Yearbook on the African Union

Volume 2 (2021)

Yearbook on the African Union

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Yearbook on the African Union

Volume 2 (2021)

Edited by

Ulf Engel

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Contents

Foreword vii
Acknowledgements ix
List of Illustrations x
Acronyms xi
Notes on Contributors xix

1 Introduction 1
Ulf Engel

PART 1
The Year-in-Review

2 The Annual Interview: Implementation of the African Union's Twin Financial and Institutional Reforms 13
Alexandre T. Ratebaye

3 The State of the Union 19
Ulf Engel

4 The Democratic Republic of Congo's Chairmanship of the African Union 46
Hans Hoebeke and Onesphore Sematumba

PART 2
African Union Policy Fields

5 Education, Science and Technology 67
Ulf Engel

6 Governance 83
Annie Barbara Hazviyemurwi Chikwanha

7 Health 104
Edefe Ojomo and Habibu Yaya Bappah

8 Infrastructure 120
Tim Zajontz

9 Peace and Security 139
Dawit Yohannes Wondemagegnehu

10 Regional Integration and Trade 179
Bruce Byiers

11 Strategic Partnerships 203
Ulf Engel

12 Women and Youth 219
Awino Okech

PART 3
Book Reviews

New Publications on Continental Matters 235
Book review editors: Katharina P.W. Döring and Jens Herpolsheime

PART 4
Appendices

Appendix 1: Chronicle, 2021 255

Appendix 2: Inventory of AU Decisions, 2021 258

Appendix 3: Key AU Office Holders, 2021 262

Index 264

Foreword

This is the second edition of the *Yearbook on the African Union* (YBAU). It is befitting that this Yearbook is being published during the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the African Union (AU), a momentous event in the annals of African integration. More significant, the anniversary underscores the need for knowledge production about the AU that is accessible to both academic and policy audiences. The anniversary also coincides with growing disenchantment across Africa regarding the ability of African regional institutions to deliver on their many promises. Such a context is increasing the demand for knowledge that not only benefits scholars but also informs policy-makers in helping to manage the expectations about their roles. Drawing on the successful inauguration in 2021 of the first Yearbook, this Yearbook continues to be an academic project that provides in-depth evaluation and analysis of the AU as an institution, its processes, and its engagements. With the conviction that understanding the annual workings of the AU furnishes perspectives that 'insiders' should find useful, it also speaks to the wider policy and practitioner constituency. Despite the challenges of establishing a yearbook as an academic resource that appeals to both scholarly communities as well as policy-makers, the richness of the contributions demonstrate the careful straddling of the two domains.

For consistency, this Yearbook retains the previous organisation of chapters and thematic areas. The first part presents a synoptic overview that examines the leadership of a compelling continental issue-area (in this respect, financial and institutional reforms), a rendering of the overall state of the union, and an investigation into the performance of the holder of the position of chairman of the AU in the particular year. Since the leadership of issue-areas and the holders of the chair are bound to change every year, the Yearbook's annual coverage provides an interesting, comparative perspective that should be useful to academics and policy-makers. Moreover, it is extremely valuable that the Yearbook investigates these two dimensions in order to highlight distinctive policy issues that animate the AU and the leadership that propels them. The second part reflects upon both changes and continuities in the thematic areas that inform each Yearbook. The chapters on education, science, and technology; governance; health; infrastructure; peace and security; as well as women and youth remain the same from the previous year, and the authors are also the same. For the chapters on regional integration and trade as well as strategic partnerships, new authors joined the enterprise. For the authors, this continuity facilitates

delineating core trends in each theme across the years while helping to avoid repetitions. The final part is critical for highlighting knowledge production through books review of various works that have contributed to deepening an understanding of continental affairs.

Linnéa Gelot, Cheryl Hendricks, Gilbert M. Khadiagala, Paul Nugent, and Thomas Kwasi Tieku (Editorial Board)

Acknowledgements

At Brill, my sincere thanks go to Joed Elich, acquisition editor for African studies as well as Middle East and Islamic studies (and many other things), and Franca de Kort, assistant editor. Again, you have facilitated a very smooth production of the Yearbook for which I am extremely grateful.

My deepfelt thanks also go to the members of the editorial board – Linnéa Gelot, Cheryl Hendricks, Gilbert M. Khadiagala, Paul Nugent, and Thomas Kwasi Tieku – for keeping an eye on quality and guiding me where necessary.

Regarding the annual interview, I am greatly appreciative of Ambassador Alexandre T. Ratebaye, deputy chief of staff the of the African Union Commission, for taking the time to reflect on the Union's ongoing institutional and financial reforms at a very crucial moment in the history of the organisation, just following the extraordinary summits on the humanitarian challenges the African continent is facing as well as the menace of terrorism and unconstitutional changes of government (Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, 27–28 May 2022).

The book review section has again been managed by Katharina P.W. Döring and Jens Herpolsheimer. I owe them for their dedicated efforts and reliability. I would especially like to thank Forrest Kilimnik, whose copy-editing was incredibly systematic, based on a long experience with similar projects. The routines developed during the first round of the Yearbook in 2021 seem to be working. And, as always, all remaining typos and glitches are mine and mine alone (and there have been a couple in the first volume and, no doubt, there will be some in this one, too).

Finally, my deepfelt thanks go to the contributors of the Yearbook: you are my academic heroes! I know that writing these chapters is a somewhat painful exercise for all of us. It was not until after the first issue of the Yearbook that I realised how much work it takes to deliver these chapters, with little immediate reward in our community. But I am convinced that together we are building an important knowledge base on the African Union that is serving a broader audience.

If you, as a reader, have any critical comment and/or suggestion on the *Yearbook on the African Union*, please feel free to get in touch: uengel@uni-leipzig.de.

Ulf Engel

Illustrations

Figures

8.1 Sectoral distribution of PIDA PAP 2 projects 129
10.1 Institutional framework for implementing the AfCFTA 183

Tables

3.1 Approved AU budgets for FYS 2020–2022 25
3.2 AU financial ownership in FYS 2020–2022 plus projection for FYS 2023–2025 (in % of the respective total budget lines) 27
6.1 Elections postponed in Africa due to the Covid-19 pandemic 91

Acronyms

ABC	African Business Council
ACCORD	African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (Durban)
ACDEG	African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance
ACERWC	African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
ACHPR	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (Banjul)
ACLED	Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (Grafton WI)
ACP	Africa, Caribbean, Pacific countries
ACTs	Artemisinin-based combination therapies
ADF	Allied Democratic Forces (DRC)
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AfCHPR	African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (Arusha)
AfYWF	African Young Women Fellowship
AfDB	African Development Bank (Abidjan)
Afreximbank	African Export–Import Bank (Cairo)
Africa CDC	Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Addis Ababa)
AfSA	African Space Agency (Cairo)
AfSEM	African Single Electricity Market
AGA	African Governance Architecture
AGA–SP	(EU) AGA Support Project
AGA–YES	AGA–Youth Engagement Strategy
AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act (United States)
AGP	African Governance Platform
AGR	Africa Governance Report
AIDS	acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
ALM	African Leaders Meeting
AMA	African Medicines Agency
AMISOM	AU Mission in Somalia (Mogadishu)
AMSP	African Medicines Supply Platform
ANC	African National Congress (South Africa)
ANFCST	African No Fault Compensation Scheme Trust
AOB	any other business
AOSTI	African Observatory in Science, Technology and Innovation
APF	(EU) African Peace Facility
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
ARBE	AUC Department of Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment
ARIA	Assessing Regional Integration in Africa

ASCRST	African Centre for the Research and Study of Terrorism (Algiers)
ASF	African Standby Force
ASRIC	African Observatory in Science Technology and Innovation Council
AU	African Union (Addis Ababa)
AUABC	AU Advisory Board on Corruption
AUBP	AU Border Programme
AUC	AU Commission
AUCIL	AU Commission on International Law
AUDA	AU Development Agency–NEPAD
AUSA	AU Staff Association
AUSM	AU Support Mechanism
AUTJP	African Union Transitional Justice Policy
AUTSTG	AU Technical Support to The Gambia
AUYVC	AU Youth Volunteer Corp
AU–3S	AU Smart Safety Surveillance (AU-3S) programme
AVAT	African Vaccines Acquisition Trust
AVATT	African Vaccine Acquisition Task Team
AWHF	African World Heritage Fund
AYC	African Youth Charter
A3	the three African non-permanent UNSC members
BASE	OAU African Bureau for Science and Education
BOCONGO	Botswana Council for Non-Governmental Organisations
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
B3W	Built Back Better World
CAR	Central African Republic
CEMAC	Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (N'Djamena)
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan States (Tripoli)
CEO	chief executive officer
CESA 16–25	Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016–2025
CEWS	(AU) Continental Early Warning System
CHR	Centre for Human Rights (Pretoria)
CID	Council for Infrastructure Development
CIEFFA	AU International Centre for Girls and Women Education in Africa
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (Lusaka)
COPAX	Council for Peace and Security of Central Africa (Libreville)
COP26	UN Climate Conference of the Parties (Glasgow, United Kingdom)
COVAX	Covid-19 Global Vaccine Access
Covid-19	coronavirus disease
CPC	Coalition of Patriots for Change (CAR)
CRF	(WPS) Continental Result Framework
CSAR	(APRM) Country Self-Assessment Report

CSDP	(EU) Common Security and Defence Policy
CSOs	civil society organisations
CT	counter-terrorism
C10	Committee of Ten Ministers of Finance
C10	Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government (EST champions)
DA	Democratic Alliance (South Africa)
DDR	disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration
DPA	Department of Political Affairs
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DTS	Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020–2030)
EAC	East African Community (Arusha)
EAP	Encyclopaedia Africana Project
EASF	East African Standby Force
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States (Libreville)
ECOSOCC	Economic, Social and Cultural Council
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States (Abuja)
EO	African Earth Observation
EOM	election observation mission
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
EPF	European Peace Facility
ERM	Early Response Mechanism
EST	education, science, and technology
ESTI	AUC Department of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation
ETIM	AUC Department of Economic Development, Trade, Industry and Mining
EU	European Union (Brussels)
EUAM	EU civilian advisory mission
EUBAM	EU border assistance mission
EUCAP	EU civilian capacity-building mission
EUTM	EU military training mission
EU PSC	EU Political and Security Committee
EU TA	EU technical assistance
FDLR	Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda
FGM	female genital mutilation
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
FMS	Federal Member States (Somalia)
FOCAC	Forum for China–Africa Cooperation
FTA	Free Trade Area
FY	financial year
F15	Committee of Fifteen Ministers of Finance
GAP	Government Action Plan

GBV	gender-based violence
GDP	gross domestic product
GERD	Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (Ethiopia)
GEWE	AU Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GMA	Great Museum of Africa (Algiers)
GMES	Global Monitoring for the Environment and Security
GNU	government of national unity
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH/German Corporation for International Cooperation GmbH) (Eschborn, Germany)
G5	G5 Sahel Joint Force
G7	Group of Seven (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States as well as the European Union)
G20	Group of Twenty
HHS	AUC Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs, and Social Development
HIV	human immunodeficiency viruses
HRISA	Health Research and Innovation Strategy for Africa
HRO	human rights observer mission
IAFS	India Africa Forum Summits
ICA	Integrated Corridor Approach
ICGLR	International Conference for the Great Lakes Region (Bujumbura)
ICJ	International Court of Justice (The Hague)
ICOYACA	(AfCFTA) Independent Continental Youth Advisory Council
ICT	information and communication technologies
IDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (Stockholm)
IDPS	internally displaced persons
IEDS	improvised explosive devices
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development (Djibouti)
IMF	International Monetary Fund (Washington DC)
IPED	Pan-African Institute for Education for Development (Abidjan)
IPSS	Institute for Peace and Security Studies (Addis Ababa)
ISS	Institute for Security Studies (Pretoria)
ISWAP	Islamic State West Africa Province
I+E	AUC Department of Infrastructure and Energy
JAES	Joint Africa–EU Strategy
JEGS	Joint Africa–EU Expert Groups
JFA	Joint Financing Agreements
JMC	Joint Military Commission
LAS	League of Arab States (Cairo)

LCB	Lake Chad Basin
LCBC	Lake Chad Basin Commission (N'Djamena)
LDCS	Least Developed Countries
LPDF	Libyan Political Dialogue Forum
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
LTMC	Local Transition Monitoring Committee
MBRF	Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Knowledge Foundation (Dubai)
MBRS	Merit Based Recruitment System
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MFF	Multiyear Financial Framework
MILOB	military observer mission
MINUSCA	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR
MINUSMA	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MINURSO	UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara
MISAHEL	Mission de l'Union africaine pour le Mali et le Sahel
MNJTF	Multinational Joint Task Force (N'Djamena)
MONUSCO	UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC
MOUACA	Military Observers Mission to the Central African Republic
MSC	(AU) Military Staff Committee
MYCM	Mid-Year Coordination Meeting
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NAP	national action plan
NARC	North African Regional Capability
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGC	(APRM) National Governing Council
NGOS	non-governmental organisations
NTC	National Transition Council
OAU	Organisation of African Unity (Addis Ababa)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (Paris)
OIF	Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (Paris)
OSE	Office of the Special Envoy
PAIPO	Pan African Intellectual Property Organization
PAP	Pan-African Parliament (Midrand, South Africa)
PAP	PIDA Priority Action Plan
PAPR–CAR	Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the CAR
PAPS	AUC Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security
PAU	Pan African University (Yaoundé)
PAUVEU	Pan African Virtual and E-University
PAUWES	PAU Water, Energy Sciences and Climate Change (Tlemcen, Algeria)
PAVM	Partnerships for African Vaccine Manufacturing
PCRD	post-conflict reconstruction and development

PIDA	Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PMC	(AUC) Promotion and Mobility Committee
PMPA	Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan for Africa
PQL	PIDA Quality Label
PRC	Permanent Representatives Committee
PSC	Peace and Security Council
PSD	Peace and Security Department
PSOs	Peace Support Operations
PwC	PricewaterhouseCoopers
RACC	(EU) Regional Advisory and Coordination Cell for the Sahel
RCI–LRA	Regional Co-operation Initiative for the Elimination of the LRA
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
RMs	Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution
RoO	rules of origin
RSC	(AUC) Recruitment and Selection Committee
RVs	regional value chains
R&D	research and development
R–ARCSS	Revitalised Agreement for the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan
SAATM	Single African Air-Transport Market
SACU	Southern African Customs Union (Windhoek)
SADC	Southern African Development Community (Gaborone)
SADR	Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic
SAIIA	South African Institute for International Affairs (Johannesburg)
SAMIM	SADC Mission in Mozambique
SARS-CoV-2	severe acute respiratory syndrome – coronavirus
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (Bern)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDGEA	Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa
SGBV	sexual and gender-based violence
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Stockholm)
SMEs	small and medium-sized enterprises
SPLM–IO	Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition
SPLM–N	Sudan People's Liberation Movement–North
SPS	sanitary and phytosanitary
SRSG	special representative of the UN secretary-general
SSR	security sector reform
STISA 2024	Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa
STC	specialised technical committee
SCT–CITC	STC on Communication and ICT

STC–EST	STC on Education, Science and Technology
STC–HPDC	STC on Health, Population and Drug Control
STC–ICT	STC on Communication and Information Communications Technology
STC–TTIIET	STC on Transport, Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructure, Energy and Tourism
STC–TIM	STC on Trade, Industry and Minerals
STG	Silencing the Guns
STR	simplified trade regime
STRC	Scientific, Technical, Research Commission
SVIS	shared value instruments
TERM	technical early response mission
TICAD	Tokyo International Conference on African Development
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front (Ethiopia)
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UCG	unconstitutional change(s) of government
UEMOA	West African Economic and Monetary Union (Ouagadougou)
UMA	Arab Maghreb Union (Rabat)
UN	United Nations (New York)
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (Geneva)
UNAMID	AU–UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur
UNCTAD	UN Conference on Trade and Development (Geneva)
UNDP	UN Development Programme (New York)
UNECA	UN Commission for Africa (Addis Ababa)
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Paris)
UNGA	UN General Assembly (New York)
UNICEF	UN Children's Emergency Fund (New York)
UNISFA	UN Interim Security Force for Abyei
UNMISS	UN Mission in South Sudan
UNOAU	UN Office at the African Union (Addis Ababa)
UNSC	UN Security Council (New York)
UNSCR	UNSC resolution
UNSG	UN secretary-general
USA	United Sates of America
VAT	value-added tax
VLP	Volunteer Linkage Platform
WAMZ	West African Monetary Zone
WGDD	(AUC) Women, Gender and Development Directorate
WGDY	(AUC) Women, Gender, Development and Youth Directorate
WHO	World Health Organization (Geneva)

WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization (Geneva)
WPS	women, peace, and security
WTO	World Trade Organization (Geneva)
YBAU	Yearbook on the African Union
YES	(AGA) Youth Engagement Strategy
4E's	education, employment, entrepreneurship, and engagement

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Ulf Engel

1 The *Yearbook on the African Union*

Since its establishment in 2002, the African Union (AU), as successor to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU, founded in 1963), has become the centre of organising essential policy fields on behalf of its 55 member states.[1] In the last twenty years, the Union has also fulfilled a key function in negotiating roles and responsibilities between itself and the eight officially recognised Regional Economic Communities (RECs).[2] Furthermore, the Union has managed to establish itself as a major actor in global affairs and interlocutor between member states, on the one hand, and the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU), on the other. The Union is also highly relevant for developing strategic partnerships with China, India, Japan, South Korea, and Turkey. Overall, and more analytically speaking, the Union has become the main African actor for organising a specific globalisation project, that is to say, a way of integrating the continent into the current global condition but at the same time also trying to change this condition (see Engel 2022b, 2023).

So far, however, the various activities of the Union have not been systematically documented, neither by itself nor by academic institutions or research projects. The *Yearbook on the African Union* (YBAU) was launched in 2021 exactly with this explicit aim of providing accessible, reliable, and contextualised information on the AU's evolution and activities. To this end, the Yearbook, and its authors, acknowledges and respects the cumbersome processes of institutionalisation, professionalisation, and communitarisation taking place at the seat of the continental body in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia).

1 The 38th Ordinary Session of the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government took place on 8 July 2002 in Durban, South Africa. The meeting literally transformed the next day into the 1st Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly, held on 9–10 July 2022.

2 The eight RECs officially recognised by the AU are the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), the East African Community (EAC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

After all, the Yearbook is a modest attempt to document progress, or lack thereof, in the development and implementation of collective African policies. It follows ongoing debates at the continental level and seeks to understand Africa's ever-shifting place in global politics. Unfortunately, due to the limited space available in the Yearbook and the complexity of the topic, the RECs cannot be investigated in more depth (this would be another promising academic project, maybe even not one but many).

Of course, a number of very helpful open sources are already available. The decisions of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government (AU Assembly), the AU Executive Council (AU Council), and the AU Peace and Security Council (AU PSC) are all published online.[3] Substantial information is also provided through the *Annual Report on the Activities of the African Union and its Organs* – however, the latest report only covers the year 2019 (AU Council 2020a). And regarding the implementation of *Agenda 2063* (AU Assembly 2013), which guides the AU's long-term activities, the AU Development Agency (AUDA–NEPAD) has started publishing a *Continental Report on the Implementation of Agenda 2063* (AUDA 2020, 2022).[4]

In addition, since 2014, there is also the laudable joint initiative by the AU Commission (AUC) and the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade to publish an *African Union Handbook* (see AUC and MFAT 2021). The handbook provides factual overviews as well as detailed information on memberships, offices, and institutions – but not on policies. In contrast, the *Yearbook on the African Union* aims at providing detailed and contextualised information on the development of important policy fields. Its aspiration is to be both documenting *and* analytical. In addition to the handbook, since 2016 the AU's Directorate of Information and Communication has been publishing *AU ECHO*, which has become an interesting and informative annual magazine around core Union policies (African Union 2021a).

2 The Yearbook's Approach

Worth noting, is that the present volume is not the *Yearbook OF the African Union*, but a *Yearbook ON the African Union*. It cannot be emphasised strongly

3 Although there are still some gaps regarding some regular OAU decisions and some extraordinary sessions, the AU Common Repository is trying to fill them step-by-step. See URL: <https://archives.au.int> (accessed: 30 June 2022). See also Engel (2022a).

4 This follows a first 28-page report, among others, on the domestication of Agenda 2063 and progress made on the Union's flagship projects. The report was tabled in 2017 by the ministerial committee working towards the implementation of Agenda 2063 (AU MCI 2017).

enough that the editor-in-chief and the editorial board are not pretending or claiming to speak on behalf of the AU – far from it. This is an academic project: nothing more, nothing less. The Yearbook brings together a group of scholars that have previously published not only on AU policies, but oftentimes also in interaction with AU officials, and sometimes as long-standing consultants for the Union. The editors and contributors share an interest in the agency of the AU, the RECs, and other African actors.

In terms of the methodological background, up to a certain point we do so from a shared perspective of historical institutionalism and organisational sociology. Thus, we nurture the development of an understanding of the various interests playing out in the AU in a historical perspective and of the dynamics between its actors and within particular institutions. And we also take an interest in the impact these activities have (had) in global politics. The approach is inductive, rather than deductive. The Yearbook is not guided by a specific theory but interested in what actually is happening in the corridors of the AU and beyond – some would call this a 'perspective of practice'.

Against this background, the target audience of the *Yearbook on the African Union* is considered to be broad and diverse. It ranges from fellow academics as well as journalists, both based on the continent and abroad, who are covering the AU and related policies on a regular basis to post-graduates of various kinds who are making their first steps into the orbit of this exciting institution and who may need some guidance. But we also hope that the very people working in the institution and the RECs as well as their 'international partners', that is to say, members of the donor community, may consider this publication to be of some value for their own work.

3 Features of the Yearbook

The *Yearbook on the African Union* comprises four parts: (1) the Year-in-Review, (2) chapters on AU policy fields, (3) book reviews, and (4) three appendices. In the first part, the Yearbook opens with three pieces: *The Annual Interview on the African Union*, an overview on *The State of the Union*, and a reflection on the role of the Union's chairperson. The rationale for the interview is to discuss in an in-depth manner a topic that has dominated Union debates and activities in the previous year by reflecting upon it with a key actor. Deliberately, *The Annual Interview* does not follow the Union's 'Theme of the Year', which in 2021 was 'Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers for Building the Africa We Want' (see AU Council 2020b; see also Ulf Engel, this Yearbook, chapter 5).

The following chapter, *The State of the Union*, is designed as a discussion of important internal developments of the AU as an institution. The AU itself is

the result of a negotiated transformation from one international organisation to another, with member states being the main actors. And in its history since 2002, the Union has continuously changed, with structures and policies coming under scrutiny and in turn leading to modifications and reformulations. In this edition of the Yearbook, one issue stands out: the Union's twin financial and institutional reforms. In the past, the AU has been described as a heavily donor-dependent institution. For this reason, member states in 2015 and 2016, respectively, agreed on several ambitious aims to increase ownership and sovereignty of the institution. Closely linked to the debate on the financial reform, in 2017/2018 the Union also decided to reform its institutions. The objective is to increase efficiency, thereby strengthening the AU as an actor in global politics.

The third chapter focuses on the activities of the AU chairperson. In accordance with Article 6 (4) of the 2000 *Constitutive Act of the African Union* (OAU 2000: §6[4]), the 'Chairman of the Assembly' is 'elected after consultations among the Member States'. In contrast to the powers and functions of the AU Assembly and that of the chairperson of the AUC, the role of the chairperson of the Union is not detailed in the Constitutive Act. It was only with the 2003 *Rules of Procedure for the Assembly* (African Union 2003a: §16) as well as the 2003 *Protocol on Amendments to the Constitutive Act of the African Union* (African Union 2003b: §7) that the – fairly limited – procedural and managerial functions of the chairperson were detailed. This makes it a very interesting office that has been carried out in varying ways since its establishment. In February 2021, Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo) president Félix Antoine Tshisekedi took over this position for a 12-month period. In this chapter, the aims, activities, and achievements of the chair for the year 2021 are reviewed.

