



Transcript

Ensuring Peace and Security in Africa: Implementing the New Africa-EU Partnership

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Ambassador John Shinkaiye:

Thank you for this kind invitation to discuss the Africa-European Union (EU) partnership. The Chairperson of the Commission, Jean Ping, has requested me to convey his sincere apologies for not being able to attend, due to prior commitments. He truly values the work of Chatham House, and wishes you every success in your deliberations.

I am happy to be here today on behalf of Chairperson Ping, and would like to take this opportunity to thank Chatham House for organizing this Conference. Your work on peace and security issues, particularly as it relates to the African continent, is of critical importance. Indeed, it provides us useful insights on the issues we are grappling with on a daily basis, for our policies and actions on peace and security can only be effective if they are informed by the knowledge and analyses produced by think tanks and research institutions such as yours.

Significantly, in the Tripoli Declaration adopted by the AU Special Session on the Consideration and Resolution of Conflicts in Africa, held in Tripoli, on 31 August 2010, the Heads of State and Government stated that “making and sustaining peace and security is also an intellectual challenge”. They, therefore, “under(took) to build the capacity of (the continent’s) universities and research institutes to explore the nature of African conflicts, to investigate what succeeds and what fails in conflict resolution efforts, and to arrive at African-centered solutions, drawing from our own distinctive and unique experience”. To this end, we look forward to an enhanced collaboration with your institution.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The topic of this Conference could not have been more timely. Last week, in Addis Ababa, we had wide ranging consultations with our European colleagues on the preparations of the third Africa-EU Summit, which will take place in Libya at the end of November 2010. These consultations provided an opportunity to review the achievements made to date on the various areas covered by our partnership, the challenges encountered and the best way forward.

Today’s discussions offer yet another opportunity to further reflect, with the benefit of academic input, on the evolution of Africa’s partnership with the EU and its contribution to the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa. The ideas and suggestions that will be put forward will be of great help to us

in the Commission as we pursue and intensify the preparatory work for the third Africa-EU Summit.

Before addressing more specifically the topic of my presentation, allow me first of all to make a couple of preliminary remarks that, I hope, will help better situate the context within which the Africa-EU partnership on peace and security is evolving:

- First, I would like to stress that, of the many challenges facing our continent, the quest for peace and security is undoubtedly the most pressing. Issues of peace and security have always been at the core of the concerns of African leaders, for this is a prerequisite for the development of our continent and its peoples.
- Second, in the past few years, the number of violent conflicts has been significantly reduced, and important advances, while still fragile, have been made, thanks to the collective determination and efforts of Africa, with the support of its partners. At the same time, far too many African countries remain trapped in a vicious cycle of conflict and its deadly consequences. That Africa is host to 8 United Nations operations and that our continent constitutes over 60% of the agenda of the UN Security Council, bear testimony to this reality. While data with regard to conflict related impact and cost is problematic, given the absence of agreed indicators, definitions and reliable national statistics, it is clear that violent conflict has had a devastating impact on the continent.

The causes of this situation are many, including corruption, exclusionary definitions of citizenship, poverty, competition for land and other resources, misallocation of resources and shortcomings in governance. The situation is aggravated by the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the scourge of drug trafficking. More generally, once violence erupts, conflict itself may become the main source of its own continuation and protractedness. It is also important to pay attention to the emerging trend of election-related conflicts and violence, as well as border disputes.

- The third point relates to the renewed determination of African leaders to address peace and security issues on the continent, in

order to achieve the objective of a conflict-free Africa. Nothing better illustrates this determination than the adoption, in July 2002, in Durban, South Africa, and as part of the transformation process from the OAU to the AU, of the Protocol relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council (PSC).

The adoption of the PSC Protocol truly marked a turning point, for it substantially strengthened the powers of the AU in matters of conflict prevention and resolution, and introduced new rules of procedure which gave added credibility to the AU. The PSC Protocol provided the basis for the African Peace and Security Architecture (ASPA), whose main pillars are: the PSC, the Panel of the Wise, the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), the African Standby Force (ASF), the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cooperation in the Area of Peace and Security between the AU and the Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, and the Peace Fund, whose objective is to provide the necessary financial resources for peace support missions and other operational activities related to peace and security.

Since the entry into force of the Protocol, significant progress has been made in the operationalization of the APSA. The PSC is now fully operational, and has already met 245 times, addressing most of the conflict and crisis situations facing the continent. In the short period of its existence, the PSC has acquired undeniable credibility, illustrated, amongst other things, by the annual meetings it now holds with the UN Security Council. It has also forged a similar relation with the Political and Security Committee (PSC) of the European Union (EU). The Panel of the Wise became operational since December 2007, and has met numerous times since then. Key components of the CEWS and the ASF are in place. Finally, the MoU between the AU and the Regional Mechanisms was signed in January 2008, and a number of steps have since been taken towards its implementation, including the establishment of Liaison Offices with the AU to facilitate coordination and collaboration.

