheduled for the chapter withdrew last minute.

dynamics leading to the current AGA – thus providing a baseline for future editions of the *Yearbook on the African Union*.

The corona pandemic has certainly dominated 2020. But the African Union, and its predecessor, have engaged in addressing diseases and pandemics for many years, including malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/Aids, and Ebola. In chapter 8, Habibu Yaya Bappah (Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria) and Edefe Ojomo (University of Lagos) dissect the broader context of the development of African Union health governance. In chapter 9, Tim Zajontz (Centre of African Studies, Edinburgh University) scrutinises the development of infrastructure as one of the pillars of the African Union's continental development agenda. Specifically, this chapter recalls progress of the *Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa* (PIDA), which is a strategic framework for developing continental (cross-border) infrastructures, such as energy, transport, information and communication technologies, as well as transboundary water resources. The traditionally paramount and fairly complex policy field of peace and security is addressed in chapter 10 by Dawit Yohannes Wondemagegnehu (Institute for Security Studies, Addis Ababa Office). Preventing, managing, and resolving peace and security issues remains the biggest challenge for the African Union. This chapter provides an overview on AU initiatives vis-à-vis transregional conflicts as well as on the collaboration with the RECs and its international partners in this respect. The chapter also addresses the evolution of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCTA) formally entered into force on 30 May 2019. With 54 member states, it has created the largest trade bloc in the world. It has certainly induced new dynamics across the continent in the area of regional integration and trade. In chapter 11, Katharina P.W. Döring and Ulf Engel analyse the effects of harmonising African policies on trade in goods and in services, investment, intellectual property rights, competition, and dispute settlement in a global context. They also look at how this project relates to the regional integration policies of the eight RECs officially recognised by the African Union as partners.[7] In chapter 12, Adekeye Adebajo (Institute for Pan-African Thought and Conversation, University of Johannesburg) revisits the development of the two strategic partnerships the AU has developed since

7 The eight RECs officially recognised by the AU are the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), the East African Community (EAC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

2007 with the UN, on the one hand, and the EU, on the other. And, finally, in chapter 13 Awino Okech (School of Oriental and African Studies, London) takes a closer look at the practices unfolding within the African Union since UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on women and children in violent conflict as well as on the role of women and youth in conflict prevention, management, and resolution was adopted. The chapter also revisits recent complementary dynamics in the field of youth and peace and security.

The *Book Review* section makes up the third part of the *Yearbook on the African Union*. Katharina P.W. Döring and Jens Herpolsheimer have selected a range of interesting new publications that are likely to advance the field of the study of the African Union and the RECs. In the first issue of the *Yearbook*, two monographs and three edited volumes have been chosen for closer inspection. Careful attention has been paid, so at least we hope, to knowledge production arising from the African continent and the diaspora. As a reader, or an author, please feel kindly invited to suggest titles for review in the next edition of the *Yearbook on the African Union*.

Finally, the fourth part of the *Yearbook* is designed as a service section for quick reference of key events, decisions, and officeholders.

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PART 1

The Year-in-Review

CHAPTER 2

The Annual Interview: The Covid-19 Pandemic

John N. Nkengasong

Editorial Note

In 2020, the SARS-CoV-2/Covid-19 pandemic has been the world's most dangerous and fastest-spreading global health challenge. At the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in Africa, on 14 February 2020, only Senegal and South Africa had the capacity to conduct corona tests. By now, almost all African Union (AU) member states can undertake their own testing. However, the number of tests conducted remains low, the time between testing and results far too long (often two weeks), and there are still by far not enough testing facilities. Yet, with the Africa Medical Supplies Platform, logistics have been put in place to address the pandemic more efficiently. Of course, the socio-economic effects of the virus remain dramatic (African Union 2020). They are partly addressed through the establishment of the African Union Covid-19 Response Fund on 13 April 2020 (AU Council 2020).

By 31 December 2020, there were 2,763,421 reported cases of SARS-CoV-2/Covid-19 in Africa and 65,602 reported deaths. Throughout the year, corona outbreak management by the AU has been crucial (Africa CDC 2021; Engel 2020). It is partly based on routines that already existed before the outbreak of Covid-19. The AU, with its technical agency, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), has responded swiftly in communicating and coordinating responses to the Covid-19 pandemic – earlier than most other regional organisations worldwide (see also chapters 4 and 8, this Yearbook). Initially, their emphasis was on disseminating information to member states and their citizens. At the operational level, Africa CDC then initiated a continent-wide network of clinicians. At the same time, the AU has undertaken sustained efforts to mobilise international financial support and develop mitigation strategies with international partners. Activating existing response mechanisms in time, and swiftly creating news ones, strongly resonates with the ongoing debate on the institutional reform of the AU, which started in 2016, with a view to make the continental body more effective and responsive to its citizens. The key instruments for developing, however limited, response mechanisms to the pandemic have been regional mechanisms (Herpolsheimer 2020; Louw-Vaudran and Diatta 2020; Medinilla et al. 2020)

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or, conceptually speaking, varying forms of regionalisms: the AU's Africa CDC, with its regions and hubs-and-spokes strategy, … inter-regionalist practices (for instance, between the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union), as well as different transregional entanglements between the Union, Ethiopia, and other members states, on the one hand, and governments (e.g. China), supranational organisations (e.g. the European Union), and philanthropes (e.g. Jack Ma), on the other. Key to the relative success of these efforts has been the interlocking of the varying regionalisms. At this stage in the pandemic, one can only very cautiously argue that the combination of varying regionalisms has effectively contributed to enhancing the sovereignty of AU member states and their capacities to address the pandemic step-by-step. Obviously, the long-term effects on societies and economies remain to be seen (see Leininger et al. 2021).

Interview with Dr John N. Nkengasong

To begin with, in many African countries the number of infected people was lower than initially anticipated. Why is this the case? Is it related to limited testing capacities or different testing strategies in AU member states?
There are a number of factors that contributed to the relatively low number of reported Covid-19 cases on the continent. The onset of the first reported case on the continent in February 2020 served as an impetus for the leadership of the African Union the to convene an emergency meeting of ministers of health from all 55 AU member states to unite in addressing the risks posed by the virus and to take actionable steps towards developing a continental response plan.[1] This plan, the *Africa Joint Continental Strategy for Covid-19*,[2] gave heed to subsequent actions, policies, mandates, and forums to further discuss and evaluate ongoing response activities.

Because the outbreak didn't begin in Africa, we had an opportunity to observe what was happening in China and to quickly prepare the continent in key areas such as diagnostics and infection prevention control. For example, in the early days of the pandemic, only Senegal and South Africa were able to diagnose Covid-19 cases. We brought together representatives of laboratories from 15 AU member states to distribute and train them on diagnostic equipment.

1 The African ministers of health met on 22 February 2020 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. See Africa CDC (2020a).
2 See Africa CDC (2020b). The strategy was published on 5 March 2020.

Although limited testing on the continent certainly has contributed to unreported Covid-19 cases, we can also look to the demographics of the continent, which skew younger than most regions in the world. Because of this, the recovery rate from the disease is relatively high (as of 21 May 2021, 90% of reported cases have recovered). The virus, having more severe implications for the elderly, has not had the same effect on younger individuals, as highlighted by research, thus allowing the continent to remain relatively unscathed by the virus as initially expected.

What are the implications of the latest virus mutation that first were reported on Christmas eve from South Africa (the variant has been named 501.V2)?
Viruses are constantly mutating, and so variants of Covid-19 are to be expected. We have now observed several variants around the world, and that number will continue to grow. While some variants will emerge and disappear, other stronger mutations will remain. It is for this reason that we should continue to remain vigilant in observing public health and social measures (PSHMs), strengthening our surveillance and diagnostics capabilities to identify hotspots, and working on ensuring equitable access to Covid-19 vaccines.

Let's briefly talk about Africa CDC. How would you describe its place within the structures of the African Union? And what is your situation like in terms of human resources and finances?
Africa CDC is a specialised technical institution of the African Union with the goal to support public health initiatives of member states. Our work aims to strengthen the capacity of their public health institutions to detect, prevent, control, and respond quickly and effectively to disease threats on the continent. Our team is small but steadily growing with the help of the African Union leadership, private and public sector partners, foundations, and other key stakeholders. It is our mission to realise a New Public Health Order on the continent in order to meet the needs of our member states – not only during Covid-19 pandemic and other health emergencies – but in all areas of public health.

In developing responses to Covid-19, to what extent have you learned from the past and, for instance, the experience with Ebola outbreaks?[3] *And with regard to Covid-19, how important have the ongoing practices of countries in other world regions, say China or South Korea, been for you?*

3 In the academic debate, there are quite a number of contributions that critically reflect on how the Ebola outbreak in West African in 2013–2016 was handled by both ECOWAS and the World Health Organisation. For an overview, see Abdullah and Rashid (2017).

The previous Ebola outbreak was an eye-opening experience for us. There is a natural assumption that responses to pandemics and major health crises must be driven by the public health community. For example, flying out technical experts from one nation to the affected nation. A disease outbreak, in fact, creates its own ecosystem and challenges, giving way to complex socio-anthropological layers that must be considered and incorporated into response efforts.

If the local context is not integrated into response strategy, misinformation and a lack of understanding at the onset will result in distrust by the local community, and result in an ineffective response to the health emergency. Engaging the community means to understand and exploit indigenous knowledge and societal values which will go further to significantly reduce misinformation. In many parts of the world, we have seen how countries incorporated mobile technology for contact tracing and developed innovative testing mechanisms to increase screenings and minimise risk of transmission and so forth. The battle of this pandemic will be fought and won at the community level.

In the interplay between Africa CDC and the World Health Organisation's (WHO) regional offices, where do you see best practices and where are challenges?

The fight against Covid-19 is a global effort. On the continent, the Africa CDC and WHO regional offices have come together to show great strength through communication, partnership, and collaboration. Dr Matshidiso Moeti, WHO regional director for Africa, serves as a co-chair for our African Taskforce for Coronavirus Response (AFTCOR) Steering Committee, where we discuss coordination and advocacy strategies. Continental commitment and partnership is key to aligning a way forward, regardless of our respective institutional missions – it is the only way to build back better.

ECOWAS with its West African Health Organisation (WAHO) has kept a considerable degree of autonomy vis-à-vis the Africa CDC and the WHO Regional Office for West Africa. How does that reflect on the efficiency of your work and coordination efforts?

As I've mentioned before, communication, collaboration, cooperation, and coordination are key to a successful continental response to the pandemic. Africa CDC works with ECOWAS and many other regional bodies on the continent to discuss key areas of partnership, advocacy, and response activities. As Africa CDC continues to grow, we welcome efforts of such institutions which play a significant role in knowledge-sharing and gathering best practices. What works for one region may not work for another, and so we open our doors to better understand how we can best support AU member states.

The focus on fighting back Covid-19 has deflected both attention and resources from addressing other potentially deadly diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis (TB), or HIV/Aids. From your perspective, what has been the combined impact on health and social care systems in African countries?
We have seen hospitals, medical professionals, and total health systems become overwhelmed, diverting resources from other critical health services to focus on Covid-19. Maintaining essential health services such as diagnostic screenings, immunisation programmes and treatments during a pandemic has been a challenge, especially here on the continent where health systems remain fragile.

During the Ebola virus outbreak, for example, uptake of HIV/Aids, malaria, and TB services decreased.[4] In Guinea, we saw a 46 per cent drop in HIV testing, and a 47 per cent decline in enrolment of new HIV patients in treatment. In Sierra Leone, the number of children under 5 years of age receiving malaria treatment declined by 39 per cent.

Moving forward, we have to invest in Africa's public health systems. We can't strengthen our health systems when we need them – they have to be strengthened before so that we can effectively mitigate the effects of future public health emergencies.

Across the continent, the pandemic has exacerbated social cleavages. What are your observations in this respect? And what role can Africa CDC play to mitigate the effects of the pandemic in the social realm?
In Africa, just as anywhere in the world, the Covid-19 pandemic has certainly taken a toll on the public. Lockdown and PSHMs have affected the livelihoods and economic harm for many, closed schools, affected transport, and much more, causing strain within communities.

Africa CDC aims to provide public health guidance and support to member states to quickly and effectively slow transmission of the virus, reducing social and economic harm. Such examples include our campaign, 'Saving Lives, Economies, and Livelihoods', where implementation of technologies led by African-led partners aim to enhance screening, centralise testing data, and provide an overall coordinated effort to respond to the pandemic. The more countries buy into continental-led initiatives and quickly implement them, the more likely Africa comes out stronger and unified, building back economies and returning to normalcy.

4 Dr Nkengasong provides the following reference: Ribacke et al. (2016).

Can you single out strategies employed by specific AU member states that have proven more effective in containing the virus than others?
During the beginning of the pandemic, the majority of African Union member states took swift action to control the virus, including the enforcement of PSHMS such as wearing facemasks in public, washing/sanitising hands, physical distancing, border closures, implementing curfews, and much more. This leadership helped to slow the transmission of Covid-19 across the continent in the early days of the pandemic.

Personally, what is you most important lessons learnt from 2020?
Covid-19 has made it clear that unified leadership is vital to enable us to coordinate, collaborate, cooperate effectively, and communicate, [without it] we are doomed. No one country can eliminate Covid-19 in Africa or beyond, alone, as we saw with various levels of preparation and response to the pandemic. We must demonstrate a unity of purpose and work collectively to wage and win the war against Covid-19 and ensure equitable access to treatment, vaccines, and other vital resources to fight the pandemic. Most significantly, it is not enough for us to come out of this crisis looking the same as we went into the crisis – there is an opportunity to build back better.

Finally, what outlook can you present for the year 2021? What situation do you expect with regard to getting anti–Covid-19 vaccines in the first place and then rolling them out? And how do you assess the future risk of mutated viruses that are diffused as easily as Covid-19 and are as deadly as Ebola?
Our plan is simple: vaccines + vaccinations = lives saved. In order for the continent to make it past Covid-19, we need to vaccinate at least 60 per cent of the population by the end of 2022. A key challenge that Africa faces is getting the vaccinations done quickly, especially now with the challenges in securing vaccine supplies globally.

This pandemic will change the way we approach public health emergencies, especially with regard to securing access to critical medical supplies, diagnostics, and treatment. For example, prior to Covid-19, there was just one country in Africa producing diagnostics – Morocco. Nearly 99 per cent of medicine and vaccine supplies are imported to the continent. Moving forward, we should have many more countries with the capacity to produce diagnostics and engage in local manufacturing of vaccines. Africa, and the world, in general will approach future public health issues with more scrutiny and greater consideration to equitable access in order to be able to manage disease outbreaks.

This interview was conducted by e-mail. It dates 23 May 2021. If not stated otherwise, footnotes are by the editor.

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CHAPTER 3

The State of the Union

Ulf Engel

1 Introduction

Before a range of important African Union (AU) policy fields are examined in the following part of the *Yearbook on the African Union*, one question needs to be addressed first: How has the institution itself developed in 2020? Processes of change are inherent to the Union as much as any international organisation. In this respect, two broad topics are particularly important for the shape and capacities of the continental body: the reform of the Union's finances and the promotion of a parallel institutional reform, including not only revamping structures and processes within the AU Commission (AUC) but also redefining the relationship between the AU, on the one hand, and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), on the other. While the financial reform has a mid-term perspective, substantial parts of the institutional reform were overdue for implementation since mid-2020, and AU–REC relations were supposed to be renegotiated in 2020, too.

2 The Union's Finances

2.1 *Developing a Reform Path*

The heavy financial dependence of the Union on its international partners and its questionable ownership of most programmes, including the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), was raised for the first time in 2003, when the AU Council of Ministers discussed a report prepared by the interim AUC chairperson on 'Alternative Sources of Funding of the AU' (AU Council 2003). After a considerable period of silence on the part of member states, the issue re-emerged some ten years later when the Union was faced with a severe financial crisis: while throughout the years member states' contributions accounted for 100 per cent of the operational budget, in 2015 the share of funding of the programme budget coming from member states plummet to

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just 1.2 per cent (Engel 2020, 25f.).[1] In addition, the Union was heavily relying on the payments of a small group of member states who contributed far above-average amounts to the budget. At the same time, many member states did not pay their assessed contributions, paid late, or only partly to avoid being sanctioned. Financial planning became unpredictable, the gap between planned and actual expenditure widened, and financial absorption capacity decreased (see Engel 2015; Pharatlhatlhe and Vanheukelom 2019; Apiko and Miyandazi 2019). For the period 2016–2020, the average collection rate from member states (by October of the financial year [FY]) was 75 per cent. The highest rate was reached in 2018, with 84 per cent; the lowest ever was in 2020, with a mere 61 per cent (AU Commission 2021, 39).

Against this background, the AU Assembly decided that in the future member states should fund the operational budget at 100 per cent, the programme budget at 75 per cent, and African-led Peace Support Operations (PSOs) at 25 per cent (AU Assembly 2015). How to accomplish such an ambitious financing scheme led to excruciating debates. Under the pressure of imminent financial crisis, the Union finally found common ground. The process itself was moderated and guided by Donald Kaberuka, a former president of the African Development Bank (AfDB, 2005–2015), and Carlos Lopes, at that point in time still the executive secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA, 2012–2016). Ahead of the 27th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (Kigali, Rwanda, 17–18 July 2016), African Heads of State and Government agreed during an official retreat on the introduction of a Union levy, a 0.2 per cent tax on eligible imports to member states (AU Assembly 2016a, 5[a]i). In principle, this decision followed the example of the 0.5 per cent community levy introduced already in 2003 by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The aim was to raise an additional $400 million for the revived Peace Fund by 2020.[2] To this end, each of the five African regions was to raise $80 million (see also African Union 2019a).

1 Percentages refer to budget estimates. Real expenditure figures have only been released in recent years. The operational budget covers the costs of running the Union and its organs (from salaries and administration to utility and service delivery costs and from investment maintenance costs to statutory payments). Conversely, the programme budget is for expenses related to the execution of programmes approved by the AU Assembly, i.e., anything 'policy'.

2 Originally, a Special Fund was introduced under the 1993 OAU Mechanism on Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (see OAU 1993, §23). With the transformation into the African Union, it was converted into the Peace Fund (African Union 2002, §21[1]). Until FY 2020, the AUC's contribution to the Peace Fund was calculated at 7 per cent of the operational budget.

In the aftermath of this groundbreaking decision, two additional choices were made. First, nine 'Golden Rules' on financing the Union were adopted. They include aims regarding a minimum threshold of the budget and an expenditure ceiling for member states (AU Assembly 2018a, §24). And second, the existing sanctions regime was revised, including a reduction of the period from two years to six months within which a member state will be considered to be in default, phased application of sanctions in case of default, and relief to member states 'experiencing force majeure circumstances making them temporarily enable to pay their assessed contributions' (AU Assembly 2018b, §4). The financial reform process was guided by a Committee of 15 Ministers of Finance (F15) (see AU Assembly 2018a, §§3 and 22).[3]

2.2 *Scale of Assessment*

Since 2015, the scale of assessment, the formula with which the amount of member states' contributions to the budget of the Union is determined, is based on three 'tiers': tier 1 includes all countries with a share of gross domestic product (GDP) above 4 per cent of the total Union's GDP, tier 2 are all countries with a GDP above 1 per cent, and tier 3 comprises all countries with a GDP of 1 per cent and below. The scale of assessment for the period 2020–2022 was planned in 2019: tier 1 countries contribute a combined 45.151 per cent to the Union's budget, tier 2 countries 32.749 cent, and tier 3 countries the remaining 22.100 per cent (AU Assembly 2019a, §7, as confirmed by AU Assembly 2020c, §5). In comparison to previous years, the main contributors are paying slightly less, and the big group of tier 3 countries slightly more (see Table 3.1). The AU Assembly also decided on the exact amount of the lower and upper limits for contributions (no less than $350,000 and no more than $35 million in any given financial year; AU Assembly 2019a, §8). Sanctions were imposed on Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe, Liberia, and South Sudan (AU Council 2019a, §12). Thus far, the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, Seychelles, and Burundi applied to be exempt from this scheme (ibid., §14).

Under the current scale of assessment, Algeria, Angola, Egypt, Morocco, Nigeria, and South Africa are tier 1 countries. Tier 2 consists of 12 countries. At the upper end of this bracket are Ethiopia (with a contribution to GDP of all AU member states of 3.99%), Sudan (3.811%), Libya (3.778%), and Kenya (3.745%); at the lower end are Zambia (1.599%) and Uganda (1.383%). The remaining 37 member states are in tier 3, with Gabon (1.274%) and Botswana (1.152%) at

3 This was an enlargement of the original Committee of Ten by five members. All five African regions were given the opportunity to appoint three members to the committee.

TABLE 3.1 Burden-sharing of contributions to the African Union's budget (in %), 2016–2020

	2016(1)	2018(1)	2019
Tier 1 countries	48.00	48.00	45.151
Tier 2 countries	33.98	36.82	32.749
Tier 3 countries	18.02	15.18	22.100

Note: (1) Angola not yet included into tier 1.
SOURCE: AU COUNCIL AND AU ASSEMBLY (VARIOUS YEARS).

the upper end and the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (0.164%) and São Tomé and Príncipe (0.115%) at the lower end.

2.3 *Budget for FY 2020*

The AU is planning its budget for financial years that begin on 1 January and end on 31 December. In February 2019, the AU Executive Council introduced a three-years budget cycle – the Multiyear Financial Framework (MFF) – and based the annual budget ceiling on a three-year average execution rate (AU Council 2019a, §11). The AU Assembly decided to reduce the budget for FY 2020 by $32 million compared to FY 2018 (AU Assembly 2019a, 9). The budget was adopted by the AU Executive Council in July 2019. The AU Executive Council also decided that the member states' assessment for FY 2021 should not exceed $250 million and that the programme budget for 2021 should be increased, as soon as possible, to at least 62 per cent of the total AU budget (AU Council 2019d, §§8–9).

Traditionally, the budget details three type of expenses: operational, programme, and AU-led PSOs. Total estimated expenditure for FY 2020 is $647.379 million, compared to $681.485 million budgeted for FY 2019 (see AU Council 2018), representing an overall cut by 5.00 per cent. Member states were to pay 100 per cent of the operational budget of $157.264 million. This compares to $158.459 million for 2019, a moderate decrease by 0.75 per cent. The programme budget was reduced by 13.2 per cent from $249.757 million (2018) to $216.994 million. These cuts were distributed unevenly: member states' contributions were $89.695 million (a reduction by 18.65% against 2018), but partners were expected to raise $127.298 million (a reduction by 8.75%). The ratio between own contributions and partner funding of the programme budget was 41 to 59 per cent (see Table 3.2).

Operational and programme budgets are allocated to AU organs and specialised offices (the ratio is 87.14 to 12.86%). For FY 2020, the allocations for

all AU organs were reduced, except for the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC), whose budget was increased substantially by 121.04 per cent (now at 1.948 mn). As usual, the largest portion of this part of the budget (76.74%) went to the AUC although its part was reduced well above the overall 5 per cent cut from $282.793 to $250.268 million (-11.50%). Other major cuts affected the *New Partnership for Africa's Development* (NEPAD, -16.60%), the AU Commission on International Law (AUCIL, -15.12%), the African Commission for Human and People's Rights (ACHPR, -13.82%), the Pan-African Parliament (PAP, -11.36%), and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC, -11.20%). The Advisory Board on Corruption had a below average cut (-2.74%).

Most allocations for AU specialised offices were reduced, too. The cuts mainly affected the Pan-African Institute for Education for Development (IPED, -29.33%), the AU Sports Council (-27.63%), the African Observatory in Science, Technology and Innovation (AOSTI, -22.82%), and the African Energy Commission (AFREC, -15.13). However, some specialised offices got their budgets increased, including the Pan African University (UPA, +27.32) and Centre for Girls and Women's Education in Africa (CIEFFA, +7.39%). Yet, the biggest increase was for the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), whose allocation was more than tripled (+227.34%). For the first time, a separate allocation was listed for the African Scientific, Research and Innovation Council (ASRIC).

The costs for AU-led PSOs remained almost stable at $273.122 million. Here member states were expected to come up with a share of only 3 per cent (or $8.2 million) and donors with the lion's share of 97 per cent (or $264.922 million). Four missions fall under this part of the budget: the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the Multinational Joint Task Force to fight the Boko Haram insurgency (MNJTF), the African Union–led Regional Task Force to deal with the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), and the Human Rights and Military Observers Mission in Burundi (HRMOM). As usual, the bulk of this part of the budget was allocated to AMISOM (for FY 2020 93.70%).

Overall, the budget estimates for FY 2020 represented a further improvement over previous budget estimates; it was fully in line with the 2015/2016 decisions to decrease financial dependence on international partners (see Table 3.2). Between FYs 2015 and 2018, the percentage of donor funding relative to the overall revenue of the Union had decreased from 77.19 to 46.45 per cent, conversely own contributions had increased over the same period from 22.41 to 52.79 per cent (operational and programme budgets only). Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the AU Board of External Auditors has not yet issued the Consolidated Financial Statements for FY 2019.

However, this picture changed as soon as the AU Executive Council approved in February 2020 two supplementary budgets. For FY 2019, an additional

TABLE 3.2 African Union revenue and expenditure (in $ million)

	2015		2016		2017		2018	
Revenue	594.754		540.262		635.113		737.711	
– MS contributions	131.471	22.11%	169.833	31.44%	205.150	32.30%	318.277	43.14%
– MS to Peace Fund	0	00.00%	0	00.00%	65.000	10.12%	65.000	08.81%
– voluntary contributions	1.797	00.30%	4.006	00.74%	1.614	00.25%	6.177	00.84%
– partner funds	459.070	77.19%	362.017	67.02%	359.742	56.64%	342.686	46.45%
– other	0	00.00%	4.405	00.82%	3.607	00.57%	5.571	00.76%
Expenditure	619.304		513.864		529.372		618.003	
Balance	(24.550)		26.398		105.741		119.708	

Notes: (1) Figures can slightly vary in-between reports, reference is always to the latest figure published; (2) excluding AU-led peace support operations.

SOURCE: AU BOARD OF EXTERNAL AUDITORS, REPORTS FOR FY 2015 TO 2018 (AU BOE 2015–2018).

$43.820 million was granted ($7.776 mn for the operational and $36.043 for the programme budget, with the bulk of the latter going to the AU Commission). Of this amount, 41.09 per cent (or $17.785 million) was expected to come from partners, and 20.01 per cent was to be sourced from internal savings through a reallocation of funds (AU Council 2020, §23). And for FY 2020, an additional $32.180 million was authorised: $2.201 million for the operational budget, $3.901 million for the programme budget, and $26.069 million for AU-led PSOs. The new total of $ 679.560 million reversed the initial 5 per cent budget cut for FY 2020 into a 5 per cent increase (AU Council 2020, §52). By the time of printing, the decisions of the 37th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 13–14 October 2020) were still to be published.

3 Institutional Reform

3.1 *From 'Dysfunctionality' to Delivery?*

The need for reform extended beyond the area of the Union's finances. Ten years after a high-level panel chaired by Nigerian professor Adebayo Adedeji (the former UN under-secretary-general and executive secretary of UNECA; AU HLP 2007) had identified a number of major challenges in the continental body's institutions and practices, Rwandan president Paul Kagame was tasked to prepare a short assessment and suggest a course of action (AU Assembly 2016b, §2). He tabled his 'Report on the Proposed Recommendations for the Institutional Reform of the African Union' on 29 January 2017.[4] President Kagame stressed that 'the unfortunate truth is that Africa today is ill-prepared to adequately respond to current [global] events, because the AU still has to be made fit for purpose' (Kagame 2017, 3f.). In short, the AU was not up to deliver.

The 'chronic failure to see through African Union decisions', Kagame bluntly summarised, 'has resulted in a crisis of implementation:

- A perception of limited relevance to African citizens
- A fragmented organisation with a multitude of focus areas
- Overdependence on partner funding
- Underperformance of some organs and institutions due to unclear mandates or chronic underfunding
- Limited managerial capacity
- Lack of accountability for performance, at all levels

4 Following the 2007 Adedeji Report, there also was the 2016 Mekelle Report, which was based on a brainstorming retreat of the AU Executive Council in the capital of the Tigray state in Ethiopia held on 24–26 January 2016.

– Unclear division of labour between the African Union Commission, the regional economic communities (RECs), other regional mechanisms (RMs), and member states
– Inefficient working methods in both the Commission and the Assembly' (Kagame 2017, 5).

As a result, the report neatly concluded, 'we have a dysfunctional organisation in which member states see limited value, global partners find little credibility, and our citizens have no trust' (ibid., 6).

The subsequent reform project was structured into four 'work packages': (1) the realignment of AU institutions, (2) connecting the AU to its citizens, (3) operational effectiveness and efficiency, and (4) sustainable financing (AU Assembly 2017, §5). Already in 2017, the AU Assembly followed President Kagame's recommendation on the role of a Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) vis-à-vis the AUC. In order to solve a long-standing dispute, and implying an unwarranted role of the PRC in decision-making, Kagame suggested to normalise the role of the PRC in line with the provisions of the Union's *Constitutive Act*: it should act as 'an advisory body to the Executive Council, rather than a supervisory body of the Commission' (Kagame 2017, 13; and, in the same words, AU Assembly 2017, 5[a]ii).

In 2016, President Kagame appointed a nine-person 'pan-African advisory team' to assist him in the reform process. In their previous positions, the team members all had demonstrated a track record of pragmatism and service delivery, in particular in the economic and finance sectors. The members of what became known as the AU Reforms Advisory Committee included:

– Cristina Duarte, a former Cape Verdean minister of finance, planning and public administration (2006–2016),
– Donald P. Kaberuka from Rwanda, who had served as president of the African Development Bank (2005–2015),
– Acha Leke, the Cameroon-born chairman of McKinsey's Africa region,
– Carlos Lopes from Guinea-Bissau, a former executive secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (2012–2016),
– Strive Masiyiwa, a Zimbabwean billionaire and philanthropist,
– Tito Mboweni, previously governor of the South African Reserve Bank (1999–2009) and currently minster of finance,
– Amina Mohammed, a former Nigerian minister of environment (2015–2017) and the present deputy secretary-general of the UN General Assembly,
– Mariam Mahamat Nour, a former Chadian minister of economy and international cooperation (2013–2016), and
– Vera Songwe, a mathematical economist from Cameroon who was appointed the International Finance Corporation's regional director for West and Central Africa in 2015.

The AU Reforms Advisory Committee still meets on a regular basis, the last time being 8 December 2020. At the working level, it is operationalised by a Reform Implementation Unit that was established by the AUC in September 2017. It is led by Professor Pierre Moukoko Mbonjou (a former Cameroonian minister of external relations) and Ciru Mwaura (a former chief of staff to the AU high representative for the financing the Union and the Peace Fund). Apart from the financial reform (see section above), the most tangible results have been reached on the institutional reform. In January 2018, the AU Assembly decided, among others, to improve gender relations in the Commission by declaring that by 2025 equal representation of women and men was to be achieved in all senior-level positions, 'including Political and Special Appointees, Directors and Heads of Divisions' (AU Assembly 2018a, §4); it also introduced a quota for the youth (35% of the workforce by 2025; ibid., §8).

3.2 *Reform of the AU Commission*

The details of the institutional reform were outlined at the 11th Extraordinary Session of the AU Assembly (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 17–18 November 2018). Based on a report prepared by the AUC chairperson, Chadian Moussa Faki Mahamat (AUC Chairperson 2018), the AU Assembly agreed to reduce the number of commissions from eight to six, including merging the comparatively big Peace and Security Department (PSD) with the smaller Department of Political Affairs (DPA). Other important innovations concern the transfer of ideas of new public management à la Kagame – the *Imihigo* principle – to the Union (see also AU Assembly 2018d). This only includes notions of merit-based appointments, involving an independent high-level Panel of Eminent Africans, as well as the strict application of already existing AU Executive Council rules and procedures while amending rules with regard to 'the abuse of office, poor performance and non-delivery of assigned responsibilities'.[5] The introduction of 'a results-based effective performance management system' is at the heart of the institutional reform (including annual performance reports and assessments of senior management). Furthermore, the reform package foresees the transformation of NEPAD into the AU Development Agency. And,

5 This decision has to partly be seen against the backdrop of a debate within the AUC on corruption, nepotism, gender discrimination, and sexual harassment. See *Mail & Guardian* [Johannesburg], 4 May 2018 and 17 May 2019 as well as *The East African* [Nairobi], 12 May 2018. In this debate, the AUC deputy chairperson and the AU Staff Association, among others, were rather critical of the AUC chairperson. For an update, see Rumbi Chakamba 2021. 'Exclusive: Audit finds nepotism, corruption, and worse at the African Union Commission', DEVEX, 19 February. URL: <https://www.devex.com/news/exclusive-audit-finds-nepotism-corruption-and-worse-at-the-african-union-commission-99181> (accessed: 22 February 2021).

finally, the Union reinforced decisions on the compliance mechanisms of the 2007 *African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance* by deciding to call on member states to table a regular 'State of Governance in Africa' report.

With regard to the merit-based selection of appointments to the senior leadership of the Commission, a Panel of Eminent Africans was appointed in February 2020 (AU Assembly 2020d).[6] Receiving technical assistance by PricewaterhouseCoopers Associates Limited (Mauritius), in October 2020 the five members of the panel ranked and shortlisted all candidates running for the position of commissioner by a number of transparent criteria.[7] And with regard to the AUC's structure, the initial plan was to discuss this at the 35th Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council (Niamey, Niger, 4–5 July 2019), but the consultancy company that prepared the paperwork did not get it right the first time and the decision had to be deferred to the 36th Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 6–7 February 2020) (AU Council 2020 and annex). This structure was then authorised by the AU Assembly (AU Assembly 2020b, §3). Starting in July 2020, the *Three-Year Transition and Financial Reform* plan will be implemented. According to the number of human resources given for each department, a reduction of staff seems unavoidable. During the processes of negotiating the institutional reform, complaints were expressed at all levels within the AUC of insufficient internal consultation.[8] The new AUC will be elected at the next ordinary session of the AU Assembly, scheduled for February 2021.

3.3 *Adjusting AU–RECs Relations*

The division of labour between the AU and the RECs has been a matter of debate and practical concern right from the establishment of the Union in 2001. Since 2008, relations have been governed by a general *Protocol* (28 January, AU and RECs 2008a) and a special *Memorandum of Understanding* for the area of peace and security (June 2008, AU and RECs 2008b). Since then, the parties involved have often claimed that principles of subsidiarity and comparative advantage would govern their relations. In practice, however, this has often proven more

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6 The four members are (1) Philémon Yunji Yang (former prime minister of Cameroon, for Central Africa), (2) Amb. Konjit Sinegiorgis (Africa's longest serving diplomat from Ethiopia, for East Africa), (3) Amb. Tuliameni Kalomoh (Namibia's first ambassador to the USA and a former UN assistant secretary-general in the Department of Political Affairs, for Southern Africa), and (4) Hassan Bubacar Jallow (the Gambian ex-prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and prosecutor of the Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals, for West Africa). The Northern African region failed to nominate its member for the panel.

7 See *ISS PSC Report* [Pretoria], No. 130, November 2020, pp. 14–15.

8 *ISS PSC Report* [Pretoria], No. 125, June 2020, p. 11.

complex and not entirely free of frictions – as highlighted by a decision of the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) on the need for better harmonisation and coordination of decision-making (AU PSC 2019). In his report on institutional reforms, President Kagame simply spoke about an 'unclear division of labour' between the Union and the RECs (Kagame (2017, 5).

Part of the AU Assembly's approval of the critical Kagame Report was the resolve to replace the second summit of the year by a Mid-Year Coordination Meeting (MYCM) between the Bureau of the AU Assembly and the RECs (AU Assembly 2017, 5[c]iii). The first of these meetings took place under the chairpersonship of Egyptian president Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in Niamey, Niger, on 8 July 2019 (see AU Assembly 2019b). At this meeting, a *Protocol on Relations between the African Union and Regional Economic Communities* as well as *Rules of Procedure for the Mid-Year Coordination Meetings* was discussed (AU Assembly 2020e, §§5–6; see AU Assembly 2020d). Part of the new protocol is the creation of a Committee on Coordination that will be made up of the AUC chairperson, the chief executive officers of the RECs, and the CEO of the NEPAD–African Union Development Agency (AUDA), with the latter exercising an oversight role. In addition, the meeting laid out guiding principles for six specific dimensions of the division of labour (African Union 2019b): policy planning and formulation, policy adoption, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, partnerships, and joint resource mobilisation. The final details are to be worked out by the 3rd Mid-Year Coordination Meeting to be held in July 2021 and to be submitted to the 35th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly, planned for February 2022.

The 2nd MYCM was held on 22 October 2020.[9] It was hosted by the AU chairperson for the year 2020, South African president M. Cyril Ramaphosa. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the meeting was held online, focusing on the continental strategy to overcome the pandemic.

4 Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose?

So how much has changed at the African Union in 2020, and how much has stayed the same? In institutional terms, the AUC has tried to make good use of 2020 to prepare for the bigger changes scheduled for early 2021. However, the achievements regarding the twin financial and institutional reforms are

9 Originally, the meeting was scheduled for July 2020 but had to be postponed because of the Covid-19 pandemic. And because problems with internet connectivity in Addis Ababa (a result of political unrest and government partial shutdowns of the internet), the meeting could also not be held online.

somewhat chequered. At the level of member states, a mix of defiance as well as active and passive resistance vis-à-vis the AU reforms prevailed, and the AUC shied away from addressing some of the big questions. Pragmatically, it rather concentrated on what could be achieved in the short- to mid-term.

On the financial reform, major countries have not yet introduced the Union 0.2 per cent levy on eligible imports. According to the latest status report, as of 16 June 2020 only 17 member states 'were at various stages of domesticating the Kigali Decision' (tralac 2020, 2). Their total contribution to the Peace Fund was $15.3 million (ibid., 3), at the same time this group of countries was in arrears ($41.7 million). The scheme lacks a compliance mechanism, so implementation will remain slow. Since the revitalisation of the Peace Fund in 2016, member states have contributed 76 per cent of the target of $260 million, that is just $176 million (ibid., 6). In response to slow domestication and weak commitments, the deadline for endowing the Peace Fund already in 2019 has been extended by 24 months (AU Council 2019c, §9; AU Assembly 2020c, 6). Member states that by June 2020 had not started to implement the AU levy include Algeria, Angola Egypt, Morocco, and South Africa, i.e., five out of six tier 1 countries (Nigeria had come in in 2019).[10]

Agreement on the new protocol governing the relations between the Union and the RECs seems difficult to negotiate. In terms of the institutional reform, a firm decision on the relation between the Union and the RECs may only be taken in 2022. In preparation for the 2nd MYCM meeting, the AUC Reform Implementation Unit had prepared a proposal for the new protocol governing AU–RECs relations. However, the decision on remaining areas concerning the division of labour was postponed. The discussion was allowed to continue until early 2022 at the latest, when the 35th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly will be held.[11]

And in addition, two important items of the reform agenda have mainly been neglected. First is closing the gap between the Addis bubble and the African people. The 'people's Union' may still be on the horizon – but just so. Second is the future role of the Pan-African Parliament, which many consider to be a powerless symbol rather than a place of lively debate and source of political initiatives within the Union (see, for instance, Magliveras and Naldi 2018, 138–147). How to move from a consultative body to a democratically legitimised legislative institution remains an open question.

10 In addition, up until June 2020 7 out of 12 tier 2 countries had not yet introduced the levy (Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Libya, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, and Zambia).

11 *AU Press Release* [Addis Ababa], 22 October 2020. See also *ISS PSC Report* [Pretoria], No. 130, November 2020, pp. 2–5.

In terms of leadership, Ramaphosa's tenure at the top of the Union was rather positive compared to his predecessor's (see also Sidiropoulos, this Yearbook, chapter 4).[12] During 2020, he showed leadership and commitment, especially in coordinating a continental response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Some observers opined that he could have done more on topics such as governance, security, and violent extremism.[13] The Ramaphosa administration also showed more interest in filling top positions in the Union's leadership. Four of the candidates nominated by South Africa for positions of commissioners to be elected in February 2021 made it to the final round.[14] And he also irritated seasoned diplomats in Addis Ababa when he appointed three AU special envoys to mediate in the Ethiopian conflict that emerged after 4 November 2020 between the government and the federal state of Tigray.[15] In the past, the appointment of high representatives, special envoys, and special representatives was a prerogative vested in the AUC chairperson under the 2002 *PSC Protocol* (African Union 2002, §10[2]c); other mediators usually were appointed by the respective RECs.

In any case, the year 2021 will be another important caesura in the development of the AU. At the 34th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (virtual, 6–7 February 2021), a new commission was elected for the coming four years. The incumbent AUC chairperson Faki Mahamat ran unopposed despite the fact that he faced strong opposition by, among others, the AU Staff Association.[16] His team is changing considerably, including an incoming commissioner for the new portfolio 'Political Affairs, Peace and Security', which certainly will constitute a centre of gravity within the AUC. Looking at the institution itself, the three core tasks of the new AUC will be to push through the institutional reform of the Union, to make headway in the consolidation of the AU's finances, and to work out a more robust and efficient division of labour between the Union and the RECs. Without a doubt, in 2020 there was continuity in incrementalism.

12 On el-Sisi's tenure, see *Deutsche Welle* [Bonn/Berlin], 7 February 2020.

13 *ISS Today* [Pretoria], 19 November 2020. In this op ed, Liesl Louw-Vaudran criticises Ramaphosa's lack of progress on the theme 'Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020', his support for problematic elections of incumbents in Tanzania (28 October) and Côte d'Ivoire (31 October), as well as insufficient action on violent extremism in Mozambique's northern province of Cabo Delgado.

14 See *ISS PSC Report* [Pretoria], No. 130, November 2020, pp. 14–15. For the original list of candidates, see *Diaspora Network Television* [Accra], 8 September 2020. This includes two bids for the position of deputy chairperson and also one each for the portfolios of 'Political Affairs, Peace and Security' as well as 'Education, Science, Technology', respectively. See also *Daily Maverick* [Johannesburg], 9 September 2020.

15 *UN News* [New York], 21 November 2020.

16 See *Mail & Guardian* [Johannesburg], 12 March 2020. See also this chapter, footnote 5.

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CHAPTER 4

South Africa's Chairmanship of the African Union

Elizabeth Sidiropoulos

The last time South Africa chaired the African Union (AU) 2002, when the newly formed successor of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was being launched in Durban, South Africa. The 1st Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (Durban, South Africa, 9–10 July 2002) highlighted the significant institutional reforms that had been agreed upon with both the establishment of the AU and the adoption of the *Constitutive Act* as well as the launch of the *New Partnership for Africa's Development* (NEPAD), which encompassed the idea of a mechanism for improving governance in African countries – the *African Peer Review Mechanism* (APRM). Soon thereafter, the APRM would be separated from NEPAD, the latter becoming the economic development arm of the AU (see Melber, this Yearbook, chapter 5).

In the period since then, the institutions established have evolved and developed further, playing a significant role in increasing 'African agency', that is to say the continent's power to make its own decisions about its development, economic, and political affairs while strengthening its voice and the outcomes of its engagement with external partners in these issue areas (see Alden et al. 2018).

Eighteen years later, in February 2020, South Africa was poised to assume the chairmanship of the African Union while at the same time serving the second year of its term as an elected member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) (see also Adebajo, this Yearbook, chapter 12). This overlap would provide an opportunity to augment coordination between the AU and the Africa-3 at the UN in addition to enhancing an issue area that South Africa had championed during its earlier elected terms on the UNSC, namely deeper cooperation between the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the UNSC in the context of Chapter 8 of the UN Charter. Furthermore, at this time, South Africa was assuming the chair of the APRM and of the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change. All of these roles were considered to align with its responsibilities and priorities as the chair of the AU.

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1 South Africa's Priorities for Its AU Chairmanship

South Africa had prepared itself for its assumption of the AU chairmanship, having high ambitions to drive continental integration via the launch of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) as well as to make progress on bringing peace to the continent. At long last, 2020 was supposed to be the year when the guns were silenced in Africa. To that end, the South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) had established a cross-departmental steering committee incorporating all the departments that would have a role to play in the AU chairmanship.

In an address on 28 January 2020 to the South African heads of mission accredited to African countries, President Cyril Ramaphosa outlined the country's priorities as economic integration, women's empowerment and good governance, underpinned by the promotion of a peaceful and secure Africa (Ramaphosa 2020). However, within a few weeks of South Africa's assumption of the AU chairmanship, the whole world went into an unprecedented lockdown to stop the spread of a deadly pandemic, Covid-19. The priorities that South Africa had set had to be abandoned in order to lead a coordinated African response to a potential health crisis that the continent would fail to tackle if it followed the same trajectory of infection that was affecting Italy and Spain. After all, Africa had an average of less than one intensive care bed and one ventilator per 100,000 people and co-morbidities such as HIV/Aids and tuberculosis.

2 South Africa's Role in the Continental Response to Covid-19

South Africa's original AU agenda had to be revised to respond to this unprecedented challenge, but the efficacy of that response left a lasting legacy on the continent in 2020. In assessing South Africa's steering of the African response during 2020, three factors were critical: (1) strategy, (2) leadership, and (3) institutions.

The strategy was driven by the imperative need to be proactive, rather than reactive, and doing so in a coordinated manner. Within days of South Africa becoming the chair, the steering committee led by DIRCO took the initiative to consider what needed to be done to respond to the pandemic continentally. South Africa recognised that a coordinated response was vital to deal with both the health and the economic impact of the pandemic, which related to issues concerning medical equipment and debt.

Developing and driving such a strategy, however, requires leadership. South Africa did not shirk from taking the lead in devising a strategy and putting

in place the mechanisms for its execution. This was enabled by the fact that South Africa had more resources (state, health, and research) at its disposal than another smaller African country might have had. South Africa worked closely with the AU Commission and the technical body, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC). In the face of travel restrictions, South Africa used the Bureau of the AU Assembly as a virtual platform to good effect to ensure coordination among member states.

However, strategy and leadership on their own would not have been sufficient in the absence of institutions, both technical and political, that could implement the response. First and foremost, the Africa CDC had provided significant support, input, and coordination at a technical level, although it had been launched only three years earlier. In addition, the AU Commission had developed its capacity to coordinate and to support the rotating chair.

3 Driving the Covid-19 Response

South Africa adopted a multi-pronged response, intending to address the health, economic, and socioeconomic challenges the pandemic posed to Africa. The multi-pronged approach was not limited to coordination of the AU member states; it also took African concerns related to the pandemic to international fora (see also the interview, this Yearbook, chapter 2).

3.1 *Mobilising the African Union*

At African Union level, the first meeting of health ministers was held on 22 February 2020, followed by a meeting of finance ministers with the UN Commission for Africa (UNECA), which focused on tackling the growing problem of fiscal space and related debt service issues. In advance of the Group of 20 (G20) virtual summit in March, South Africa convened a meeting of the AU Bureau to coordinate positions vis-à-vis the G20 (and more specifically a call for a moratorium on debt service payments). The AU Bureau was used as the primary means for coordinating and reporting. The fact that the meetings occurred on a virtual platform meant that the leaders of the AU Bureau member states were able to participate directly in the meetings with greater ease than in normal times. The AU Bureau meetings included the director of the Africa CDC, the Special Envoy (see below), and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), who provided reports on developments in their regions.

A *Covid-19 Response Fund* was established in March 2020 on the initiative of President Ramaphosa, following a similar initiative that had been undertaken domestically. The fund was intended to support the Africa CDC to execute the *Africa Joint Continental Strategy for Covid-19 Outbreak* (African Union 2020a).

By 19 February 2021, the fund had received 56 per cent of $42.4 million pledged, and the Africa CDC had received 75 per cent of the $254.8 million pledged (Bradlow et al. 2020).

The Africa Medical Supplies Platform (AMSP) was also established to secure supplies of medical equipment, such as personal protective equipment and test kits, for health workers given the global shortages and the difficulty of small countries in negotiating their own for procurement. The African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) was mobilised to guarantee payment for suppliers. In January 2021, the AU was able to secure more than 250 million vaccines where again Afreximbank would provide advance procurement commitment guarantees of up to $2 billion to the pharmaceutical companies on behalf of African countries.

3.2 *Advocating Africa's Concerns on Other Platforms*

As chair of the AU, South Africa was able to legitimately present an African perspective on a number of issues in global fora relating to the impact of the pandemic on Africa. It spearheaded a coordinated response to tackle the debt crisis. In the early days of the crisis, individual countries were trying to argue their specific circumstances, but President Ramaphosa recognised the importance of negotiating as a group. He appointed four envoys to help raise funds for African efforts to deal with the pandemic. UNECA also played an important role in advocating debt assistance for African states, especially low-income countries.

The discussion on possible debt service suspension for low-income countries was raised by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as a necessary initiative for the G20 countries to consider and also advocated by South Africa at the G20 extraordinary summit in March 2020. Concerning the latter, such support was possible considering that South Africa is the only African permanent member of the G20.

Another issue area where the South African president was extremely vocal about in 2020 was that of affordable and equitable vaccine access for the developing world. In May, he was one of 3 African leaders and some 50 former world leaders to call for vaccines, when available, to be 'produced rapidly at scale and made available for all people, in all countries, free of charge. The same applies for all treatments, diagnostics, and other technologies for Covid-19' (Khan, Ramaphosa et al. 2020).

South Africa's concern over the affordability, access, and supply of vaccines led it to submit a joint petition with India to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in October 2020 for a temporary waiver for all patents, trade secrets, industrial design, and copyright on Covid-19–related drugs, vaccines, diagnostics. and other medical technologies. Some 100 countries, including AU member states and the low-income group of countries at the WTO, have expressed

support for this waiver; however, the European Union and Japan have opposed it to date.

Recognising the potential threat that the pandemic has posed to health, economic, socioeconomic, and political contexts, South Africa was able to repurpose its chairmanship of the AU to develop and roll out a comprehensive continental response. Its response did not just focus on the African institutions, but also sought to bring Africa's case to the G20, the WTO, and the Bretton Woods institutions. The success of these aims are mixed. The African push for debt service suspension, which was supported by the IMF and the Paris Club of creditors, led to the *Debt Service Suspension Initiative* (DSSI), which has been extended to the end of 2021. However, not all eligible low-income countries are participating in the initiative, and not all creditors have approved the initiative, not least the private sector creditors. As of early March 2021, 31 African countries were participating in the DSSI (World Bank Group 2021).

The request for a WTO waiver has also made little actual progress although many developing countries have supported South Africa and India's call. Its success depends on whether the home countries of the major pharmaceutical companies are willing to take a step in redefining the limits of the protection of intellectual property rights when human life is being threatened. South Africa's position on the 1994 *Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights* (TRIPS) is well known, having argued in the late 1990s at the height of the HIV/Aids pandemic that the rights granted to pharmaceutical companies under the TRIPS Agreement prevented the mass roll-out of affordable medicine (see Dhar 2012).