But first and foremost, the *Yearbook on the African Union* aims to review major developments in key policy fields of the continental body that took place in the calendar year of 2021. With an interest in the historicity of the institution, these policy fields do not necessarily mirror 1:1 the up-to-the-minute policy priorities of the Union but rather investigates policy fields that have emerged and are being developed over a longer period. So, longue durée trumps 'discourses of newness'. Over the coming years, this approach hopefully also makes the Union's policies more commensurable across time. Embedded in its long-term guiding Agenda 2063 policy (AU Assembly 2013), the continental body is currently pursuing 15 so-called flagship projects (African Union 2022b).[5] In addition, on a day-to-day basis the Union is prioritising activities

5 The 15 flagship projects include (1) the integrated high-speed train network; (2) the formulation of an African commodities strategy; (3) the establishment of the African

in 14 key programme areas.[6] Among others, these are ranging from 'conflict resolution, peace and security' to 'agricultural development', from 'democracy, law and human rights' to a 'visa free Africa', and from 'migration, labour and employment' to 'gender equality and development'.

However, by looking into the history of the organisation, more long-term priorities can be identified. Based on an analysis of all the decisions taken by the OAU and AU Assemblies, Executive Councils, as well as the PSC between 1963 and today (see Engel 2022a), eight key policy fields have been identified. Over the years, they may have been framed in different ways, but these policy fields are the substantive issues the Union has been dealing with. These policy fields are at the heart of the second part of the Yearbook. In alphabetical order, they are (1) education, science, and technology, (2) governance, (3) health, (4) infrastructure, (5) peace and security, (6) regional integration and trade, (7) strategic partnerships, and, last but certainly not least, (8) women and youth. In time, other topics may develop into fully fledged policy fields – climate change is an obvious candidate.

The first edition of the Yearbook featured a chapter on 'development' (Melber 2021). Its focus was on the *New Partnership for Africa's Development* (NEPAD), the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), and the transfer of NEPAD into the AU Development Agency. Among others, Henning Melber concluded that although these institutions and practices 'play essential roles in the cross-cutting discourse on development in an African continental perspective', in practice they are 'of limited relevance': The 'efforts taken … have not yet had a direct impact on regional or local levels' (ibid., 62). And for 2021, nothing substantial can be reported on the further development of NEPAD etc., save for the fact that the term of chief executive officer, Dr Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, has been extended until a new head of the mechanism is recruited (African Union

Continental Free Trade Area; (4) the policy on an African passport and free movement of people; (5) the *Silencing the Guns by 2020* initiative (now postponed to 2030); (6) implementation of the Grand Inga Dam Project; (7) the establishment of a Single African Air-Transport Market; (8) an annual African economic forum; (9) African financial institutions; (10) the Pan-African e-Network; (11) the *Africa Outer Space Strategy*; (12) an African Virtual and E-University; (13) a cyber security project; (14) the Great African Museum; and (15) the *Encyclopaedia Africana*.

6 The 14 key programme areas are (1) conflict resolution, peace, and security; (2) infrastructure and energy development; (3) agricultural development; (4) trade and industrial development; (5) a visa-free Africa; (6) democracy, law, and human rights; (7) promoting health and nutrition; (8) migration, labour, and employment; (9) promoting sports and culture; (10) education, science, and technology; (11) youth development; (12) economic integration and private sector development; (13) diaspora and civil society engagement; and (14) gender equality and development.

2021c, §1).[7] In its brief *Annual Report 2021*, AUDA–NEPAD laconically states that 'The current budget does not meet the institutional demands for carrying out the AUDA–NEPAD mandate' (AUDA–NEPAD 2021, 41).

Also, in the first edition of the Yearbook, there was a need to establish some sort of baselines for the chapters on policy fields. Thus, contributors were asked not only to review the dynamics of the previous year, but also to provide as much background information as necessary to guide the reader through the respective policy field. The character of the chapters in part 2, therefore, will progressively change over time.

Third, the Yearbook also contains a book review section. It is edited by Katharina P.W. Döring (Södertörn University, Stockholm) and Jens Herpolsheimer (Leipzig University). The aim of this section is to critically highlight important academic contributions that were published in the respective year under review (i.e. 2021) to the debate on the AU, the RECs, and their entanglements in continental and global politics.

And fourth, the Yearbook provides a service section. It comprises three appendices: a chronicle of key events, an index of key AU decisions, and an overview on selected office holders. The chronicle very briefly develops a timeline of the most important meetings and other key events. The index contains all decisions documented and available online by the AU Assembly, the AU Executive Council, the AU/REC Mid-Year Coordination Meeting (MYCM), and the AU PSC. Unlike the UN, the AU does not provide an index function on its website. Usually, the AU Assembly takes about 40 to 50 decisions at the annual gathering, and the PSC roughly meets 35 times a year. In addition, there is an equal number of decisions taken by the AU Executive Council and the AU/REC MYCM. The index is meant to provide quick guidance and access to those important AU documents that are in the public domain (needless to say, there are, undeniably, many more documents available on the websites of the Union and its various entities). The overview on key office holders provides information on the chairperson of the AU, the chairperson of the AUC and the commissioners, the countries serving on the PSC, and the members of the Panel of the Wise.

4 Structure of the 2021 Yearbook

The first part of the *Yearbook on the African Union*, the Year-in-Review, features *The Annual Interview*, a chapter on *The State of the Union*, and a contribution

7 On APRM and political governance, see Annie Chikwanha, this Yearbook, chapter 6.

discussing the Union's chairperson. In this second edition of the Yearbook, the interview focuses on the implementation of the dual financial and institutional reforms of the AU, which started in 2015 and are currently in a crucial implementation phase. The AUC deputy chief of staff, Ambassador Alexandre T. Ratebaye, kindly availed himself of discussing some key questions. The interview is followed by a review of *The State of the Union* (Ulf Engel, Leipzig University). Part 1 then moves on to analyse the aims, activities, and achievements of the AU chairperson for the year 2020, DR Congo president Félix Antoine Tshisekedi. This chapter is co-authored by Hans Hoebeke (Egmont Institute, Brussels) and Onesphore Sematumba (International Crisis Group, Brussels).

Part 2 of the Yearbook is made up of eight topical chapters that highlight dynamics in the Union's substantive policy fields. In chapter 5, Ulf Engel reviews dynamics in the field of education, science, and technology. Among others, this chapter investigates several strategies that are meant to support the establishment of knowledge societies on the continent; it also highlights the challenges of developing *a* (?) post-colonial and 'truly' African knowledge order.

In chapter 6, Annie Chikwanha (University of Johannesburg) looks at the implementation of the African Governance Architecture (AGA), which is based on the *African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance* (ACDEG). The African Charter was adopted in 2007 and became operational in 2012. The author takes stock of the implementation of the agenda in terms of the domestication of human rights and democracy standards and, to this end, the transformation of the practices of AU member states. Discussing the merger in 2021 of the AU departments in charge of political affairs, on the one hand, and peace and security, on the other, this chapter also delves into some of the institutional questions facing the AU.

In chapter 7, Habibu Yaya Bappah (Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria & ECOWAS) and Edefe Ojomo (University of Lagos) dissect the broader context of the development of AU health governance. Despite the on-going Covid-19 pandemic, other diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/Aids, and Ebola continue to test the limits of Africa's public health policies.

In chapter 8, Tim Zajontz (Freiburg University) scrutinises the development of infrastructure as one of the pillars of the AU's continental development agenda. Specifically, this chapter recalls the progress made regarding the *Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa* (PIDA), which is a strategic framework for developing continental (cross-border) infrastructures, such as energy, transport, information, and communication technologies, as well as transboundary water resources.

Preventing, managing, and resolving peace and security issues remains the biggest challenge for the AU, as clearly demonstrated by the current rise

in violent extremism and terrorism as well as the growing number of unconstitutional changes of government.[8] This policy field is addressed in chapter 9 by Dawit Yohannes Wondemagegnehu (Institute for Security Studies, Addis Ababa office). He provides an examination of AU initiatives vis-à-vis transregional conflicts as well as the collaboration with the RECs and international partners in this respect. The chapter also addresses the evolution of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCTA) was formally launched on 1 January 2021. With 54 member states, it is the largest trading bloc in the world. It has certainly generated new dynamics across the continent in the area of regional integration and trade. In chapter 10, Bruce Byiers (European Centre for Development Policy Management, Maastricht) analyses the effects of harmonising African policies on trade in goods and in services, investment, intellectual property rights, competition, and dispute settlement in a global context. He also looks at how this project relates to the regional integration policies of the eight RECs officially recognised by the AU as partners.

In chapter 11, the development of the Union's strategic partnerships is explored. The focus is on the three multilateral partnerships the Union maintains with the Arab League, the European Union, and the United Nations, respectively, as well as five bilateral partnerships with China, India, Japan, South Korea, and Turkey. It seems that there is an unwritten rule that each year there must be at least one force majeure when it comes to the authors of the *Yearbook on the African Union*. This time it affected the chapter on strategic partnerships. The author initially foreseen could not commit in time, thus I ended up writing the chapter myself.

And, finally, in chapter 12 Awino Okech (School of Oriental and African Studies, London) takes a closer look at the practices unfolding within the AU since the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on women and children in violent conflict as well as on the role of women and youth in conflict prevention, management, and resolution. The chapter also delves into recent complementary dynamics in the fields of youth and peace and security.

The *Book Review* section makes up the third part of the Yearbook. Katharina P.W. Döring and Jens Herpolsheimer have selected a range of interesting new (2021) publications that are likely to advance the field of the study of the AU and the RECs. In this volume of the Yearbook, two monographs and four edited volumes have been chosen for closer inspection. As a reader, or an author,

8 Just in 2021, three AU member states were suspended from the Union's activities because of coup d'états: Mali (1 June), Guinea (10 September), and Sudan (26 October).

please feel kindly invited to suggest titles published in 2022 for review in the next edition of the Yearbook.

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PART 1

The Year-in-Review

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CHAPTER 2

The Annual Interview: Implementation of the African Union's Twin Financial and Institutional Reforms

Alexandre T. Ratebaye

Editorial Note

Starting in 2015, the African Union (AU) began embarking on two major reforms (African Union 2016a, 2016b). First, to reduce dependence on 'international partners', i.e. donors, the financial architecture of the Union was to be readjusted. The main goal was to raise member states' assessed contributions to cover 100 per cent of the AU's operational budget (which includes maintenance and salaries, etc.), 75 per cent of the programme budget (which includes implementation of all AU policies), and 25 per cent of the budget for AU-led Peace Support Operations (PSOs) (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2020*, 24; see also the following chapter in this Yearbook). Implementation of this goal was still ongoing in 2021, and some progress could be observed. However, the deadline for achieving the target of 100/75/25 per cent was postponed by four more years, to 2025.

Second, to make the AU more efficient and relevant, and based on the so-called *Kagame Report* of 2017 (Kagame 2017), in 2018 the Union also decided to reform the institutional set-up of the continental body (African Union 2018). The year 2021 was the deadline for two major dimensions on institutional reform: (1) reducing the number of portfolio departments from eight to six and (2) reviewing quota systems for all AU professional appointments and revising staffing, including skills audits.

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Interview with Ambassador Alexandre T. Ratebaye

Deputy chief of staff the of AU Commission in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia)

The Need for Reforms

Your Excellency, in a nutshell, what are the financial and institutional reforms of the African Union (AU) all about?
The reforms of the African Union were introduced to put in place an effective system of governance capable of addressing the challenges facing the AU, respond to new vulnerabilities at the dawn of the new millennium, and guarantee a safe and prosperous continent for African citizens.

Could you please briefly recap why there was need for these reforms?
As indicated above, the reforms at the AU were necessitated to address peculiar challenges in a dynamic global system, strengthen the AU to focus on key priorities with continental scope, ensure an effective Union at both political and operational levels, and help the AU of the twenty-first century to become impact-driven, independent, and assertive in the global system.

What are the consequences of high levels of financial dependence on international partners for the AU, in particular the AU Commission (AUC)?
Invariably, high levels of financial dependence give rise to foreign-inspired agenda that may be at variance with the interests of the Union and its people. For the AUC, such dependence impedes the ability to initiate and assume ownership of its programmes and activities. The attainment of financial

autonomy and sustainability would create a new niche and redefine the image and personality of the organisation.

Do you see the reforms as one single process, or are they separated – both politically and technically?
The reforms – financial and institutional – make up a single process. These two planks are intertwined and complement each other; they are therefore mutually reinforcing.

Implementing Reforms

Who among the AU member states do you see as the champions or driving forces in these processes?
In my candid opinion, all AU member states are committed to the reform process and have equal stake. It will therefore be remiss of me to categorise any member state(s) as the driving force. However, it should be clarified that His Excellency Paul Kagame, president of the Republic of Rwanda, conducted the study and presented the report on 'The Imperative to Strengthen the Union' to the Heads of State and Government at its Assembly, in January 2017, and was appointed as champion.

How is the reform process technically organised at the AU Commission? Who is in the lead and who reports to whom?
In order to implement and measure results, a Reform Unit was created in the cabinet of the chairperson of the AUC. The unit is headed by a former foreign minister of Cameroon, Professor Pierre Moukoko.

How are you monitoring implementation progress?
To ensure progress, the AU has introduced a mechanism for dedicated oversight, implementation, and change management structures, as well as the establishment of a Reform Unit to drive the reform implementation.

So far, what are the biggest implementation successes?
The successes include the introduction of new working methods for the summit (January summit at the assembly level and mid-year summit focusing on coordination with the Regional Economic Communities [RECs], Bureau of the AU Assembly, chairs of RECs/Regional Mechanisms [RMs]); election and appointment of new commissioners with fewer appointees; revised structure

and staff complement, as well as staff audit and competency assessment; and revised assessed contribution of member states based on such criteria as the ability to pay.

And vice versa, where do you see implementation challenges?
A major challenge is how to align the AUC structures, organs, and specialised technical committees to focus on the agreed priorities. The aim here is to find the best articulation in the implementation of the new structure of the AUC, taking into account the difficult financial situation of the member states in view of the expected contributions and the priorities resulting from the reform. Any institutional reform requires resources, willingness, and constant commitment.

Institutional Reform

What progress has been made regarding the implementation of an effective performance management system, as well as the development annual performance reports?
Indeed, the staff appraisal system has been improved upon and made result-oriented, measurable, and realistic. It is now a two-way stream that is interactive between the supervisor and staff.

A key element of the institutional reform is the merger of previous portfolio departments from eight to six. Observers were particularly keen to see the results of the merger of the Department of Political Affairs, on the one hand, and the Department of Peace and Security, on the other. What is your view on the results thus far?
While such concerns could be germane, the merger of these two related departments makes for effective coordination and synergy. Although the new portfolio arising from the merger is huge and demanding, the recruitment of competent staff and directors to man the two segments will significantly assist the responsible commissioner, who has been effective and resourceful.

Financial Reform

Talking about the financial reform: how do you assess the progress regarding the introduction of a 0.2–per cent levy on eligible imports by member states to collect an initial revenue of $400 million so far?
In order to ensure effective monitoring of progress, a Committee of Ten Finance Ministers (F10) was set up to, among other things, define the road map for the

implementation of the financial reform. In this respect, the F10 has reviewed the scale of assessment in line with the principles of equitable burden sharing and ability to pay and recommended a new sanctions mechanism to encourage members to timely pay their contributions.

A number of AU member states are already collecting the new levy. Each of the five African regions is to contribute $80 million to the Peace Fund – but how will the money be apportioned to the various conflict interventions on the continent? Will there be a regional formula?

The Peace Fund, set up in 1993 and revitalised in 2018, is one of the Union's most important financial instruments/initiatives; it is a pillar of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The fund should help the AU manage crises on the continent and ensure African ownership and leadership of peace efforts. As of January 2022, member states' contribution stood at over $231 million, although the modalities and criteria for disbursements are being worked out by the Peace and Security Council (PSC).

There seems to be a contradiction between the Union's 100/75/25 budget target, on the one hand, and the decision to cap member states' assessed budget contributions at $250 million, on the other. If the target was to be achieved already in FY 2022, then this would mean that member states have to go substantially beyond current levels of funding.

I do not see any contradiction between the budget outlay and the cap of member states' assessed contribution. However, I should clarify that the management of the fund has been resolved – it is being coordinated by the Board of Trustees and the Executive Management Committee (comprising the chairperson of the AUC, deputy chairperson, and commissioner for political affairs, peace and security [CPAPS]). Progress is geared towards meeting the target of $400 million, as the PSC has already identified 21 peace and security priorities to be financed and has approved the budget line for each. Efforts are being made to resolve such issues as the assessment for countries' contributions, a fund replenishment mechanism, and regional scale for contribution to the fund.

Achievement of the 100/75/25 budget target has been postponed to FY 2025. What is the current discussion about how the AU can reconcile the reform target with its spending habits. For instance, are you discussing reductions of programme expenditure or even staff size?

Quite rightly, the reforms aim at delivering an effective result-oriented African Union, a lean and operationally efficient staff that achieves the *Agenda 2063* aspirations. However, I am not privy to discussions on reducing programme

expenditure because programme execution rate remains relatively low across the AUC. Nonetheless, efforts are being made to streamline staff complement and downsize staff sponsored by partners, such as the short-term, special services, fixed term, consultants, etc.

Finally, the European Union (EU) has terminated its African Peace Facility (APF) at the end of 2020. It has been replaced by a European Peace Facility (EPF). What consequences do you already see regarding its utilisation by the AU and the RECs, also regarding the AUC's coordinating and harmonising role vis-à-vis the RECs?
For emphasis, the African Peace Facility, established in 2004, contributed significantly to financing 16 African-led PSOs in 19 countries. However, the European Union announced in 2021, as part of its new defence policy, the European Peace Facility to replace the APF. This change annuls the transmission of EU security funding through the AU. The implications for both the AU and RECs include drastic reduction of funding for African peace missions, less AU involvement in how the funds are spent, a threat to multilateral engagement between the two continents, and reduced African decision-making on security. The resultant financial shortfall of this new policy can be overcome by the AU through early disbursement of the AU Peace Fund and accessing United Nations' assessed contributions for African peace missions.

The interview was conducted by e-mail. It dates 6 June 2022.

CHAPTER 3

The State of the Union

Ulf Engel

1 Introduction

Still under conditions of the global Covid-19 pandemic, three themes dominated the development of the African Union (AU) and its policy organs in 2021: first, the continued reform of the Union's finances; second, the implementation of the parallel institutional reform, including the ongoing fine-tuning of relations between the AU and the eight officially recognised Regional Economic Communities (RECs);[1] and third, the election of a new AU Commission (AUC). In addition, other important developments relating to AU policy organs will be highlighted in this chapter.

The first cycle of AU statutory meetings of key decision-making bodies in 2021 started with the 41st Ordinary Session of the Permanent Representatives Committee (20–21 January), followed by 38th Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council (3–4 February), and the 34th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of the Heads of State and Government (6–7 February). All meetings took place in Addis Ababa and via video. On 24 June, the Bureau of the AU Assembly decided to postpone the second round of meetings. It commenced with the 42nd Ordinary Session of the Permanent Representatives Committee as well as the 39th Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council, which took place in Addis Ababa in autumn (28 September–1 October and 14–15 October, respectively). The Mid-Year Coordination Meeting (MYCM) between the AU and the RECs took place on 16 October 2021.

1 These are the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), the East African Community (EAC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

2 The Union's Finances

The African Union has a chronic budget problem: far too many member states are paying too late, too little, or not at all. This has created severe problems, among others, both in terms of planning and budget execution, resulting in a low absorption capacity. In financial year (FY) 2020, member states only contributed 59 per cent of the funds assessed to them towards the regular budget and 32 per cent towards the AU Peace Fund endowment (AU Council 2020b, §3). At the same time, the Union remained heavily dependent on contributions from 'international partners', that is to say, the donor community (which mainly is the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] world). Against this background, the AU decided in 2015 that it should be able to fulfil 100 per cent of its operational budget (which includes maintenance and salaries, etc.), 75 per cent of the programme budget (which includes implementation of all AU policies), and 25 per cent of the budget for AU-led Peace Support Operations (PSOs) (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2020*, 24). Historically, the latter mainly refers to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), which was started in 2007 and was usually responsible for the bulk of this budget position (well above 90%). As of late, it also extends to other missions (see below). In 2016, the Union also introduced a 0.2 levy on eligible imports to raise an additional $400 million for its Peace Fund by 2020 (ibid.).

The AU is planning its budget for FYs, which begin on 1 January and end on 31 December.[2] In February 2019, the AU Executive Council introduced a three-year budget cycle – the Multiyear Financial Framework (MFF) – and based the annual budget ceiling on a three-year average execution rate (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2020*, 26). Audit figures for previous budgets are available for FYs 2015–2018. The audit of the 2019 financial statement was delayed due to the challenges brought by the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, in October 2021 the Council instructed 'all AU Organs to address the issues raised under their respective Audited Financial Reports by implementing all the audit recommendations and submit a detailed matrix on the status of implementation of each recommendation by May 2022 for consideration by the PRC [Permanent Representatives Committee] Sub-Committee on Audit matters' (AU Council 2021n, §40).

The AU Executive Council also reversed a number of previous decisions aiming at a more efficient budget implementation, including that 'the release and allocation of budgets to all AU Organs to depend on the rate of execution

2 The budget process is explained in Engel (2015) and AU/NZ MFAT (2021, 214–215 and 220–222).

of the Audit recommendations' (ibid., §41[I]). Budget allocation and release should also 'be dependent on the rate of execution of the audit recommendations as well as average budget execution rate of the previous three years' (ibid.). Violations of the *AU Staff and Financial Regulations and Rules* are to be penalised (ibid., §41[II]). The council also reiterated that strict rules apply to the utilisation of financial resources and payments of loans and advances to AU staff (ibid., §41[III–IV]) – implying that in the past this has not always been the case.

2.1 *Reforming Finances*

Looking back at FY 2020, the AU Executive Council in February 2021 commended member states for contributing 90 per cent of the funds assessed to them in 2020 ($222.97 million) towards the Union's regular budget (AU Council 2021f, §2). It also highlighted that since 2017 member states have collected a total of $204.88 million for the AU Peace Fund (ibid., §3).[3] Still, this was a far cry from the initial aim of $325 million in 2017 and $400 million for 2020.

Sanctions against 18 member states were lifted with immediate effect because in the meantime they had honoured their financial obligations and had paid outstanding arrears.[4] In addition, Burundi, the Seychelles, and Somalia – all of which were in arrears for two or more years – agreed on a payment plan to clear their debt by 2023 (ibid., §7). In October 2021, Libya and Sudan were urged to develop payment plans for approval by February 2022 (AU Council 2021s, §13). And 'cautionary sanctions' were imposed on nine member states that had not settled at least 50 per cent of their 2021 assessed contributions: Benin, Cape Verde, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, Lesotho, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe, and South Sudan (ibid., §14).[5]

The AU Executive Council also noted with concern that the Union did not manage to reduce its dependency on international partners. In FY 2021, these

3 By October 2021, contributions stood at $231.93 million (AU Council 2021s, §3).

4 This included Benin, Cameroon, Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Comoros, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Tanzania, and Tunisia. Most of these sanctions were introduced in October 2020 (see AU Council 2020b, §6). At that meeting, it was also decided that member states 'in unique circumstances should at least settle fifty percent (50%) of their arrears in year 2020 to ensure that the Commission continues to function' (ibid., §10).

5 The new sanctions regime was instituted in November 2018. See *AU Press Release* [Addis Ababa], 27 November 2018. In February 2021, the AU Assembly also delegated 'with immediate effect' the power to impose sanctions against defaulting member states to the Executive Council (AU Assembly 2021e, §6). It also granted authority to the AUC chairperson to provisionally lift these sanctions in collaboration with the Permanent Representatives Committee (ibid., §7).

partners still financed 75.4 per cent of the programme budget and most of the expenditure for AU-led PSOs. The AUC was requested to mobilise further funds and 'to prioritize the remaining programs and activities and to avoid creating new ones when submitting supplementary budget at a later date' (AU Council 2021a, §15). At the same time, the council was worried about the 'low technical and financial execution rates of the program budget, reaching 56% and 74% respectively' (AU Council 2021d, §64). In view of these trends, the council extended the deadline for achieving the 100/75/25 per cent target for the three budget lines by four more years to 2025 (AU Council 2021f, §14).

