

10th FES Annual Conference: Peace and Security in the Horn of Africa

**“Consolidating Regional Cooperation While Protecting National Security Interests: Diametric Opposition or Precondition for Peace and Security?”
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- Security dynamics in the Horn of Africa are shaped by states’ shared interest in having a peaceful region, on one hand, and competition between them, on the other. This year’s FES conference on peace and security in the Horn of Africa, however, stressed that the debate needs to move beyond a binary distinction between national and regional interests. It highlighted that the dynamics between the region’s various security actors, as well as the ambiguous consequences of regional security, merit more attention.
- Although the initiative to deepen the policy dialogue on regional security cooperation was welcomed, the conference revealed that there are still crucial lines of division. These can be clustered along three questions: (i) which understanding of security and security actors should guide the debate?; (ii) who will define the regional peace and security agenda?; and (iii) to what extent and for what purpose should regional security policy become institutionalised in existing regional organisations?
- The discussion of the conflicts in South Sudan and Somalia in particular highlighted these divisive lines. South Sudan has seen competing regional peacemakers (IGAD, Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania) and competing strategies (military versus political). Somalia still poses the problem of uniting the region’s protagonists under AMISOM and moving beyond a military strategy. Both cases underlined that the region’s states have ambiguous approaches towards IGAD, which remains under-resourced and prone to competition among its most powerful members. Moreover, the current practice of ad hoc, state-driven security policies may at times be in contradiction with the interests of national elites as well as with those of the local population.
- Finally, the conference disclosed a need for further dialogue on how to redefine the region in more positive terms. Rather than thinking of the region only as a product of national policies, this could lead to a more positive definition of a vision for the region in its own right. Such a dialogue could start from a reflection on the region’s positive lessons or from the potentials that emanate from deepened economic integration.

Introduction: Paradoxes of Regional Security in the Horn of Africa

The Horn of Africa has rightly been termed one of Africa's hotspots when it comes to peace and security challenges. Over recent decades, the region – understood here to comprise Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda—has witnessed wars between states, secessionist movements, intra-state violent conflicts, foreign interventions, terrorist attacks and piracy, as well as violence after contested elections. Moreover, by enlarging the understanding of security beyond physical violence, state-centricity and its military dimension, the region has seen security challenges arising from the spread of small arms, refugee flows, droughts and environmental degradation, as well as humanitarian crises, which all affected the region as a whole. The numerous security challenges straddling national borders hence require policy responses that equally take a regional rather than a national perspective. On one hand, the region has often been described as a so-called »security complex« which poses interlinked challenges that transcend recognised state borders. On the other hand, the region has also witnessed some of the most successful examples of peace-making on the African continent, as well as a gradual institutionalisation of a regional peace-making architecture through the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the East African Community (EAC), both organisations holding clear mandates on peace and security.

Despite these efforts, however, regional security in the Horn of Africa has also been shaped by two paradoxes. First, despite increasing recognition of the regional character of the security challenges, suspicion and distrust among the region's member states remain high. In fact, the region's history has been shaped by state elites' support for armed opposition movements in neighbouring countries, which developed into a widely used foreign policy instrument and a crucial ingredient for regime survival. Neighbouring states hence not only experienced shared security concerns, but more often than not became a perceived or actual threat to each other. Secondly, while the region has seen the establishment of formal regional organisations whose main achievement until today is the establishment of a permanent exchange forum for heads of state and government, the objective of an open and strategic policy dialogue remains unrealised. Ethiopia is the only member state of the region with a written, officially published and publicly accessible foreign policy strategy. At the same time, in their capacities to define a regional security agenda, IGAD and EAC are highly dependent on individual strategic, financial and logistical contributions from their member states. This renders IGAD prone to being hamstrung whenever disagreements emerge.

Both paradoxes thus point to an ambiguity in the relationship between the region as a whole and the individual states of which it consists, between incentives and pressures for cooperation on one hand, and prevailing divisions, divergences and competition, on the other. How can the interlinked security challenges in the region be translated

into effective cooperation? What do the remaining distrust between regional elites and real or perceived security threats from neighbouring states imply for the prospects of a regional peace and security agenda? What do member states expect from regional organisations and why does their support for a more regionalised security policy remain so minimal?

