



THE AFRICA-EU PARTNERSHIP
LE PARTENARIAT AFRIQUE-UE

APF Lab-Debate
European Development Days
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Summary

Moderator Shada Islam (Friends of Europe) introduced the APF debate by highlighting that among the many disagreements on the global stage, there is clear consensus on the notion that the 21st century is an 'African century', that security is an essential pre-condition for the wellbeing of our societies, and that what happens to Africa matters to the EU, and vice-versa, due to the increase interconnection globalization has brought about in the world. Discussing the successes, challenges and future prospects of the African Peace Facility is therefore highly timely and relevant.

Mr. Koen Doens (Director for Development Coordination - East and Southern Africa, European Commission) started the debate by outlining the historical roots and main features of the APF. Set up in 2004 at the request of African leaders at the Maputo Summit, the APF stemmed from the need to strengthen and deepen the peace and security pillar of the Africa-EU partnership via an innovative cooperation mechanism. The APF, building on the preceding creation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the first EU-Africa Summit, provides quick, predictable and sustainable financing and caters to African security needs, notably supporting three types of activities: i.) Peace-Support-Operations (PSOs) ii.) Capacity-building programs and iii.) the Early-response Mechanism (ERM). The APF gradual financial increase over the years evidences the EU commitment in this area. Mr. Doens indicated that the upcoming Africa-EU Summit in Abidjan in November provides for a unique opportunity to bring the Africa-EU partnership to the next level. The creation of the Peace Fund within the AU is seen as a crucial deliverable to ensure sustainable funding in the future.

Mr. Ajay Bramdeo (Permanent Representative of the AU to the EU and ACP) indicated that the APF fits neatly into the overarching and long-term African Agenda 2063, as it triggers a multi-pronged approach focused on diplomacy, conflict-prevention as well as support for peace operations in an attempt to achieve the "Silencing the guns by 2020" initiative. Mr. Bramdeo noted that the partnership with the EU is instrumental in this respect and accompanies the African ambition for an enhanced ownership as the AU has in recent years moved from "non-interference" to "non-indifference" as evidenced by the African Governance Architecture. Eventually, the APSA developed on the basis of four components: the Peace and Security Council, the Panel of the Wise, the Continental Early Warning System, and the African Standby Force whose operationalization rests with the Regional Economic Communities. Since then, a healthy partnership has evolved with the EU and other partners, notably the UN, in pursuit of the common interest of a stable Africa. "Joint strategizing is difficult to implement but key to addressing root causes of conflicts".

Mr. Koen Vervaeke (Managing Director of Africa, European External Action Service) similarly emphasized the relevance of the 'triangular momentum' that exists with the leaderships of the AU, UN and EU to bring their partnership forward. This is critical to the EU as it has become undeniable that

what happens in Africa has a direct impact on Europe. The EU Global Strategy acknowledges such interdependence, and in pursuit of a holistic, long-term, integrated approach to fragility and security threats, the APF will remain indispensable. Without the APF, some African efforts would have remained political, not operational. Mr Vervaeke also highlighted EU efforts in the area of peace and security notably by highlighting the Common Security and Defence Policy missions as well as the flexibility shown by different EU Trust Funds,. On the sustainability side, Mr. Vervaeke considered the need to find a better balance in financing through enhanced contributions from the African side. The Kaberuka plan to finance the AU through a continent-wide import-levy is seen as a promising step in this regard.

Mr. Jonas Hemou, (Permanent Representative of ECOWAS to the EU) addressed the topic of regional coordination. According to him, the reduction of conflicts in Africa are mostly due to the increase in democratic governance. However, new threats are emerging and the solutions of the past may no longer be valid, hence the need for ad hoc processes. Divergences between the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities tend to decrease as there is a growing understanding that those communities are essential for the operationalization of the African Standby Force. As a matter of fact, subsidiarity should be applied on a systematic basis with a clear division of labour. Peace and Security matters have been tackled by the ECOWAS since the 1990s and this framework is legally compatible with the APSA, which should lead to more cooperation. However, this is not true of all Regional Economic Communities whose unequal economic development has hampered the African Standby Force to flourish evenly across the continent. If anything, the APF is an excellent tool to continue validating the "African solutions to African problems" rationale.

A civil society perspective was given by Volker Hauck (European Centre for Development Policy Management), who noted that great strides have been made as regards African Peace and Security since the 1980s and 90s. Mr. Hauck indicated that ultimately, African Peace and Security will be dependent on the ability to fund efforts with African means. Linked to these is the question of AUC human resources which jeopardises African ownership by undermining the sense of responsibility and the institutional memory. These capacities and funding gaps have been raised in the past and need to be addressed and overcome.

After the panel discussion the audience had the opportunity to contribute and ask questions to the panel. On the role of civil society, Mr. Hauck expressed that more could be done in terms of involving civil society in P&S efforts, as it can play an essential role in understanding and resolving ongoing conflict, a view that was supported by Mr. Vervaeke. Mr. Bramdeo indicated that the AU has structurally involved civil society, in particular women, to play a role in mediation efforts. At the same time, Mr. Bramdeo noted that extensive involvement of civil society can also complicate matters and therefore is not always desirable. On how the APF may be embedded institutionally in the post-2020 architecture, the panelists could only speculate. According to Mr. Doens the APF has shown to be a vital answer to a vital need, and this realization will also inform political decision-making. What form this may take in the future is unclear as of now.

In their concluding remarks, the panelists were asked to share their views on what African Peace and Security may look like in ten years. Mr. Hauck emphasized the need to contain emerging pockets of conflict that have flared up in recent years, while Mr. Doens highlighted the importance of progress towards the Agenda 2063 and a strong Standby Force to prevent and contain such conflicts. But all panelists expressed their hope that ten years from now the focus of Africa and the international community will have shifted from reactive Peace and Security responses towards a proactive development agenda