Regarding the independent forensic and performance audit of tendering and procurement processes carried out in 2019–2020 by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), the AU Executive Council was 'deeply' concerned (AU Council 2021e, §75). The report, which was commissioned in 2019 and covered 112 files for the period 2019–2020, identified staff that was responsible for breaking the rules and regulations of the Union. The council directed that an audit should be extended to other AU organs, covering the period 2014–2020 (ibid., §79).

2.2 *Scale of Assessment*

Member states' contributions to the budget follow a scale of assessment. During the Union's first decade, the culture of not and/or late paying membership fees resulted in a particular form of burden sharing: one group of countries shouldered the brunt of the AU's finances (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Nigeria, and South Africa). The system came to end following the popular uprisings in 2011 in Northern Africa and political upheavals in Libya and Egypt. In 2015, a three-tier system of assessed contributions was introduced that reflected countries' contribution to the continent's gross domestic product (GDP) (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2020*, 25). In 2019, the AU Assembly revised the scheme for FYs 2020–2022 'on the principles of ability to pay, solidarity, and equitable burden-sharing to avoid risk concentration' (AU Assembly 2019, §4). No member state should pay more than $3.5 million and no one less than $350,000. Tier 1 countries (with a GDP above 4% of the continent's GDP) are contributing 45.15 per cent of the Union's assessed budget, tier 2 countries (GDP between 1 and 4%) 32.75 per cent, and tier 3 countries (GDP below 1%) 22.10 per cent (ibid., §7).[6] The six tier 1 countries contributing 7.52 per cent each are Algeria, Angola, Egypt, Morocco, Nigeria, and South Africa. There are 12 tier 2 countries, who

6 This was a slight adjustment to the contribution of the three tiers agreed in 2016 for the period 2016–2018 (tier 1 to take care of 48% of the overall assessed contributions, tier 2 another 33.98%, and tier 3 the remaining 18.02%).

are contributing between 1.38 per cent (Uganda) and 3.99 per cent (Ethiopia) to the budget. Tier 3 comprises the remaining 37 member states.

In 2021, Sudan wanted to renegotiate its contribution to the Union (AU Council 2021f, §9). Furthermore, in regional consultations with the AU high representative for Financing the Union and the Peace Fund, Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), and Tunisia expressed reservations against the current scale of assessment to the AU Peace Fund (ibid., §11).[7] The AU Executive Council instructed the AUC, supported by the experts of the Committee of Fifteen Ministers of Finance (F15), 'to expedite the process of developing the new scale of assessment to be applied for the period 2023–2025' for adoption in February 2022 (AU Council 2021s, §16). For 22–25 January 2022, a high-level retreat was planned to operationalise the AU Peace Fund and agree on its medium-term strategic funding priorities.

2.3 *Supplementary Budgets*

In 2021, the AU Executive Council approved two supplementary budgets, one for FY 2020 and another one for FY 2021. At the 38th Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council, a $7.71 million supplementary budget was adopted for FY 2020 (AU Council 2021a, §§11–14). This actually was already the second supplement for FY 2020. Together with the first supplementary budget this represents an increase of the original budget by 5.85 per cent (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2020*, 26–29).

The supplementary budget for FY 2021 was adopted at the 39th Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council. The total extra funding was $102.05 million, out of which $12.02 million (11.78%) was allocated to the operational budget and $90.03 million (88.22%) to the operational budget (AU Council 2021k, §8). These funds were planned to come from the Administrative Pool Fund (12.22%), the Maintenance Fund (2.33%), the Reserve Fund (12.40%), and international partners (73.04%). Furthermore, another $4.53 million was reallocated through internal savings (ibid., §9). The Council also noted a funding gap for FY 2021 amounting to $20.3 million. Out of this amount, the AUC managed to secure $8.1 million from international partners, the bulk of which went to financing the activities of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and

7 In contrast to the other four African regions, the North Africa region was not in favour of the use of the general scale of assessment. Instead, it proposed to introduce a regional scale as originally decided in July 2016. It suggested that Central Africa should contribute 10% to the Peace Fund and all other regions 22.5% (AU Council 2020a). The 2016 decision on the Peace Fund stated that the finance should 'be raised from equal contributions from each of the five (5) AU Regions' (AU Assembly 2016, §b[2]).

Prevention (Africa CDC, i.e., $3.5 million). The remainder was cancelled and deleted from the budget for FY 2021. The supplementary budget increased the corrected final allocation of $623.84 million for FY 2021 by 16.36 per cent (with a new total of $725.89 million).

Increasing the pressure on the AUC to apply a stricter expenditure policy and controls, the AU Executive Council also directed the AUC that in the future it would only accept one supplementary budget request per FY, which, again, would only be considered if it met the requirements of the *AU Financial Rules and Regulations* (AU Council 2021k, §12). As the audit of FY 2020 has not yet been released, the council also instructed the AUC that with the next FY supplementary budgets would only be considered if the audited budget execution report for the period preceding the request was presented (ibid., §13). Finally, the Council introduced a cap on supplementary budgets by ruling that requests for 2022 and beyond 'shall not exceed 15% of the initial approved regular budget' (ibid., §14).

2.4 *Budget for FY 2022*

The budget for FY 2022 was adopted at the 39th Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council (AU Council 2021k). It amounts to $651.11 million, out of which member states agreed to contribute $204.78 million (31.45%) and international partners $428.91 million (65.87%) – the remainder (2.68%) was to come from the Administrative Cost and the Maintenance Fund (see Table 3.1). As usual, AU member states were meant to take care of the operational budget of $176.35 million (90.12% to directly come from them, and the rest from the Administrative Cost and the Maintenance Fund). For the programme budget of $195.54 million, member states were expected to contribute 23.45 per cent (instead of the planned 75%). In fact, international partners were expected to pay 76.55 per cent ($149.68 million). And regarding the budget line for AU-led PSOs, the entire budget of $279.22 million was to be solicited from donors. The overall dependency ratio on external finances in the FY 2022 budget is 65.87 per cent.

In terms of taking on the biggest budget position regarding AU organs, is traditionally the AUC ($210.14 million, or 56.51%). This is followed by the African Union Development Agency (AUDA, which emerged from the *New Partnership for Africa's Development*, NEPAD) ($34.69 million, or 9.33%), the Pan-African Parliament (PAP, $11.99 million, or 3.22%), the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (AfCHPR, $11.91 million, or 3.20%), the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM, $11.32 million, or 3.04%), and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights ($5.70 million, or 1.53%). And in terms of specialised agencies, the biggest budget position is the Pan-African University

TABLE 3.1 Approved AU budgets for FYs 2020–2022

	FY 2020			FY 2021			*FY 2022 shortfall* (3)			
	$ million	MS (in %)	IP (in %)	$ million	MS (in %)	IP (in %)	$ million	MS (in %)	IP (in %)	$ million
Operational	157.26	100.00	0.00	172.09	93.56	0.00	176.35	90.12	0.00	
supplementary budget 1	2.20	0.00	0.00	12.02	0.00	0.00				
supplementary budget 2	5.85	0.00	0.00							
subtotal A	**165.32**	**95.12**	0.00	**184.11**	**87.45**	0.00	**176.35**	**90.12**	0.00	0.00
Programme	216.99	41.34	58.66	199.25	21.33	77.14	195.54	23.45	76.55	
supplementary budget 1	3.91	0.00	100.00	90.03	0.00	82.79				
supplementary budget 2	8.60	0.00	100.00							
subtotal B	**229.50**	**39.08**	**60.92**	**289.28**	**14.69**	**78.90**	**195.54**	**23.45**	**76.55**	**100.81**
AU-led PSOs	273.12	0.00	100.00	264.74	0.00	100.00	279.22	0.00	100.00	
upplementary budget 1	26.07	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00				
supplementary budget 2	nil	nil	nil							
subtotal C	**299.19**	0.00	100.00	**264.74**	0.00	100.00	**279.22**	0.00	100.00	**69.81**
Total original budget	**647.38**	**38.00**	**61.00**	**636.08** (1)	**31.99**	**65.78**	**651.11**	**31.45**	**65.87**	**170.62**
supplementary budget 1	32.18	0.00	100.00	102.05	0.00	73.04				
supplementary budget 2	14.45	0.00	59.62	4.53 (2)	0.00	0.00				
Grand total	**694.01**	**35.45**	**64.73**	**730.42**	**27.86**	**67.53**				

Notes: Where percentages do not add up to 100, additional sources of finance from within the AUC have been utilised (e.g. reserves, administrative costs, maintenance fund, etc.). It is not clear to which extent these sources are based on assessed member states' contributions or funds mobilised from international partners. MS = member states, IP = international partners. (1) Later corrected by $12.24 million to $623.84 million; (2) from savings; (3) shortfall compared to the 100/75/25 target (the achievement of which has been postponed to FY 2025).

SOURCE: AU EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (VARIOUS YEARS)

(18.02 million, or 4.85%), followed by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA, $13.71 million, or 3.69%), Africa CDC ($13.57 million, or 3.65%), and the AUC *Transition Plan*, relating to the institutional reform of the organisation ($12.78 million, or 3.44%). On AU-led PSOs, the bulk of expenditure still goes to AMISOM ($247.79 million, or 88.74%), followed by the Multinational Joint Task Force in the Lake Chad Basin (MNJTF, $11.31 million, or 4.05%), as well as missions of military observers (MILOBs) and human rights observers (HROs; $7.13 million, or 2.55%). The EU African Peace Facility's Early Response Mechanism (ERM) was financed with $13 million (4.66%). This last budget item shows the hybrid nature of the AU's budget: although listed in its own budget, this position clearly is part of the European assistance programme to the AU (historically, the AU only started including finances for its PSOs in the FY 2017 budget).[8]

When it comes to staff costs, the major items of the total $151.03 million budget are the AUC ($78.00 million, or 51.65%), the AUC Transition Plan ($12.78 million, or 8.46%), AUDA–NEPAD ($9.09 million, or 6.02%), the PAP ($8.66 million, or 5.73%), the AfCHPR ($6.94 million, or 4.60%), the APRM ($5.26 million, or 3.48%), the AfCFTA ($5.21 million, or 3.45%), Africa CDC ($4.09 million, or 2.71%), the African Human Rights Commission ($3.53 million, or 2.34%), and the Pan-African University ($2.20 million, or 1.46%). Organs that are most strongly supported by international partners through the programme budget positions are the APRM ($5.63 million, or 49.73% of the total costs), the AUC ($103.67 million, or 49.32%), and AUDA–NEPAD ($16.77 million, or 48.34%). Regarding specialised offices, international partners are strongly supporting the AfCFTA ($7.71 million, or 56.24%) and Africa CDC ($5.87 million, or 43.26%).

Thus, so far not too much has been achieved to diminish the AU's dependence on its international partners (see Table 3.2: AU Financial Ownership). Trying to strike a balance between controlling the expenditure of a growing institution on the one hand and reducing dependency on donors on the other, in February 2019 the AU Executive Council called to mind the preceding year's decision to cap member states' assessed contributions to the budget at $250 million (AU Council 2021a, §19); in October 2021, the council directed that this cap would also be applied for the following budget for FY 2023 (AU Council 2021k, §22). With a total budget of $651.11 million for FY 2022, member states currently contribute $204.78 million of this amount ($158.03 million to the operational budget and another $45.86 million to the programme budget). If the 100/75/25 target was to be achieved already in FY 2022, this would mean that members states had to raise an additional $100.80 million

8 On the future of the dissolved African Peace Facility (APF), now transformed into the European Peace Facility (EPF) with a global outreach, see Hauck (2020).

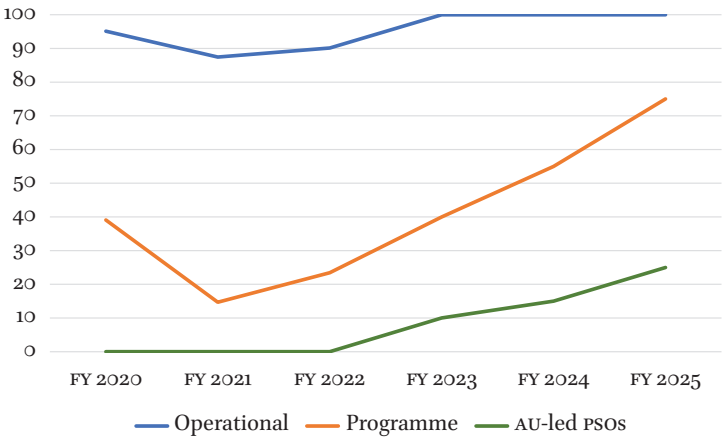

TABLE 3.2 AU financial ownership in FYs 2020–2022 plus projection for FYs 2023–2025 (in percent of the respective total budget lines)

Note: The projection for FYs 2023–2025 is not based on AU internal planning documents, but simply an attempt to indicate which direction budget composition must go if the 100/75/25 target was to be achieved by FY 2025. A decision on benchmarking the budget has not yet been taken (save for the $250 million expenditure cap).

SOURCE: AU EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, VARIOUS YEARS

for the operational budget and an additional $69.81 million for AU-led PSOs, or in combination an extra $170.61 million. However, considering the $250 million cap on assessed contributions, the amount raised for the FY 2022 budget ($204.78 million) and the additional amount needed to achieve the 100/75/25 target ($170.61 million) by far exceeds the cap ($375.39 vs. $250 million) – and that is even before a potential supplementary budget. As meeting the 100/75/25 target has been postponed to FY 2025, this still begs the question of how the AU plans to reconcile the reform target with its spending habits. Maintaining the cap policy practically means that either programme expenditure will have to be drastically reduced and binding priorities set and/or that staff will have to be retrenched (as salaries already account for three-fifths of the $250 million cap on assessed contributions).

3 Institutional Reforms

The second pillar of reforming the African Union relates to its institutions and practices. Based on the 2017 report submitted by Rwandan president Paul

Kagame, the Union has identified a wide range of reform that are needed to overcome its crisis of implementation and non-delivery (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2020*, 29–32). The reform project was structured into four 'work packages': (1) the realignment of AU institutions, (2) connecting the AU to its citizens, (3) operational effectiveness and efficiency, and (4) sustainable financing (AU Assembly 2017, §5). Originally, the *African Union Administrative Reform Roadmap* had an implementation horizon of four years (see AU Assembly 2018b). In October 2021, the AU Executive Council requested the AUC to extend phase one of the AUC Transition Plan until the end of 2022 (AU Council 2021k, §31).

3.1 *Reform of the AUC*

In 2021, reforming the AUC focused on (1) retailoring the commission departments and their portfolios after their reduction from eight to six and (2) reviewing quota systems and staffing. First, the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and Department of Peace and Security (PSD) were merged into the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) (on the circumstances surrounding the merger, see Ronceray et al. 2021; Handy and Djilo 2021). This step was important for a better integration in the future of the complementary, but so far not so closely aligned, architectures for peace and security (African Union 2002) and governance (African Union 2007).[9] The Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture, on the one hand, and the Department of Economic Affairs, on the other, were merged into the Department of Agricultural, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment (ARBE). The Department of Trade and Industry became the Department of Economic Development, Trade, Industry and Mining (ETIM); the Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology was changed into the Department of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation (ESTI); and the Department of Social Affairs became the Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs, and Social Development (HHS). The layout of the portfolio of the Department of Infrastructure and Energy (I+E) remained as it was.

The restructuring of the DPA and PSD into the PAPS portfolio had the potential to derail some of the Union's activities. The merged department is now divided into two directorates: first, the Directorate for Conflict Management

9 Although Said Djinnit, the former OAU assistant secretary-general for political affairs (1999–2003) and first AU commissioner for peace and security (2003–2008), has always argued that there were very good reasons to keep the two departments separate: the one working on immediate conflict prevention and management and the other for long-term conflict prevention.

(including divisions for mediation and dialogue; Peace Support Operations; and the Secretariat for the Peace and Security Council, PSC) and, second, the Directorate for Governance and Conflict Prevention (including divisions for democracy, elections, and constitutions; governance and human rights; and post-conflict reconstruction). The *African Union Border Programme* (AUBP) has disappeared from the organogram – as did the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), one of the five pillars of the AU Peace and Security Architecture (APSA; see African Union 2002). While the CEWS Situation Room remains in place, the analytical tasks were delegated to the three newly created regional desks, each staffed by five analysts (West and Central Africa; East and Southern Africa; and North Africa), within the Directorate for Conflict Management, not in the Directorate for Governance and Conflict Prevention.[10] In practice, the understaffed regional desks are preoccupied with day-to-day conflict management rather than early warning. As a result, some core CEWS capacities are at risk of falling between the cracks of the new divisions. This may affect in particular the ability of the Union to engage with member states (for instance, on the development of long-term structural prevention and mitigation strategies), but also the RECs (in terms of coordination and harmonisation).[11]

The total number of approved staff positions for the new, leaner AUC is 1,681, out of which 193 (or 11.48%) are temporary, that is to say, supported under joint financing agreements (JFA) by international partners, often the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2020*, 32). The six portfolio departments account for 479 of these positions (or 28.49%), with the remainder being distributed across the various directorates and offices. PAPS is by far the AUC's biggest portfolio department (staff size: 211, or 44.05% of the portfolio departments), followed by HHS (86, or 17.95%), ARBE (57, or 11.90%), ETIM (53, or 11.06%), ESTI (44, or 9.19%), and I+E (28, or 5.85%). The biggest directorates are the following: operation support services (191, or 15.89% of the remaining 1,202 AUC positions), conference management and publications (162, or 13.48%), finance (152, or 12.65%), and the Office of Safety and Security (114, or 9.48%). PAPS accounts for the highest number of temporary positions across the AUC (90, or 46.63%).

Second, reviewing the quota system for appointments of all AU professional positions in all organs, the AU Executive Council expressed concern that the AUC was unable to fully implement previous recommendations on gender

10 See *PSC Insights* [Pretoria], 5 May 2021.

11 In more detail this is discussed in *The Conversation* [Melbourne], 25 May 2021. URL: <https://theconversation.com/the-african-unions-conflict-early-warning-system-is-no-more-what-now-183469> (accessed: 25 May 2022).

and youth quotas (the so-called Maputo and Sharm-el-Sheikh recommendations, respectively). It recommended the AU Assembly to adopt a new quota system based 'on the two fundamental principles of solidarity (membership) and equity (scale of assessment) at 50% each' (AU Council 2021b, §28). Gender parity should be valid at all levels, and positions below the salary scale on the tactical level (P3) 'should favor Youth without prejudice' (ibid., §29[b]). On the managerial level (P4) and (P3), fair and equitable representation of all member states should be guaranteed (ibid., §29[c]). In addition, a gap cap of 25 per cent was introduced: comparing the highest utilisation by a member state of its respective quota to the member state least utilising its respective quota, once the gap cap has been reached, 'the highest member state will be temporary blocked till that gap is back to less than 25%' (ibid., §29 [d]). The AUC was instructed to develop a quota policy for approval by the Council at its next meeting (i.e. October 2021).[12] The proposed changes were endorsed by the AU Assembly in February 2021 (AU Assembly 2021f).

The AUC Transition Plan for restructuring the AUC included the point that staff had to reapply for their own position (on previous staffing and recruitment, see Tieku et al. 2020). Some staff was 'redeployed' (in addition, a 'voluntary departure scheme' for staff with more than ten years in the AUC was launched). Regarding the introduction of a Merit Based Recruitment System (MBRS) (AU Council 2021c, §56) in February 2021, the AU Executive Council approved a supplementary budget of $450,000 to hire an external consultancy for a skills audit (AU Council 2021c, §49). Until new *Staff Regulations and Rules* are adopted by the relevant organs, the AUC installed two committees, a Recruitment and Selection Committee (RSC) and a Promotion and Mobility Committee (PMC) (AU Council 2021c, §54). In October 2021, the Council emphasised that hiring external consultants should only be considered 'in exceptional circumstances after all efforts to secure internal or free of charge expertise from Member States have been explored and exhausted' (AU Council 2021k, §26). It also called upon the Commission to conduct an audit of all PSD staff previously paid by international partners under JFA 'and still continued to be in service being financed from the proceeds of the Administrative Costs' (ibid., §27).

For months, these processes have led to high levels of insecurity, anxiety, and frustration among staff, particularly in the PAPS portfolio department – and

12 The October 2021 AU Executive Council decision then refers to the 'Merit Based Recruitment System (MBRS) and AU wide quota system' (AU Council 2021j, § 3[5]) but provides no details on the nature of the quota system.

according to some observers, almost a paralysis of the entire AUC.[13] It remains to be seen how the skills audit are continued in 2022 and what the impact on the effectiveness of the department will be.

3.2 *Adjusting AU–RECs Relations*

An important dimension of the institutional reform of the African Union affects its relations with the eight officially recognised the RECs and Regional Mechanisms (RMs). Despite the existence of a general protocol (28 January 2008, AU/RECs 2008a) and a special memorandum of understanding on peace and security (June 2008, AU/RECs 2008b), the division of labour between the Union and the RECs has been a matter of debate and practical concern since the very establishment of the Union in 2001. In his report on reforms, Kagame highlighted the 'unclear division of labour' between the Union and the RECs (Kagame (2017, 5). When adopting the reform agenda in 2017, the AU Assembly decided to replace the second summit of the year by a MYCM between the Bureau of the AU Assembly and the RECs (AU Assembly 2017, 5[c]iii). At the 1st MYCM (Niamey, Niger, 8 July 2019), a *Protocol on Relations between the African Union and Regional Economic Communities* as well as *Rules of Procedure for the Mid-Year Coordination Meetings* were discussed.

The MYCM governance structure consists of a new Committee on Coordination, comprising the AUC chairperson, the chief executive officers of the RECs and the CEO of AUDA–NEPAD, with AUDA exercising an oversight role. In addition, the meeting adopted guiding principles for six specific dimensions of the division of labour: policy planning and formulation, policy adoption, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, partnerships, and joint resource mobilisation. AUDA–NEPAD was clearly elevated in its role in coordinating the Union's approaches to the 'development' of the continent (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2020*, 32f. and 60–62). Some progress on the question of division of labour was made in 2020 during the 2nd MYCM (virtual, 22 October 2020), especially in the areas of trade as well as peace and security. The final conclusions on the future division of labour were to be submitted to the 35th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly, scheduled for February 2022 (AU Assembly 2021d, 5[a]).

On 4 October 2021, the Bureau of the AU Assembly met online with the chairs of the RECs to brief them on the activities of the AU chairperson, President Félix Antoine Tshisekedi (Democratic Republic of Congo), and prepare

13 See *PSC Insights* [Pretoria], 5 May 2021.

the 3rd MYCM, which was held also via video on 16 October 2021.[14] Earlier substantial progress was made in defining the division of labour during the 2nd Annual Consultative Meeting between the AU PSC and the peace and security organs of the RECs/RMs (26 August 2021) (AU PSC/REC/RMs 2021).[15] The meeting committed 'to establishing a knowledge exchange platform on Governance and Conflict Prevention between the AU and the RECs/RMs premised on horizontal partnership and aimed at fostering consistent interaction between AU and the RECs/RMs' (ibid., §13). Among others, it also agreed to develop a report 'on the promotion of common response strategies' for presentation at the AU Assembly (ibid., §14[v]).

4 Election of the New AU Commission

According to the *Constitutive Act of the African Union* (OAU 2000) and the *Statutes of the African Union* (AU Assembly 2002), the AUC is led by the AUC chairperson, his/her deputy, and commissioners (at this time reduced from eight to six). The chairperson is the chief executive officer, the legal representative of the Union, and the AUC accounting officer. He/she is directly responsible to the AU Executive Council (ibid., §7). The terms of office for all elected positions are four years, once renewable. Until 2021, the region from which the chairperson and the deputy chairperson are appointed were entitled to one commissioner each. All other regions were entitled to two commissioners, of which at least one must be a woman (ibid., §6).[16]

With the reduction of the number of commissioners from eight to six, these rules were adjusted. Core principles for the selection of the senior leadership are equitable regional representation and gender parity as well as 'predictable inter and intra-regional rotation following the English alphabetical order to be applied to each senior leadership position' (AU Assembly 2018a, §12[I]). In addition, the Union highlights the principle of rotational gender parity: 'if the Chairperson is male then the Deputy Chairperson shall be a female and vice versa' (ibid., §12[II]). Furthermore, the six commissioner level posts

14 AU Communiqué [Kinshasa], 5 October 2021.; and *AU Press Release* [Addis Ababa], 19 October 2021. See also explanatory note on the AU website prior to the 3rd MYCM. URL: <https://au.int/en/summit/coordinationmeeting/3> (accessed: 27 December 2021).

