TOGETHER TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

A REVITALISED EU-AFRICA PARTNERSHIP IN PEACE AND SECURITY

IMPLICATIONS FOR EU FINANCING FOR AFRICAN PEACE AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

Faith Mabera
October 2020

The regional dimension of the EU-Africa partnership should be enhanced as a partnership of equals.

The EU should clarify how its strategy links short-term and long-term engagement to the finance instruments of NDICI and EPF

The AU should formulate a clear action plan on the future paths of APSA and address the problems undermining APSA's efficiency.

FRIEDRICH EBERT STIFTUNG

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CONTENTS

1

INTRODUCTION

In March 2020, a new comprehensive EU-Africa strategy was launched, signalling the enduring commitment to deepening the partnership based on shared interests and values. With the broad aim of consolidating the EU-Africa partnership agenda in the face of emerging priorities and challenges in an evolving geopolitical context, the 2020 EU-Africa strategy comes at a time when both partners are engaged in the process of broad institutional and financial reforms in their respective organisations. For the EU, 2020 marks the end of the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) which necessitated negotiations for the new MFF 2021-2027, including a raft of proposed financing and structural changes pertinent to the EU's external action. On the part of the African Union (AU), the ongoing reform agenda is aimed at implementation of institutional and financial reforms initiated in 2017 under the leadership of President Paul Kagame in his capacity as AU chair at the time. In addition to realizing more effective and efficient institutions, a core priority of AU reform has been financial self-sufficiency built on the Kigali Financing Decision which directed AU member states to finance the AU's operational, program and peace support operations (PSO) budgets and to endow the AU Peace Fund. [1]

In the context of substantive policy developments across the EU and AU respectively, this policy brief presents an analysis of the evolution and trajectory of EU-Africa relations pertinent to cooperation in peace and security; and the EU's support to the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The analysis also takes into account the political, strategic and operational dimensions of EU-AU strategic partnership in peace and security and the implications of changes in policy and implementation mechanisms for the dynamics of cooperation in peace and security.

2

A SNAPSHOT OF THE EU'S SUPPORT TO APSA: INSTITUTIONAL & FINANCIAL ASPECTS

APSA is the AU's collective mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution in response to African peace and security challenges. Established in 2002 in accordance with the Protocol on the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the AU, APSA is comprised of the PSC; eight Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and two Regional Mechanisms (RMs); the Panel of the Wise; the Continental Early Warning System, the African Standby Force (ASF) and the AU Peace Fund. [2] The strategic direction of APSA's operationalisation is drawn from the APSA 2016-2020 Roadmap, dovetailing the AU's Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020, both of which are in need of updating in their current versions.

At the institutional level of EU-AU cooperation in peace and security, the 2007 Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) set the pace for long-term strategic partnership driven by multiannual roadmaps and action plans.[3] The 2020 comprehensive EU- Africa strategy sets out five key areas for partnership, including a partnership for peace and governance, which underscores the EU's strategic and targeted support for Africa peace and security initiatives, informed by the EU's integrated approach to conflict prevention, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction and development. [4]

Pertinent to the EU support to APSA, the EU's main financing instrument is the African Peace Facility (APF) which prioritises three elements: African-led PSOs; capacity building and early response mechanism.[5] The APF is an off-budget financing instrument that corresponds with three security and defence-related instruments namely, the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Athena Mechanism. Although the added value of the APF support to African-led PSOs and institutional support was affirmed by independent evaluations in 2006, 2011, 2013, 2015 and 2017, concerns have been raised about the sustainability of funding required for PSOs and the low investment in capacity-building vis-à-vis growing demands in the PSO budget. [6]

3

THE APF: ADAPTING TO STRATEGIC REALITIES AND OPERATIONAL DEMANDS?