The FES Roundtable Series and the Regional Security Conference

Against this background, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), in cooperation with the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), organised its 10th Annual Conference on Peace and Security in the Horn of Africa under the headline »Consolidating regional cooperation while protecting national security interests: diametric opposition or precondition for peace and security?« The overall aim of this year's conference was to engender a debate on the prospects for regional peacemaking in light of prevailing national security interests that often enough seem to deepen competition rather than form the basis for real cooperation.

Preceding the conference, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung organised six thematic roundtables in Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda between August and November 2013, which brought together key decision-makers, academics and regional experts. Each roundtable was meant to discuss key national security interests, as well as expectations with

regard to regional cooperation. The results of each of these national roundtables were summarised in a comprehensive mapping report.¹

The mapping report reflected the breadth of identified security interests in the region, which range from »traditional« security interests to economic prospects or concerns about individual influence and political survival. Furthermore, the exercise highlighted high levels of mutual distrust and competing security interests in the region, as well as widespread ambiguity with regard to the support for the security and peacemaking mandates of regional organisations. One key lesson of this mapping exercise was thus the need to strengthen the political dialogue on national security agendas and prospects of regional security initiatives in order to identify points of convergence and divergence between the numerous national, regional and international agendas that shape the region today.

For this purpose, the 10th annual conference brought together more than 60 diplomats, decision-makers, party representatives, academics, policy analysts and civil society representatives from within the region and beyond. In order to facilitate a constructive debate, the conference focused on the

¹ See Katharina Newbery (2014): Mapping National Security Interests in the Horn of Africa. Summary Report. Addis Ababa: Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung; see also two other FES publications published as part of this project: Jonathan Fisher (2014): Mapping »Regional Security« in the Greater Horn of Africa: Between National Interests and Regional Cooperation. Addis Ababa: FES, available online at: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/aethiopien/10855.pdf>; Kidist Mulugeta (2014): The Role of Regional Powers in the Field of Peace and Security: The Case of Ethiopia. Addis Ababa: FES, available online at: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/aethiopien/10879.pdf>.

conflicts in South Sudan and Somalia, which were discussed alongside more general panels on the resulting challenges for IGAD and other regional organisations, as well as the potential roles of international actors in supporting regional security efforts.

Apart from the lively debates and the constructive inputs from experts, the FES regional security conferences also build upon the exchanges that happen outside the plenary sessions. Key to this format is that it all takes place under Chatham House Rules. This report is therefore not meant to provide a comprehensive summary of the debates or individual contributions. Rather, its aim is to review the main points of discussion in order to facilitate further debates and policy dialogue. It does so by addressing three overarching themes: (i) the nature of security, (ii) the definition of a peacemaking agenda and (iii) the institutionalisation of a regional security framework. To all three, the participants of the conference gave diverging interpretations or pointed out gaps between official policy debates and the practical and lived realities of peacemaking and insecurity on the ground. The three themes are therefore phrased as questions, an attempt to highlight the diverging interpretations and the need for further dialogue. To a large extent, this also reflects the outcome of the conference more generally: as observed by many of the participants, the exchanges held in Nairobi helped to crystallise questions for debate and points of divergence which may form the basis for further policy deliberations. The report therefore concludes with an outlook on how to move the debate towards a positive redefinition of the region as such, an overarching theme concerning which the participants of the conference provided

various ideas over the course of the debates in Nairobi.

Beyond National Interests versus Regional Cooperation

The overarching lesson of this year's annual conference is, however, that future dialogues on regional security dynamics will have to go beyond the often established binary distinction between national security interests and regional cooperation. As observed across the different contributions to this conference, both commonly held definitions of security and national and regional actors' practices and strategies run counter to such clear-cut differentiation. Three reasons in particular were mentioned as explaining why the debate should go beyond this distinction.

First, because of the interdependencies that exist in the region, regional security interests and national interests more often than not overlap: Ethiopian, Kenyan or Ugandan regional security engagements were thus all justified as preventing the spread of violence and small arms across borders, stopping migration flows or addressing the dangers of economic decline. Regional security efforts are thus not an altruistic gesture, but part of national strategies for survival. In this context, it was noted that national sovereignty was not necessarily undermined, but rather strengthened as a consequence of regional security cooperation.

Secondly and related to that, regional security efforts are often a question of necessity or *fait accompli* rather than a matter of choice.

The circulation of small arms, cross-border movements of armed groups, migration flows or economic dependencies thus produce regional repercussions irrespective of whether individual governments support or object to a regional policy-agenda.