15 In addition to the eight RECs, the meeting was also attended by two RMs: the East African Standby Force (EASF) and the North African Regional Capability (NARC).

16 The five regions defined by the African Union are North, West, Central, East, and Southern Africa. The terms are not used consistently in AU documents, so one could also find reference to, for instance 'Northern Africa'. And there is a sixth region – the African diaspora.

'shall be equally distributed by gender and across the three regions that are not represented at Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson level' (ibid., §12[III]). And finally, the new rules stipulate that 'the regions with candidates that are elected to the position of the Chairperson or the Deputy Chairperson shall not be eligible for consideration for the six remaining Commissioner posts' (ibid., §12[IV]). This created a not only highly interdependent but also consequential selection process – whose consequences seem to have passed over some member states and regions when they nominated their candidates (see below). The AU Assembly approved the new draft *Rules of Procedures of the Assembly, Executive Council, Permanent Representatives' Committee* and the *Statute of the Commission* in February 2021 (AU Assembly 2021g).

The election took place on 6 February 2021 during the 34th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly, which was held virtually (AU Assembly 2021b).[17] Elections are conducted by secret ballot and a two-thirds majority of member states eligible to vote. Moussa Faki Mahamat became the first AUC chairperson to be re-elected for a second term of office. The former prime minister of Chad (2003–2005) and minister of foreign affairs (2008–2017) was first elected AUC chairperson in February 2017. This time he ran unopposed.[18] The incumbent nevertheless 'campaigned' and published two brochures: the first ever AUC *End of Term Report* (AUC Chairperson 2021a), which covers through 46 pages his first term of office from 17 February 2017 to 6 February 2021, and a 32-page long *Vision for the Term of Office 2021–2024* (AUC Chairperson 2021b), which lists priorities for his second term. Despite calls for competitive elections as well as a series of news stories about corruption under his reign as CEO (see below, sect. 4.4), Faki received 51 out of 55 votes (one vote was not eligible). He was sworn in on 15 March 2021.

Dr Monique Nsanzabaganwa became the first woman to be elected deputy chairperson in charge of administration and finance. The Rwandan economist has held various positions in her country's government before, including minister of state responsible for economic planning in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (2003–2008), minister of trade and industry (2008–2011), and deputy governor of the National Bank of Rwanda (2011–2021). Other candidates for deputy chairperson included Awale Ali Kuliane (Somalia), Fatoumata Jallow Tambajang (The Gambia), Hasna Barkat Daoud (Djibouti), Martha Ama Akyaa Pobee (Ghana), as well as Pamela Kasabiiti Mbabazi (Uganda).

17 For an informed preview, see Miyandazi and Apiko (2020).

18 Ghanaian president Nana Akufo-Addo briefly nominated Mohamed Ibn Chambas to represent the Western African region, but the former ECOWAS executive secretary (2002–2006) withdrew his nomination two days later. See *DNT* (Accra), 8 September 2020.

In accordance with the new rules, nominated candidates were pre-assessed by a five-person Panel of Eminent Africans (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2020*, 32n6), one per region. Assisted by PwC, the panel ranked and shortlisted all candidates (see Miyandazi and Apiko 2020, 5–8).[19] Three commissioners were re-elected, some for readjusted portfolios:

– Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko (Angola), the former secretary-general of the Abidjan-based Inter-African Coffee Organisation, continued as commissioner for agriculture, rural development, blue economy and sustainable environment (previously: rural economy and agriculture);
– Albert Muchanga (Zambia), a former permanent representative to the AU a deputy executive secretary of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), became commissioner for economic development, trade, industry and mining (previously: trade and industry); and
– Dr Amani Abou-Zeid (Egypt), with a previous career in international organisations such as the African Development Bank, UNDP, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), was confirmed as commissioner for infrastructure and energy.

One more commissioner was elected in February 2021, and two remained in place until elections for their positions finally took place in October 2021 (the necessary powers were delegated to the AU Executive Council). The politically important merged portfolio of PAPS went to Bankole Adegboyega Adeoye, the former Nigerian permanent representative to the AU (2017–2020) and former high-ranking NEPAD official (2007–2015). He hit the ground running by releasing a *Priority Action Plan: First 100 Days* in early March.

For the time being, Prof Sarah Anyang Agbor (Cameroon) remained in office as commissioner for education, science, technology and innovation (previously: human resources, science and technology). So did Amira Elfadil Mohammed (Sudan) as the commissioner for health, humanitarian affairs and social development (previously: social affairs). Following the election arithmetic, candidates for these two positions had to be 'male candidates from the Northern Region and female candidates from the Western Region' (AU Council 2021i, §5). So, in October 2021 the AU Executive Council elected Prof Mohammed Belhocine, a public health expert from Algeria, as commissioner for education, science, technology and innovation, and Minata Samaté Cessouma, the previous commissioner for political affairs (2017–2021) from Burkina Faso, as commissioner for health, humanitarian affairs and social development (AU

19 The North African region failed to nominate its candidate for the panel.

Council 2021q). Prof Mohammed was only sworn in on 17 January 2022, and the hand-over ceremony was held five days later.

Which candidates did not make it, and which countries or regions had miscalculated their nominations (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2020*, 35)? With Sacko and Muchanga standing for re-election, the Southern African region had already made use of its allocated quota. Therefore, all prominent candidates fielded for other portfolios were non-starters right from the beginning. South Africa's policy in this respect raised eyebrows.[20] Their candidate for the position of commissioner for PAPS, the career diplomat Jeremiah Kingsley Mamabolo, who has served, among other posts, as the South Africa's permanent representative to the Union Nations (2013–2016) and a deputy joint special representative for the AU–UN hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) since 2016, was nominated in vain. The former director of the National Research Foundation, Molapo Qhobela, met the same fate when he ran for the position of commissioner for education, science, technology and innovation – even though for this portfolio he was the highest ranked candidate by the panel. For the position of deputy chairperson, South Africa had initially fielded even two candidates, which were later withdrawn. In contrast, the Western African region compromised to increase Adeoye's chances for becoming the PAPS commissioner by withdrawing the candidate nominated by Ghana.[21]

5 Miscellaneous

5.1 *Ratification of Key AU Legal Instruments*

The only two updates on the AU's website in 2021 on 'OAU/AU Treaties, Conventions, Protocols and Charters' relate to the AfCFTA and the African Medicines Agency (AMA).[22] On the AfCFTA, two more member states have ratified and deposited the legal instruments (Malawi and Zambia), bringing the total number to 36. And on the AMA, five more states ratified (Algeria, Ghana, Guinea, Namibia, and Sierra Leone), increasing the total number to just nine.

Likewise important legal instruments around questions of governance, human rights, as well as peace and security have seen little progress in terms of ratification by member states. On governance, for instance, regarding the 2003 *African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption*, 44

20 *Daily Maverick* [Johannesburg], 8 February 2021.

21 Ibid.

22 OAU/AU Treaties, Conventions, Protocols & Charters. URL: <https://au.int/en/treaties> (accessed: 27 December 2021).

member states have ratified and deposited the legal instruments. The 2007 *African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance* has so far been supported by only 34 member states. And the 2014 *African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralisation, Local Governance and Local Development* has been ratified by only 6 member states. In the area of human rights, 42 member states have ratified and deposited regarding the 2003 *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa*, but other ratification processes seriously lagged behind: the 2003 *Protocol of the Court of Justice of the African Union* (19), the 2008 *Protocol on the Statute of the African Court of Justice and Human Rights* (8), as well as the 2014 *Protocol on Amendments to the Protocol on the Statute of the African Court of Justice and Human Rights* (8). And on internally displaced persons (IDPs), only 31 member states have so far deposited legal instruments on the 2009 *African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa* (*Kampala Convention*). And finally, in the field of peace and security, member states have been sluggish on both OAU and AU legal instruments. This goes for the 1977 *OAU Convention for the Elimination of Mercenarism in Africa* (36 states have ratified and deposited) and the 1999 *OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism* (43), as well as the 2004 *Protocol to the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism* (21), the 2005 *African Union Non-Aggression and Common Defence Pact* (22), and the 2017 *Statute of the African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation* (*Afripol*) (0).

5.2 *Selected Appointments*

On 6 February 2021, Tshisekedi, president of the DRC (Central African region), was appointed chairperson of the African Union. The DRC is one of the three member states that has not ratified and deposited the legal instruments on the *Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council* (African Union 2002).[23] The new Bureau of the AU Assembly was appointed on 22 February 2021. Senegal became the first vice-president (West), Comoros the second vice president (East), Egypt the third vice president (North), and South Africa rapporteur (Southern).

The three-year terms of office of all five members of the Panel of the Wise – one of the five APSA pillars – expired in mid-2020 (see this Yearbook, Appendix 3). The 34th AU Assembly did not appoint new members to the panel, so there was a gap.

23 OAU/AU Treaties, Conventions, Protocols & Charters. URL: <https://au.int/en/treaties> (accessed: 27 December 2021).

In February 2021 the AU Executive Council elected four judges for six-year terms to the AfCHPR (Arusha): Rafaa Ben Achour (Tunisia), Aboud Imani (Tanzania), Dumisa Buhle Ntsebeza (South Africa), and Modibo Sacko (Mali) (AU Council 2021g). And in October 2021, the council elected four members of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights: Ourveena Geereesha Topsy-Sonoo (Mauritius), Solomon Ayele Dersso (Ethiopia), Janet Ramatoulie Sallah-Njie (The Gambia), and Idrissa Sow (Senegal) (AU Council 2021r). The new bureau of the commission will be led for two years by Rémy Ngoy Lumbu (Central African region), who is deputised by Maya Sahli Fadel (Northern African region). In view of the ongoing recruitment process for the position of chief executive officer for AUDA–NEPAD, the contract with incumbent CEO Dr Ibrahim Assane Mayaki was extended until the completion of the process (AU Assembly 2021c, §2).

On 26 August 2021, former Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo was appointed high representative of the AUC chairperson for the Horn of Africa, clearly with a view to find a mediation solution for the conflict that has been ongoing since 4 November 2020 in Ethiopia (see Dawit Yohannes, this Yearbook, chapter 9).[24]

5.3 *PAP and Regional Representation*

Following violent clashes among members of the PAP over rules applying to the election of the PAP president, the AU Executive Council desperately tried to resolve the matter. On 30 May and 1 June 2021, PAP members from different African regions brawled and even thrashed each other because they could not agree on the region that was to nominate the next president of the continental parliament.[25] Challenging the West and East African regions (and by extension 'the francophone' countries – Cameroon was the incumbent), the Southern African region insisted that now it was its turn.[26] Southern Africa has not held the presidency since the inauguration of the PAP in 2004. The AUC chairperson immediately recommended to suspend the PAP session and parliamentary activities until a ruling could be made by the Council. In October 2021, the council reversed earlier decisions that called upon the PAP to apply AU rules

24 He was the fifth (1976–1979) and twelfth (1999–2007) president of Nigeria.

25 See the footage on *SABC News* [Johannesburg], 31 May 2021. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fmfnESznb90>, and *Reuters* [London], 1 June 2021. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2BeXZO1cY2A> (both accessed: 1 June 2021).

26 In the past, the position was occupied once each by the Eastern African and the Western African region and twice by the Central African region. Two of the presidents came from 'anglophone' countries, the other two from 'francophone' ones. See *ISS Today* [Pretoria], 10 June 2021.

to these matters and to 'to comply with the principle of geographical rotation among the five regions of the Africa' (AU Council 2021p, §§4–5). It instructed the PAP not only 'that the elections should be in line with the principle of rotation', but also that 'only regions that have not previously held the position are eligible to present candidates for election of the PAP President through their Regional Caucuses' (ibid., §6). The AUC chairperson and the commissioner for political affairs, peace and security were requested to attend the upcoming election of the next PAP bureau (ibid., §9).

5.4 *Accusations of Corruption and Sexual Harassment in the AUC*

Both the outcome of the 2019/2020 forensic and performance audit requested by the AUC chairperson and initiated by the AU Executive Council, together with a 2018 AUC-internal investigation into allegations of gender discrimination and sexual harassment, produced ample evidence of corruption, nepotism, and cronyism in the AUC (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2020*, 31n.5).[27] Related accusations had repeatedly been made by the AU Staff Association, the deputy chairperson of the AUC, some (anglophone) permanent representatives, and a group of female officers.

Reportedly, the forensic and performance audit carried out by PwC revealed cases of nepotism, unverified qualifications, recruitment, as well as anomalies in contracts, staff remuneration, and allowances (including irregular spousal and double housing allowances).[28] Furthermore, the report detailed cases of financial mismanagement, power abuse, and sexual harassment. Also, the audit found 212 staff members working at the AUC despite being past the retirement age of 62 and more than AUC 100 staffers who were directly related to another person within the continental body. The new deputy chairperson, Nsanzabaganwa, whose mandate covers administrative and financial management of the AUC, has been given quite a challenge to deal with.

5.5 *Controversy over Observer Status of Israel*

On 22 July 2021, the AUC chairperson decided to accredit Israel as an observer to the AU. This decision was technically within his prerogatives (see AU Council 2005, §4) and apparently a result of strong Israeli diplomatic efforts (Palestine

27 In a letter to the Ghanaian president, dating 6 November 2018, the deputy AUC chairperson, Thomas Kwesi-Quartey (Ghana), accused the chairperson of nepotism. Another key document in this respect is a memorandum filed by the head of the AU Staff Association (AUSA), Sabelo Mbokazi, on 6 March 2020. See *Mail & Guardian* [Johannesburg], 21 June 2018, 7 February 2019, and 12 March 2020. On the AUSA memorandum, also see *The East African* [Nairobi], 15 March 2021.

28 *devex* [Washington DC], 19 February 2021.

is enjoying the same privilege since 2013).[29] Out of 55 AU member states, 46 maintain diplomatic relations with Israel. And the country had observer status with the OAU, which was not extended when it transformed into to the AU. In 2020, Israel had normalised relations inter alia with Sudan and Morocco (both belonging to the League of Arab States) – a change that was one of the reasons for Algeria to cut-off diplomatic ties with Morocco on 24 August 2021. Currently, there are more than 70 non-African countries accredited to the AU.[30]

The AUC chairperson's decision was quickly rejected by 21 AU member states, including SADC members (on this question, the regional organisation was led at its 17–18 August summit by South Africa, which had downgraded its diplomatic representation in Israel from an embassy to a liaison office in 2019), a group of Northern African countries (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia), as well as Comoros and Djibouti. Previous applications by Israel were rejected in 2013 and 2016 because of the country's occupation of the Palestine territories since 1967. These countries formally requested that the AU Executive Council should rescind the decision at its October 2021 gathering.[31] However, the Council only took note of this decision (AU Council 2021st); the final say now was supposed to be with the 2022 AU Assembly. The last AU Assembly in February 2021 had adopted a declaration vehemently condemning Israel's policy regarding Palestine and expressing its solidarity with the Palestinian people (AU Assembly 2021j) – it also condemned the United Kingdom for its continued occupation of the Mauritian Chagos Archipelago since 1965 (AU Assembly 2021i). Note: the UK enjoys observer status with the Union.

6 Outlook

The utilisation of compliance mechanisms by AU member states still leaves much to be desired. In its annual report on the status of implementation of previous decisions of the AU Executive Council and the AU Assembly, the AUC noted that only five member states had submitted their respective reports: Egypt, Gabon, Mali, Morocco, and Namibia (AU Council 2021n, §5). To address this issue, the council requested the AUC 'to take stock of all decisions taken in the last decade, devise innovative ways of improving on the follow-up of

29 *The Conversation* [Melbourne], 15 August 2021. It seems the chairperson has not asked for legal advice on this issue.

30 *Al Jazeera* [Doha], 23 July 2021.

31 *ISS PSC Insights* [Pretoria], 28 August 2021; and *The Conversation* [Melbourne], 16 September 2021.

implementation of Policy Organs' decisions and report back to the PRC' (ibid., §6). It was decided to establish, in collaboration with the PRC, a joint task force of member states' experts. The council furthermore called for a joint retreat between the PRC and the AUC to comprehensively review the implementation of AU policy organs decisions to be discussed at the forthcoming 41st Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council, scheduled for February 2022 (ibid., §7).

In March 2022, all memberships in the AU PSC will come to an end because of the staggered timing of two- and three-year memberships on the AU Executive Council. This has never happened before. The only country permanently on the council since May 2004 is Nigeria – and it can be expected that it will continue to do so.

The chairmanship of the African Union rotates to West Africa, which decided that Senegal will be the incoming chair of the Union in 2022 (AU Assembly 2021h).

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CHAPTER 4

The Democratic Republic of Congo's Chairmanship of the African Union

Hans Hoebeke and Onesphore Sematumba

1 A Particular Political Context

It is no overstatement to consider the run-up of his chairmanship of the African Union (AU) politically more important to President Félix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo (b. 1963) than occupying the seat itself. When Tshisekedi was announced the winner of the controversial December 2019 elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), a high-level AU meeting chaired by Rwandan president Paul Kagame, concluded that 'there were serious doubts on the conformity of the provisional results'.[1] The AU decided to dispatch a high-level delegation to Kinshasa comprising the AU chairperson and the AU Commission (AUC) chairperson. However, the Congolese authorities pressed ahead and proclaimed the electoral results. Tshisekedi was sworn in as president and he formed a governing alliance with former President Joseph Kabila's (2001–2019) Common Front for Congo (FCC). Meanwhile, the AU cancelled its planned mission. In addition to the rapidly evolving situation on the ground, the AU's decision was likely impacted by the lack of popular rejection of the official electoral result. As Tshisekedi supporters celebrated the outcome, after months of violent riots and unrest, the streets of Kinshasa remained calm.

The international controversy was nevertheless visible during the inauguration. The only visiting head of state was Kenyan president Uhuru Kenyatta. A few weeks after taking office, Tshisekedi attended the 32nd AU Assembly (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 10–11 February 2019).[2] Before and during the summit, the new president had numerous bilateral meetings, and Tshisekedi left Addis Ababa as the second vice-president of the Union and probable chairperson for the 2021 mandate. This continental recognition effectively torpedoed the viability of enduring attempts by the Congolese opposition to challenge the electoral outcome. Tshisekedi entered Addis Ababa under a cloud and left the summit legitimised by his peers. In the following months, Tshisekedi would travel

1 *France 24* [Paris], 18 January 2019.

2 Tshisekedi's first foreign visit was to Angola, followed by Kenya and the Republic of Congo.

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widely across the globe to firmly establish his legitimacy. This diplomatic activity was crucial to the domestic audience. After years of a deepening and violent political crisis, the DRC was now increasingly visible and active on the world scene. With his legitimacy guaranteed, this international and regional recognition and visibility brought security. It was also quite a stylistic break after the more introverted Kabila.

The next and unavoidable step was now emancipation from his predecessor and coalition partner. In February 2021, when the DRC assumed the AU chairmanship the country was in the final stages of this major political transition. On 6 December 2020, nearly two years after his installation, Tshisekedi announced the end of the coalition with Kabila. By that time, the coalition government had effectively stopped functioning normally. It would last until the end of April 2021 for the country to again have a functioning government. In the meantime, most of the management of the state was left to the formal and informal networks operating around the Tshisekedi presidency.

The political developments in Kinshasa were a crucial step in the ongoing attempt to transform the governance of the country after more than two decades of increasingly authoritarian rule. These developments and the management of the political processes to build a new political coalition, the 'sacred union', concentrated President Tshisekedi's attention close to home. Given the nature of the country's political system, this also included the careful management of the security services, which had been central to the Kabila system of governance and whose officials have mostly remained loyal to Kabila. The complexities and potential dangers of this profound transition could not be better symbolised by the events at the end of Tshisekedi's chairmanship of the Union. On 5 February 2022, after the handover to Senegalese president Macky Sall, Tshisekedi left Addis Ababa in great haste due to the surprise arrest of his national security advisor, François Beya. Rumours of the preparation of a coup d'état were buzzing, very symbolic at an AU Assembly that had discussed the continental response to military coups after the events in West Africa and Sudan during 2021.

In addition to the consolidation of the new political alliance, the Tshisekedi government also focused a lot of its attention in the early months of 2021 on the conflicts in the eastern DRC. First, in May 2021, Tshisekedi decreed a 'state of siege' in the provinces of North Kivu and Ituri. This suspended civilian administrators and elected provincial bodies, effectively putting both provinces under the control of Kinshasa and the military. Second, the president spent three weeks touring both provinces. Third, a new initiative for the disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) of Congolese armed groups was launched. Fourth, the Congolese government reached out and signed

(mostly economic) agreements with its neighbours in the east. Lastly, regional diplomacy acted as a basis for a Ugandan military intervention in North Kivu in a joint initiative to rout the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). Since then, there have also been increasing signs and concerns about more discrete operations in the border regions by Rwanda and Burundi – all focused on dealing with their respective armed opposition groups operating in and from the eastern DRC.

2 The DRC and the African Union

The DRC has not played an active or particularly meaningful role in the development of the AU. Rather, the lack of agency of the AU's predecessor, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), in the successive regional wars (1996–1997 and 1998–2003), of which the country formed the unenviable centre, was one of the boosters in transforming the continental organisation. Until the demise of his regime in May 1996, former President Joseph Mobutu Sese Seko (1965–1997), once chairperson of the OAU in 1967, was one of the autocratic faces of the continent that the AU founders sought to permanently ban to the history books. The successive and heavily regionalised Congolese conflicts, also dubbed the 'First African World War' that came on the heels of the 1994 Rwandan genocide, were a particularly challenging environment for the continental and regional organisations. The conflicts involved direct military confrontations between African armies on Congolese soil. The regimes of Laurent-Désiré Kabila (1997–2001) and the initial years for his son Joseph Kabila (2001–2019) were defined by bilateral and regional arrangements, mostly with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to ensure regime survival in the conflicts with its eastern neighbours Rwanda, Uganda, and (to a much lesser degree) Burundi.[3]

Pushed by South Africa, the AU and SADC were actively engaged in the Congolese and regional dimension of the peace processes alongside the United Nations (UN). Between the signing of the 2003 *Sun City Agreement*, which led to the Congolese transition period from 2003 to 2006, the AU (both the AUC and the chairperson) was part of the International Committee Supporting the Transition in the DRC (CIAT), chaired by a UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG).

3 The DRC became a SADC member in 1998. In the second war (1998–2003), SADC member states Angola, Zimbabwe, and Namibia intervened in support of the Kabila government, leading to major internal issues within the organisation.

After the 2006 elections, when Joseph Kabila gained democratic legitimacy, the DRC government sought to limit the role of international and regional actors in its domestic politics. At regional and continental meetings, the DRC remained mostly in the shadows, while its enduring conflicts and political crises continued to figure prominently on the agendas of AU and SADC summit meetings. In 2010, ahead of the 2011 presidential elections, the AU opened a Liaison Office in Kinshasa. During the 2012 conflict with the M23 and the renewed tension with Rwanda, the AU rose again to some prominence. Together with the European Union (EU), SADC, and the UN, it became one of the guarantors of the *Peace-Security and Cooperation Framework Agreement* (PSCF). This agreement was signed in Addis Ababa on 24 February 2013, but the AU only played a marginal role in its follow-up, which was mostly in the hands of the newly created post of the UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, working from Nairobi.

Since 2015, a political crisis began to brew in Kinshasa due to President Kabila's attempt to prolong his stay in power. Several of the DRC's immediate neighbours, including Angola and Rwanda and other influential players on the continent such as South Africa, considered a prolongation of the Kabila presidency as a cause for concern and a guarantee for continued regional instability and therefore maintained pressure on the regime to effectively organise constitutionally respected elections. The AU stepped up in 2016 by appointing the late Edem Kodjo (Togo), a member of the AU Panel of the Wise, as facilitator for a national dialogue in the DRC. Kodjo was, however, distrusted by a considerable part of the opposition that boycotted the dialogue. The AU played no meaningful role in the *Saint Sylvester Agreement* that followed, a process led by the Congolese Catholic Church. In the same year, Ambassador Abdou Abarry (Niger) was appointed to head the AU Liaison Office in Kinshasa.

