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UN-EU-AU Coordination in Peace Operations in Africa

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Executive Brief



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UN-led peacekeeping operations have recently reached unprecedented levels, straining civilian, police and military capabilities. The high demand has led to a situation where the organisation seeks aid from other intergovernmental and regional organisations. The complexities and number of African conflicts have resulted in overstretch, parallel mandates, and a need for complementary partnerships in peace operations.

Commissioned by the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI) has studied coordination between the UN, EU and AU in peace operations in Africa. Through research and interviews conducted in Khartoum, Addis Ababa, Brussels, New York, Paris and Stockholm, and using examples from some of the most recent missions in Africa as references, the study presents some of the coordination challenges inherent in contemporary peacekeeping. It includes an analysis of factors affecting inter-organisational coordination between the UN, EU and AU in peace operations and presents ideas for enhanced coordination, highlighting several areas requiring attention in future UN-EU-AU relations. Although every peace operation is unique, the aim has been to identify and recommend structural and procedural enhancements that may be of value in more than one mission.

This Executive Brief presents key excerpts from the final report, written by Markus Derblom, Eva Hagström Frisell and Jennifer Schmidt. The full report can be accessed from www.foi.se/africa

Setting the stage: Coordination among ‘unequals’?



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (right) meets with Jean Ping, Chairperson of the AU Commission.

UN Photo by Evan Schneider

The emerging partnership between the UN, EU and AU in peace operations is predominantly founded in a mutual relationship of resource-dependency, legitimacy and shared values. However, the organisations have different internal structures, levels of experience of and resources for peacekeeping operations, and therefore different comparative advantages for peace operations in Africa. These ‘unequal’ traits impact on coordination between them.

The UN is flexible, employs comparatively efficient mechanisms for large-scale resource-management, and acts with the full legitimacy of the international community. However, the current overstretch, political realities, and decision-making procedures may work against both timely deployment and sustained engagement in areas of fragile or failed peace. The UN’s nascent procedures for accommodating the emerging peacekeeping partnerships, and a modus operandi for interacting with regional organisations, have to be formalised and continuously refined.

Being a regional organisation covering many policy areas, the EU has several tools for conflict prevention

and crisis management at its disposal, and it is currently engaged in several missions in Africa. In addition, the organisation provides funding to support conflict prevention, crisis management and capacity building. However, the EU has difficulty in harmonising its member states and institutions when it comes to foreign and security policy, which creates problems in relations with third countries and international organisations. Exemplary attempts have been made to compensate for this, e.g. through the set-up of an EU Joint Delegation to the AU consisting of both Commission and Council Secretariat staff, headed by a joint EU Special Representative. As for the UN and AU, mustering resources for peace operations is a problem for the EU, affecting both decisions to deploy and long-term commitment.

The AU, seeking to promote peace, security and stability on the continent as a prerequisite for development and integration, is compared to the other two organisations very young. From its birth in 1999, a series of subsequent decisions has established the fundamentals of a future architecture for peace and security, including institutions such as the Peace and Security Council and the

African Standby Force (ASF). Spearheading the ‘African Solutions to African Problems’ device, the AU has the advantages of African legitimacy, rapid deployment, and a focus on its own continent. In addition, the AU has incorporated the ‘responsibility to protect’ in its Constitutive Act, preserving the right to intervene in a member state ‘in respect of grave circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity.’ Since 2003, the AU has launched several missions to African conflicts, including engagements in some of the most complex situations, such as Darfur and Somalia. The laudable missions undertaken by the AU so far, however, indicate a gap between the ambition and will to engage on one hand, and the access to matching capabilities on the other. In none of its larger missions, authorised or intended troop levels have been reached. Significant problems in force generation, financial commitments, and political coordination of member states in the implementation phases have been encountered. AU missions have been dependent on support from external sources.

The gap between will and capabilities in the AU affects the relationship to the UN and EU, in the sense that the AU is much more of a recipient of e.g. finances and support for capacity building. As underlined by the 2007 AU Audit, there is need for a number of structural improvements. The degree of institutionalisation is very low, and resort is often made to *ad hoc* solutions and external funding for specific missions. Several partners, including the UN and EU, supply capacity building support on the continent in the form of training and financial assistance. Significant efforts are required to reach envisioned future objectives.