4 What Had to Be Sidelined?

Africa's experience with earlier pandemics such as Ebola and HIV/Aids served the continent well as many African states were able to use the mechanisms they had deployed for those outbreaks. However, that experience also taught many countries that a health crisis, if not managed and contained quickly, could soon become a governance crisis.[1]

Effective governance remains an underlying challenge for most African countries, notwithstanding the promotion of a number of instruments, not least the APRM, to help Africa improve its governance. The promotion of good governance was identified as an important element of South Africa's

1 Nicholas Norbrook. 'Coronavirus: 5 key lessons from the 2014 Ebola outbreak', *The Africa Report* [Paris], 21 March 2020. Podcast. URL: <https://www.theafricareport.com/24905/coronavirus-5-key-lessons-from-the-2014-ebola-outbreak/> (accessed: 30 June 2021).

chairmanship because it coincided with the country's chairing of the APRM. In January 2020, President Ramaphosa linked the good governance agenda to the reduction of 'political tensions in countries with social divisions' (Ramphosa 2020).

South Africa was also concerned about the persistence of political and civil instability in many African countries and the role of external actors in exacerbating instability. In particular, the president noted the conflicts in Libya and South Sudan. Making progress in resolving these two conflicts was at the top of the country's agenda in early 2020 because it was also on the UNSC's agenda, where South Africa had pushed for deeper cooperation between the Africa-3, the UNSC, and the AU Peace and Security Council. However, the imperative of focusing on the pandemic constrained the progress that could be made in this regard. The South African president, nevertheless, did facilitate the mediation of the dispute between Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). South Africa intervened and brought in the African Union as a facilitator after Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia had sent letters to the UNSC and Egypt wanting the matter discussed in the UN Security Council. An open debate on the matter did take place, although nothing came of it. A number of virtual meetings of the AU Bureau were held to try to resolve the negotiating impasse among the three countries during South Africa's chairmanship, but little was achieved (African Union 2020a).[2]

The number and complexity of conflicts in Africa meant that 'Silencing the Guns' in 2020 was unlikely to be achieved regardless of Covid-19. Before the coronavirus outbreak, an Extraordinary Session of the AU Assembly on Silencing the Guns had been planned for May 2020. This was postponed and finally held on 6 December (African Union 2020b). The extraordinary session agreed to extend the deadline for Silencing the Guns to 2030. However, this will require concerted effort on a number of fronts, working with a number of actors both internal and external. It will also require a much more proactive approach to low-level political instability, which nevertheless may morph into a bigger political crisis – the case of Cabo Delgado in Mozambique is one such example, where there had been warning signs for some years, but which during 2021 became a significant insurgency in the north (see Dawit Yohannes, this Yearbook, chapter 10).

South Africa under President Ramaphosa emphasised the link between good governance, accountability, political stability, democracy, and human rights as issues that were intrinsically linked to peace and security. However, on the whole African leaders have been less than willing to proactively tackle such issues while they are still nascent. Failing to take bold actions in this regard,

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2 *ISS PSC Insights* [Pretoria], 4 September 2020; *ISS Today* [Pretoria], 5 March 2021; and *Ahram Online* [Cairo], 5 February 2021.

the extension to 2030 to silence the guns across the continent will continue to hinder achieving this ambition.

The other major priority of South Africa's chairmanship was the launch of the African Continental Free Trade Area, planned for 1 July 2020 (see Döring and Engel, this Yearbook, chapter 11). This launch was supposed to be preceded by an extraordinary session in May, but was in the end held on 5 December. At the 13th Extraordinary Session of the AU Assembly (Virtual, Johannesburg, 5 December 2020), the member states agreed that trading under the AfCFTA would begin on 1 January 2021. Since the free trade agreement was adopted in 2018, all African states (except Eritrea) have signed it, and 36 have deposited their instruments of ratification. Significant momentum was built up to ensure that the agreement did not languish as others have done before it, and South Africa felt strongly that its launching should not be delayed, notwithstanding Covid-19. The free trade agreement is intended to be implemented incrementally as the details of the various chapters are negotiated and concluded.

AfCFTA covers trade in goods, trade in services, investment, intellectual property rights (IPRs), and competition policy, although specific provisions concerning additional legal instruments are still to be negotiated. The legal instruments for Phase I negotiations – covering trade in goods and services – entered into force on 30 May 2020, notwithstanding that the rules of origin, schedules of tariff concessions, and schedules of specific commitments on the five priority service sectors (business services, communications, finance, tourism, and transport) had not been finalised by all parties (Chidede 2021). Phase II negotiations have also commenced, and in February 2020, the AU agreed to begin Phase III negotiations on e-commerce immediately after Phase II negotiations had been concluded. The first countries to trade under the AfCFTA are likely to be the members of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) and Egypt as both have finalised or are close to finalising their tariff offers and associated standards of reciprocity.[3]

The Covid-19 pandemic and the difficulty in securing vital medical equipment and personal protective equipment has exposed the vulnerability of African countries to global supply chains. For South Africa, it highlighted the urgent need to develop medical and pharmaceutical facilities in Africa to reduce such dependence.[4] The pandemic has also helped to highlight how important building regional value chains in Africa is to ensure a degree of strategic independence. South Africa's request to the WTO for a waiver, as

3 Interview with SA official at the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition. Pretoria, 23 February 2021.

4 Ibid.

discussed above, would create opportunities for greater African manufacturing capacity in pharmaceuticals.

Infrastructure has been identified as the 'oil' that will facilitate deeper continental integration. This was another pillar of South Africa's initial priorities for the chairmanship. It had been hoped that a High-Level Forum on Infrastructure could be held in 2020, and there was even consideration of launching a continent-wide infrastructure fund. South Africa is the advocate of the Presidential Infrastructure Champion Initiative under NEPAD, and as a result, this initiative could be taken forward beyond the term of its chairmanship of the African Union.

At the 13th Extraordinary Session of the AU Assembly on the AfCFTA, President Ramaphosa also proposed that the African Union should consider an AU Protocol on Women in Trade. Women comprise up to 70 per cent of informal cross-border traders on the continent, and they are often the breadwinners in their families. They face several personal and economic challenges in their day-to-day activity as informal traders (see Parshotam and Balongo 2020).

This proposal by the president mirrored the initial aim to emphasise the empowerment of women as an important agenda item during 2020. Empowerment here includes promoting financial and economic inclusion as well as combating gender-based violence. During the pandemic, concerns were growing about the rising incidence of gender-based violence (GBV), an area that South Africa wanted to raise awareness about in the AU, specifically to address harmful social norms that perpetuate such violence (see Okech, this Yearbook, chapter 13). Ironically, South Africa itself has chronic high levels of GBV, which were exacerbated by the pandemic.

South Africa began 2020 with an ambitious agenda for its chairmanship, with 'Silencing the Guns' carrying the greatest test of its ability to bring actors and resources together for dealing with the numerous conflicts on the continent. The black swan event it had to deal with meant that much of its agenda had to be shelved. Under normal circumstances, South Africa might not have been able to make significant progress in all of its priorities; however, Covid-19 highlighted what can be achieved in a crisis. South Africa played a significant leadership role in steering a continental response to the pandemic and driving a proactive and coordinated engagement across the continent and with international actors.

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PART 2

African Union Policy Fields

CHAPTER 5

Development

Henning Melber

1 Introduction

The norms and values of the African Union's (AU) developmental agenda are rooted in the conceptualisation efforts that have taken place since the turn of the century, maturing in the *New Partnership for Africa's Development* (NEPAD). NEPAD became a reference point and a strategic framework, which since then, despite several modifications and structural/institutional adjustments, has remained intact. The first parts of this chapter offer a summary of its emergence, followed by an overview on the *African Peer Review Mechanism* (APRM) as an integral and substantive NEPAD initiative. The final part discusses the recent transfer of NEPAD into the African Union Development Agency (AUDA–NEPAD).[1]

2 New Partnership for Africa's Development

The initial stages for the establishment of the current AU developmental framework – consolidated in NEPAD[2] – began with the briefing on the *Millennium Africa Renaissance Programme* (MAP, or MARP). The MAP was presented by the then South African president Thabo M. Mbeki to the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos, Switzerland, on 28 January 2001. He described the MAP as 'a declaration of a firm commitment by African leaders to take ownership and responsibility for the sustainable economic development of the continent' (Mbeki 2001). President Mbeki had the support of fellow heads of state:

1 The *Africa Yearbook. Politics, Economy and Society South of the Sahara*, which began in 2004 and has been published since then every year by Brill (Leiden, Boston, MA), has in each issue a general overview chapter on sub-Saharan Africa, with a section presenting details on NEPAD and the APRM for the year under review.

2 For more details on the dynamics unfolding during the initial stages, see Melber (2002), while Taylor (2006) offers a more historically contextualised overview beginning with the *Lagos Plan of Action* (1980) as the first aspirational continental strategy of this kind preceding NEPAD. I dedicate this text to the memory of Ian Taylor. 52 years of age, he lost his battle against cancer on 22 February 2021.

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Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, the late Benjamin W. Mkapa of Tanzania, and Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal (although the latter still had his own ideas, which were made known at a later stage). In particular, the Mbeki-Obasanjo axis (in office from 1999 to 2008 and 1999 to 2007, respectively) became, at the turn of the century, a relevant partnership for promoting African aspirations for international soft power through concerted and systematic engagement mainly with dominant Western powers through the Group of 7 (G7, and also the G8), as well as international financial institutions, in particular the World Bank. The catchword 'African Renaissance' became a trademark (cf. Tella 2020a).[3]

The MAP originated during a complex process that had started in September 1999 including the South African, Nigerian, and Algerian presidents, who were mandated by the 4th Extraordinary Session of the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government (Sirte, Libya, 8–9 September 1999) to approach Africa's creditors regarding the total cancellation of Africa's external debt. The presidents were further tasked by the South Summit (Havana, Cuba, April 2000) to convey the concerns of the South to the G8 Summit (Okinawa, Japan, 21–23 July 2000). The 36th OAU Assembly (Lomé, Togo, 10–12 July 2000) mandated the same presidents to prepare the MAP.

At the Conference of Ministers of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) (Algiers, Algeria, 8–10 May 2001), the South African government presented the *Millennium Partnership for the African Recovery Programme* as the updated and final version of these joint efforts. At the same occasion, the Senegalese president Wade presented an *Omega Plan for Africa* and the UNECA a *Compact for African Recovery*. It was decided that the documents should be tabled in a merged version at the OAU Summit in Lusaka. The diplomatic compromise prevented the initiative(s) from ending in a cul-de-sac at this early stage. The final draft was adopted by the 37th OAU Assembly (Lusaka, Zambia, 9–11 July 2001) as the *New African Initiative* (NAI) (OAU 2001).[4] Subsequently, at the end of a meeting in Abuja, Nigeria, on 23 October 2001, an Implementation Committee of Heads of State and Government renamed the modified document the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

The document introduction emphasises the 'common vision and a firm and shared conviction' by African leaders, anchoring the programme 'on the

3 As summarised elsewhere (Tella 2020b): 'Due to their soft power resources, Obasanjo and Mbeki made their mark on pan-Africanism and conflict resolution in Africa. Their ideas remain deeply ingrained in the African Union'.

4 Also included in NEPAD (undated, 3–5), which compiles all resolutions adopted by the OAU/AU Assemblies on NEPAD between 2001 and 2014. See for more details and full text of the adopted Strategy Policy Framework of NAI, Melber (2001).

determination of Africans to extricate themselves and the continent from the malaise of underdevelopment and exclusion in a globalising world' (NEPAD and AU 2001, §1). It goes on to state that 'African peoples have begun to demonstrate their refusal to accept poor economic and political leadership' (ibid., §7). With reference to the painful historical experiences of the continent's impoverishment, it postulates, as a lesson, that 'Africans must not be wards of benevolent guardians; rather they must be the architects of their own sustained upliftment' (ibid., §27). In order to achieve these objectives, the African leaders declare joint responsibility for the following goals and tasks (ibid., §49):

- strengthening mechanisms for conflict prevention, management, and resolution and ensuring that they are used to restore and maintain peace,
- promoting and protecting democracy and human rights by developing clear standards of accountability, transparency, and participative governance,
- restoring and maintaining macro-economic stability by developing standards and targets for fiscal and monetary policies and appropriate institutional frameworks,
- instituting transparent legal and regulatory frameworks for financial markets and auditing of private companies and the public sector,
- revitalising and extending the provision of education, technical training, and health services (with priority on HIV/Aids, malaria, and other communicable diseases),
- promoting the role of women in social and economic development,
- building the capacity of the African states to set and enforce the legal framework and to maintain law and order, and
- promoting the development of infrastructure, agriculture, and its diversification.

The following preconditions for sustainable development were identified: a) peace, security, democracy, and good governance (NEPAD and African Union 2001, §§71–85); b) economic and corporate governance, with a focus on public finance management (ibid., §§86–92); and c) subregional and regional approaches (ibid., §§93–98). The long-term objectives single out poverty eradication and promotion of the role of women (ibid., §67). Sectoral priorities include infrastructure (subdivided into information and communication technology, energy, transport, water, and sanitation), human resource development (poverty reduction, education, brain drain, and health), agriculture, environment, culture, science, and technology.

Critics, however, soon pointed out the pitfalls of the all-encompassing agenda, which seemingly tried not to overlook any possible area in the list of priorities, warning that NEPAD 'is in dire danger of becoming a mechanism for aid-funded projects, a sort of mega-NGO, distinguished by the fact that its

governing board consists of heads-of-state' (de Waal and Raheem 2004). As also observed by Grimm and Katito (2010, 2):

> NEPAD describes a vast agenda rather than a well-sequenced action plan for Africa's development. The broad range of activities embraces various initiatives on Peace, Security, Development, Democracy and Political Governance and wide plethora of other issue areas: food security and common agricultural policy, infrastructure, regional integration, business promotion, etc. However, the relationship between these initiatives is not always clear. Overlap prevails, and the will or capacity to carry through an agenda is often questioned.

The implementation of NEPAD was officially adopted at the 1st Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (Durban, South Africa, 9–10 July 2002). NEPAD has since been the blueprint for Africa's development (AU Assembly 2002). A more detailed agenda was adopted by the 2nd Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (Maputo, Mozambique, 10–12 July 2003) (AU Assembly 2003). The resolution emphasises the long-term nature of NEPAD, introduces the APRM as an integral part of NEPAD, and urges identifying programmes related to the priority areas, in particular infrastructure and agriculture. The Maputo Summit declared the *Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme* (CAADP) an integral part of NEPAD. At the same time, it incorporated NEPAD into the AU structures and processes but entered a 'temporary host agreement' with South Africa 'with a view to providing the NEPAD Secretariat with a legal status of an AU office operating outside the African Union Headquarters for a *transitional period* of three (3) years as from July 2003' (AU Assembly 2003, §9[2]). The NEPAD Secretariat was established at Midrand (halfway between Pretoria and Johannesburg, South Africa),[5] from where – despite the originally temporary time frame – it has continued to operate since.

In subsequent years, NEPAD-related debates in the African Union focused mainly on the question how best and close the initiative should be linked as a subdivision to the AU headquarters. AU Assemblies adopted additional structural provisions step by step, integrating NEPAD despite its continued physical location elsewhere in the African Union. Notably, at the 14th AU Assembly (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 31 January–2 February 2010), the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee (HSGOC) was turned into a subcommittee of the AU Assembly 'that provides political leadership and

5 Already since October 2001, NEPAD has had in Midrand an office for its secretariat at the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA).

strategic guidance on the NEPAD Programme and reports its recommendations to the Assembly for endorsement' (AU Assembly 2010, §5[b]ii). Afterwards, the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA) was further integrated into AU structures and decision-making processes, as, among others, approvingly noted in 2011 by the 16th AU Assembly and reinforced in the same year by the 17th AU Assembly (AU Assembly 2011a, 2011b). Summits during the following years, however, more critically observed the slow pace of continued integration. The 18th AU Assembly expressed 'deep concern that NPCA organisational structure is yet to be finalised two (2) years after the integration of NEPAD into the structures and processes of the AU' (AU Assembly 2012a, §4). The subsequent meeting of the AU Assembly reiterated

> the critical need for a more suitable and practical structure that fully reflects the Continent-wide mandate of the Agency to enable it function effectively and move on the path of results-based delivery for the benefit of Member States. (AU Assembly 2012b, §6)

Following this finding, the focus shifted more to enhancing collaboration between NEPAD and other continental and international agencies as well as the promotion of sectoral programmes. A decisive turn was taken with the tabling of the *Kagame Report* (see Engel, this Yearbook, chapter 3), which went a step further by recommending in early 2017 that

> NEPAD should be fully integrated into the Commission, possibly as African Union's development agency, aligned with the agreed priority areas and underpinned by an enhanced results-monitoring framework. (Kagame 2017, 14)

This set the path for more restructuring and institutional transformation, as summarised under the section on AUDA–NEPAD below.

3 African Peer Review Mechanism

As Taylor points out (2006, 34), among the major differences and innovations NEPAD introduced was

> the fact that it contains the African Peer Review Mechanism, which seeks to monitor and advise governance issues. This is a considerable move forward for the continent, particularly as any attempt to appropriate

> 'blame' – or even suggest that malgovernance might be a problem – manages to generate considerable debate and controversy.

The APRM, as a voluntary self-monitoring mechanism to which AU member states could accede, was officially institutionalised at the inaugural 1st Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (Durban, South Africa, 9–10 July 2002), where the *NEPAD Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Government* was adopted. The final paragraph of the declaration states:[6]

> We have separately agreed to establish an African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) on the basis of voluntary accession. The APRM seeks to promote adherence to and fulfilment of the commitments contained in this Declaration. The Mechanism spells out the institutions and processes that will guide future peer reviews, based on mutually agreed codes and standards of democracy, political, economic and corporate governance. (OAU 2002, §28)

The evolution from this initial concept to its practical implementation involved at times delicate negotiations. The APRM collided with the desire of African governments to retain control over and ownership of the mandate as well as the priorities of the assessment undertaken. In light of concerns that the APRM might turn out to support undue interference into domestic affairs by imposing recommendations for implementation on those willing to subscribe to the review, the APRM was firmly incorporated into African Union structures. Such incorporation also ensured that a high degree of control remained with the reviewed member state. Despite such precautionary measures, reviews had a rather slow start. First steps were implemented in 2004 with the first summit of the Committee of Participating Heads of State and Government in the APR Forum, hosted by President Paul Kagame on 13 February in Kigali, Rwanda. In line with claiming the African ownership of the process, the APR Forum approved a minimum contribution of $100,000 per year by each participating country towards operationalisation of the APRM.[7]

But progress was slow, with review processes taking long and the interaction with the governments of the reviewed member states being, in most cases, slow and cumbersome. As early criticisms had already predicted, the APRM

6 For a comparison of the APRM with other peer review mechanisms as well as a detailed critical engagement with its feasibility and constraints in implementation, see Kebonang and Fombad (2006).

7 Many countries have, however, not complied with this obligation and remain in arrears.

> generated a lot of excitement because civil society activists mistook it for an African POPULAR [sic] Review Mechanism – i.e. they thought it would be an opportunity for citizens to pass judgement on their rulers. It did, indeed, expand from economic management and corporate governance into areas of political governance and it did promise greater transparency. But those who expect a democratic revolution through the APRM are setting themselves up for disappointment. The process will be slow and bureaucratic. (de Waal and Raheem 2004)

A decade after its establishment, the APRM had lost momentum and much of its appeal. The original enthusiasm had vanished and member states were more concerned how best the APRM could be fully integrated and controlled by the African Union. It was a far cry from being a showcase of African self-evaluation in support of improving and strengthening good governance.

Furthermore, with the adoption of the African Governance Architecture (AGA) in 2007 and *Agenda 2063* in 2013 (see AU Assembly 2007, 2013), the APRM was increasingly sidelined and demoted to a 'third fiddle' status, though both AGA and Agenda 2063 attributed an important role to it (see also Chikwanha, this Yearbook, chapter 7). Its downward spiral was reinforced by a continued lacklustre engagement of member states subscribing to a review and performing the assessments accordingly. This was also reflected in apathy towards contributing the agreed annual minimum of $100,000. In addition, the position of chief executive officer has been vacant since 2008 and only filled by interim stand-ins for several years. Such circumstances did not enhance consolidation but rather had the opposite effect. By 2015, the APRM had reached a watershed, either facing collapse or being lifted up through concerted efforts by member states. As had been observed in a review undertaken by the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA), the original enthusiasm showed wear and tear:

> What started out as an initiative that could transform Africa became an overly complex and technical academic review, with member states seemingly lacking the political will to implement proposed changes. (Grudz and Turiyanskyi 2015)

While the reinvention of the APRM remained a challenge (Corrigan and Turiyanskyi 2015), the introduction of Agenda 2063 potentially opened a new window of opportunity for introspection (Corrigan and Gruzd 2017). After years of ineffectiveness, the APRM finally gained new momentum, when the 75th meeting of the APR Panel of Eminent Persons (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 25–26

January 2016) discussed a roadmap for the integration of the APRM into the African Union. Attended by ten presidents and prime ministers, a Special Summit was held on 29 January 2016, at which Kenyan president Uhuru Kenyatta, as chairperson of the APR Forum, bemoaned the concomitant slowdown in the review processes and advocated a 'revitalization of the APRM'. This became the guiding slogan for the year. Prof. Edward (Eddy) Maloka, from South Africa and the former CEO of the Africa Institute of South Africa, was appointed new chief executive officer. Under his guidance, the APRM entered a partnership with several other stakeholders, most notably UNECA, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, and the African Capacity Building Foundation. The revival of the APRM was also documented at the APR Forum on 26 August 2016, with the adoption of a five-year strategic plan – the first since being founded in 2003.

New life was also breathed into the APRM with the Kagame Report, presented at the 28th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 30–31 January 2017). The report suggested that the APRM 'could be strengthened to track implementation and oversee monitoring and evaluation in key governance areas of the continent' (Kagame 2017, 14), thereby resuming a key role in in the monitoring and evaluation of Agenda 2063. In addition, it was stressed that the APRM should be entrusted with monitoring progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on the continent. But as Grudz and Corrigan (2017) caution:

> the APRM is a recognised brand and is institutionalised as part of the African Governance Architecture. To take on the monitoring of Agenda 2063 and the SDGs it would need to resolve its administrative weaknesses, secure adequate funding and conduct reviews on an ongoing basis.

The recommendations by the Kagame Report also triggered more material support for the APRM. On 19 April 2018, the African Development Bank (AfDB) signed a grant agreement for an Institutional Support Project to strengthen efforts to consolidate and improve the quality of governance on the continent and to enhance the effectiveness of reviews. As one of the first visible results of the revised mandate, the APRM, in collaboration with AGA, submitted an Africa Governance Report (APRM 2019) to the AU Assembly, which was met with approval (AU Assembly 2019a).[8] As Turiyanskyi and Grudz (2019, 23) observe:

8 The 32nd AU Assembly welcomed 'with satisfaction' the extended tenure of Edward Maloka as the CEO of the APRM Secretariat for another three years, up until 2022 (AU Assembly 2018b, §15).

> It covers governance issues in all AU states, not just APRM members. It has been criticised for being too vague and not naming individual countries, reducing its utility. This may have been the price paid for ensuring adoption by the AU Assembly.

By 2020, 40 AU member states had volunteered for the APRM,[9] of which 23 had completed their peer review stages. One of the declared aims is that all 55 African countries have joined the APRM by 2023 'as to attain universality' (AU Assembly 2020b, §24). But this risks to deflate the meaning by lowering the threshold and thereby encouraging 'rogue states' to join the exercise in order to safeguard their standing. Zimbabwe, joining in February 2020, might be a case in point. As Grudz and Turianskyi (2020, 7) warn:

> The APRM was conceptualised as a thorough and honest country review, intended to unpack challenges in the realms of politics, society and economy, no matter how uncomfortable. To drop these standards and ease off pressure on countries because of tragic historical events is to fail to hold a frank discussion about the present and what needs to be done to improve it. Even worse is allowing authoritarian governments to control the review process, the narrative and, subsequently, the research findings. Countries that stifle public conversation about governance shortcomings for fear of being portrayed in a negative light should arguably not be part of the APRM in the first place.

This seems well-meaning advice, following the often true insight that less might be more and that it is quality, not quantity, that really matters – by all means, good governance should be determined based on merit not on the generosity of those who evaluate and assess. Keeping this in mind, it might have been an (unintended) case of tongue in cheek that the AU Assembly (2020b, §22) welcomed the Seychelles's and Zimbabwe's '*courageous* decision in joining the APRM' (emphasis added). After all, as the same decision rightly so points out: 'improved governance is a key prerequisite for creating conducive condition for Africa's development' (AU Assembly 2020b, §34).

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9 The APRM website lists 37 of these with details on progress in the review, as well as other available information and documents. Botswana, the Seychelles, and Zimbabwe joined in 2019 and 2020 as the latest member states, but they have not yet been included (see APRM 2021). A complete overview of all 40 member states is offered by Grudz and Turianskyi (2020, 5f).

4 African Union Development Agency–NEPAD

As part of its institutional reform process, the African Union finally transformed NEPAD into a technical body within AU structures. On 1 July 2018, the 31st AU Assembly (Nouakchott, Mauretania) approved the establishment of AUDA to assume the role and responsibility of NEPAD as the body's technical implementation agency. It emphasised 'the importance of the Governance structures of AUDA and the need to render them more inclusive' and that 'the Chairperson of the African Union Commission exercises supervisory authority over the AUDA' (AU Assembly 2018c, 4[iii] and 5[ii]). At the following 32nd AU Assembly (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 10–11 February 2019), AUDA–NEPAD was confirmed as *the* development agency of the AU (AU Assembly 2019). Its mandate stipulates the fostering of coordinated actions within the AU with the mission

> to foster the development of the continent through effective and integrated planning, coordination, and implementation of Agenda 2063 with Member States, Regional Economic Communities and Pan-African institutions by leveraging partnerships and technical cooperation. (AUDA–NEPAD 2020a, 1)

Its 11 core functions are (AUDA–NEPAD 2020a, 2):
- coordination between AU specialised agencies, organs, and other institutions in support of achievements towards Agenda 2063,
- incubation of programmes in fields such as technology, research and development, knowledge management, and data analysis,
- provision of technical and implementation support to Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and member states within priority projects and programmes,
- assistance to member states and RECs in strengthening capacities in key areas,
- advisory support for cultivating norms and standards in AU thematic priorities accelerating regional integration,
- technical backstopping the AU in implementing policy recommendations on continental, regional and national levels,
- monitoring and assessing development trends and progress towards key continental and global goals,
- application and dissemination of research on policy development support for member states,

- coordination, facilitation, and promotion of cooperation with strategic partners and stakeholders for effective resource mobilisation,
- coordination and facilitation of partnerships with stakeholders and African academia, and
- fostering cooperation with the private sector in Africa.

In July 2019, six thematic priority areas were identified: economic integration; industrialisation; environmental sustainability; human capital and institutions development; science, technology, and digitalisation; and knowledge management. Five centres of excellence – one each to be established in the five regions of the continent – were approved: rural resources and food systems; science and technology and innovation hub; human capital and institutions development; supply chain and logistics; and climate resilience. Of these five, three were established in 2019: human capital and institutions development in Nairobi; climate resilience in Cairo; and rural resources and food systems in Dakar (AUDA–NEPAD 2020a, 11). The first phase of the transformation process during 2019 ended with submission of a draft *AUDA–NEPAD Strategic Plan 2020–2024* (AUDA–NEPAD 2020c).

This is an overly ambitious agenda, calling to mind the earlier concerns shared above (Grimm and Katito 2010) regarding the overfilled 'shopping basket' attached to NEPAD. Accordingly, the cautious reminder by the AU Assembly in February 2020 was necessary, calling 'upon the African Union Commission and AUDA–NEPAD Secretariat to continue to harmonize their work programmes to prevent duplication of roles' (AU Assembly 2020a, §1[3]). Since then, however, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on the further implementation of any agenda due to a lack of resources (see the interview, this Yearbook, chapter 2). The centre of excellence on science, technology, and innovation was established at Stellenbosch, South Africa, in September 2020, while consultations on a suitable Central African host country and commencement of operations for the centre on supply change and logistics continue (AUDA–NEPAD 2020b, 11). At the end of 2020, the agency summarised the year in a sobering conclusion:

> The institutional demands placed in consideration to the AUDA-NEPAD mandate far out-weigh the current budget which has continued at levels before the transformation … [T]he budget for 2020 and 2021 have been substantially reduced. …
>
> At programmatic level, in some cases weak and divergent legal, policy and regulatory environments across countries inhibit effective support for transboundary infrastructure projects. … This poses a challenge to

> foster transnational solutions which has been exacerbated by countries not having harmonised responses.
>
> The overall reprioritisation of funding in the AU system has seen significant cuts in the budget for programmatic activities. This has impeded the efficacy of the Agency in providing impactful support to the AU Member States and RECs. (AUDA–NEPAD 2020b, 58f)

5 Conclusion

As summarised in this chapter, although NEPAD, the APRM, and, most recently, AUDA-NEPAD play essential roles in the cross-cutting discourse on development in an African continental perspective, African modes of self-help initiatives feature less prominently on the international stages beyond the niches of a G7/8 and G20 Summit and the debates in the United Nations, often appearing as mere tokenism. It is revealing that neither NEPAD nor the APRM or any of the subregional RECs are in any significant way considered in an academic *Handbook of Transregional Studies* (Middell 2019) or in the *Handbook on Pan-Africanism* (Rabaka 2020). This seems to underline and illustrate the limited relevance of the institutions and initiatives outside of the continent. But it should not downplay the need for a coordinated and systematic approach to development by an agency such as AUDA–NEPAD. Likewise, none of the 20 chapters contributing to a recent assessment of regional integration and development in Africa (Oloruntoba and Muchie 2019) focus on any of the agencies or institutions touched upon in the overview provided above. Similarly, the study by Hout and Salih (2019) on the asymmetrical development displayed by the political economy of African regionalism does not engage at all with any of the agencies. Notably, however, even the *Summary of the 2020 Africa Sustainable Development Report* – presented at the UNECA's Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development in Brazzaville, Congo, on 2 March 2021 (UNECA 2021) – does not even mention the APRM or AUDA–NEPAD once.

This suggests that the efforts taken – despite attempts to translate the ideas institutionalised two decades ago into something practical – have not yet had a direct impact on regional or local levels. The extent to which this could be achieved depends, as Staeger and Byiers (2021) in their positive assessment of the institutional shifts and responsibilities as well as ownership from NEPAD to AUDA–NEPAD point out, to a large extent on the key actors and interests at the country level. As already remarked upon by Signé (2018, 87):

> AUDA still has a long way to go if it hopes to reach full and successful implementation. … [P]rograms have faced many challenges, including a complex and overlapping institutional configuration, unrealistic mandates and targets, insufficient funding and capacity, occasionally hostile political contexts, and limited participation by the national or subregional actors charged with implementing them.

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CHAPTER 6

Education, Science, and Technology

Ulf Engel

1 Introduction

The sovereign construction and equitable dissemination of knowledge is fundamental to the success of any society, together with the conditions under which it is embedded in global society. Right from the start, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) therefore paid close attention to the policy field of education, science, and technology (EST). The 1963 *OAU Charter* recalled the general responsibility of the newly independent Heads of State and Government 'to harness the natural and human resources of our continent for the total advancement of our peoples in all spheres of human endeavour' (OAU 1963, preamble). The authors of the charter evoked a general sense of 'progress' and work for 'the welfare and wellbeing' of the African people. To this end, the charter called for educational and cultural as well as scientific and technical cooperation among member states (ibid., §2). This goal was kept by the African Union (AU). In the 2000 *Constitutive Act of the African Union*, a clear commitment is articulated towards advancing 'the development of the continent by promoting research in all fields, particular in science and technology' (OAU 2000, §3[m]).

In *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want* (African Union 2015), which is based on the *Solemn Declaration* that was adopted on the occasion of the 50th OAU/AU anniversary in May 2013, a number of clear references to the field of EST were developed. The Heads of State and Government aspired to create a 'prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development', 'an Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics', and an 'Africa, whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children' (ibid., 2). This was linked to the need to provide for 'well educated and skilled citizens, underpinned by science, technology and innovation for a knowledge society is the norm and no child [missing] school due to poverty or any form of discrimination' (ibid., §10). In particular, Agenda 2063 spells out the following vision:

> Africa's human capital will be fully developed as its most precious resource, through sustained investments based on universal early

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> childhood development and basic education, and sustained investments in higher education, science, technology, research and innovation, and the elimination of gender disparities at all levels of education. Access to post-graduate education will be expanded and strengthened to ensure world-class infrastructure for learning and research and support scientific reforms that underpin the transformation of the continent. (ibid., §14)

And with regard to technology, the continent shall pursue the following aim:

> By 2063, the necessary infrastructure will be in place to support Africa's accelerated integration and growth, technological transformation, trade and development. This will include high-speed railway networks, roads, shipping lines, sea and air transport, as well as well-developed ICT [information and communication technologies] and the digital economy. A Pan-African High Speed Train Network will connect all the major cities/capitals of the continent, with adjacent highways and pipelines for gas, oil, water, as well as ICT Broadband cables and other infrastructure. (ibid., §25)

Against this background, the AU has developed a number of specific policy initiatives in the field of EST. Following a brief look at basic facts and figures as well as an overview on policy coordination, this chapter calls attention to the *Continental Education Strategy for Africa* (2016–2025), hereinafter CESA 16–25; the *Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa* (STISA 2024); the *Continental Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training* (TVET); the Pan-African University (PAU), the *Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa* (DTS 2020–2030), and the *African Space Policy and Space Strategy*. In the last part of this chapter, the AU's response to current debates on #RhodesMustFall and 'decolonise the curriculum' are briefly examined in determining how, if at all, the Union is responding to fundamental epistemological challenges that are closely related to the field of EST through its history and identity policies.

2 Facts and Figures about EST in Africa

Reliable, up-to-date, and comparable data on the status of EST in Africa is difficult to find. Nevertheless, some comparative figures are provided below. They all show that in global comparison the African continent is still lacking behind. Detailed data also suggests that there are big differences between (and within)

African countries, as well as gender divides. Partly, this data is reflective of fragile academic institutions and overdependence on international funding of research and development (R&D). Related expenditure in Sub-Saharan Africa region was 0.47 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 2007 (latest figures, World Bank 2021) – as compared to 0.93 per cent in the Middle East and North Africa, or the MENA region (2012), or to a global average of 2.27 per cent in 2019 (2010: 2.02%).

Education (all figures World Bank 2021): The primary school enrolment rate for Sub-Saharan Africa was 75.26 per cent in 2009 (latest figure) – as compared to 90.34 per cent for the MENA region (2018: 93.72%) or to a global average of 88.44 percent (2019: 89.41%). The primary school completion rate for Sub-Saharan Africa was 68.81 per cent in 2019 (2010: 67.95%) – as compared to 92.34 per cent for the MENA region (2010: 90.60%) or to a global average of 89.51 percent (2010: 88.83%). For girls, these figures are even lower: in Sub-Saharan Africa their primary school completion rate was 67.39 per cent in 2019 (2010: 64.47%) – as compared to 90.85 per cent for the MENA region (2010: 87.84%) or to a global average of 89.08 per cent (2010: 87.83%). The literacy rate among the age group 15–24 years in Sub-Saharan Africa was 76.32 per cent in 2019 (2010: 69.21%) – as compared to 90.12 per cent for the MENA region (2010: 88.94%) or to a global average of 91.73 percent (2010: 89.57%). And tertiary, or university, enrolment in Sub-Saharan Africa was only 9.44 per cent in 2018 (2010: 7.88%) – as compared to 40.59 per cent for the MENA region (2010: 31.40%) or to a global average of 38.36 percent (2010: 29.57%). In combination, these figures show that despite the many gains made since 2000, the challenges to achieve the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 'Quality Education' continue to be huge (see United Nations 2021).

Science (all figures World Bank 2021): Three indicators are briefly looked at here – the number of patent applications (resident), trademark applications with the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), and scientific and technical journal articles. There are no figures on patent applications for the Sub-Saharan Africa region, only for selected countries. In this respect, in 2019 77 patents were registered originating from Kenya (2010: 294), 1,290 from Nigeria (2010: 64), and 567 from South Africa (2010: 821), to name but a few. For the MENA region, 15,802 patents were counted in 2019 (2010: 13,869), and worldwide 2,144,825 (2010: 1,160,899). The number of trademark applications coming from Kenya in 2019 was 7,205 (2010: 4,167), Nigeria 18,658 (2010: 20,560), and South Africa 37,371 (2010: 30,549). This is in stark contrast with the MENA region (2019: 303,093, 2010: 100,448) and global figures (2019: 3,789,328, 2010: 3,557,865). Finally, research output in the natural and technical sciences as measured by journal articles confirms the above observations on an African continent that is facing tremendous challenges to build up its

EST infrastructure: for 2018, 29,479 articles were counted (2010: 16.047), while scientific output in the MENA region was 119,302 (2010: 60,746) and worldwide 2,554,373 (2010: 1,943,521).

Technology (all figures World Bank 2018): In 2016, 74.4 mobile cellular telephone subscriptions per 100 people were counted in Sub-Saharan Africa (2010: 44.4) – as compared to 111.2 in the MENA region (2010: 92.9) and 101.6 worldwide (2010: 76.5). The number of fixed broadband subscriptions in Sub-Saharan Africa was 0.4 (2010: 0.2) – as compared to 7.7 in the MENA region (2010: 2.6) and 12.5 worldwide (2010: 7.9). And in terms of quality, in 2016 the international internet bandwidth (bit/s per internet user) was 47,625 in Sub-Saharan Africa (2010: 43,579) – as compared to 42,518 in the MENA region (2010: 8,818) and 78,795 worldwide (2010: 28,691).

3 AU Coordination of EST Policies

The framing of the policy field has changed over time. Particularly in the 1990s, the OAU focused on themes captured under the heading 'education and culture'. The field of 'education, science and technology' is a more recent innovation of the mid-2000s and linked to the increasingly popular notion of 'knowledge societies'[1] – with 'arts and culture' somewhat getting disentangled from this field lately (and gaining more prominence in its own right). Recently, the prospect of a knowledge-based economy is seen by the AU not just as an alternative to the 'resource-based economy', but also as a means to overcome the continent's condition of exploitation and dependency (see AU Commission 2019, 4).

With a view to revitalise the Union's efforts in higher education, the 25th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (Johannesburg, South Africa, 14–15 June 2015) established a team of ten heads of state and government to champion the newly assembled EST policy field (AU Assembly 2015). The summit committed 'to the establishment of a team of ten Heads of State and Government (two from each geographic region) as African EST champions, to meet and report on the status of education, science and technology in Africa, to the AU Summit once a year' (African Union 2015, §8). Senegal's president Macky Sall was appointed coordinator of 'the group [of] champions'.

1 On the notion, see Stehr (1994), Dunning (2000), and Cloete et al. (2015), but also UNESCO (1996, 2006). The Western roots of the concept (modernisation, modernity, and post-industrial societies) and its transfer to the African continent may not have been discussed thoroughly enough. See also the last section of this chapter.

It took the Union another three years to agree on the list of ten. Apart from Senegal, the so-called C10 comprise Chad, Egypt, Gabon, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Sierra Leone, and Tunisia (AU Assembly 2018, §6). The first education summit of the C10, 'Strengthen Education, Science and Technology', was hosted on 3 November 2018 in Malawi (AU Assembly 2020a). The summit adopted the *Action Plan of the C10* and the *Lilongwe Declaration on Education Science and Technology* (AU Assembly 2020b). At this meeting, Tunisia's late president Beji Caïd Essebsi (b. 1926–2019) and Malawi's president A. Peter Mutharika, holding office from 2014 to 2020, were appointed first vice-chairperson and second vice-chairperson of the C10, respectively (AU Assembly 2018, §3). Among others, the C10 reminded member states to meet an earlier commitment of 1 per cent GDP allocation to R&D and 4 to 6 per cent to education. The C10 also committed themselves 'to lead by example' (AU Assembly 2020b, §I[1]).

A report of the C10 was tabled at the 33rd Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 9–10 February 2020), which also adopted the Action Plan. This plan started from an honest assessment, noting with concern 'the underperformance of the education, training, research and innovation systems across many African countries and its inability to support the implementation of AU Agenda 2063' (ibid., preamble). Yet, at the same time the C10 noted with appreciation 'the efforts by African Universities to support Africa's development Agenda through the Africa's Universities' Agenda for Higher Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy for Africa and efforts to increase staff capacities in universities through the Graduate Teaching Assistantship program' (ibid.; see below). The C10 summit detailed recommendations for investing in EST, promoting education in Africa, and engaging the private sector. It furthermore stressed the immediate need to implement the three policies summarised in more detail in the following sections of this chapter.

Apart from the C10, the Specialised Technical Committee on Education, Science and Technology (STC-EST) remains the most important political fora to develop further the CESA 16–25 agenda – its 3rd session was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 10 to 13 December 2019 (the 4th session is scheduled for 26–28 May 2021). Within the AU Commission (AUC), the policy field falls under the commissioner for human resources, science and technology, which is led by Prof. Sarah Mbi Enow Anyang Agbor (Cameroon, elected in July 2017). The department is directed by Mahama Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso, acting) and comprises three divisions: Human Resource and Youth Development, Education, and Science and Technology. The staff size is slightly above 70.

The various sub-policy fields are administered by an array of institutions. In education, these are the Pan-African University (PAU, see below), the

Pan-African Institute for Education for Development (IPED), which grew out of the OAU African Bureau for Science and Education (BASE), and the 2004-founded African Union International Centre for Girls and Women Education in Africa (AU/CIEFFA, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso). And in science and technology, these agencies include the African Observatory for Science, Technology and Innovation (AOSTI, Malabo, Equatorial Guinea) and the Scientific, Technical, Research Commission (STRC, Abuja Nigeria), which also hosts the African Scientific, Research and Innovation Council (ASRIC).

In the implementation of EST, the AU often partners with the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Planning and Coordinating Agency (through its Science, Technology and Innovation Hub) of the *New Partnership for Africa's Development* (NEPAD), as well as bilateral donors, such as the German development agency (GIZ).

4 EST Policy Initiatives

In the following, six major policy initiatives of the AU in the field of EST are highlighted. The status of implementation of most of these policies can be gauged from the AU's website: it is work-in-progress.

4.1 *Continental Education Strategy for Africa (2016–2025), CESA 16–25*

Inspired by Agenda 2063 and Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education), CESA 16–25 aims 'to "create" a new African citizen who will be an effective change agent for the continent's sustainable development' (African Union 2016). The strategy was drafted in 2015 and adopted the following year at the 26th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 30–31 January 2016); it falls under the department's education division. Among others, CESA 16–25 is guided by the principle that knowledge societies 'are driven by skilled human capital' and that education has to be 'holistic, inclusive and equitable'. In addition, '[g]ood governance, leadership and accountability in education management' are identified as key factors. In order to facilitate 'intra-Africa mobility and academic integration through regional cooperation', education and training systems need to be harmonised. And, finally, '[q]uality and relevant education, training and research' are regarded as 'core [elements] for scientific and technological innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship'(ibid.).

4.2 *Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa* (*STISA 2024*)

This strategy was adopted by the 23rd Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, 26–27 June 2014). It envisions an Africa whose transformation is led by innovation with a view to create a knowledge-based economy (African Union 2014). It falls under the science and technology division. The strategy defines four mutually reinforcing pillars, which are prerequisite conditions for its success: (1) building and/or upgrading research infrastructures; (2) enhancing professional and technical competencies; (3) promoting entrepreneurship and innovation; and (4) providing an enabling environment for science, technology, and innovation (STI) development in the African continent (ibid., 10). This is to be achieved through, first, 'improving STI readiness in Africa in terms of infrastructure, professional and technical competence, and entrepreneurial capacity' and, second, 'implementing specific policies and programs in science, technology and innovation that address societal needs in a holistic and sustainable way…' (ibid., 11).

4.3 *Continental Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training* (*TVET*)

This strategy was mainly developed under the commissioner for human resources, science and technology, Dr Martial De-Paul Ikounga (Congo), who's term of office was 2013 to 2017.[2] It was originally developed in 2007, when the AUC wanted to revitalise TVET in Africa through the *Plan of Action* for the *Second Decade of Education for Africa 2006–2015* (African Union 2006), which was adopted at the 6th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (Khartoum, Sudan, 23–24 January 2006). Implementation of the strategy falls under the science and technology division. TVET provides 'a comprehensive framework for the design and development of national policies and strategies to address the challenges of education and technical and vocational training to support economic development, creation of national wealth and contribute to poverty reduction through youth entrepreneurship, innovation and employment' (African Union 2018, 6).

4.4 *Pan-African University* (*PAU*)

To increase the low level of post-graduate training opportunities and research outputs, the 15th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (Kampala, Uganda, 25–27 July 2010) decided to create the Pan-African University. It was developed to act as a standard for all other universities within Africa and officially launched on 14 December 2011. The PAU rectorate is based in Yaoundé, Cameroon. The host

2 The strategy was published on 22 October 2018.

agreement was signed on 6 April 2018. The PAU is led ad interim by Deputy Rector Prof. Kassa Belay, a professor of agricultural economics and ex-president of Haramaya University (Ethiopia). The president of the PAU Council, Prof. Pierre Dominique Nzinzi (Gabon), was elected for a three-year term in January 2018 and the vice-president, Prof. Nthabiseng Ogude Audrey (South Africa), in July 2018. The first batch of students graduated in March 2016. By November 2018, the PAU had already produced 591 graduates coming from 45 different AU member states. Total enrolment at that time was 872 master's and PhD students (PAU 2019, 17). According to the *Strategic Plan* (2020–2024), which was endorsed by the Bureau of the PAU Council on 7 June 2019, the period 2012 to 2018 was seen as the initiation phase, 2019 to 2024 as the consolidation phase, and 2025 to 2030 as the achieving excellence phase (ibid., 5).

The PAU focuses on five thematic areas: basic sciences, technology, and innovation; life and earth sciences (including health and agriculture); governance, humanities, and social sciences; water and energy sciences (including climate change); and space sciences. The thematic areas are assigned to institutes hosted by existing universities across Africa's five geographic regions as follows:

- the Institute for Basic Sciences, Technology and Innovation (PAUSTI), as part of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology in Kenya (East Africa),
- the Institute for Life and Earth Sciences (including Health and Agriculture) (PAULESI), hosted by the University of Ibadan in Nigeria (West Africa),
- the Institute for Governance, Humanities and Social Sciences (PAUGHSS), based at the University of Yaoundé II in Cameroon (Central Africa),
- the Institute for Water and Energy Sciences (including Climate Change) (PAUWES), located in the University of Tlemcen in Algeria (North Africa), and
- the Institute for Space Sciences (PAUSS), to be coordinated by the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), plus a consortium of six other South African universities (Southern Africa). Operations were to commence in February 2019 but were delayed. South Africa made it a priority of its presidency of the Union in 2020 to fast-track the finalisation of technical and legal arrangements.

In addition, there is the Africa Virtual and e-University as the open, distance, and e-learning arm, located at the headquarters of the PAU in Yaoundé.

4.5 *Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa* (*DTS 2020–2030*)

On 9 February 2020, the AU adopted its strategy for the digitalisation of the continent in the coming decade. The DTS falls under the commissioner for

infrastructure and energy, Dr Amani Abou-Zeid (Egypt). The highly ambitious strategy goes beyond notions of knowledge society and aims at an 'integrated and inclusive digital society and economy in Africa' (African Union 2020, 2). The DTS objectives include the building of a secured Digital Single Market in Africa and the digital empowerment of all African people by 2030. By this time, 30 per cent of all basic e-services and content should be developed and hosted in Africa. A digital sovereignty fund should be set-up to 'create a harmonized environment necessary to guarantee investment and financing' in order 'to close the digital infrastructure gap and achieve an accessible, affordable and secure broadband, across demography, gender, and geography' (ibid.). High hopes for the digital transformation of African societies and economies were also expressed in a report jointly organised by the AUC and the Paris-based Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) during 2020: 'Digitalisation is a powerful tool for productive transformation and resilience to the [COVID-19] crisis' (AU Commission and OECD 2021, 23).

4.6 *African Space Policy and Space Strategy*

With reference to the African Outer Space Programme, promoted under Agenda 2063, and as key mechanisms for implementing STISA 2024, the 26th AU Assembly approved both the *African Space Policy* and *Space Strategy*. A couple of years later, the 32nd Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 10–11 February 2019) decided to locate the African Space Strategy in Cairo, Egypt. The African Space Policy responds to 'a number of fragmented initiatives that have a regional dimension' (AU Commission 2016, 7). The policy aims 'to bring all of these pockets of excellence together to create synergised, complementary programmes to foster collective actions towards Africa's development, and eventually enable the continent to be a global space player' (ibid.). The objective is twofold: first, to 'create a well-coordinated and integrated African space programme that is responsive to the social economic, political and environmental needs of the continent, as well as being globally competitive', and second, to 'develop a regulatory framework that supports an African space programme and ensures that Africa is a responsible and peaceful user of outer space' (ibid., 9).

The African Space Strategy follows the same logic as the digitalisation policy: on the one hand, it is acknowledged that the continent 'is facing serious challenges in ensuring adequate provision of basic necessities, such as food, shelter, a clean and healthy environment, and proper education, for its growing population', yet, on the other, there is great hope that a 'slowly awakening' Africa can benefit by leapfrogging from space science and technology (AU Commission 2019, 4). The core of the strategy is geared towards developing

both an 'indigenous capacity to operate and maintain core space capabilities' and 'an industrial capability that is able to translate innovative ideas from research and development into the public and commercial sectors' (ibid.). In addition, the strategy highlights the need 'to coordinate space activities across member states and regions to minimize duplication, but maintaining sufficient critical mass' (ibid.).

4.7 *Ratification of Legal EST Instruments*

Like in other policy fields, AU member states are fairly slow in ratifying and depositing the legal instruments they have adopted in the field of EST. The AUC website lists six legal instruments relating to EST (African Union 2021a).[3] Only two, the *Statue of the African Space Agency* (29 January 2018) and the *Revised Statute of the Pan-African University* (PAU) (31 January 2016),[4] have entered into force. The *African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection* (27 June 2014) has only been signed by 14 member states and ratified/deposited by 8 member states; the *Statute of the Pan African Intellectual Property Organization* (PAIPO) (30 January 2016) has been signed by 6 member states – none have ratified/deposited. And the *Statute of the African Observatory in Science Technology and Innovation* (AOSTI) (30 January 2016) as well as the *Statute of the African Science Research and Innovation Council* (ASRIC) (30 January 2016) have not been signed, ratified, or deposited at all.

5 Outlook: EST in Context – Arts, Culture, and Heritage

The above-described EST policies are being operationalised in a concrete historical context that is characterised by at least two major dynamics: first, a debate about the lasting impact of conceptual Eurocentrism and colonial legacies in higher education and, second, a controversy about the return of African art looted during European colonial rule and the restitution of African cultural heritage. In both debates, African and European actors – single and collective – are repositioning themselves and renegotiating their mutually constituted identities.