- Fourth, as part of the overall AU Peace and Security Architecture, the OAU/AU, has, over the past two decades, adopted several instruments designed to facilitate the structural prevention of

conflicts. These instruments relate to human rights, governance, democracy, disarmament, terrorism, to list but a few. They represent a consolidated framework of commonly accepted norms and principles, whose observance would reduce considerably, the risk of conflict and violence on the continent and consolidate peace where it has been achieved.

- Lastly, it is important to bear in mind that, in their efforts to promote peace and security, African leaders have been mindful of the need for support from the international community. To this end, the AU has endeavored to build effective partnerships with international stakeholders, bearing in mind, as stressed in the Tripoli Declaration, that “these partnerships (should be) fully based on Africa’s leadership, because without such leadership, there will be no ownership and sustainability; because we understand the problems far better than those who come from far away; because we know which solutions will work, and how we can get there; and because, fundamentally, these problems are ours, and we will live with their consequences”.

Consequently, the AU has developed close relations with the United Nations. Since 2007, the PSC and the UN Security Council have instituted an annual consultation between the two organs, which is held alternately in Addis Ababa and in New York. The Commission and the UN Secretariat work together on a range of issues relevant to peace and security in Africa, and have recently launched a Joint Task Force to foster coordination and collaboration.

The AU has also developed strong partnerships with the Arab League, the International Organization of La Francophonie and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Mention should also be made of the AU/G8 regular consultations undertaken within the framework of the Joint Africa/G8 Plan to Enhance African Capabilities to Undertake Peace Support Operations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

These elements provide the context within which the Africa-EU partnership is evolving, characterized, as it is, by: persisting challenges in the area of peace and security, in spite of the progress achieved so far; sustained efforts at building institutions and norms that would enable Africa to successfully

address the conflict and crisis situations that are still prevailing on the ground; and the development of numerous partnerships with a wide array of stakeholders, the relationship with EU being one of the pillars of these partnerships.

The partnership with the EU should also be situated in the specific context of the relationship between Africa and Europe. The two continents are bound together by history, culture, geography, a common future, as well as by a community of values, ranging from the respect for human rights, freedom, equality and solidarity to justice, the rule of law and democracy.

The strengthening of AU-EU partnership gained momentum in 2007, when both sides agreed to adopt a Joint Strategy and Plan of Action that would deliver concrete positive results for the people of Africa, Europe and the world. Four objectives were identified in this regard: 1) to forge an AU-EU partnership that would address issues of common concern; 2) to strengthen and promote peace, security, sustainable development, human rights and regional and continental integration in Africa; 3) to jointly promote and sustain a system of effective multilateralism and address global challenges; and 4) to facilitate and promote a broad-based and wide-ranging people-centered partnership.

Peace and security is one of the eight priority areas of the strategic partnership. As rightly stressed by the Joint Strategy, Africa and Europe understand the importance of peace and security as preconditions for political, economic and social developments, having laid the foundation for successful cooperation based on the need to promote holistic approaches to security, linked to governance and sustainable development, with a view to addressing the root causes of conflicts.

The partnership revolves around two key elements:

- First, the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa and Europe. This is to be achieved through: (a) a strengthened dialogue and institutional cooperation that not only addresses issues of peace and stability in Africa, but also challenges that Europe is facing. Accordingly, the two parties agreed to share information, perspectives and lessons learned, as well as to consult on issues of common concern; (b) efforts to ensure the full operationalization of the APSA, building on the steps already taken by Africa and EU's experience and financial resources; (c) and the search for adequate solutions to provide sustainable,

predictable and flexible funding for AU-led peace support operations, for building capacity should go hand in hand with the mobilization of appropriate funding for Africa's efforts on peace and security.

- Second, a coordinated action to address common and global peace and security challenges. In the Strategy, Africa and the EU recognize that, while global environment has opened up new opportunities to enhance international peace and security, it has also come with new security challenges. In a world of increasing interdependence and close links between the internal and external aspects of security, these challenges can only be addressed through concerted international actions. Hence, the decision of both sides to coordinate their efforts on issues relating to transnational organized crime, international terrorism, mercenary activities, human and drug trafficking, illicit trade in natural resources, illicit proliferation, accumulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This cooperation also extends to other areas such as the link between climate change and conflict. Looking beyond Africa and Europe the two sides agreed to coordinate their actions and bring their influence to bear in the search for lasting solutions to crises and conflicts in other parts of the world that undermine international peace and security, in particular in the Middle East region.

Since the adoption of the Joint Strategy and Plan of Action, significant progress has been made towards the implementation of the three main areas of focus. Allow me to highlight few points:

- Political dialogue has indisputably developed, facilitating better understanding and the implementation of common approaches to challenges and security in Africa, Europe and globally, as evidenced by the structural and systematic linkages between decision-making organs, such as the EU Peace and Security Committee (PSC) and the AU PSC, the EU Military Committee (EUMC) and the AU Military Staff Committee (MSC), Crisis management teams on both sides, as well as by the regular consultations between African and EU Heads of delegation in Addis Ababa, Brussels and New York. Last week in Brussels, the AU PSC and the EU PSC convened their third annual joint

consultative meeting, discussing a range of issues, including conflict and crisis situations in Africa, maritime security and safety, terrorism, EU structures on peace and security as they arise from the Lisbon Treaty. A week earlier, the EU MC undertook a visit to Addis Ababa, conferring with the AUMSC and AU Commission leadership.