Thirdly, the discussions gave numerous examples of negative or at least ambiguous consequences of regional cooperation. Rather than an end in itself, these at times unintended, at times inevitable consequences and »dark sides« of regional initiatives should be taken into account more. Such negative effects were identified, for example, with regard to recent regional engagements in post-independence South Sudan. Motivated by shared interests in a stable and prosperous South Sudan multiple actors from within the region – from governments to individual business people – were said to follow a self-understanding of entitlement over the spoils. This »cutting the cake« approach, however, is often injurious to the economic prospects of many South Sudanese. Furthermore, it may itself create rather than mitigate new insecurities, as evident, for example, in the recent expulsion of foreign workers from South Sudanese territory. Additional examples mentioned during the discussion were the ambiguous socio-economic consequences of large-scale infrastructure cooperation projects such as the LAPSSET corridor project or natural resource extractions, which at least locally often engender conflicts over land, shares and the protection of economic and social rights. Furthermore, negative consequences can also stem from an observed contradiction between states' short-term security interests and the more long-term search for sustainable peace in the region. This was observed, for instance,

with regard to the currently ongoing IGAD mediation in South Sudan, where IGAD's pursuit of elite power-sharing was said to prevent the political reforms necessary to build viable state–society relations. Similarly, the Somali peace process gave rise to numerous instances in which the economic prospects of a »New Deal« – an economic incentive for a political settlement – have indeed exacerbated local struggles over the control of resources and individual economic benefits.

A future structured dialogue on regional security may thus have to go beyond the contrast between national interests, on one hand, and regional cooperation, on the other. Rather, both ambiguities, as well as the dynamics between national interests and cooperation, may have to be addressed more systematically.

Broadening the Mapping of Security Interests: What Kinds of Security?

While the participants overall welcomed the outcomes of the FES national roundtables and the mapping of national security interests, there was a shared concern that the final report reflects a rather limited understanding of security. These limitations were identified primarily with regard to the way security was defined in the debates, which altogether reflected a very elite- and state-centred perspective. On one hand, this is not surprising because the primary aim of the roundtables had been to register national security interests as perceived mainly by state officials and diplomats. On the other hand, it was nevertheless felt

important to highlight these limits and to extend the national roundtable debates through other conceptions of national and regional security.

Beyond State Security

One repeatedly made observation was that the national mapping exercises almost entirely omitted reflection on the domestic sources of the security challenges the region is currently facing. These internal sources can be found in weakly institutionalised state structures, a lack of good governance and public support for the central state and incumbent governments, a high degree of economic inequality and unequal access to (state) resources, as well as ideological disintegration, especially among the region's young people. In fact, there seemed to be a widely shared perception that the insecurities the region's young people are facing have to be taken into account much more thoroughly. While the success of Al-Shabaab and other radical Islamic groups in Somalia and Kenya are proof of a lack of economic and political prospects for younger generations, these challenges cannot be confined to individual states, but rather affect the region as a whole.

It was also observed that what was missing from the debate so far was an acknowledgement of the security threat the state itself poses to many of the region's people. Rather than seeking to construct a regional security community, the challenge the region is currently facing is hence how to turn its existing states into proper security communities *within*, not beyond existing borders in the first place. While Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya, for instance,

acknowledge that internal conflicts in neighbouring South Sudan or Somalia have repercussions for their own security, this does not lead to a similarly open acknowledgement of their own domestic sources of insecurity and how these in turn affect the wider region or define the governments' respective regional (security) agenda.

Despite the widely shared reference to internal root causes and their importance for the region's security predicament, there were nevertheless remarkable divisions between the conference participants concerning what exactly count as root causes. Participants disagreed, for example, over the extent to which economic or political marginalisation drive violent conflicts in the region and whether identity and political representation should be taken more seriously as causes of people's disengagement from or violent action against the central state. With regard to the current intra-South Sudanese mediation efforts, it was argued that taking the latter perspective would not only require more equal access to and distribution of economic resources, but also a more profound political reorganisation.