Initially in the higher education sector, and then also in the more general public, the past few years have seen some extremely controversial but also very constructive debates around #RhodesMustFall and the need to 'decolonise the curriculum'. Starting in 2015, students in South Africa questioned the politics

3 However, some of the lists have not been updated for more than three years.
4 This statute does not require signature or ratification.

of memory still tolerated by the post-apartheid government in South Africa (see Booysen 2016; Nyamnjoh 2016). Statues of colonialists and imperialists such as Cecil J. Rhodes (1853–1902), as well as apartheid architects such as premier Hendrik Verwoerd (1901–1966), were razed. This public debate quickly gave way to more fundamental discussions about the Western-based legacy of university curricula in many African countries (again, for the South African context, see Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Zondi 2016; Jansen 2019). As a consequence, important questions have been raised by intellectuals from the continent and beyond (see also Mkandawire 2005): What are the implications of conceptual Eurocentrism and the claims for universal scientific assumptions – which in fact are based on very concrete historical experiences of 'the West' – on African systems of education? What place does local and indigenous knowledge have in the training at primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions of education? How can the average African curriculum be decolonised and 'epistemic violence' (see Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2020; Neilson 2020) addressed in ways that avoid replacing Eurocentrism by simple Afrocentrism? Answers to these questions certainly will have to go beyond current debates on the future of higher education on the continent (in this respect, see the important contributions by Afoláyan 2007; Cloete et al. 2015; and Comunian et al. 2021).

Likewise, recently intensified debates around art looted from the African continent during colonial rule, including its return and restitution, raise questions not only of post-colonial justice but also of memorialisation and ownership (see Sarr and Savoy 2018; and, for a brilliant case study, Hicks 2020). Of course, these questions are not just negotiated between African and European stakeholders, but also within African societies.

How does the AU place itself in this context? Since the days of the OAU, there is a rich tradition of the continental body to engage in concrete history and memory politics. This is closely linked to diverse and contested visions of African unity and ideas of pan-Africanism (see the sharp analysis by Abrahamsen 2020; and the voluminous overview by Rabaka 2020). Since 1969, the OAU had organised Pan-African Cultural Festivals, a Pan-African Film Festival, and Pan-African Festivals of Arts and Culture.

Apart from promoting African arts and culture, three major themes stand out: memorialising slavery, engaging the African diaspora, and constructing Africa's history. Following the commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the abolition of slavery in 2007, the AU organised a series of related meetings in South Africa: the 1st Ministerial Diaspora Conference (Midrand, 16–18 November 2007), the African Diaspora Summit (Johannesburg, 10–11 October 2008), and the Global African Diaspora Summit (Sandton, 25 May 2012). The theme gained huge momentum when the UN General Assembly proclaimed 2015 to

2024 as the *International Decade for People of African Descent* (UNGA 2014). Subsequently, a series of continental and regional events was organised, including the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean States (Brasilia, Brazil, 3–4 December 2015), the Regional Conference for Europe, Central Asia and North America (Geneva, Switzerland, 23–24 November 2017), the African Union Continental Symposium on the Implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent (Accra, Ghana, 18–20 September 2018), and the Regional Conference on the International Decade of People of African Descent (Dakar, Senegal, 23–24 October 2019).

At the beginning of 2019, the 32nd Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly recognised the 400th anniversary of the transatlantic slave trade. The summit urged

> all people of African descent to make this a year of reconnection and re-engagement with our African identities, collective interests and to seek to forge practical and ambitious initiatives that will build our unity and offer prosperity to our peoples. (AU Assembly 2019a, §2)

And in 2020, the 33rd AU Assembly called for closer collaboration and cooperation between the African Union and 'the African diaspora people of African descent in the Caribbean and Pacific regions' (AU Assembly 2020c).

Given the importance of various trajectories that developed after independence, it is no surprise that the AU also took an interest in how these histories and their global entanglements are narrated. It therefore welcomed the UNESCO's initiative to produce an eight-volume 'The General History of Africa' (UNESCO 1981–1999) and called for the AUC, in cooperation with ministers of education, to develop a ninth volume 'covering the recent history of decolonization, end of Apartheid and Africa's position in the World' (AU Council 2009, §5(1)).[5]

This interest also led to the adoption of the *Encyclopaedia Africana Project* (EAP).[6] Proposed by Ghana, which is hosting the Secretariat for the Encyclopaedia Africana Project in its capital Accra, the project was adopted by the 22nd Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 30–31 January 2014) (AU Assembly 2014). In 2019, the AU decided to make this one its flagship projects under Agenda 2063 (AU Assembly 2019b). The EAP 'aims to provide an authoritative resource on the authentic history of Africa and

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5 The project was launched in 1964. Currently, UNESCO is planning vols. 9 to 11.

6 The EAP was initiated by Ghana's first president (1960–1966), Kwame Nkrumah, and eminent African diaspora scholar Dr W.E.B. DuBois in 1962. It was granted observer status with the OAU in February 1975.

African life'. It 'provides Africans a body of truth to guide and unite them in their development with foundations in all aspect of the African life including history, legal, economic, religion, architecture and education as well as the systems and practices of African societies' (African Union 2021b).[7]

The 33rd AU Assembly appreciatively noted the efforts of Malian president Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta, who was ousted in a coup d'état later that year (on 19 August 2020), as 'AU Champion for the Promotion of Arts, Culture and Heritage'. The summit deplored the insufficient funding of this policy field by member states and called upon them 'to allocate at least 1 [per cent] of their national budget to the sectors by 2030' (AU Assembly 2020d, §5). The year 2021 was declared the AU Year of the Arts, Culture, and Heritage. The summit also expressed its support and called for funding of the African World Heritage Fund (AU Assembly 2020e).

This unequivocal rhetorical thrust to commemorate Africa's past and build on its arts, culture, and heritage is somewhat contradicted by AU member states' reluctance to ratify the 2006 *Charter for African Cultural Renaissance* (which is replacing the 1976 *African Cultural Charter for Africa*). This document, among many other things, wants to 'develop all the dynamic values of the African cultural heritage that promote human rights, social cohesion and human development' (African Union 2006b, §3[k]); it also aims to 'provide African peoples with the resources to enable them to cope with globalization' (ibid., §3[l]). By 18 June 2020, only 14 members had ratified and deposited the legal instruments (African Union 2021e). For the charter to enter into force, it takes the ratification of two-thirds of member states.

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7 The other history-related flagship project is the Great African Museum, which is meant to become a 'focal centre for preserving and promoting the African cultural heritage' (African Union 2021b). It is planned to be launched in 2023 as part of the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063. Located in Algiers, Algeria, '[t]he Museum of Africa Permanent Memorial of Slave Trade will showcase, protect and promote the rich cultural heritage of the continent' (AUDA-NEPAD 2021).

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CHAPTER 7

Governance

Annie Barbara Hazviyemurwi Chikwanha

1 Evolution of the African Governance Architecture and the Key Actors

The African Union's (AU) regional governance architecture has its origins in the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA, Abuja, Nigeria, 8–9 May 2000). The CSSDCA instigated the development of common values and expressed the need for governance oversight of and an appraisal system for the AU. A slow building-block approach, with several significant developments, expanded this initiative, which followed changes informed by different AU organ processes that were tied to other events. The African Governance Architecture (AGA) institution eventually came into being through a series of disjointed activities that all had the same goal of achieving development in democratic, peaceful, and prosperous environments. The slow evolution of the AGA has not been a linear process because addressing Africa's myriad governance challenges require a comprehensive collaborative approach at the national, subregional, and regional levels. Africa's obligations to good governance have been taken up in the international conventions, treaties, and instruments developed and adopted by the AU and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) (see Kioko 2019; Wiebusch et al. 2019).

The prevalence of coup d'états in Africa since 1990 prompted the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to respond with the 1999 *Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes of Government* (UCGs), adopted in Algiers. This was followed by the *Framework for an OAU Response to Unconstitutional Changes of Government* (hereinafter the Lomé Declaration, July 2000), which defined unconstitutional changes of government as military coup d'états, mercenary interventions to replace a democratically elected government, and the displacement of a democratically elected government by armed dissidents and rebel movements (Mehari Taddele Maru 2012). The 2007 *African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance* (ACDEG) (African Union 2007) later added refusal to hand over power to the winning party after elections as well as the manipulation of constitutions to extend the hold on power by incumbents to the definition of unconstitutional power alternation. This ACDEG addition to the initial Lomé

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definition was to dissuade incumbents seeking to extend their tenure from tempering with constitutions. Good examples of this unwillingness to relinquish power were the planned third term in Nigeria at the end of President Olusegun Obasanjo's reign in 2004 as well as the constitutional amendment in 2005 in Uganda that allowed President Yoweri Museveni to extend his rule (Aniekwe 2012; Wiebusch and Murray 2019).

By 2000, the AU member states had consecutively adopted a number of protocols to facilitate the adoption and implementation of democratic norms in Africa. These instruments are spread across AU institutions and are embedded in the 2000 *Constitutive Act of the African Union* (OAU 2000). The comprehensive ACDEG established standards of democratic governance for the region. It came into force in February 2012 after ratification by the requisite 15th member state. Ratification by member states of this charter has been a slow, long and arduous process (Engel 2019). By 2020, only 46 countries had ratified the ACDEG and deposited the legal instruments, indicating the need for continuous popularisation and advocacy to get all 54 countries to embrace the ACDEG. The implementation of the ACDEG requires a cohesive effort, a more robust and efficient sequencing of events, a commitment to combat corruption, effective and efficient public services and administration, the upholding of the rule of law, and respect for women's and human rights (Kioko 2019).

2 The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance

The primary African governance policy framework is the ACDEG, which incorporates elements from all other AU instruments, such as the *African Charter on Human and People's Rights* (1 June 1981), the *African Charter on Rights and Welfare of the Child* (1 July 1990), the *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa* (Maputo Protocol, 1 July 2003), the *African Union Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Corruption* (1 July 2003), the *African Charter on the Values and Principles of Public Administration* (31 January 2011), the *African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation* (16 February 1990), the *Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa and the African Youth Charter* (2 July 2006). The ACDEG supersedes all earlier AU protocols, norms, and standards, and the charter technically makes it easier to apply a holistic approach to governance. The rationale for the charter is rooted in the widespread concern about unconstitutional changes of

government and the associated political instability, insecurity, and violent conflict (Matlosa 2008).

The ACDEG is designed to promote democracy and human rights in the African continent and is the first binding regional instrument adopted by member states that expansively addresses all fundamental elements for the establishment of liberal democracies. The charter is also the first legal instrument that condemns any amendments to the constitution or legal instruments of a member state without the people's consent, considering that such actions infringe on the principles of democratic change of government. ACDEG provisions on civil and political rights safeguard individual freedoms and are laden with rules that regulate governance practices and competitive elections. As the various instruments present the amount of coordination required in the implementation of the ACDEG, a coherent architecture became essential to streamline efforts and minimise wastage caused by duplication. Implementation of the ACDEG is a painstaking process that constantly evolves in line with the dynamics within the AU and in the member states.

Since the initial development of the framework on UCGs, the AU has applied it on different occasions and in different countries, from Togo in 2005 to Mali in 2020 (see Aniekwe 2014; Wiebusch and Murray 2019). In all these cases, the AU responded differently in its efforts to restore constitutional order. The different approaches were determined by the concerned country's responses to AU diplomatic and political interventions. Still, the AU continues to struggle in interpreting and classifying what constitutes unconstitutional power alternation and the process to restore order since this includes both sides, those pursuing power and those ousted in the contestation. The difficult case of the Arab Spring revolutions uncovered the fissures in the ACDEG's definition and the AU's interpretation and interventions (AU PSC 2014, 2019; see Mehari Taddele Maru 2012; Engel [2020], 39f.).

Monitoring compliance with the ACDEG has been a challenge for the AU Commission (AUC) for a long time. The ACDEG reporting parameters were only developed nine years after the charter came into force and were only adopted at the 28th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 23–28 January 2016). Each country must produce an initial baseline report, which is then used to benchmark all other subsequent reports every two years. The report must provide general background information, implementation measures undertaken as prescribed by the ACDEG and the challenges encountered, and an indication of sectors needing technical support. Togo was the first country and is still the only one nine years after the ratification of the ACDEG, to submit the initial report on the implementation of the ACDEG.

3 Establishment of the AGA

In March 2009 at the Yaoundé consultative meeting, the AUC considered establishing the AGA to improve the coordination of the governance efforts on the continent. The meeting acknowledged the role of other institutional actors in developing the AGA. In 2010, the Yaoundé Working Session on the AGA approved the establishment of the new institution that would facilitate, coordinate and complement, and manage information flows on governance work in Africa. The AUC Department of Political Affairs (DPA) hosts the AGA Secretariat, which works with all AU organs such as the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), and the African Union Advisory Board on Corruption (AUABC). The genesis of the AGA was sealed by the Executive Council decision on the theme 'Shared Values of the AU', with a special emphasis on inaugurating the AGA in the year 2011 (AU Council 2010).

The AGA's key guiding principles clearly spell out its mandate: safeguarding citizen participation in democratisation processes in member states and regional affairs, advancing inclusionary mechanisms for gender equality and youth empowerment, protecting democratic principles, promoting human rights, upholding the rule of law, and pursuing good governance (see Matlosa 2014a). The RECs and AU organs are the bedrock of the AGA. There is consensus among key stakeholders that the AGA should be the regional framework for harmonising and bringing together AU organs and institutions mandated to ensure democracy and governance in order to minimise the transactional costs caused by the duplication of efforts. Emphasis is on improvement of complementarity among the different AU institutions.

The AGA operates through five clusters that all have mechanisms for inclusion of youth and women in the various areas of activities. The five intertwined clusters are: democracy (elections, parliaments, political parties, and democracy assessments), governance (public service and administration, local governance and decentralisation, anti-corruption and accountability, and natural resource governance), human rights and transitional justice, constitutionalism and the rule of law, and humanitarian affairs (AGA 2021).

Due to the divergent nature of AU organs' activities, an operationalisation mechanism for the AGA – the African Governance Platform (AGP) – was devised to oversee, coordinate, and complement the already ongoing efforts by the different institutions on improving governance (African Union 2010).[1]

1 Related to the 'Shared Values' summit, the AU Assembly recommended the establishment of a Pan-African Architecture on Governance.

The AGP acts as the foundation for the execution of the AGA and is composed of all the major AU organs, the RECs, and civil society organisations (CSO). The AGP provides a broad dialogue platform for all various stakeholders involved in promoting good governance and democracy building in Africa. It is responsible for translating AU Shared Values into tangible objectives that form the core of the AGA and for treaty monitoring with the RECs. The African Governance Facility (AGF) (AGA 2021) is a regional resource mobilisation framework to support AGP initiatives and programmes with funding and is another key element of the AGA. The facility aims to support all AGA activities with funds raised from member states. The APRM stands out as the governance assessment body par excellence in the AGP.

4 The African Peer Review Mechanism

The APRM was established as a voluntary governance assessment mechanism in 2003 and is an initiative that grew out of the *New Partnership for Africa's Development* (NEPAD) (ASR Editorial 2010). NEPAD's primary objectives are to alleviate poverty by promoting infrastructural development for sustainable growth, facilitating the integration of Africa into the world economy, and fast-tracking the empowerment of women. The APRM Secretariat coordinates the country governance assessments across all sectors of AU organs and works with diverse partners, including NEPAD, the AGA, the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), select think thanks, and CSOs. The APRM assessment questionnaire covers all the governance sectors, and an Independent Panel of Eminent Persons leads the APRM country reviews, with the Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC) exerting peer pressure on the reviewed countries to implement the reforms. The APRM has accumulated experience from the numerous country reviews that have been undertaken to date in more than 20 countries. The APRM approach has clear mechanisms for linking the governance assessment platforms at the national level, being the focal points, to the APRM Secretariat and all steps and protocols are clearly outlined to ensure ownership of the review process by the country under assessment. The APRM goes beyond just assessments to ensure that action at the national level will be undertaken by overseeing the creation of the National Programme of Action (NPoA), which ties remedial action to resources and then to existing development plans and expenditure frameworks (see Matlosa 2014b). The processes eliminate duplication and ease the reporting of the APRM's governance activities to the APRM Forum. The APRM's 17 years of experience give it a vantage point of assessing countries' compliance with the ACDEG. By 2016, 22 of the 36 countries that had acceded to the

APRM had had the first review, and in the last three years the APRM has conducted five country reviews and four targeted reviews. More member states also signed up to the APRM in this period (APPM 2021).

The mandate of the APRM was extended to include tracking of the implementation and overseeing monitoring and evaluation of the continent's key governance areas – that is to say, those listed in the ACDEG – by the 28th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 30–31 January 2017). The APRM has steadfastly demonstrated readiness for future governance assessment roles and is always ahead in sequencing its activities. By March 2017, an APRM-AGA Joint Experts Methodology Workshop was convened by the APRM Secretariat in Johannesburg, South Africa, to unpack the implications and practicalities of the expanded mandate. The workshop produced a strategy and framework document on the new responsibilities and also established a multi-stakeholder Joint Task Force to design a road map. This additional mandate has paved the way for the AGA to work through the APRM for the monitoring of and reporting on the ACDEG through the well-established APRM processes.

The APRM is thus ready to be the lead agency for monitoring and evaluating the AU *Agenda 2063* and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals *Agenda 2030*. This implies closer collaboration with NEPAD, which also has the mandate to coordinate the implementation of Agenda 2063 alongside the AUC and other strategic partners like the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and AGP members. On this task, the APRM will have to work closely with the RECs, which are key pillars of the AU, and some, like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), have demonstrated remarkable capacity in enhancing governance and resolving disputes in their subregion. The APRM has the capacity to provide the RECs with the experience it has acquired at the country and regional levels and can also use the RECs to obtain some useful information from countries that have not yet signed and implemented the APRM. Bridging the governance assessment gap between the AUC and the RECs requires a collaboration system between the APRM Secretariat and the RECs on the monitoring and evaluation of Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030. The AU Assembly also decided that the *Africa Governance Report* shall be developed by the APRM, in collaboration with the AGA, and this will be presented every two years for consideration by the AU Assembly at its ordinary sessions starting in 2022 (AU Assembly 2019).

The 29th APR Forum of Heads of State and Government (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 9–10 February 2020) also tasked the APRM with organising an African Migration Governance Conference in collaboration with the AUC and relevant stakeholders in order to share best practices. The intention is to strengthen

migration policies across member states through the *Migration Policy Framework for Africa and its Plan of Action* (2018–2030). This policy action is tied to the 2015 *Protocol on Statelessness and the Right to Nationality*, which is still under consideration for endorsement (Forum on the Participation of NGOs 2020). The *Draft Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Specific Aspects on the Right to a Nationality and the Eradication of Statelessness in Africa* was presented for adoption at the 34th AU Assembly (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 6–7 February 2021) (Adeola 2020). The draft protocol draws on the *Agenda 2063* framework document, which envisions an African citizenship and the integration of the African diaspora into democratic processes by allowing dual nationality by 2030. The draft protocol is inspired by an ECOWAS ministerial declaration issued in February 2015, in which the ministers stated that they would 'prevent and reduce statelessness by reforming constitutional, legislative and institutional regimes related to nationality' (AU Commission 2015). By July 2020, the draft protocol had not yet been adopted after going through various review processes by AU organs. Giving responsibility for its implementation to the APRM is likely to gain traction with the member states.

The APRM was integrated into the AU budget in 2018 and has more stable funding for its AGA-related work (AUC Chairperson 2021). In January 2018, the board of the African Development Bank (AfDB) confirmed the project plan and budget for the projects to be funded within the 2018–2021 funding cycle ($2.8 million confirmed). Other funders include the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, which gave $60,000, and the European Union (EU), with $5 million.

5 AGA Operationalisation Challenges

Coordinating the work of the key stakeholders in a coherent manner that takes account of institutional sensitivities has slowed down the functioning of the AGA. The AGA policy and legal frameworks are now firmly in place, but a major problem remains since many AU institutions working on governance initiatives continue to operate in an uncoordinated and fragmented way. Each organ continues with its mandate as before and steps into the AGA realm when necessary. A good example of this is the continued segmented submission of reports on the different protocols that are now contained in the ACDEG. The APRM country reviews have reported that many of the signed commitments in the region have yet to come into force. And even when they get ratified, the probability and capacity to domesticate them and to adhere to the provisions remains low (Mangu 2014).

Member states have remained sluggish in regard to both commitment and translation of the ACDEG into action even though they admit to needing improved governance. The ACDEG is the fulcrum on which the AGA and the AGP are anchored, and all successes are benchmarked against this policy framework and the integrated protocols. It reflects a multi-pronged approach to the establishment and consolidation of democracy, and success is determined by the cooperation of the member states.

Providing AU member states with an implementation road map for the ACDEG remains essential, but there have been many setbacks to the process due to a high level of political disinterest by the member states. The AGA Secretariat database of key indicators to be used in the ACDEG as a baseline for assessing country reports struggled to get traction and in 2012 the DPA worked with technical support from the Centre for Human Rights in Pretoria in drafting the guidelines for reporting on the ACDEG. Furthermore, at a DPA meeting in Senegal in 2013, only three member states were represented at a junior administrative level to discuss the proposed implementation process. Other actors on the democracy landscape in the region contributed to the formulation of the implementation process, for instance, the Stockholm-based International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), was involved in a mapping study lasting from 2011 to 2013 of existing assessment frameworks in the African region. The Open Society Initiative also prepared a draft for the state reporting guidelines. None of these processes included input from the member states, hence their reluctance to even consider them as prototypes to work with. The benchmarking and indicators assessment processes eventually stalled in the latter part of 2013 due to internal administrative issues within some supporting institutions. Technical staff that had been seconded by IDEA to support AGA work in the Union did not get their contracts renewed. A new understaffed AGA Secretariat continues with the work, attempting to the content of the several draft documents in consultation with the AGP and member states. For now, the governance challenges faced by African countries necessitate that the AGA must prioritise a universal ratification of the ACDEG and work towards its domestication at the national level. However, more positive outcomes are likely if the work is led by the more established and experienced APRM.

In the case of the ACDEG, the Arab Spring revolutionary movements in the North African region required a platform for a thorough revisiting of the AU's normative frameworks concerning constitutionalism and democracy (Solomon Ayele Dersso 2012; Mehari Taddele Maru 2012). There were glaring inconsistencies in the AU responses to the popular uprisings in North Africa (Solomon Ayele Dersso 2012). For instance, the Tunisian case was accepted as following the democratic process, but the Egyptian and Libyan cases were

seen as a negation of the principles of the framework (Aniekwe 2014). Likewise, in the case of ECOWAS, there have been myriads of problems that tested the ACDEG's democratic credentials.

6 Division of Labour Between the AU and the RECs on Governance

The foundation for broader African integration was laid out in the 1980 *Lagos Plan of Action for the Development of Africa* and in the 1991 *Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community* (Abuja Treaty), which proposed that the RECs form the building blocks of continental integration. The eight RECs officially recognised by the AU (see this Yearbook, chapter 1, footnote 7) have all developed context-relevant roles and structures for facilitating regional economic integration between members of the individual regions and the wider African Economic Community (AEC). The RECs serve as the bridge between the AU and member states in areas of mutual interests – like peace and security, development, and governance.

All the RECs have acknowledged major AU protocols on democracy and governance and expect their member states to commit to them. Despite clear-cut duties of the RECs, many have not been able to perform their duties efficiently. The former SADC chairperson, President Hage Geingob of Namibia (since 2015), expressed dissatisfaction with the overlapping mandates and duplication of efforts among the RECs, as well as between the RECs and the AU (Geingob 2019). This was a hindrance to accelerating regional integration, and he therefore advocated the clarification of roles and responsibilities between the AU and the RECs, with the principle of subsidiarity providing the basis for an effective division of labour that would take into account the financial challenges faced by member states. Such an approach would allow member states to direct and take ownership of the policy and programme formulation at the subregional and regional levels in a way that ensures better value for the money spent.

The July 2019 Mid-Year Coordination Meeting (MYCM) addressed the division of labour between the AU, the RECs, and AU member states. It also scrutinised the second *African Regional Integration Report* (African Union, AfDB and UNECA 2019) and reviewed the draft protocol amending the 2008 Memorandum of Understanding between the AU, RECs, and Regional Mechanisms. The division of labour emphasised six specific areas: policy planning and formulation, policy adoption, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, partnerships, and joint resource mobilisation. All entities were tasked with developing a matrix for the division of labour based on the six areas. The matrix has to

take into account the fact that some RECs have fared better than the AU in some cases. For instance, ECOWAS has been the lead REC in interventions in peace and security, governance, and integration in West Africa, and the close proximity of ECOWAS to the concerned countries' structures puts the REC in a better position than the AU to handle delicate governance crises (Bamidele and Ayodele 2018).

ECOWAS has been very proactive in intervening in member states to restore constitutional order. This is a notable difference from traditional AU positions of unresponsiveness and seemingly tacit support it gave to some coups and undemocratic changes of government (ibid.). Recent examples of ECOWAS enforcement of the ACDEG include pressure that was placed on the military regimes to step down in Mali and Guinea-Bissau. ECOWAS's capacity to apply military force in cases of violation of the unconstitutional change of government has produced positive results in the countries in the region – including Sierra Leone, Togo, Mali, Guinea (Conakry), Niger, Guinea-Bissau, and Burkina Faso – which were all at one time threatened with sanctions and military intervention if they refused to revert to democratic order (ibid.). ECOWAS utilises mechanisms such as members of its Council of the Wise, the Mediation and Security Council, and regional police personnel to defuse political crises and monitor elections in the subregion. This has helped to fulfil commitment to the ACDEG in the region. ECOWAS actions imply that the division of labour between the AU and the RECs should be determined by the specific capacity of each REC.

In 2020, the AU embarked on reforms that are meant to be more effective and efficient. The division of labour between the AU, the RECs, member states, and other stakeholders will thus be performance oriented. The deputy chairperson of the AUC, Ghana's Quartey Thomas Kwesi, announced acceptance of the proposed new structure along with the projected financing strategy at the 39th Session of the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) (Addis Ababa, 21–22 January 2020). In line with the Kagame reforms, it was decided to replace the AU Assembly held in summer with a Mid-Year Coordination Meeting between the RECs and the AUC. This MYCM is now the principal forum for the AU and the RECs to align their work and coordinate the implementation of the regional integration agenda according to the adopted and revised 2008 *Protocol on Relations between the African Union* (*AU*) *and the Regional Economic Communities* (*RECs*). After the transformation of NEPAD into the resource mobilisation agency of the AUC, in February 2020 the AUC, the new African Union Development Agency (AUDA–NEPAD), the RECs and member states were tasked with finalising the gaps in the proposal on other facets of the division of labour that remain outstanding (Mangu 2017). The outstanding issues will be considered at the 35th AU Assembly scheduled for February

2022, effectively postponing the finalisation of the full matrix on the division of labour.[2] A major setback for all AU decisions is the time lag between decision-making and implementation.

7 Post-2020 Linking Peace and Security with Governance

Under the AUC *Strategic Plan* (2014–2017) (AU Commission 2013), interventions concerning governance, democracy, and human rights were brought together to pursue the outcome, '[p]eace and stability, good governance, democracy and human rights as foundations for development and stable societies promoted'. Upon its establishment, the AGA complemented APSA, since both frameworks acknowledge the linkages between democratic governance, peace, and security (see Dawit Yohannes, this Yearbook, chapter 10). Both the AGA and APSA are intended to jointly address the structural root causes of conflict in Africa. The AGA's overarching work extends to preventive diplomacy, mediation, negotiated settlement of conflicts, humanitarian assistance and durable solutions, reconciliation, and post-conflict reconstruction and development (PCRD). This mandate spills over into the work undertaken by the AU Peace and Security Department (PSD). The AGA and APSA are therefore found in the Annual High-Level Dialogues on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance, an initiative began by the AGA in 2012. The high-level dialogues follow thematic lines and provide an engagement platform that produces reports for input into the AU policy processes. And in 2014, the AU High-Level Retreat of the AUC Chairperson's Special Envoys and Special Representatives (Arusha, Tanzania, 21–22 October 2014) was held under the theme 'Silencing the Guns: Improving Governance for Preventing, Managing and Resolving Conflicts in Africa by 2020' (ACCORD 2014).

Opportunities for fortifying the links between the AGA and APSA are found in the AU-PCRD policy framework and the African Solidarity Initiative (ASI). The African Solidarity Initiative was launched by AU ministers of foreign affairs/external relations on 13 July 2012 to mobilise support from within Africa for PCRD in countries emerging from protracted violent conflict (Matlosa 2014a). Such collaboration between the AGA and APSA took place in the Central African Republic (CAR), where the DPA and the PSD both assisted in rebuilding CAR's governance system by implementing a PCRD programme under the guidance of the AU- CRD policy framework (ibid.). Elections and human rights

2 *ISS PSC Report* [Pretoria], 18 November 2020. URL: <https://issafrica.org/pscreport/psc-insights/the-importance-of-regional-integration-highlighted-by-covid-19> (accessed: 30 June 2021).

violations trigger conflicts in many African countries, and the DPA has been involved in some PSD observation and fact-finding missions in this regard. The PSD has also been part of DPA election observation missions, but the collaboration has not extended to other thematic governance areas. Between 2016 and 2019, African Union Election Observation Missions were deployed to 50 presidential and parliamentary elections across the region.

By the end of 2020, the AU was prepared for a full-fledged merger between the AGA and APSA. The build-up had begun in an ad hoc manner through joint collaboration at select events. However, the upcoming merger of the DPA and the PSD into one Commission on Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) seems to be hanging at a policy and administrative level. The DPA has been left intact, with the director reporting to the new commissioner for PAPS. The AGA Secretariat remains in the old DPA offices, with the same set-up as before, and continues with its programmes. Unfortunately, the AGA Secretariat lost technical staff in 2019 when funding was cut by the main donors, the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ) and the EU. Reliance on one donor has cost the department dearly as two of its key staff members joined GIZ to pursue other AU-related projects.

8 Citizen Participation in Governance

The AGA acknowledges the role of civil society in governance dialogues and in monitoring the ACDEG and all other related protocols. As AGP members, the media and CSOs have actively participated in AGA dialogues and meetings, playing an important role in promoting the ratification, domestication, implementation, and dissemination of the protocols' substance. Local media in Africa is affected by the declining quality of professionalism due to partisanship leanings in news coverage caused by political influence. The public broadcaster rarely reports on the implementation or publicisation of regional instruments and human rights violations. CSOs facilitate African citizen's access to AU organs; monitoring adherence to the protocols; giving voice to citizen's concerns for injustice and assisting in claiming compensation; and providing technical skills and expert knowledge and information to facilitate the protection of rights and to hold governments accountable. CSOs have organised networks and initiated their own platforms, such as the 7th AU–EU Civil Society Human Rights Seminar (Banjul, The Gambia, 28–29 October 2017), which took place just before the AU–EU Human Rights Dialogue (31 October 2017). The topic for the seminar was 'Tackling Torture in Africa and Europe' (EEAS 2017). Intolerance towards CSOs, especially those working on defending human rights, is increasing in many countries, and where the public space is

sealed off, some social change movements have often resorted to confrontational strategies. This has further destroyed trust between CSOs and national governments, a context that requires measures to improve the overall political culture.

The AU Constitutive Act established two key organs that facilitate the participation of African citizens in the AU: the Pan-African Parliament, whose aim is 'to ensure the full participation of the African peoples in the development and integration of the continent' (OAU 2000, §17), and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), an 'advisory organ composed of different social and professional groups' (ibid., §22). The APRM has been outstanding in the inclusion of CSOs in the governance assessments at all levels of government. The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights has successfully institutionalised the participation of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and a broad array of CSOs in their dialogues (Bekker 2007). The Peace and Security Council (PSC) developed the Livingstone Formula in 2008 (AU PSC 2008) for greater citizen interaction in the promotion of peace, security, and stability in Africa. This gave ECOSOCC an intermediary role between the PSC and civil society. Unfortunately, the formula restricted CSO participation due to the provisions of the AU Constitutive Act, the 2002 *PSC Rules of Procedure* (Rules 21 and 22), and the eligibility requirements of ECOSOCC. The Livingstone Formula was only operationalised in November 2016 in the quest to find inclusive solutions to *Silencing the Guns by 2020*.[3] The AGA managed to overcome such hurdles by making CSOs part of the AGP, and the AGA Secretariat has been routinely supported by CSOs, such as the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD, Durban), the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA, Dakar), and the Institute for Security Studies (Pretoria), the Southern African Trust (Kyalami), and intergovernmental bodies such as IDEA.

9 Gender Dimension of the Governance Realm

Gender and youth participation in governance processes is stressed in all AGA processes, but progress in managing gender diversity has been slow (see Okech, this Yearbook, chapter 13). At the AGP institutional level, many countries struggle to comply with the AUC gender parity requirement. At the country level, efforts have been largely confined to the establishment of gender and

3 *AU Press Release* [Addis Ababa], 10 November 2016. ULR: <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20161110-2> (accessed: 30 June 2021).

youth desks in some government ministries. Broad participation of women and youth remain difficult to achieve in most of the African countries. Likewise, upholding human and women's rights is not part of the political and service culture. The lack of political will is clearly a stumbling block to the efforts to develop gender-inclusive governance systems. The APRM country reviews undertaken thus far have noted the problems surrounding the exclusion of women and the youth in governance and development, but the information has not been acted upon by the other AU organs, such as the ACHPR, the PAP, and the AfCHPR (see AU Commission 2021). Problems identified have been left for the national level even though it has been clear at times that gross human and women's rights violations have taken place and that action needs to be taken at a regional level to stop impunity.

The AGA has addressed gender in the same way AUC institutions have. Gender sensitivity in the AU has been treated according to gender parity, and hence institutional policies have emphasised the inclusion of women. Achieving gender parity has been an uphill struggle, but the Kagame institutional reforms have set a timeframe (by 2025) for realising gender parity across all AU organs. The *Maputo Protocol Scorecard and Index* (MPSI) assesses performance and progress on gender across all AU institutions, and the recent AU Gender Online Reporting Platform provides a one-stop reporting facility for the various and complementary accountability tools including the *Gender Scorecard*, and the *Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa* (SDGEA) reports.

Gender is mainstreamed across all the five AGA clusters, AGP structures, and AGA activities, with a clear emphasis on process-related gender issues such as integrating women's roles across the governance arena. At the national level too, gender is mainstreamed across ministries and departments, but the substantive content of policy implications on gender remains elusive. A gender-responsiveness approach across all policy sectors can address this effectively since the AGA's scope is broad, ranging from trade to criminal justice systems. For example, there is a need to answer questions such as 'What does the the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCTA) need to put in place for women traders?' and, 'What do the criminal justice systems need to cater for women's needs?' Applying these important questions across all sectors makes it possible to move closer to gender equality in terms of the quality of policy outputs. Issues concerning gender parity are left to AGP institutions, including CSOs that have their own gender policies, but even then, in most institutions the gender gap remains vast. The gender policies in most institutions continue to target parity issues but not the substantive issues that equalise the service conduct between genders.

The period 2020 to 2030 has been declared the Decade of African Women's Financial and Economic Inclusion, with emphasis on opening up opportunities for women's entrepreneurship within the ambit of the AfCTA (ibid.). Alongside this financial inclusion, the 2020 *AU Guidelines on a Gender-Responsive Responses to Covid-19* will be operationalised to integrate gender equality and women's agency in decision-making processes in Africa. Gender responsiveness is an important focal point for action across all institutions to effectively address policy gaps and outline substantive implementation plans. The new Youth Fund and the Women's Leadership Fund, both launched in 2020, are set to devote resources to the substantive content of gender responsiveness.

From 19 to 20 November 2020, the AGA Secretariat convened for the first time the Gender Pre-Forum, under the auspices of the AGA Women Engagement Strategy (AGA 2020). This brought together the Office of the Special Envoy on Women Peace and Security and the Women and Gender Development Directorate (WGDD) of the AUC as partners in the AGA pre-events of the then forthcoming 9th High-Level Dialogue on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance in Africa (online, 10–11 December 2020).

10 The Youth

The role of the youth as partners in sustainable development and stabilising Africa is well enunciated in the 2006 *African Youth Charter* (see Okech, this Yearbook, chapter 13). The charter urges member states to facilitate the creation of platforms for youth participation in decision-making at local, national, and regional levels (African Union 2006, §11[2]a). The AGA–Youth Engagement Strategy (AGA–YES) provides a framework for AU policy organs and the RECs to ensure sustainable engagement of youth in democratic governance processes (AU Commission 2018). AGA–YES evolved from the Youth Consultation event during the 2nd Annual High-Level Dialogue on Democracy, Governance and Human Rights (Dakar, Senegal, November 2013). AGA–YES was adopted by the technical and political heads of AGP members at their statutory meetings two years later, in December 2015.

Mainstreaming the youth across AGA work is seen as imperative because the presence of the youth is paramount for effective and relevant policy processes. Youth CSOs have been able to organise networks and set their own agenda on inclusion in governance processes. In 2017, the *AU Demographic Dividend Roadmap* was formulated to operationalise the theme of the year 'Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth' (AU Commission 2017).

A number of regional networks evolved and connected through social media platforms to dialogue on the youth's role in governance in the region. The AU's first special envoy on youth was appointed in November 2018, Aya Chebbi from Tunisia. She was tasked with representing and advocating the voices and interests of African youth across all AU organs. The Office of the Youth Envoy (OYE), the Youth Advisory Council, and youth volunteers and networks have established themselves as a pan-African collaborative mechanism for engagement on governance issues. The AU Youth Volunteers Corps (AU YVC) has translated empowerment and youth activism into action by recruiting, training, and deploying young African professional volunteers for one year across the region. Between 2017 and 2020, 419 females and 326 males had been placed in work positions across the region to gain professional experience. Another initiative is the African Youth Community of Practice on Anti-Corruption (AYCPAC), which emerged as a framework for coordinating youth-led efforts in the fight against corruption in Africa. The 2018 youth regional consultations were thus convened with the support of AGA–YES as well as the AU theme of the year, 'Leveraging Youth Capacities for the Fight Against Corruption in Africa'.

11 AGA Cooperation with International Partners

The AU has different kinds of strategic partnership that all add diverse value. Some partners provide direct grants to the AU, which are then parcelled out to the different organs/divisions, with others providing technical support, but most support is in the form of specific projects. This gives external partners the upper hand as they can cherry-pick what to support according to their domestic priorities (Pharathathle and Vanheukelom 2019). The high number of external partners distributing aid to the AU has overwhelmed its administrative capacity since funder servicing requirements are always high.

The EU's support to the AUC was channelled through the Joint Africa–EU Strategy (JAES) (Myandazi et al. 2018). The partnership pursued strong cooperation for ensuring effective, inclusive, and accountable governance, combating corruption, and recognising the role of civil society, the media, and democratic institutions (European Union n.d.). This support was managed through a direct grant to the AUC and operated under a Joint Programme Agreement (JPA) and Joint Financing Arrangement with Pool Funding Partners and Non-Pool Partners who did not harmonise their financial support but were committed to a coordinated approach (Miyandazi et al. 2018). The JPA utilised a coherent framework through which partners could support DPA activities in elections, governance, and humanitarian affairs. In 2014, the JPA supported the DPA with

€242,338 for the human rights component and €330,826 for AGP operationalisation (ibid.). The JPA was a response to the AUC request for partners to provide predictable funding in a coordinated way.

Since 2012, the German government, through GIZ, has directly supported the implementation of programmes initiated by the AGA Secretariat. Initial GIZ support in the first phase was geared towards improving the institutional development and capacity of the AGP, and the later phase sought to support AGP members through technical aid for implementing the ACDEG at the member state level (GIZ 2021). This was under the GIZ–AGA Africa programme, which focused on supporting coordination and cooperation in the AGA. For this, €3 million was earmarked to support the four AGP organs – the AfCHPR, the DPA, the PAP, and the ACHPR – in the form of technical assistance from 2014 onwards. The new AGA Secretariat was supported from this budget, which also funded the elections programme, with support for capacity-building regarding the implementation of existing instruments. Plans for 2015 included a Human Capacity Development process for joint planning and monitoring of the ACDEG in a bid to reduce the burden on member states concerning the production of numerous reports. GIZ support has applied a systemic approach in strengthening the capacity of AGP members and AU member states to enhance their governance efforts.

Some specific projects like the AU–EU Human Rights Dialogue receive financial support from the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) (EEAS 2012). The Human Rights Dialogue is a long-standing framework for strategic discussion between Africa and the EU on issues related to human rights, democratic principles, and the rule of law in Africa and in Europe.

A rather popular mechanism is the technical support given across AU institutions. For instance, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights funded a legal officer who was assigned to assist the special rapporteur on human rights; the government of Denmark funded another officer to assist the Working Group on Indigenous Populations/Communities in Africa. A Canadian CSO, Rights and Democracy, provided technical support fort the special rapporteur on women's rights with a Canadian assistant who was based in Bamako in 2010 and with another assistant for the period 2011 to 2012 to help with report writing, conduct research for presentations, write press releases, and care for general administration.

Another partnership model of funding is the short-term proposals that are written for donors as specific ad hoc requests by directors or commissioners in AUC departments. These requests are usually for small amounts of funding to support projects, and the AGA has used this model a lot to support regional dialogues and consultative meetings. These AGA events were very often funded

directly by a mix of partners, such as International IDEA, GIZ, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Some of the funding to support governance initiatives is provided by some development partners through other independent agencies, like the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa, which provides electoral assistance and observation through support to the Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit in the DPA.

12 Outlook

The year 2020 marked the end of all instruments of EU–Africa partnership, and the AUC chairperson appointed a high-level representative to lead the renegotiating of a new partnership with the EU based on principles of equality, mutual respect, and shared interests. A new directorate of partnership and resource mobilisation was created, AUDA–NEPAD, to harmonise the two processes that were initially separate. Separating partnerships from resource mobilisation resulted in the duplication of efforts and wastage. The last four years have seen partners increase their funding support in an ad hoc manner, directing their contributions to a wide number of projects, programmes, and pan-African organisations. This has fragmented governance enhancement efforts that the AGA is trying to pull together. For the AU, donor funding will continue coming in fragmented, unknown quantities, with strings attached, thereby worsening the managerial overload and constraining scarce administrative capabilities (see Pharatlhatlhe and Vanheukelom 2019).

Post-Brexit United Kingdom is working independently in fostering new relationships and partnerships. In 2019, the United Kingdom intended to inject up to £30 million of funding into prosperity and security projects across Africa as part of the partnership agreement.[4] This funding will be spread over three years across different institutions and will be used to train peacekeepers in Kenya, assist free and fair elections, and support the next phase of negotiations for the AfCFTA. Although money for the AGA is very often contained within such big amounts given to the AUC, it does not trickle down to the actual activities of the AGA Secretariat. Given the demands placed on donors by Covid-19, future funding trends are likely to follow this British model and become even more targeted and fragmented.

4 *Africanews* [Lyon], 21 February 2019. URL: <https://www.africanews.com/2019/02/21/uk-to-invest-up-to-30m-through-partnership-with-african-union//> (accessed: 30 June 2021).

The AGA is a sprawling institution with many processes, agents, and cross-cutting themes that require financial support. The AGA will struggle to get donors to harmonise their efforts with one another, and the expansiveness of the work means each actor should bring financial support when wanting to undertake collaborative activity. Therefore, all AGP members can achieve more by budgeting for AGA-related activities as defined by the AGA Secretariat in the annual plans. However, the governance assessment responsibility is clearly shifting to the APRM, which has a track record in mobilising funds and implementing programmes, and hence AGA Secretariat work is likely to be carried out more and more by the APRM. Given that future developmental matters in Africa are anchored to the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, financing for development in Africa clearly depends on the ability to mobilise financial resources from within the continent.

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CHAPTER 8

Health

Edefe Ojomo and Habibu Yaya Bappah

1 Introduction

This chapter examines major activities of the African Union (AU) in the health sector, particularly in 2020. The year 2020 proved to be eventful in global public health history, with significant impact on the global economy. It has been recognised for centuries that human capital is necessary for the development and sustenance of a vibrant economy, and this includes a healthy and educated workforce, making health an important economic variable (see UNECA 2004). Fortunately, health has always been an important sector of the AU's programmes and activities, and has been part of the bedrock of continental cooperation and integration throughout its history. The preamble of the 1963 *Charter of the Organisation of African Unity* (OAU) states the desire of all African states to come together and unite in order to improve the welfare and well-being of their peoples. The issue of health is thus, among the prominent factors defining African regionalism. As outlined in Article II of the OAU charter, one of the purposes of establishing the organisation was to 'coordinate and intensify … cooperation and efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa' (OAU 1963, § II[1]b). To this end, member states of the organisation were encouraged to coordinate and harmonise their general policies in different fields, including health, sanitation, and nutrition cooperation (ibid., §II[2]d). Similarly, one of the specific objectives of the 2000 *Constitutive Act of the African Union* is 'the eradication of preventable diseases and the promotion of good health on the continent' (OAU 2000a, §3[n]). Health is therefore an important aspect of the aspiration and agenda of the continental organisation.

In recent times, the importance of health to development has been increasingly recognised, especially considering the health challenges and crises that have befallen countries and regions across the globe. The Covid-19 pandemic, which the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared a public health emergency of international concern in February 2020, shut down the global economy in a way that has continued to devastate communities the world over. While the health effects of the pandemic have not been as devastating as anticipated in Africa, the social, political, and economic effects are quite telling and the region's existing health challenges are compounded by the global

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pandemic, further revealing these important linkages between health and development (see also the interview, this Yearbook, chapter 2).

In Africa, there are several major issues of concern regarding development in the health sector, including the quantity and quality of health systems, endemic diseases, nutrition deficiencies, and health-related challenges in humanitarian contexts. For instance, the Ebola epidemic of 2014, which was also declared a public health emergency of international concern, revealed critical fractures in the health systems of the countries most affected by the epidemic and exposed their vulnerabilities (see Abdullah and Rashid 2017; Ojomo 2017). Similarly, global health indicators have consistently put the continent among the low-performing regions when measuring important health benchmarks.[1] Diseases like malaria, tuberculosis (TB), and HIV/Aids have placed a heavy burden on the health systems of African countries for decades and have led to significant fatalities in countries across the region. The continent has the lowest average in life expectancy, relative to the global average and to the record of other regions, and it has high mortality rates for infants and adults. These circumstances reveal a health sector facing widespread challenges that impact human productivity and limit the enjoyment of life. Thus, the AU has an important role to play in promoting the individual and collective development of the health sector of member states.

To give effect to the AU agenda on health, the AU Commission (AUC) is endowed with different structures. At the AUC, there are two divisions responsible for health both of which are located within the AUC's Department of Social Affairs. These are (1) the Health and Humanitarian Affairs Division – which responds to vital generic health issues related to health policy and delivery systems, nutrition, and other related public health issues and challenges that require a concerted and coordinated approach at a continental level – and (2) the Health Systems, Diseases and Nutrition Division – which plays a leading role in policy development, advocacy, coordination, monitoring, and evaluation on AIDS, TB, and malaria, as well as other infectious diseases.

Moreover, in 2016 the 26th AU Assembly (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 30–31 January 2016) established the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), which was officially launched in January 2017 (AU Assembly 2016). As a specialised technical institution of the AU, it was established

1 Most of the data used in this paper comes from WHO records, which rely on the regional data coming from the WHO Regional Office for Africa (WHO ROA). This does not cover the entire membership of the African Union or all states within the continent, but is limited to 47 countries, thus excluding Djibouti, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Somalia, Sudan, and Tunisia from the records of the ROA.

'to support the public health initiatives of Member States and strengthen the capacity of their public health institutions to detect, prevent, control and respond quickly and effectively to disease threats' (Africa CDC 2021a). The mandate of Africa CDC extends to supporting AU member states to address 'inadequacies in their public health infrastructure, human resource capacity, disease surveillance, laboratory diagnostics, and preparedness and response to health emergencies and disasters' (ibid.).

Furthermore, in 2019 the treaty for the establishment of the African Medicines Agency (AMA) was adopted by the 32nd AU Assembly (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 10–11 February 2019) (AU Assembly 2019). The AMA is described as 'the second continental health agency after the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), that will enhance the capacity of States Parties and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to regulate medical products in order to improve access to quality, safe and efficacious medical products on the continent' (AUC AMA). The AMA is also expected to promote the harmonisation of standards and coordination of efforts within and among recognised RECs and the Regional Health Organisations (RHOs).

As the AU continues to build its policy and institutional capacity, the year 2020 found it oscillating between attending to long-standing health challenges and confronting the Covid-19 pandemic. This chapter examines how the AU has been able to balance its activities by ensuring that the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic did not occur at the expense of other critical health programmes.

1.1 *Facts and Figures about Health in Africa*

The major areas of focus of the AU in health matters are malaria, HIV/AIDS, TB, and other infectious diseases, as well as nutrition and the strengthening of health systems. This is rightly so in view of the stark statistics on these issues. The disproportionate global share of Africa in the disease burden, mortalities, and impact on children and communities justifies the placement of high priority by the AU on programmes and activities aimed at strengthening the health systems in member states.

According to the latest World Malaria Report (WHO 2020) released on 30 November 2020, there were approximately one million fewer malaria cases in 2019 (229 million) than in 2018 (228 million) and about 2,000 fewer deaths in 2019 (approximately 409,000) than in 2018 (approximately 411,000). In 2019, children under five years of age accounted for 67 per cent of global malaria deaths, making them the most vulnerable group affected by the disease. The report further records that Africa continues to carry a disproportionately high share of the global malaria burden, with 94 per cent of all malaria cases and deaths in 2019 coming from Africa. In 2019, the following six African countries

accounted for approximately half of all malaria deaths worldwide: Nigeria (23%), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (11%), Tanzania (5%), Burkina Faso, Mozambique, and Niger (4% each).

Similarly, according to the WHO, HIV continues to be a major global public health issue and has claimed more than 35 million lives so far (WHO RO Africa 2021). In 2018, some 470,000 people died from HIV-related causes, approximately 37.9 million people were living with HIV, and 1.7 million people became newly infected globally. Of these figures, Africa was the most affected region, with 25.7 million people in Africa living with HIV in 2018. The African region also accounts for almost two-thirds of the global total of new HIV infections, and in 2018, about 1.1 million people were infected with HIV in the region.

According to Africa CDC (2021b), in 2016, approximately one-quarter of the 10.4 million people who fell ill with TB were from Africa, and more than a quarter of the 1.7 million people who died from TB globally were from Africa. Nevertheless, the WHO Regional Office for Africa (ROA) reports that there was a yearly decline in TB incidence on the continent from 2011 to 2014, which was expected to continue in subsequent years, while treatment success rate was high and increasing and mortality rate low and declining (WHO ROA 2018, 60, 62).

In terms of nutrition, the 2020 *Global Nutrition Report* shows that among children under 5 years of age in Africa, the malnutrition burden is noteworthy, although the Africa averages are lower than global averages in some instances. For example, while the regional average prevalence of overweight (4.7%) and wasting (6.4%) is lower than the global average (5.6% and 6.9%, respectively), the regional prevalence of stunting (29.1%) is higher than the global average (21.3%). Among adults in the region, 16.9 per cent of the population live with diabetes while 25.9 per cent are obese.