Inter-organisational agreements

The UN, EU and AU all emphasise the importance of effective multilateral cooperation to promote peace and security. Their peacekeeping relationship is based on several agreements.

For the UN and EU, the 'Joint Declaration on UN-EU Cooperation in Crisis Management' from 2003 calls for increased coordination in planning, training, communication and best practices. In the aftermath of the 2006 experiences from the DRC, the UN and the EU issued a joint statement to further enhance coordination. A set of guidelines for

joint UN-EU planning was adopted in 2008.

Concerning UN-AU relations, the UN member states agreed in 2005 to the development and implementation of a 10-year plan for capacity building with the African Union. Subsequently, a joint framework for this effort was signed in 2006. The declaration reflects the common commitment of the UN and the AU to maintain peace and human security, promote human rights and post-conflict reconstruction, and advancing Africa's development and regional integration. It outlines strategic priorities and provides a framework for UN support



UN Photo by Eskinder Debebe

Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon (left) meets with Javier Solana (right), EU high representative.

to the capacity-building efforts of the AU and the emerging ASF structure.

The EU-AU relationship builds on the 'Joint Africa-EU Strategy', adopted at the 2007 Lisbon summit. This strategy is a long-term framework for Africa-EU relations, in which cooperation on peace and security is one of the priority areas.

The political and legal framework for peace operations

UN peacekeeping finds its political and legal framework in the UN Charter, chapters VI and VII, and the decisions of the United Nations Security Council. In practice, organisations such as the AU seek UN authorisation also for non-UN missions in Africa. According to Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, regional arrangements or agencies for peace and security should be promoted.

In contemporary Africa, there is significant support for predominantly African approaches to peace and security. In its resolution 1809 (2008), the Security Council welcomed the efforts of the African Union and sub-regional organisations to undertake peacekeeping operations in the continent.

It welcomed the development regarding cooperation between the UN, AU and EU, and stated that regional organisations have the responsibility for securing human, financial, logistical and other resources for their organisations, including obtaining contributions from their members and partners.

The mandate of a mission is always the product of political will and compromises. A UN Security Council resolution is the result of sometimes lengthy negotiations, possibly affected by resistance from important stakeholders, be it among the permanent members of the Security Council or by the host nation itself, as was the case for UNAMID. Across the border, in Chad and the CAR where the conflict has connections to the

situation in Darfur, the EU operation has a more limited mandate.

The aim of every peacekeeping operation is to create an environment conducive to sustainable peace and security and democratic governance. Delicate problems arise as peacekeeping operations might not always be perceived as neutral, which in turn affects coordination. UNAMID carries the legacy of AMIS, which was seen as the protector of the Darfur Peace Agreement – an agreement not signed by all parties to the conflict. For AMISOM, which has a mandate that includes provisions for support to the transitional federal institutions in Somalia, perceptions of the mission's partiality may negatively affect future negotiations between the opposing parties.

Planning for Peacekeeping

A UN mandate is generally considered a prerequisite for the later stages of the strategic planning process of the EU and AU. In parallel to the discussions on the mandate, as part of initial planning, consultations take place between member states as well as between organisations.

The planning processes, however, differ between the UN, EU, and AU, and they are rarely conducted in a coordinated and synchronised manner. Where partnerships are envisaged from the outset, the importance of synchronisation of planning processes and struc-

tural harmonisation is very high. Despite the fact that the planning processes differ in nature, there are ways of overcoming this, e.g. through joint agreement on how to connect core stages of the respective organisation's processes.

Coordination Arrangements



UNAMID Commanders General Agwai (centre) and Karenzie (right) don the United Nations blue beret to mark the transfer of authority from AMIS. To the left, the Joint UN/AU Special Representative Adada.

UN Photo by Shereen Zorba

creating and managing the hybrid has been too cumbersome, stating that the UN system is designed to manage UN operations, not hybrids. However, UNAMID is not fully deployed and functioning yet. Hybrids and support missions promote experience-sharing and organisational learning, and it is clear that the AU, as an institution, already has learned a lot about peacekeeping operations from the UN. The hybrid arrangement may also – as for UNAMID – provide legitimacy and be the single politically viable option.