Different Actors and Levels of Security Policies

As was repeatedly noted, the political dynamics within the region's states can also be an important driver of regionalisation. A more elaborate perspective on these drivers for regional (security) policies would thus take into account how the region's states react to different constituencies within their

own borders and how these, consequently, impact on individual government's concrete regional policies. A broader perspective on regional security therefore also has to reconsider the actual agents of regional security policies and thus go beyond governments or the small circle around the region's presidents, who were identified as key sources of national foreign policies. What has to be understood more deeply, however, is how these exclusive circles nevertheless respond to demands and pressures from within their own countries, and how this in turn affects the prospects of governments' regional engagements. Uganda's military support for AMISOM in Somalia, for instance, has to be seen in light of pressures from its own military and security sector. Kenya's 2011 intervention in Somalia has to be connected to its own Somali and Muslim population. Ethiopia's changing but committed relationships with the SPLM's various factions and the recently unfolding Dinka-Nuer conflicts within South Sudan cannot ignore the fact that people with shared linguistic and ethnic identities live on both sides of the Ethiopian–South Sudanese border.

Finally, a broadening of perspectives on regional security was also discussed with regard to what is considered to constitute »the region« in the first place. Here, several participants observed that focusing on the abovementioned core states of the so-called Greater Horn of Africa conceals the wider international interests and actors that shape the region's political and security dynamics. In this sense, it was repeatedly suggested to broaden the scope of what was considered to be the region. This was deemed necessary because countries such as Egypt or Yemen – although outside the region – do influence

the region's security dynamics substantially. They do so either through efforts to act as peace broker, as potential hubs of support for Al-Shabaab and other armed groups (such as the entire Middle East and Arab peninsula region) or as primary parties to regional conflicts themselves (such as Egypt in the case of the growing competition over the use of the Nile waters). It was observed that taking this larger international context into account also raises important questions concerning how these extra-regional interests shape the prospects for regional solutions and whether they hinder or support regional organisations in their peace and security engagements. This, of course, also applies to other international actors – the United States and other donor countries in particular – whose interests and policies continue to have a substantial influence on regional security dynamics, not least through their financial support for regional organisations.

A similar need to broaden the scope of »the region« was recognised with regard to Tanzania, even though Tanzania's rationale for (dis)engagement from the region's conflicts and its overall strategic importance raised different viewpoints among the conference participants. Nevertheless, recent efforts to mediate intra-SPLM talks by President Jakaya Kikwete mirror an increasingly regional perspective in Tanzania's foreign policy and raise crucial questions about how to link them to other ongoing regional peace efforts, in this case the IGAD-led Addis Ababa mediation process. Tanzania's historical experiences of regional peace-making – in Burundi and Southern Africa, for instance – paired with its membership of both SADC and EAC, may also help to facilitate a process of

sharing lessons learned across Africa's sub-regional confines and to use overlapping membership in different RECs constructively for a strategic policy dialogue.

In summary, the conference participants repeatedly made the case for broadening the debate with regard to the kinds of security, the main agents or actors of regional peacemaking, as well as the region's overall scope. However, this was only vaguely reflected in the way the two concrete cases, South Sudan and Somalia, were discussed. While »human security« and »root causes« are by now established terms within the official policy discourse, the exchanges soon revealed that translating these concepts into the concrete practices of regional security policies remains a big challenge. This will be further elaborated in the following two sections.

Who Defines the Regional Peacemaking Agenda?

The second broad area of debate concerns the question of who defines the region's peacemaking agenda and what means are used to establish peace and security. While the region's historical and current experiences show no lack of interdependences and regional military or political engagements in search for peace and security, these overlapping and diverse interests and security agendas more often than not turn out to be problematic. As the overall rationale of this year's conference suggests, one of the crucial tasks for the future will thus be how, where and with whose participation these diverse and sometimes contradicting interests may be

reconciled. The conference participants alluded to three salient areas in which the question of who defines the regional peacemaking agenda came to the fore.

Competing Peacemakers

First, the diverse responses to the outbreak of violence in South Sudan in late 2013 revealed a division within the region with regard to which means – military or political – are best suited to addressing the situation. More than merely a competition between Ethiopia (supporting and pushing for an IGAD-led mediation) and Uganda (sending troops to evacuate nationals and later on fighting alongside the government), the division between military and political solutions has also shaped the history of regional engagements in Somalia. Nevertheless, the recent developments in South Sudan reflect not only competing strategies, but also competing peacemakers whose search for recognition and influence on the course of the process were detrimental overall. While mediation seems to be privileged over purely military solutions, the fact that Uganda remained rather excluded from the Ethiopia-led IGAD-mediation process may point to the fact that the initial competition is far from being settled. As was repeatedly raised by the conference participants, having all regional players on board remains the core ingredient of sustainable peace within South Sudan. As will be elaborated further in the following section, the ongoing competition among different peacemakers also compromises IGAD's prospects of serving as a constructive, accountable and powerful regional organisation in the area of peace and security.