The legal basis of the APF Article 11 of the Cotonou Agreement between the EU and the countries from the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP), sets out its financing by the European Development Fund (EDF).[7] Hinged on cognisance of the security-development nexus at the core of the EU's 'integrated approach to conflict and crisis,' [8] the scope of activities financed under APF has been subject to limitations with respect to beneficiaries (AU and RECs/RMs) and components (APSA, PSOs), excluding military equipment, military training and military-related expenses such as soldiers' salaries. The legal restriction barring funding operations with defence and security implications has sparked debates among EU member states about innovations needed for the APF to address its limitations, including institutionalisation of dedicated mechanisms to finance military equipment, training and advice. Consequently, the impetus to bolster coherence, responsiveness, flexibility, and strategic direction in the EU external action galvanised efforts towards the establishment of a Capacity-Building for Security and Development initiative in support of military activities that complement development objectives. The emphasis on long-term, sustainable engagement has also informed calls for a 'context-informed' EU-wide strategy framework for security sector reform and the proposal for the creation of the European Peace Facility (EPF) to finance operations under the CFSP that have military or defence implications. [9]

Since its creation in 2003, the APF has channelled over EUR 2.7 billion in support of the AU and the RECs/RMs in the framework of APSA. The biggest chunk of this allocation (90%) has gone to PSOs, particularly AMISOM whose costs have been skyrocketing amidst an elusive exit strategy. [10] The issues around sustainability of long-term APF financing motivated gradual reduction of APF funding for PSOs capped at 65% and growing calls for balanced use of APF funds in favour of increased capacity-building programmes and ERM activities such as mediation and diplomacy. [11] The 2019-2020 Action Programme for the APF sets out a total of EUR 800 million under the 11th EDF, a significant increase from EUR 584.5 million under the 2017-2018 Action Programme. Moreover, the 2019-2020 APF Programme is aligned to the five priorities set out in the 2016-2020 APSA Roadmap namely, conflict prevention, crisis/conflict management, post-conflict reconstruction and peace building, strategic security issues, and coordination and partnerships.

Furthermore, the 2019 - 2020 Action Programme takes note of the findings of a 2017 external evaluation of the APF which found that APF support for institutional capacity-building has mostly been 'fragmented activities rather than clear contributions to an agreed set of outcomes.' With respect to PSOs, the scale and reliability of APF support has not only contributed to the AU momentum for financial self-sufficiency in the long-term, but has also cemented the EU's role as both 'an enabler & a financier.' [12] In spite of the overall positive contribution to APSA and its evolving concept, the evaluation urged continual EU-AU dialogue in tune with evolving realities in order to avoid undermining of APSA by 'centrifugal forces' such as the turn to Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against Boko Haram and the G5 Sahel Joint Force. [13]

In a similar vein, an audit by the European Court of Auditors (ECA) in 2018 found that the bulk of APF funding for capacity-building into operational costs and that persistent challenges to APSA's effectiveness contributed to a gap between donors' expectations and APSA's implementation record, adding on to a pattern of AU over-dependency on external funding.[14] Accordingly, the ECA recommended that the EU Commission and the EEAS redirect EU support away from funding operational costs towards capacity-building projects. A second recommendation was the prioritization of results-based intervention to reduce delays to contracting and retroactive financing. The EU aims to implement these recommendations in the 2019-2020 Action Programme for the APF by emphasizing key objectives and targeted outputs of the 2016-2020 APSA Roadmap and strengthening capacity-building of PSOs at HQ and field levels, including the integration of a gender-sensitive and rights-based approach in APF Support Programmes. [15]

In spite of the indispensability and 'uncontested relevance of the APF in supporting peace and security in Africa,'[16] the legal limitations under Article 41 (2) of the EU Treaty on eligible expenditure has hitherto excluded military equipment, training and infrastructure, creating a gap in EU support to PSOs led by international, regional or country partners such as African Union Mission in Somalia or the G5 Sahel Joint Force. A related political issue around APF funding is the incompatibility between military expenses and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Official Development Assistance (ODA) eligibility,

which bears on EU member states' contributions to the EDF.[17] As a corrective measure, the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR/VP) put forward the proposal for the creation of the EPF as an off-budget instrument to finance all CFSP external action with military or defence implications, including provision of military equipment, running costs of peace operations led by international partners and military operations under the CSDP (replacing the Athena Mechanism). [18]

4

THE PROPOSED EUROPEAN PEACE FACILITY: TOWARDS A POSITIVE NET EFFECT ON EU'S FINANCING ARCHITECTURE FOR PEACE & SECURITY?

At a broad level, the main objective of the EPF is to 'enhance the Union's ability to preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen international security' [19] in four main ways: (i) providing a permanent fund to increase effectiveness of CSDP missions; (ii) filling a gap in EU military support by enabling provision of military equipment, training, infrastructure and advice; (iii) broadening the ambit of support to partners, replacing APF and expanding scope of support to PSOs on a global scale to international, regional and country partners; (iv) broadening the scope of military and defence-related activities to include 'train and equip' support to militaries of third countries and integrated support packages complementary to CSDP operations.