Available literature on health systems in Africa has shown that there is a gap in the capacity of the health systems to confront these challenges. In particular, it also shows persistent inequities in access to quality and affordable health care between countries and within countries (WHO 2019, 21). The Covid-19 pandemic exposed the grim reality of basic hygiene inequalities in Africa, with data from the WHO/the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) revealing that hundreds of millions of Africans lacked access to basic hygiene facilities for handwashing, which is critical for preventing the spread of the virus (Okoi and Bwawab 2020).

These statistics and facts show that Africa has a complex health crisis that has to be addressed in order to have a healthy society that can supply productive labour and build a vibrant market for economic growth while reducing

the social and financial burden on governments to invest in the welfare and development of the people. It is no wonder that the founding fathers of the OAU and the AU reserved a special place for health in the African integration and development agenda. In the next section, we examine some of the institutional and policy responses to health by the AU.

2 AU Response to Health Challenges

The AU has over the years developed broad policy frameworks for defining its health goals and generating strategies for their achievement. It has also adopted specific programmes targeted at addressing immediate health challenges, including efforts to tackle some of the most pressing health challenges in the region, such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, and TB. In this section, we discuss the comprehensive health agenda of the AU defined in the *Africa Health Strategy*, then we look at some of the specific policies and programmes developed to address particular health challenges over the past few decades.

2.1 *Efforts at Health Integration: Towards a Pan-African Health Project*

The AU Executive Council is empowered to coordinate and take decisions on policies related to '[e]ducation, culture, health and human resources development', among other things (OAU 2000a, §13[1]h). As noted above, there are also departments within the AUC that are charged with functions that cover health matters (ibid., §14[1]f). These institutions are charged with a general task that flows from the statutory justification for health cooperation among African states, demonstrating the recognition of health as an important tool for enhancing social and economic development and integration on the continent.

2.1.1 Africa Health Strategy (2007–2015)

As part of its efforts towards strengthening health cooperation and development, the AU, through the AU Executive Council, adopted a health strategy in June 2007 based on the instrument adopted by the 3rd Session of the AU Conference of Ministers of Health (CAMH) (Johannesburg, South Africa, 9–13 April 2007), with the theme 'Strengthening of Health Systems for Equity and Development in Africa' (AU Council 2007). The strategy emphasised the role of the AU, member states and the RECs in the 'strengthening of health systems with the goal of reducing disease burden through improved resources, systems, policies and management' (CAMH 2007a, 2). This was an attempt to articulate the continent's health challenges in one instrument and propose broad plans

towards effective health leadership and governance on the continent in order to build strong health systems and tackle the identified challenges.

The strategy identified the following challenges affecting the development of health sectors in member states and across the region (CAMH 2007a, 4–5):

a. Insufficient sustainable financial resources and the efficient allocation and use thereof;
b. Lack of social protection for the vulnerable groups especially those in catastrophic situations;
c. A shortage of appropriately trained and motivated health workers;
d. Poor commodity security and supply systems and unfair trade practices favouring the rich countries;
e. Weak health systems operations;
f. Marginalisation of African Traditional Medicine in national health systems;
g. Inadequate community involvement and empowerment;
h. Capacity of the private sector, including NGOs [non-governmental organisations] is not fully mobilised;
i. Paucity and inadequate use of available evidence and information to guide action including use of ICT [information and communications technology];
j. Effective co-ordination with other sectors and harmony with partners not yet attained;
k. Lack of optimal intersectoral action and coordination;
l. Restrictive and disruptive global policies (e.g. structural adjustment programmes and unfair terms of trade), conditionalities and actions that adversely impact on Africa's health systems; and
m. Gaps in governance and effective leadership of the health sector.

In addition to this, the strategy identifies central guiding principles to govern the implementation of the strategy, including the recognition of health as a human right, health as a productive sector, and the requirement for cross-border cooperation in the management of diseases, among others. The role of regional and subregional institutions in advancing the health agenda is core to the Africa Health Strategy. Consequently, the AU instructs the RECs and member states to build their capacity for implementation of the strategy. This reveals the importance of subregional programmes – through the RECs – for the implementation of the continental strategy.

2.1.2 Africa Health Strategy (2016–2030)

In 2015, the 1st Meeting of the AU Specialised Technical Committee on Health, Population and Drug Control (STC-HPDC) (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 13–20 April

2015) recommended a revised Africa Health Strategy be developed for the period 2016–2030 based on an assessment of the 2007 strategy, relevant AU health policy instruments, and the integration of research and innovation for health. Consequently, the *African Health Strategy* (*2016–2030*), similarly to the preceding strategy,

> seeks to provide strategic direction to Africa's efforts in creating better performing health sectors, recognizes existing continental commitments and addresses key challenges to reducing the continent's burden of disease, while also drawing on lessons learned and existing opportunities. (AUC DSA 2016, 8)

The strategy relies on the following policy frameworks to identify and advance approaches for the implementation of health programmes for development (AUC DSA 2016, 13):
- *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*
- Sustainable Development Goals
- 2015 *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* on the 3rd High-Level Conference on Financing for Development
- *Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescent Health* (2016–2030)
- *AU Roadmap*
- 2016 *Catalytic Framework to end AIDS, TB and eliminate Malaria by 2030*
- 2006 *Continental Policy Framework for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights* and its *Maputo Plan of Action* (2016–2030)
- 2007 *Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan for Africa*
- *African Regional Nutrition Strategy* (2015–2025) and
- *AU Decade on Traditional Medicines* (2001–2010).

Relying on the same guiding principles adopted under the 2007 strategy, the 2016 strategy identifies the following two strategic objectives: achieving universal health coverage by 2030; and reducing morbidity and ending preventable mortality from communicable and non-communicable diseases and other health conditions. To achieve these objectives, the strategy identifies thirteen strategic approaches, including, among others, surveillance, emergency preparedness and response; expanding social protection; health financing; health research and innovation; leadership and good governance; and multi-country collaboration. As with the 2007 strategy, the 2016 strategy particularly recognises the importance of the RECs in facilitating its implementation, noting that the RECs play a special role in providing technical assistance to member states; advocating increased resources; harmonising standards and their implementation; monitoring and reporting progress; and identifying and sharing best

practices (AUC DSA 2016, 32). This approach shows that the RECs play a crucial role in the construction and implementation of national strategies, as well as the continental one.

The RECs, like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), have adopted comprehensive legal and institutional mechanisms for health cooperation within their spheres of operation. The RECs act as a forum for closer cooperation among states with tighter geographical and historical ties, and this cooperation feeds into the broader cooperation at the continental level.

In the case of ECOWAS, the 1975 treaty establishing the community makes no mention of health, neither as a policy focus nor as a broad objective. There is a mention of cooperation in social and cultural matters but there is no specific mention of health (ECOWAS 1975, §60[2]). In the 1993 *Revised Treaty of ECOWAS*, health is recognised as an important objective of the integration project. Among the aims and objectives of the community is 'the harmonization and coordination of national policies and the promotion of integration programmes, projects and activities, particularly in … health' (ECOWAS 1993, §3); member states also undertake efforts to 'encourage and strengthen cooperation among themselves in health matters' (ibid., §61). Health is also recognised as an important objective of cooperation in science and technology (ibid., §27[1]b), while trade restrictions are permitted for the protection of human health, among other things (ibid., §41[3]c). In addition to these statutory endorsements of health cooperation, the West African Health Organisation (WAHO) was established on 9 July 1987 for the purpose of promoting the attainment of the highest standards of health in member states (WAHO 2021). WAHO acts a platform for cooperation among ECOWAS member states on all health matters. It is headquartered in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso.

While the WAHO protocol presents a broad framework for health cooperation in all relevant matters, the 1999 *Protocol on Health* in SADC provides both general and specific provisions for health cooperation, identifying areas such as mental health, trauma, environmental health, reproductive health, and occupational health, among others. The SADC protocol also places a particular focus on combatting HIV/AIDS/ sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) through regional policies and cooperation (SADC 1999, §9).

The AU's Africa Health Strategy provides the most comprehensive articulation of a regional plan on health, including the relevant policy frameworks, vision, and mission for health development in the region; the objectives and operational approaches; and the institutional components and functions. Although the AU does not have a specialised health agency like the WHO or WAHO, its organisational structure provides for a health component in its

objectives and its institutions, such as the AU Executive Council, the AU CAMH, the AUC, and the relevant departments within the AUC, so that it offers a platform for achieving global, regional, and national health goals.

2.1.3 Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want

On 25 May 2013, 50 years after the establishment of the OAU, African leaders adopted the *50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration* to celebrate past successes of integration and commit to greater efforts towards achieving their sustained goals. Agenda 2063 represents a 'shared framework for inclusive growth and sustainable development for Africa' that is meant 'to translate the ideals [of the Solemn Declaration] into concrete objectives, milestones, goals, targets and actions/measures' (AUC 2021). The agenda lies at the core of all development initiatives on the continent, and the RECs are expected to adopt it and apply it to the implementation of their development programmes. Aspiration 1 of the agenda is a 'prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development', and this covers the promotion of health and social development on the continent. As noted above, the agenda is one of the key instruments that offer the underlying policy guidance for the Africa Health Strategy (2016–2030).

2.2 *Regional Responses to Critical Health Challenges*

In addition to the above-mentioned general initiatives that underlie the health policies and programmes of the AU, there have been specific programmes aimed at targeting particular health challenges, especially diseases that are endemic to the region, like malaria, or diseases with a high prevalence like HIV/AIDS. These specific policies and programmes have formed the core of the regional health initiative that drives subregional and national health plans and their implementation as well as the focus of international development partnership in health. Below are some of the most prominent health policies and programmes that have shaped the regional landscape in this regard.

2.2.1 1997 Harare Declaration on Malaria Prevention and Control in the Context of African Economic Recovery and Development

Noting that more than 4,200 lives and $5 million were lost daily to malaria, member states at the 33rd OAU Assembly (Harare, Zimbabwe, 2–4 June 1997) declared their commitment to make malaria eradication a priority and commit to partnerships at all levels and across sectors for the purpose of ending malaria on the continent (OAU 1997). The Harare Declaration contained a proposed plan of action with the following eight priority areas: health systems; disease management; provision of anti-malarial drugs; disease prevention; disease surveillance and epidemic detection and control; sustainable control; human resources development; and interdisciplinary operational research.

2.2.2 2000 Abuja Declaration on Roll Back Malaria in Africa

In response to the WHO's Roll Back Malaria initiative, introduced in 1998, an Extraordinary Summit of the OAU Assembly (Abuja, Nigeria, 24–25 April 2000) adopted the Abuja Declaration to show their commitment to the initiative and pledge their support to its implementation by making specific undertakings to that effect (see OAU 2000b). The declaration noted that malaria was the cause of more than a million deaths and more than $12 billion was lost to malaria in the region annually, with about 90 per cent of malaria cases happening in sub-Saharan Africa. The declaration contains a pledge to halve malaria mortality by 2010 and make correct, affordable, and appropriate treatment available to 60 per cent of the population, among other things. Member states and development partners are also called upon to commit specific resources to the implementation of the Initiative. The declaration also makes 25 April World Malaria Day.

2.2.3 2000 Lomé Declaration on HIV/Aids in Africa

This declaration was adopted in July 2000 at the 36th Ordinary Session of the OAU Assembly (Lomé, Togo, 10–12 July 2000), which noted, among other things, their grave concern over 'the widespread incidence of HIV/AIDS and the ravages caused by other pandemics such as malaria, which seriously undermine Africa's development efforts' (OAU 2000d, preamble). The accompanying Lomé Declaration (OAU 2000d) presents a more detailed elaboration of the plan of African leaders to intensify the fight against HIV/AIDS, including their endorsement of several instruments for that purpose: the *Algiers Common Position and Plan of Action on Strategies to support HIV/AIDS Orphans, Vulnerable Children and Children Infected by HIV/AIDS* adopted by the OAU Labour and Social Affairs Commission; the *Algiers Appeal by the OAU Labour and Social Affairs Commission for the Intensification of the Fight against AIDS in Africa*; the *Ouagadougou Commitment for Action for the Implementation of the Declarations, Decisions and Recommendations of the Heads of State and Government of the OAU* aimed at strengthening HIV/AIDS control in Africa; and the *Framework of the International Partnership on AIDS in Africa* in order to intensify the health sector response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

AIDS Watch Africa (AWA) is an advocacy platform of the AU created at the Abuja Special Summit (Abuja, Nigeria, 24–27 April 2001) (OAU 2001a, 2001b), in line with the perspectives promoted in the Lomé Declaration and other related regional and global strategies, including the Africa Health Strategy and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Its main objective is to 'lead advocacy, resource mobilization and accountability efforts to advance a robust African response to end AIDS, TB and malaria by 2030' (AIDS Watch Africa 2021). Its governance structure comprises the AWA Heads of State and Government

Action Committee, the AWA Consultative Experts Meeting, and the AWA Secretariat. The AWA Secretariat is located in the AUC's Department of Social Affairs. The OAU Assembly committed to allocating 15 per cent of total government expenditure to health expenditure, among other things.

2.2.4 2006 Continental Policy Framework for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

This continental policy framework was adopted by the 2nd Session of the AU CAMH (Gaborone, Botswana, 10–14 October 2005), and it was subsequently endorsed by the 8th Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council (Khartoum, Sudan, 16–21 January 2006) (see AUC 2006). It seeks to prioritise sexual and reproductive health and to improve access to services and financing for health challenges. The framework formed the basis for the subsequent plan for its implementation, the *Maputo Plan of Action for the Operationalisation of the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Continental Policy Framework* (2016–2030), which was adopted during a Special Session of the AU CAMH (Maputo, Mozambique, 18–22 September 2006) (CAMH 2006). The plan is 'a short-term plan for the period up to 2010 built on nine action areas: Integration of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services into PHC, repositioning family planning, developing and promoting youth-friendly services, unsafe abortion, quality safe motherhood, resource mobilization, commodity security and monitoring and evaluation' (ibid., 2).

2.2.5 2006 Abuja Call for Accelerated Action towards Universal Access to HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Services in Africa

This is a plan of action adopted by the AU Assembly to intensify action by governments and their partners in the fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria, and TB in Africa (AU Assembly 2006). The call stipulates particular action points to be taken through engaged partnership between states, the RECs, civil society, the private sector, and international development partners and sets timelines for monitoring and implementation. In 2010, a five-year review of the call was undertaken, leading to the extension of the call to 2015, when it was again extended to 2030.

2.2.6 2007 Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan for Africa

This plan was developed by the AUC within the framework of the *New Partnership for Africa's Development* (NEPAD), pursuant to instructions from the AU Assembly and the AU CAMH in 2005. It was adopted in 2007, with the main objective to promote the local manufacturing of drugs in Africa (CAMH 2007b). To this end, it highlights the technical and political challenges exacerbating

efficient pharmaceutical production in the continent and proposes strategies and measures for tackling the challenges and promoting greater drug production. In 2012, an accompanying business plan developed by the AUC in collaboration with UN Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), was adopted to further the implementation of the plan.

2.2.7 2013 Abuja Declaration of the Special Summit of African Union on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

At a special summit themed 'Ownership, Accountability and Sustainability of HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis (TB) and Malaria Response in Africa: Past, Present and the Future', the AU Assembly adopted a declaration on HIV/AIDS, TB, and malaria. The declaration was themed 'Abuja Actions Toward the Elimination of HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria by 2030' (AU Assembly 2013). The declaration set out specific proposals for tackling the health issues identified and called on national authorities and the RECs to adopt and implement strategies towards implementation while also setting up a monitoring timeline for its proposals.

2.2.8 Abuja +12: Shaping the Future of Health in Africa

This is a set of commitments by African leaders to continue more fervently to tackle the health challenges in the region, particularly to address the scourge of HIV/AIDS, TB, and malaria (UNAIDS 2013). It provides an overview of the progress made and the persistent challenges encountered since the adoption and implementation of the Abuja Declaration. The recommendations put forward are:

- Unite leadership for a healthy Africa
- Generate innovative financing solutions
- Make smart investments for greater health returns
- Strengthen Africa's human health resources
- Leave no one behind.

2.2.9 African Union Support to Ebola Outbreak in West Africa (ASEOWA)

Shortly after the Ebola outbreak in West Africa in 2014, AU leaders, under the auspices of the Peace and Security Council, adopted a communiqué to provide much-needed support to the countries affected by the outbreak (AU PSC 2014). The decision endorsed the deployment of an AU-led military and civilian humanitarian mission, with the first deployment arriving in Liberia on 15 September 2014, less than a month after the establishment of ASEOWA on 20 August 2014. By November, ASEOWA teams had been deployed to Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, as the AU continued to engage citizens across the

continent through communications campaigns. The ASEOWA mission showed how regional health services could be deployed to address humanitarian crises and emergency situations across the continent.

2.2.10 2016 Catalytic Framework to end AIDS, TB and eliminate Malaria by 2030

In 2016, African leaders endorsed the framework, which was adopted by African ministers of health during the Working Group of the Specialised Technical Committee on Health, Population and Drug Control (African Union 2016, 4). The main aim of the framework is to 'intensify the implementation of the Abuja +12 commitments by building Africa-wide consensus on the key strategic actions within the context of the existing targets and milestones' (ibid., 8).

2.2.11 African Regional Nutrition Strategy (2015–2025)

The regional nutrition strategy is a multi-year blueprint of ideas and programmes for promoting nutrition and food security in Africa (African Union 2015). The first strategy was presented by the OAU and adopted by the International Conference on Nutrition (Rome, Italy, 5–11 December 1992). The 1993–2003 strategy was revised by a 2005–2015 strategy. The current strategy is the 2015–2025 instrument, which highlights the challenges of malnutrition on the continent and proposes a clear institutional path towards the implementation of existing plans and programmes. The 2015–2025 strategy situates 'the AUC as an implementing institution focusing on promoting the execution of existing policies and frameworks' (ibid., 5). It presents the following clear targets (ibid., 13):

- 40 per cent reduction of the number of African children under 5 years who are stunted by 2025
- 50 per cent reduction of anemia in women of child-bearing age in Africa by 2025
- 30 per cent reduction of low birth weight in Africa by 2025
- no increase of overweight in African children under 5 years of age by 2025
- increase exclusive breast-feeding rates during the first six months in Africa to at least 50 per cent by 2025 and
- reduce and maintain childhood wasting in Africa to less than 5 per cent by 2025.

3 AU Health Activities in 2020: The Covid-19 Response

The major health issue that dominated the attention of the AU in 2020 was the Covid-19 response (see the interview, this Yearbook, chapter 2). While the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in a global crisis of multiple dimensions,

the effect on African countries has been somewhat unexpected, to say the least. First of all, the expectations for the effects of such a devastating health crisis on a region with a limited capacity were grim, and the response of public and private actors was not expected to fill the huge capacity gap in the regional health sector. However, the region has suffered fewer Covid-19 fatalities than most other regions. Secondly, the not-too-distant past experience of the Ebola epidemic had revealed deep crevices in the health systems of some African countries, and there had been desperate efforts to respond to the manifest challenges; these efforts – and perhaps the fear of an apocalyptic aftermath – led to improved measures and responses to the Covid-19 pandemic. Finally, the pandemic has renewed the focus on health as an important determinant of development and stability, leading African leaders to foster greater cooperation in health indicators and interventions, first with a focus on Covid-19 but without neglecting other long-standing health challenges, as described above.

As noted above, the Covid-19 pandemic dominated the global health landscape in 2020, and in Africa, the pandemic took centre stage. Although there were other health initiatives, particularly those based on the existing strategies and programmes, its effect on other sectors also impacted other health concerns and plans given the critical impact of the pandemic. For instance, the AUC's Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture produced a *White Paper on the COVID-19 Crisis and the Seed Sector in Africa: Impact, Options for Actions and Recommendations* (AUC DREA 2020). This revealed the impact of the pandemic on agricultural activities, which led to concerns about food and nutrition security on the continent. Some of the identified impacts include increased transaction costs; delays in distribution; reduced imports and exports; reduction in availability of quality seeds; delays in service delivery; and limited legislative and regulatory framework (ibid., 3–5). The white paper contains recommendations for governments to prioritise agricultural production, being essential to the health conditions and challenges created or worsened by the pandemic.

While the current focus on health for the past year has been on fighting the global pandemic, the role of cooperation in strengthening health systems and tackling health crises is not new, and the AU made available an important collective platform for African states to tackle the pandemic. The AU's response was primarily driven by Africa CDC, which developed the following six initiatives with regard to the regional Covid-19 response: the 2020 *Africa Joint Continental Strategy for COVID-19 Outbreak*; Africa Task Force for Coronavirus (AFTCOR); Partnership to Accelerate COVID-19 Testing in Africa (PACT); Africa Medical Supplies Platform (AFSP); Consortium for COVID-19 Clinical Vaccine Trials (CONCVACT); and Africa against COVID-19: Saving Lives, Economies

and Livelihoods. Each of these projects covered an important aspect of the response plan, including testing, treatment, and medicine; policy-building and implementation; and social impacts of the pandemic. This comprehensive approach provided various support mechanisms for states and the RECs to confront the pandemic.

Below are some of the additional programmes, activities and reports issued by the AU in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. On 13 April 2020, the AU Executive Council requested that the AUC chairperson establish a Covid-19 response fund 'with the objective to fight the socio, economic and humanitarian aspects arising from COVID-19 and to further boost the capacity of Africa CDC' (AU Council 2020, §6). On 24–25 June 2020, the AUC and Africa CDC held a conference on 'Africa's Leadership in Covid-19 Vaccine Development and Access', involving 'African leaders, pharmaceutical industry experts, and partners to discuss a roadmap for the development of safe, efficacious, affordable, equitable and accessible COVID-19 vaccine in Africa, with the involvement of Africans' (Africa CDC 2020). And in November 2020, Africa CDC published a Q&A sheet on the Covid-19 vaccine to provide basic information drawn from common speculations and frequently asked questions about the Covid-19 vaccine (Africa CDC 2020b). Furthermore, Africa CDC, in collaboration with the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) held a conference on 'Framework for Fair, Equitable and Timely Allocation of Covid-19 Vaccines in Africa' (December 2020), where leading public and private sector personalities – including the UN under-secretary-general and executive secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa, the president of the Africa Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank), and the director-general of WAHO – discussed strategies for making vaccines available and accessible in Africa. The regional response to the pandemic by the AU primarily through Africa CDC displays a multifaceted engagement with various stakeholders.

4 The AU and Health: An Appraisal

The African Union has been active for decades in developing health policy and strategy to guide national and regional health programmes and activities. The OAU, prioritised health as an important ingredient for development, and the AU pursued this approach to integration and development by sustaining and further developing some of the OAU programmes while also devising new programmes to address health challenges. There has been an aggressive regional approach to addressing the most pressing health challenges on the continent, including endemic diseases such as HIV/AIDS, TB, and malaria;

malnutrition; availability of medicine; and epidemiological surveillance and response. The AU works with various partners and stakeholders to ensure that its programmes are accepted and implemented in member states at various levels. Its strategies incorporate the roles of local stakeholders, civil society, national authorities, the RECs, and global partners, including intergovernmental organisations like the WHO and international NGOs like the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Also fundamental to the regional health agenda is the recognition of health as a component of a comprehensive integration and development agenda, pushing the AU to adopt a multi-sectoral approach to health policy and intervention. In 2020, the AU, primarily through Africa CDC, focused on devising a regional response to the global pandemic. This included political decision-making, stakeholder engagements, informative publications, and various initiatives to provide guidance and assistance to citizens and communities across the continent.

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CHAPTER 9

Infrastructure

Tim Zajontz

1 Background

Pan-African cooperation in the development and management of key infrastructure has long been considered pivotal for economic integration and autocentric economic development in Africa. In 1965, Ghanaian president Kwame Nkrumah claimed that

> [t]ransport and communications are also sectors where unified planning is needed. Roads, railways, waterways, airlines must be made to serve Africa's needs, not the requirements of foreign interests. (Nkrumah 1965, 30)

Yet, ideological and political divides within the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), alongside post-independence development strategies that first and foremost aimed at nation-building, had long curtailed joint efforts in improving the continent's infrastructure. It was arguably not until 2001 that infrastructure development in the sectors of energy, transport, information and communication technologies (ICT), as well as transboundary water resources was consolidated as a distinct policy field at the continental level. In the *New Partnership for Economic Development* (NEPAD), African Heads of State and Government acknowledged that

> unless the issue of infrastructure development is addressed on a planned basis – that is, linked to regional integrated development – the renewal process of the continent will not take off. (African Union 2001, §194)

The African Union (AU) has since identified cross-border and regional infrastructure projects as the key to facilitating continental integration and social and economic development. This prioritisation has been in line with the return of infrastructure

> on mainstream development agendas, with Western donors and international development banks returning to previous development strategies

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> after decades of disregarding infrastructure investments. (Wethal 2019, 473–474; see also Nugent 2018)

Debates within the AU and African Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have been consistently characterised by expectations that the improvement of economic infrastructure will boost intra- and interregional trade on the continent, spur economic growth, and promote the continent's integration into the global economy (Ncube et al. 2017). Indeed, the African Development Bank (AfDB) acknowledges that the relationship between infrastructure and economic growth is, even among mainstream economists, controversial and, ultimately, 'heterogeneous and heavily dependent' on other, not least political, contextual factors (AfDB 2018, 68). Nonetheless, African decision-makers, AU officials and technocrats, external development partners (such as the European Union (EU) and the People's Republic of China), as well as development banks and foreign investors, commonly agree that infrastructure deficits constitute a negative locational factor that undermines Africa's competitiveness and, hence, inhibits the unlocking of the continent's economic potential (see, for instance, Schwab 2019, 13). Poor economic infrastructure is notably a main driver of logistics costs, driving up both prices for consumer goods and overall costs for doing business on the continent (AfDB 2018, 66; see Arvis et al. 2018). Overall, it is assumed that 'the economic benefits that Africa could draw from improved infrastructure are higher than those for other regions' (AfDB 2018, 66).

A long-term legacy of colonial spatial planning and exploitation, Africa's infrastructure still trails behind by global comparison. In 2013, Africa had a density of paved roads of 2 km per 100 km^2, compared to Latin America (3 km), Asia (25 km), and Europe (122 km) (AfDB 2018, 76). According to World Bank statistics, only 47.7 per cent of people in sub-Saharan Africa had access to electricity in 2018, compared to 96.5 per cent of the population in the Middle East and North Africa, 98 per cent in East Asia and the Pacific, 98.3 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 100 per cent in both Europe and North America (World Bank [2021]). Equally, access to safely managed drinking water and sanitation services remains severely restricted in many parts of Africa (see UNICEF and WHO 2019, 7–8). Africa's ICT infrastructure also lags behind: About 300 million Africans live more than 50 kilometres away from a fibre or cable broadband (OECD and ACET 2020, 12).

Unsurprisingly, infrastructure features very prominently in the AU's *Agenda 2063*. '[B]ased on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance', the AU aspires to '[h]ave world class, integrative infrastructure that criss-crosses the continent' by 2063 (African Union 2015, §20). Agenda 2063 emphasises the role of rail, road, sea, and air transport as well as gas and

oil pipelines, water networks, and ICT broadband cables as 'catalyst[s]' for continent-wide, cross-sectoral economic development. Explicit reference is made to the Pan-African High Speed Train Network, transcontinental transport corridors, and the expansion of sustainable energy as well as ICT infrastructure (ibid., §§25, 72[g]). Infrastructure upgrades, together with trade facilitation measures, are expected to increase intra-African trade from 12 per cent (where it stood in 2013) to 50 per cent by 2045 (ibid., §26).

The coming into force of the *African Continental Free Trade Agreement* (AfCFTA) in 2019 (see Döring and Engel, this Yearbook, chapter 11) has added urgency to coordinated continental and (inter)regional infrastructure planning and development. As a recent report puts it, the AfCFTA

> will foster the transformation of African economic geography with new cross-border linkages within the continent and to the global economy. However, lack of quality infrastructure is a binding constraint on the development of regional value chains. (OECD and ACET 2020, 12)

Inversely, for the AfCFTA to yield social and economic benefits for Africans, the continent needs social, transport, energy, and digital infrastructures that not only foster global connectivity but also facilitate intraregional trade and the movement of people, goods, and services across Africa. Accordingly, in his acceptance speech during the 33rd AU Assembly (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 9–10 February 2020), the then incoming AU chair, South Africa's president Cyril Ramaphosa, emphasised that

> [t]he success of the AfCTFA depends on [i]nfrastructure development. We must all drive the implementation of the Presidential Infrastructure Champion Initiative, so that priority and high-impact projects act as catalysts for the AfCFTA. (African Union 2020a)

The emergence of infrastructure as a distinct policy field at the AU level has been accompanied by several institutional reforms to promote coordination among continental, regional, and national actors and programmes.

2 The Institutional Landscape

In the first decades following the establishment of the AU, infrastructure policy and programmes were rather loosely coordinated among relevant departments within the AU Commission (AUC), NEPAD's Planning and Coordinating

Agency, and the specialised technical committees (STCs), which were carried over from the OAU's institutional structure by means of Article 14 of the *AU Constitutive Act* (OAU 2000, §14 [1–3]). STCs are composed of the responsible ministers and high officials from the member states and provide input to the AU Executive Council in their respective policy realms. In 2009, the AU Assembly decided to increase the number of STCs and adjust their sectoral responsibilities to match the AU's broadened integration agenda (AU Assembly 2009). Notwithstanding, most STCs were neither fully operational nor sufficiently staffed until the second half of the 2010s. There are two STCs that have been particularly concerned with infrastructure-related matters: the STC on Transport, Intercontinental and Interregional Infrastructures, Energy and Tourism (STC-TIIIET)[1] and the STC on Communication and Information Communications Technology (STC-ICT) (AU Commission 2014, 24).

In 2012, the continental institutional landscape in regard to infrastructure underwent major reform. To streamline cooperation within the infrastructure sector among AU institutions, the RECs, member states, and other stakeholders, the 18th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 29–30 January 2012) adopted the *Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa* (PIDA) as well as the *Institutional Architecture for Infrastructure Development in Africa* (IAIDA) (AU Assembly 2012). PIDA brings together all key players that are involved in infrastructure development at the continental level, notably the AUC; the AU Development Agency, which emerged from NEPAD (hence its composite acronym AUDA–NEPAD); the AfDB; and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

The IAIDA, in turn, has a dual structure comprising decision-making and implementing bodies. Within the former, the AUC's Department of Infrastructure and Energy oversees infrastructure policies and prepares decision-making information on infrastructure-related matters for the Council for Infrastructure Development (CID). The AUC is advised by the Infrastructure Advisory Group, which convenes meetings with infrastructure experts and high-level officials from relevant bodies at least biannually. The CID is composed of top officials from the AUC, the RECs, the AfDB, and UNECA and provides programmatic guidelines for the infrastructure sector, arbitrates and approves programmes and harmonisation measures in the sector, and advises the STCs and the AU Executive Council, which in turn is answerable to the AU Assembly of Heads

1 It took until March 2017 that the STC-TIIIET convened for its first ordinary meeting in Lomé, Togo. At this occasion it established three sub-committees on energy, on transport and on tourism.

of State and Government. At the centre of the implementation structure is AUDA–NEPAD, which coordinates the implementation of projects with key stakeholders, such as the RECs, the AfDB, UNECA, as well as various development partners and specialised agencies. In the case of PIDA, this has taken the form of the PIDA Steering Committee (AU Commission 2017).

Two other institutions have been established to spur cross-border and regional infrastructure development and to increase commitment to the same policies among AU member states. Born out of a proposal from then South African president Jacob Zuma, the Presidential Infrastructure Champion Initiative (PICI) was endorsed by the AU Assembly in 2011, and selected Heads of State were commissioned to foster the speedy implementation of eight major projects in the sectors of transport, energy, ICT, and water (AU–PIDA [2021b]). Despite the political weight of their 'champions', not all of the projects have made the desired progress in implementation. In his role as AU chairperson during 2020 (see also Sidiropoulos, this Yearbook, chapter 4), South African president Ramaphosa reiterated that

> [t]he PICI must play a key role in meeting the aspiration of Agenda 2063 of increasing inter and intra-regional trade[,] of improving road[,] rail and port infrastructure in the region, of using financial institutions to collaborate with the private sector to expand on the continent, and of identifying and promoting practical opportunities based on complementary national endowments.[2]

In October 2018, the AUC chairperson, Moussa Faki Mahamat, appointed Raila Odinga, Kenya's former prime minister (2008–2013), to become the AU's high representative for infrastructure development, underlining the importance the AUC attaches to infrastructure as a supranational policy field. While the PICI, in a sense, reflects deeply entrenched logics of intergovernmentalism (and presidentialism) in AU politics, the high representative for infrastructure development can plausibly be seen as an attempt at strengthening the Union's supranational agency in setting the agenda in the policy field and in actively engaging both the RECs and member states on infrastructure-related matters of common concern.

2 'Ramaphosa Highlights Importance of Supporting the Presidential Infrastructure Champion Initiative', South African Broadcasting Corporation [Johannesburg], 8 February 2020. URL: <https://www.sabcnews.com/sabcnews/ramaphosa-highlights-importance-of-supporting-the-presidential-infrastructure-champion-initiative/> (accessed: 30 June 2021).

3 Major Developments in 2020

Just as other policy realms, development of the AU's infrastructure portfolio was crucially affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. On 21 April 2020, tourism ministers met under the umbrella of the STC-TIIIET's Subcommittee on Tourism to discuss measures to cushion the tourism industry from the detrimental effects of the pandemic. The subcommittee set up a high-level task force to develop a *Post-Covid-19 Continental Tourism Recovery Strategy* (African Union 2020b). Two days later, the STC-TIIIET's Subcommittee on Transport discussed strategies in the transport sector to support the fight against the spread of the pandemic. The transport ministers urged member states and relevant agencies to ensure the circulation of critical cargo, including foods and medical supplies, on the sea, on land, and in the air. At the same time, the subcommittee called on member states to put in place appropriate measures 'to avoid transport to be a vector of spreading of the pandemic' (African Union 2020c). On 5 May 2020, with the aim of increasing the continent's resilience to health crises, the Bureau of the STC-ICT convened to discuss enhancing IT-based cooperation and exchange of information as well as best practices to contain the pandemic as well as to accelerate the implementation of the *Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa* (2020–2030) (see also Engel, this Yearbook, chapter 6). The meeting also considered the establishment of an *AU Digital Fund* to leverage finance for the improvement of ICT infrastructure and digitalisation on the continent (African Union 2020d).

The *Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa* was previously adopted by the 33rd AU Assembly (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 9–10 February 2020). It foresees the realisation of an African Digital Single Market by 2030. Concrete goals of the strategy include the digital empowering of all Africans by providing safe and secure access to bandwidth of at least 6 mb/s at a price of no more than $0.01/mb all across the continent, whereby at least 30 per cent of e-services and content should be developed and hosted in Africa. By 2030, 99.9 per cent of Africans should also have a digital legal identity as part of a civil registration process (African Union 2020e, 3). Needless to say, these objectives will require immense efforts to expand (cross-border) ICT infrastructure on the continent. Another sector that received considerable attention in 2020 was electricity.

3.1 *Establishing a Single Electricity Market*

Throughout 2020, the AU made some notable progress in the preparation of a framework for the establishment of the African Single Electricity Market (AfSEM). The AfSEM is expected to gradually harmonise policies, regulations, as well as technical norms and standards while addressing financing needs

and market barriers – all with the aim of having a fully integrated African electricity market by 2040 (African Union 2020f). At a roundtable with key stakeholders in October 2020, AUDA–NEPAD and the AfDB presented recommendations from a baseline study on the development of a continental energy grid and market. The study, which was funded by the EU Technical Assistance Facility, constituted the first phase in developing a continental transmission masterplan with which AUDA–NEPAD was tasked by the STC-TIIIET (African Union 2020g). The ordinary (virtual) meeting of the STC-TIIIET on energy on 1 December 2020 endorsed the AfSEM policy paper as well as a proposal for a road map and governance framework. At the meeting, the AU commissioner for infrastructure and energy, Dr Amani Abou-Zeid from Egypt, underscored that

> [s]ignificant mobilization and coordination strides are required to effectively engage stakeholders in addressing the key barriers to energy sector development on the continent including policy, regulatory, technical, financing and market barriers. (African Union 2020g)

The AfSEM policy paper, road map, and framework were approved during the 1st Extraordinary Meeting of the STC-TIIIET (14–15 December 2020) in preparation for the upcoming 34th AU Assembly (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 6–7 February 2021). Going forward, the study recommends the establishment of a permanent technical unit responsible for the masterplan, which will ensure effective coordination as well as skills transfer between the AU and the five regional power pools and will align the plan with existing infrastructure projects, including PIDA energy projects (ibid.).[3] The speedy realisation of the AfSEM is not least highly dependent on the success of major energy generation projects across the continent as well as on connective hard infrastructure, such as transmission lines. The revision and reorientation of PIDA towards an Integrated Corridor Approach (ICA) was therefore a crucial development in 2020.

3.2 *Realigning the Continental Infrastructure Agenda: PIDA's Second Priority Action Plan*

The AU's PIDA underwent profound programmatic realignments in 2020. As the project period of the first Priority Action Plan (PAP 1; 2012–2020) came to an end in 2020, the year was marked by the evaluation of PAP 1 and the

3 The five power pools are the Central African, East African, Southern African and West African Power Pools as well as the Maghreb Electricity Committee. For their respective membership and a discussion of energy governance on the continent, see Medinilla et al. (2019).

preparation of PAP 2 (2021–2030). PAP 1 included 51 cross-border or regional programmes, made up of over 400 individual projects, in the sectors of transport (232), ICT (114), energy (54), and water resources (9) (AU–PIDA [2021c]). According to the AUC, PAP 1

> resulted in an increase of 16,066 KM of roads, 4,077 KMs of railways, 3,506 KM of power transmission lines, and 17 additional Member States connected with regional fibre optic cables. Through constructed and operational PIDA projects, 112,900 jobs were directly and 49,400 indirectly created. (AU Commission 2021, 15)

As diagram 9.1 shows, by the end of the PAP 1 period projects had reached different stages of implementation. While a mid-term review of PIDA PAP 1 attested to the overall positive social and economic impacts of the programme, it also revealed that 'not all of the selected PIDA projects were considered priorities at their country level, leaving them without the much-needed political support and hindering their progress' (AUDA–NEPAD 2020, 28).

These findings are emblematic of the overall slow implementation of cross-border and regional infrastructure projects on the continent and are notably a result of divergent priority-setting at national, regional, and continental levels of infrastructure governance – a problem that is exacerbated by the scarcity of infrastructure finance. As national governments bear the brunt of infrastructure financing costs, project prioritisation is ultimately often determined by national political considerations despite governments' official commitments to AU and regional initiatives. An evaluation report on regional infrastructure development commissioned by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) finds that 'national governments have a tendency to look inwards at their national priorities' and identifies a 'shift in priority by Member States in terms of infrastructure projects that they are implementing' – from regional towards national projects, with the former usually not being factored in in national budget planning (SARDC 2019, 59, vii). Inconsistencies have also arisen from the fact that infrastructure development plans of the RECs have not always been well aligned with AU programmes, a governance challenge that the AU has tried to address when redeveloping PIDA for its second PAP.

The evaluation of PAP 1 further identified challenges related to fiscal limitations and infrastructure financing, constraints in both the construction sector and administrative capacities, constraints arising from climate change and the environment, issues of political stability and political commitment, and concerns about gender inclusivity (AUDA–NEPAD 2020, 29). To prepare the transition to PAP 2, the AUC in 2019 commissioned a market and demand study to determine regional infrastructure needs across the sectors of transport,

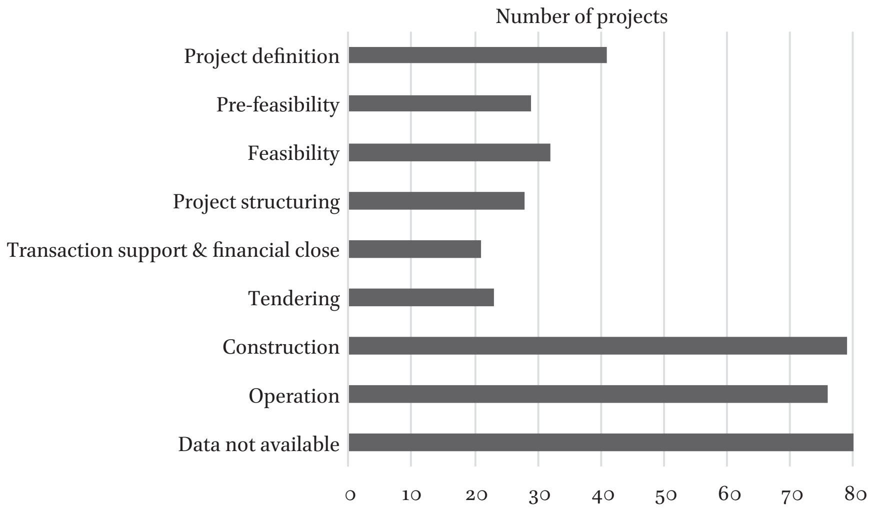

FIGURE 9.1 Implementation stages of PIDA PAP 1 projects (as of February 2021)
SOURCE: AUTHOR'S COMPILATION, BASED ON AU-PIDA (2021b)

energy, ICT, and water. The study projected, until 2030, annual growth rates of 6.5 per cent in road passenger-kilometres, of 3.9 per cent in rail freight tonne-kilometres, of 6.7 per cent in electricity consumption, 9.3 per cent in fixed broadband users, and of 3.1 per cent in water consumption (ibid., 30).

In consultation with the member states and RECs as well as with stakeholders from civil society, the AUC and AUDA–NEPAD developed the ICA as the guiding concept for PIDA PAP 2 with the aims of addressing identified constraints, incorporating Agenda 2063 principles, and improving the effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of PIDA projects. The ICA has two main characteristics: (1) it prioritises cross-sectoral infrastructure, whereby different infrastructure sectors, such as transport, energy, and ICT, are planned in a coordinated manner and linked to create synergies; and (2) it emphasises projects that maximise employment creation, gender sensitivity, climate friendliness, and urban-rural connectivity (ibid., 31; African Union 2020h, 7–8). The ICA also revised the selection criteria for PAP 2 projects. Eligibility criteria includes 'Strategic alignment and Regional Commitment' of the project and the 'Regional nature of the project', which should 'ensure only regional projects that are priority for RECs and MS [member states] will be considered' (African Union 2020h, 11). Once eligible, projects were assessed according to the following criteria: multi-sectoral planning of physical assets, job creation, environmental impact and climate resilience, gender-sensitive planning and implementation, urban-rural connectivity, economic viability, fundability and bankability, innovation, and smart technologies (African Union 2020h, 12–13; AUDA–NEPAD 2020, 32).

Between January and June 2020, AU member states could submit project proposals for PIDA PAP 2 via their respective REC. In parallel, the AUC and AUDA–NEPAD engaged in 'regional consultations to facilitate joint analysis and project evaluation with PIDA stakeholders', including the RECs, to ensure the programmatic coherence of PIDA PAP 2 and its alignment with the African Union 2063 vision (African Union 2020h, 18). In January 2020, stakeholders were trained during a three-day workshop in Addis Ababa on the selection criteria for PAP 2 projects as well as on the ICA. Further (virtual) meetings followed with officials from specific RECs and their member states. In total, 240 projects were proposed by member states, the RECs, and specialised institutions – from which 73 were put forward for consideration. The STC-TIIIET convened in an extraordinary (virtual) session on 14–15 December 2020 to finalise preparations for the PAP 2. Under the theme of 'Setting Africa's Infrastructure Priorities for the Next Decade', the STC meeting approved the PIDA PAP 2 process as well as strategies for its implementation, financing, and partnerships. It also finalised the priority list of 69 projects – to be confirmed by the ministers in charge on 12 January 2021 and approved by the AU Assembly on 7 February 2021. Before turning to the long-standing challenge of infrastructure financing, the gender dimension in the policy field of infrastructure requires attention.

3.3 *Infrastructure and Gender Sensitivity*

Concerns relating to gender inclusivity in the context of the planning, implementation, and delivery of infrastructure have played an increasingly important role in the formulation and implementation of AU infrastructure policies in recent years. The concept of gender-sensitive infrastructure has gained further momentum since Dr Amani Abou-Zeid has been in charge of the AUC's infrastructure and energy portfolio, which has significantly impacted policy formulation, including PIDA PAP 2. In 2020, two policy documents were developed by the African Network for Women in Infrastructure (ANWIN), which was officially recognised by the AU in 2019 and was consulted during the preparation of PIDA PAP 2. The guidelines for Gender-Responsive Infrastructure Development (GRID) offers concrete guidelines for member states and the RECs concerning gender-sensitive planning, procurement, and implementation of infrastructure projects, and the PIDA Gender-Responsive Infrastructure Policy Brief (GRIPB) outlines 'gender-smart infrastructure policy areas' that are in need of further dialogue and reform (AU–PIDA 2020). The commissioner emphasised at a webinar organised by ANWIN in November 2020 that

> we want to make sure that the sector generates jobs for skilled women professionals, ensure gender-responsive procurement, enhance the

> participation of women-led enterprises in the supply and value chains, and help women to make the best out of digitalization. (quoted in AU–PIDA 2020)

AUDA–NEPAD has aimed to strengthen gender sensitivity in the infrastructure sector by aligning all PIDA instruments with the GRID guidelines that were developed by ANWIN during the stakeholder consultations in preparation of PIDA PAP 2 (ibid., 35). The review of PIDA PAP 1 revealed that 'gender issues have not been sufficiently addressed or mainstreamed in the design or project selection criteria' (African Union 2020i, 28). Among the challenges identified has been the limited participation of women in the infrastructure value chain, with access to finance remaining one of many obstacles for women-owned businesses and (sub)contractors (ibid., 29–30). Each PIDA PAP 2 project was thus screened for determining the focus on increasing the share of women in the infrastructure value chain through appropriate gender-sensitive measures in the procurement process. To this end, the AU suggests that these measures may include preferential treatment of women-owned small and medium-sized businesses or gender-certified businesses as subcontractors; capacity-building for both contractors and procuring authorities to increase women's participation; training of female business owners to obtain national certification; the inclusion of evaluation criteria in bidding documents that aim at encouraging female contractors, suppliers, or vendors; the establishment of standards for bidders to demonstrate gender-inclusiveness; and the establishment of gender-responsive monitoring and reporting systems (ibid., 30). It is too early to determine the success of these measures. In the last section I shall now turn to Africa's chronic 'infrastructure funding gap' and recent changes in the landscape of infrastructure finance on the continent.

4 Africa's Infrastructure Financing Gap and the Changing Landscape of External Involvement

Access to finance for infrastructure development has remained a major challenge in Africa. The African Development Bank estimates Africa's infrastructure yearly infrastructure financing gap to be $68–108 billion (AfDB 2018, 63). In order to attract funding for capital-intensive investments in infrastructure, the AU depends on cooperation with external actors, such as the EU and China, which over the past decade has become a key player in Africa's infrastructure sector. According to Infrastructure Consortium for Africa (ICA) figures, infrastructure finance totalled $100.8 billion in 2018, with $37.5 billion

TABLE 9.1 Funding for African infrastructure by source (in $ million)

	2015	2016	2017	2018
ICA members[1]	*19,832*	*18,615*	*19,650*	*20,243*
France	2,445	2,887	2,123	1,936
Germany	1,139	1,127	838	1,608
Japan	1,768	1,941	2,361	517
United States	307		292	297
South Africa	929	1,211	497	1,055
AfDB	4,166	3,956	3,364	4,538
European Investment Bank	1,414	1,250	1,852	2,225
World Bank Group	6,285	4,055	7,516	7,989
Other ICA members	1,379	2,188	807	78
Non-ICA members	*51,687*	*45,766*	*59,592*	*68,736*
African governments	24,000	30,700	34,345	37,525
China	20,868	6,413	19,403	25,680
India	524	1,197	704	762
African regional development banks	419	924	541	328
Arab Coordination Group	4,412	5,528	2,985	2,442
European Bank for Reconstruction & Development	638	105	1,327	744
New Development Bank		180		500
Other non-ICA bilaterals/multilaterals	826	719	287	755
Private sector	*7,400*	*2,600*	*2,320*	*11,824*
Total financing	*78,919*	*66,981*	*81,562*	*100,803*

Note (1): Membership: G8 members (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, United Kingdom, USA), South Africa, the World Bank, International Finance Corporation (IFC), European Commission (EC), European Investment Bank (EIB), Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), African Development Bank (AfDB), and Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA).

SOURCE: AUTHOR'S COMPILATION, BASED ON ICA (2018, 8)

thereof coming from African government coffers. As Table 9.1 shows, China has meanwhile become Africa's largest bilateral infrastructure financier, contributing about a fourth of the continent's infrastructure finance in 2018 (ICA 2018, 4). As a recent study published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the African Center for Economic Transformation puts it, there is a 'striking evolution of African governments using significant Chinese financing for infrastructure development … in order "to get things done"' (OECD and ACET 2020, 15).

In order to raise more infrastructure finance within Africa, the idea of establishing a dedicated infrastructure fund has been floating for several years within AU and AfDB circles. Its realisation picked up momentum in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and related negative effects on public budgets as well as on the availability of loan finance from development partners (including China) and financial markets. In November 2020, the AU high representative for infrastructure development, former Kenyan prime minister Raila Odinga, hosted the second high-level dialogue on infrastructure development, titled the Africa Infrastructure Boma. The gathering was specifically concerned with post-pandemic infrastructure funding and Odinga unveiled the framework for an AU infrastructure fund (AIB [2021]). To raise capital for the envisaged fund, the AU plans to invite sovereign wealth as well as insurance and retirement funds in countries like Angola, Egypt, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, and South Africa to invest up to 5 per cent of their holdings in continental infrastructure projects. The fund is planned to be administered by AUDA–NEPAD (Miriri 2021). In a Reuters interview, Odinga explained that the recent slowdown in infrastructure lending, not least from China, required the AU 'to think out of the box' (quoted in Miriri 2021). While a legal and regulatory framework for an AU infrastructure fund is currently being prepared by AUDA–NEPAD, the AU and its member states will remain dependent on external loan finance, grants, and investments at least in the medium term. This section therefore briefly recounts how AU infrastructure policies and programmes are shaped by Western actors and China.

4.1 *Cooperation with the European Union and the United States*

Reflecting the AU's general challenge of donor dependency (see Engel, this Yearbook, chapter 3), the AU's IAIDA and PIDA have been heavily co-funded by development partners. External actors, such as the European Commission, the German *Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ), the Japan International Cooperation Agency, and the UK's former Department for International Development, have financed overhead or project costs and/or provided technical advice to PIDA (see AUDA–NEPAD [2021]).

In 2020, the EU, through the African Union Support Programme, also stepped in to fund PIDA's capacity-building programme, which was previously supported by the AfDB (AUDA–NEPAD 2020, 60). Considering the EU's crucial role in co-funding the IAIDA and AU infrastructure policy formulation and evaluation, some developments in Brussels are noteworthy, as they can be expected to co-determine AU infrastructure policies. In March 2020, the European Commission proposed a new comprehensive strategy with Africa in anticipation of the 6th AU–EU Summit in October, which was later postponed to 2021. It clearly underscores the strategic importance the EU attributes to cooperation

between the two blocs in the infrastructure sector. Out of five proposed partnerships, the first two are a 'partnership for green transition and energy access' and a 'partnership for digital transformation', emphasising the need of infrastructure that allows for green and climate-resilient energy production and ICT infrastructure to support the continent's digitalisation (European Commission 2020, 2). Both of these 'partnerships', at first glance, appear to be in line with the AU's Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa as well as with the Union's ambitious goals in the energy sector. However, a lot will depend on their operationalisation and, in particular, on the availability of funding.