What Are the Political Solutions?

Secondly, while especially with regard to Somalia the conference participants unanimously shared the observation that military means alone will not suffice to achieve the sustainable peace required for the region, there was a remarkable vagueness with regard to what kinds of political solutions both individual countries, as well as the regional or international organisations engaged in the Somali peace process, actually have to offer. This poverty with regard to the political solutions at hand was also recognised in the context of the currently ongoing IGAD-led South Sudanese peace talks. Here several participants noted that the focus on power-sharing does not reflect the fact that the same parties now at the negotiation table had failed to implement the required political reforms agreed upon during the last power-sharing arrangements (first as part of the CPA, then the post-independence SPLM government). In several instances, it was noted that the current peace efforts follow the logic of »cutting the cake« – thus multiplying the spoils – rather than re-establishing a social contract between governments and people, as well as governments and their regional friends and foes. In a similar vein, it was concluded that the latest regional engagements in Somalia followed the logic of »displacing« rather than »replacing« Al-Shabaab. Here, more strategic thinking about political solutions would also require a more thorough engagement with the social, economic, political and gender relationships that have been formed during times of war. It will be necessary to think about how these will have to be transformed into similarly stable, yet non-violent and inclusive ones

in the course of a peace process. In this context, it was also noted that the existing Somali state institutions would need to be more constructively included in regional peacemaking efforts, working with them – even if still far from ideal – rather than undermining what has already been constructed.

External versus National/Local Interests

Thirdly, various participants pointed to increasing friction between national or local security interests, on one hand, and those of regional or international interveners, on the other. As noted above with regard to the »dark sides« of regional security engagements, the kind of security and peace that neighbouring interveners are willing to support often enough do not correspond to the expectations and interests of either national elites and/or (parts of) the local population. The reorganisation of the Somali state and the extent and character of Somali federalism that ought to be promoted is a good case in point for such friction between different interests. On one hand, Ethiopia and Uganda are often said to promote diverging ideals of a Somali state: Ethiopia favours an Ethiopia-like ethnic federalism, while Uganda favours a more centralised state. On the other hand, there was significant controversy among the conference participants concerning whether and to what extent any external actor would actually be able to influence intra-Somali political reforms. Any solution, it was argued, can be achieved only with the active ownership and contribution of the Somalis themselves. Regional actors can thus only support, not dictate or impose.

Others, however, pointed to the difficulty of evaluating what counts as »Somali interests«. How is it possible to measure the needs and grievances of Somali citizens? Who can be trusted as legitimate representatives of a Somali voice, especially in times of defunct state institutions not legitimised by universal suffrage?

As one participant pointed out, this is sometimes less difficult than often stated. The Heritage Institute for Policy Studies, for instance, conducted surveys to find out what kinds of federal state Somalis wish to establish. Though not yet finalised, the first findings reveal that the models currently being debated do not seem to meet the expectations most of the Somali respondents concerning a federal state. Furthermore, the study stresses that the model of federalism has to be defined depending on the specific context, considering which options are likely to build peaceful societal relationships, rather than creating new sources of conflict and division. In the context of the debate at the conference, this example highlights how important it is to critically evaluate the often diverse local, national and international interests and to be alert towards regional peacemakers – whatever their intentions – that conceive of the conflict scenario as an object for their own strategies, rather than as a dynamic social setting in itself.

The debates around the question of whose peace-making agenda defines the region thus pointed to the importance of discussing the means and strategies of regional peace engagements much more thoroughly than focusing on governments' interests and their attitudes towards the region more generally. While the potential rifts among the region's competing peacemakers

already formed part of the overall rationale of the conference, the debates in Nairobi pointed to two further lines along which these questions may be debated in future: first, with regard to the actual means and instruments for so-called political (as opposed to military) solutions and secondly, their respective legitimacy, support or alternatives on the ground.

Institutionalisation of Regional Security: To What Extent and for What Purpose?

While the increasing role of sub-regional organisations in shaping the security agenda of the Horn of Africa has been widely received as a positive development, particularly in contrast to the unilateralism and foreign interventionism of past times, this trend remains problematic in many ways. The third area of debate thus concerns the question of how and to what extent regional policies should become more institutionalised in the future. While both the African Union and the EAC formed part of the debates, the major focus was on the potentials and challenges which IGAD is currently facing.