Another arrangement is the 'co-deployment' instrument, such as in Chad and the Central African Republic, where EUFOR is deployed alongside the UN mission MINURCAT. Initially, the UN wanted the EU Forces subordinated to its SRSG as in UN-led peacekeeping missions, but this structure was not acceptable to EU member states. Instead, the EU Force Commander shall maintain 'close contacts' with MINURCAT. In an exchange of letters between the organisations, the relationship between the EU Force Commander and the UN SRSG have been further elaborated, decentralising information exchange and coordination of actions. Regionally, MINURCAT has the mandate to liaise closely with the

The partnerships that have now become the predominant architecture for peacekeeping operations, are based on mutual resource-dependency, legitimacy, and sharing of values. In terms of the relationship between the UN, EU and AU, issues revolving around organisational learning are also important. In missions, these partnerships take on the form of coordination arrangements. Three broad categories have been identified in this study: Hybrids, Co-deployments and Transitions.

In 2004, the AU decided to authorise its mission in Darfur, Sudan (AMIS). Initially operating with a very limited observer force, the AMIS mandate and capability was subsequently reinforced through a series of decisions. The EU launched a support mission to AMIS, encompassing both advice and resources. However, the EU had problems influencing AMIS decision-making and implementation. As a result, voices have been raised to advocate that it is better for the EU to *coordinate with* rather than to support an

AU operation, and that in the future, the EU should take responsibility for the resources provided, and ensure adequate control over operations.

In 2006, following a continued deterioration of the security situation in Sudan, it was jointly decided that the way forward to support AMIS was a series of incrementally reinforcing UN support packages and, finally, a transition to an African Union-United Nations 'hybrid operation'. The hybrid UNAMID took office after AMIS in January 2008, with an African leadership and predominantly African troop constellation, but all other functions of UNAMID are run by the UN in accordance with UN standards and principles. The advantages and disadvantages of a hybrid mission remain yet to be seen. UN officials voice concerns that the process of

“Hybrids, Co-deployments, and Transitions”



EUFOR Tchad RCA mounted patrol at the Sudanese border.

Government of Sudan, the AU and UNAMID, to exchange information on emerging threats to humanitarian activities. The EU is invited to take part. However, there are no formal ties between UNAMID and EUFOR Tchad/RCA, due in part to the fact that coordination across the border is politically sensitive.

In general, the co-deployment instrument allows for political and military control over own resources, including the time and nature of their use, and costs. As in EUFOR RD Congo and Chad/CAR, the co-deployment set-up still lends the legitimacy provided by the mandate and it constitutes a signal of shared values between the UN and EU concerning the situation at hand. Also, the notion of a short co-deployment with a clear end-date may potentially be more politically viable in the EU, where member states bear the costs for their contributions. In return, the prospects of the synergies and organisational learning that may come from further integration are reduced. Co-deployments also challenge coordination in a mission area, as they increase the number of power-hubs present. In addition, co-deployments are often limited in time and scope, which reduce the incentives for transparency and information sharing, and these features may work counter-productively to the institutionalisation of trust and long-term commitment in peacekeeping partnerships.

'Transitions', or sequential operations, allow for exploitation of comparative advantages of the different organisations. One organisation might be willing and capable to act fast in response to an emerging

crisis, as the AU. Another may have the finances, mechanisms and capabilities for large multifunctional missions, post-conflict reconstruction and long-term development at their disposal, such as the UN. As in co-deployments, highly specific and costly capabilities can be deployed for one stage of an operation, and then be withdrawn for use elsewhere. The transition instrument, however, contains risks since it relies on a level of predictability of partnership that currently does not exist in UN-EU-AU relations. To exemplify, the view of the appropriate time for transition of peacekeeping capabilities differs between the UN and the AU, creating friction. In Africa, a widespread perception is that the UN would take on the responsibility for long-term peace building after an early intervention by the AU. However, the UN principle is that the organisation only engages after there is an overarching peace agreement in place. In addition, the current situation of capability overstretch posits a practical impediment to some deployments. A noteworthy case is the remaining confusion on potential UN transitions after AMISOM and EUFOR Tchad/RCA, despite an increased willingness and timelines signalled by recent resolutions. Another risk is that the ownership and responsibility for the outcomes of the various stages of a peace operation may become blurred. The inheritance of both perceptions and structures in a handover of responsibility is also a source of friction. UNAMID still struggles with the legacy of the perception of AMIS.