Over the past decades, the DRC has been mostly passive in international, regional, and sub-regional institutions. The last membership within the UN Security Council (UNSC) dates from 1990–1991, and except for the executive chairmanship of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) between 2011 and 2016, the country has had no major leadership positions in the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) or within AU institutions. The main Congolese actors in Addis Ababa were Marie Madeleine Kalala-Ngoy, a member of the AU Panel of the Wise (2010–2014), and Francine Muyumba Furaha, president of the Pan-African Youth Union (2015–2019). The Pan-African Institute for Education and Development (IPED), a specialised institution of the AU, is headquartered in Kinshasa and functions as the observer institution of education in Africa.

President Kabila was the first (2015–2016) and second (2014–2015) vice chairperson of the AU. But this hardly left a mark. The second mandate was entirely eclipsed by the controversies surrounding the chair of Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe. From early 2015, the DRC entered a profound and violent national political crisis when Kabila sought to seek a third mandate and prolong his hold on power. The introverted Kabila was rarely seen on the international scene and did not manage to build an extensive relationship with most of his peers or other international leaders.

In the domain of peace and security, despite appearing numerous times on its agenda, the DRC remains one of the few African states that has yet to ratify the 2002 *Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union* (African Union 2002). On 15 February 2019, in one of his first speeches as president, Tshisekedi promised a signature 'in the next days' – but it has not happened yet. The DRC participated in the AU's Regional Task Force for the elimination of the Lords' Resistance Army (LRA) from 2013. This is part of the *Regional Co-operation Initiative for the Elimination of the LRA* (RCI-LRA) authorised by the AU in November 2011. The initiative has been mostly inactive since 2017 after the closure of the joint intelligence operations centre of the UN Organisation Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), the departure of US advisors, and the withdrawal of Ugandan troops from the mechanism. The LRA remains active in the border areas between the DRC and the Central African Republic (CAR).

The worlds' largest hydropower project, also by far the DRC's main infrastructure venture, the Grand Inga Hydropower Project is one of the AU's *Agenda 2063* flagship projects. The overall scheme, involving the refurbishment and construction of a network of dams on the Congo River, could reach a 40,000 MW of power generation and cover 40 per cent of the African electricity supply. The massive project includes a wide range of partners, including South Africa, the Suez Canal Economic Zone Authority, the African Development Bank, and the AUC. In June 2020, a pan-African conference on the project and hydroelectricity in the DRC was organised with the AU High Representative for Infrastructure Development in Africa, Raila Odinga (Kenya).[4]

At the 30th Summit of the African Peer Review Forum (virtual, 25 March 2021), the DRC joined the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM).[5] During its plenary session on 2 April, the Congolese Senate adopted the bill authorising Tshisekedi to ratify the *African Continental Free Trade Agreement* (AfCFTA). On

4 *African Development Bank Press Release* [Addis Ababa], 25 March 2021.

5 URL: <http://grand-inga.org/site%20uk.htm#xl_Xxr_v4_CONFERENCE:32PROGRAM> (accessed: 30 June 2022).

3 July, Tshisekedi met the AfCFTA secretary-general, Wamkele Mene, to discuss trade development in Africa. As AU chairperson, Tshisekedi declared his readiness to contribute effectively to the fulfilment of the commitments made by the AfCFTA member states. The DRC foreign trade minister noted that the DRC established a AfCFTA follow-up committee and took measures to fulfil its commitments. On 14 April, Tshisekedi signed the legislation ratifying the DRC's membership in the AfCFTA.

The DRC has some delays in fulfilling its financial obligations to the AU, as well as to the RECs. According to a mid-2021 internal report by the Congolese foreign ministry, the arrears to the AU were $3.2 million and $4.4 million to SADC. In January 2022, just before the election of the chair of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Congolese minister for regional integration called for his government to pay the $6.9 million in arrears to the organisation.

The arrears and other issues indicate a structural problem that was laid bare in a August 2021 internal report by the Congolese foreign ministry. It shows an alarming situation at the ministry with embassies being underfunded and under pressure together with a largely insufficient infrastructure. As is the case with other parts of the government apparatus, the deficiencies are doubled by an expanding machinery of the presidency and in the personal offices of key government officials.[6] Top-level diplomacy is to a large extent a domain identified with the head of state, but in the DRC, this is taken to the extreme. This has helped Tshisekedi in revamping the DRC's presence on the international scene. However, as is the case in other areas of government, there is a strong disconnect between the presidential declarations and their implementation.

3 Covid-19 Response and Controversy

During the DRC's position as AU chairperson, the international attention remained focused on managing the global fallout of the Covid-19 crisis. The African response to this crisis remained to a large extent managed by the previous chairperson, South African president Cyril Ramaphosa (the 'AU Covid champion'), working closely with the Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2020*, 15–22 &

6 To support the Congolese chairmanship, a specific panel was established within the Office (cabinet) of the President. The panel, composed of eight personalities, was coordinated by Alphonse Ntumba Luaba, a former minister for human rights, who was the executive secretary of the ICGLR from 2011 to 2016.

40–48). In 2021, the AU established the Commission on African Covid-19 Response, chaired by President Ramaphosa and the Africa CDC. In its response to the crisis, the African continent remained in a fragile position. It lacked the resources and technical/industrial base to effectively contribute to the roll-out of the vaccines developed in the EU, the United Kingdom, the United States, the Russian Federation, and China. Despite the efforts of many African leaders, together with the programmes that have been put in place with donors and pharmaceutical partners, the continent trails behind in vaccination statistics.

Tshisekedi's role in the Covid-19 response was mostly limited to partaking in the numerous international meetings and conferences, voicing the concerns of the continent. This included the conference 'Africa Vaccine Manufacturing' (virtual, 12 April 2021), convened by the AUC chairperson and the Africa CDC. The two-day meeting focused on the development and manufacture of vaccines by Africa itself for its health security. Other participants included the presidents of South Africa, Rwanda, Senegal, and the director-general of the World Health Organization (WHO).

On 17 May, in Paris, Tshisekedi attended the two-day France-Africa Summit on Financing African Economies, hosted by French president Emmanuel Macron.[7] The aim of the summit was to support African economies, weakened by Covid-19, by mobilising financial support, including funding by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). At the end of the France-Africa summit, Tshisekedi noted the importance of vaccination for the African continent. He also suggested that the reluctance to vaccination on the African continent might stem from the fact that the vaccines were produced outside Africa. To overcome the challenge, he stressed that vaccines should also be produced on the African continent, with intellectual property rights shared to allow African countries to produce the vaccines.

The AU's position on vaccinations was at first marked by some controversy. Tshisekedi had initially showed hesitation to be vaccinated himself, despite having lost several close relatives and friends. He then doubled down on the doubts regarding the Astra Zeneca vaccine, for months the only vaccine available in the country.[8] During a press conference on 27 August in Berlin with former German chancellor Angela Merkel and South African president Ramaphosa, Tshisekedi sidestepped the narrative to promote some non-validated anti-Covid medication. He was only vaccinated in September, a

7 See *Africanews.com* [Lyon], 21 May 2021.

8 *France 24 TV* [Paris], 3 July 2021. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cfT2O5qwVa0> (accessed: 30 June 2022).

six-month delay, when the Moderna vaccine became available in the DRC.[9] On 21 September, during the 76th Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA), Tshisekedi also addressed the Covid-19 vaccine situation in Africa.

4 Chairmanship Theme and Initiatives

The Congolese chairmanship was placed under the theme 'Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers for Building the Africa We Want'. This led to a number of initiatives. On 27 November, Tshisekedi participated in the second edition of the Biennale of Luanda: Pan-African Forum for the Culture of Peace.[10] Also present were João Lourenço (Angola), Sassou Nguesso (Republic of Congo), and Carlos Vila Nova (São Tomé and Príncipe). The biennale forum is a partnership between the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the AU, and the Angolan government. It aims to promote peace and conflict resolution through cultural exchange in Africa, dialogue between generations, and the promotion of gender equality. In Luanda, Tshisekedi announced the upcoming opening in Kinshasa of the Maison de la Culture Africaine et Afrodescendante, the launching of the Pan-African Festival of Kinshasa (FESPAKIN), and the Pan-African Grand Prize of Literature. The new literature prize, currently accepting manuscripts only in French or English, awards $30,000 to the winner. The first laureate was the Cameroonian author Osvalde Lewat for the novel *Les Aquatiques*. Of symbolic importance during the Congolese chairmanship, UNESCO announced on 14 December the inclusion of Congolese rumba music in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

In addition to the cultural theme, the Congolese chairmanship focused on several important transversal issues. On 19 October, in Kinshasa, Tshisekedi opened the first pan-African colloquium on albinism under the theme 'African Solidarity for People with Albinism'. The two-day event was organised by the DRC ministry in charge of people living with disabilities and other vulnerable groups in collaboration with the UN Joint Human Rights Office (UNJHRO), the AU Social Affairs Commission, and the DRC presidency. Delegations from Angola, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Kenya, Mali, Niger, the Republic of Congo, South Africa, and Tanzania attended the conference. Tshisekedi underscored the need to prepare massive sensitisation and advocacy campaigns focused on the rights of people with albinism in the AU member states.

9 *Reuters* [Toronto], 13 September 2021.

10 *L'Angola Press Agence* [Luanda], 27 December 2021.

One month later, on 25 November, Kinshasa hosted the first pan-African conference on positive masculinity. Several heads of state were in attendance: Paul Kagame (Rwanda), Macky Sall (Senegal), Denis Sassou Nguesso (Republic of Congo), Nana Akufo-Ado (Ghana), Faure Gnassingbé Eyadéma (Togo), and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (Liberia). AUC Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat attended online. The conference focused on sexual violence in conflict, early marriage and pregnancy, female genital mutilation, limited access to land and other resources, and women's participation in decision-making.

As a concluding action, the conference issued the *Kinshasa Declaration and Call for Action of the AU Heads of State on Positive Masculinity in Leadership to End Violence Against Women and Girls in Africa* (African Union 2021). The leaders committed to put in place necessary policies and measures to address the issues. They affirmed their commitment to a participatory and intergenerational approach in mobilising all stakeholders, including youth, religious and traditional leaders, civil society, African women leaders, and the private sector. The leaders called on the private sector to develop and implement policies and programmes to combat violence against women and girls while strengthening their financial empowerment and inclusion to correspond with the *AU Decade of Women's Financial and Economic Inclusion 2020–2030*.[11] During the conference, Tshisekedi recalled that the DRC has been affected by conflict-related sexual violence for more than two decades. He expressed hope that countries outside Africa will also adopt this declaration.

The meeting was followed on 7–8 December by a regional conference on the involvement of women in the prevention, mediation, and peacebuilding processes in Central Africa. The conference, deliberating on the establishment of a regional network of women mediators of the ECCAS with a view to better implementing UNSC *Resolution 1325* (2000), culminated with the adoption of another *Kinshasa Declaration*. It saw the participation of Congolese ministers; ministers of ECCAS member states; the former CAR interim president and co-chair of the FemWise-Africa, Catherine Samba Panza; experts; civil society organisations; academics; and religious and customary leaders from ECCAS members.

At the 35th AU Assembly (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 5–6 February 2022), Tshisekedi was appointed as the 'AU Champion for its Positive Masculinity Program', carrying forward the results of the Kinshasa conference. The programme intends to strengthen political commitment for ending violence

11 *AU Press Release* [Addis Ababa], 15 June 2020.

against women and girls by supporting actions to accelerate the realisation of the rights of women and girls.

5 Other Key Issues and Dynamics

5.1 *Terrorism in Africa*

The terror threat to Africa figured prominently in Tshisekedi's incoming speech to the AU. The eradication of terrorism was also underlined prominently by the AUC chairperson as a priority in the Union's *Silencing the Guns* initiative. On 27 April, in Paris, presidents Tshisekedi and Macron discussed the strengthening of their cooperation regarding security and socioeconomic matters. During a joint press conference, Tshisekedi sought the international community's support in eradicating an Islamist group spreading terror in the eastern DRC. In March 2021, the United States had already designated the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria – Democratic Republic of the Congo (ISIS-DRC, also known as the Allied Democratic Forces, ADF) and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria – Mozambique (ISIS-Mozambique), also known as the Islamic State Central Africa Province, ISCAP), as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs).[12] In June 2021, SADC decided to send its standby force on a military mission (SAMIM) to support Mozambique to combat terrorism and violent extremism in the Cabo Delgado province (SADC 2021). Also in June, the DRC alongside the CAR and Mauritania joined the Global Coalition against Daesh. In December of the same year, the global coalition launched the Africa Focus Group.

During his speech at the UNGA in September 2021, Tshisekedi warned that 'if the international community minimizes the danger posed by the spread of jihadism in Africa, if it does not adopt a comprehensive and effective strategy to eradicate this scourge, the wounds opened in the Saharan zone, in Central and Southern Africa, will continue to metastasize until they join to become a real threat to international peace and security'.[13]

On 22 November, a delegation from the Algiers-based African Centre for the Research and Study of Terrorism (ASCRST) visited Kinshasa. The delegation met with Prime Minister Jean-Michel Sama Lukonde Kyenge. Discussions revolved around strengthening the means to fight terrorism, including anti-terrorism

12 *US Department of State Media Note* [Washington DC], 10 March 2021. URL: <https://www.state.gov/state-department-terrorist-designations-of-isis-affiliates-and-leaders-in-the-democratic-republic-of-the-congo-and-mozambique/> (accessed: 30 June 2022).

13 *Agence Congolaise de Press* [Kinshasa], 22 September 2021.

laws and the *National Strategy to Fight Terrorism*. The discussions also included the situation in the eastern DRC.

In December 2021, Uganda deployed a military contingent to the eastern DRC for joint operations with the Congolese armed forces to combat the ADF. The Ugandan operation follows the earlier imposition of the state of siege in the provinces of North Kivu and Ituri since May 2021. These offensive operations against the group have not stemmed the violence against civilians. On 25 December 2021, the ADF conducted a bomb attack in Beni, North Kivu. On this occasion, the ECCAS Secretariat announced that it would focus on ways to address terror threats and violent extremism during the next meeting of the Peace and Security Council of Central Africa (COPAX), scheduled to take place in January 2022 in Brazzaville (Republic of Congo).

5.2 *Israel–Africa Relationship*

During 2021, the diplomatic relationship between Israel and the AU was high on the diplomatic agenda (see Ulf Engel, this Yearbook, chapter 2). In July 2021, the AUC chairperson announced that Israel had been formally granted observer status at the AU. Several African states in particular – South Africa, Djibouti, and Algeria – strongly opposed what they considered 'a unilateral move' by the commission chair. In August 2021, pressed by South Africa, SADC expressed concern and objected to the AUC chairperson's decision. As a result, the 39th Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 14–15 October 2021) decided to postpone the decision regarding Israel's observer status until the AU Assembly in February 2022.

During the summit, the AUC chairperson strongly defended his position; however, due to the major divisions, the debate was suspended, and the AU decided to kick the can to the AU Assembly in 2023. To build consensus, a committee composed of eight African Heads of State and Government was established. It includes outspoken opponents, in particular South Africa and Algeria, and supporters of the move, such as the DRC and Rwanda. This decision was strongly supported by Tshisekedi, who has taken a candid pro-Israel position. During a 2020 speech in the USA at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), he had announced the reopening of the DRC embassy in Tel Aviv as well as the opening of an economic bureau in Jerusalem. During a state visit to Israel (24–27 October 2021), these engagements were confirmed. The DRC also reached out to Israel for security assistance in support of fighting terrorism.

5.3 *Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Mediation and Wider Horn of Africa Dynamics*

In the run-up to the chairmanship and during the first few months following, the DRC was engaged in an intense diplomatic exchange with Egypt, Ethiopia,

and Sudan. Kinshasa received Ethiopian president Sahle-Work Zewde in January 2021. During the visit it was announced that Ethiopia would open an embassy in Kinshasa. Before going to Addis to take the helm of the AU, Tshisekedi visited Egypt for talks with the Egyptian government.

On 4 April, under the auspices of the AU, a tripartite ministerial meeting to mark the resumption of talks between Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) project was held in Kinshasa. At the start of the meeting, Tshisekedi underscored the importance of seeking African solutions to African issues and urged the delegations to find a sustainable solution. On 8 May, he began a tour of Sudan, Egypt, and Ethiopia. In Khartoum, he had talks with the Sudanese prime minister, the minister of foreign affairs, and the chairman of the Transitional Sovereignty Council to discuss continental issues, including the GERD. No statement was made by the AU chairmanship and Sudanese officials at the end of these meetings. Tshisekedi then flew to Cairo for further talks. On 25 June, in Goma, Tshisekedi met with the US Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa. According to the Office of the President, talks revolved around the GERD, and it was noted that the discussions between the stakeholders are taking place in a peaceful atmosphere aiming at a fair resolution.

The AU-led process struggled, and Egypt and Sudan, angered by Ethiopia's decision to proceed with the filling of the dam, decided to refer the issue to the UNSC. The AU had been the lead negotiator since the 2020 South African chairmanship. In July 2021, the UN sent the case back to the AU.

In September 2022, the Congolese foreign minister visited the three countries concerned with the project to discuss measures to resume negotiations on the GERD. However, no new negotiation round was announced, and on 26 October, following the Sudanese coup d'état, Sudan was suspended from the AU. This effectively ended the immediate prospect for any talks to take place. Shortly before the coup, Egyptian and Sudanese military forces conducted major joint exercises. Despite the deadlock, Tshisekedi and President El-Sisi still had talks about the GERD negotiations on the margins of the Conference of Parties on Climate Change (COP26) in Glasgow, United Kingdom. The Congolese foreign minister was in Addis Ababa for talks with his Ethiopian counterpart and the AUC in late November 2021. Afterwards the Congolese delegation headed to Khartoum for talks with the Sudanese authorities.

In addition to the GERD dossier, Tshisekedi, alongside the AUC chairperson and the South African and Senegalese presidents, was involved in quiet diplomacy in the Ethiopian conflict, in support of former President Olusegun Obasanjo, AUC chairperson's High Representative for the Horn of Africa.

5.4 *Climate: COP26*

From 4–5 October, Jonathan Pershing, US Deputy Special Envoy for Climate, visited Kinshasa to discuss climate change and sustainable development within the framework of the DRC-US Privileged Partnership for Peace and Prosperity, plus Preservation of the Environment. On 4 October, he was received by Tshisekedi, with whom he discussed the upcoming COP26. The bilateral talks focused on cooperation on the conservation of the Congo Basin ecosystem.[14]

On 2 November, Tshisekedi addressed the COP26. He underscored the need to support vulnerable countries in Africa, Asia, and small island states in adapting to the impacts of climate change. The same day, in the framework of the *Central African Forest Initiative* (CAFI), Tshisekedi and UK prime minister Boris Johnson signed a 10-year agreement (2021–2031) to protect the DRC's forests.[15] The agreement is expected to unlock investments worth $500 million in its first five years, with additional funding after 2026 depending on an independent evaluation of results and the availability of funds. This partnership places 30 per cent of the Congolese territory under a protective status. Any activity incompatible with conservation objectives in the protected areas will be banned. At the same time, several industrialised countries and international organisations at the COP26 jointly declared an initial collective financing pledge of at least $1.5 billion between 2021–2025 to support countries of the Congo Basin in order to protect the forests, its peatlands in Central Africa, as well as other carbon reserves essential for the planet.

6 Representation and Diplomacy

One of the more confusing and puzzling decisions during the Congolese chairmanship was the short-lived campaign to launch a candidature for one of the two seats up for election for the African Group (A3) in the UNSC. In February 2021, the AU Executive Council had endorsed the candidatures of Gabon and Ghana. This decision was questioned by the DRC in early May 2021. Gabon and the DRC are both in the Central African Group and the DRC maintained that the AU Assembly had decided that consultations on the matter should continue. On 7 June, the DRC announced to the UN secretary-general and the

14 See *Financial Times* [London], 25 October 2021.

15 The CAFI is a UN Trust Fund and policy dialogue platform that aims to support Cameroon, the CAR, the DRC, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and the Republic of Congo in pursuing a low-emission development pathway that ensures economic growth and poverty reduction while protecting forests and natural resources.

UNGA that it had decided to withdraw its candidature; it would run in the 2025 UNSC election for a seat in 2026–2027.

From 15 to 18 July, Tshisekedi, toured West Africa in his capacity as AU chairperson. He travelled to Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, and Cote d'Ivoire, where he met with his counterparts to discuss the common challenges faced by African countries, notably on political, economic, and development issues, and ways to address them. After the West Africa trip followed a series of international meetings and summits. On 27 August, Tshisekedi attended the *Compact with Africa* (CWA) summit by the Group of Twenty (G20) in Berlin, Germany. After Berlin, in early September 2021, he visited Turkey for a meeting with President Recep Tayip Erdoğan. They signed three bilateral cooperation agreements. Besides bilateral issues, the two presidents also discussed the latest developments in African political, security, and economic affairs, as well as the arrangements for the 3rd Turkey-Africa Partnership Summit held later that year. During the annual meeting of the UNGA, Tshisekedi advocated four positions for Africa on the UNSC, notably two non-permanent seats and two permanent seats, with the same privileges and veto rights as other current members.

On 26 October, in Kigali, Rwanda, the vice prime minister in charge of foreign affairs, Christophe Lutundula (G7/Ensemble/USN), in his capacity as chairperson of the AU Executive Council, co-chaired the second AU-EU Ministerial Meeting, together with the high representative of the EU for foreign affairs and security policy, Josep Borrell. The meeting discussed investing in people; strengthening resilience; promoting peace, security, and governance; facilitating migration and mobility; and mobilising investments for an African structurally sustainable transformation. This second meeting took place in preparation of the next, scheduled for early 2022.

On 30 and 31 October, Tshisekedi, attended the G20 Leaders' Summit in Rome, Italy. He highlighted the negative impact of climate change on Africa's socioeconomic development and stability. Referring to the DRC's determination to contribute towards the AU Agenda 2063 through the implementation of the Grand Inga Dam project, he invited G20 members and development partners to support the project. He also encouraged the leaders to invest in renewable energy projects in Africa. Furthermore, the president proposed the creation of a new funding mechanism to implement the *Paris Agreement*, which would facilitate vulnerable countries' access to funds intended to mitigate effects of climate change.

The eighth edition of the Forum on China-African Cooperation (FOCAC) took place on 29–30 November in Dakar, Senegal, under the theme 'Deepen China-Africa Partnership and Promote Sustainable Development to Build a

China-Africa Community with a Shared Future in the New Era' (see Ulf Engel, this Yearbook, chapter 11). The DRC was represented by the vice prime minister for foreign affairs and its minister of industry.

On 18 December, in Istanbul, Turkey, President Erdoğan opened the third Turkey-Africa summit, organised under the theme 'Enhanced Partnership for Common Development and Prosperity'. In his remarks, he stressed that his country has worked to advance cooperation 'on an equal partnership and win-win basis' and 'always rejected contemptuous, peremptory and excessively orientalist perspectives towards Africa'.[16] For his part, AU chairperson Tshisekedi welcomed Turkey's approach of strengthening economic and trade ties through a comprehensive development strategy consisting in technical assistance and technology transfer. During the summit, the two presidents had a bilateral meeting and later held a joint press conference along with the AUC chairperson.

On 19 December, in Brussels, Belgium, Tshisekedi attended a high-level EU-AU meeting organised by the president of the European Council, Charles Michel, as a prelude to the EU-AU summit planned for 2022. Michel noted that discussions focused on 'innovative financing solutions' for the EU-AU partnership, as well as on economic recovery, digital and green transitions. Furthermore, he stressed the importance of establishing a new EU-AU alliance based on 'prosperity, peace and common values' and noted that the EU supports a '360° approach to strengthen African health systems and vaccine production'.[17] Other attendees of the meeting included the incoming AU chairperson, Senegalese president Sall, Rwandan president Kagame , the AUC chairperson, and the secretary-general of the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), Louise Mushikiwabo (from Rwanda).