With respect to budgetary implications, it is envisaged that the EPF will not finance peace and security expenditure covered by EU budget, which will be financed by the Neighbourhood, Development, International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI). Relevant to APSA, ineligible expenditure under EPF would include institutional capacity-building support to APSA institutions, salaries under the Joint Financing Agreement for AU Staff and AU Liaison Offices, and support to early response mechanism. [20] Additionally, the allocation of EUR 10.5 billion to the EPF under the MFF 2021-2027, is indicative of a broad increase in the EU's budget for external action across the board, up by 13% from the 2014-2020 period.[21]

The design and operationalization of EPF has also brought to the fore a number of challenges and dilemmas in view of its expanded thematic and geographic scope. For instance, some EU member states have pointed to prospective challenges to the EU in reconciling its interests and its core values in an evolving geopolitical context. [22] The EU's support for SSR in conflict-affected states, particularly through support of train-and-equip programmes, also runs up against the risk of arms falling into the wrong hands thereby fuelling conflict dynamics; or inadvertently providing foreign assistance to military forces responsible for human rights abuses or propping up authoritarian regimes. The associated risks of EU military support to third parties have underscored the imperative for safeguards such as risk assessments, monitoring systems and verification for compliance with human rights in the decision-making and implementation processes of the EPF. [23]

For African countries, the absorption of the APF into the EPF has raised about the potential waning of EU support to APSA, especially when viewed against competing demands under a broadened EPF scope. Additionally, there remain unanswered questions about how the non-military components of the reconfigured APF will be sustained and how the EU will ensure earmarking for African-led PSOs while prioritising long-term engagement. [24]

While the EPF is envisaged to inject coherence, flexibility and harmonisation of EU financing architecture for peace and security, and positively shift the decision-making to member states within the EU Council, there is the risk that increased expenditure may be largely 'crisis-led and steered by high-level political priorities without necessarily being rooted in long-term strategy.' This places the onus on the EU to link its peace and security financing instruments in a conflict-sensitive way by ensuring, for instance, greater coordination between the civilian and military components of EU support to operations such as the MNJTF and the G5 Sahel Joint Force. [25]

5

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION INSTRUMENT (NDICI): FACILITATING AN INTEGRATED EU APPROACH TO CONFLICT & CRISIS?

The Commission's proposal for the creation of the NDICI is grounded in the 2016 EU Global Strategy priorities for external action, including state and societal resilience, and an integrated approach to conflict that is multidimensional, multi-phased, multi-level and multilateral. Furthermore, the Commission's 2017 mid-term assessment of the EU external action financing instrument highlighted the need for synergy across instruments, as well as enhanced fit with the EU's global partnership agenda, including its commitment to the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and EU-Africa partnership among others.[26] In response to the recommendations, the Commission proposed an enlarged budgetary 'Heading 6' labelled 'Neighbourhood and the World' in the MFF that would include a 'jumbo instrument' merging existing financial instruments to improve internal and external coherence; and promote complementarity and strategic direction of the EU's external direction. [27] The NDICI embodies a unification of 11 existing instruments[28]

into a single mega instrument, while providing for a more streamlined, transparent budget and maximisation of synergy and coherence. The NDICI is structured along three pillars: geographic, thematic and rapid response. The geographic pillar will cover cooperation with neighbouring countries and countries of three designated geographic zones; the thematic pillar addresses flagship initiatives and global issues such as human rights and democracy, stability and peace and global challenges. The stability and peace thematic programmes include assistance for conflict prevention, peacebuilding and crisis preparedness, and addressing global and transregional threats. The rapid response pillar will finance quick responses for conflict prevention, peacebuilding and strengthening the security-development nexus. There is also an Emerging Challenges and Priorities Cushion made up of flexible programmable funds that would enable the Commission to move funds across pillars in response to emerging needs, challenges and priorities. [29]