EU funding for infrastructure projects in Africa underwent changes in 2020, as the EU Infrastructure Trust Fund for Africa (EU ITF), which had been launched by the European Commission and 13 member states in 2007, was discontinued at the end of 2019. During these 12 years, the EU ITF had raised €763 million in grants for 123 infrastructure projects and leveraged investments in the sector worth €11.4 billion. Crucial to AU infrastructure programming, the fund had a dedicated regional envelope that specifically targeted cross-border projects (EIB [2021]). As of 2020, EU grants and concessional loans for African infrastructure projects are now administered under the EU External Investment Plan and, hence, compete with many other sectors for EU finance. Generally, a significant increase in EU funding for African infrastructure seems unlikely, considering that the post-pandemic recovery of European economies will incur immense costs for at least a decade.

A rapid increase in US loan finance and/or investments in Africa's infrastructure sector under the Biden administration cannot be expected either. The memorandum of understanding that governs US–AU cooperation under the Power Africa programme, former President Obama's signature initiative that aims at boosting Africa's electricity generation capacity, was renewed on 17 September 2020 in a virtual ceremony attended by the US ambassador to the AU, Jessica Lapenn, and AUDA–NEPAD CEO Ibrahim Mayaki (AUDA–NEPAD 2020, 61). It is possible that Power Africa might pick up momentum under the new US administration, which will have to offer viable alternatives to Chinese loan-debt investments in Africa instead of only criticising the latter, as happened under Trump.

4.2 *Chinese Infrastructure Loans and the Question of Debt Sustainability*

Over the past decade and a half, Chinese policy banks and firms have become increasingly important in financing, constructing, and, in some cases, operating infrastructure on the African continent – a context that that has, according to some, caused a 'Global Race to Build Africa's Infrastructure' (see Gil et al. 2019). Since 2013, mostly under the umbrella of the Belt and Road Initiative

(BRI), Chinese state-owned and private enterprises have gotten involved in the implementation of regional infrastructure projects that have long been planned by the AU and/or RECs, for example the Mombasa-Kigali railway project, the Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia-Transport (*LAPSSET*) Corridor, or the Grand Inga Dam project in the Democratic Republic of Congo. China, which today has the world's longest high-speed railway network and is the world market leader in high-speed rail technology, is also considered a crucial partner in the implementation of the AU flagship project of an integrated high-speed railway network.

In 2015, the African Union signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Chinese government to spur cooperation in developing continental transport networks, including high-speed railways, aviation, and highways, and other infrastructures to support Africa's industrialisation. China has since repeatedly been committed to support AU initiatives such as PIDA and the PICI, which were explicitly mentioned in the Johannesburg Action Plan that was announced at the 6th Forum for China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). The Beijing Action Plan, a result of the 2019 FOCAC, further pledged

> to explore and advance cooperation and projects promoting continental, regional and sub-regional connectivity. China has decided to jointly formulate a China-Africa infrastructure cooperation plan with the African Union. (quoted in Otele 2020, 9)

This has led some observers to suggest that the 'China-Africa partnership in infrastructure development has taken a transformational shift from a national orientation to a regional and continental approach' (Vhumbunu 2016, 271).

However, China's growing involvement in Africa's infrastructure sector has not always fostered continental regional integration; in some cases, this involvement arguably even reinforced frictions within the RECs. For example, China's strategic engagement with East Africa, a pivotal region within the BRI, has exacerbated 'infrastructural competition' between Kenya and Tanzania, which are involved in a race to upgrade port infrastructure, build pipelines, and construct standard-gauge railways along the Northern and Central Corridors. As Otele underlines,

> China's bilateral approach in funding regional infrastructure projects is also threatening regionalism. … China in its engagement on the continent appears to ignore regional institutions key to setting Africa's regional infrastructure agenda. … China's bilateral approach in the region … [acts] as a regional sub-system wrecker. (Otele 2020, 12–13)

Indeed, there is little consideration for the integration of a regional railway network in the current railway race between Kenya and Tanzania.

Throughout 2020, China's extensive loan financing for African infrastructure has caused further controversies in light of the Covid-19–induced economic contraction and rapidly waning debt sustainability in African countries that have extensively relied on Chinese infrastructure loans. External debt (owed to China and other creditors) has significantly limited the fiscal space for governments in Lusaka, Nairobi, Djibouti, or Addis Ababa. Zambia defaulted on Eurobond payments in November 2020, while several African governments had to engage creditors in negotiations on debt restructuring (Carmody et al. 2021; Zajontz 2020, 2021). The waning debt sustainability of some African key participants in the BRI as well as the questionable economic feasibility of some of the initiative's 'flagship projects' has again underlined the importance of prudent (financial) governance of Africa's recent infrastructure 'boom', which was partly enabled by the 'moving out' of Chinese surplus capital and materials (Taylor and Zajontz 2020). Hence, analysts have rightly argued that

> it would be prudent to share lessons learned from one country to another on how to negotiate with China given that the balance of power will often be tilted in China's favour. Another option for greater leverage in negotiations would be to negotiate as a block where relevant, for example under the umbrella of the African Union …. (Phiri and Mungomba 2019, 20–21)

Besides the FOCAC, the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation has become an increasingly important institutional platform for African governments to collectively raise prevailing mutual concerns in the context of BRI infrastructure projects. The former deputy chairperson of the AUC, Erastus Mwencha, as well as former Egyptian prime minister, Essam Sharaf, are currently members of the Advisory Council of the BRI Forum. The Advisory Council met virtually on 18 December 2020. According to official Chinese sources, the council recommended enhanced cooperation within the BRI to coordinate Covid-19 responses of participating states and to boost economic recovery in the post-pandemic era. Infrastructure construction and the enhancement of digital infrastructure connectivity through the expansion of 5G networks and big data technology were seen as playing a key role in such efforts (China MFA 2020).

5 Outlook

The year 2021 will be decisive to kick-start PIDA PAP 2 as well as to accelerate cross-border and regional infrastructure development in line with the Agenda

2063 and with the aim to create synergies for the AfCFTA. It will be pivotal for the AUC to convince African Heads of State and Government that more supranational coordination and commitment to regional initiatives are needed to ensure that infrastructure projects are in line with long-term regional and continental development objectives, instead of serving short-term national political goals. Against the background of the pandemic-induced economic contraction and waning debt sustainability, raising sufficient infrastructure finance will remain another main challenge for the AU, the RECs, and member states. Progress in the policy field of infrastructure will therefore not least be dependent on the AU's engagement with external actors. A coordinated and strategic AU approach is necessary to engage the EU during the upcoming AU–EU summit on matters such as cooperation in green energy and digitalisation as well as to engage China, which thus far has preferred to negotiate African infrastructure on a bilateral basis. Both the FOCAC summit and the 3rd BRI Forum are planned for 2021. These events will significantly co-determine China-Africa cooperation in the infrastructure sector and its funding for the coming years. The AU could play a proactive role in shaping these agendas.

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CHAPTER 10

Peace and Security

Dawit Yohannes Wondemagegnehu

1 Introduction

The state of peace and security in Africa remains dire. The continent is far from reaching its aspired goal of ridding itself of the scourge of conflicts. Out of 13 United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations globally, Africa hosts 6 of these missions. African peace and security matters dominate the UN Security Council (UNSC) meetings, outcome documents, and resolutions on missions with Chapter VII mandates (de Carvalho and Forti 2020). State fragility remains an endemic challenge, although incidents of mass violence are increasingly rare (McNamee and Muyangwa 2021). While political violence declined almost in every other world region in 2020, Africa saw a rise in violent events and fatalities by 4,328 events and 9,298 fatalities (ACLED 2021). The continent still grapples with the threats of violent extremism, recurrence of election-related crises, and political violence. Addressing the root causes of conflicts is still a major shortcoming of the African Union (AU), the Regional Economic Communities (RECs)/Regional Mechanisms (RMs), and their member states, whose responses continue to be predominantly reactive than proactive. Preventing, managing, and resolving peace and security issues thus remains the biggest task of the Union.

The chapter departs from the intersection of these trends and offers a broad overview of how the AU fared in fulfilling this task in 2020. It starts by providing a brief background on the evolution around some selected areas of the Africa Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The third section will provide regional overviews on the Union's policies and engagements vis-à-vis some of the most important peace and security challenges. This section also includes a brief overview of the state of the AU's cooperation, collaboration, and competition with the RECs/RMs and the UN. This is followed by conclusions and a brief outlook for 2021.

2 The Evolution of Key Policy Debates and Dynamics

In 2013, African leaders set for themselves an ambitious goal to rid the continent of the scourge of conflicts by 2020. They seized the 50th anniversary of

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the establishment of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU)/AU as an opportunity to recommit the continent to this noble cause, pledging not to 'bequeath the burden of conflicts to the next generation of Africans and undertake to end all wars in Africa by 2020' (AU Assembly 2013, 5). Five decades after the establishment of the OAU, and a largely unsuccessful experiment of dealing with recurring crises in Africa, African leaders had renewed their commitment to tackle the challenges confronting the continent and the people.

To date, the APSA framework has been the centrepiece of the AU's engagement in peace and security broadly encompassing mechanisms for early warning, preventive diplomacy, and Peace Support Operations (PSOs). The collaboration with subregional actors has also been an important layer of APSA, which also includes the eight AU-recognised RECs and the two RMs in charge of administering and managing the African Standby Forces (ASF) for North African and Eastern Africa. Guided by two *Roadmaps* (African Union 2016a, 2016b), the AU has made significant progress, not only in establishing APSA institutions and mechanisms, but also in increasingly utilising them for the purpose of conflict prevention, management, and resolution (AU Commission 2015). Sessions of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) have become more regular platforms for deliberations and decision-making (in 2020, the PSC met 68 times, i.e., almost every 5 days). Different cohorts of the Panel of the Wise have been implemented since 2007; the current cohort was to end its mandate in 2020. The panel has been involved in a number of preventive diplomacy initiatives, along with its subsidiary organs – the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation (FemWise-Africa) and the Pan-African Network of the Wise (PanWise).

Another pillar of APSA, the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), has been fully operational for some years now. It is providing key decisions-makers with analyses and response options to address conflicts at an early stage. Following Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire and Zambia (in February and November 2020, respectively) have requested the AU to assist under the Union's Continental Structural Conflict Prevention Framework (CSCPF), with the facilitation of Country Structural Vulnerability and Resilience Assessments (CSVRA), and, based on that, to develop Country Structural Vulnerability Mitigation Strategies (CSVMS).[1]

Finally, there has been substantive progress in enhancing the AU's capacity to plan, launch, manage, and liquidate PSOs, including through the gradual development of the ASF. The AU has so far deployed 70,000 uniformed

1 Interview with a regional analyst #1. Addis Ababa, 8 March 2021.

peacekeepers in 12 missions (Williams 2021). At the same time, the Union has increasingly been deploying on the basis of ad hoc coalitions and not always necessarily within the APSA framework. Though considered at one level suited for dealing with Africa's deadliest transnational armed groups, these ad hoc arrangements have also raised debates over who should authorise, finance, and provide them with various forms of technical, logistical, and security assistance (ibid.). While ad hoc deployments and their utilisation have continued in the continent, as evidenced by the growing engagements of the G5 and the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), the AU has also made substantive decisions related to the ASF and to the broader issue of PSOs in 2020. In December 2020, the AU declared the ASF fully operational, responding to long-standing demands to the same end. The AU also sought to rectify ongoing difficulties as a result of the under-utilisation of the ASF by directing the PSC to utilise its framework in mandating and authorising AU PSOs (AU Assembly 2020a, §19[xi]). An important corollary of this development was the decision to dissolve the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis (ACIRC), which was considered by some as a competing initiative to the ASF framework (ibid.). Funding the AU's peace and security-related activities has been a critical long-standing challenge. Encouragingly, the AU Peace Fund has been reinvigorated (see Engel, this Yearbook, chapter 3).

These developments notwithstanding, successive assessments and reports evaluating the APSA framework, including those commissioned by the PSC, have underlined challenges, importantly in the further development and timely utilisation of APSA instruments in appropriate contexts. Conceptually, this challenge has also been framed as a 'fundamental chasm between its aspirations and their implementation' (Badmus 2015, 103). While this challenge is applicable in all areas of APSA, it is more pertinent in the area of developing conflict prevention capacities and their timely utilisation.

Having undergone close to two decades of implementation, APSA entered a new phase in the face of emerging obstacles, dynamics, and priorities. A persistent lack of political will among AU member states to adhere to and implement the AU's governance, peace and security norms, and policies and decisions are arguably the most fundamental obstacles (see Chikwanha, this Yearbook, chapter 7). Despite gradual improvements, the requisite institutional capacity has not been adequately achieved in the various APSA institutions. While collaboration with subregional and international partners is a key aspect of the APSA framework, there is still lack of seamless coordination, especially in terms of clarity on the subsidiarity principle vis-à-vis the RECs/RMs and the UN. It is within this historical context that 2020 has been designated as the year for attaining the ambitious goal of 'Silencing the Guns' (STG).

On 6 December 2020, however, the AU recognised the difficulty of meeting this mammoth challenge by 2020 and extended the deadline of STG by another 10 years (AU Assembly 2020a).

A major challenge in 2020, of course, has been the SARS-CoV-2/Covid-19 pandemic. It had manifold effects (see also the interview, this Yearbook, chapter 2), most notably in exacerbating the peace and security dynamics in the continent and convoluting response efforts by the AU, the RECs/RMs, and member states. Impacts on the broader peace, security, and governance landscape 'include delays in electoral processes and affecting accountability, service delivery and the quest for improved governance as well as delayed the implementation of critical peace agreements and hampered mediation efforts at the local level' (AU Commission and UNDP 2020). At the level of the AU, the pandemic also induced a change in working modalities, significantly in terms of the modalities of convening PSC sessions and AU Assembly meetings. The pandemic also forced funds to be diverted away from peace and security to the African CDC to tackle the pandemic. As with other areas, the pandemic halted a number of programmatic initiatives and interventions.

3 Regional Overview of the AU's Engagement in Peace and Security

3.1 *North Africa*

North Africa saw the least engagement of the AU in 2020 in comparison to other regions in the continent (see inventory, this Yearbook, chapter 16). The situation in Libya is the only North African issue that the AU engaged with in 2020. The 11-member AU High-Level Committee for Libya (HLC) was one key initiative. The HLC met four times between January and July 2020 (AU 2020) in what could be arguably considered a demonstration of the AU's renewed resolve to the inter-Libyan inclusive dialogue. In February 2020, the 33rd AU Assembly (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 9–10 February 2020) took two key decisions on Libya, following a PSC meeting convened at the level of Heads of State and Government on Libya and the Sahel on 8 February 2020. The AU Assembly decided to deploy a military and security reconnaissance mission to Libya to consult with the parties and gather information on the ground. It also decided to upgrade the AU Liaison Office to enable the AU to play a more active role (AU Assembly 2020b). Progress in the implementation of these two key decisions remained limited in 2020, pending the finalisation of technical consultation and coordination with the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL).[2]

2 Interview with a regional analyst #1. Addis Ababa, 8 March 2021.

Following the signing of the *Permanent Ceasefire Agreement* (Geneva, Switzerland, 23 October 2020) in Geneva, the PSC met on 3 November. It affirmed the AU's continued role in the implementation of the agreement and requested 'the AU Commission to undertake the preparations … toward the AU's participation in the Ceasefire Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (CMVM) with African monitors on the ground' (AU PSC 2020k, §13). The PSC also requested 'the UN Secretary-General [UNSG] to appoint, as soon as possible, a UN Special Representative for Libya of an African extraction' (ibid., §14).

The AU also set up two more platforms for engaging with the Libyan crisis. It established the AU Contact Group for Libya to 'provide political leadership, as well promote coordination of international efforts in the search for a solution to the Libyan crisis' (AU Assembly 2020b, §17). The AU Contact Group held its first meeting on 12 March 2020 and discussed the modalities for the preparation of the Inter-Libyan Reconciliation Forum. Furthermore, the AU launched the Interdepartmental Task Force for Libya on 16 February 2020 to support the implementation of the AU Assembly's decisions. However, the AU's plan to organise its own inter-Libyan reconciliation conference, initially conceived in 2019, was dropped in 2020.

The first face-to-face meeting of the UN-facilitated Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF) took place on 9 November 2020 in Tunis, Tunisia. The LPDF made critical headway, including reaching an agreement on a political road map and dates for national elections, as well as reforming the executive authority by outlining the structure and prerogatives for the Presidency Council and a separate Head of Government (UNSMIL 2021). As a fragile ceasefire had continued to hold for most of 2020, the AU managed to participate in key political processes regarding Libya without necessarily taking a lead role, including in the 5+5 Joint Military Commission, in the Berlin Conference on Libya, and in supporting the LPDF.[3] This could attest to the fact that AU 'has been asserting, with increasing vigour, that it must be included in attempts at brokering peace in and bringing stability back to Libya'.[4]

However, the AU also struggled to speak with one voice vis-à-vis the plethora of actors within the Libyan peacemaking scene, thereby lessening its effective participation. One example, of many, is the differences among member states during the February 2020 33rd AU Assembly to agree on the deployment of a joint AU–UN missions and which countries to involve in the newly formed AU Contact Group for Libya. This arguably undermined the AU's role in the various processes led by the UN and other key global actors.[5] Furthermore, the

3 *UN News* [New York], 26 October 2020.

4 'Africa's place in resolving Libya's quagmire', *ISS PSC Report* [Pretoria], 19 February 2020.

5 Ibid.

AU itself was running too many African initiatives and engagements aiming to resolve the Libyan crisis, albeit with a lack of clarity on how to avoid overlaps in their mandates. As hinted at earlier, the AU maintains its engagement in Libya through the High-Level Ad-hoc Committee on Libya, a special envoy of the AU Commission's (AUC) chairperson, the AUC chairperson, the AU commissioner for peace and security, the special representative of the AUC chairperson for Libya, and the head of the AU Liaison Office. The AU Contact Group for Libya was a new addition to the mix, without dissolving the larger High-Level Ad-hoc Committee.[6] Also, the AU is yet to convince some Libyan military and political factions that it is a neutral player and arguably the right platform for resolving the Libyan conflict. This occurs against the background of not only a historical perception that the AU and some of its member states were allied to the late Muammar Gaddafi, but also the current reality that some of Libya's African neighbours are allied to some of the warring factions in Libya.[7]

As in the previous years, the AU's engagement in peace and security matters in Libya also continued to suffer from the absence of a meaningful and coordinated subregional platform that could help achieve consensus among key counties of the region. The AU-recognised subregional mechanism, the Union du Maghreb arabe (UMA, the Arab Maghreb Union) for Northern Africa, remains restrictive as to its membership of countries in the region. Notably, Egypt, a neighbouring country to Libya with a strong stake in the conflict, is not a member of UMA.

Other than Libya, the long-standing issue of Western Sahara saw no visible engagement by the AU, notwithstanding some developments that presented additional challenges to the resolution of an already complex problem. Notably, the Trump administration's recognition of Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara in 2020 is likely to convolute the AU's attempts at meaningful engagement with Western Sahara issues, which has been pitting some of its key members against one another, specifically Algeria and Morocco, each having divergent positions on the issue.

4 West Africa: Mali and the Sahel

The Sahel saw an increasing level of violence in 2020 – rightfully framed as the deadliest year for countries such as Mali. According to the Armed Conflict Location & Events Data Project, the death toll in the Central Sahel region alone has risen to 2,248 civilians in 2020 (an additional 400 over the previous year)

6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.

(ACLED 2021). The numerous challenges in the region broadly include terrorism and violent extremism; persistent economic instability; extreme poverty; transnational organized crime such as drug, human and other illicit trafficking; inter-communal violence associated with climate change, drought and desertification; humanitarian crises; conflict-disrupted livelihoods; and forced migration (Conkar 2020).[8] The insecurity also further expanded beyond the Sahel to some of the coastal countries in the West African region, including Benin, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, and Côte d'Ivoire. Reflecting the dire security situation of the region, the Sahel and Mali issues featured more in PSC meetings than in previous years (see inventory, this Yearbook, chapter 16). As the region's multifaceted and complex peace and security challenges persist, the Sahel has continued to be a site for multiple forms of global, regional, and national responses. The following section provide an overview of key developments regarding the AU's various strategies, mechanisms, and initiatives on peace and security in the Sahel region in 2020.

4.1 *Counterterrorism Efforts in the Sahel*

The threat from a subregional insurgency of violent extremist groups remained one of the main driver of violence in the region in 2020. Unlike the preceding years, the region also witnessed fighting among the major rival violent armed groups, notably the Al Qaeda–affiliated Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS). The armed rivalry among these groups over hegemony in and control of territories led to a further escalation of violence against civilians while adding to the insecurity of the region.

Noting the contribution of the G5 Sahel Joint Force in fighting terrorist groups in the region, on 30 July 2020 the PSC renewed its mandate for a period of 12 months, starting from 13 July 2020 (AU PSC 2020f). As noted in the *UNSG Report* on the Sahel in 2020, the G5 Sahel Joint Force increased its 'operational tempo', launching its first regional operation, Operation Sama, in March 2020 (UNSG 2020a). This occurred in the wake of key operational and strategic changes related to the G5 Sahel Joint Force's engagement in the region, notably the 'revision of its strategic concept of operations and the establishment in Niamey of a joint command mechanism for the Joint Force, French forces and other security presences in the Sahel region' (ibid., §56).

In order to boost counterterrorism efforts in the region, the 33rd AU Assembly in February 2020 indicated the possible deployment of 'a Joint Multi-National Task Force and 3,000 troops for six months, in order to further degrade terrorist

8 Also interview with a regional analyst # 4. Addis Ababa, 6 March 2021.

groups in the Sahel' (AU Assembly 2020b, §4). The PSC followed up on this decision with consultations between the AUC, the G5 Sahel Joint Force, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on the development of a concept of operations (CONOPS) for the deployment of troops (AU PSC 2020f).

Nevertheless, scepticism abound over the likelihood of the deployment of the new AU force and its possible impact on the ground. Funding the force is expected to be a key problem whether in terms of its ability to tap into the AU Peace Fund or to access pledged resources from ECOWAS for the fight against terrorism. Key states in the region, Nigeria and Ghana, criticised the AU for insufficient consultation with ECOWAS on the development of the Multi-National Joint Task Force (see ICG 2021). Furthermore, there are expected obstacles in coordinating the multiple security actors on the ground. Regional rivalry, which is subtly dogging the AU as well as regional and international initiatives in the Sahel, may also adversely affect its deployment.

The Nouakchott Process, initiated in 2013 to strengthen regional security cooperation and information sharing in the fight against terrorism, and the operationalisation of APSA in the Sahelo-Saharan region remained in need of greater momentum throughout the year. Though credited for creating a culture of exchange and cooperation among security actors, political thrust around the Nouakchott Process had started to wane.[9] However, as the process still remains at the back of most coordinating efforts, the AU, during a meeting of the AU PSC and the European Union (EU), expressed its intent 'to re-energize the Nouakchott Process within the context of the review process of the AU Strategy for the Sahel region' (EU Council 2020). However, the revision of the *AU Strategy for the Sahel Region* was not completed during 2020. This would have provided an opportunity for the AU to coordinate all its efforts in the region based on a comprehensive approach to the resolution of the crises beyond the current preponderant focus on security-based approaches.

4.2 *Coup d'etat in Mali*

Riding on the back of public grievances and later on the fallout from contested elections in April 2020, a military junta took over power in Mali on 18 August 2020. Following the coup d'etat, the AU supported ECOWAS in managing the political crises and the establishment of a transitional authority, dedicating three PSC sessions to the unfolding dynamics. Responding in a reasonably timely manner, one day after military takeover the PSC condemned the coup as an unconstitutional change of government (UCG) and suspended Mali from the AU until the restoration of normal constitutional order in the country (AU PSC 2020g).

9 ISS PSC Report (103) [Pretoria], 2018, 5–7.

4.3 *The Mali Peace Process*

Calls for implementing the 2015 *Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali* has been the centrepiece of the AU's endeavours in finding a peaceful resolution to the Malian crises. The AU continued to stress the imperative of fully implementing the agreement, highlighting the issue at least in four of the PSC communiqués in 2020. Among other communiqués, in the communiqué on the 'Fifth (5th) anniversary of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali', from 26 June, the PSC reaffirmed the necessity to support the implementation of the agreement (AU PSC 2020c).

These political calls notwithstanding, the agreement was only implemented in parts, with only 23 per cent of its provisions being put into action as a confluence of many factors (ICG 2020). There was a continued lack of political will among the signatories to implement the agreement, and most Malians were either sceptical or uninformed about the process (Ibid). In addition, rifts within the some of the armed opposition groups also persisted, with possible implications for the implementation of the peace agreement (UNSC 2019).

On top of these and other national matters, the international mediators behind the signing of the agreement have not fulfilled their designated roles as guarantors, especially given their failure to exert pressure on the parties towards successful implementation (ICG 2020). The AU could have played a role in pushing specifically for more active engagement of the peace agreement's Monitoring Committee (Comité de suivi de l'accord, CSA) and more generally for the fast-tracked implementation of the agreement, beyond just issuing political calls. Regional rivalry may also be behind the delayed implementation of the *Algiers Agreement*. According to Baudais et al., tensions between Algeria and ECOWAS have strained conflict resolution efforts in Mali. Algeria's president vowed not 'to involve ECOWAS in its own [Algeria's] initiatives in the Sahel, insisting that "the solution to the Malian crisis is 90 per cent Algerian"' (Baudais et al. 2021, 28). This position had emerged from Algeria's disappointment in ECOWAS for not involving Algeria in the resolution of the Malian coup in August 2020.

4.4 *Assessing the AU's Peace and Security Engagement in the Sahel*

Overall, the AU's response to evolving security challenges in the Sahel is indicative of the long-standing gap between its ambitions and capabilities. In the preceding years, the AU was more visible in responding to political dynamics in the Sahel than in the security realm. And yet, the trajectories of the Sahel crises – marked by complex threats, proliferations of security actors, and the absence of sustained engagements from national counterparts – have limited the AU's ability to carve out a niche on the political front. Without losing

sight of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on security dynamics and the responses from multilateral actors, the AU has not adequately capitalised on that (albeit little) niche, which is partly to do with the not yet fully revised and implemented AU Strategy for the Sahel Region.

As in the rest of the continent, structural conflict prevention efforts have remained overlooked, with no major visible progress in implementing the initiatives of the AU and ECOWAS to address the structural root causes of crises in the Sahel. However, the difficulty of implementing these initiatives in a volatile region must be acknowledged – where there are more pressing security issues to handle.

Also, the AU's engagement in the Sahel has been largely shaped by the quality of its interaction with local, national, subregional, and international actors. The AU and ECOWAS strengthened their engagement in 2020, especially in synchronising their responses in resolving the political crises after the coup in Mali. It is illustrative to see how various decisions and statements from the two organisations were feeding into each other's prior actions. At the same time, it is unclear if the complaint of some ECOWAS member states regarding the lack of consultation in the decision to deploy the new AU 3,000 force mentioned above speaks to larger issues surrounding AU–ECOWAS relations.

The UN Office for West African and the Sahel (UNOWAS) is serving as a crucial lynchpin, linking the disparate interventions of the UN, on the one hand, and the AU and ECOWAS, on the other. The head of UNOWAS, Ibn Chambas, himself a long-time ECOWAS insider with a track record of leadership in UN missions in Africa, is playing a key role in bridging institutional divides. This underlines the fact that the AU also has to show strong leadership in the region. In addition to having a working strategy, this could also be achieved through effective representation by filling the post of its special envoy to Mali and the Sahel (the former Burundian president Pierre Buyoya resigned from this position on 24 November and subsequently passed away on 17 December 2020).[10]

4.5 *West Africa: Lake Chad Basin, The Gambia, and Guinea-Bissau*

4.5.1 Boko Haram

The jihadist insurgency Boko Haram was the single most important security threat in the Lake Chad Basin region in 2020. Along with other jihadist elements, the *Global Terrorism Index* had designated Boko Haram earlier as one of the four deadliest terrorist groups in the world in 2019 (IEP 2020). According to the Council on Foreign Relations' *Nigeria Security Tracker*, the long-running

10 Interview with a regional analyst #4. Addis Ababa, 6 March 2021.

conflict with Boko Haram led to 195 violent incidents in 2020 that resulted in 1,335 deaths, of which 738 were civilians and 617 were military/security (CFR 2021).[11] Specifically, the deadly and quasi-simultaneous attacks by Boko Haram in March 2020 against a Chadian army position in the area of Boma, in the Lake Chad Basin region, and a convoy of the Nigerian army in Konduga in Borno State, Nigeria, stand out killing 162 soldiers and wounding 47 others (AUC Chairperson 2020a).

The AU's responses to the growing threat of violent extremism from various factions of Boko Haram came through two major forms. On the security front, the AU sustained the deployment of the MNJTF, which launched operations aimed at degrading the fighting capacity of Boko Haram fighters and supporting the endeavours of local authorities in addressing humanitarian crisis. The most notable is Operation Yancin Tafki, being conducted since January 2019 and resulting in the killing of over 1,100 Boko Haram/Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) combatants, the capture of 151 fighters, and the surrender of 354 others (AU PSC 2021). In order to support the fight against the violent extremist threat in the region, the AU and its partners, especially the European Union (EU), provided support to the MNJTF, including air mobility assets, fuel, Mission Subsistence Allowance (MSA) for the HQ MNJTF Staff Officers, salaries to civilian staff supporting the MNJTF, and HQ MNJTF operating costs, etc. (AU PSC 2021, §9–12). The EU–AU support also helped in the full implementation of the Command, Control, Communication and Information Systems (C3IS) project for the MNJTF operations (ibid.).

Supporting the implementation of the *Regional Stabilisation Strategy* (RSS) is another key area of the AU's engagement in the region, jointly undertaken with the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the UN, and other international partners. The support notably included assistance in the operationalisation of various RSS coordination and management structures, including the RSS Secretariat in N'Djamena, Chad; the Civil Society Platform; the Steering Committee; and the Regional Task Force and its attendant clusters; and the Office of the Civil-Military Coordinator (AU PSC 2021). The Regional Stabilisation Facility (RSF), created by the UN Development Programme (UNDP), helped in securing more funds to launch some community-level engagements, such as building houses for returnees, rehabilitating facilities for delivering public services, and revitalising cross-border activities in some of the areas affected by the threat of violent extremist

11 These figures indicate the number of violent incidents and deaths in Nigeria and do not account for attacks and fatalities in Cameroon where Boko Haram also operates. See URL: <https://www.cfr.org/nigeria/nigeria-security-tracker/p29483> (accessed: 30 June 2021).

acts of Boko Haram. While the Territorial Action Plans (TAPs) to domesticate the broader RSS were finalised throughout 2020 for the eight affected areas, the AU, in collaboration with partners, implemented aspects of the RSS, including programmes on mental health and psycho-social support as well as activities engaging the youth of the Lake Chad Basin region as part of RSS' pillar nine.[12]

While there is still some work needed concerning the full implementation of the RSS at the national level, the strategy is important with regard to creating coherence among the many stakeholder operating in the Lake Chad Basin region and complementing the security-driven efforts of the MNJTF and states in the region with developmental endeavours. In this respect, the strategy served as an important starting point to bring these actors together in arriving at a shared understanding of key priorities of the region to tackle 'key challenges such as climate change and promoting good governance, transparency and accountability in both the political and socio-economic domains' (LCBC and AU Commission 2018, 8). The added value of the strategy was further underscored by contrasting it with other regional contexts, notably the Sahel. In the latter context, finalisation of the current revision of the strategy and its adoption has not yet helped in situating various activities of the AU within a single strategic framework.[13] The region also saw greater drive towards fruitful partnership with the UN and the EU. While the UN–AU partnership was noted, among others, in the creation of the RSF, the EU's support was also credited for sustaining the MNJTF through support in financing, logistics, and human resources (AU PSC 2021).

4.6 *Guinea-Bissau and the Gambia*

Other than Mali, the Sahel, and the Lake Chad Basin region, Guinea-Bissau and The Gambia are two countries that the AU engaged with in West Africa in 2020 through the PSC (see inventory, this Yearbook, chapter 16). Although Guinea-Bissau and The Gambia were among the countries that the AU recognised as seeing significant improvements in their political/security situations, both continue to face political issues.

In The Gambia, protests calling for the resignation of President Adama Barrow and a deadlock in the constitution-drafting process after the parliament rejected the proposed *Constitution Promulgation Bill* in 2020 were at the centre of the political crisis (cf. Amani Africa 2021). The latter constituted a major concern as Gambians were to go the polls in December 2021. On 28 August 2020, the PSC underlined the need for the Gambian government to

12 Interview with a regional analyst #2. Addis Ababa, 17 March 2021.

13 Ibid.

embrace and implement the AU instruments relating to elections, democracy, and good governance, with a view to preparing the groundwork for holding credible, free and transparent elections (AU PSC 2020h). This was one of the most visible AU engagements in The Gambia during 2020, in addition to the AU Technical Support to The Gambia (AUTSTG). The AUTSTG had been assisting institutional and political reforms in The Gambia since 2017. However, the AU was forced to close the AUTSTG on 31 December 2020 due to shortage of funds to continue its operations.

In Guinea-Bissau, the AU's engagement has been centred around contestation over the 2019 election and the political unrest that unfolded throughout 2020. The election results were contested by different political actors, mainly between Umaro Sissoco Embaló, the winner of 2019 presidential election, and Domingos Simões Pereira, the former prime minister, who rejected the results. The PSC welcomed the successful holding of both the first round of and the run-off elections (AU PSC 2020a). In April 2020, ECOWAS recognised Sissoco Embaló as the winner of the 2019 presidential election. Other actors, such as the AU, the EU, the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP), and the UN followed suit. However, the political issues persisted side by side with organised criminal activities notably related to drug trafficking. Throughout these political crises, the AU offered its political backing to dialogue processes between various political actors as well as the efforts of ECOWAS while offering its assistance to pending peace support projects (see AU PSC 2020a).

4.7 *Horn of Africa*

The year 2020 continued to be a challenging year for the Horn of Africa region. Long-standing conflicts, side by side with different forms of emerging dynamics in the region, accounted for more than half of the PSC sessions (see inventory, this Yearbook, chapter 16).

4.8 *Counterterrorism in Somalia*

Terrorism continued to be a major security issue in the region, notably in Somalia, which saw a continuation of terrorist attacks in 2020. According to the ACLED database, Al Shabaab was again ranked among the top five most active, violent armed groups in 2020 (ACLED 2021). As indicated the UNSG's Report to the UNSC on Somalia, '270 incidents were recorded per month, most incidents were Al-Shabaab attacks, including those carried out using improvised explosive devices' (UNSG 2020b, §11). The AU maintained its long-standing engagement in counterterrorism efforts in Somalia by mainly sustaining the deployment of its AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Previous AMISOM operations have helped in decreasing al-Shabaab's territorial control and

contributed to preserving fragile state presence in Somalia. Nevertheless, there has been a lull in AMISOM operations recently, raising concerns over its ability to make new military gains. The operation in Lower Shebelle was the only exception to this trend in 2020 (United Nations 2021).

The year 2020 was a pivotal year for AMISOM, being the year preceding a looming planned exit from Somalia in December 2021. Albeit the absence of enabling conditions on the ground, this decision was largely induced by major funding cuts by the EU, which has been the mission's main financier. However, it became increasingly unlikely that AMISOM would leave by December 2021, and a continuation of the mission is becoming more and more accepted – even among those partners that were pushing for AMISOM's exit. Following the terms of an earlier agreement for the gradual withdrawing of the mission, AMISOM saw a reduction by 1,000 troops in 2020 (Amani Africa 2021). Alarmed by the growing security concerns in Somalia, the PSC stressed 'the imperative need for a halt in further reduction of AMISOM uniformed personnel' (AU PSC 2020b, §7). The AMISOM mandate at the UNSC was given a two-week technical rollover – with a decision expected in March 2021 on troop reduction and other matters during the rest of 2021.

The year also witnessed key developments related to AMISOM's future role in Somalia. As the deadline for AMISOM's exit increasingly seemed unachievable, the AU, the Somalia government, and its partners recognised the imperative of reviewing the 2018 Somalia Transition Plan (STP), which serve as the basis for condition-based exit of the mission in Somalia. The AU, through various PSC meetings, pushed for a Somali government-led review of the STP, which was updated in 2020, as well as a revision of the 2018–2021 AMISOM's CONOPS (cf. AU PSC 2020b, 2020i). The latest STP, which has been finalised by the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and lays out the transition from AMISOM to Somali forces, plans a timeline to be completed by 2023, but the STP has not yet been endorsed by the Federal Member States (FMS). This is unlikely to happen until after the elections, creating additional uncertainties as new timelines for the election has not been agreed upon by the FGS and the FMS.

On 7 May 2020, the PSC renewed AMISOM's mandate for another 12 months, starting on 27 May 2020 (AU PSC 2020b). But the year was also marked by decreasing funding for AMISOM, with the looming depletion of the AMISOM Trust Fund. According to the UNSG's Report to the UNSC complete depletion of the Trust Find by mid 2021 would create strains on 'United Nations logistical support for the Somali forces and compromise implementation of the Somali transition plan' (UNSG 2021, §102). However, the obligatory funding for AMISOM was still provided in 2020 (i.e., EU stipends for troops and UN-assessed contributions for the UN Support Office in Somalia's mission).

4.9 *Country Situations: Ethiopia and Somalia*

There had been a significant rise in politically induced tension across the region, including in Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, and, to a lesser extent, Kenya. Such political tensions evolved against a backdrop of laudable improvements in democratic trends and prospects for stability in the preceding years. These challenges could be considered the result of internal political disruptions as transitions were hampered by the Covid-19 pandemic, exacerbating an already fragile political and socioeconomic situation in the region. The PSC dedicated its meeting held on 26 November 2020 to receive a briefing on the situation in the Horn of Africa (AU PSC 2020m).

In 2020, problems linked to such political tensions have been most notable and consequential in Ethiopia and to a lesser extent in Somalia. Ethiopia had seen incrementally growing political and ethnic hostility throughout the preceding years. Rising political tensions finally culminated in the outbreak of a violent conflict in Tigray in November 2020. However, the AU's engagement for most part of the year remained imperceptible, and its belated response raised criticisms. The AU first visible response came on 3 November 2020, when the AUC chairperson issued a statement strongly condemning the killing of innocent civilians following intercommunal violence in Ethiopia, called for a national dialogue, and offered the AU's support for achieving peace and stability in the country (AUC Chairperson 2020b). The next day, and following the attack by the Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF) on the Northern Command of the Ethiopian Army, the Ethiopian government launched military campaigns in Tigray. On 9 November, the AUC chairperson issued another statement expressing concerns over the escalation of military confrontations, appealing to immediate cessation of hostilities, calling on parties to protect civilians, and offering its support in mediating dialogue (cf. AUC Chairperson 2020c). On 20 November, the AU chairperson, South African president Cyril Ramaphosa, appointed three high-level envoys to help resolve the conflict in the Tigray region.[14] The envoys met with the Ethiopian prime minister Abiy Ahmed in Addis Ababa, who rejected mediation with the TPLF and defended the military campaign as a 'law enforcement operation' strictly within Ethiopia's sovereign rights. As a full-blown military campaign unfolded and the humanitarian consequences of the war in Tigray started to emerge, the AU responses drew further criticisms that it could have done more and much earlier.[15]

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14 The envoys are the former presidents of Mozambique (Joaquim Chissano), Liberia (Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf), and South Africa (Kgalema Motlanthe).

15 *ICG Briefing* (166) [Brussels], 3 February 2021.

The AU also had some noticeable engagement in Somalia, which was also reeling from the impacts of political wrangling on top of the dire security situations in the country. Other than concerning issues related to AMISOM, the AU's engagement in Somalia in 2020 primarily focused on improving relations between the FMS and the FGS and supporting electoral processes. The PSC convened three meetings (held on 24 February, 7 May, and 24 September), dealing with different aspects of these two key issues. Focusing on the political tension among Somali political actors as one area of concern for the PSC, the AU remained supportive of attempts to narrow the differences between the FMS and the FGS, notably through the Dhusamareeb consultation process, which resulted in an agreement on the electoral model for the 2020/2021 national elections (cf. AU PSC 2020i). However, it is questionable if the AU's political backing, together with the involvement of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), extended to practical engagements in resolving the friction between the FMS and the FGS, including electoral issues. Likewise, as the agreement between the FMS and the FGS on election modalities and timing faltered, the AU on 29 April 2020 called for timely elections.

4.10 *Emerging Interstate Disputes*

A rise in interstate hostility and rivalry has been a much more worrisome and regionally distinct trend in the Horn of Africa in 2020. Ethio-Sudan and Kenya-Somalia relations have soured, resulting in short-lived skirmishes in November 2020 in the former and in bitter diplomatic rows in both cases. Wars of words and military confrontations between Ethiopia and Sudan flared up over contested swathes of land around the Al-Fashagha area. The dispute came on top of existing disagreements between Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on the Nile River. Though the border dispute would constitute a serious concern for the peace and stability of an already fragile region, the AU did not convene a meeting or issue a statement to address the border issues throughout 2020.

Likewise, Somalia and Kenya saw their relations deteriorating throughout 2020. Particularly, disagreement over their maritime boundaries had been ongoing throughout the previous years. In 2020, accusations of Kenya interfering in Somalia's internal affairs and nurturing regional allies with Somali elites that are at odds with the FGS, notably in Jubaland, became a key factor behind the strained relations between the two countries. In this regard, the year witnessed a tense standoff in Gedo in February and March between troops loyal to the FGS, on the one hand, and to the Jubaland regional state, on the other hand. As a result, there was a likelihood of a confrontation between Somalia's neighbours and AMISOM troop contributors, Ethiopia and Kenya,

since each supported rival politicians in Jubaland.[16] Due to the rising hostility between Kenya and Somalia, on 6 March the AUC chairperson issued a statement expressing concern, calling for restraint, and offering the AU's support to resolve their differences.

4.11 *Supporting Peace Agreements and Transitions in South Sudan and Sudan*

The AU continued to maintain its engagement in other political and security dynamics in the region in 2020. Being a major milestone in an otherwise difficult year, the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGONU) of South Sudan was finally formed in February, having experienced some delays since 2018. The AU prides itself in having worked collaboratively with IGAD to mediate in the South Sudan conflict, resulting in the establishment of the revitalised TGONU in South Sudan (AU Commission 2021). The PSC conducted a field mission to South Sudan in February 2020 and dedicated four sessions to the conflict in 2020 (27 January, 27 February, 9 April, and 15 September). The PSC discussed aspects of the political process in South Sudan, including offering its support for the signing of the *Rome Declaration for Ceasefire*, enhancing inclusivity of the current peace process, appraising the implementation of Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS), and establishing a national taskforce to address growing intercommunal violence (Amani Africa 2021). In addition to these PSC engagements, the AU High-Level Ad-hoc Committee on South Sudan supported attempts at resolving contentions over the numbers of states and their boundaries (AU Commission 2021). Building upon its previous engagements, the AU support for South Sudan also extended to other areas, including endeavours to establish the hybrid court[17] and supporting a comprehensive disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) process and national reconciliation.

Judged by the number of PSC sessions, the AU appeared to have engaged more in Sudan than any country in the region (the six sessions were held on 30 January, 3 March, 21 May, 17 June, 6 October, and 30 November). The Union's engagement in Sudan in 2020 mainly focused on the interrelated issues of addressing the economic challenges, removing Sudan from the US list of 'State Sponsors of Terrorism', and supporting the political transition and peace

16 *ICG Briefing* (158) [Brussels], 14 July 2020.

17 'Cabinet approves establishment of hybrid court', *Eye Radio* [Juba], 30 January 2021. URL: <https://eyeradio.org/cabinet-approves-establishment-of-hybrid-court/> (accessed: 30 June 2021).

process in Sudan and transition of the AU–UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) (Amani Africa 2021). The PSC session on 30 November focused specifically on Darfur and UNAMID transition.

The AU claims to have successfully contributed to Sudan being removed on 14 December 2020 from the US list of 'State Sponsors of Terrorism', notably through engagement of the PSC and the AU's three non-permanent members (the A3) on the UNSC (AU Commission 2021). The PSC provided its political support to ongoing attempts to lift economic and trade sanctions, including rapprochement with the US government. Though not necessarily playing a key role, the AU also continued its support for Sudan's intersecting peace processes. The transitional government signed a peace agreement with the Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF) and Sudan Liberation Movement of Minni Minnawi (SLM-MM) as well as a separate joint agreement of principles with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N-AH). On 6 October 2021, the SPC praised these agreements as stepping stones towards the cessation of hostilities and durable peace in Sudan (AU PSC 2020j).

With regard to the drawdown of UNAMID, a key milestone in 2020 was the agreement between the AU, the UN, and the Sudanese government regarding the termination of the UNAMID mandate by 31 December 2020 and acceptance of a post-UNAMID mission, the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS), which would operate without the AU. On 30 November 2020, the PSC endorsed earlier reports of the AUC chairperson and the UN secretary-general recommending the termination of the mission. These reports noted that the mission's termination was made in light of the concrete practical steps and progress achieved in the implementation of the *National Plan for the Protection of Civilians by the Sudanese Government* (1 June 2020) in both tracks, physical protection and protective environment, as well as the consultations between the AU and the UN with the Sudan Transitional Authorities on 25 October 2020 (AU PSC 2020n).

4.12 *Other Emerging AU Engagements*

In addition to the above-mentioned country-specific and thematic engagements, the AU ventured into relatively unchartered peace and security related issues in 2020. The AU responded to calls to mediate disputes over the GERD and the Nile River water as the protracted negotiations between Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan were faltering. South Africa as the AU chair for 2020, took over the negotiation, which was previously a US-brokered process (see Sidiropoulos, this Yearbook, chapter 4). The AU framed this engagement under its activities concerning conflict prevention and early warning. Despite a series of meetings

held since July 2020 between the riparian countries, a conclusive agreement has not been reached so far.[18]

In addition, managing the Horn of Africa's relations with external actors increasingly became critical as it has continued to witness interference of foreign actors in the region. While foreign actors broadly refer to a set of traditional and non-traditional foreign powers, the involvement of Gulf states in the region was more visible, with clear peace and security implications for the region. Considering the adverse consequences of such involvement, on 26 November 2020 the AU condemned foreign interference in some countries in the region and underscored the importance of national ownership of political processes (AU PSC 2020m).

Overall, the AU's record in addressing crises in the subregion has been mixed. It has made some modest contributions and achievements as evidenced by its continued engagement in Somalia through AMISOM as well as its political support for the peace processes and political transitions in Sudan and South Sudan. However, these and other initiatives are no match for the complex and volatile political and security dynamics in the region. As elsewhere in the continent, the AU's engagement has been marked by failure to prioritise conflict prevention efforts and to effectively utilise existing instruments therein. This is clearly the case in Ethiopia, where the AU could have acted much earlier based on early warning signs and reports suggesting a possible escalation of violence (cf. Dawit and Meressa 2020). The AU's belated calls for mediation and national dialogue after the Tigray debacle appears to have been out of place both in terms of timing and context.

Despite their long-standing engagement in supporting AMISOM's presence in Somalia, recent differences in carrying out the UN's 'Independent Assessment of International Support to the Whole Security Environment in Somalia Post-2021' have reflected possible opposing views between the AU and the UN regarding their analyses of broader peace and security dynamics and approaches to resolving crises. The AU refused to cooperate with the UN's independent assessment after the UN failed to meet the AU's request for co-leadership of the assessment, deciding in the end to conduct its own assessment (United Nations 2021). Beyond the UN, AU, and IGAD, the imperative for coordinating other international and regional actors and partners remained key for the region. While the support of these partners in sustaining peace and security initiatives was vital, Somalia offered an extreme example in terms of existing obstacles in coordinating these actors in Somalia, which has resulted at times in duplication and competition and has also contributed to fragmentation of local institutions.

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18 'The AU should persevere on the GERD issue', *ISS PSC Insights* [Pretoria], 28 April 2021.

4.13 *Central Africa and the Great Lakes Region*

The situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) stand out in a region that saw arguably marginal AU engagement in 2020 (see inventory, this Yearbook, chapter 16). The AU's involvement was centred around two major interrelated dimensions – making a fragile peace agreement, the 2019 Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the CAR (PAPR-CAR) stick, and containing the fallout from contestations over the 2020 elections. These engagements could be broadly conceived as an extension of the AU's historical engagement in CAR, including the deployment of a peacekeeping mission in the immediate years following the civil war in 2012.

The year 2020 saw increasing political tensions and manoeuvring in the lead up to the elections. Particularly unsuccessful attempts by the government to extend the election dates due to the Covid-19 pandemic have heightened the political tension. But more consequential was the Constitutional Court's decision to reject the candidature of the former president François Bozizé.[19] This led to attacks by the Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC), a loose alliance of armed opposition groups, calling for ceasing the entire electoral process and convening a consultation with all the national forces. These attacks were targeting the Central African armed forces, civilians, humanitarian personnel, and UN peacekeepers.[20]

These contestations over the elections were taking place within the precarious security situation, where the AU-brokered peace agreement remained a critical lynchpin of the unravelling CAR's peace puzzle. For the major part, the implementation of the agreement faltered, especially regarding the lack of significant progress in 'the creation of the mixed special security units (MSSUS) and the formation of inclusive government' (Diatta 2021). In this regard, the AU continued to offer its political support and convening power to the implementation of the PAPR-CAR in collaboration with the UN, ECCAS, the EU, and other relevant actors. In, addition, on 10 July 2020 the PSC also authorised the deployment of the AU Military Observers Mission to the Central African Republic (MOUACA) (AU PSC 2020d). Despite unsatisfactory attempts in the past to hold violators of the peace agreements accountable, the PSC also condemned

> [t]he decision of the former president François Bozizé to collude with some armed groups and for launching a rebellion warfare against the government and UN peacekeepers (MINUSCA) which resulted in blatant

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19 'Eight Priorities for the African Union in 2021', *ICG Briefing* No 166, [Brussels], 3 February 2021.

20 'Central African Republic: December', *ICG Crisis watch* [Brussels], December 2020.

> human rights violations, war crimes and crimes against humanity for which he will be held personally accountable. (AU PSC 2020o, §6)

On the one hand, this could be considered a good start in holding violators of the peace accord accountable. Conversely, the PSC's action could be scrutinised for its timing and impact. The PSC's condemnation had come after the CPC coalition was formed and after it was able to influence the electoral process. The threat and violence of the CPC was recognised to have disrupted the electoral process, leading, among other issues, to a low voter turnout of 36 per cent and casting a shadow over the legitimacy of the electoral outcome (Diatta 2021). But more fundamentally, it took place within a larger trend where the AU was struggling to fulfil its role as guarantor of the CAR peace agreement, not least as it was lacking the human and financial resources to deploy its military observers.[21] Concerning elections, the AU had offered its political support through its participation in election observation. The PSC underlined the importance of upholding the electoral process, including the observance of the electoral calendar defined by the National Electoral Authority (ANE) and the Constitutional Court.