In Kinshasa, on 10 January, Prime Minister Lukonde opened the 3rd Forum for Rural Development in Africa, under the theme 'Decentralised Planning for Rural Transformation by Capitalising on Experiences'. The three-day forum – which was attended by AU member states, experts, civil society actors, as well as local authorities – aimed inter alia at identifying evolving practices in rural transformation planning and sharing lessons learned from South-South cooperation.

16 *Horn Diplomat* [Nairobi], 18 December 2021.

17 URL: <https://twitter.com/eucopresident/status/1472600936208080907?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw> (accessed: 30 June 2022).

7 Regional Focus

During its AU chairmanship, the DRC devoted considerable diplomatic effort close to home. One area of priority was the persistent violent conflict in the eastern DRC, where the Kinshasa government has deployed a multipronged approach. In the provinces of North Kivu and Ituri, civilian authorities were suspended when a state of siege was declared by the government. Both provinces have been under direct control from Kinshasa through military and police governors. In addition to this, there has been an active security collaboration with its eastern neighbours. This has been the most fruitful with Uganda, which deployed troops to the eastern DRC for joint operations against the ADF with the Congolese army.

A second area of attention was the border conflict with Zambia. This decades-old conflict relates to the nineteenth-century colonial borders. It led to incidents between both countries' armed forces in the course of 2020. Following these latest clashes, both countries separately requested mediation by SADC. After the Zambian election in August 2021, there has been an intense diplomacy between both countries, including the signing on 30 September 2021 of a bilateral trade agreement. The newly elected Zambian president, Hakainde Hichilema, also chose the DRC as his first international visit. During the visit, both presidents agreed on the need to settle the border dispute.

In the course of 2021, the DRC and the East African Community (EAC) proceeded quickly with the DRC's 2019 bid to enter the organisation (see Omondi 2022). From 25 June to 4 July 2021, an EAC verification mission was carried out to assess the DRC's level of conformity with the EAC admission criteria. In November 2021, the EAC Council of Ministers advised those attending the summit to admit the DRC. On 22 December, the EAC held its 18th Extraordinary Summit by video conference, under the chair of Kenyan president Kenyatta, to consider the admission of the DRC. After reviewing the report of the Council of Ministers' verification visit to Kinshasa, which was deemed satisfactory, the regional presidents agreed to expedite the conclusion of negotiations. The DRC was admitted to the EAC on 29 March 2022, as its seventh member state.[18] Not all went as planned though. During 2021, the DRC campaigned for the position of SADC executive secretary; however, its candidate, Faustin Luanga Mukela, was defeated by Elias M. Magosi of Botswana.

On 19 January 2022, the DRC became chair of the ECCAS. The theme of the DRC's year at the helm of the Central African REC is 'Education, Health

18 *The East African* [Nairobi], 27 March 2022.

and Culture' to support the AU's Agenda 2063. During the SADC summit on 18 August 2021, the DRC was elected to chair the organisation, starting in August 2022 (SADC 2021). It will take over from Malawi. During the DRC's mandate, Namibia will be the chair of the SADC Organ on Defence, Politics and Security Cooperation (the SADC Organ), a position currently held by South Africa. The DRC will thus chair two of the RECs it is member of during its politically sensitive pre-electoral phase.

8 Conclusions

In his annual 'State of the Nation' speech on 13 December, President Tshisekedi recalled his main achievements as chairperson of the AU. He saw these notably in terms of supporting gender equality, fighting against gender-based violence, countering climate change, and protecting indigenous peoples and people suffering from albinism. Some of these issues were effectively moved up the AU's agenda during Tshisekedi's chairmanship. Having come to power in controversial happenings, a concern of the AU, Tshisekedi professed his accession to the chairmanship of the continental organisation to ensure his legitimacy among his peers and thus consolidate his position internally.

This chairmanship also took the DRC out of the isolation created by Tshisekedi's predecessor, Kabila, who had broken ties with the international community. Tshisekedi did not want the international community, particularly the AU, to interfere in the internal affairs of the country, especially in the electoral process. However, despite the remarkable diplomatic activity, Tshisekedi did not escape the restraints inherent in the chairmanship, whose annual theme, agenda, and format are predetermined upstream and long in advance by the AUC. Thus, although the DRC is facing insecurity following armed conflicts involving several countries in the Great Lakes region, this issue has not been brought specifically to the agenda of the AU under Tshisekedi. It is the same with the multiplication of initiatives, summits, and fora and roadmaps. which leave behind a bitter taste of unfinished business.

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PART 2

African Union Policy Fields

CHAPTER 5

Education, Science and Technology

Ulf Engel

1 Introduction

Based on the 2000 *Constitutive Act of the African Union*, with its reference to 'the development of the continent by promoting research in all fields, particular in science and technology' (OAU 2000, §3[m]), the African Union (AU) has developed specific policies in the field of education, science, and technology (EST). This commitment was renewed in *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want* (African Union 2015). Following a brief look at basic facts and figures as well as an overview on policy coordination, this chapter recaps the progress made in the following AU EST policies: the *Continental Education Strategy for Africa* (2016–2025), hereinafter CESA 16–25; the *Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa* (STISA 2024); the *Continental Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training* (TVET); the Pan African University (PAU), the *Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa* (DTS 2020–2030); and the *African Space Policy and Space Strategy*. In the last part of this chapter, the AU's response to the broader epistemological debates that are the heart of EST and knowledge orders is discussed: How does the Union frame its history and identity policies around topics such as culture, heritage, and decolonising the minds?

2 Fact and Figures about EST in Africa

To find reliable, up-to-date, and comparable data on the status of EST in Africa remains a painstaking task. The comparative figures provided below all show that in compared globally the African continent is still lagging behind (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2020*, 69–71). Detailed data also suggests that there are considerable differences between (and within) African countries. Partly, this data is reflective of fragile academic institutions and overdependence on international funding of research and development (R&D). Related expenditure in sub-Saharan Africa was 0.48 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 2007 (latest figures, World Bank 2022) – as compared to 0.94

per cent in the Middle East and North Africa (the MENA region) in 2012, or to a global average of 2.22 per cent in 2019 (2010: 2.02%).[1]

Education (all figures World Bank 2022): The primary school enrolment rate for sub-Saharan Africa was 75.26 per cent in 2009 (latest figure) – as compared to 90.34 per cent for the MENA region (2018: 93.72%) or to a global average of 88.44 per cent (2019: 89.41%). The primary school completion rate for sub-Saharan Africa was 70.40 per cent in 2020 (2010: 67.95%) – as compared to 93.39 per cent for the MENA region (2010: 90.60%) or to a global average of 90.14 per cent (2010: 88.83%). For girls, these figures are even lower: in sub-Saharan Africa their primary school completion rate was 68.82 per cent in 2020 (2010: 64.47%) – as compared to 91.81 per cent for the MENA region (2010: 87.84%) or to a global average of 89.94 per cent (2010: 87.83%). Literacy rates among the age group 15–24 years in sub-Saharan Africa was 76.70 per cent in 2020 (2010: 69.21%) – as compared to 90.33 per cent for the MENA region (2010: 88.94%) or to a global average of 91.88 per cent (2010: 89.57%). And tertiary, or university, enrolment in sub-Saharan Africa was only 9.46 per cent in 2019 (2010: 7.88%) – as compared to 41.05 per cent for the MENA region (2010: 31.40%) or to a global average of 39.41 per cent (2010: 29.57%). In a joint report from 2021, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and the AU Commission (AUC) conclude that

> despite the substantial progress that has been made in terms of access, completion and quality of basic education, disparities persist within and between countries, and learning achievement remains low in many parts of Africa. Girls, children from the poorest backgrounds, children with disabilities and children on the move face particular difficulties in realizing their right to education. (UNICEF and AUC 2021, 7)

The report also establishes that disparities in education are particularly prevalent between boys and girls, rich and poor, urban and rural and that underlying structural inequities can be observed: children from wealthy families benefit more from education spending (ibid., 30–33).

In combination, the figures show that despite the many gains made since 2000, the challenges to achieve the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 'Quality Education' continue to be huge (see United Nations 2022).

1 Figures are not entirely consistent with last year's figures. Some seem to have been adjusted retrospectively by the World Bank.

Science (all figures World Bank 2022): As in previous editions, three indicators are briefly looked at here – the number of patent applications (resident), trademark applications with the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), and scientific and technical journal articles. There are no figures on patent applications for the sub-Saharan African region, only for selected countries. In this respect, in 2019 77 patents were registered originating from Kenya (2010: 294), 1,290 from Nigeria (2010: 64), and 567 from South Africa (2010: 821), to name but a few. For the MENA region, 15,802 patents were counted in 2019 (2010: 13,869), and worldwide 2,144,825 (2010: 1,160,899). The number of trademark applications (resident and non-resident) coming from Kenya in 2019 was 7,205 (2010: 4,167), Nigeria 18,658 (2010: 20,560), and South Africa 37,371 (2010: 30,549). This is in stark contrast with the MENA region (2019: 303,093; 2010: 100,448) and global figures (2019: 3,789,328; 2010: 3,557,865). Finally, research output in the natural and technical sciences as measured by journal articles confirms the above observations on an African continent that is facing tremendous challenges to build up its EST infrastructure: for 2018, 29,479 articles were counted (2010: 16.047), while scientific output in the MENA region was 119,302 (2010: 60,746) and worldwide 2,554,373 (2010: 1,943,521).

Technology (all figures World Bank 2022): In 2020, 93.60 mobile cellular telephone subscriptions per 100 people were counted in sub-Saharan Africa (2010: 44.4) – as compared to 115.81 in the MENA region (2010: 92.9) and 107.52 worldwide (2010: 76.5). The number of fixed broadband subscriptions per 100 people in sub-Saharan Africa was 0.76 in 2020 (2010: 0.16) – as compared to 11.61 in the MENA region (2010: 2.61) and 17.12 worldwide (2010: 7.85). And in terms of quality, in 2016 the international internet bandwidth (bit/s per internet user) was 47,625 in sub-Saharan Africa (2010: 43,579) – as compared to 42,518 in the MENA region (2010: 8,818) and 78,795 worldwide (2010: 28,691).[2]

3 AU Coordination of EST Policies

The policy field of EST is 'championed' by a Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government (C10), led by Macky Sall (Senegal). Apart from the chair, the committee comprises Sierra Leone (both for Western Africa), Egypt, Tunisia (Northern Africa), Malawi, Namibia (Southern Africa), Kenya, Mauritius (Eastern Africa), as well as Chad and Gabon (Central Africa). The establishment of the C10 in this policy field was already planned by the AU Assembly in

2 See *Yearbook on the African Union 2020*, 71. This data is no longer provided by the World Bank (2022).

June 2015, but it was only endorsed in January 2018 (when the C10 met unofficially for the first time). The official inaugural meeting then took place on 2–3 November 2018 in Lilongwe Malawi. The detailed political work is discussed by the ministerial Specialised Technical Committee on Education, Science and Technology (STC–EST). The committee's 4th session was originally scheduled for 20–23 December 2021 but had to be postponed to 2022 (the 3rd session was held on 10–13 December 2019 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and chaired by the bureau's head Dr Tumwesigye Eliodia [Uganda]).

Policy implementation is with the AUC. Because of the institutional reform of the AU, the portfolio department of Human Resources, Science, and Technology was changed in 2021 into Department of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation (ESTI). In October 2021, a new commissioner was elected by the AU Executive Council: the Algerian professor Mohamed Belhocine. He was head of the country's Department of Internal Medicine and held various positions at the Ministry of Health before joining the international civil service in 1997. Among others, his stations include the director of the Division of Non-Communicable Diseases at the World Health Organization's (WHO) Regional Office for Africa (first in Harare, then in Brazzaville), the WHO representative in Nigeria (2003–2006) and Tanzania (2006–2008), as well as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) resident representative in Tunisia (2009–2013). From 2016 to 2019, he worked as a health consultant for the WHO.

The ESTI department continued to be directed in an acting capacity by Mahama Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso).[3] Before the AUC's institutional reform, it had comprised three divisions: human resource and youth development; education; and science and technology. The staff size was slightly above 70. Under the new organogram of the AUC, which was being implemented throughout 2021, staff size was to be reduced to 44 and the number of divisions to two: education; and science, technology, and space. In addition, a principal policy officer was to be introduced to look at human capital and innovation.

The various subpolicy fields are administered by an array of institutions. In education, these are the PAU, the Pan-African Institute for Education for Development (IPED), which grew out of the Organisation of African Unity's (OAU) African Bureau for Science and Education (BASE), and the African Union International Centre for Girls and Women Education in Africa (AU/CIEFFA, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso). And in science and technology, these agencies include the African Observatory for Science, Technology and Innovation (AOSTI, Malabo, Equatorial Guinea) as well as the Scientific, Technical,

3 The position was advertised on 24 November 2021.

Research Commission (STRC, Abuja, Nigeria), which also hosts the African Scientific, Research and Innovation Council (ASRIC).

In implementing ESTI, the AU often partners with the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Planning and Coordinating Agency (through its Science, Technology and Innovation Hub) of the *New Partnership for Africa's Development* (NEPAD), as well as bilateral donors, such as Germany's development agency, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

4 EST Policy Initiatives

According to its own analysis, the African Union has made some progress in implementing Agenda 2063 aspiration 1, subgoal 2. By 2063, the Union's blueprint for Africa's development, states: 'Well educated and skilled citizens, underpinned by science, technology and innovation for a knowledge society is the norm and no child misses school due to poverty or any form of discrimination' (African Union 2015, 2). In its second monitoring report on the *First Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063*, being undertaken from 2014 to 2023 and based on data submitted by 38 out of 55 AU member states, the AUC and the AU Development Agency (AUDA–NEPAD) declare that while in 2019 only 25 per cent of this aspiration was achieved, by 2021 the implementation status had increased to 44 per cent (AUC and AUDA–NEPAD 2022, 4).[4] However, the report also acknowledges that '[t]he state of education in Africa remains quite weak … This is largely attributed to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic which drastically affected school enrolment as schools were closed in many African countries to contain the virus' (ibid., 18). In fact, Covid-19 had an extremely negative effect on primary and secondary enrolment rates (see above, section 2). Preschool net enrolment rates in 2021 stood at 45 per cent, primary school enrolment at 86 per cent, and secondary school enrolment at 52 per cent (instead of foreseen levels of 75%, 96%, and 87%, respectively).

4.1 *Continental Education Strategy for Africa (2016–2025), CESA 16–25*

CESA 16–25 is inspired by the AU's Agenda 2063 and the UN SDG 4 'Quality Education'; it was adopted at the 26th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly

4 The increase from 25 to 44 percentage points within just two years in the performance alone should raise some methodological concerns. See also the discussion in AUDA–NEPAD (2020, 90–91; 2022, 10–11).

(Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 30–31 January 2016) (African Union 2016; see *Yearbook on the African Union 2020*, 73). The Covid-19 pandemic is considered 'the worst shock to education systems in recent global history, with the longest school closures and interruptions to education' (UNICEF and AUC 2021, 34). Across the worlds, but particularly on the African continent, education systems were ill-prepared. There was a lack of access to distance learning, and above all, the digital divide was felt tremendously (e.g. access to internet and computers in schools, as well as limited homeschooling opportunities) (ibid., 35).

The analysis of these and other issues, UNICEF and the AUC emphasise, is significantly hampered by 'a lack of critical data against key indicators, such as out-of-school rates, disaggregated data on children with disabilities, learning outcomes, and provision of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities' (ibid., 40). According to UNICEF and the AUC, it is critical 'to ensure that there is harmonization between different education data producers and sources, by establishing effective coordination mechanisms and functional data repositories at the Regional Economic Community (REC) and African Union level' (ibid., 41). Finally, UNICEF and the AUC are concerned about 'the lack of finance and independence from their national statistical offices' that African educational institutions are faced with. They highlight the poor coordination of national statistical systems, 'lack of uniformity in methodologies and definitions, inadequate financial and human resources, and weak infrastructure and technology' (ibid., 41f.).

Nevertheless, some comparative date is available. On the 2021 *Global Knowledge Index* from the UNDP/ Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Knowledge Foundation (MBRF), six African countries are ranking above the global average score of 60.8 for the indicator group 'pre-university education': Mauritius (rank 38/154, score 74.9/100), Seychelles (rank 42, score 74.3), Tunisia (rank 61, score 70.5), Egypt (rank 72, score 67.1), Algeria (rank 68, score 66.2), and Cabo Verde (rank 84, score 64.7). And at the bottom end of the index are the Democratic Republic of Congo (rank 150, score 25.6), Guinea (rank 151, score 21.8), Mali (rank 152, score 20.3), Chad (rank 153, score 14.5), and Niger (rank 154, score 9.7) (UNDP and MBRF 2021, 8). And regarding 'higher education', only the following five African countries are above the global average score of 46.1, namely Egypt (rank 35/154, score 54.6/100), Malawi (rank 43, score 52.6), Sierra Leone (rank 48, score 49.9), Seychelles (rank 56, score 49.0), and Botswana (rank 67, score 47.6). The five least performing African countries include Sudan (rank 149, score 26.8), Niger (rank 151, score 25.8), Mali (rank 152, score 23.6), the Democratic Republic of Congo (rank 153, score 22.9), and Mauritania (rank 154, score 20.7) (ibid., 10). Looking at these and other reports, academically a 'growing sophistication in evaluating education programs in Africa' can be observed (Evans and Mendez Acosta 2021; see also Gatti et al. 2021).

4.2 *Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa* (*STISA 2024*)

The STISA 2024 strategy was adopted in June 2014 (African Union 2014). It aims at (1) building and/or upgrading research infrastructures; (2) enhancing professional and technical competencies; (3) promoting entrepreneurship and innovation; and (4) providing an enabling environment for science, technology, and innovation (STI) development throughout the African continent (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2020*, 74). The *Second Continental Report on the Implementation of Agenda 2063* did not report any specific progress in implementing the Union's STISA policy (AUDA–NEPAD 2022).

According to the UNDP/MBRF 2021 Global Knowledge Index, six African countries are ranking above the global average score of 31.4 for 'research, development, and innovation': The Gambia (rank 43/154, score 36.3/100), Liberia (rank 48, score 35.6), South Africa (rank 53, score 34.9), Egypt (rank 58, score 32.7), Botswana (rank 59, score 32.7), and Kenya (rank 62, score 32.1). At the bottom of the table are Madagascar (rank 149, score 16.1), Ethiopia (rank 150, score 15.9), Côte d'Ivoire (rank 151, score 14.8), Burkina Faso (rank 152, score14.4), and Angola (rank 153, score 14.2) (UNDP and MBRF 2021, 11).

4.3 *Continental Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training* (*TVET*)

The 2018 strategy provides 'a comprehensive framework for the design and development of national policies and strategies to address the challenges of education and technical and vocational training to support economic development and the creation of national wealth and contribute to poverty reduction' (African Union 2018, 6; see *Yearbook on the African Union 2020*, 74). Implementation monitoring of the strategy has moved from the AUC's science and technology division to AUDA–NEPAD. The key constraints the development of TVET on the continent is facing were summarised in June 2021 by the commissioner for ESTI, Prof Sarah Anyang Agbor, including '(i) insufficient and inequitable access; (ii) poor quality and low market relevance; (iii) weak institutional capacity; (iv) low prestige and attractiveness and (iv) large investment gaps – low financing' (Anyang Agbor 2021, 4). Again, the Second Continental Report on the Implementation of Agenda 2063 did not report any specific progress in implementing the Union's TVET policy (AUDA–NEPAD 2022).

The only African countries on the UNDP/MBRF 2021 Global Knowledge Index ranking above the global TVET average score of 51.2 are Botswana (rank 23/154, score 64.7/100), Lesotho (rank 41, score 59.3), Namibia (rank 49, score 56.1), South Africa (rank 53, score 55.3), Mauritius (rank 69, score 53.4), and Seychelles (rank 71, score 53.0). And at the lower end of the spectrum are Burundi (rank 147, score 33.5), Angola (rank 149, score 30.7), Sudan (rank 150,

score 29.9), the Democratic Republic of Congo (rank 152, score 28.8), and Mozambique (rank 153, score 27.8) (UNDP and MBRF 2021, 9).

4.4 *Pan African University* (*PAU*)

The Pan African University, launched on 14 December 2011 as one of the 15 flagship projects of the African Union, operates under the recently reformed ESTI department (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2020*, 74–75). Its headquarters is based in Yaoundé, Cameroon, with campuses in the five regions of the continent.[5] According to the PAU *Strategic Plan* (2020–2024), the period 2012–2018 was the initiation phase, 2019–2024 is the consolidation phase, and 2025–2030 will be the 'achieving excellence' phase (PAU 2019, 5).[6] During the period 2011–2022, the university – and especially the Institute of Water, Energy Sciences and Climate Change (PAUWES), based at the Abou Bakr Belkaïd University of Tlemcen, Algeria – is financially supported by the GIZ (amounting to ca. €30 million).

The term of office of the PAU Council was extended to July 2021 and a decision on the position of the university president deferred to the 39th Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council (AU Council 2021a). Originally appointed in January 2018, the Gabonese bioethics chair Pierre Dominique Nzinzi, the PAU's second president, wanted to run for another term. However, the council decided that Kenneth Kamwi Matengu from Namibia would take over this position (AU Council 2021d). The council also regretted that no female candidates were put forward and decided to postpone the election of a vice president to the 40th Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council, to be held in February 2022. Meanwhile, the term of office of the outgoing vice chairperson – Audrey Nthabiseng Ogude, an analytical chemist from South Africa and dean of the Mamelodi campus of the University of Pretoria – was extended. The council suggested that the *Revised Statutes* of the PAU (adopted on 31 January 2016) be amended 'in order to take into consideration the principles of gender equality and geographical rotation in the presidency and vice-presidency of the PAU Council' (ibid., §7).

Under the PAU falls one of the flagship projects of the AU, the Pan African Virtual and E-University (PAVEU). It aims at increasing access to tertiary and

5 Governance, Humanities and Social Sciences in Yaoundé, Cameroon (PAUGHSS); Life and Earth Sciences in Ibadan, Nigeria (PAULESI); Water, Energy Science, and Climate Change in Tlemcen, Algeria (PAUWES); Basic Science, Technology and Innovation in Nairobi, Kenya (PAUSTI); and Space Sciences in Cape Town, South Africa (PAUSS).

6 The PAU website – like many other websites of the AUC – is not up to date. See URL: <https://pau-au.africa> (accessed: 30 June 2022).

continuing education in Africa, primarily by capitalising on the digital revolution. In its second progress report on the implementation of Agenda 2063, the AUC and AUDA–NEPAD highlight the development of ten online courses, procurement of information technology, and a review of the PAVEU structure and cost implication by the Permanent Representatives Committee's (PRC) Sub-Committee on Structural Reforms, which will ultimately lead to the adoption of PAVEU's structure (AUC and AUDA–NEPDA 2022, 55).

4.5 *Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa* (*DTS 2020–2030*)

The African Union's overall policy aims related to digitalisation have been detailed at the beginning of 2021 in the third report on *Africa's Development Dynamics*, tabled by the AUC and the Development Centre of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (AU Commission and OECD 2021, 5). The AU aims to (1) ensure 'universal access to the digital solutions best suited to local contexts'; (2) make digital technology 'a lever for productivity, especially for small and medium[-]sized enterprises (SMEs)'; (3) develop 'skills tailored to the fourth industrial revolution so that the expertise of the African workforce is aligned with 21st century markets'; and (4) coordinate the 'multiplicity of digital strategies at the continental, regional, national and local levels to better prioritise, implement, monitor and evaluate progress'. High expectations are linked to the establishment of a single digital market in Africa once the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is fully implemented (see Bruce Byiers, this Yearbook, chapter 10).

The background to this policy is the Union's strategy for the digitalisation of the continent in the coming decade, which was adopted on 9 February 2020 (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2020*, 75f.). The DTS 2020–2030 falls under the commissioner for infrastructure and energy, Dr Amani Abou-Zeid (Egypt), who was re-elected in February 2021. On 25–27 October 2021, at the 4th Ordinary Session of the STC on Communication and ICT (STC–CICT), the relevant ministers, among others, decided to pursue an *AU Digital Education Plan* and develop a *Continental AI* (*Artificial Intelligence*) *Strategy* (AU Council 2022, §38[1]I). They also vowed to redesign the Pan African e-Network to deliver e-health and e-education services (ditto., §38[1]VII).