Support to capacity building

Capacity building is an area for inter-organisational coordination between the UN, EU and AU. Efforts are currently being made in an enlarged G8 forum – the 'Africa Clearing House' – to exchange information on security assistance and cooperation programmes for the African continent, and to provide a mechanism for coordination funding activities. The UN and EU have established offices in Addis Ababa aimed at supporting the capacity building of the AU.

The AU and its partners all emphasise the need for support to the African Peace and Security Architecture, including the fundamental financial arrangements such as budgeting and accounting systems. Human resource limitations in the AU institutions currently impede management of the capacity-building process and limit the AU capacity to absorb partner assistance. Long-term commitments to support institutional capacity-building, with minimal conditionality, will deliver a more sustainable progress.

Two core instruments for EU support to the AU are the 'African Peace Facility', providing financial support to peace support operations, capacity building, conflict prevention, mediation and some aspects of post-conflict reconstruction, and the 'Euro RECAMP' training programme, designed to reinforce the African capacities with regard to prevention, management and resolution of conflicts.

Ideas for enhanced coordination – strategic level planning

In UN-EU-AU coordination, similarities can be found with another realm of study, i.e., dealing with ‘multifunctional’, ‘whole-of-government’ and ‘comprehensive’ approaches, as the preferred framework for most contemporary peace operations. While generally addressing a different problem – resource-dependencies and coordination between different instruments and professions in complex multi-actor environments – several concepts and techniques can be of value in UN-EU-AU relations.

The United Nations *Integrated Missions (IM)* is often put forward as representing the most mature conceptual development of coordinated multi-actor approaches to international peace operations. Another example is the EU *Comprehensive Approach*. The main conceptual tools to achieve integration and coordination suggested by such concepts include emphasis on clear strategic frameworks, promoting common understanding and outlining the purpose and desired objectives; processes for integrated and joint analysis, planning and assessment; and structures that allow political direction to come from one office. For coordination in the field, suggestions for executive coordination bodies, joint implementation plans, extensive use of liaisons, decentralisation of decision-making, co-location of headquarters, and joint coordination

of press and information activities are put forward. However, there is a gap between the concepts themselves and their implementation, predominantly at the strategic level.

Clearly defined strategic frameworks – stating how, when and why different actors should combine their efforts, and promoting a mutual understanding of the mandates, approaches and tasks of different actors – address the most important element of enhanced strategic direction: to establish a level of predictability in the inter-organisational partnerships. In addition, collaborative development of modus operandi for various coordination arrangements should be considered. Indeed, arguments have been made that the UN should strive to further formalise its support and collaboration with regional organisations, in line with a contemporary application of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter and the UN Security Council Resolution 1809.

The strategic process takes place at different places (e.g. New York, Addis Ababa, Brussels), and the mutual representation of these organisations in the respective capitals is not always matching the needs. Inter-organisational coordination in the strategic process for missions should to a greater degree be built on timing, in that the coordination needs to take place at specific decisive stages, and inclusiveness, in that the complementary capabilities and comparative advantages of

the organisations involved need to be exploited throughout. From interviews conducted during the course of the study, there is advocacy for early and inclusive involvement, i.e. even in fact-finding and analysis preceding the mandate deliberations, as a means to enhance coordination at later stages.

Analysing the situation collaboratively is a key precursor to coherent action. Where joint fact-finding and assessments have been made, as by the UN-EU in Chad and the Central African Republic, and by the AU-UN in Darfur, the general perception is that these have contributed to better coordination. Joint planning based on inclusiveness has proved to be an enhancer for coordinated action, e.g. the UN-EU preparations for the missions in Chad and CAR. Another area that may be decisive for enhancing coordination between co-deployed organisations, or organisations engaged in a potential transition of authority, is ‘joint evaluation’. Collaborative assessment of progress and of the situation on the ground requires information exchange and discussions on analysis and interpretation. This promotes mutual understanding and transparency. However, collaborative analysis, joint implementation planning, and focus on evaluation are not always easy. In multi-actor environments, a ‘neutral’ facilitating part to guide the process and to reinforce capacity in its critical stages may be needed.