Other country situations in the region have not seen much of AU engagement in 2020 (on CAR the PSC met twice). Cameroon has been struggling with twin threats from the so-called Anglophone Crisis, a secessionist insurgency in the English-speaking region of the country, and the Boko Haram insurgency. As in 2019, the issue of Cameroon was not tabled at any of the PSC meetings. The last notable engagement of the AU was the AUC chairperson's visit to the country in November 2019. The government in Yaoundé is trying to handle the security crisis through military offensives and a national dialogue process; however, a broad-based, inclusive political settlement still remains an imperative.[22]

There is still high level of insecurity in the eastern parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) due to the conflict in South Kivu that has been ongoing for the last two decades. The security scene is marked by the presence of a myriad of armed groups and rebel forces from neighbouring countries. The emerging threat arising out of the activities of Islamic State Central Africa Province (ISCAP), an IS-affiliated group operating in the DRC, added another layer to the country's complex security situation.[23] The threat from these multiple sources, coupled with political confrontation between the country's

21 *ISS PSC Insights* [Pretoria], 14 February 2021.

22 *ISS Today* [Pretoria], 23 March 2021.

23 'Armed fighters free over 1,300 prisoners from DR Congo jail', *Al Jazeera* [Doha], 20 October 2020.

former president (2001–2019) Joseph Kabila, and incumbent Félix Tshisekedi, continued to demand a more robust AU engagement in the DRC. So far, the AU's role in the DRC has been mainly in terms of coordinating stabilisation and mediation efforts with the UN Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the DR Congo (MONUSCO). However, the AUC chairperson has appointed a special representative and head of the AU Liaison Office in the DRC, Michelle Ndiaye Ntab (former head of the Tana Secretariat, among other positions).

Burundi saw increasing friction in the lead up to the 2020 election, which was concluded in a relatively calm environment, albeit with persisting political harassment of opposition politicians. The AU did not participate in election observation in Burundi where it could have played alternative roles in providing other forms of electoral support, including technical support and training of local observers. The AU's role has also been limited in furthering the diplomatic rapprochement between Burundi and Rwanda. In 2020, Burundi was not on the PSC's agenda.

4.14 *Southern Africa*

In comparison to the other regions, the AU had been less involved in evolving peace and security dynamics in Southern Africa in 2020. The only PSC session on Southern Africa was held on 5 November 2020; it discussed the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) report on Mozambique (AU PSC 2020l). However, this is not necessarily indicative of the greater stability of the region. On the contrary, governance and socio-economic related tension (in Zimbabwe) and more worryingly the growing threat of terrorism in Mozambique constituted concerns for regional stability.[24] Particularly, the insurgency in the country's Cabo Delgado province is arguably the most consequential in terms defying the existing narrative that Southern African region is relatively stable and less prone to the threat of violent extremism than the rest of the continent.

The IS-affiliated extremist group Ahlu Sunna Wa Jamma strengthened its campaign in 2020 across Cabo Delgado, and it stepped up its offensive capacity, launching 20 attacks per month. The group launched more attacks on military targets than the previous year and expanded its territorial control beyond its base of Mocímboa da Praia, which it took control of in August 2020. Attacks and violence against civilians have doubled from the 2019 levels. Since the start of the insurgency in 2017, the number of reported fatalities reached 2,523 by January 2021, with the number of civilian fatalities totalling 1,274 (ACLED 2021). Coupled with the twin cyclones that hit Mozambique, the insurgency

24 *ISS Today* [Pretoria], 19 November 2020.

also led to humanitarian crises in the form of continued displacement and food shortage.

Despite the ongoing nature of the crisis since 2017 and the more recent increase in threats from jihadist attacks against security forces and civilians, in 2020 the situation in Northern Mozambique has not prompted any visible responses from the AU. Rather, in February 2020, in its decision on the Report of the Peace and Security Council on its Activities and the State of Peace and Security in Africa, for the Period from February 2019 to February 2020, the 33rd AU Assembly did not make any further reference to the conflict, although the insurgency was discussed in the report's extended version (AU Assembly 2020c, with respect to Assembly/AU/5 [XXXIII]). The AU, it seems, is letting the Southern African Development Community (SADC) take the lead in responding to the crisis.

5 Conclusion

In 2020, a number of new and old conflict situations unveiled existing limitations in the continental resolve and the capacity of the AU and its member states to tackle crises. By and large, the AU's responses throughout the year were reactive rather than proactive and, to a large extent, were outpaced by unfolding political and security dynamics. Implementing Africa's peace, security, and governance agenda continues to be hampered by 'a difficult implementation environment'. This is due to some member states' reluctance to provide the required level of funding as well as to their resistance to the continent's reform agenda. As in previous years, the track record of the PSC, the Union's main decision-making organ on matters of peace and security, though critical, was fairly limited and often late in responding to emerging crises other than those it had already tabled in previous years.

The AU attempted to handle some crises and disputes after they had escalated and/or after the deep involvement of other non-African actors. This is particularly the case regarding the negotiations around the GERD, but it could also apply to the Union's response to the situation in Tigray. In some cases, crisis situations that have had a profound impact on the ground remained under the AU's radar (as in Cameroon) or clearly lacked a more forceful reaction from the continental body (e.g. the jihadist insurgency in Mozambique). The multiplicity of actors on the ground and the complex nature of the security landscape also presented multiple obstacles in the AU's endeavours to manage the situation in CAR, the Sahel, and Libya. At the same time, the AU was crucial in a number of existing situations. In Somalia, it managed under

difficult conditions to maintain the status quo on the ground by sustaining its mission AMISOM. It also kept on course the implementation of peace agreements in Sudan and in South Sudan. These engagements were more relevant in preventing a relapse of gains and projecting the visibility of the AU's work, rather than representing significant progress. Overall, the AU showed a commendable level of adaptation, including changes in its working methods (such as virtual PSC and AU Assembly meetings) and launching a timely response to the Covid-19 pandemic through Africa CDC. In addition, the AU had to operate within a difficult international environment marked by increasing scrutiny of multilateralism and heightened rivalry between old and new global powers.

However, the lack of political will – as regards not only the AU's willingness to act in situations but also member states' acceptance of the role of the AU in specific situations – is arguably the most defining element of the Union's performance in the management of Africa's reality in 2020. This challenge is alternatively framed as the sovereignty dilemma, which remains a major obstacle whether in terms of addressing political conflicts and electoral crises or proposing robust actions to respond to violent conflicts. While AU member states had made political commitments to key global, continental, and regional norms related to peace, security, and governance agenda, the lack of adherence to these commitments continue to perpetuate governance-related conflicts across the continent. In such contexts, the role of the AU remains limited in enforcing the implementation of these norms because member states consider this task to be their sovereign prerogative and therefore simply ignore existing compliance mechanisms, for instance with regard to governance.

While acknowledging the importance of context-specific analysis, an argument could also be made that the AU itself was also lacking the political will to act on warning signs and in turn to deploy existing preventive diplomacy mechanisms. The largely proactive demeanour broadly speaks to continued lack of appreciation for the AU's alert systems, inadequate uptake of early warning information, and weak political will to act.[25]

A lack of clarity surrounding the principle of subsidiarity also impacts on the AU's response to key crises (on AU–RECs relations, see also Engel, this Yearbook, chapter 3). Where there is better understanding of the essence of the subsidiarity relationship, mainly as a function of the relative strength and willingness of the REC in question, a more robust continental action was visible. This was the case in dealing with the coup in Mali, where the AU and ECOWAS streamlined their positions and pushed for the return to constitutional rule.

25 Interview with a regional analyst #3. Addis Ababa, 19 March 2021.

In contrast, in the case of Mozambique the regional bloc, SADC, had failed to come up with clear response mechanisms to deal with terrorism and violent extremism. In this case, the AU appeared to have been waiting with its hands tied with the double jeopardy of subsidiarity (vis-à-vis SADC) and sovereignty (vis-à-vis Mozambique).[26]

The idea and practice of collaboration and partnerships with subregional and global actors by now have become a regular fixture in the AU's response to crises. Practical forms of engagement with these actors helped in buttressing the AU's response to conflicts, notably in Somalia, in the Sahel, and in the fight against Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin region. In other cases, the AU played a norm-setting and decision-making role in supporting the engagement of the UN and some of the RECs, which were playing lead roles in some regional and country contexts. This could be illustrated by the AU's role in Libya supporting the UN-led peace process and in Mali rallying behind ECOWAS' attempts to resolve the political crises following the August 2020 coup. Regarding the latter, the AU's norms pertaining to UCG were at the heart of ECOWAS' response to the coup in Mali.

However, outstanding tasks and challenges remain as to clarifying the division of labour between the AU and the RECs as well as the AU and the UN in this policy field. A new Memorandum of Understanding between the AU and the RECs will be adopted, latest at the 35th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (scheduled for February 2022). In the context of the AU–UN partnership, lack of strategic convergence between the UNSC and the AU PSC still remains a key obstacle. Even though joint decision-making between the two councils is unlikely to be sought at this moment, there were evident limitations on the level of consultations between the UNSC and the PSC before key decisions were made at the UNSC. There were also challenges in terms of ensuring that African's positions and voice are adequately considered. In this regard, the existing practice of the penholder system at the UNSC remains a limitation as this gives undue privilege to some permanent members of the UNSC over a number of African files and dossiers at the Council.

Looking towards 2021, it is worthwhile to offer a brief outlook on expected changes in the peace and security dynamics on the continent and the response mechanisms of the AU. Crises situations that the AU overlooked in 2020, such as the Horn of Africa and Mozambique, are expected to get more attention at

26 Arguably, challenges related to resources and capacity are secondary to the above-mentioned challenges. Funding limitations that have forced untimely interruption of the AUTSTG in The Gambia and induced debates regarding the untimely exit of AMISOM still show that these factors are still relevant but not primarily decisive in terms of lasting stability and security of specific country situations.

the continental level. The expansion of the violent extremist threat in the Sahel as well as Ghana, Benin, Guinea-Bissau, and Côte d'Ivoire may prompt closer collaboration between the AU and ECOWAS. The growing threat of kidnapping and other forms of organised criminality warrants more attention both as a standalone issue in and of itself and in light of its intersection with terrorism and violent extremism. At the same time, there may not be key changes in the way the AU handles the profound challenge of the political will dilemma that impacts its engagement in crises situation. As such, some country situations (Cameroon) and thematic issues (such as effectively dealing with the nuanced strategies of tampering with elections, UCGs, and successions in aging regimes) are unlikely to feature in the AU agenda in 2021.

The ongoing institutional reform efforts that will lead to the merger of the AU departments in charge of political affairs, one the one hand, and peace and security, on the other, in 2021 needs to be keenly watched. As any other process of change, the merger has created some uncertainties not least due to the enormity of the tasks that are placed under one single commission and the progress of laying the foundation for the institutional infrastructures that are envisaged for these tasks. At the same time, there are already some positive outcomes of this process, notably a more structured approach to handling the business of the new commission which combines the political affairs and the peace and security portfolios.

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CHAPTER 11

Regional Integration and Trade

Katharina P.W. Döring and Ulf Engel

1 Introduction

Trade has been on the very top of the African regional and continental integration agenda for decades. For this reason, the signing of the 2018 *Agreement on the Establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area* (AfCFTA) at the 10th Extraordinary Session of the African Union (AU) Assembly (Kigali, Rwanda, 21 March 2018) was seen as a major breakthrough (AU Assembly 2018a, §5). Up to the present day, the AfCFTA brings together 54 out of 55 member states of the AU, covering a market of more than 1.3 billion people and a combined GDP of $3.4 trillion (Malizewska and Ruta 2020, 1). It is the biggest free trade area (FTA) outside the World Trade Organisation (WTO), founded in 1995. The establishment of the AfCFTA raised high expectations: the United Nations Commission for Africa (UNECA), for instance, estimates that the elimination of import duties would boost inter-African trade by 52.3 per cent, and even double this trade if non-tariff barriers would also be reduced.[1] The World Bank reckons that real income gains from full implementation of the AfCFTA 'could increase by 7 percent by 2035, or nearly $450 billion (in 2014 prices and market exchange rates)' (ibid., 3). With regard to poverty and employment, the AfCFTA 'can lift an additional 30 million people from extreme poverty (1.5 percent of the continent's population) and 68 million people from moderate poverty' (ibid., 5).

For this reason, the AfCFTA is celebrated as a major step towards continental economic integration and an important contribution to *Agenda 2063* (African Union 2014; see also Luke and MacLeod 2019; Nwankwo and Ajibo 2020). Both the AfCFTA and Agenda 2063, a 'master plan for transforming Africa into the global powerhouse of the future' (African Union 2021), imply grandiose teleological narratives of progress reiterated by national and regional elites. At the same time and given the rampant 'crisis of implementation' on the

1 'UNECA – AfCFTA: an opportunity to boost Africa's economic transformation, *eTrade for all* [Geneva], 16 March 2018. URL: <https://etradeforall.org/news/uneca-afcfta-an-opportunity-to-boost-africas-economic-transformation/> (accessed: 30 June 2021).

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continent, however, the AfCFTA is seen as 'a litmus test of the commitment of African countries to economic integration' (UNECA et al. 2019, xi).

Depositary of the agreement is the chairperson of the AU Commission (AUC) (African Union 2018a, §24[1]). The agreement was to 'enter into force thirty (30) days after the deposit of the twenty second (22nd) instrument of ratification' (ibid., 23). The minimum number of instruments of ratification was received on 29 April 2019 (AU Assembly 2019a, §2).[2] Accordingly, the agreement entered into force on 30 May 2019. Initially 1 July 2020 was designated as the implementation date (see AU Assembly 2020a, §9), but because of SARS-CoV-2/Covid-19, it was decided on 17 June 2020 to postpone the official launch of the AfCFTA to 1 January 2021.[3]

This chapter proceeds as follows. After this introduction, in the second section, the historical background to regional integration and trade on the African continent is briefly sketched out, including an overview on current levels of regional integration and intraregional trade. The third section details the more immediate background, objectives, and principles of the AfCFTA as well as its institutional framework. The fourth section reviews the ratification process of the agreement and discusses resistance by some member states. The fifth section recapitulates the launching of the AfCFTA in 2020. This is followed by a brief outlook, highlighting some of the challenges and still unresolved issues around the AfCFTA.

2 Background on Regional Integration and Intraregional Trade

The history of regional integration on the African continent goes back to the formation of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), the oldest of its kind in the world, which was founded in 1910.[4] Continental integration thrived with the establishment of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) on 25 May 1963 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. And even before that, in 1959, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Upper Volta (present-day Burkina Faso), and Dahomey (present-day Benin) formed the Conseil de l'Entente (later joined by Togo). Among other

2 For a good reason, the African Union refers to this process as 'an unprecedented record attainment of the minimum number of instruments of ratifications' (AU Assembly 2019c, §2). The 13-month period indeed compares rather positively to, for instance, the 60 months it took the Union to reach the minimum number of ratifications for the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (which was signed on 30 January 2007 and only entered into force on 15 February 2012).

3 Decision Assembly/AU/OSP/Dec.1(06.20)II of 17 June 2020 was not officially published on the Union's website. It was adopted through 'Silent Procedure'.

4 Today comprising Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia, and South Africa.

initiatives to 'encourage viable economic development projects on a regional basis', in February 1976 the OAU Council of Ministers decided to define five regions on the continent: Northern, Western, Central, Eastern, and Southern (OAU Council 1976, §2[a]). Subsequently, in all five African regions a number of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) were established. The mushrooming of the RECs resulted in two waves of regionalisation, in the 1980s and the 1990s respectively, which inter alia led to overlapping memberships and mandates. At the continental level, this included the 1979 *Monrovia Declaration* and the 1980 *Lagos Plan of Action* (see OAU 1980). In the long run, an African Economic Community (AEC) was envisaged. This vision was codified in the *Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community* (hereinafter the Abuja Treaty, 3 June 1991), signed in the Nigerian capital (OAU 1991).

Today, regional integration efforts are playing out at two policy levels, the AU and the RECs (see also the book review section, this Yearbook, part 3). According to the second *Africa Regional Integration Index 2019*, jointly produced by the AU, the African Development Bank (AfDB), and UNECA, contemporary levels of regional integration on the continent differ widely between not only the RECs, but also their respective member states (African Union et al. 2020). On a scale from 0 to 1, the eight RECs officially recognised by the AU[5] show a very mixed record in this respect (see Table 11.1), usually with above-average scores on the free movement of people, and below-average scores on productive integration and infrastructural integration. However, in comparison to the *Africa Regional Integration Index 2016* all average scores were lower in 2019 (African Union et al. 2017).[6]

Differences between the regions are substantial, for instance with regard to infrastructural integration, ranging from a very low score in SADC (0.214) to a well-above-average score in the EAC (0.555). And in terms of trade integration, there is a considerable spread between SADC on the low end (0.340) and the UMA on the highest end (0.481).

Historically, intraregional trade in the African RECs has been fairly low compared to other world regions. In 2017, only up to 17 per cent of all trade on the African continent was between AU member states. This was partly because

5 There are also five other RECs not enjoying the same kind of relations with the Union. These are the Arab Mediterranean Free Trade Agreement (AGADIR, 2001), the Economic and Monetary Union Community of Central Africa (CEMAC, 1964), the Greater Arab Free Trade Agreement (GAFTA, 1997), the Indian Ocean Commission (1982), and SACU (1910).

6 The composite indicator on trade is made up of the average intraregional import tariffs, the share of intraregional exports over GDP, the share of intraregional imports over GDP, the share of intraregional trade, and 'AfCFTA' (African Union et al. 2020, 20). The methodology was slightly refined compared to the first report, resulting in scores not really being comparable across time (African Union et al. 2017, 11).

TABLE 11.1 African regional integration scores, 2019

	Regional average		Free movement of people	Trade	Production	Macro-economics	Infra-structure
	2019	2016					
Africa	0.327	0.470	0.441	0.382	0.201	0.339	0.220
CEN-SAD	0.377	0.395	0.508	0.377	0.256	0.441	0.302
COMESA	0.367	0.415	0.385	0.445	0.328	0.365	0.317
EAC	0.537	0.540	0.664	0.440	0.434	0.660	0.555
ECCAS	0.442	0.454	0.469	0.357	0.323	0.684	0.373
ECOWAS	0.425	0.509	0.733	0.438	0.220	0.469	0.298
IGAD	0.438	0.457	0.540	0.444	0.321	0.423	0.480
SADC	0.337	0.531	0.490	0.340	0.239	0.422	0.214
UMA	0.488	0.459	0.438	0.481	0.449	0.571	0.509

Note: CEN-SAD (Community of Sahel-Saharan States), COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa), EAC (East African Community), ECCAS (Economic Community of Central African States), ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States), IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development), SADC (Southern African Development Community), and UMA (Arab Maghreb Union).
SOURCE: AFRICAN UNION ET AL. (2020, 23–25); AND AFRICAN UNION ET AL. 2017 (14F.).

post-independence trade patterns were still geared towards the former colonial powers. In most cases, both trade within the respective REC and the rest of the continent has not been strongly developed. In terms of exports and imports, the EAC, SADC, and IGAD show relatively higher levels of integration, whereas ECCAS, the UMA, and CEN-SAD are only very weakly integrated. COMESA and ECOWAS are somewhat between these groupings (see Table 11.2).

This situation is dynamic, as indicated by 2016 figures from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), according to which the shares of intraregional economic community trade in total trade in Africa have gone up so that currently:

> there were deeper levels of integration in SADC (84.9 per cent), followed by COMESA (59.5 per cent), CEN-SAD (58.4 per cent), ECOWAS (56.7 per cent), AMU (51.8 per cent), IGAD (49.0 per cent), EAC (48.3 per cent) and ECCAS (17.7 per cent). (UNCTAD 2019, 21)

TABLE 11.2 Direction of African trade, 2000–2017 (%)

	Exports			Imports		
	Intra-REC	**Other African**	**Non-African**	**Intra-REC**	**Other African**	**Non-African**
CEN-SAD	7	5	88	6	4	90
COMESA	9	8	83	9	5	86
EAC	20	18	62	17	14	69
ECCAS	2	4	94	3	5	92
ECOWAS	9	7	84	8	6	86
IGAD	14	12	74	14	12	74
SADC	19	3	78	16	3	81
UMA	3	2	95	3	2	95

SOURCE: UNCTAD ET AL. (2019, 5–6).

Within regions, country-to-county differences are noticeable. Regarding the overall average integration scores, the top five performers are South Africa (by far), followed by Kenya, Rwanda, Morocco, and Mauritius. The bottom five performers are Sudan, Sierra Leone, Burundi, Eritrea, and South Sudan (African Union et al. 2020, 27). And in terms of trade integration, the top five performers all happen to be SADC member states: Eswatini, Namibia, and Lesotho, followed by South Africa and Zimbabwe. Conversely, the lowest levels of trade integration can be found, in descending order, in Algeria, Comoros, Tunisia, Sudan, and Somalia (ibid., 28). The International Monetary Fund (IMF) points out that intra-African trade flows are dominated by a handful of 'hubs': Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Senegal, and South Africa (IMF 2019, 39). Above all, these figures are 'reflecting the fact that Africa has the highest average import duties and the highest average non-tariff barriers in the world' (ibid.).[7] The liberalisation of trade under the AfCFTA is expected to lead to increases in regional exports. And 'as trade increases, so will the demand for production capacities and regional infrastructure, spurring growth in these dimensions of integration as well' (ibid.).

The IMF suggests that the main bottlenecks in higher levels of trade integration are non-tariff related; these include very practical impediments, such

7 Discussing the challenge of reducing non-tariff barriers (NTBs), see Erasmus (2020c). See the monitoring platform: <www.tradebarriers.org>.

as bureaucratic mismanagement at border crossings. Reducing tariffs alone would not suffice. In addition, the following is highlighted by the IMF:

> Poor trade logistics and, to a lesser extent, infrastructure are major obstacles to further trade integration in the region. These bottlenecks are particularly important for landlocked and low-income countries. (IMF 2019, 40)

At the same time, the IMF cautions that the removal of trade barriers to foster intraregional trade 'may unevenly affect countries in the region' (ibid.). In a few countries that still apply high export tariffs, fiscal revenue losses may be significant. And, finally the IMF warns that deeper trade integration 'can have adverse effects on countries' income distribution, particularly in countries with more diversified economies and large shares of skilled labor' (ibid.).

3 The African Continental Free Trade Area

The 2011 decision by Heads of State and Government of three Eastern and Southern African RECs – COMESA, the EAC, and SADC – to launch negotiations on the establishment of the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA), cutting across their regions and bringing together almost half of the AU member states (26 out of 55), introduced a new momentum to the continental debate on trade integration (AU Assembly 2012a). Subsequently the 18th AU Assembly (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 29–30 January 2012) endorsed the *Framework, Road Map and Architecture for Fast-tracking the Establishment of the Continental Free Trade Area* (*CFTA*) and the *Action Plan for Boosting Intra-African Trade* (AU Assembly 2012b, §3). Rather ambitiously, the AU Assembly also decided 'that the CFTA should be operationalized by the indicative date of 2017' – this was based on three milestones: (1) finalisation of the COMESA, EAC, and SADC TFTA initiative by 2014, (2) completion of other, complementary FTA(s) across the continent between 2012 and 2014, and (3) 'consolidation of the Tripartite and other regional FTAs into a Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) initiative between 2015 and 2016' (ibid., §4). Official negotiations for the establishment of the CFTA were launched in June 2015 – just days after the COMESA, EAC, and SADC TFTA was finally established. Basically, the Union 'aimed at integrating Africa's markets in line with the objectives and principles enunciated in the Abuja Treaty' (AU Assembly 2015, §3).

The negotiation process was led by the president of the Republic of Niger, Issoufou Mahamadou (2011–2021), and was under the oversight of the AU ministers of trade (AMOT). The dossier is coordinated by the AU Specialised Technical

Committee (STC) on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration. Within the AUC, the portfolio is led by Commissioner for Trade and Industry Albert Muchanga (previously Zambia's ambassador to Ethiopia and the AU).

3.1 *The Agreement*

In March 2018, these talks led to the signing of the 2018 *Kigali Agreement on the Establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area*. In the preamble to the agreement, the AU highlights 'the need to create an expanded and secure market for the goods and services of State Parties through adequate infrastructure and the reduction or progressive elimination of tariffs and elimination of non-tariff barriers to trade and investment' (African Union 2018a, 1). At the same time, the AU is conscious of 'the challenges of multiple and overlapping trade regimes to achieve policy coherence' (ibid.). In the agreement, the principle of national sovereignty of member states is reaffirmed, and the historic role of the eight officially recognised RECs as building blocks working towards the establishment of the AfCFTA is acknowledged (ibid., 2). In this respect, the AfCFTA agreement clearly reflects a compromise (see Woolfrey et al. 2019, 3).

In general terms, the AfCFTA aims to create 'a single market for goods, services, facilitated by movement of persons', establish 'a liberalised market for goods and services through successive rounds of negotiations', and contribute 'to the movement of capital and natural persons and facilitate investments' (African Union 2018a, §3). The AfCFTA agreement also wants to lay the foundation for the establishment of 'a Continental Customs Union at a later stage' (ibid.). Specifically, the parties commit themselves to

a. progressively eliminate tariffs and non-tariff barriers to trade in goods;
b. progressively liberalise trade in services;
c. cooperate on investment, intellectual property rights and competition policy;
d. cooperate on all trade-related areas;
e. cooperate on customs matters and the implementation of trade facilitation measures;
f. establish a mechanism for the settlement of disputes concerning their rights and obligations; and
g. establish and maintain an institutional framework for the implementation and administration of the AfCFTA (African Union 2018a, §4).

Overall, the agreement is based on a number of principles, including – but not exclusively – that the FTA of the RECs serve as building blocks for the AfCFTA, Most-Favoured-Nation (MFN) Treatment, reciprocity, and consensus in decision-making (African Union 2018a, §5). The areas not covered by the AfCFTA

(but in some agreements regulating the RECs) are state aid, public procurement, environmental laws, and labour market regulations (see Malizewska and Ruta 2020, 2).

3.2 *Institutional Framework*

In contrast to, for example, the EAC or SADC, the AfCFTA is not a legal person. The ultimate decision-making body of the AfCFTA is the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government (see African Union 2018a, §9), providing oversight of and guidance on the AfCFTA. The Council of Ministers comprises ministers for trade or other nominees from state parties. The council takes decisions in accordance with the AfCFTA agreement. It reports to the AU Assembly through the AU Executive Council and makes recommendations to the AU Assembly for the adoption of an authoritative interpretation of the AfCFTA agreement (in general, also see Erasmus 2020a, 2020b). The development of programmes and action plans is the domain of the Committee of Senior Trade Officials, which consists of permanent secretaries or other designated officials. The AfCFTA Secretariat is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the agreement (ibid., §13). The Dispute Settlement Mechanism is modelled upon the WTO dispute settlement system (ibid., 54–76). Litigation is only possible for signatories, that is to say, state parties, not private ones.[8]

3.3 *Ratification and Reluctance*

After 8 countries had ratified and deposited the legal instruments relating to the AfCFTA in 2018, and another 20 did so in 2019. This was followed by another 6 countries in 2020: the Central African Republic (22 September), Angola (4 November), Lesotho and Tunisia (both 27 November), Cameroon (1 December), and Nigeria (5 December) – bringing the total number of countries who have ratified and deposited to 34 (African Union 2020). One of the 55 AU member states still has yet to sign the AfCFTA agreement: Eritrea. In Algeria, Somalia, and Zambia, parliamentary approval is pending. Among those 20 states who have not yet ratified and deposited by the end of 2020 are a substantial number of SADC member states: Botswana, Comoros, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Seychelles, and

8 See also *tralacBlog* [Stelllenbosch], 28 July 2020. URL: <https://www.tralac.org/blog/article/14802-what-disputes-could-be-heard-by-the-afcfta-dispute-settlement-mechanism.html> (accessed: 30 June 2021). In this blog, tralac founder Gerhard Erasmus details the various regional, continental, and global dispute mechanisms that will eventually have precedence in the context of the AfCFTA. See also Mthandazo Ngwenya, 'The Africa investment protocol: a prickly pear for Africans', *Mail & Guardian* [Johannesburg], 9 November 2020.

Tanzania. This reflects continuous reluctance by least developed countries (LDCs), in particular from this African region, to the agreement.

However, South Africa and Nigeria – the two biggest African economies, accounting for roughly one-third of the continent's GDP – initially showed some reluctance to sign[9] and, then, to deposit the legal instruments (Nigeria only did so on 5 December 2020, while South Africa did so on 10 February 2019). For decades, both countries have successfully pursued regional strategies for economic integration that suited their industries' needs and therefore it is at best unclear if continental integration would be beneficial for their economies. For South Africa, this has been attributed to the already established market dominance of its companies, which could only expect marginal gains, if any, from joining the AfCFTA (Vanheukelom et al. 2020, 9). For Nigeria, a similar conflict of interests has been observed:

> Domestic opposition from trade unions and influential private sector actors with direct access to the President led to a significant delay in Nigeria's signature of the AfCFTA Agreement. (Vanheukelom et al. 2020, 8 – with reference to the detailed ECDPM case study of Woolfrey et al. 2019)

Trade liberalisation is a challenge – particularly for the 32 LDCs negotiating the AfCFTA.[10] Thus, in the negotiation process a difference was introduced between LDCs and non-LDCs. For full trade liberalisation, non-LDCs were given a grace period of 5 years and LDCs 10 years. And another group of African states, called the G6 countries,[11] asked for a 15-year period (see AU Assembly 2019a, §9). On designated sensitive goods, non-LDCs have 10 years to eliminate tariffs and LDCs 13 years. At that stage, the grace period for G6 countries was still to be determined (see Hartzenberg 2019). In support of G6 countries in particular, the day after the summit Africa's biggest trade bank, the Cairo-based African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank), announced a $1-billion

9 See, for instance, Asmita Parshotam, 'South Africa, Nigeria and the AfCFTA: 6 key questions answered', *Africa Portal* [Johannesburg], 3 May 2018. URL: <https://www.africaportal.org/features/south-africa-nigeria-and-afcfta-6-key-questions-answered/> (accessed: 30 June 2021). See also *Africa Research Bulletin. Economic, Financial and Technical Series* [Southern Gate, Chichester], 1 May 2018, 55 (3): col. 22060A–22062A. The Nigerian president claimed he needed more time for consultation following objections from Nigerian business leaders and trade unions, and the South African president was waiting for parliament approval first.

10 For a case study on Malawi, see Ndonga et al. (2020).

11 Ethiopia, Madagascar, Malawi, Sudan, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

AfCFTA Adjustment Facility 'to enable countries adjust in an orderly manner to sudden significant tariff revenue losses as a result of the implementation of the agreement'. Afreximbank also launched an Africa-wide digital payment infrastructure – the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS). It was estimated that $5 billion in intraregional payment transaction costs could be saved every year and that the system would also 'formalise a significant proportion of the estimated $50 billion of informal intra-African trade'.[12] It was against this background that the G6 countries in February 2020 officially withdrew their reservations against the agreement (AU Assembly 2020a, §19).

4 Launching the African Continental Free Trade Area

While Phase I of the negotiations centred around the founding agreement and protocols on trade in goods, trade in services, and dispute settlement, Phase II took off after the 10th Extraordinary AU Assembly (Kigali, Rwanda, 21 March 2018). These negotiations focused, and are still focusing, on investment, intellectual property rights, and competition policy (AU Assembly 2018a, §13). The subsequent 31st Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (Nouakchott, Mauritania, 1–2 July 2018) adopted the annexes to the 2018 *Protocol on Trade in Goods* and the *Protocol on Rules and Procedures on the Settlement of Disputes* (AU Assembly 2018b, §4).

Tariff liberalisation was at the centre of the following 32nd AU Assembly (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 10–11 February 2019). The AU Assembly followed the recommendation of the Union's ministers of trade and agreed 'that the percentage for Sensitive Products will be 7% of total tariff lines and the Exclusion List will not exceed 3% of the total tariff lines' (AU Assembly 2019b, §4). It also concluded

> that the application of these percentages will be subjected to double qualification and anti-concentration clauses, where the excluded products shall not exceed 10% of total import value from other State Parties. Thus, products to be excluded from liberalization will represent no more than 3% of tariff lines, accounting for no more than 10% of the value of imports from other African countries. (ibid.)

12 Afreximbank, 'Press release', 8 July 2019. URL: <https://www.afreximbank.com/afreximbank-announces-1-billion-adjustment-facility-other-afcfta-support-measures-as-african-leaders-meet/> (accessed: 30 June 2021).

On sensitive goods, a transitional period of five years, or less, was stipulated (ibid., §5). And for the finalisation of Phase II negotiations, a new deadline was set for June 2020 (ibid., §6). And, among others, the leader of AfCFTA (i.e., Niger's president Mahamadou) and the head of the AfCFTA Secretariat became part of the Mid-Year Coordination Meetings (MYCMs) between the AU and the RECs (ibid. §8; see Engel, this Yearbook, chapter 3). And, finally, the AUC was directed 'to have the structure of the AfCFTA Secretariat, its work program and budget approved' by February 2020 (ibid., §12).

The operational phase of the AfCFTA was launched at the 12th Extraordinary Session of the AU Assembly (Niamey, Niger, 7 July 2019). A decision was also taken to host the AfCFTA Secretariat in Accra, Ghana (AU Assembly 2019c, §4). The hosting agreement was ratified by the Ghanaian parliament on 3 August 2020, and the official opening took place two weeks later.[13] The summit also launched the African Trade Observatory (ATO), a trade information portal.[14]

In February 2020, the 33rd AU Assembly (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 9–10 February 2020) appointed Wamkele Keabetswe Mene for a four-year term as the secretary general of the AfCFTA. He was born in Eastern Cape, South Africa. He holds a BA in law from Rhodes University (Mhakanda, previously Grahamstown, South Africa), an MA in international studies and diplomacy from the School of Oriental and African Studies, and an LLM in banking law and financial regulation from the London School of Economics and Political Science (both London). Among others, Mene was the deputy head of the Permanent Mission of South Africa to the WTO, the chief director for Africa economic relations in the country's Department of Trade and Industry, and, since March 2016, has been South Africa's the lead negotiator in the AfCFTA. It was also decided that the AfCFTA Secretariat in Accra should start operating by 31 March 2020 (AU Assembly 2020a, §§6–7).

On the eve of the SARS-CoV-2/Covid-19 pandemic reaching the African continent, the AU Assembly pushed for the conclusion of Phase I negotiations on trade in goods, services, and rules of origin – focusing on five priority areas: business services, communications, finance, tourism, and transport. The AU Assembly called for a special session to be held on 30 May 2020 'to approve all instruments required for the start of trading under the AfCFTA on 1 July 2020'

13 See *Africa Research Bulletin. Economic, Financial and Technical Series* [Southern Gate, Chichester], 9 October 2020, 57 (8): col. 23107A–23107B.

14 African Union 'Press Release' [Addis Ababa], 15 October 2020. See URL: <https://ato.africa/en> (accessed: 30 June 2021). The mechanism is being implemented by the Geneva-based International Trade Centre (ITC) and co-financed by the European Union.

(AU Assembly 2020a, §9). It also upheld the decision to conclude all Phase II negotiations on investment, intellectual property rights, and competition policy by December 2020 (ibid., §22). The summit furthermore agreed on new Phase III negotiations on the AfCFTA 2020 *Protocol on E-Commerce* immediately after conclusion of Phase II negotiations. All these plans later had to be postponed because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Endorsing the outcomes of the 3rd Meeting of the AfCFTA Council of Ministers (virtual, 20 November 2020), the 13th Extraordinary Session of the AU Assembly (virtual, Johannesburg, South Africa, 5 December 2020) noted the transfer of the coordination of the AfCFTA negotiations from the AUC to the AfCFTA Secretariat. The AfCFTA finally was to commence on 1 January 2021 (AU Assembly 2020b, §14; AU Assembly 2020c, §1). By the time of the session, 41 countries had submitted their schedules of tariff concessions and 34 countries their initial offers in respect of trade in services (AU Assembly 2020c, §§10, 12; on the negotiation see also Cattaneo 2020, 49–53). The session also endorsed the previous ministerial decision to conclude the negotiations on Phase II and Phase III by 31 December 2021 (ibid., §15).

5 Outlook

The year 2020 saw substantial progress in moving towards the operationalisation of the AfCFTA and fostering regional integration on the continent. However, a lengthy process of negotiating the conditions for intra-African trade will remain on the agenda of the African Union, the AfCFTA Secretariat, the RECs, and member states. This affects Phase II negotiations on investment, intellectual property rights, and competition policy as well as Phase III negotiations on e-commerce. If Phase II negotiations are concluded in time by the end of June 2021, interim measures based on the unilateral tariff offers and rules of origin proposals made so far will only have to be in place for half a year.[15] But still, they call for a number of proactive adjustments by member states (see Erasmus 2020d).

As the degree of integration within the individual RECs differs, implementation of the AfCFTA will call for a continuing process of trade policy coordination and harmonisation – in a situation where the differences between AU member states will grow in terms of their market power, world market integration, and economic capacities. When looking at the bigger economies on the continent, Morocco and Sudan have yet to be firmly brought into the AfCFTA.

15 For existing and potential levels of tariff liberalisation within the various RECs, see Viljoen (2020).

And in other member states, for instance South Africa and Nigeria, full implementation of the AfCFTA is not a foregone conclusion. In addition, some of the RECs, in particular SADC, will have to make an effort to convince member states to ratify the AfCFTA and deposit the legal instruments. Furthermore, the challenge of some members of customs unions that have not yet joined the AfCFTA need to be resolved in order to guarantee the free movement of goods within these customs unions.[16] Overall, Vanheukelom et al. (2020, 8) remind us:

> Regardless of progress made on the AfCFTA negotiations and the continental trade governance architecture, the degree to which member states implement the AfCFTA will depend largely on national dynamics. These include the incentives and interests of political elites and influential private businesses, as well as the 'rules of the game' that govern state-business relations.

This can be seen when turning to the state of borders in Africa. Nigeria's closure of its border with Benin for a wide range of products in August 2019 serves as a reminder that protectionist national perspectives can easily get the upper hand (the move was justified with reference to curbing smuggling). In October 2019, Nigeria also closed the remaining land borders for trade with all its other neighbours.[17] It was only on 16 December 2020 that border posts were partially reopened. In addition to trade-related border closures, between mid-March and early April 2020, 43 AU member states had fully closed their borders as a result of restrictions imposed to contain the Covid-19 pandemic (see also the *Annual Interview*, this Yearbook, chapter 2). By the time of the Extraordinary AU Assembly (Niamey, Niger, 7 July 2019), still 40 borders were fully closed and further restrictions in other countries imposed.[18] First and foremost, this affected the movement of people, but it also slowed down border-crossing trade quite considerably.

In other areas of trade and regional integration, a profound lack of progress in adopting and domesticating legal instruments has continued across the continent (see African Union 2020). So far only 22 member states have

16 This is the case for the EAC, ECOWAS, and SADC, as well as for the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC). See UNCTAD et al. (2019, 62).

17 'Africans want open borders, but can they overcome stumbling blocks?', *Deutsche Welle* [Bonn], 18 December 2019. URL: <https://www.dw.com/en/africans-want-open-borders-but-can-they-overcome-stumbling-blocks/a-51716938> (accessed: 30 June 2021). See also *ISS Today* [Pretoria], 22 March 2021.

18 Africa CDC, 'COVID-19 Scientific and Public Health Policy Update', 6 April 2020 & 14 July 2020.

signed the *African Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation* (Niamey Convention, June 2014), and 5 countries have ratified and deposited; 12 have signed the *Protocol on the Establishment of the African Monetary Fund* (June 2014), and 1 has ratified/deposited; 22 have signed the *Protocol on the African Investment Bank* (February 2009), and 3 member states have ratified/deposited; and 11 have signed the *Statute of the African Minerals Development Centre* (January 2016), and 3 member states have ratified/deposited. No progress was registered on these instruments in 2020, and although 34 member states have signed the *Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment* (January 2018), so far only 4 have deposited the legal instruments.

And in structural economic terms, according to a joint assessment by UNECA, the AU, the AfDB, and UNCTAD, regional integration on the African continent continues to be challenged 'by limited energy and infrastructure development, insecurity and conflicts, multiple and overlapping membership of RECs, poor sequencing of the regional integration arrangements and limited financial resources' (UNECA et al. 2019, xi). In addition, large infrastructure gaps hinder regional integration (discussing some of the policy challenges, see Fofack 2020).

Finally, three major trade policy themes are still lurking beneath the surface: (1) the complicated spaghetti bowl of overlapping REC memberships, intra-REC/FTA harmonisation, and their respective interfaces with the AfCFTA (see Olayiwola 2020), (2) future negotiations between some AU member states and the European Union on the so-called Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) (with the exception of the one with SADC, none of the regional EPAs have been ratified), and (3) new talks between the European Union and the African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) community to replace the 20-year-old 2000 *Cotonou Agreement* under which the European Union, among others, had granted preferential access to the European market.

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CHAPTER 12

Strategic Partnerships

Adekeye Adebajo

1 Introduction

In the Middle Ages, European alchemists unsuccessfully tried to turn lead into gold, employing impenetrable, mystical language. This chapter will assess the similar attempt by the African Union (AU) to use strategic partnerships to transform its political, security, and economic fortunes, employing equally unsuccessful verbal incantations as earlier European alchemists. There are two dimensions of what the AU describes as strategic partnerships – those with international organisations, such as the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU), and those with individual countries.[1] With the exception of a case study on Mali, the emphasis of this chapter is on multilateral partnerships. The Mali case study highlights not only the role of France unilaterally but also in the context of the UN and the EU while illustrating how difficult it is to separate national agency from multilaterally organised strategic partnerships. Since strategic relationships are by their very nature long-term and because this is the first edition of the *Yearbook on the African Union*, this foundational chapter will necessarily have to provide some historical context and background.

The chapter is divided into five main sections. First, the background is provided to the AU's strategic partnership with the UN, centred on collaboration on peacekeeping missions, together with the involvement of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in this undertaking, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). The second section focuses on the 'strategic partnership' established between the AU and the EU between 2000 and 2017. The third section examines the central issue of strategic partnerships in the core area of peace and security between 2012 and 2020. A case study of Mali is provided to illustrate the dynamics of these strategic partnerships and the relevance of national interests in multilateral partnerships. The fourth part

1 Apart from the UN and the EU, the AU also maintains a strategic partnership with the Arab League. In addition, there are AU strategic partnerships with individual countries, including China, India, Japan, and Turkey. See AU Council (2020, §§78–112).

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analyses the efforts to revamp the broader AU–EU relationship in 2020 during the corona pandemic. The fifth section assesses the role of the AU's three non-permanent members (the A3) on the UN Security Council (UNSC) between 2019 and 2020, before concluding with some brief observations on these strategic partnerships.

2 From Burden-Shedding to Burden-Sharing: AU–UN Peacekeeping

Relations between the AU and the UN are governed by the 2017 *Joint Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security* (UN and AU 2017). The AU remains the only regional organisation that consistently engages the UNSC. It is important to stress the point that in the core area of peace and security in the AU's strategic relations, there is a pressing need to establish a proper division of labour between the UN and the AU, as well as Africa's other fledgling security organisations, which need to be greatly strengthened (for details, see Adebajo 2011). Rwanda's 1993 *Arusha Agreement*, the Democratic Republic of the Congo's (DRC) 1999 *Lusaka Accord*, and the 2000 *Algiers Accords* that ended the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict, all clearly revealed the military weakness of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU)/AU, whose members lacked the resources to implement agreements they had negotiated without UN peacekeepers. In Sierra Leone and Liberia, the UN took over peacekeeping duties from the ECOWAS-led missions in 2000 and 2003 respectively. The UN also took over the AU mission in Burundi in 2004 and the ECOWAS missions in Côte d'Ivoire in 2004 and Mali in 2013, as well as the AU mission in Darfur in 2007 and the ECCAS mission in the Central African Republic (CAR) in 2014. The UNSC has clearly not done enough to strengthen the capacity of regional organisations or to collaborate more effectively with them in the field. These are among the key issues that South Africa, one of Africa's regional powers, sought to pursue vigorously during its tenure on the UNSC in 2019/2020.

In December 2008, an AU–UN panel led by the former president of the European Commission, the Italian politician Romano Prodi, submitted a report suggesting ways of enhancing cooperation between both organisations. On the basis that 'having something on the ground is better than doing nothing', the panel criticised the deployment of peacekeeping missions into difficult environments without the means to keep peace. It dismissed this approach as a 'recipe for failure' (UNGA and UNSC 2008, 8). The report then made sensible proposals, such as enhancing the strategic relationship between the UN and the AU, particularly between the UNSC and the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC); the UN providing resources to AU peacekeeping in a sustainable manner

and funding UN-authorised AU missions for six months before the world body takes over such missions; and establishing a multi-donor trust fund to finance future missions. Thirteen years later, almost none of these sensible recommendations have been implemented, as the UNSC's five veto-wielding permanent members (P5) continue to seek to retain as much flexibility in decision-making as possible and to determine on a case-by-case basis whether their parochial interests are at stake before supporting interventions in Africa and elsewhere.

The approach of first deploying ill-equipped African peacekeepers and then converting them into a larger, better-resourced UN force (strongly condemned by the 2008 *Prodi Report*) had previously been practised with the conversion of a 13,000-strong ECOWAS force in Sierra Leone into a 20,000-strong UN force by 2000; a 2,645-strong AU force in Burundi into a UN force of 5,650 by 2004; and an 8,000-strong AU force in Darfur into a 26,000-strong AU–UN hybrid force by 2008. In all of these cases, powerful Western UNSC members only belatedly supported the deployment of sufficient forces after ill-equipped and poorly funded regional peacekeepers had sacrificed much blood and treasure.

3 A Partnership of Unequals: AU–EU Relations

Contemporary Africa–EU relations can be dated back to the first ever intercontinental summit in Cairo, Egypt, on 3–4 April 2000 between the then OAU and the EU (see, for example, Adebajo and Whiteman 2012). This process eventually culminated in the 2007 *Joint Africa–EU Strategy* (JAES), adopted at the 2nd Africa–EU Summit (Lisbon, Portugal, 8–9 December 2007).[2] The JAES intended to make the partnership more equal. Its *Action Plan* (2008–2010) identified eight priority areas: peace and security; democratic governance and human rights; regional economic integration, trade, and infrastructure; the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); climate change; energy; migration, mobility, and employment; and science, information society, and space. During the 3rd Africa–EU Summit (Tripoli, Libya, 29–30 November 2010), the *Action Plan* (2011–2013) was adopted, reinforcing cooperation in the same eight priority areas as the previous action plan.

The central theme of the 4th Africa–EU Summit (Brussels, Belgium, 2–3 April 2014) was 'Peace, Prosperity and People'. The meeting adopted the *Roadmap* (2014–2017), highlighting five priority areas for joint action: peace and security; democracy, 'good governance', and human rights; human

2 This was not named as an AU–EU Summit, as Morocco was not a member of the continental body at the time.

development; sustainable and inclusive development and growth and continental integration; and global and emerging issues. The 5th Africa–EU Summit (Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 29–30 November 2017) took placed under the broad theme of 'Investing in Youth For A Sustainable Future', as European leaders worried increasingly about irregular African migration across the Mediterranean to 'Fortress Europe'. With 375 million African youths expected to reach working age by 2035 (Tsion Tadesse and Maalim 2020, 11), EU leaders were eager to find ways of keeping these young people at home. Four strategic areas were identified in Abidjan: mobility and migration; economic opportunities for youth; peace and security; and cooperation on governance. But despite Brussels' constant assertion and rhetoric about 'equal partnership' and 'coherence', as well as the need to move away from a purely donor-recipient relationship, there were serious divergences between both sides: African governments emphasised aid and trade, while the EU side championed security and migration (see Carbone 2017). These priority action plans have also often been criticised for lacking concrete implementation plans and measurable mechanisms to monitor progress effectively. Furthermore, there have been calls to channel funding away from operational costs to capacity-building projects (see Mabera 2020).

4 Beating Swords into Ploughshares: Peace and Security

4.1 *Silencing the Guns: The AU–UN Partnership*

The critical security relationship between the AU and the UN was rocky between 2012 and 2016, and the personal relationship between AU Commission (AUC) chair, South Africa's Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, and the UN secretary-general, South Korea's Ban Ki-moon, was described by several diplomats to be tinged with hostility.[3] The AU and ECOWAS had asked the UN for a peace-enforcement mandate in Mali in 2012, as well as a logistical and financial package for African peacekeepers to be deployed there. Both requests were declined, leading to the two organisations sending a letter of protest to the UN. The AU and ECOWAS also felt that their mediation process in Mali, which had achieved some results, was not being properly acknowledged.[4] There were further tensions between the AU and the UN over the peacekeeping mission in the CAR, with the AU reportedly resisting at first the 'rehatting' of African

3 Confidential interviews, AU Commission and diplomatic community. Addis Ababa, October 2014.

4 *Security Council Report Monthly Forecast*, 'Mali', July 2013, 3.

troops under a new UN mission.[5] Dlamini-Zuma had come into office calling for a reduction in French influence in Africa. France, however, continued to dominate military interventions in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, and the CAR by the end of her tenure in February 2017, even as the AU struggled to establish a promised rapid-reaction force.

Following the French military intervention in Mali in January 2013, which many Africans found humiliating, Dlamini-Zuma supported the South African president Jacob Zuma's drive to establish a 5,000-strong African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC) – before a more permanent 25,000-strong African Standby Force (ASF) could be set up in 2015 – to which 11 countries had signed up by 2014. At the 23rd AU Assembly (Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, 26–27 June 2014) it was announced that the force would become operational within three months, though it was unclear where ACIRC's funding would come from.[6] Finally, as a humanitarian crisis developed in the CAR, the AU eventually 'rehatted' a 5,200-strong ECCAS force – first as an AU and then as a UN mission – which has been deployed in the country since 2008 and was working alongside 1,600 French troops five years later.

The relationship between the Portuguese UN secretary-general, António Guterres, and the Chadian AUC chair and Dlamini-Zuma's successor, Moussa Faki Mahamat, was cordial but not close. Guterres clearly knew where power lay and dealt directly with African Heads of State and Government, deeply aware of the AUC's limitations[7] from his time as the UN high commissioner for refugees (UNHCR, 2005–2015). In 2020, the AU, along with ECCAS, the UN, and the EU, continued to work together in the difficult security situation of the CAR, which deteriorated severely after elections in December 2020 in which only 37 per cent of eligible voters participated. In neighbouring DRC, the AU – through its liaison office and special representative, Senegal's Michelle Ndiaye Ntab – also continued to collaborate with the UN in its mediation and stabilisation efforts in the eastern Congo (see Dawit Yohannes, this Yearbook, chapter 10).