The responses by EU member states on the design and implementation of the NDICI have ranged from alignment, with some identified priorities, to broad support for more integrated EU external action, to divergence on some geographic and thematic programmes.[30] Overall, the debate among member states regarding Heading 6 has oscillated between the 'pro-European proponents' (such as Germany, Spain and France) who are in favour of increased overall budget in terms of value added for adaptive and flexible external action; and the 'Eurosceptics' (such as Netherlands and Denmark) who are pressing for significant MFF budget cuts and a reprioritization of funding specifically to areas where there is demonstrable added value of EU contribution. [31]

6

CONCLUSION

Hence, while the broad reform of EU financing instrument for external action can be read in the context of broad ambition to inject strategic direction in its global strategy, and strengthening the integration of development policy and foreign and security policy, it remains to be seen how the redesign and operationalization of instruments and programmes will advance coherence and complementarity between security and development objectives; and the EU's balancing of values & interests.[32] Furthermore, the priorities under Heading 6 also carry certain risks that may undermine the integrated approach to conflict and crisis. For instance, some have argued that rather than promoting long-term engagement in the stability and peace thematic programmes, the NDICI may instead foster greater focus on the EU's own security concerns. [33] Furthermore, the merger of all instruments into a single instrument may mean that certain conflict dimensions, levels or phases will outweigh others if they are better positioned to serve EU internal and external interests. [34]

7

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PROPOSED EU FINANCING INSTRUMENTS FOR PEACE AND SECURITY

FOR THE EU

- Enhance regional dimension of the EU-Africa partnership as an anchor to the leitmotif of a partnership of equals, as well as strengthening African ownership through joint and inclusive processes and assessment of context-informed needs.
- Ensure greater coordination and political dialogue between EU-RECs working through mechanisms such as the RIPs and the AULOs.
- Incorporate an incentive approach to strengthen the internal capacity of EU, AU and RECs/RMs to strengthen the effectiveness of APSA through targeted and focused capacity-building support, informed by dialogue, training and advice.
- Strengthen accountability and reporting on APF at all levels across the AUC, RECs/RMs and operational level.
- Clarify EU strategy on the complementarity between short-term and long-term engagement in the scope of foreign policy, security and development policy activities to be financed by NDICI and EPF. For the APF this means enhancing linkages between civilian and military components of PSOs as well as linking EU instruments in support of peacebuilding, conflict prevention, resilience and humanitarian assistance.

FOR THE AU

- In light of the imminent expiry of 2016-2020 APSA Roadmap, the AU should conduct a review of the roadmap and formulate clear action plan to its partners with regard to the future trajectory of the APSA.
- Address the perennial problems that undermine APSA's efficiency, specifically the delayed operationalisation of some APSA components and weak coordination between AU and RECs/RMs.
- Embrace the proposed reforms of EU financing support as an incentive to sustain the momentum for financial self-sufficiency in implementing the Kaberuka reform package.
- Adapt a reform mindset with regard to updated, comprehensive partnership-driven assessment of APSA in ensuring its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and adaptability to changing context of peace and security developments and conflict dynamics.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
APF	African Peace Facility
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
ASF	Africa Standby Force
AU	African Union
AULO	African Union Liaison Office
CBSD	Capacity-Building for Security and Development
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
ECA	European Court of Auditors
EDF	European Development Fund
EEAS	European External Action Service
EPF	European Peace Facility
ERM	Early Response Mechanism
EU	European Union
G5	Group of 5 Sahel countries:
	Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania & Niger
HR/VP	High Representative for Foreign Aff. & Security Policy
IcSP	Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
NDICI	Neighbourhood, Development, International Cooperation Instrument
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PSC	Peace and Security Council
PSOs	Peace Support Operations
REC	Regional Economic Community
RM	Regional Mechanism
SSR	Security Sector Reform

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Enhance the regional dimension of the EU-Africa partnership as a partnership of equals, as well as strengthen the African ownership through joint and inclusive processes and the assessment of context-informed needs.

Clarify how the EU strategy links short- and long-term engagement in foreign policy, security and development policy to the finance instruments of NDICI and EPF. Improve the coordination between civilian and military components of peace support operations and connect the EU instruments in support of peacebuilding, conflict prevention, resilience and humanitarian assistance.

In the upcoming renewal of the 2016-2020 APSA Roadmap, the AU should formulate a clear action plan to its partners with regard to the future trajectory of the APSA and address the problems that undermine APSA's efficiency, specifically the delayed operationalisation of APSA components and the weak coordination between AU and RECs/RMs.

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