“The strategic process takes place at different places”

Ideas for enhanced coordination – field level implementation

The studies of multifunctional coordination reveal a desire to enhance the structures and processes for coordination in the field. Common responses to queries about potential enhancers are: mechanisms for regulated information exchange; extensive use of liaisons; co-location, or regular consultation meetings, between field offices; and harmonisation of administrative borders.

In situations where limited general and specific strategic direction exists, coordination tends to include a high degree of ad-hoc arrangements. While not always desirable, it is important to acknowledge that this can also be a positive thing. Such arrangements are generally designed to meet field-level needs, hence being more in tune with the situation at hand. This, however, presupposes decentralised decision-making.

Suggestions for enhanced coordination advocate the use of single focal points for coordination

and information exchange in the field. Prospects of coordination are enhanced if political direction comes from one office. An important

factor for field coordination is to provide venues for the different executives and Heads of Missions to meet and share information.



Member of the military component of the United Nations-African Union Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) speaks with one of the villagers during a patrol routine.

UN Photo by Shereen Zorba

Ideas for enhanced capacity building

The great interest from partners to support AU efforts when it comes to peace and security increases the need for coordination. Today partners are offering more resources than the AU can absorb. Support to capacity building must also be based on the needs of the AU, and evaluations of the support given.

The strengthening and development of permanent structures

for planning, management and evaluation of peace support operations is a key area for future capacity building. Much of the partner support has been directed at the continental level. However, a complementary approach of also supporting the regional and member state levels seems equally important. The regional structures are key to the build up of the ASF, and the individual member states

provide the capabilities.

Training of the ASF is an area where the UN, EU and AU are involved side by side. In the EU training programme 'Euro RECAMP', UN expertise is involved. Complementing the initial military focus, the UN and EU should consider supporting the development and training of the police and civilian components of the ASF.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings, and inspired by other fields of study concerning coordination, the report deals with the prospects for enhanced coordination through attention to three main areas: *Enhanced Strategic Direction, Enhanced Coordination Arrangements, and Enhanced Capacity Building*. These are all important to build mutual knowledge and trust in inter-organisational coordination arrangements.

Enhanced Strategic Direction

Coordination in missions is dependent on strategic direction. The aim is to establish predictable inter-organisational relations. The better the strategic direction sets the prerequisites for coordination, the better the coordination in the field will work. Coordination benefits from specific agreements, and such frameworks are emerging.

There is a pattern emerging in peace operations in Africa, with quick intervention by the AU, and transition to the UN when the situation so permits, with possible co-deployment to reinforce by the EU at certain points. The need to develop frameworks and modus operandi for this pattern is evident.

- **Promote mutual understanding.** It is advisable to create a higher degree of mutual understanding of the unique nature and procedure of each organisation (UN, EU, AU).
- **Expand the inter-organisational dialogue.** When operational in the AU, the Military Staff Committee and other strategic elements would benefit from dialogue with their organisational counterparts in the EU.
- **Strengthen representations in capitals.** Strong mutual representation offices for the organisations in the respective capitals may prove beneficial to coordination.
- **Promote clear mandates for coordination.** Keeping the political nature of the mandate process in mind, the inclusion of more specific instructions for coordination arrangements in the mandate itself is desirable.
- **Develop modus operandi for coordination arrangements.** General Modus Operandi for the major types of coordination arrangements, such as hybrids, co-deployments, and transitions should be developed collaboratively and included in relevant frameworks for coordination.
- **Promote joint fact-finding, collaborative analysis, joint planning, and joint assessment of progress.** Timing and inclusiveness are key principles for enhanced coordination in the strategic process.
- **Develop joint information and communication strategies.** Joint information and communication strategies in support of the mandate, the strategic objectives and the nature and quality of the coordination arrangement should be developed.
- **Use professional planning experts.** The strategy process may benefit from a reinforcing capacity to support critical stages of the planning process with personnel trained and experienced in facilitation, joint planning and with fair knowledge of the processes, structures and capabilities of each organisation.
- **Strengthen planning and management support to the AU.** Since the AU institutions are currently dependent on the few individuals filling the positions, temporary reinforcements are needed in times of coordination.
- **Promote organisational learning.** Coordination arrangements that promote organisational learning may have long-term effects and benefits for peacekeeping in Africa.