4.2 *A Case Study of Mali*

It is important to examine the important case of the UN intervention in Mali to illustrate the difficulty for the AU of strategic partnerships with actors like the UN and the EU (this section draws from Adebajo 2018). France's clout within the UNSC and its Department of Peacekeeping Operations, led by Frenchman

5 *The Africa Report* [Paris], March 2014 (58), 35.
6 *ISS Today* [Pretoria], 7 July 2014.
7 Confidential telephone interview with a senior diplomat. 2 May 2021.

Hervé Ladsous, was evidenced by the deployment of the UN Office in Mali (UNOM) in January 2013, weeks after a French military intervention in the country. Paris was the 'penholder' for the Mali dossier on the UNSC, meaning that it drafted all the resolutions relating to the West African country. Aside from its influence in the UN, Paris also used its influence in Brussels to ensure that the EU approved a training mission for the Malian army by March 2013. A coordinating mechanism was put in place involving the UN, ECOWAS, the AU, and the EU.

Aside from France, another veto-wielding permanent member of the UNSC that played an important role in Mali was the United States. Throughout 2012, Washington had consistently warned against a premature deployment of the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA), doubting its capacity to rout the militias. It proposed instead a two-step process for AFISMA to train the Malian army first, before engaging in peace-enforcement activities.[8] The US, as much as France, was thus complicating the AU's peacemaking efforts in Mali.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon noted in March 2013 that the world body could not absorb the high numbers of casualties likely to be incurred in Mali, condescendingly implying that African organisations like the AU and ECOWAS could. He then proposed two options for peacekeeping in Mali. The first was a UN presence operating alongside AFISMA; the second option would be the deployment of a full-fledged UN mission with peace-enforcement powers, mandated with robust rules of engagement to address threats and protect populations at risk. Under this option, most of AFISMA would be incorporated into the UN mission with an authorised strength of 11,200 troops and 1,440 civilian police. In a proposal that again appeared to have been heavily influenced by France, Ban Ki-moon suggested that a parallel Gallic force operate outside the UN chain of command to conduct combat and counterterrorism operations (UNSC 2013a, 14–15).

Both the UNSC and the UN Secretariat in New York rejected the idea of a hybrid mission implicit in Ban Ki-moon's first option (as attempted, to some extent, in Darfur by the UN and the AU between 2007 and 2020), preferring the single command of a full-fledged UN mission suggested by the second option, but without robust peace-enforcement powers.[9] In April 2013, the UNSC established the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The mission – which at the time became the third largest UN operation in the world – was tasked with helping the Malian government

8 *Security Council Report Monthly Forecast*, 'Mali', January 2013, 5–6.

9 *Security Council Report Monthly Forecast*, 'Mali', March 2013, 20.

to extend state authority throughout the country; to be present in main population centres; and to promote civilian security. The UNSC called on France to report to it on the Gallic power's role in supporting MINUSMA to undertake peace-enforcement and counterterrorism activities at the request of the UN secretary-general. This clause was inserted in the mandate following concerns expressed by other UNSC members about the relationship between the French and UN forces.[10] Russia (along with others) was particularly sceptical about what it saw as undue haste in establishing MINUSMA without sufficient understanding of the situation on the ground.

AFISMA was transformed into MINUSMA by July 2013. The appointment of a Dutch special representative, Albert Koenders, to head MINUSMA was a further slap in the face of the AU, which had unsuccessfully pushed for the former Burundian military leader Pierre Buyoya, special representative of AFISMA, to be appointed to this position. Much to the chagrin of the AU and ECOWAS, the UN was also to take over the coordination functions of the Support and Follow-Up Group on the Situation in Mali, which had been initiated by both African regional bodies. Italian politician Prodi was appointed UN special envoy for the Sahel, continuing Ban's penchant for appointing non-African diplomats to these roles on the continent, much to the annoyance of the AU.

The Support and Follow-Up Group on the Situation in Mali also continued to meet in Bamako and even in Brussels, again demonstrating France's influence in drawing the EU into subsidising its foreign policy by supporting peacebuilding efforts in Mali. An international donor conference for Mali in Brussels in May 2013 was co-chaired by France, the EU, and the government of Mali, and pledged €3.25 billion for the reconstruction of the country (UNSC 2013b). (An AU pledging conference in Addis Ababa four months earlier had pledged $455 million, of which African governments were to provide a paltry $50 million.) The 540-strong EU Training Mission in Mali (EUTM) – under the French general François Lecointre – had also been deployed by May 2013, meaning that Paris would continue to wield significant influence over Mali's future armed forces.

By 2017, government administration was still absent from large parts of Mali's five northern regions. Groups such as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Ansar Dine, the Mouvement pour l'unicité et le jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest (MUJAO), the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), and the Macina Liberation Front killed civilians and attacked UN and French peacekeepers, as well as Malian soldiers, inflicting serious fatalities.

10 *Security Council Report Monthly Forecast*, 'Mali', May 2013, 7.

Security sector reform was still proceeding slowly. The Malian army was redeploying to the north, while the $1-billion-a-year UN force struggled to stabilise the country, even despite sporadic 'pacification' missions undertaken with French soldiers that echoed the colonial era actions of *Pax Gallica*. MINUSMA continued to lack the two helicopter units and 88 armoured personnel carriers it needed by 2017, at a time when 78 UN peacekeepers, about 20 French soldiers, and over 180 members of the Malian security forces had been killed in hostile attacks in Mali (for details, see UNSC 2016a, 2016b, 2016c, 2017).

Following months of political instability and persistent protests after the disputed March/April 2020 elections in Mali, a military coup d'état toppled the administration of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita in August 2020. The 12,877-strong UN mission continued to lead the Monitoring Committee of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, encouraging accelerated progress on disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) (UNSC 2020b). ECOWAS – through the former Nigerian president Goodluck Jonathan as mediator – took the lead in helping to resolve the issues from June 2020, strongly supported by the AU, the UN, and the EU. All four organisations called for the release of President Keita and his officials and the return to constitutional order, while the AU and ECOWAS suspended Mali's membership of their respective institutions.

After the Malian putsch, ECOWAS acted particularly decisively in imposing economic sanctions, which stopped financial transactions and trade flows and closed the country's borders with its neighbours. International mediators also held meetings with Mali's political parties and civil society groups, which eventually culminated in the formation of an 18-month transitional government and the release of all political prisoners by October 2020 (UNSC 2020c). The ECOWAS chair and Ghanaian president, Nana Akufo-Addo, subsequently announced the lifting of all subregional sanctions on Mali in the same month. The AU and ECOWAS also lifted Bamako's suspension from participation in their activities. AUC Chair Mahamat visited Bamako in November 2020 to underline the organisation's support for its transition. In the same month, the AU-led follow-up and support committee for the transition held its first meeting in the Malian capital, while the Agreement Monitoring Committee convened its first meeting in five months, involving the AU commissioner for peace and security, Smaïl Chergui, and the EU special envoy for the Sahel, Ángel Losada Fernández (UNSC 2020d). The AU, however, failed quickly to appoint a special envoy to Mali, after Buyoya resigned in November 2020, somewhat reducing its clout in diplomatic negotiations (see Dawit Yohannes, this Yearbook, chapter 10).

The Mali case exposed the cynical politics behind peacekeeping missions in Africa. France had now used UN-sanctioned missions in Mali, Rwanda, the CAR, Côte d'Ivoire, and Chad to subsidise its parochial interests in Africa under the cover of a UN flag. It effectively multilateralised its past discredited unilateral interventions on the continent. While stability may have occurred in some of these cases, it was incidental to primary Gallic interests of maintaining its political, strategic, and economic interests in its African *chasse gardée* (private hunting ground). AFISMA had clearly been set up to fail. It was a phantom force that was stillborn and dead on arrival in Mali, and clearly had to be resurrected as MINUSMA. In the international community's grisly 'aristocracy of death', the lives of African peacekeepers were still considered to be worth less than those of Western peacekeepers. The fact that, after the French military intervention in 2013, the UN authorised a force that was four times as large as the proposed African force, exposed the duplicity of its Western-dominated Security Council. AFISMA's initial strength of 3,300 was almost tripled, totalling 9,500, as soon as the French intervention occurred, and some of the support that had previously been denied it suddenly appeared.

France continued to drive the G5 Sahel Joint Force (Chad, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mauritania), hosting meetings attended by UN and AU representatives. But this force has struggled to establish stability in the Sahel and remains unable to fight an effective anti-terrorist war, with regional armies suffering hundreds of casualties, even as it euphorically announced a wish to increase regional development initiatives in 2020. By February 2020, only 30 per cent of the EU's $6.2 million for the G5 Sahel Joint Force, transferred two years earlier, had been spent (UNSC 2020a, 6). The AU's ambitious announcement on 9 February 2020 to deploy an extra 3,000 troops to the region remained unfulfilled by the end of the year (African Union 2020a, §4). Its promised strategy for the Sahel also failed to materialise in 2020.

5 From Eurafrique to Afroeuropa? Africa–EU Relations, 2019–2020

The EU accounted for 36 per cent of Africa's external trade and remained its largest investor, at €261 billion, in 2020.[11] Brussels had also contributed a generous €2.7 billion to the African Peace Facility (APF) between 2004 and 2019 (European Commission 2020a, 8). Under the APF, three funding lines were supported: (1) African-led Peace Support Operations (PSOs), (2) operationalisation

11 *Great Insights* [Maastricht], 2020 (3), 4–5.

of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), and (3) initiatives under the Early Response Mechanism (ERM). Importantly, APF's funding for the RECs had to go through the AUC, in order to obtain AU endorsement. The current model, however, will change from 2021 onwards: in December 2020, the APF came to an end, and the new European Peace Fund with different conditions was being unveiled.

In a bid to revitalise the AU–EU relationship, the Bissau Guinean technocrat Carlos Lopes, the AU high representative on negotiations with the EU after 2020, along with the AUC, crafted a draft strategy in February 2019 to engage the EU. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen visited the AUC three days after assuming office in December 2019. On 27 February 2020, she led a delegation of 22 of her commissioners back to the Ethiopian capital for the 10th EU–AU Commission-to-Commission (or 'college-to-college') meeting to shape new priority areas between the two organisations (European Commission 2020b). On 9 March 2020, the European Commission and its high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, Joseph Borrell, unilaterally issued a joint communication to the European Parliament and European Council titled 'Towards A Comprehensive Strategy with Africa', outlining five priority areas: green transition and energy access; digital transformation; sustainable growth and jobs; peace and governance; and migration and mobility (European Commission 2020c).

On 26 October 2020, the 12th Joint Meeting of the AU PSC and the EU Political and Security Committee (EU PSC) was held virtually (AU PSC and EU PSC 2020). The security situations in the Sahel, Sudan, and Somalia were discussed. In the Sahel, the meeting condemned attacks against civilians by armed groups and pledged support for the UN mission in Mali, as well as for the French-driven G5 Sahel Joint Force. Both organisations promised to continue supporting the efforts of the transitional government in Sudan, calling for donor pledges to be delivered from the High-Level Sudan Partnership Conference (Berlin, Germany, 25 June 2020). Finally, the two organisations called for the acceleration of the building up of the Somali National Army (SNA) in order for the SNA to be able to take over responsibilities from the 20,000-strong AU mission in Somalia (AMISOM), which is heavily funded by the EU. The meeting also praised the agreement reached by Somali parties on the electoral model for the 2020/2021 polls.

But the realities on the ground in Somalia were such that the Heads of State and Government of the major troop-contributing countries (Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Burundi) often bypassed the AUC when making decisions on the mission, and there were constant complaints about the lack of AU capacity even to administer AMISOM's budget. The EU paid the salaries of AU

peacekeepers, the UN reimbursed contingent-owned equipment, and the US bilaterally provided military equipment to Kenya and Uganda.[12] This support was thus not always well-coordinated for the greater good of the mission, and the AU was far from leading conflict management efforts in an operation being run in its name.

In 2020, the EU promised support to help alleviate Africa's external debt burden of $417 billion, which has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic (Tsion Tadesse and Maalima 2020, 16). Fulfilling this promise will remain a high priority for this strategic partnership, as well as a test of its lasting value to Africa. The AU–EU relationship is being renewed at a time when 33,418 African migrants sought to reach Europe through the Mediterranean in 2020 and when a quarter of Africa's global immigrants – 10.6 million out of 39.4 million – live in the EU (ibid., 18), sending vital remittances to their home countries. The AU–EU Summit scheduled for October 2020 had to be postponed to 2021 due to the corona crisis, and, in 2020, the EU committed €10 million to kick-start the *Africa Joint Continental Strategy for Covid-19 Outbreak* through the AU's Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (see the interview, this Yearbook, chapter 2).[13]

6 The View from Turtle Bay: The AU Peace and Security Council and the UN Security Council, 2019/2020

We next examine the African role on the UNSC in 2019/2020 – coordinated in New York through the head of the AU Permanent Observer Mission, Nigeria's Fatima Kyari Mohammed – with South Africa often taking the lead in a council that also contained Côte d'Ivoire and Equatorial Guinea (2019) and Tunisia and Niger (2020) respectively. The UN Office at the AU (UNOAU), under the lead of the former Ghanaian foreign minister Hanna Serwaa Tetteh, in Addis Ababa also plays an important role in coordinating this relationship. Tensions have arisen as members of the UNSC have stressed their primacy in matters of global peace and security, while AU members have highlighted their political legitimacy and proximity to African theatres of conflicts (Forti and Singh, 2019).

The three African non-permanent UNSC members (the A3) were reporting monthly to the Africa Group in New York, while the A3's quarterly chair liaised closely with the chair of the AU PSC in Addis Ababa to try to ensure that AU decisions fed into the UNSC's deliberations (Ayebare 2018). In August 2020, about 85 per cent of the UN's 81,820 peacekeepers – mostly military and

12 Confidential telephone interview with a senior diplomat. 2 May 2021.

13 *Great Insights* [Maastricht], 2020 (3), 7.

police personnel – were deployed in nine African theatres (the DRC, South Sudan, Mali, the CAR, Darfur, Abyei, Western Sahara, Somalia, and Libya). South Africa's priorities while on the UNSC in 2019/2020, at a time when it also chaired the AU in 2020, included the following: pursuing 'The African Agenda' of promoting Africa's global interests and managing conflicts on the continent; seeking to draft resolutions on African cases (which are currently dominated by France, Britain, and the United States); and pushing for closer cooperation between the UNSC and Africa's regional organisations (see Sidiropoulos, this Yearbook, chapter 4). Germany and Indonesia drafted resolutions in 2019/2020, but South Africa did not.

The April 2019 'revolution' in Sudan that toppled the three-decade autocracy of Omar al-Bashir focused the UNSC's attention on peacekeeping missions in Darfur and South Sudan. In Sudan's Darfur region, the UN – led by the South African diplomat Kingsley Mamabolo, the UN secretary-general's special representative (SRSG) – had downsized its 20,000-strong peacekeeping mission by December 2020 and established a much smaller political mission. While Western powers on the UNSC – the US, France, Britain, Germany, and Belgium – pushed for a strong follow-on mission with a police force that could protect civilians and monitor human rights, South Africa, along with Russia and China, supported Khartoum's position of having a limited UN presence in the territory. In South Sudan, African states worked to support the country's government of national unity installed in February 2020. Along with Tunisia, Niger, Russia, and China, South Africa successfully opposed Western efforts to continue to impose sanctions on the belligerents, which they felt could damage the political process. They instead argued for benchmarking the easing of sanctions to concrete progress in the peace process.[14] South Africa, Côte d'Ivoire, and Equatorial Guinea – backed by Beijing and Moscow – had earlier successfully pushed back against American efforts to reduce the number of Ethiopian-led UN peacekeepers in Abyei in 2019.

The relationship between the UNSC and the AU PSC is one that has become stronger since their first joint meeting in 2007. There was urgency within both the UNSC and the AU PSC at their 13th Annual Joint Consultative Meeting (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 21–22 October 2019) for the Transitional Government of National Unity to be established in South Sudan by the deadline set for 12 November 2019. On the Sahel, both bodies expressed concern about the worsening security situation, calling for the strengthening of the UN mission in Mali, as well as the French-led Sahel force. On the CAR, both praised the

14 Confidential telephone interview with a senior diplomat. 23 May 2020.

2019 *Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation*, though instability continued to wrack this militia-infested country. Both the UNSC and the AU PSC further expressed concern over the fragile political situation in Guinea-Bissau ahead of 24 November 2019 presidential polls, calling for support for ECOWAS' peacebuilding efforts. Based on the unhappy experience of the joint UN–AU special representative in Darfur, UNSC members rejected the AU PSC's idea of a joint AU–UN special envoy in Libya. A thematic issue discussed between the two councils was the AU campaign of *Silencing the Guns by 2020*. Both sides, however, disagreed about the mechanism for sending joint field missions to conflict zones, with UNSC members complaining about the size and cost of deploying such large missions.

The 14th Annual Joint Consultative Meeting between the UNSC and the AU PSC was held virtually on 30 September 2020 amid the Covid-19 pandemic (AU PSC and UNSC 2020). Both councils focused on the root causes and drivers of conflicts in Mali, the Sahel, and Somalia, as well as thematic issues such as *Silencing the Guns in Africa* and Women, Peace and Security (WPS). They repeated the usual platitudes about 'enhancing coordination' and 'generating international support' for resolving African conflicts. Most UNSC members continued to defer to the AU and the RECs on African issues. Funding of AU peace operations by the UN, however, remains a hotly contested issue (amid strong US opposition), with the African side holding back on engaging the UNSC on a common position due to the fiscal deficits triggered by the Covid-19 crisis.[15]

Three months later, on 9 December 2020, AUC Chair Moussa Faki Mahamat and UN Secretary-General Guterres held virtually the 4th AU–UN Annual Conference, stressing the need to accelerate mutual efforts for Africa to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic (see UNSG 2020). Both leaders specifically backed full debt restructuring for Africa and the African call for the provision by international donors of $100 billion over three years for the continent's recovery. Guterres and Mahamat further discussed peace and security, development, and human rights issues within the 2017 *AU–UN Joint Framework on Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security* and the 2018 *AU–UN Development Framework*. Specifically, the conference raised concerns about ceasefire violations in southern Libya, while noting progress in the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum. It expressed continuing concern over the security and humanitarian situation in the Sahel, calling for increased support for the G5 Sahel Joint Force. On Mali, both organisations advocated deepening cooperation between the AU, the UN,

15 *Security Council Report Monthly Forecast*, December 2020, 11–12.

and ECOWAS while underlining their commitment to the political transitions in Ethiopia, Sudan, and South Sudan on the Horn of Africa. In Ethiopia's Tigray region, the two institutions called for political dialogue, respect for human rights, and unfettered humanitarian access. The conference finally advocated sustainable support for AMISOM and free and fair polls in Somalia; called for support for forthcoming polls in the CAR; voiced concerns over political tensions in the DRC; and promoted continued coordination between the AU, the UN, and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) over Mozambique's conflict-torn Cabo Delgado province.

After October 2019, South Africa again chaired the UNSC in December 2020. It focused on three key issues. First, Tshwane (Pretoria) on 3 December held a high-level debate on cooperation between the AU and the UN: a consistent focus of all three of its tenures on the UNSC (also 2007/2008 and 2011/2012). The debate was chaired by President Cyril Ramaphosa – also the AU chair – and focused on the continental body's *Silencing the Guns by 2020* and *Agenda 2063*. The session called for greater involvement of women and youth in peace processes across Africa, and the UNSC took the decision to remove Burundi from its agenda. The second key theme of South Africa's tenure was a debate on 2 December on security sector governance and reform, chaired by its foreign minister, Naledi Pandor. The third key area was an open debate on 17 December on the importance of the international rule of law and fostering closer cooperation between the UNSC and the Hague-based International Court of Justice (ICJ). The session specifically advocated closer collaboration between both bodies and pushed for more states to accept the ICJ's jurisdiction. Conflict cases discussed under the South African presidency included Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, the DRC, and Libya, as the UN mission in Darfur ended in December 2020, and the gradual reduction of the operation in the DRC continued.[16]

7 Conclusion

By way of conclusion, it is important to highlight four key points about the AU's strategic partnerships. First, while the AU has sometimes used the strategic partnership with the UN and the EU effectively, due to the pan-continental body's financial and logistical weaknesses, some of these external partners – particularly France and the US – have also used this relationship to pursue

16 This section has benefitted from the *Security Council Report Monthly Forecasts*, 2019 and 2020.

more parochial agendas. In the crucial area of peace and security, the duplicitous approach of deploying financially and logistically deficient African peacekeepers in Burundi, Darfur, Liberia, and Sierra Leone before the UN assumed its proper responsibilities was to be followed by AFISMA in Mali. One therefore wonders why African regional powers such as Nigeria in Mali and South Africa in Burundi continue to set themselves up for failure in the full knowledge that they lack the logistics and finance to sustain peacekeeping interventions in these theatres without substantial external support.

Second, there remains much misunderstanding between the AU and the EU. The EU has been the most generous funder of peace and security efforts in Africa, contributing about 90 per cent of finances to the AU Peace Fund over two decades. But the AU–EU partnership has often been regarded by Africans as being one-sidedly shaped from Brussels according to its own interests. Eurocrats in the European Commission have, however, often complained about a lack of timely responsiveness to proposals by their Afrocrat counterparts in the AUC in Addis Ababa.

Third, the AU must adopt more realistic and less illusory approaches to implementing its mandates based on an accurate assessment of its financial and logistical realities. The organisation's plans to set up the ASF by 2010 were postponed until 2015 (another missed deadline), even as talks continued of establishing the yet to be realised ACIRC. On 6 December 2020, the AU simply declared the ASF fully operational, despite the fantasy involved in such a statement (African Union 2020b). The date for *Silencing the Guns by 2020* was postponed by a decade in the same month (see Dawit Yohannes, this Yearbook, chapter 10), further exposing the alchemy at the heart of a body whose huge ambitions frequently fail to match its achievements. *Pax Africana* (Mazrui 1967) will clearly not be achieved through empty declarations or an alphabet soup bowl of acronyms, but by greater political commitment and resources being provided and led by Africa's regional powers, such as Nigeria, South Africa, Algeria, and Ethiopia. More positively, the AU had raised $176 million by June 2020 under its revised Peace Fund (tralac 2020, 6).

Finally, consistent with the previous point about unrealistic mandates and unmatched ambitions, the AU is still stalked by the ghost of Kwame Nkrumah as this tale of the strange alchemy of the AU and its strategic partners demonstrates. The lessons of the founding Ghanaian leader's failed vision of a common African currency, government, and military command do not appear to have been learned. Just as Nkrumah neglected to take into account the existing political, social, and economic circumstances of the 1960s in championing his vision, it is not clear that his political heirs have properly understood the

political, social, and economic circumstances of their own era in outlining a 50-year vision for the AU. It is almost as if – as in the days of the OAU – by African leaders making a 'solemn' declaration on the 50th anniversary of the OAU/AU and adopting Agenda 2063 that a religious sanctity could be achieved to ensure its implementation.

The 2013 *Agenda 2063* – championed by Dlamini-Zuma as the AUC chair – specifically sought to eradicate poverty in two decades; promote a 'skills revolution' while building a 'knowledge society'; provide shelter, water, sanitation, energy, public transport, and information and communication technology; ensure collective food security; preserve the environment and ecosystem; promote gender equality and youth employment; increase Africa's gross domestic product (GDP) proportionately to its population and natural endowments; create a 'blue economy' by developing sea transport, fishing, and beneficiation of deep sea minerals; build links with Africa's diaspora; eliminate all forms of oppression; strengthen Africa's place in global trade; build a pan-African high-speed rail network, as well as roads, shipping, sea, and air transport; increase intra-African trade from 12 per cent in 2013 to 50 per cent by 2045; end corruption; render government institutions developmental, democratic, and accountable; silence all the guns by 2020; end terrorism, gender-based violence, illicit trade in small arms and drug and human trafficking; establish a common African foreign and security policy; use African languages for administration and integration; end 'female genital mutilation' and child marriages; eliminate youth unemployment; promote industrialisation through beneficiation; create a continental free-trade area by 2017; and establish the African Investment Bank and Pan-African Stock Exchange by 2016, the African Monetary Fund by 2018, and the African Central Bank by 2034 (African Union 2014b).

Many of these proposals appear to be quixotic and do not seem to have taken structural obstacles and the root causes of these challenges into account. Human nature also makes many of these noble aspirations difficult to achieve, even in the most industrialised countries in the world, which typically seek to regulate and manage problems like corruption and drug trafficking rather than eliminate them. The AU's alchemic approach to reform appears to replicate some of the worst habits of the OAU in seeking to legislate its desires into existence while employing empty, high-sounding slogans that are often more symbolic than substantive. This is a magical, mystical world of diplomatic marabouts, fetishes, and incantations.

The year 2021 will see a continuation of efforts by the AU and strategic partners like the UN to contribute to conflict management efforts in Mali, the CAR, the DRC, South Sudan, and Somalia. The EU will further seek to consolidate its

new priorities with the continental body, contributing to peacebuilding and governance efforts while attempting to increase trade and restricting irregular migration from Africa. External powers like the US, France, and China will also continue to pursue their own parochial agendas under the guise of 'strategic partnerships'. The strange alchemy of these partnerships will thus continue into the future.

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CHAPTER 13

Women and Youth

Awino Okech

1 Introduction

This chapter offers an overview of priority interventions made by the African Union (AU) in 2020 concerning women and youth as policy fields. It is worth noting that while women and youth are considered alongside each other in this chapter, they have evolved as separate political projects within the AU. Consequently, this chapter was developed with an attentiveness to this distinction in how approaches to women and youth have taken parallel tracks while finding synergy particularly where young women's concerns dovetail with women's rights questions. This chapter is divided into four major sections. The first section offers an understanding of the institutional policy landscape that guides programmes and initiatives on youth and women. The second section examines the major policy developments in 2020. The third section zooms in on thematic priorities that dominated theses policy fields in 2020. While there are many intersecting and cross-cutting discussions within which women and youth can be included into, this chapter focuses on Covid-19, trade and economic development, and peace and security. It is against these three areas that the discussions on political leadership, education, and gender-based violence (GBV) are also considered. The final section offers some closing reflection on the AU outlook in the policy fields of women and youth for 2021.

2 Institutional Landscape

In relation to women, the institutional landscape in this policy field is framed by the 2003 *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa*, popularly known as the *Maputo Protocol* (African Union 2003a), and the 2004 *Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa* (SDGEA). Coming into effect on 25 November 2005, the Maputo Protocol is an international human rights instrument that guarantees comprehensive rights to women. It covers a wide range of concerns pertaining to women, gender power relations, and gender equality, encompassing the right to take part in

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political processes, social and political equality, and reproductive and bodily autonomy, as well as freedom from cultural, political, social, and economic discrimination (African Union 2003). It is worth calling attention to the fact that the adoption of the Maputo Protocol was led to a great measure by feminist activists and women's movements organised into various formations, but most notably under the Solidarity for African Women's Rights (SOAWR). Consequently, the work of SOAWR has been to mobilise the signing, ratification, and depositing of the instruments that would ensure all members states align their national laws and policies with the provisions within the Maputo Protocol.

In addition to the Maputo Protocol, the 2000 *Constitutive Act of the African Union* notes the 'promotion of gender equality' as one of its guiding principles (OAU 2000, §4[l]). The 2003 *Protocol on Amendments of the Constitutive Act of the African Union* also recognises the critical role women play in promoting inclusive development and calls for the AU 'to ensure the effective participation of women in decision-making, particularly in the political, economic and sociocultural areas' (African Union 2003b, §3).

An additional framework that is committed to women as a policy field is *Agenda 2063*, which is a continental strategic 'master plan for transforming Africa into the global powerhouse of the future' (African Union 2013). Developed in 2013 at the height of global discussions on the United Nation's (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), Agenda 2063 is considered a framework that sets Africa's development agenda on its own terms beyond international commitments to sustainable development. Agenda 2063 provides a road map for pan-African 'inclusive growth and sustainable development' (African Union 2015, §8). Importantly, Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063 calls for 'an Africa, whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children' (ibid.). Agenda 2063 calls for a more inclusive society in which all citizens can participate in political processes, regardless of gender, political affiliation, religion, ethnic affiliation, locality, age, or other factors.

Finally, the *AU Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment* (2018–2028) (GEWE) is also an important strategic instrument in this field. Adopted at the 31st AU Assembly (Nouakchott, Mauritania, 1–2 July 2018), this strategy acts as a road map for the implementation of gender-related commitments (African Union 2018a, 5). The strategy aims to achieve gender equality in all spheres of life. It is informed by the findings of a 2009 policy evaluation that focused on gender mainstreaming in all sectors, including legislation and legal protection, economic empowerment, and peace and security (ibid., 10). The strategy includes four main pillars: achieving economic autonomy for

women, protecting their rights in times of peace and conflict, strengthening institutional capacities, and establishing women's leadership in all its dimensions (ibid.).

Collectively, the policy instruments listed above have framed debates, activism, and policy positions in relation to women's rights and gender equality. Coordinating these efforts is the Women, Gender and Development Directorate (WGDD). It leads, guides, defends, and coordinates the AU's efforts on gender equality and development, including ensuring that African countries comply with the Maputo Protocol.

In relation to youth, the 2006 *African Youth Charter* is the central framework guiding the AU's engagement with youth concerning policy (African Union. 2006). The charter focuses on the mainstreaming of youth across policy discussions and provides a legal basis for guaranteeing youth presence and participation in government structures and forums at national, regional, and continental levels. The *Youth Decade Plan of Action* (2009–2018) is an implementation mechanism of the African Youth Charter focusing on a multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional engagement of all stakeholders through five key policy areas: education and skills development; youth employment and entrepreneurship; governance, peace, and security; youth health and sexual reproductive health rights; and agriculture, climate change, and the environment (African Union 2011a).

The 2011 *Malabo Declaration on Creating Employment for Accelerating Youth Development and Empowerment* was issued at the 17th AU Assembly (Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, 30 June–1 July 2011). The key commitments in this declaration focus on states' commitment to reducing youth and women unemployment by at least 2 per cent annually over the next five years; improving education and training; expanding social protections; and developing a comprehensive youth employment pact in collaboration with the African Development Bank (AfDB) and Regional Economic Commissions (African Union 2011b). Further, the 2018 *Technical and Vocational Education and Training* (*TVET*) *Continental Strategy* provides a comprehensive framework for designing and developing national policies and strategies to address the challenges facing education and technical and vocational training in order to support economic development, create national wealth, and contribute to poverty reduction through youth entrepreneurship, innovation, and employment (African Union 2018b).

A significant development in the youth policy field was the November 2018 decision by the chairperson of the AU Commission (AUC), Moussa Faki Mahamat, to appoint the first special envoy on youth – the Tunisian feminist activist Aya Chebbi (born 1988). Special envoys of the AUC chairperson have

a temporary mandate to profile concerns associated with their role, in this case youth. The office of the special envoy instituted a two-year action plan (2019/2020) spanning the period of her appointment (AU OYE 2019). Most notably, the 2020 *Continental Framework on Youth Peace and Security* (AU Commission 2020) and the 2020 *Youth Silencing the Guns Campaign* became the main platform for rallying youth (see below).

At the regional level, the principle of subsidiary within which the AU operates with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) means that regional norms are required to pay attention to the contextual realities, which are diverse across Africa. The RECs work in collaboration with and constitute key implementing arms of the AU. The most active RECs in this respect include the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the East African Community (EAC).

3 Major Policy Developments in 2020

In 2020, there were three major developments in the policy fields of women and youth. The first was the conclusion of the African Women's Decade, which begun in 2010. Following the theme 'Grassroots Approach to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment', the decade offered an opportunity for the advancement and achievement of gender equality as well as the inclusion of gender issues on the African agenda (United Nations 2020). The key principles that framed this decade included providing sufficient financial resourcing, safeguarding gains made for women, implementing all policy documents on women's rights adopted by member states, and achieving targets arising from commitments to gender equality by AU Heads of State and Government (ibid.). The AU reports on the impact of this highlight an increase in women's participation in political decision-making process across member states, with 16 member states having surpassed the 30 per cent threshold of women's representation in national parliaments. The next African Women's Decade, focusing on 'Financial and Economic Inclusion', was launched in 2020 (AU Assembly 2020).

The second major policy development was the 25th commemorative anniversary of the 1995 *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. The Beijing Declaration is considered the UN's most wide-reaching and ambitious blueprint for advancing women's rights. The established of the civil society–led Beijing+25 Women, Peace, and Security – Youth, Peace, and Security (Beijing+25 WPS–YPS) Coalition in 2019 was an important pre-cursor to the Beijing+25 WPS–YPS commemoration in 2020. Established to address the exclusions of women and

young people from decision-making, the initiative represents over 100 grassroots women and youth peacebuilders; national, regional, and global women's rights and feminist organisations; and civil society networks from around the world that are working towards the full and effective implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) as well as Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agendas (GNWP 2020a). The purpose of the coalition is to create advocacy opportunities by ensuring civil society's key messages are heard in Beijing+25 WPS–YPS discussions and to increase awareness of the Beijing Declaration among civil society groups, particularly grassroots organisations working in conflict-affected contexts.

An Open Letter to the Representatives of the Core Group of the Generation Equality Global Forum written in January 2020 by the Beijing+25 WPS–YPS Action Group highlights barriers to youth participation (GNWP 2020b). They note that many grassroots women's rights and youth organisations have found it impossible to participate in Beijing+25 WPS–YPS processes due to a lack of information, awareness, funding, capacity, and access to internet, as well as language restrictions. They argue that the 'marginalization and limited participation of women and youth peacebuilders has resulted in weak language on the WPS and YPS agendas in regional outcome documents' (ibid.). In particular, they cite regional intergovernmental reports in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific, arguing that these lack specific recommendations on the effective implementation of the YPS agenda, especially the involvement of young women and LGBTQIA+ youth in peace processes and political decision-making (ibid.).

The Beijing+25 WPS–YPS Action Group makes a number of key recommendations to UN member states to promote the inclusion of women and youth in all processes related to peace and security and political decision-making. These include investing in safe and accessible learning opportunities; addressing the structural barriers, including lack of access to education and of economic opportunities and resources; increasing accessible, flexible, demand-driven, and long-term financial support to civil society organisations; guaranteeing that women and LGBTQIA+ people, including young people, are protected in their work for peace (GNWP 2020a). The 2020 *Africa Young Women's Manifesto*, pioneered by the AU special envoy on youth, is an equally important document that emerged during the Beijing+25 WPS–YPS commemoration period; it sets out equality in employment, criminalisation of GBV, legislative measures that deal with all forms of discrimination against young women, and intergenerational co-leadership as some of the key demands 25 years after the Beijing conference (AU OYE 2020c).

The third and final major policy development is the 20th anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on WPS, and the 5th anniversary of UNSCR 2250 on YPS (see also Dawit Yohannes, this Yearbook,

chapter 10). The latter emphasises the important role youth play in maintaining and promoting peace and security. The AU also launched the 'UNSCR 1325 beyond 2020: Walk the Talk from the Bottom to the Top' campaign to call for further enhancement of the efforts for the promotion and protection of women's rights through more gender-responsive decision-making guided by gender-sensitive reporting (African Union 2020a). Twenty years after the adoption of UNSCR 1325, 9 subsequent WPS-related UNSCRs, as well as 30 national action plans in Africa and numerous other policy commitments, the AU special envoy on WPS, Benita Diop, notes that 'the numbers show very little progress in the role of women mediators, negotiators and signatories in peace processes' (Diop 2020). The focus on numbers comes from research that points out that the inclusion of women in peace processes accounts for a 20 per cent increase in the probability that a peace agreement would last at least two years. This probability has increased to 35 per cent for such an agreement, lasting 15 years (UN Women 2015). The special envoy therefore highlights the need to redesign peace processes by allowing them to be led and owned by women, increasing youth participation in peacebuilding, and supporting grassroots youth activism through institutional support and resources (Diop 2020).

4 Covid-19

From March 2020 onwards, the SARS-CoV-2/Covid-19 pandemic has shifted the focus away from these discussions and advocacy opportunities (see the interview, this Yearbook, chapter 2). As in other parts of the world, the pandemic has refocused attention on the entrenched inequalities that complicated the efficacy of globally adopted measures (social distancing, sanitising, and wearing masks) to manage the spread of Covid-19.

The gender, class, age, spatial, and nationality disparities have been heightened due to unequal access to healthcare, safety, education, and economic and food security, as well as lacking freedom from violence. These difficulties were also acutely felt in conflict-affected areas. The disparities in health care provision were documented in a Mo Ibrahim Foundation study that found that only 10 African countries provide free and universal healthcare and that in another 22 countries provide neither free nor universal healthcare (Mo Ibrahim Foundation 2020). The World Health Organisation (WHO) has also highlighted the skills shortage, with an average of only 17 skilled health workers per 10,000 people across Africa (WHO 2021). The *Africa Health Strategy* (2016–2030) acknowledges health as a human right and therefore requires that healthcare systems should be equitable, accountable, gender equal, cost effective, and involve regional cooperation (AU DSA 2016). Ahead of the 32nd AU Assembly

(Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 10–11 February 2019), an initiative to increase country commitments for health was launched. This included improving spending on healthcare to facilitate the provision of universal health coverage in all African countries. There has been a trend of low spending on healthcare, with only three AU member states dedicating 5 per cent of their GDP to health, a requirement under the 2001 *Abuja Declaration on HIV/Aids, Tuberculosis, and Other Related Infectious Diseases*. Between 2016 and 2019, 30 countries increased their investment in healthcare, while 21 decreased it (Mo Ibrahim Foundation 2020).

On women and Covid-19, the AU's 2020 *Declaration: African Union Civil Society Organisations Consultation Meeting on Accelerating Actions Against the Impact of Covid-19 on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment* advocates specific measures to confront the gendered impacts of Covid-19, including the need to combat the rise of GBV during the pandemic and to safeguard women's livelihoods. It also significantly underscores the importance of women's unpaid work and the need to support and protect the predominantly female frontline health workforce (African Union 2020b).

The African Youth Front on Coronavirus was set up in May 2020 to provide a meaningful space for grassroots youth engagement in decision-making at the continental level. As a multi-stakeholder youth advocacy group, it has supported the implementation of the 2020 *African Joint Continental Strategy for Covid-19 Outbreak*. In November 2020, in a policy paper titled 'Africa Youth Lead: Facts and Figures of Africa Youth Agency, Challenges and Recovery Roadmap on COVID-19', the Office of the Youth Envoy identified that the lack of basic amenities such clean water and sanitisers was resulting in increased infections and that the loss of jobs was leading to the loss in health insurance coverage, as well as noticed limited national health insurance schemes; the lack of testing, especially in rural areas; and misinformation about the severity of the pandemic because of perceived low mortality rates (AU OYE 2020, 11). In addition, GBV was considered as a major challenge by 40 per cent of 205 young women who were polled. The increased risks of GBV are closely linked to the impact of 'stay at home' policies on women who are locked down with abusers, the impact of job loss on women's vulnerability to violence due to financial dependency, as well as the lack of shelters, particularly in rural areas and refugee camps (AU DIC 2020a).

In relation to the impact of Covid-19 on education, the AU published a 'Compendium of Regional and International Legal Instruments on Girls' and Women's Education' in May 2020, noting numerous obstacles, including harmful stereotypes, sociocultural norms, gendered violence and discrimination within schools, as well as legal, political, and economic barriers (AU CIEFFA

2020, 6). A range of legal frameworks were outlined to provide a reference point for governments and human rights defenders in their efforts to ensure 'actual realization' of women and girls' fundamental rights to access education, as well as to safeguard them against violations (ibid.). With the onset of Covid-19 in 2020, the AU identified the risk of young women and girls being unable to access education. With the gendered distribution of labour that was created following the closure of schools and universities, the brunt of caretaking and domestic chores fell to young women and girls (African Union 2020c: 13). In order to widen accessibility and participation in education, the AU focused on increasing access to the internet as well as providing instructional materials for digital platforms.

These focus issues have been linked to a broader leadership question both in the political and public spheres. For youth, the question of co-leadership, providing intergenerational experience, has been a key feature of how young people have engaged the leadership question in response to Covid-19 specifically and political leadership generally. There are many continental policy frameworks that support the participation and leadership of young people in determining Africa's future. Most notable are the African Youth Charter, Agenda 2063, the 2011 *African Charter on Public Service and Administration*, and the AU Office of the Youth Envoy's 2019/2020 *Action Plan*. The Office of the Youth Envoy has advocated intergenerational co-leadership as a core strategy to further the political participation of young people. Between March and June 2020, a series of online youth consultations on Covid-19 were co-organised by the AU Office of the Youth Envoy and the African Leadership Institute's Project Pakati (AFLI and AU OYE 2020b: 8). These consultations highlighted four major recommendations that focus on the importance of youth voice and leadership as part of strengthening youth involvement in resolving the long-standing challenges exacerbated by Covid-19. In addition to intergenerational co-leadership, preparing youth to enter the public service, building platforms for youth political voices, and establishing accountability mechanisms to ensure reforms that can outlive political interests were foregrounded (ibid.). For women, the pursuit of equity in the political sphere has been a long-standing site of activism and political mobilisation, which features across the focus areas covered in this chapter.

5 Trade and Economic Development

Trade and economic development are key areas of focus for the AU, framed more recently by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCTA), which is

designed to accelerate intra-African trade and boost Africa's trading position in the global market by strengthening Africa's common voice and policy space in global trade negotiations (see Döring and Engel, this Yearbook, chapter 11). Africa's economic integration and development ambitions are closely related to the nature of labour arrangements and employment across Africa. Across the African continent, informal jobs are the default rather than the exception, leading to labourers being trapped in a precarious employment. Informal employment accounts for 79 per cent of women's source of income and 68 per cent of men's. In North Africa, men have a higher share in informal employment, at 69 per cent, with women at 62 per cent (ILO 2018, 30). Informal employment dominates the labour market in both urban and rural areas in Africa, 76 per cent and 88 per cent, respectively, with younger people accounting for 95 per cent of those in informal employment. The share of informal employment is particularly high in agriculture (98%), followed by industry (77%), and services (70%) (ibid., 26). Informal jobs are never covered by labour and social protection policies. Moving away from informal employment, it is also worth noting that almost 16 million young Africans between 15 and 24 years, which is around 13.4 per cent of the total labour force, are unemployed (ibid.). With these statistics in mind, it follows that with the onset of Covid-19 women and youth would be most affected by the measure taken to control the spread of the virus.

In 2020, the 'Youth Unemployment and Economic Recovery' consultation drew attention to the associated questions of precarious employment in the youth policy field with a focus on the lack of government stimulus packages including refugee youth, youth in rural areas, and those living with disability and HIV/Aids. The need for stimulus packages is connected to the prevalence of youth in underpaid, informal, or precarious sectors, thereby preventing access to social security and health insurance (AU OYE 2020a: 8). These different youth groups encounter greater difficulties due to 'stay at home' lockdown policies as a result of Covid-19, particularly for those without access to basic amenities and internet as well as for those whom staying at home risks job loss (ibid.). A 2020 Hivos report on the early impacts of Covid-19 on women workers in the horticulture sector offers additional empirical evidence demonstrating the layoffs for temporary and seasonal workers, unpaid leave, salary cuts, and intensified unpaid care work. Importantly, the report underlines that many layoffs, salary cuts, and unpaid leaves occurred with neither notice nor consultation, thereby contravening labour laws (Hivos 2020).

The gender and generational impact of Covid-19 was further emphasised during the AU's Declaration: Civil Society Organisations Consultation Meeting on Accelerating Actions Against the Impact of Covid-19 on Gender Equality

and Women's Empowerment, which foregrounds women as being the majority of 'the poor, unemployed, in the informal sector, and shouldering the burden of care' (African Union 2020c: 7). The prevalence of women in the informal sector means that they are disproportionately impacted by the movement restrictions necessitated by Covid-19 management measures (ibid.: 8). Member states were called on to establish special funds to provide emergency relief for women's enterprise, especially those in the informal sector; seed funding for women to access protective gear; and provide paid leave, especially for vulnerable women.

Similar themes were also tackled in 'The Futures Report: Making the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Work for Women and Youth' (AfCFTA Secretariat and UNDP 2020). The report advocates the integration of women and youth 'into the value chains, jobs and opportunities stemming from the AfCFTA' – the AU's single market (ibid., 4). In addition, the policy paper 'Africa Youth Lead' (2020) of the AU Office of the Youth Envoy cites Aspiration 1 of Agenda 2063, which calls for the eradication of poverty in order to 'build shared prosperity through social and economic transformation of the continent' (AU OYE 2020a, 4). This transformation includes improving the standard of living and quality of life, educating citizens, and transforming African economies as well as agriculture 'to enable the continent to feed itself' (ibid., 7). Following the adoption in February 2020 of the *Declaration of 2020–2030 as the Decade of African Women's Financial and Economic Inclusion*, the AUC's WGDD will develop a ten-year continental AU Strategy and Action Plan to further women's financial inclusion and provide evidence-based solutions for women to control their own economic resources (AU DIC 2020b).

6 Peace and Security

Peace and security is the key focus of the AU given the long history of armed conflict across the continent and the gender, generational, and class dynamics associated with it (see Dawit Yohannes, this Yearbook, chapter 10). Consequently, two key issues were central to the youth and women policy field in 2020: the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 and the AU's flagship initiative Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 (STG). Endorsed by the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, the 2016 *African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns by Year 2020* (African Union 2016) recognises that, beyond ongoing political and military efforts, structural interventions in the area of socioeconomic development are necessary to facilitate governance, such as youth and women, employment and education, climate change, and

other important factors. The AU Office of the Youth Envoy also emphasised the socioeconomic empowerment of youth as an essential element for the effective implementation of the road map (AU OYE 2020b, 1).

Consequently, the Africa Youth Declaration on Silencing the Guns emerged in September 2020, advocating a broad and intersectional approach to the campaign that calls attention to Covid-19–associated concerns that are also intimately linked to structural inequality in Africa, such as disruption of education, mass unemployment, risks in informal sector employment, digital divides, gender inequality, and exclusion from decision-making (AU OYE 2020b, 13). The declaration calls for, among other things, the criminalisation of GBV, especially in conflict; displacement and humanitarian settings; the restriction of 'illicit movement of small weapons across borders', and 'holistic Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration programmes for youth' (ibid.; see AU OYE and ISS 2020).

The connections between political participation, peace and security, and GBV and gender were further developed by the Beijing+25 WPS–YPS Action Group, who call attention to armed conflict being a major obstacle to the fulfilment of women's rights and gender equality. Conflict, as has been well established, 'increases the levels of sexual and gender-based violence, marginalization, and discrimination of girls, young women, Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans Intersex people' (AU OYE 2020b: 13). The 2020 Global Network of Women Peace Builders affirm these observations by pointing out 'deep-rooted, protracted armed conflicts, which have resulted in the displacement of over 22 million people across the region, and created acute humanitarian crises' (GNWP 2020a), which have huge implications for gender inequality, particularly impacting young women and girls (see WIPC et al. 2020). The exclusion of women from official peace negotiations and the limited commitment to national action plans (NAPs) inhibit meaningful participation of diverse women and reduce the possibilities for addressing the 'intersecting and mutually reinforcing impacts of conflict, emergencies and natural disasters' (AU DIC 2020a). Investment in national funds to ensure ownership and sustainable implementation of the NAPs therefore becomes an important intervention for demonstrating government-level commitment (ibid.).

To accelerate action on protecting women and girls from GBV in conflict and post-conflict zones, the AUC – through the WGDD and together with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and UN Women – convened a multi-stakeholder policy dialogue as part of the activities to commemorate 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (AU DIC 2020c). A number of recommendations emerged, including: the provision of one-stop centres

and safe houses; access to medical services and trained personnel for clinical management of GBV; access to information for the most vulnerable women and girls, including those with disabilities and inclusion of sign language, accessible digital technology; and access to immediate psychosocial support as well as reporting mechanisms including hotlines (ibid.). To advance strategic actions, the dialogue recommended: the inclusion of gender-responsive social protection systems and mechanisms; enhanced surveillance and response systems that include disaggregated health data by age, sex, and other crucial data on pregnancy status, disability among others. The economic support and empowerment for women and girls as well as capacity-building of healthcare workers at all levels to respond to GBV, were also restated. Finally, the *16 Days of Activism Campaign Against Gender-Based Violence* facilitated by AUC's WGDD called attention to the connections between GBV and women's economic status (ibid.).

In May 2018, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) adopted a *Continental Results Framework for Monitoring and Reporting on the Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Africa* 'in order to monitor the implementation by AU member states and other relevant stakeholders of the various African and international instruments and other commitments on women, peace and security in Africa' (AU PSC 2018). This tool was launched on 4 February 2019 by the special envoy on WPS. Through the Continental Results Framework, some 41 different indicators are being monitored (African Union 2019). However, a first annual report is yet to be tabled.

7 **Outlook**

As the African Union looks ahead to 2021, it is critical to pay attention to a range of interconnected concerns around the long-term impact of Covid-19 on the socioeconomic and political landscape and what this means for the larger questions of peace and security, equality, and economic growth around which the women and youth policy fields have been structured. On peace and security, the Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS) issued the 'Call to Action Now and the Future: COVID-19, Gender Equality, Peace and Security'. This multi-country participatory research study points out how governments should plan for Covid-19 and future pandemics and crises (GAPS 2020). Foregrounded in the report is the need for gendered emergency response plans; access to and investment in comprehensive healthcare; and GBV prevention, protection, and response – all being essential to women's meaningful participation in the public sphere. This is in addition to funding women's rights

and feminist organisations, networks, and movements for transformative approaches.

In relation to economic growth, the combination of the youth bulge and the precarity of women in the informal sector will remain important focus areas for the AU (AfFCTA 2020). In this regard, civil society groups, such as the Ugandan Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMwA), caution against economic arrangements that are tied to precarious labour and working conditions and individualism (Alesi and Eryenyu 2020: 7). Covid-19 has brought to the fore the need for safety nets for those in precarious economic situations and a part of the labour arrangements that drive economic activity across Africa (ibid.). The need for coordinated policy efforts at the governmental level to protect the labour force through the expansion of cash transfer programmes and other safety nets for workers in precarious employment, economic rescue and stimulus packages, and control of food prices and essential commodities become important parts of a post-Covid-19 recovery plan (ibid., 4). Additionally, the question of unpaid care work for young women, and women in general, remains a key area of concern within a Covid-19 recovery agenda for the AU. Women undertook three times more unpaid care work than men did, and this has risen dramatically as a result of illness and school closures due to Covid-19. A survey conducted in Nairobi's informal settlements revealed that 42 per cent of women were unable to get paid work because of an increased care and domestic workload caused by the pandemic (Oxfam 2020).

The *Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa* (2020–2030), adopted by the 33rd AU Assembly (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 9–10 February 2020) (African Union 2020d), remains an important area of focus for youth and women as policy fields (see also Engel, this Yearbook, chapter 6). Specifically, the internet penetration rate on the continent is still low, at 39.3 per cent. The country with the highest internet penetration is Mauritius, with 56.5 per cent. This means that even at the highest, half of the African population still has no access to the internet (AFLI and AU OYE 2020). Digital freedom requires accounting for spatial dynamics, affordability, reliability, speed, and generational and gender divides (ibid.). Investing in improving the digital infrastructure will have an impact on the health sector through e-healthcare, education, and economic and employment opportunities, which have become obvious needs due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Finally, expanding technological access must also be accompanied by strong regulatory frameworks that guide data protection and online safety and security for women – young and old, both whom face higher risks of online violence (see Lumsden and Morgan 2017).