According to the UNDP/MBRF 2021 Global Knowledge Index, five African countries are above the global average score of 43.3 for 'information and communications technology': Seychelles (rank 31/154, score 59.3/100), Mauritius (rank 48, score 53.6), Egypt (rank 57, score 50.0), Tunisia (rank 72, score 44.9), and Morocco (rank 74, score 44.5). Conversely, the bottom five performers in this respect include Niger (rank 150, score 17.9), Sudan (rank 151, score 17.7), Liberia (rank 151, score 17.0), Chad (rank 153, score 15.9), and Ethiopia (rank 154, score 15.9) (UNDP and MBRF 2021, 12).

4.6 *African Space Policy and Space Strategy*

The African Union's space policy was approved by the 26th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (Addis Ababa, 30–31 January 2016). It aims to bring together 'a number of fragmented initiatives that have a regional dimension' (AU Commission 2016, 7; see *Yearbook on the African Union 2020*, 76). Regarding the status of implementation, the Second Continental Report on the Implementation of Agenda 2063 (AUC and AUDA–NEPDA 2022, 60) highlights five developments:

1. the strengthening of the African Earth Observation (EO) System through the European Union (EU)-led Global Monitoring for the Environment and Security (GMES) and Africa programme to improve management of the environment;
2. the development of four geoportals to improve data access and knowledge management through education and capacity-building;
3. the identification of common or cross-cutting areas among the four space segments (satellite communication; navigation and positioning; astronomy; and space sciences) through an 'environmental scan';
4. the training of at least 2,000 people on earth observation, satellite communication, navigation and positioning, space science and astronomy, and space regulatory regimes; and
5. a review of the structure and cost implication of the African Space Agency (AfSA) by the PRC Sub-Committee on Structural Reforms, which eventually will lead to the adoption of the *Africa Outer Space Strategy* structure.

The AfSA structure was finally approved by the AU Executive Council (AU Council 2021b, §I[2]g) and is now expected to commence its operations in Egypt in 2022.[7]

4.7 *Ratification of Legal EST Instruments*

Like in many other policy fields, AU member states are fairly slow in ratifying and depositing the legal instruments they have adopted in the field of EST. The AUC website lists six legal instruments relating to EST (African Union 2022a).[8] There is no change compared to 2020 on the status of these legal instruments. Only two, the *Statue of the African Space Agency* (29 January 2018) and the *Revised Statute of the Pan African University* (31 January 2016),[9] have entered into force. The *African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection* (27 June 2014) has only been signed by 14 member states

7 See also *Africanews.space* [Nairobi], 21 October 2021. URL: <https://africanews.space/african-union-executive-council-approves-african-space-agency-structure/> (accessed: 30 June 2022).

8 However, some of the lists have not been updated for more than four years. Dates in brackets refer to when the instrument entered into force.

9 This statute does not require signature or ratification.

and ratified/deposited by 8 member states; the *Statute of the Pan African Intellectual Property Organization* (PAIPO) (30 January 2016) has been signed by 6 member states – none have ratified/deposited. And the *Statute of the African Observatory in Science Technology and Innovation* (30 January 2016) as well as the *Statute of the African Science Research and Innovation Council* (30 January 2016) have not been signed, ratified, or deposited at all.

5 Outlook: EST in Context – Arts, Culture and Heritage

Any policy in the field of education, science, and technology is deeply embedded in a specific political economy of knowledge production. Recent years have brought to the fore severe inequalities in this regard and highlighted the continued dominance of a global knowledge order that is rooted not only in current Western knowledge production, but also in the history of colonial domination, conceptual Eurocentrism, and continued disregard of knowledge from the Global South (see *Yearbook on the African Union* 2020, 77f.).

The African Union, as much as its predecessor the Organisation of African Unity, has played a pivotal role in challenging this imbalance by articulating the continent's ambitions. What academia may discuss in terms of 'identity politics' and 'mental decolonialisation', the Union has recently framed with respect to 'Culture, Arts and Heritage: Levers for Building the Africa We Want' – which was chosen by the AU Assembly as the 'Theme of the Year' for 2021 and is 'championed' by Mali (AU Assembly 2021a). Key instruments highlighted in this decision by the African Heads of State and Government are the *Charter for African Cultural Renaissance*, the *Statute of the African Audio-Visual and Cinema Commission*, the Great Museum of Africa (GMA), and the 2nd Luanda Biennale on a Culture for Peace (Luanda, Angola, 27 November–2 December 2021).[10] Furthermore, the decision calls attention to the African World Heritage Fund (AWHF), the Statute of the Pan African Intellectual Property Organization and the, not yet finalised, Protocol on Intellectual Property Rights in Africa. Finally, the Union calls on the AUC, in cooperation with UNESCO, 'to inventory the African cultural properties in the museums of foreign states outside of the continent, in order to return into African Countries of origin' (ibid., §16).[11]

The language used by the AU centres around terms such as 'African Cultural Renaissance', 'the spirit of Pan-Africanism', and 'continental integration' (AU Council 2021c, §2) – all of which are empty signifiers. These references allow for

10 On the latter, see URL: <https://www.unesco.org/biennaleluanda/2021/en> (accessed: 30 June 2022). See also AU Assembly (2021c).

11 See *Yearbook on the African Union* 2020, 78.

easy alignment and serve the purpose of a political buy-in, without having to work out in detail what exactly is meant and what the practical consequences of such affirmation would entail. The consensus seemingly evoked also helps to bridge – often fundamental – political differences among member states. And at the same time, it helps to renew an opaque vision of African unity.

Two tangible projects in this regard are the Encyclopaedia Africana Project (EAP) and the Great Museum of Africa. The origins of the EAP dates back to 1962 and a joint initiative by the then president of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, and the American pan-African academic and activist W. E. B. Du Bois, the first director of the project (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2020*, 79). The EAP was meant to 'document the authentic history of Africa and African life' and to help raise 'African's self-awareness, encouraging new thinking and restoring African dignity' (AUC and AUDA–NEPDA 2022, 61). The EAP is one of the 15 flagship projects of Agenda 2063. But so far, only 3 out of the 20 planned volumes of the *Encyclopaedia Africana* have been published – and no new volume has been released since 1995.[12]

Implementation of the Great Museum of Africa turned out to be more successful. The GMA aims 'to create awareness of and benefit from Africa's vast, dynamic and diverse cultural artefacts and the influence Africa has and continues to have on the various cultures of the world in areas such as art, music, language and science'. It is envisaged as a 'focal centre for preserving and promoting African cultural heritage' (ibid., 62). By 2021, the GMA Comprehensive Project Document and the GMA Brochure had been finalised, together with the completion of preparations for 'the launch of the temporary site' and the first continental exhibition. The draft statute was submitted to the AU's Office of the Legal Counsel, and a draft host agreement between the AUC and Algeria was submitted to the legal counsel (AUC and AUDA–NEPDA 2022, 62).[13] The museum is planned to be launched in 2023.

12 In fact, rather than an 'authentic history of Africa and African life' the project was transformed into a series of hagiographic dictionaries, organised on a country basis. Volume 1 covers Ghana and Ethiopia (1977), volume 2 Sierra Leone and 'Zaire' (1979), and volume 3 South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland (1995). All three volumes were edited by Lawrence H. Ofosu-Appiah (1920–1990), who became the EAP director in August 1966. See URL: <http://www.endarkenment.com/eap/eavolumes/index.htm>; see also URL: <http://www.webdubois.org/wdb-ency.html> (both accessed: 30 June 2022). This is quite a contrast to the *UNESCO General History of Africa*, another major post-independence publication project on the history and identity of the African continent, which begun in 1964 (see UNESCO 1981–1999).

13 The Technical and Advisory Committee of the Great Museum of Africa is led by Nawel Dahmani, director of prospective studies, documentation, and information technology at the Ministry of Culture (Algeria).

An important point of reference in the above debate is the 'African diaspora', constructed by the AU as the sixth region of the continent. Based on an initiative by Togo, the AU Assembly declared the years 2021–2031 to be the 'Decade of African Roots and Diasporas' (AU Assembly 2021b). Building on the *Declaration of the World Diaspora Summit* in 2012 (see AU Assembly 2012), the Union emphasised 'that the Decade of African Roots and Diasporas offers the … opportunity to implement a solid plan of global actions to make it possible to materialise the return and greater involvement of the Diaspora of African descent from the West Indies, the Caribbean, the Pacific and the Americas in the development process of the Continent' (ibid., §8). A 'perfect coherence' with the theme for the year 2021 – 'Arts, Culture and Heritage' – was seen, and Togo focused on setting up a high committee for oversight and implementation of the decade's activities (ibid., §9).

In the last edition of the *Yearbook on the African Union*, it was concluded that this unequivocal rhetorical thrust to commemorate Africa's past and build on its arts, culture, and heritage is contradicted by AU member states' reluctance to ratify the 2006 *Charter for African Cultural Renaissance* (which is replacing the 1976 *African Cultural Charter for Africa*). Through this document, the Union, among many other things, wants to 'develop all the dynamic values of the African cultural heritage that promote human rights, social cohesion and human development' (African Union 2006, §3[k]); it also aims to 'provide African peoples with the resources to enable them to cope with globalization' (ibid., §3[l]). There is no change compared to the last edition of the Yearbook. By 18 June 2020, only 14 members had ratified and deposited the legal instruments – although some 34 members have signed up to today (African Union 2022b). For the charter to enter into force, it takes the ratification of two-thirds of the AU member states.

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CHAPTER 6

Governance

Annie Barbara Hazviyemurwi Chikwanha

1 Africa's Regional Governance Initiative: The African Governance Architecture

Since 2000, Africa's regional governance architecture has been evolving, with a more coherent picture only emerging after 2010 when the African Union (AU) resolved to establish the African Governance Architecture (AGA) as the pan-African platform to promote good governance, democracy, and respect for human rights (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2000*, 85f.). The AGA draws inspiration from the *Constitutive Act of the African Union* (OAU 2000), which expresses the organisation's determination to 'promote and protect human and people's rights, consolidate democratic institutions and culture and ensure good governance and the rule of law' (ibid., §3[h]). The AGA is aligned with the AU's continental development blueprint – *Agenda 2063* – specifically with Aspiration 3, which identifies the region as 'An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law' (African Union 2015, 5).

The AGA brings together all the stakeholders with a mandate to promote good governance and strengthen democracy in Africa – member states, AU bureaus, civil society organisations (CSOs), development partners – by coordinating the implementation of the AU's shared values agenda and tracking compliance with the 2007 *African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance* (ACDEG, African Union 2007). The ACDEG is the major legal framework specifying the normative commitments to democratic governance and integrity of the AU member states. Through supportive joint engagement in strategic interventions, the coordination of interdepartmental efforts towards preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention, and post-conflict reconstruction and development in Africa, the AGA is slowly and painstakingly becoming the driving agent for democratic change on the continent (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2000*, 86f.).

The AGA's activities and objectives are operationalised through the African Governance Platform (AGP) members who meet annually and agree on joint flagship initiatives as outlined in the AGA road map. The AGP is composed of the AU Commission (AUC), the Peace and Security Council (PSC), the Pan-African

Parliament (PAP), the African Union Development Agency (AUDA–NEPAD), the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (AfCHPR), the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), the AU Advisory Board on Corruption (AUABC), the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC), the African Union Commission on International Law (AUCIL), as well as the Regional Economic Communities (RECs). And these agencies all interact with organised non-state actors and development partners. In 2021, the AGP members all carried out different activities at the continental, regional, and national levels. At the national level, many activities were organised around advocating the adoption and institutionalisation of the democratic conduct of elections. Peacebuilding dialogues were also a key area of activity across the RECs and member states. Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the AU appears to have paid more attention to developing tools and reports in 2021 that will guide the implementation of some governance activities.

2 Dominant Actors in the Governance Realm

In 2021, the APRM, a voluntary instrument for self-monitoring by participating member governments, rose to prominence in steering regional governance work (of note, however, is the fact that not all AU member states are members of the APRM). The background for this meteoric rise was set in 2017 when the 28th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 30–31 January) tasked that the institution with being the lead agency for tracking member states' implementation of the ACDEG (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2000*, 89–91). The expanded mandate also included monitoring progress on Agenda 2063 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as producing the *Africa Governance Report* (AGR).

Under the leadership of Prof Edward 'Eddi' Maloka, the APRM Continental Secretariat (Midrand, South Africa) has been turned around within a short period. In the last five years, a reactivation of the organ has been successful, and the expanded mandates of the APRM by the AU Assembly show the confidence in his steering. The amount of work covered by the organ is unprecedented as the unit now shoulders the production of most continental reports, including the *Agenda 2063 Continental Report*, the AGR, country review reports, and periodic update reports of Africa's credit rating. The new emphasis on knowledge production by the APRM points to a shift in the use of empirical evidence in the designing of governance strategies and programmes.

The APRM's mandate is to ensure that the policies and practices of member states conform to the agreed political, economic, and corporate governance values, codes, and standards contained in the *Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance* (OAU 2002), adopted by the AU Assembly of the Heads of State and Government at the 38th Ordinary Session of the Organisation of African Unity (Durban, South Africa, 8 July 2002). The APRM conducts periodic governance assessments in the member states, and it is integral to meeting the aspirations of Agenda 2063. The AU Assembly mandated the APRM Continental Secretariat to ensure universal accession by all the 55 AU member states to the mechanism by 2023, and the courting, so to say, of the remaining 13 member states continued in 2021 despite the difficult operational environment due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. The campaigning for voluntary membership is done through a series of high-level consultations with the leaderships of the non-APRM member states. In 2021, the Africa Peer Review Forum welcomed the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as the 41st AU member state to accede to the APRM at its 30th Ordinary Session in March (the DRC was the AU's chairperson in 2021; see Hans Hoebeke and Onesphore Sematumba, this Yearbook, chapter 4).

3 Key Developments

The APRM led the production of the biennial publication of the AGR in 2021 and the national governance reports of reviewed states. There were broad consultations across the AGP for the second report to be produced by an AU organ in 2021.[1] The AGR report, titled 'African Governance Futures for the Africa We Want' (APRM 2021), was finalised at the end of 2021 and raised red flags of where Africa is headed should it continue to neglect needed governance reforms. The AGR assessment of the state of governance in APRM member states is produced through cooperation and collaboration between the APRM and AGP members. The report emphasised four scenarios for Africa in 2063: the *Baseline Scenario* refers to a more integrated continent, including diaspora communities, and greater connectivity among the citizens who are supported by efficient governance; the *Utopian Scenario – Africa Thriving* is a continuation of current governance and socioeconomic systems, including some technological developments and enhanced regional unification; the *Dystopian*

1 Previously, five governance reports were produced by the United Nations Economic Community for Africa (UNECA) between 2005 and 2018. The first APRM governance report was published in 2019.

Scenario – Africa Defeated reflects a bleak future where Africa is haunted by the incapacity to self-govern, poor decision-making authority, weak policy management, and poor governance, leading to the continent being taken over by non-African actors and international institutions; and, the last one, the *Surprise Scenario – Africa's Lift-Off* is presented as the ideal situation where there is a high level of trust between the leaders and the citizens, leading to greater stability. This AGR is important for signalling to African leaders the governance areas that require attention in order to shift towards the peace and prosperity paradigm, though challenges remain at the national level where the implementation of paradigm-shifting policies takes place. The report was to be presented to the 35th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 5–6 February 2022).

The APRM soldiered on with plans for the country peer reviews and successfully concluded four reviews in Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, and South Africa during the course of the year in spite of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Among these four countries, Nigeria and South Africa conducted the second country reviews, while Niger and Namibia had their first reviews. The APRM also conducted targeted reviews in 2021 of Uganda and Kenya. The Uganda Targeted Review Mission took place in October 2021 and focused on three thematic clusters, namely underdevelopment of agriculture, unresponsive civil service, and underdevelopment of infrastructure (APRM 2022, 3). The Kenya Targeted Review Mission took place in November and December 2021 and focused on the 'Big 4 Agenda' – covering key issues in four broad sectors: affordable housing, expansion of manufacturing, food security and nutrition, and affordable healthcare – as well as salient cross-cutting issues, including corruption, gender inequality, youth unemployment, and diversity management. The targeted reviews were in response to requests by the two member states.

For South Africa, the APRM National Governing Council (NGC) and the Country Review Mission conducted provincial consultations for the second country review process of the country between 6 and 22 December. These consultations led to the production of the Country's Self-Assessment Report (CSAR) at the end of December 2021.[2]

The South African Institute for International Affairs (SAIIA) was very proactive in supporting CSOs in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region (South Africa, Botswana, and Zimbabwe) to contribute to the

2 South African Government. Department of Public Service and Administration *Press Statement* [Pretoria], 13 December 2021. URL: <https://www.gov.za/speeches/african-peer-review-mechanism%C2%A0review-mission-engages-provincial-consultations-14-22-dec-13> (accessed: 30 June 2022).

APRM country reviews. In Zimbabwe, the APRM Popular Sensitisation Project worked with SAIIA to mobilise the inclusion of CSOs in the Zimbabwe APRM process even though a date has not yet been set for the country's review. Other regional organisations also supported capacity-building with regard to APRM processes, thereby enabling the Zimbabwe CSO project to make a submission concerning the key governance issues in the country. The country's shadow report that was produced in this exercise was submitted to the APRM Continental Secretariat in 2021.

The Botswana Council for Non-Governmental Organisations (BOCONGO) partnered with a regional organisation and arranged for local civil society organisations to make submissions regarding 12 priority key governance issues in Botswana.[3] Supported by SAIIA, the Botswana APRM Popular Sensitisation Project created public awareness on the APRM in the country and launched its own report in April 2021.

The APRM seems to be gaining more traction with CSOs in many countries as there is more enthusiasm to join the country review process. The process is very complex and requires expertise across the themes targeted for review. Governments continue to lag behind in mobilising this capacity and remain rather reluctant to rely on CSOs. Such collaboration, however, would hasten the quick turnaround in conducting the country reviews. Up until now, 23 countries have undergone the APRM country review process. Of the 41 countries that are now APRM members, the following are yet to undertake the very first country reviews: Angola, Botswana, Cameroon, Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Malawi, Mauritania, Seychelles, Togo, Tunisia, and Zimbabwe.

In line with the Kagame reforms (see Ulf Engel, this Yearbook, chapter 3), the integrative approach to security and governance was finally achieved when the AU positioned itself as a key governance actor in the region through the newly established Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS). The PAPS merger of the Africa Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the AGA is now under a new administrative structure in the AUC that is led by a new cohort of commissioners appointed in February 2021. The merger is supposed to result in a more coordinated management under one PAPS commissioner, Ambassador Bankole Adeoye. The new unit has two directors: one for conflict management, and another one for governance and conflict prevention. The rest of the administrative structures and other logistical arrangements is still falling into place; PAPS now has a total headcount of 111 positions (56 staff

3 See URL: <https://saiia.org.za/research/botswana-civil-societys-submission-to-the-aprm/>.

in conflict management and 35 in governance and conflict prevention), much less than the previous 240 plus officers in the old Peace and Security Department (PSD; see Ronceray et al. 2021, 6).

Due to the nature of the merged governance and security tasks, the institutional development of PAPS dominated the rest of 2021, and cultivating a new organisational culture centred on governance will take years to develop. However, some system integration has been faster in some areas of work. For instance, a noticeable change is the integration of early warning and governance monitoring into different regional desks, which could increase the potential for quick collaboration and information-sharing (but also see Ulf Engel, this Yearbook, chapter 3). Challenges around structuring will dominate management issues for the foreseeable future as there are concerns regarding the new location of some units. For example, the location of the desks for early warning and governance monitoring in the Directorate for Conflict Management rather than the Directorate for Governance and Conflict Prevention[4] signals a subtle continuation of previous operational modalities in silos, yet these desks should inform the conflict prevention efforts of both directorates.

At the REC level, in May and June 2021, the Pan-African Parliament – the legislative body of the AU that was formed in response to the calls of the 1991 *Abuja Treaty* and the 1999 *Sirte Declaration* for a body that would ensure the inclusion of Africa's citizens in the development of the continent – spent time quibbling over the procedures for the nomination of a parliamentary president for the next five years.[5] Disagreements on the election modalities have plagued the organ for some years, and the AU Executive Council noted in October that the election of the PAP president and four vice presidents should follow the AU's regional rotation principle. These problems took place against a background of deep-rooted corruption practices, impartiality, and maladministration. The AU established a commission to conduct a PAP fact-finding mission in September, and the team also flagged similar challenges that had been picked up by an earlier audit report.[6] The PAP has struggled to comply with the 2001 protocol that established it, which stated that each of the five regions must have a chance to lead the institution. The PAP was thus instructed to restrict presidential election candidates to regions that have not held the position, leaving Southern and North Africa as the only legitimate contestants. A loss of autonomy was noted when the AU Executive Council ordered in October 2021 that the forthcoming elections be run by the AU's Office of the

4 *ISS PSC Insights* [Pretoria], 5 May 2021.

5 *ISS PSC Insights* [Pretoria], 3 November 2021.

6 Ibid.

Legal Counsel and not by the legal counsel of the PAP Secretariat, which was allegedly allying itself with some contestants (see AU Council 2021). While the causes of the 2021 squabbles are being investigated, the AU legal counsel was tasked with reviewing PAP's rules of procedure with a view to aligning them with those of other AU organs.

The PAP is clearly aggrieved by its failure to get the legal recognition emanating from the 2014 *Malabo Protocol*, which gives the PAP greater legislative powers (see African Union 2014). Eight years later, only 12 of the 28 needed AU member states have ratified the protocol. It is proving difficult to get the 16 needed for enforcement of the protocol. Many of PAP's 235 parliamentarians did not win their seats in free and fair elections, which further complicates relations among members of diverse political backgrounds and the quest for the body's legitimacy. Tendencies towards inward servicing of the PAP divert attention away from the key business of the institution.

The 10th High-Level Dialogue on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance was held on 2–9 December 2021 (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia) as part of the annual AGP projects. The high-level dialogues are an open space where state and non-state actors meet to discuss regional policies and progress on democratic governance, human rights, and peace within the AU frameworks.[7] In 2021, the themes covered developments in the state of governance, democracy, and peace in the region. A new emphasis was on reshaping the African renaissance concept to acknowledge the region's historical context, the contemporary democratic governance landscape, and the normative and legal frameworks on democratisation and governance. The dialogue attempts to give insights into road maps and opportunities for both state and non-state actors to design requisite national level interventions.

In line with the AGA's inclusion policies, regional-wide youth consultations and a gender pre-forum deliberated on the enhancement of their incorporation into the policy and implementation levels before the 10th High-Level Dialogue. All the discussions were held under the AU's theme of the year, 'Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers for Building the African We Want'. This theme opened up opportunities for embracing diversity and the repositioning of women in politics and society while increasing their presence and roles in leadership and decision-making. Member states, the RECs, the AGP, and pan-African cultural institutions were urged to work together to utilise these spaces for collaboration and dialogue. The AU used this space to acknowledge youth agency in the region and encouraged intergenerational

7 *AU News* [Addis Ababa], 2 December 2021.

dialogue through the sharing of best practices in youth leadership for the renewal of the African renaissance through the identification of key values based on pan-African principles, integrity, and renaissance. The youth consultations were organised under the auspices of the AGA Youth Engagement Strategy (YES).

Due to the slow pace of ratification, AU member states were called on to ratify the 2006 *Charter for African Cultural Renaissance* and the *Statute of the African Audio-Visual and Cinema Commission* to ensure its entry into force and implementation. Member states were urged to allocate 1 per cent of the national budget to arts, culture, and heritage and the development of the creative economy to contribute to the inclusion of women as part of the African Women Decade on Economic and Financial Inclusion agenda.

4 Covid-19 Setbacks

4.1 *Postponement of Elections*

The effects of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated the governance crisis in the region in 2021. The shifts on the democracy landscape to combat the disease and the deepening health and socioeconomic crisis all tested the resilience of governance systems and political institutions. Government weaknesses in organising mass health delivery and designing responsive social support systems remained glaring across all levels – exposing Africa's primary challenges due to weak institutional environments, poor structures, and deficient leadership. Service delivery was delayed across all sectors in most countries as services were disrupted in the attempts to contain the disease, together with some elections that were postponed at the beginning of the pandemic from 2020 to 2021.