In this regard, numerous participants highlighted that, despite the increasing importance of the regional security agenda, IGAD remains a forum of heads of state, rather than an organisation in its own right. Most recently, this became evident in the post hoc legitimisation of Uganda's 2013 intervention in South Sudan. As one participant observed, IGAD's ambiguous wording pointed to the fact that member

states were actually in sharp division over the legitimacy and usefulness of this intervention. And yet, lacking an overall regional strategy, IGAD was forced to accept – at least officially – the Ugandan intervention as a *fait accompli*. IGAD hence acted reactively rather than pro-actively.

The dependency on individual member states also leads to numerous other shortcomings of IGAD, which were mentioned during the debates. First, member states remain unwilling to support IGAD financially and logistically. In contrast to member states' investments in national security apparatuses, there is no equivalent financial contribution to regional security instruments. This, as one participant observed, could be read as reflecting national governments' political priorities rather than a lack of financial means, as is often argued.

Secondly, the IGAD Secretariat remains powerless with regard to member states and is often circumvented altogether. As pointed out during the debate on the ongoing IGAD mediation in South Sudan, the three appointed mediators are in fact »envoys« who report directly back to their respective capitals rather than to the IGAD Secretariat.

Thirdly, several participants were concerned about the fact that many of the instruments and institutions that are already established are used only in an *ad hoc* way, or often circumvented altogether. It was, for instance, observed that IGAD's in many respects path-breaking early warning system CEWARN was not used adequately in the current mediation in South Sudan. In a similar vein, the African Union's Panel of the Wise (PoW),

as well as various human rights instruments, do not seem to be adequately utilised in the organisation's engagements in the region. This points to institutional potentials that remain largely underutilised. In this vein, it was also noted that IGAD's own policy documents, such as the Strategic Plan, remain ideas on paper only and seem to define neither the debate nor the practices of peacemaking in the region. In fact, one participant pointed out that during the FES mapping exercise none of the government representatives had interpreted their respective national strategies along the lines of IGAD's regional security priorities. Likewise, where they exist, national policy documents rarely mention IGAD. The challenge thus remains how to increase the sense of ownership and buy-in for both an overall regional policy framework and already existing instruments.

Finally, the question of the role of individual member states in shaping IGAD's policies became a controversial point of discussion. While some participants argued that Ethiopia is clearly playing the role of a regional hegemon, others were more moderate in their interpretation of the power balance between IGAD member states. They thus pointed to an increasing competition between Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia in particular in shaping the course and extent of IGAD's regional engagements. The controversy over the Ugandan intervention in South Sudan, the »shared« mediation efforts, or the reluctance with which Ethiopian and Ugandan military forces integrate into AMISOM despite official »re-hatting« were mentioned here as examples. Irrespective of which side is taken, this controversy showed that, whether hegemons or not, IGAD member

states continue to play ambiguous roles and often continue to pursue their own national policies while using IGAD as a regional forum, whose primary *raison d'être* is to convey a certain legitimacy on member states' regional policies. As one participant put it, instead of regional policies, what we see are often national policies *regionalised*. Apart from the potential to hijack IGAD's regional peacemaking agenda, the dominance of individual member states also raises the question of who is left out of regional policy-making. An important question for the future may thus be how those states either excluded (Eritrea) or less powerful (Djibouti, for instance) may nevertheless become part of a regionally shared security agenda.

One possible strategy to overcome IGAD's susceptibility to being blocked internally by member states' diverging interests was identified in the inclusion of other »third« parties in regional peace-making processes. Recent successful examples of this strategy include the involvement of South Africa (and the ANC) in the IGAD mediation process in South Sudan and the role of high-profile individuals (former presidents Thabo Mbeki and Olusegun Obasanjo, for instance) as integrative lead figures.

Altogether, it became clear that future debates on the state and prospects of a more institutionalised regional security architecture will have to take these ambiguous national interests as their starting point. A regional organisation built against member states' interests will never be turned into an effective regional peacemaker. In this regard, it was revealing that the assessment of IGAD's shortcomings was, in fact, not shared by all participants

in the conference. The open defence and positive assessment of IGAD's role in both Somalia and South Sudan by most of the participating government officials reflected that there is a clear divergence in terms of what to expect from and how far to support a more institutionalised regional organisation. Furthermore, these voices often pointed to IGAD's more general limitations and made the case for more realistic expectations towards IGAD's overall peacemaking potential. Particularly in light of resistant national parties, as currently witnessed in the South Sudanese mediation process, these participants argued that IGAD will always be hamstrung, irrespective of its member states' agreement, financial means or level of institutionalisation.