Finally, the question of sustainable financing for the AU has been front and centre since 2016 (see Engel, this Yearbook, chapter 3). The overreliance of the

AU on donor funding to run its programmes and operations also affects the policy fields of women and youth. International cooperation is an important part of forging global alliances and advancing collective interests on all matters, especially on gender and youth equality. However, there is a need for independent African resourcing for commitments to the policy fields of youth and women, which would offer the AU a wider scope to drive the priorities in these policy fields, with greater flexibility and focus on contextual demands than is currently the case.

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PART 3

Book Reviews

New Publications on Continental Matters

Book review editors: Katharina P.W. Döring and Jens Herpolsheimer

Paul-Henri Bischoff (ed.) 2020. *African Foreign Policies: Selecting Signifiers to Explain Agency*. London: Routledge, xix + 265 pp. ISBN 978-0-367-34828-1 (hbk), £96.00; ISBN 978-0-429-32823-7 (ebk).

The determination of and undertaking of decision-making on foreign policies by many independent African states have undergone significant changes over the years in response to emerging trends, including the circumstances surrounding local and international settings and affairs. Africa under the African Union (AU), on the one hand, and as individual states, on the other, continues to embrace principles, and frameworks regulating foreign relations and policies. Diversity in foreign policies of African states indicates a persistent lack of common principles that guide design and key issues to take them closer to the dream of a United Africa. This gap in and lack of African common principles in the formulation and characteristics of Africa's foreign policies have attracted considerable amounts of scholarly work by academics and practitioners. *African Foreign Policies: Selecting Signifiers to Explain Agency*, edited by Paul-Henri Bischoff,[1] is one such scholarly work, comprising 15 well-researched essays with 12 case studies in 265 pages. It gives an interesting overview of foreign policy through multidimensional perspectives within the geographic space of the African continent.

This book comes at a time when the continent is experiencing significant political, economic, and technological changes, endeavouring to answer the question how African states' foreign policies have been and continue to be crafted and used as tools in response to both external and internal needs and expectations of individuals or groups. Offering options for policy orientations, from a foreign policy analysis the volume sheds light on theories, actors, contexts, and aspired outcomes in Africa as well as areas that need to be included

1 Paul-Henri Bischoff is a professor of international relations and the long-standing head of the Department of Political and International Studies at Rhodes University, South Africa.

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and clearly provided for in the policies. Contributors to this volume narrate dynamics of African foreign polices alongside theories adopted in response to local circumstances or substituted for continental ontologies. Most of the authors use different theoretical approaches, focusing on different historical and cultural dynamics of state elite behaviour to draft foreign policies.

The key theme that runs through this edited volume is how foreign policy has for years been crafted and used as a basis for responses to internal and external issues. Changing foreign policy orientations over time have, in many cases, depended on the personality and character of the leader(s) in power. The book indicates that throughout the history of several African states, the personality of the head of state and government has, in many cases, played the predominant role and served as the main driver of policy formulation.

In the first two chapters, while discussing foreign policies, Bischoff gives an account of the concept and historical background of African foreign policies, demonstrating how different actors have and continue to behave, as well as presents aspects pertaining to success and failures. The editor clarifies the central issues of the book, including foreign policy writing and foreign policy links with states and regional as well as continental organisations (e.g., the Southern African Development Community, the AU, and interregional policy formulation and implementation agencies). It is asserted that foreign policies of many African states are an extension of domestic policies to the international space. They address such issues in terms of preserving independence, national survival, culture, enhanced livelihoods, and better living standards for poor populations. These are some key factors that influence decision-makers in their foreign policy choices. The chapters by Bischoff, thereby, provide a general background for the edited volume.

While chapter 3 of the book focuses on the AU as the primary collector and overseer of policy implementation on the continent, chapters 4, 5, and 6 offer descriptions of the foreign policies of South Africa, Ethiopia, and Nigeria, respectively, as drivers of political and economic influence on the African continent. Chapters 7 and 8 focus on Zimbabwe and Kenya, respectively, as expressions of symbolic power alongside diplomatic and military presence to make these states more significant. Chapters 9, 10, 11, and 12 outline external affairs of small states. In chapter 13, Cecilia Lwiindi Nedziwe addresses external relations of SADC, as a regional organisation, and its external relations in overseeing implementation of the region's security policy. In chapter 14, Kwesi Aning and Kwaku Danso examine Ghana's policy relating to identity formation and defence policies of small states. In the last chapter, Bischoff offers a conclusion and ways forward.

In this volume, several authors assert that in formulating, orientating, reviewing, or changing African foreign policy, the individual role of African presidencies have, in many cases, overruled the state. Bischoff and Mzukisi Qobo (chapters 1 and 4, respectively) argue that foreign policy is not a static art but instead has contingencies that reflect a state leader's preferences and the character of a country's institutions (pp. 9, 64). This argument is similar to that of Olumuyiwa Amao's narratives (chapter 6). He notes that the role of personality, beliefs, character, and regime in the orientation of foreign policy should not be underestimated, especially in African states where the institutional set-up is weak (p. 100). Such an approach is also reflected in Zimbabwe, where former President Robert Mugabe personalised the country's foreign policy in what is popularly referred to as Mugabeism, as described by Mike Mavura (chapter 7, p. 106). Thus, this book raises concerns about the prominent role of personality as a factor in understanding African foreign policy orientation.

The volume can be a useful reference for analysts of African foreign policies, especially regarding the related challenges and contributions of the personalisation of foreign policy, including its perceptible limitations in its implementation and outcomes. This volume draws attention to the need to restrict personification of African foreign policies and ensure they are formulated by accredited institutions to enhance African democratic governance and to ensure that specific foreign policy issues are dealt with that otherwise might escape the personal attention of presidencies. Several studies show that there is a strong link between the quality of African political institutions and the related state of governance and socioeconomic development (Ahmed Salem, chapter 10; Issaka Souaré, chapter 12). This means that more institutional teamwork, rather than idiosyncratic behaviour, often defines better principles, rules, and procedures that structure effective and efficient social interactions at local and international levels, such as through foreign policy.

Another strength of this book is that it is a timely contribution to literature on how history and culture impact and shape a state's foreign policy-making. The volume – via the chapters by Mike Mavura (chapter 7), Makonnen Tesfaye (chapter 5), and Cecilia Nedzine (chapter 13) – offers a holistic explanation of how history and cultural heritage can shape and direct foreign policies of states. These scholars show that culture influences the way people think and behave and even interpret as well as determine issues with far-reaching implications. Culture and history help to shape the behaviours, thinking, ideas, and interpretation regarding events that are internal or external to a nation state. For example, Mavura argues that the mind of a foreign policy-maker is containing complex and intricately related, critically patterned thoughts, including beliefs attitudes, values, and self-conceptions, to mention but a few (chapter 7, p. 107).

In short, this volume offers a well-written collection of essays with diverse and professional perspectives by prominent scholars. However, a few things have been overlooked. For example, this includes the potentially positive role of individual personalities putting African solidarity and national interests ahead of their own in recommending and pushing for an all-Africa direction of foreign policy. Most African states gained independence over 60 years ago, when the idea and intricacies of foreign policy were new to them, compared to counterparts in Europe and America, and they had to figure out on their own how to put their states on the international stage. Consequently, many had to rely on the visionary outlooks of their leaders, often facing continued influence by foreign powers. Moreover, contributions to this volume could have reflected more on the role of African universities and related institutions, including academics as well as activists in the diaspora, specifically in proactively offering advice and shaping more effective African foreign policies in the future, and in response to the AU's *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*.

Despite these shortfalls, the volume is theoretically and empirically rich and therefore contributes to the literature on foreign policy. It is a timely eye-opener, so to say, for African foreign policy scholarship and writers, departing from the tradition where such policies are written from a Western perspective. Furthermore, it serves to update ideas about foreign policies in Africa. Given the rich scope of the subject matter and its disciplinary focus, some of the chapters in the book would serve as useful teaching resources and be of use for scholars of African politics, society, and diplomacy.

Jacob Lisakafu

Peter Brett and Line Engbo Gissel 2020. *Africa and the Backlash Against International Courts*. London: ZED Books, 288 pp. ISBN 978-1-786-99297-0 (pbk), £18.99; ISBN 978-1-786-99298-7 (hbk); ISBN 978-1-786-99300-7 (ebk ePub); ISBN 978-1-786-99301-4 (ebk Kindle).

Peter Brett and Line Engbo Gissel,[2] authors of *Africa and the Backlash Against International Courts*, explore an important and often neglected question of international law: 'if [African states] do not want [international] courts, why did

2 Peter Brett is a senior lecturer in international politics at Queen Mary University of London, United Kingdom. He teaches the politics of international law and Africa's international relations. Line Engbo Gissel is an associate professor at Roskilde University, Denmark. She teaches global governance and human rights.

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African governments ever set them up?' (p. 16). Using interpretative methods, the book gives an elaborate, novel explanation of Africa's backlash against international courts. Backlash, according to their preferred definition, is 'an attempt by a state or states to restructure, withdraw from or coordinate non-compliance with an international court' (p. 12). Whereas it is acknowledged that countries of different backgrounds and forms of governance have at some point denounced an international court when a decision contrary to their interests has been taken (pp. 1–2), the authors' focus is on Africa – a continent with the most international courts in the world but where states ironically 'rarely use … [them], never promote them, and often do not comply with their judgments' (p. 16).

The authors' extensive navigation of different international courts operating in Africa helps to show that the International Criminal Court (ICC) is not the only international court in Africa and that the recent scholarly focus on the Africa–ICC relationship has been disproportionate. It is also their view that academic literature on Africa–international courts backlash 'ignores or systematically downplays the justifications that African states give for their conduct – assuming that these simply serve to conceal real interests or are of no consequence' (pp. 2–3). Thus, this literature chooses to focus on 'states' justifications, and the identity [credibility] of those making them' (p. 4).

The authors demonstrate, with persuasive evidence, some significant changes that happened in the 1990s and 2000s that might have caused Africa to become the 'most judicialised world region' (pp. 16–21). In their analysis of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Tribunal, the Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS) Community Court of Justice (ECCJ), the East African Court of Justice (EACJ), the International Criminal Court (ICC), and others, it is the authors' view that the end of the Cold War, the loss of Africa's influence in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), and the desire to attract donor money from the Global West pushed African governments to join international organisations. Their argument is that 'ruling regimes now created international images of themselves as rule of law states in order to preempt new donor pressures and capture new resources' (p. 11, see also pp. 14, 35). In Africa, international courts were created to compensate for their loss of aid and influence in international affairs, as well as to give the impression of being part of the rule of law and a new global order of regionalism (p. 24). Because this extraversion strategy was used as a mere means of 'survival and reproduction' rather than a desire to promote an 'anti-impunity norm', rule of law, justice or human rights, Africa's participation in international courts has sometimes happened without full knowledge of its consequences (pp. 22–32). Therefore, it should not be a surprise seeing a backlash against an international court that threatens state sovereignty or regime interests.

However, the claim that African states participate in (or join) international courts because of extraversion strategies (to reinforce their status in the global affairs) presupposes an existence of some virtuous states, those that participate in international courts for the mere promotion of global 'rule of law' and 'fighting impunity' simply because those are objectives and/or values that are good in themselves. This, in my opinion, is still magical thinking. States, whether strong or weak, will consider their national (or regime) interests before joining an international organisation, and they will do whatever is possible to see their will is exercised – whether it is through diplomacy, material resources, the use of other international organisations, or media or civil society. A real assessment of this claim would have been possible through the work of the ICC, which was expected to be a global court, but unfortunately has not been able to fairly distribute justice across the world. It is partly this imbalance (unfair distribution of justice) that African states have contested because, as these authors argue, 'again and again, organisations that originally supported the establishment of the Court in The Hague have struggled to justify [UN] Security Council involvement or the exclusive focus on African crimes' (p. 8). Probably, the backlash against international courts is a good thing, 'a rebalancing of the relationship between ICs [international courts] and domestic institutions' as Madsen, Cebulak and Wiebusch argue.[3]

The experience of the SADC Tribunal and the EACJ clearly show that international courts ought to deal with sensitive issues and politically charged disputes with care. This is not a suggestion that international courts should submit to political pressure. Quite oppositely, it is to argue for them to consider the prevailing context and specific situations within countries as well as what could be the ramifications of their decisions – international courts do not exist in a vacuum. As Alter notes, '[i]f we are going to increasingly turn to international courts to address international political problems, we need to have a better sense of when international courts are more or less helpful'.[4]

Brett and Gissel acknowledge the importance of 'civil society and institutional design' in constraining the occasional backlash against international courts (p. 134). It is indeed important to never underestimate the role of media and civil society in the working of international courts and in holding wrongdoers accountable. As Brutger and Strezhnev argue, 'media coverage of international disputes plays an important role in shaping perceptions of who

3 Mikael Rask Madsen, Pola Cebulak and Micha Wiebusch 2018. 'Backlash against International Courts: Explaining the Forms and Patterns of Resistance to International Courts'. Copenhagen: *iCourts* – Centre of Excellence for International Courts (= Working Paper Series 118), 36.

4 Karen J. Alter 2003. 'Do International Courts Enhance Compliance with International Law?', *Review of Asian and Pacific Studies* 25: 51–78, 74.

wins and loses from international law'.[5] However, one needs to warn against too much involvement of international civil society organisations (CSOs) and media in the work of international courts, as well as the impact such involvement might have on the perception of the institutional independence of those courts.[6] The perception of impartiality can sometimes be a result of inaccurate reporting from both CSOs and media. It is also possible that if an international court's strategy is to follow the pressure coming from media and CSOs, then the risk is that when civil society/media gets it wrong, the court will also get it wrong. Such a situation, in turn, creates an excuse for a backlash. However, it should not be forgotten that civil society is sometimes accused of bias, as Barkin notes: 'Critics of NGO participation in IOs also point out that NGO membership is disproportionately biased toward middle-class, white citizens of Western states. In this sense, NGOs can be criticized as being neo-colonial, as a mechanism for reintroducing rule by the West over the South through non-military means'.[7]

Africa and the Backlash against International Courts undoubtedly makes a significant contribution and brings a different perspective to the understanding of why African states have joined and created international courts, which other scholars have ignored, together with the changes that occurred in the world order after the end of the Cold War. The book also indicates the need to pay attention to the merits in justifying backlash and the status/identity of those critiquing international courts in order to understand whether backlash is likely to succeed or not. The book is highly recommendable to scholars of African studies, international law, international relations, and international politics.

Alphonse Muleefu

André Mbata Betukumesu Mangu (ed.) 2020. *Regional Integration in Africa: What Role for South Africa?* Leiden, Boston MA: Brill, 194 pp. ISBN 978-90-04-39993-8 (hbk), €88.00; ISBN 978-90-04-41781-6 (ebk).

At the 2021 34th African Union Assembly (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia), South Africa was in the spotlight for two contrasting reasons. On the one hand, President

5 Ryan Brutger and Anton Strezhnev 2018. 'International Disputes, Media Coverage, and Backlash Against International Law', Working Paper. URL: <https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/web.sas.upenn.edu/dist/f/164/files/2018/07/Paper_5-21-2018-2j16nmg.pdf> (accessed: 30 June 2021).

6 Kjersti Lohne 2019. *Advocates of Humanity: Human Rights NGOs in International Criminal Justice.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

7 Samuel J. Barkin 2013. *International Organizations: Theories and Institutions.* London: Palgrave Macmillan, 16.

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Ramaphosa, who had been at the helm of the organisation for a year, was widely acclaimed for having facilitated effective continental responses to the Covid-19 crisis. On the other hand, none of the South African-sponsored candidates for the new African Union Commission were elected.

These contradictions remind us that the relationship between South Africa and its regional and continental neighbourhood is as fundamental as it is complex. At times hailed as a pan-African leader and at other times feared as a neo-imperial bully, the country still struggles to find its position. The 2020 book *Regional Integration in Africa: What Role for South Africa?*, edited by André Mbata Mangu,[8] offers several inroads to understand why South Africa's pan-African potential has remained unfulfilled during the post-apartheid period.

The book contains eight contributions by three seasoned African scholars (in addition to the editor, chapters are authored by Henri Bah and Siphamandla Zondi) and is the result of a CODESRIA[9] research network. The authors go beyond unidimensional accounts and use a decolonial approach to delve into different constitutive pillars of regional integration. They engage with South Africa's impact in terms of peace and security, rule of law, economic development, and freedom of movement. They also show how the country's regional role has been closely intertwined with its domestic politics and with its global standing, both during and after apartheid.

Chapter by chapter, the authors reveal the good, the bad, and the ugly of South Africa's role in regional integration. The good side of South Africa's impact on regional integration largely rests on the enthusiasm that unfolded with the end of apartheid and the election of President Mandela. South Africa fostered human rights and democracy at home thanks to a progressive constitution and influential institutions. As a consequence, it gained the credibility to play a leadership role in this domain on a continental level. African states agreed to locate the seat of the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) in Midrand, South Africa. The Truth and Reconciliation Committee served as inspiration for restorative justice in various parts of the continent. In addition, South Africa was invited to play a mediating role in numerous political crises, including in the distant and francophone Côte d'Ivoire, an episode to which an entire chapter is dedicated. A similar dynamic ensued concerning economic integration, as it was hoped that South African companies could advance continental trade and investment.

8 The author is a professor of law and the director of the Verloren van Themaat Centre of Public Law at the University of South Africa (UNISA), Pretoria.

9 Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, Dakar, Senegal.

The bad side of South Africa's continental outreach follows promptly and is analysed in depth throughout the book. Despite early successes of a normative foreign policy, the promotion of constitutionalism has been very limited. The book provides a detailed account of South Africa's failures, such as the inconsistencies vis-à-vis Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir, the incapacity to challenge the dominance of personal rule in African politics, and the pro-incumbent bias when dealing with unconstitutional changes of government and third-termism. The authors argue that post-apartheid South Africa had the opportunity to promote regional integration on the basis of rule of law but has increasingly given in to geostrategic and national interests since. While this is overall a convincing argument, the authors miss the opportunity to outline South Africa's rationale for prioritising regime stability over peace. They make up for this lacuna with a critical account of xenophobia in South African politics, which – amplified by the sanctification of colonial borders and exclusionary migration policies – impede a serious commitment to regional integration. The authors explain how a nation-building process that did not manage to integrate Africans into its society proves to be inept as a guideline for regional integration. On the economic front, the liberal economic model promoted under the guise of 'African renaissance' ended up fostering domestic patterns of extractivism and inequality, instead of developmental regionalism. Lastly, the bad manifests itself in inconsistent commitment, as South Africa multiplied its alliances from the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) to the Group of 20 (G20), often diverting from African integration.

The ugly side of South Africa's role in regional integration reveals itself thanks to the decolonial approach of the book. Coloniality not only was an inward-looking process but also led to the promotion of a specific type of regional integration. The book explains in detail how the apartheid governments sponsored or sabotaged regional initiatives according to their ability to shape them and to benefit from them. While the book provides a generally excellent historical account, it is unfathomable that the authors neglected the most tenacious project of South Africa's ugly regional integration. The Southern African Customs Union (SACU) is merely mentioned in passing without dealing with its modalities and dynamics. This regional organisation has persisted since 1910 and continues to cement the domination of South Africa over its regional neighbours by means of monetary, commercial, and fiscal arrangements. Despite President Mandela's aspiration to abandon the imperial logics of regional integration and to become a 'catalyst', SACU remains in place to date and would merit to be examined in any book that deals with South Africa and regional integration. Precisely such a decolonial perspective on the enduring legacy of SACU is missing in the volume.

Although it is commendable that the authors seek to go beyond the characterisation of South Africa as a regional power, questions of dominance, control, and followership receive far too little attention to understand the type of regional integration at stake. This also applies to the chapters discussing South African relationships with regional projects pursued by other powers, such as the Indian Ocean Commission in the case study of Madagascar or the West African Economic and Monetary Union in the case study of Côte d'Ivoire.

And while the book is strong in empirical discussions, notable shortcomings exist in conceptual and theoretical terms. Regional integration – although the main concept of the book – lacks analytical grip. Neither region nor integration are clearly defined and the plethora of subconcepts such as 'integration from below' and 'developmental regionalism' remain vague buzzwords that do not shed light on central questions of actorness, practices, or institutionalisation. In addition, South Africa often remains a black box, as it is presented as uniform, despite the multiplicity of actors pursuing at times contradictory regional projects.

Despite these shortcomings, the book is a welcome addition to the scholarship on regionalism in Africa. Not only does it cover multiple dimensions of regional integration, but it also shows how regional integration remains a political project that ends in setbacks if key actors, such as South Africa, do not live up to their aspirations. In their decolonial pan-African perspective, the authors do not mince their words over how the abusive governance in many countries impedes a serious regional integration process in Africa. The lucid analyses that characterise the chapters are a pleasure to read, even if at times interrupted by lengthy quotes of primary sources that could have been presented in a more synthetic manner. The bilingual writing is a clear gain for the book, despite the risk that the French chapters might get lost due to the book being promoted in English.

In the foreword of the book, the African Peer Review Mechanism's CEO Eddy Maloka claims that 'South Africa is not an exception or a special country' (p. vii). The authors in fact quickly disprove this assertion. Chapter after chapter, they paint the picture of a country that occupies a special position for the continent in almost every domain and holds exceptional continental clout. Yet, it struggles to take up the ensuing opportunities for pan-Africanism. After reading the book, African and international observers will be able to recalibrate their expectations regarding South Africa, while South African readers will benefit from a clear assessment of why the extrapolation of their domestic politics has had limited success on the regional level.

Frank Mattheis

Samuel Ojo Oloruntoba (ed.) 2020. *Pan Africanism, Regional Integration and Development in Africa.* Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, xxi + 326 pp. ISBN 978-3-030-34295-1 (hbk), €103,99; ISBN 978-3-030-34296-8 (ebk).

Pan Africanism, Regional Integration and Development in Africa provides a multifaceted analysis of African development, ranging from the role of the diaspora to continental, regional, and local dynamics, taking in a wide range of historical as well as current issues and affairs. As such, the book's content can be said to reflect all three of the elements in the title: pan-Africanism, regional integration, and development.[10] It also offers some interesting Afrocentric perspectives on development, leading to current discussions of 'decolonising development' (e.g., chapter 9). Indeed, the scope of some of the chapters – though apparently narrow in focus, for example looking at city dynamics in Johannesburg (chapter 11) – in fact are about the wider capitalist system.

Some chapters also offer a clear analytical objective and ambition, with interesting and up-to-date analysis. The strongest and most interesting and informative chapter in that regard is chapter 6 on Morocco's request to join the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which combines a mixture of policy analysis and current issues – bringing in a wide variety of input and insights, continental agendas, and the wider complexities of overlapping regional memberships in Africa – with domestic political economy dynamics of Morocco and the ECOWAS member states. In some respects, this is the best reflection of the stated agenda of the book, providing a combined practical analysis of pan-African ambitions, regionalism (in theory), regionalisation (in practice), and how they connect with development concerns of nation states.

Other chapters have a range of positive aspects to them, for example illuminating the role of pan-Africanism in the origins of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) (chapter 1), discussing the origins of various regional institutions in West Africa (chapter 2), and examining the troubled Central African Republic in terms of identity (chapter 7). This is done with regular use of historical literature and a wide array of citations from African scholars, helping to reflect the breadth of existing analyses on the continent.

At the same time, the book faces numerous challenges. Rather than taking the reader on a journey through the interconnectedness of pan-Africanism, regional integration, and development, as reflected in chapter 6, each chapter

10 The author is an associate professor and the coordinator of the research cluster on Innovation and Developmental Regionalism at the Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute, University of South Africa (UNISA), Pretoria, South Africa.

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instead picks up some distinct issues that relate to one or other of these three areas, at times somewhat indirectly. The chapters on bureaucracy (chapters 12 and 13), for example, raise an interesting point about 'how to develop' given the administrative legacies inherited, structural adjustment, and 'capacity building' support from outside, but this is not linked to issues of pan-Africanism or regionalism, for example in terms of the administrative capacities of the regional organisations. Other chapters are quite explicitly about pan-Africanism (chapters 2, 3, and in some ways chapter 4 on the International Criminal Court), but in a normative way – suggesting that more pan-Africanist thinking would help address some of the development challenges faced, though with limited analysis of how it might help, beyond reflections on historical collaborations. Other chapters are quite far removed from this thinking at all; for example, chapter 11 looks at capitalism and the development of Johannesburg, and chapter 17 investigates international law and violence against women. This is not to say that these are not relevant topics. But while providing a wide and varied set of analyses that at one level provides an interesting collage of essays on African development issues, the idea that the chapters together form a coherent body feels stretched.

Moreover, despite the definitions and quite detailed description of the origins of pan-Africanism in different chapters of the volume, the authors that use the term do not always seem to agree on what it means. That may be inherent to its nature, but it would nonetheless benefit from explicit recognition and discussion. Chapter 2 lays out the very different meanings of 'Pan-Africanism' in terms of an ideology, a philosophy, a movement, a 'perception of common goals', and 'a celebration of "Africanness"' (p. 19). It may indeed be all of these, but the difficulty its multifarious nature poses as an analytical concept could be better recognised throughout the book. At the same time, while it is normal to find some brief repetition of some of the background to the concept as it is used, the volume might benefit from greater editing of those chapters that repeat the same elements – both for brevity but also for coherence of the ideas being used and how they help to better understand the aspects being discussed. This comes about in explaining pan-Africanism, but also the origins of the Organisation of African Unity; interesting as it is to read once and in context, the different competing groups that eventually led to the OAU structure are considered in at least three different chapters.

Beyond that, there is also a wide range of styles and depth of analysis in the different contributions. Some chapters come across as (well-written, well-referenced) op-ed opinion pieces rather than analyses – chapter 4 on the ICC comes to mind or chapter 3, which describes regional organisation efforts alongside a broad attack on neo-liberalism. This leads to some quite

prescriptive recommendations that seem at odds with a more political understanding of what has brought regional collaboration about, including their pre-independence origins in many regions. At the same time, other chapters read a little like adapted funding proposals with little real applied analysis to the issue at hand. For example, chapter 5 on how African public administrations may best support implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) again takes a relevant topic given the importance of the AfCFTA. But the analysis of 'capacity needs' is quite generic and therefore distant to the current negotiations and activities underway with states to develop implementation strategies, instead pointing to the need for more research on the topic. Other chapters introduce a theoretical framework but then make very limited use of it (e.g., chapter 7 on the Central African Republic). Some chapters provide useful material that then feels underused, such as chapter 14 on Nigerian border control – the mapping of involved agents, their mandates, and the issues they face makes useful context for analysis and policy-making, but one is left looking for an analysis of what that means for cross-border trade, for implementing the AfCFTA, ECOWAS trade, or indeed for the recent Nigerian border closures, none of which are discussed.

One finishes the book with a sense that, while addressing all of Africa in one book is clearly a challenge, it is rather overly centred on West Africa and Nigeria in particular. The chapters on Morocco and its application to join ECOWAS, on the Central African Republic, and on Johannesburg stand out as exceptions to this, while there is, of course, some mention of other countries. But in terms of looking at pan-Africanism and regional integration, one might have expected more on what these mean for the East African countries, where regional integration is arguably most advanced, or in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa, where the dynamics with Egypt also play a role in the wider region. Beyond country scope, for an up-to-date analysis of what it means to think about development in Africa, and regionalism in particular, there is very little mention of climate change and river basin management, both key topics to think about in terms of African development and regional cooperation, where institutions exist to promote cooperation, but where these often fall short. Even taking the topics covered, some chapters would benefit from applying the conceptual lenses and descriptive analysis to current affairs – the ongoing African Union (AU) reform process; the move to reconnect governance and peace and security in the AU Commission (AUC); or what the bureaucratic reality on the ground means for implementing ambitious (pan-African) agreements, such as the AfCTA.

A major thesis of the book, laid out in the introduction, seems to be that 'the continent therefore needs new leaders who understand the imperative of forging a Pan-African front and are prepared to provide both the intellectual

and material resources required to re-crystallise Pan-Africanism' (p. 4). Given the breadth of topics covered, the chapters then presented do not convincingly make this case. Similarly, the introduction raises the question that '[p] erhaps the failure of the African Union is being compensated for by the new drive towards regional integration in Africa' (p. 7). That is an interesting question, especially given ongoing AU reforms, the launch of the AfCFTA, recent AU elections, and a new AUC, which all seem to point to a continuing and maybe even revitalised demand for and improvements to the AU, alongside and building on the regional mechanisms. Though an interesting question, it is not addressed in the volume. A challenge of the volume is perhaps therefore precisely the multiple levels, layers, and themes addressed.

Overall, the combination then is a mix of work that seeks to advocate using pan-Africanist thinking to better address today's challenges in Africa while providing more descriptive discussions of what is taking place around specific thematic areas. The topics are relevant, and there is a lot of rich research, even though the contents do not seem to fully reflect the ambitions.

Bruce Byiers

Allwell Uwazuruike 2020. *Human Rights under the African Charter.* Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, xi + 229 pp. ISBN 978-3-030-41738-3 (hbk), €72.79; ISBN 978-3-030-41739-0 (ebk).

Realising the principle 'African Solutions to African Problems' has never been more formidable than in the area of human rights, where well-established and codified international conventions make their way into a continental charter and implementing institutions. The tug of war between universalism/internationalism and regionalism in creating a human rights regime reflects a seemingly conflicting desire to be emancipated from colonial bonds and protect human dignity, which is internationally enshrined in institutions led by the very same colonial powers. While colonialism is an experience of inequality, the value of human life has been collectively learned throughout humanity's history. The African Union (AU) has taken on this challenge in establishing the 1981 *African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights*, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights. The making of such a human rights regime takes place against the backdrop of robust international human rights institutionalisation, but at the same time, growing pushback from many AU member states against many international institutions.

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In his book *Human Rights under the African Charter*, Uwazuruike takes up a similarly challenging scholarly task of examining how the pendulum swings between consistency with international conventions and making space for regional ownership and innovation.[11] Through a comprehensive review of the African Charter; the development, compliance, and enforcement of its provisions; and the African Commission and Court's institutionalisation, he makes a case for the African human rights regime as a balance between universalist and regional aspirations. He argues that while covering a 'near-comprehensive gamut of rights' (p. 9) codified in international conventions, the African human rights regime enables African ownership of both the theory of rights and its implementation mechanisms.

The book provides a concise summary of the legal-theoretical debates behind regional institution-building and, particularly, on the creation and application of the international human rights conventions in the African context. In describing the main elements of human rights covered in the African Charter, the book argues why such rights, while referenced from international regimes, are tailored to the continent's understanding of human rights. It then proceeds with an outline of challenges, ranging from implementation, states' compliance, and enforcement to institutionalisation. In the end, the book presents clear-cut approaches for the overall improvement of these aspects, with feasibility ranging from implementable under the current circumstances and those that may need more time and political capital in implementation.

Throughout the book, Uwazuruike performs the same balancing act between universalism and regionalism that his subject of study, the African human rights regime, is expected to undertake. In the book's assessment of the African-ness of the African Charter, he illustrates how the African human rights regime is a tailored approach to the international conventions, showing African capability to live up to these international conventions while maximising the principles of complementarity, the margin of appreciation, the universality of human dignity, and responsiveness to cultural nuances. He extensively illustrates the use of two legal innovations, namely the lack of expressed distinction between different generations or classes of rights and the emphasis on duties. These innovations highlight the interdependence of the different classifications of rights and balance the individual dimensions with the collective and cultural. He argues that the African Charter is not necessarily an attack on universalist standards but provides room for 'moderate' relativism, serving as a supplement to the United Nations treaties (p. 23).

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11 The author is a lecturer in law at the School of Justice at the University of Central Lancashire, Preston, United Kingdom, and a barrister of the Supreme Court of Nigeria.

However, this balancing comes at a cost. The book equally elaborates on the difficulties the AU human rights regime faced due to these innovations and the overall political climate surrounding its development. The lack of a hierarchy between individual and collective rights has widened the margin of appreciation. Still, it has also provided room for ambiguity that has led to state interpretations that counter the spirit of the African Charter and international treaties. Indeed, the African human rights regime's realisation has faced many criticisms, including ineffectiveness, incompetence, and lack of teeth, primarily traced to the lack of member states' political will. The book acknowledges these critiques and grounds them in self-referential evidence, such as member states' reports and the African Court and Commission's issuances. Such a basis for analysing weaknesses minimises the non-systematic variety of complaints and Western-looking comparisons of the AU's efforts and performance. Furthermore, in finding evidence for such challenges in member states' own words and the African Commission's replies, Uwazuruike makes these critiques more potent.

Given the treatment of such critiques, the last part of the book was well-positioned to present solutions that range from feasible to ambitious. The urgent next step presented can be summarised as simply making the AU live up to its design. Though late in the book, this recommendation finally drives home the point that this regional community-building project faces a gargantuan roadblock: the lack of overall commitment from member states to adopt and follow through with their own intended design. Uwazuruike has extensively alluded to the challenge of political will in analysing specific provisions and their implementation, which shows how endemic this challenge truly is. While such details help isolate the problem and identify workable solutions, they are only the symptoms of the general lack of commitment, which can be best addressed holistically.

In this regard, less discussed in this book is that the innovations mentioned were also a product of, and an instrument for, addressing more realpolitik concerns, such as the need for member states to sign, accede to the African Charter, and comply with its institutions. While referred to in the book, such power play did not comprise a major reference in tracing and interpreting the formulation of the African Charter's provisions. The challenges of political will and the lack of resources after the establishment were discussed in detail, but more insights on member states' decision-making leading up to the African Charter's establishment could shed light on the deep-rootedness of these political constraints and provide solutions responsive to the specific concerns of member states. Lastly, the role of civil society has been underlined in cultivating greater

ownership. Still, its pivotal role in the formulation of the African Charter and its policing role in enforcement merits more attention.

Overall, Uwazuruike nonetheless offers a well-qualified answer to whether the African human rights regime upholds a balancing of international commitments and the principle of 'African Solutions to African Problems'. He provides a detailed analysis of the African human rights instruments as a living outcome of norm translation. It recognises both the merits of the AU's current efforts and the prevalent critique in current assessments of the African human rights regime. At the same time, it grounds the critique in more constructive terms.

It is a timely read for international law scholars and social scientists studying the translation of norms, not only from the international to the region but also from the ground up. Scholars studying other parts of the Global South will feel familiar with the cited concerns of ensuring the protection of human dignity, taking the merits of international conventions, and catering to the needs of the region. Policy-makers and legal experts in this part of the world will gain useful insights into norm translation to guide the establishment and institutionalisation of human rights mechanisms in their own regions.

Jamie Pring

PART 4

Appendices

APPENDIX 1

Chronicle of Key AU Events, 2020

21–22 Jan.	39th Session of the Permanent Representatives Committee (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)
18 Jan.	renewal of the MNJTF mandate for another 12 months (effective 31 Jan.)
6–7 Feb.	36th Ordinary Session of the AU Council of Ministers (Addis Ababa), including supplementary budgets for FY 2019 and FY 2020
9–10 Feb.	33rd Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (Addis Ababa), including inter alia the appointment of a Panel of Eminent Africans to prepare the election of the new AU Commission and the decision to deploy a MNJTF of 3,000 troops for six months in the Sahel
9 Feb.	appointment of South African president Cyril Ramaphosa as incoming chairperson of the AU
22 Feb.	meeting of the African ministers of health on Covid-19 (Addis Ababa)
27 Feb.	10th EU–AU Commission-to-Commission meeting (Addis Ababa)
9 Mar.	release of the EU 'Towards A Comprehensive Strategy with Africa'
26 Mar.	establishment of the Covid-19 Response Fund
7 May	renewal of the AU Mission in Somalia mandate for another 12 months
18 May	release of the *Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa* (2020–2030)
17 Jun.	postponement of the official launch of the African Continental Free Trade Area to 1 Jan. 2021
10 Jul.	authorisation of the AU Military Observers Mission in the Central African Republic
13 Jul.–3 Aug.	66th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (Banjul, The Gambia)
30 Jul.	extension of the G5 Sahel Joint Force mandate for another 12 months
30 Sept.	14th Annual Joint Consultative Meeting between the UN Security Council and the AU PSC (virtual)
30 Sept.–1 Oct.	40th Session of the Permanent Representatives Committee (virtual, Addis Ababa)
13–14 Oct.	37th Ordinary Session of the AU Council of Ministers (virtual, Addis Ababa)
22 Oct.	2nd Mid-Year Coordination Meeting between AU/RECS (virtual, Johannesburg, South Africa)
26 Oct.	14th Joint Meeting of the AU PSC and the EU PSC (virtual, Addis Ababa)

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13 Nov.–3 Dec.	67th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (Banjul)
20 Nov.	appointment of a three-person high-level panel to assist in mediating the conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia
5 Dec.	13th Extraordinary Session of the AU Assembly (virtual, Johannesburg) on the African Continental Free Trade Area
6 Dec.	14th Extraordinary Session of the AU Assembly (virtual, Johannesburg) on *Silencing the Guns in Africa*, with implementation target extended to 2030; African Standby Force declared fully operational
9 Dec.	4th AU–UN Annual Conference (virtual, New York, USA)
31 Dec.	expiry of the EU African Peace Facility
31 Dec.	termination of the UN–AU Mission in Darfur

APPENDIX 2

Inventory of AU Decisions, 2020

General Notes

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, in March 2020 the AU started adopting decisions by Online Silence Procedure (OSP).

Peace and Security Council (**PSC**): reference is to 'communiqués' and 'press statements' only (in addition there is a considerable amount of dated, but not numbered 'press releases'). In 2020, PSC meetings number 904 (16.01) to 972 (24.12) were held. For the following PSC meetings, there is no documentation available at URL: <http://www.peaceau.org/en/resource/documents>: 907–909, 916, 919, 925, 932, 937, 940, 944, 947, 956, 959, 964, 969–971 (in most cases, that would imply that a meeting was held but no decision was taken).

Abbreviations

A	AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government
C	AU Council
EO	extraordinary meeting
MYCM	AU/RECs Mid-Year Coordination Meetings
PSC	AU Peace and Security Council

Syntax

Year: number (volume and, in the case of the PSC, exact date)
Dates are referenced: (DD.MM).

Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) **A** 2020: 751 (XXXIII), **EO** 13 (05.12)

Africa's strategic partnerships
- **A** 2020: 762 (XXXIII)
- **C** 2020: 1073 IV (XXXVI)
- **PSC** 2008: 108 (21.01)

African candidatures for posts in international organisations **A** 2020: 795 (XXXIII) | **C** 2020: 1090 (XXXVI)

African Capacity Building Foundation **C** 2020: 1087 (XXXVI)

African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT, *see* convention …, terrorism) **PSC** 2020: 957 (20.10)

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African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (AfCHPR) **C** 2020: 1080 (XXXVI)
  elections **A** 2020: 784 (XXXIII) | **C** 2020: 1094 (XXXVI)
African Committee on the Rights and Welfare of the Child **A** 2020: 1084 (XXVI)
  elections **A** 2020: 781 (XXXIII) | **C** 2020: 1092 (XXXVI)
African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (*see* African Court of Justice) **C** 2020: 1079 (XXXVI)
African Governance Architecture (AGA, *see* African Charter on ..., APSA, democracy, human rights, unconstitutional changes of government)
African Inclusive Market Excellence Centre (AIMEC) **A** 2020: 780 (XXXIII) | **C** 2020: 1077 (XXXVI)
African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA, *see* African Governance Architecture, Common Defence and Security Policy, conflicts, terrorism etc.)
  African Standby Force (ASF, *see* Multinational Joint Task Force)
    Counter-terrorism unit **PSC** 2020: 960 (28.10)
    Peace support operations (PSOs), Cairo Roadmap **PSC** 2020: 995 (15.10)
  AU Border Programme (AUBP), Africa Border Day **PSC** 2020: 930 (11.06)
  AU Master Roadmap (*see* Agenda 2063) **A** 2020: 755 (XXXIII)
  illicit financial flows, asset recovery **A** 2020: 774 (XXXIII)
  Peace and Security Council (PSC)
    briefings to PSC (*see* Panel of the Wise)
      African Centre of the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) **PSC** 2020: 957 (20.10)
      African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) PSC 2020: 953 (08.10)
      International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) **PSC** 2020: 904 (16.01)
    elections **A** 2020: 785 (XXXIII) | **C** 2020: 1095 (XXXVI)
    report to AU Assembly on PSC activities **A** 2020: 753 (XXXIII)
  Post-Conflict Reconstruction Development (PCRD) **PSC** 2020: 958 (23.10)
    AU Centre for PCRD **A** 2020: 756 (XXXIII)
  Specialised Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security **A** 2020: 754 (XXXIII)
African Risk Capacity [Agency] (ARC) **C** 2020: 1086 (XXXVI)
African Union (*see AU Commission, APSA, AGA* etc.)
  Agenda 2063 (*see* OAU/AU 50th anniversary) **A** 2020: 755 (XXXIII) | **C** 2020: 1088 (XXXVI)
  anthem (*see* symbols) **C** 2004: 137 (V)
  AU financial institutions **A** 2020: 869 (XXXIII)
  Chairperson **A** 2020: 777 (XXXIII)
  delegation of authority to Council **A** 2020: 759, 760 (XXXIII)
  finances (*see* institutional reform)
    budget **C** 2020: 1073 (XXXVI)
    budget supplementary **C** 2020: 1073 (XXXVI)
    scale of assessment **A** 2020: 752, 764 (XXXIII) | **C** 2020: 1089 (XXXVI)

implementation of previous decisions C 2020: 1077 (XXXVI)
institutional reform A 2020: 749, 760, 761 (XXXIII) | C 2020: 1075 (XXXVI)
languages, Spanish A 2020: 794 (XXXIII)
Permanent Representatives' Committee (PRC)
budgetary, financial and administrative matters C 2020: 1073 (XXXVI)
rules and procedures A 2020: 759 (XXXIII)
Specialised Technical Committees (STC) A 2020: 1074 (XXXVI)
structures A 2020: 750 (XXXIII) | C 2020: 1073 I (XXXVI)
UN reform PSC 2020: 940 (22.09)
UNSC reform A 2020: 766 (XXXIII)
agriculture and rural development A 2020: 787 (XXXIII)
AU Advisory Board against Corruption A 2020: 783 (XXXIII) | C 2020: 1085 (XXXVI)
election of members C 2020: 1093 (XXXVI)
AU Assembly of HSG (*see* AU Commission)
Bureau of the AU Assembly A 2020: 776 (XXXIII)
mid-year sessions of the AU Assembly A 2020: 758 (XXXIII)
AU Commission (*see* African Union, AU Assembly, AGA, APSA etc.)
Chairperson, oversight role A 2020: 757 (XXXIII)
Panel of Eminent Africans re pre-selection of candidatures of the senior leadership A 2020: 761 (XXXIII)
AU Commission on International Law (AUCIL) A 2020: 782 (XXXIII) | C 2020: 1083, 1096 (XXXVI)
AU/RECs coordination (*see* African Union, RECs) A 2020: 758, 767 (XXXIII)
MYCM A 2019: 2020: D1 (I)

border disputes (*see* conflicts)

children
in armed conflict PSC 2020: 965 (19.11)
child marriage, ending A 2020: 771 (XXXIII)
climate change (*see* desertification) A 2020: 764 (XXXIII)
conflicts (*see* border disputes, terrorism)
Central African Republic (CAR) PSC 2020: 936 (10.07), 972 (24.12)
Gambia PSC 2020: 942 (28.08)
Guinea-Bissau PSC 2020: 905 (27.01)
Libya PSC 2020: 961 (03.11)
Mali (*see* Sahelo-Saharan region) PSC 2020: 934 (26.06), 938 (07.08), 941 (19.08), 946 (17.09), 954 (09.10)
Mozambique PSC 2020: 962 (05.11)
Sahelo-Saharan region (*see* Mali) PSC 2020: 950 (29.09)
Somalia PSC 2020: 911 (24.02), 949 (24.09), 967 (26.11), 968 (30.11)
South Sudan PSC 2020: 906 (27.01), 912 (27.02), 917 (09.04), 945 (20.09), 967 (26.11)
Sudan PSC 2020: 906 (30.01), 927 (21.05), 931 (17.06), 952 (06.10), 967 (26.11)
Sudan/Abyei PSC 2020: 966 (24.11)
Sudan/Darfur PSC 913 (03.03), 923 (07.05), 927 (21.05), 968 (30.11)

Covid-19 (*see* Ebola, health, HIV/Aids)
  PSC 2020: 910 (13.02), 915 (09.03), 918 (14.04), 921 (28.04), 922 (06.05), 924 (12.05), 926 (19.05), 928 (27.05), 931 (17.06)
  Covid response fund **C** 2020 (13.04)
Cuba, lifting of US sanctions **A** 2020: D6 (XXXIII)

decolonisation
  Mauritius/United Kingdom, Chagos Archipelago **A** 2020: 788 (XXXIII)
desertification (*see* climate change) **C** 2020: 788 (XXXIII)
diaspora, African diaspora summit **A** 2020: D6 (XXXIII)

Ebola (*see* Covid-19, health, HIV/Aids)
  PSC 2020: 910 (13.02)
Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) **C** 2020: 1082 (XXXVI)
education, science and technology **A** 2020: 790 (XXXIII)
elections **PSC** 2020: 935 (09.07)
European Union (EU), sanctions against AU member states **A** 2020: D6 (XXXIII)

female genital mutilation (FGM), elimination of **A** 2020: 773 (XXXIII)

gender equality, New African Women's Decade 2020–2030 **A** 2020: 793 (XXXIII)
G5 Joint Force **PSC** 2020: 920 (21.04)

health (*see* Covid-19, Ebola, HIV/Aids)
  antimicrobial resistance (AMR) **A** 2020: D3 (XXXIII)
  hepatitis **A** 2020: D2 (XXXIII)
  malaria **A** 2020: 770 (XXXIII)
history politics
  African World Heritage Fund **A** 2020: D4 (XXXIII)
  promotion of arts, culture and heritage **A** 2020: 772 (XXXIII)
HIV/Aids (*see* Covid-19, Ebola, health) **A** 2020: 786 (XXXIII)
humanitarian situation **C** 2020: 1076 (XXXVI)

International Criminal Court (ICC) **A** 2020: 789 (XXXIII), 1091 (XXXVI)

locust **PSC** 2020: 917 (09.04)

malaria *see* health
Middle East **A** 2020: D5 (XXXIII)
migration
  African Migration Observatory **A** 2020: 758 (XXXIII)
  Continental Operational Centre for combating illegal migration **A** 2020: 758 (XXXIII)
Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF, *see* terrorism)
  A 2020: 792 (XXXIII)
  PSC 2020: 950 (29.09)

NEPAD **A** 2020: 758 (XXXIII), 763 (XXXIII)
  APRM **A** 2020: 758, 765 (XXXIII)
    early warning tool **A** 2020: 914 (05.03)
    Mozambique **PSC** 2020: 962 (05.11)

Pan-African Parliament (PAP) **C** 2020: 1081 (XXXVI)
pandemics (*see* Covid-19, Ebola, HIV/Aids)

refugees **PSC** 2020: 921 (28.04)
Regional Economic Communities (*see* AU/ RECS)

‘Silencing the Guns’ (*see* Year of …)
A 2020: 775 (XXXIII), EO 14 (06.12)
Amnesty Month **PSC** 2020: 943 (10.09)
youth **PSC** 2020: 933 (23.06), 963 (12.11)

terrorism (*see* MNJTF) **PSC** (2020: 957 (20.10), 960 (28.10)

United States (USA), sanctions against AU member states **A** 2020: D6 (XXXIII)

Women, Peace and Security **PSC** 2020: 951 (05.10)
UNSC Res. 1325, 20th anniversary **PSC** 2020: 951 (05.10)

Year of …
refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons **A** 2020: 1076 (XXXVI)
Silencing the Guns (*see* AU Agenda 2063) **A** 2020: 775 (XXXIII)

APPENDIX 3

Key AU Office Holders, 2020

Chairs of the Assembly of the African Union, 2020

Feb. 2019–Feb. 2020	Abdel Fattah el-Sisi (Egypt)
Feb. 2020–Feb. 2021	M. Cyril Ramaphosa (South Africa)

Chairperson of the AU Commission and Commissioners, 2020

Chairperson	since Mar. 2017	Moussa Faki Mahama (Chad)
Deputy Chairperson	Jan. 2017–Feb. 2021	Quartey Thomas Kwesi (Ghana)
Commissioner for Peace and Security	Oct. 2013–Feb. 2021 (re-elected Jan. 2017)	Smaïl Chergui (Algeria)
Commissioner for Political Affairs	Jan. 2017–Feb. 2021	Minata Samate Cessouma (Burkina Faso)
Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy	since Jan. 2017	Amani Abou-Zeid (Egypt)
Commissioner for Social Affairs	Jan. 2017–Jul. 2021	Amira Elfadil Mohammed Elfadil (Sudan)
Commissioner for Trade and Industry	since Jan. 2017	Albert M Muchanga (Zambia)
Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture	since Jan. 2017	Josefa Leonel Correa Sacko (Angola)
Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology	Jul. 2017–Jul. 2021	Prof. Sarah Mbi Enow Anyang Agbor (Cameroon)
Commissioner for Economic Affairs	Jul. 2017–Feb. 2021	Victor Harison (Madagascar)

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Members of the Peace and Security Council, 2020

Central Africa	Burundi		2019–2022
	Equatorial Guinea	2018–2020	
	Gabon	2018–2020	
	Cameroon		2020–2022
	Chad		2020–2022
East Africa	Kenya		2019–2022
	Djibouti	2018–2020	
	Rwanda	2018–2020	
	Djibouti		2020–2022
	Ethiopia		2020–2022
North Africa	Algeria		2019–2022
	Morocco	2018–2020	
	Egypt		2020–2022
Southern Africa	Lesotho		2019–2022
	Angola	2018–2020	
	Zimbabwe	2018–2020	
	Malawi		2020–2022
	Mozambique		2020–2022
West Africa	Nigeria		since 2004
	Liberia	2018–2020	
	Sierra Leone	2018–2020	
	Togo	2018–2020	
	Benin		2020–2022
	Ghana		2020–2022
	Senegal		2020–2022

Note: De facto, periods of election always begin in February and end in February.

Members of the Panel of the Wise, 2020

Central Africa	since Jul. 2017	Honorine Nzet Bitéghé (Gabon)
East Africa	since Jun. 2014	Speciosa Wandira Kazibwe (Uganda)
North Africa	since Jul. 2017	Amr Moussa (Egypt)
Southern Africa	since Jul. 2017	Hifikepunye Pohamba (Namibia)
West Africa	since Jul. 2017	Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (Liberia)

Note: All three-years terms of office have expired. Members are eligible for reappointment only once.

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