- Progress has also been made regarding the operationalization of the APSA. Under the Africa Peace Facility (APF), the EU provides substantial financial support for the various components of the APSA, both at continental and regional levels, including the African training centres in the area of peacemaking and peacekeeping. This support has, also, made it possible to establish RECs Liaison Offices to the AU (the process of establishing AU Liaison Offices to the RECs is underway and will also be funded from the APF), as part of the implementation of the MoU between the AU and the RECs. I also would like to highlight the ongoing AMANI Africa training exercise, a collaborative effort between the AU and the EU, in line with the strategic partnership between the two organizations, as agreed to in Lisbon in 2007, whose objective is to evaluate the ASF procedures relating to the deployment of peace support operations, as well as determine the state of readiness of the ASF.
- Regarding the provision of predictable funding for Peace Support Operations undertaken by the AU or under its authority, the EU, through the 1st and 2nd APF, has provided valuable financial support to African-led peace support operations. The second APF was signed in Addis Ababa, in February 2009. Covering the period 2008 – 2010, it amounted to 300 million Euros, with a possible replenishment of 300 million Euros. It represented a major deliverable of the Peace and Security Partnership, notably its priority number 3 (predictable funding for African-led peace support operations), and comprises an early response mechanism that allows for urgent support to the first stages of African-led mediation and preparatory steps of African-led peace support operations. Through the APF, the EU has provided financial support to the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the ECCAS operation in Central African Republic (MICOPAX), as

well as to a host of other AU initiatives relating to Sudan, Guinea, Niger and Madagascar.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

While significant progress has been made, we should not lose sight of the many challenges that are yet to be overcome in order to make the partnership more effective and enhance its contribution to the promotion of peace and security in the two continents and beyond.

In this respect, I would like to highlight the following few points:

- While political dialogue has intensified on conflict and crisis situations, issues related to terrorism (including the payment of ransom to terrorist groups, which is prohibited by the AU), disarmament (especially weapons of mass destruction), and other topics of common interests (cross-border cooperation and post-conflict reconstruction and development) have not been given commensurate attention. Hence, the need in the Action Plan for the period 2011-2013 to promote a more inclusive dialogue that goes beyond the specific conflict and crisis situations. New thematic issues such as cross border cooperation and maritime safety and security are added to make this dialogue more comprehensive and sustainable. The EU and the AU will review progress annually in the implementation of UNSCR 1325.
- On the operationalization of the APSA, much remains to be done in order to sustain, and consolidate the progress that has been made and to achieve a functional Architecture including smooth and effective interaction between all components of the APSA. I am pleased to note that the AU, with the support of EU, has carried out an assessment study of APSA, whose findings and recommendations will provide the basis for a trilateral AU-RECs-EU roadmap, for funding and support in the context of the APF capacity building component.
- Regarding the funding of AU-led peace support operations, the initial objective "to financially enable the AU and regional mechanisms to plan and conduct Peace Support Operations" has not been fully achieved. Further exchanges are required on how to mobilize additional resources, including from within the

continent. Furthermore, there remains an acute need for more concerted action between the AU, the EU and the UN to move forward the process of implementation of the recommendations contained in the Prodi Panel's and subsequent UN Secretary-General reports.

It is with this in mind that AU and EU teams met last week in Addis Ababa to elaborate the Action Plan for the period 2011-2013. I am pleased to note that we have reached an agreement on the content and direction of the next Action Plan, which will aim at enhancing political dialogue, facilitating the full operationalization of APSA, and contributing to the mobilization of predictable funding for AU-mandated peace support operations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Clearly, the EU is today one of Africa's most important partners. The Joint Strategy and Plan of Action agreed to in Lisbon provide a strong platform for enhanced partnership and close coordination of our efforts in order to further peace and security in both our continents and contribute to global security. Since these commitments were made, the ties between the two continents have grown from strength to strength. I have no doubt that the next Africa-EU Summit in Libya will mark a new milestone in our joint endeavor, acknowledging our shortcomings and building on the achievements made so far.

Beyond the specific area of peace and security, our continent is keenly following the European integration project and the efforts being made to meet the challenges arising from this project. In particular, Africa is interested in how an integrated Europe, at peace with itself, would project power as a cohesive whole. We are watching how Europe is balancing the re-nationalization of political life, which one could detect from recent developments, and the pursuit of a collective ideal. If the former tips the balance, Africa will once again have to revert to the old modus operandi of interacting individually with European governments in peace and development matters, which will be a serious setback to the AU-EU strategic partnership.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me end by, once again thanking, Chatham House for organising this conference and for the European Commission for supporting it financially. I have looked closely at the brief outline of what the Conference is supposed to achieve. The detailed programme has been clearly designed to ensure that the aims of the conference will be achieved. We, that is the African Union

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Commission, therefore wait with great anticipation of the outcome of the conference.

I thank you for your kind attention.