Further complicating this picture of different expectations, several participants also pointed to the role of international financial, technical and logistical support in building a regional peace and security architecture. Having been instrumental in the evolution of IGAD and the AU, international donors are increasingly demanding more visibility and effectiveness for their support. It also became clear that, especially in light of IGAD member states' reluctance to take more financial responsibility, international donors are increasingly reconsidering their overall support. This, however, stands in sharp contrast to both the necessity of a more gradual development of »ownership« and the apparent divergent expectations within these organisations concerning what course to take. The future debate on the institutionalisation of regional peace-making may therefore have to take these wider international interests and concerns into account.

Outlook: How Should the Region Be Redefined?

When evaluating the potential of regional cooperation it is not enough to scrutinise how individual states define their respective national interests with regard to the region as a whole. The discussions in Nairobi pointed to the importance of placing the region itself at the centre of the debate. How can the region as such be imagined in the future? How can a more positive image of the region be constructed and used in an integrative way? The starting point for such a debate should be a positive redefinition and re-evaluation of the region. This may include both a positive evaluation of the region's achievements and lessons learned from the past, as well as a positive formulation of a future vision.

As observed during the debates in Nairobi, today we are witnessing an increasing regionalisation of national (security) interests. However, this regionalisation is rarely based on a vision of what the region as a whole is supposed to be and how individual member states seek to contribute to its construction. Participants noted the lack of foreign policy documents in which member state governments articulate their visions. Similarly, security policy is, by its very nature, shaped by a high level of secrecy and suspicion. All this has contributed to a hitherto very opaque process of policy-making and -formulation which not only conceals who is in charge of what, but also hinders a more open scrutiny of the visions and strategies these policies are built on.

While many participants noted this as a concern in its own right, there is also a more

concrete reason why it is so important to develop a positive future vision of the region. As noted by several participants, one root cause of the various conflicts that shape the region's peace and security agenda today is ideological or normative disengagement and disintegration, in particular among the region's young people. This, several participants pointed out, has become one of the key factors in the radical mobilisation of groups such as Al-Shabaab. However, this has shaped security dynamics in the region for a long time now. It has also been at the core of most of the armed resistance movements from which many of the region's current governments (Uganda, Ethiopia, South Sudan and Eritrea in particular) evolved. Articulating clear visions for the region will thus fill an increasingly gaping void and establish the trust, reliability and predictability that are so crucial to the development of a cohesive social fabric for the region. Thinking and imaging the region in positive terms is therefore not merely an intellectual exercise but an integral aspect of a strategic policy for the region. Where could such a positive evaluation come from?

Over the course of the conference, it was repeatedly pointed out that a positive evaluation of lessons learned could become the starting point for such a redefinition of the region. While confronted with the realities of seemingly never-ending challenges in the region, there is a tendency to forget or downplay these positive achievements. How can the history of IGAD mediation in the region be translated into lessons learned? What can the current peace process in South Sudan learn from the preceding CPA negotiations between the North and the South? How can the region's rich experience of transforming former

armed groups into civilian governments be used more constructively in current peacemaking? How can the success of IGAD as a forum for member states despite fierce divisions among them be translated into a constructive role in the future?

Another way of re-interpreting the region could start from economic relations within the region, especially the potential for socio-economic development. This would enable a shift away from the negative image of a region prone to conflict and crisis to one in which increasing regional economic cooperation opens up hitherto unrealised development opportunities. Such a shift in the overall discourse would, however, also need to consider the abovementioned ambiguous consequences of economic regionalisation (for instance, with regard to ecological consequences or rising socio-economic inequalities) and raise questions with regard to the just distribution of current and future shares.

As evident from these two examples, both suggested avenues may spark rather than allay controversy. However, in keeping with the rationale of the conference, such a controversy might be constructive and thus welcome in the end. It may contribute to the gradual formulation of a regional identity that stems from and is nourished by shared regional concerns. It would certainly be a gradual and long-term process, but the conference revealed the need for such a debate in many respects. Moreover, it offered important starting points concerning the themes and lines of debate that may serve to facilitate and structure such an endeavour.

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