UN Photo by Sarah Hunter

Field level coordination

With regard to coordination in the field, though highly dependent on personalities, an important structural issue is the agreement on common operational procedures for cooperation and information exchange between the different executives and Heads of Missions.

- **Strive for harmonised political direction for transitions and co-deployments.** Prospects of field level coordination are enhanced if political direction comes from one office.
- **Find ways to facilitate transitions.** Promotion of e.g. UN standards in non-UN missions may facilitate transition to the UN.
- **Delegate authority.** It is necessary for the strategic level, i.e. capitals, to delegate political authority to the field level to conduct coordination and take the necessary decisions.
- **Promote co-location of headquarters.** Co-location of field headquarters facilitates regular consultations
- **Promote joint coordination bodies.** As a principle, a joint coordination body, inclusive of the respective executives of the missions, should be established.
- **Use a common implementation plan.** A plan encompassing mandated tasks in a mission area should be jointly agreed upon by the different stakeholders in the field. It will help delineate the areas of responsibility and avoid overlap.
- **Conduct joint periodic evaluation and review of plans.** The in-mission joint evaluation of progress and assessment of the situation on the ground enhances coordination, as it requires information exchange and discussions on analysis and interpretation.
- **Use liaisons.** These should be empowered individuals, with quick access to the appropriate level of command in the organisation they represent.
- **Harmonise administrative borders.** Coordination is facilitated by an increased harmonisation of administrative borders, including the use of common geographical references.
- **Promote joint coordination of press and information activities.** Based on a Joint Information and Communication Strategy, forms for joint press coordination and coordination of information activities in the field should be designed.
- **Promote regional cooperation.** A regional perspective on conflicts is advisable.
- **Apply pooling of resources.** If several organisations are active in the same conflict area, they might consider pooling of resources, e.g. for some administrative functions, medical services etc.

Capacity Building

Cooperative efforts to build capacity entail coordination challenges in itself, and such efforts build mutual knowledge about the strengths and weaknesses of the processes and structures in each organisation. Cooperative capacity building is a potential enhancer for coordination in missions. It is important that partners coordinate their support to the AU in its build-up process.

- **Strive for internal harmonisation.** Increased harmonisation within AU partner organisations (the UN and EU) is advisable, to increase cost-efficiency, synergies and to facilitate political dialogue between the organisations.
- **Promote partner coordination.** The current partner group in Addis Ababa is a venue for the three organisations to meet and discuss harmonisation of support.
- **Conduct regular needs assessment.** The AU is a continuously evolving organisation. To ensure precision in matching AU needs to partner contributions, mechanisms for regular needs assessment should be developed, together with tools for evaluation.
- **Direct partner support to the restructuring of the AU Peace Support Operations Division (PSOD).** The result of recent technical assistance missions may provide guidance for matching partner support to needs.
- **Develop tri-organisational training programmes.** The Euro RECAMP programme directed at the build up of the ASF may be a model for tri-organisational cooperation in training.
- **Promote continental, regional and bilateral support.** A balanced strategy of capacity building, directed at the continental, regional and bilateral levels promotes broader organisational learning and reduces the gap between central will and local/regional ability.
- **Strengthen AU reporting/administrative capacity.** Capacity building initiatives should include support for the strengthening of the AU PSOD administrative capacity, including financial mechanisms for reimbursement of capability providers. This is a critical area in order to facilitate financial transfers between partners, AU, and member states.
- **Support strategic level capacity building.** The strategic planning, management and evaluation of missions is a key area for partner support to strengthen the AU institutional capacity.
- **Support development of AU civilian crisis management capability.** This is an area in great need of support.
- **Promote predictable funding.** The AU PSOD would benefit from predictable funding for peace-keeping operations.

UN Photo by Stuart Price