The postponement of elections was contested by many defenders of democracy. For instance, in South Africa, the ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC), supported the postponement, whereas its main rival, the Democratic Alliance (DA), strongly opposed it.[8] South Africa's Constitutional Court finally rejected the appeal, ordering the elections to be held between 27 October and 1 November 2021. An argument presented by some CSOs that were demanding that these democratic procedures be adhered to was that the ACDEG was accepted as a treaty falling under the purview of the AfCHPR since 2016 hence the debates that elections during Covid-19 should be within the framework of Article 25(b) of the International Covenant on

8 *The Conversation* [Melbourne], 31 August 2021.

Civil and Political Rights, which guarantees the right to vote and to be elected (Open Society Justice Initiative 2022). The Covid-19 pandemic's ruptures of democratisation processes affected the consolidation of democracy and the legitimacy of election outcomes since voter turnout dropped significantly

TABLE 6.1 Elections postponed in Africa due to the Covid-19 pandemic

Country	Election	Place	Originally scheduled	Rescheduled
Botswana	local by-elections	Metsimotlhabe and Boseja South wards	May 2020	18 December 2021
Chad	legislative elections		13 December 2020	24 October 2021, then postponed indefinitely
Ethiopia	parliamentary elections		29 August 2020	21 June 2021
Gabon	partial legislative elections	Lékoni-Lékori (Akiéni)	4 and 18 April 2020	31 January 2021
The Gambia	National Assembly by-election	Niamina West constituency	16 April 2020	7 November 2020
Kenya	County Assembly and National Assembly by-elections		April, June–July 2020	15 December 2020
Liberia	midterm senatorial elections and national referendum		13 October 2020	8 December 2020
Libya	municipal elections		18 April 2020	June 2020
	presidential elections		24 December 2021	(not directly related to Covid-19)
Niger	local elections		1 November 2021	13 December 2021 (not directly related to Covid-19)

TABLE 6.1 Elections postponed in Africa due to the Covid-19 pandemic (*Cont.*)

Country	Election	Place	Originally scheduled	Rescheduled
Nigeria	senatorial by-elections	Bayelsa, Imo, and Plateau districts	March 2020	5 December 2020
Rwanda	local elections	Kigali city	30 December 2021	
São Tomé and Príncipe	second round presidential elections		8 August 2021	5 September 2021 (not directly related to Covid-19)
Somalia	parliamentary elections		27 November 2020	
	presidential elections		before 8 February 2021	first moved to 25 July–10 October 2021
South Africa	municipal by-elections and voter registration activities		March–May 2020	11 November 2020
Tunisia	municipal elections	Hassi El Ferid and Jbeniana	28–29 March 2020	5 July 2020
Uganda	special interest groups elections		April–May 2020	11, 13, 17 August 2020
Zimbabwe	rural district council by-election	Chiredzi ward 16	4 April 2020	
	legislative and council by-elections		5 December 2020	2021

SOURCE: IDEA (2022)

across most countries. Some countries suffered democratic reversals due to these postponements.

In January 2021, the AU PSC agreed on AU *Guidelines on Elections in Africa in the Context of the Novel Coronavirus* (*Covid-19*) *Pandemic and Other Public*

Health Emergencies (AU PSC 2021). The guidelines were designed to create a level electoral playing field by encouraging the national Election Management Bodies (EMBs) to develop appropriate policies to ensure the organisation of credible elections during public health emergencies and also for relevant government institutions, political parties, CSOs, the media, election observers, and the rest of the international community to adopt these standards.

The continuing menace of the Covid-19 pandemic forced many policy-makers and civil society leaders to recognise the importance of technology to political and economic participation. The shift towards engaging through digital technologies, such as video conferencing, allowed many actors to participate. The connectivity challenges experienced by many participants in AGA activities pointed to the need for hastened technology infrastructure development in the region. Crippling power outages pushed many CSOs to begin physical meetings much earlier on in 2021, drawing attention to the gaps between the AU structures and its potential to keep working remotely. At the national level, the impact of constant power outages, high data costs, and lack of options pushed local actors to organise themselves differently.

4.2 *Linking Governance with Security*

The APRM Continental Secretariat was mandated to link the region's governance work with the African Peace and Security Architecture's tasks in building regional stability. In December 2021, the First Joint Retreat of the PSC and the APRM was held in Durban, South Africa.[9] The retreat was supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Durban-based African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD).

The Durban Joint Retreat was aimed at enhancing early warning systems by revisiting previous APRM reports and identifying problematic issues that could feed into the new PAPS early warning strategies. The development of a systematic framework for feeding what the APRM pointed out as conflict markers was essential for cementing the ties between governance and conflict in the region. The Joint Retreat also aligned its actions and aims with the realisation of two aspirations of AU Agenda 2063: Aspiration 3 'An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law' and Aspiration 4 'A peaceful and secure Africa as guided by the AU Master Roadmap on Practical Steps in Silencing the Guns by the Year 2020' (African Union 2016).[10]

9 The retreat was an arrangement pursuant to a PSC decision (see AU PSC 2020a, 2020b).

10 On 6 December 2020, the AU Assembly decided to postpone the deadline for *Silencing the Guns* by 10 years to 2030 (see *Yearbook on the African Union* 2020, 150f.).

The Constitutionalism and Rule of Law Unit of PAPS worked on mainstreaming of the ACDEG in school curricula of AU member states; it also produced a 'Pedagogic Toolkit for Rule of Law Stakeholders in Africa' that is aligned with the road map on inclusion and mainstreaming of the ACDEG in the school curricula of AU member states. The validation workshops were held back-to-back in Abuja, Nigeria (29–30 November and 1–2 December 2021, respectively).[11] Embedding this toolkit into the school curricula is aimed at inculcating the culture of democracy, good governance, as well as respect of rule of law and human rights into future generations and thereby make it possible to achieve Agenda 2063. In December 2021, experts on the theme met in Abuja, Nigeria, to review the pedagogic toolkit. After its validation, a harmonised training framework for capacity-building and advocacy for customised and cascading use of the toolkit at the national and regional levels will be developed. The project is in line with the promotion of the AU shared values instruments through education institutions. However, this project was started before the merger of PAPS, and as reflected in the controversial location of the department, the transition to fully merged programmes will take time. The first meeting of the Sub-Committee on Human Rights, Democracy and Governance of the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) for the year (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 24 May 2021) also called on the need for better synergies and coordination between member states on the AGA and APSA as the same gaps were noted in national programmes.

5 AU/RECs Division of Labour in Governance

Nascent participatory innovations under the AGA reflect ongoing contestation over the form and function of African regional governance initiatives. The RECs, through the principle of subsidiarity, aid the AU's response to governance challenges, but this contestation complicates the governance institutional landscape, hence the need for better continental and regional coordination mechanisms. The RECs tend to insist on their autonomy and work with other Regional Mechanisms (RMs), which hold more power in certain respects; nevertheless, power tussles remain notable around positioning the dominance of the AU in steering the peace and security agenda (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2000*, 93–95). The AGA Secretariat sits within the merged PAPS and

11 *AU Press Release* [Addis Ababa], 2 December 2021.

comprises members of the AGA platform to which the RECs belong. However, the AGA Secretariat only coordinates but does not oversee the work of the members of the AGA platform, leaving room for improvement and innovation.

The RECs form the pillars of the AU and take the responsibility of distilling and conveying continental policies to the subregions. All of the RECs had been established prior to the launch of the AU in July 2002, having all evolved in response to regional dynamics and set up differing structures for tackling political and development challenges in the quest for regional integration. The RECs facilitate regional economic integration between members of the individual regions and through the wider African Economic Community, which was established under the 1991 Abuja Treaty (see also Bruce Byiers, this Yearbook, chapter 10). Due to the varying nature of demands across regions, the RECs carried out different AGA-related activities in 2021 and these were always designed to bring the AU and CSOs closer.

After the AU Assembly had identified the underlying need for a clear division of labour and effective collaboration between the RECs, RMs, and AU organs to achieve the aspirations of Agenda 2063, annual coordinating meetings, which derive their mandate from the 28th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly were scheduled (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 30–31 January 2017). The 3rd Mid-Year Coordination Meeting (MYCM; virtual, 16 October 2021) deliberated on the following governance issues: the *Report on the Status of the Regional Integration in Africa* and the *Progress Report on the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Continent*.[12] After the PAPS commissioner's statement on the state of AU–RECs/RMs relationship, the rest of the RECs and RMs provided their own reports on the status of the relationship. Though major points emphasised cordial relations and collaboration with the AU, the RECs clearly had more initiatives that connected them with citizens in their member states. A major challenge that will continue to complicate relations is the principle of subsidiarity, which allows the RECs to intervene in their member states without active participation and engagement of the PSC regarding conflict prevention, conflict management, and conflict resolution (see Ulf Engel, this Yearbook, chapter 3).

A five-day high-level ministerial conference on the role of the RECs in promoting the youth, peace, and security agenda in the east and the Horn of Africa took place in Nairobi, Kenya (1–5 November 2021). The conference aimed to promote the youth, peace, and security agenda by advocating more inclusive policies and meaningful engagement of young people in peacebuilding and conflict prevention mechanisms. The combination of governance and security

12 *AU Press Release* [Addis Ababa], 19 October 2021.

made it easier and profitable to discuss these issues within the same platform. Senior government officials and youth leaders from national youth councils as well as the AU's 'African Youth Ambassador for Peace' representative, community youth leaders, and development partners participated in the debates. The conference was co-hosted by the AU, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern (COMESA), the government of Kenya, and some CSOs (including Save the Children, the Life and Peace Institute, and the Horn of Africa Youth Network). Deliberations considered the many initiatives by state and non-state programmes for encouraging and helping youth in the Horn of Africa. Emphasis was laid on feeding into the early warning systems of COMESA and the AU Youth Peace and Security Framework (see African Union et al. 2021).

6 Gender and Governance

The AU has a few protocols in place to address gender equality and development – but translating the blueprint into action remains slow (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2000*, 97–99). Progress is hampered due to the dominant toxic patriarchal tendencies in the region that are manifested in both domestic and political violence that is experienced by many women. Agenda 2063 locates gender equality at the forefront of the continent's vision, particularly in Aspiration 6 and Goal 17, with the focus on achieving full gender equality to enable people-driven development for Africa (African Union 2015). The priority areas of women's and girls' empowerment and an end to violence and discrimination against women and girls are thus central to the achievement of Agenda 2063. The RECs have been operationalising the several AU protocols meant to tackle the marginalisation of women and the violence that creates distance. These are: the *Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa* (2004), a reporting framework on gender equality and women's empowerment that reaffirms the member states' commitment to gender equality as enshrined in Article 4(1) of the 2000 *Constitutive Act of the African Union*; the 2003 *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa* (Maputo Protocol); and the *AU Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment* (*2018–2028*) (see Awino Okech, this Yearbook, chapter 12).

Violence remains a big deterrent to women's inclusion into political affairs. Coupled with the defective criminal justice systems across all the countries, most women shy away from stepping into the public realm, and many do not enjoy their rights. In a bid to make law enforcement more gender responsive, SADC developed tools to curb regional gender-based violence (GBV) in the region. The tools are designed to operationalise and guide the implementation

of the SADC's *Strategic Plan of Action on GBV*, Article 24 of the *SADC Protocol on Gender and Development on the Training of Service Providers*, and the *Regional Strategy and Framework of Action for Addressing GBV (2018–2030)*[13] by strengthening the capacity of law enforcement and other actors in managing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). The tools cover SGBV Training Guidelines and the Regional Guideline for Developing Standard Operational Procedures. As many women continue to face displacement due to SGBV, a Regional Strategy on Rehabilitation of GBV Perpetrators/Offenders and a Regional Migration Policy Framework are still being developed. The tools are all aligned with international conventions aimed at responding to victims/survivors of SGBV-related crimes, and emphasize the need to bring all stakeholders on board. Members states contributed to the development of these tools, and the SADC Chief of Police Sub-Committee accepted them in June 2021, with ministers responsible for women's affairs and gender approving them in August 2021. Zambia became the first country to use the tool to train its criminal justice system in the same month of August.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Gender Development Centre brought together gender experts from member states in October 2021 to review their response to the announcement by the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government on January 2021 regarding a 'Declaration on Zero Tolerance for Sexual and Gender-based Violence and the Elimination of all forms of Violence against Women and the Girl child at all times and under all circumstances in the ECOWAS region'.[14] The gender experts reviewed the draft regional strategies on the prevention of and response to GBV as well as sexual harassment in the workplace and educational institutions in West Africa. The documents were submitted to the ECOWAS ministers in charge of women's affairs and gender for official adoption.

The East African Community (EAC) continued to blend youth and women issues when ministers met at the 5th Sectoral Council on Gender, Youth, Children, Social Protection and Community (Arusha, Tanzania, 7–11 June 2021). Among the items on the agenda was the consideration of a training manual for female cross-border traders and service providers, the progress report of the *50 Million African Women Speak* networking platform project, progress in implementing the Action Plan of the EAC Youth Policy, the impact of Covid-19

13 *SADC News* [Gaborone], 9 December 2021. URL: <https://www.sadc.int/news-events/news/sadc-develops-tools-curb-gbv-across-region/> (accessed: 30 June 2022).

14 *ECOWAS Post* [Abuja], 12 October 2021. URL: <https://ecowas.int/?p=50946> (accessed: 30 June 2022).

on children, and the development of the *COVID-19 Response, Mitigation and Adaptation Plan for Youth and Children* in the EAC.[15]

7 Youth and Governance

Agenda 2063 singles out young people as an instrumental driving force behind the continent's political, social, cultural, and economic transformation (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2000*, 99f.). To harness the energy of the youth, the AGA has been fundamental for AU policy organs and the RECs to ensure sustainable engagement of youth in democratic governance processes within the AGA framework. YES creates channels for youth participation in policy-forming and democratic governance through institutionalised annual consultations on democratic governance, peace, and security.

Youth participation is enshrined in the ACDEG (African Union 2007, §§31[1] and [2]). It calls on member states to promote the participation of social groups with special needs, including youth and persons with disabilities, in governance processes. The 2006 *African Youth Charter* (AYC) is a blueprint for youth empowerment and development at continental, regional, and national levels. Among others, it states that every young person shall have the right to participate in all spheres of society and commits member states to promote active youth participation and create platforms for youth involvement in decision-making processes (African Union 2006, §§ 11[1] and 11[2]b). Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063 envisions a continent 'whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children' (African Union 2015, 8). Though there is convergence with the AU protocols on youth and participation, all of the RECs have devised their own strategies, reflecting their areas of concern. Some strategies, however, are vague and do not specify the strategic action areas.[16]

15 *EAC Post* [Arusha], 9 June 2021. URL: <https://www.eac.int/press-releases/146-gender-community-development-civil-society/2095-5th-sectoral-council-of-ministers-on-gender,-youth,-childen,-social-protection-and-community-development-underway-in-arusha> (accessed: 30 June 2022).

16 ECOWAS has made youth empowerment a priority in its conflict prevention framework; the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) has mainstreamed youth in its main regional strategy; the EAC has instituted a youth ambassadors programme to promote youth engagement; COMESA has mainstreamed youth participation in policy, democracy, and socioeconomic development in its programming; the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) has adopted a regional programme to strengthen the capacities of young people in the management of association, crisis, and

Utilising the YES platform, the AGA Secretariat, with support from the AU's Directorate for Governance and Conflict Prevention, held the 'Africa Talks' event at the Expo 2020 Dubai. The 'Africa Talks' provided a political platform for sharing best practices and gave young people the opportunity to showcase their initiatives and share comparable lessons on the various thematic areas that support the realisation of good governance on the continent. The 2021 'Africa Talks' session was on the theme 'Showcasing Youth Innovations in Peace, Democracy and Governance towards Silencing the Guns in Africa' and young innovators showcased their ideas and contributions to creating a peaceful and prosperous Africa.[17] The rest of the panel discussions on 'Silencing the Guns through Innovation' were based on the presentations of the AGA top-five winners of the Democracy and Governance in Africa – Youth Innovation Challenge, launched in the 2020.

At the REC level, the national youth councils of COMESA member states elected in September 2021 the first COMESA Youth Advisory Panel.[18] The 11-member advisory panel has a three-year tenure and is responsible for strengthening the engagement of youth within the region in democracy, governance, and socioeconomic development issues and to promote and advocate productive and meaningful participation of young people in decision-making processes. The panel reports to the COMESA Council of Ministers and the COMESA Secretariat through periodic reports and contributes to the reports of the various thematic groups. The institutionalisation of the Youth Advisory Panel in the COMESA structure is an outcome of the joint project on 'Youth Engagement in Democratic Governance and Socio-Economic Development processes in Africa' with the AU through the AGA. The COMESA Secretariat was supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

With SDC support, the AGA and COMESA again developed a guide to facilitate 'Youth Participation in Political and Electoral Processes in Africa.' The guide and manuals will be useful for the RECS and member states to mainstream youth participation across the electoral cycle. This youth inclusion guide is a response to allowing youth voices to be part of the electoral processes as a contribution to the *Silencing the Guns* initiative.

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conflict prevention; the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) has rolled out a regional strategy for engagement, participation, and advocacy to amplify youth voices to promote peace, security, and sustainable development; and SADC has developed a programme focusing on mitigating youth participation in violence, youth empowerment, and employment (see African Union/AGA 2021).

17 *AU Press Release* [Addis Ababa], 23 December 2021.

18 *AU Press Release* [Addis Ababa], 14 September 2021.

8 Cooperation and Partnerships for Enhancing Governance

European Union (EU) cooperation on governance and human rights in the AGA continues to flounder and is unlikely to ever match the scale of APSA in terms of support (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2000*, 100–102). Globally, cooperation is being impaired, with multilateralism facing many challenges (Bellmann et al. 2012). This has left bilateral relations with the upper hand, being the preferred option for engagement since it continues to prove to be a more successful cooperation approach for all development partners. In terms of supporting the AGA, there is a clear failure to replicate the existing cooperation within the APSA. Reasons for this vary from the indifference of heads of state and government to all interventions into governance areas which are deemed to be sensitive domestic affairs to the absence of effective AU enforcement mechanisms. Another reason is the emphasis on financial support over increased internal institutional collaboration and rationalisation of resources.

As in previous engagements, external partners continued to pick AGA work they want to support. A good example is the EU Technical Assistance to the AGA Support Project (AGA–SP) that focused on the strengthening of the following AGA members: the ACHPR, the PAP, the APRM, and the ACERWC. In doing so, the AGA–SP seeks to improve coordination, maximise synergies between AGA members and other institutions, and nuture formal/informal linkages with national governance institutions.

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit's (GIZ) governance strengthening programme continued with its systemic focus on capacity-building of AGA platform members and on AU member states fulfilling their commitments to the regional governance protocols as laid out in several shared value instruments (SVIS).[19] The cooperation agreement targets AU institutions that overlap in four bureaus with the EU TA: the AU Commission's former Department of Political Affairs, as the host of the AGA Secretariat; the ACERWC, the ACHPR, the APRM, and the AUABC. The GIZ programme cooperates with 6 of the 19 AGA platform members, meeting annually and formulating joint flagship initiatives in line with the AGA road map.

The APRM appears to be drawing more attention due to its elaborate mandate and capacity to deliver. The organ has also forged more partnerships around its different work areas. Accordingly, it is likely to gain more attention from development partners in the future.

19 GIZ 2022. 'Support to the African Governance Architecture (AGA)'. URL: <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/27933.html> (accessed: 30 June 2022).

9 Governance Outlook in 2022

The year 2022 is set to be dominated by consolidating the functions and collaboration mechanisms across the new PAPS structures. PAPS institutional challenges, the hesitancy towards interference in governance, the need to safeguard sovereignty, the relatively indifferent AU leadership, and the presence of international partners and their ideologies all risk having the governance agenda play second fiddle to the AU's peace and security activities. PAPS will struggle to strike a balance between the unified though diverse member states, as well as their constantly competing interests. The merger therefore raises questions about the implications for the AU's role in governance, and questions remain on whether the merger will boost or undermine its governance role and if it can move Africa closer to peace and prosperity. The marker of success will be if the AU can intervene in the domestic politics and governance of its member states and if the member states' interests comply with AU expectations.

Governance remains a sensitive area for member states, who are unlikely to buy into AUC leadership of what they deem domestic matters. Despite the PAPS merger, these sensitivities will continue to shape the AU's work, which was intended to be streamlined by merging the AGA and APSA. The complementary nature of the fragmented AGA and AGP responsibilities appear to add value by allowing for multi-layered scrutiny and addressing of governance issues. Notwithstanding, the reality of high coordination costs and the possibility for inefficiencies and overlaps between actors with similar roles may slow down progress. For this is the nature of bureaucratic procedures in intergovernmental bodies.

For instance, conflict alerts by national level institutions can get bogged down by inertia at the REC level. With the APRM country assessments, these take time and early warning risks the chance of coming too late, and the AGA Secretariat itself does not have the capacity to connect with national level actors, thereby prolonging the time for essential interventions to be undertaken. A positive note is that the AU managed to develop a number of essential governance-enhancing tools, leaving the challenge for 2022 of translating these blueprints into action.

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CHAPTER 7

Health

Edefe Ojomo and Habibu Yaya Bappah

1 Introduction

This chapter examines major activities of the African Union (AU) in health governance, particularly during 2021. Declared by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in January 2020 as a public health emergency of international concern, the Covid-19 pandemic continued to be considered as such throughout 2021.

Given the AU's recognition of health as an important sector for the development of African states and peoples, several initiatives have been introduced to improve health conditions across the continent. The response to the Covid-19 pandemic has taken place within the existing framework for health intervention provided by the AU (see Boateng and Iroulo 2021; Engel and Herpolsheimer 2021; Patterson and Balogun 2021; Tieku 2021). Additionally, health forms an important part of the Union's *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want* (AU Assembly 2013; see AU Commission 2015), as well as several decisions and declarations made by African leaders over the years.

The African Union has displayed a commitment to recognising and promoting the importance of health to a comprehensive development agenda that takes into consideration the livelihood and capacity of people as well as to economic growth. The Health and Humanitarian Affairs Division and the Health Systems, Disease and Nutrition Division, both within the Department of Social Affairs of the AU Commission (AUC), contribute to a holistic regional health agenda that builds on policy and implementation concerning health-related matters. The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) is a specialised technical institution of the AU responsible for promoting effective disease prevention, detection, and control as well as effective responses to outbreaks. Additionally, the African Medicines Agency (AMA) is a newly established regional agency responsible for promoting the beneficial and sustainable production and supply of medicines across the continent (AU Assembly 2019a; see *Yearbook on the African Union 2020*, 108).

The above-mentioned institutional framework provides a broad overview of the regional health agenda devised and implemented under the auspices of the AU to cover various aspects of health, including, inter alia, strengthening

health systems, access to medicines, disease prevention and control, and nutrition programmes.

2 2021 Africa Health Facts and Figures

In 2019, the Africa region had the lowest life expectancy among WHO regions, at 64.5 years, and communicable diseases accounted for 52 per cent of all deaths in the region (WHO 2019, 19). Of the adult population in Africa, 7.5 per cent were recorded as being infected with hepatitis B. The *Report on the Performance of Health Systems* (2020) in the WHO Africa Region states that health systems in the region perform at a rate of 52.9 per cent, meaning that 'the health systems in the WHO African Region are performing at an average of 52.9% of what they can feasibly do' (WHO Africa 2020, 2). In 2019, the under-five mortality rate in Africa was 74 out of 1,000 births, the highest in the world, and almost twice the global average of 38; and neo-natal mortality rate in the region was also the highest in the world, 27 out of 1,000 (ibid.).

The Africa region ranks poorly in relation to the performance of other regions and the global average in malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV/Aids incidence and mortality rates. Between 2019 and 2020, there was more than an increase of 5 per cent in global malaria incidence, and most of that increase was centred in the Africa region, which accounted for about 25 per cent of malaria cases that year. The increase in cases has been attributed to disruptions in service delivery and health infrastructure during the Covid-19 pandemic (WHO 2021a, xv). Malaria deaths also increased from 534,000 in 2019 to 602,000 in 2020. On the bright side, of the 1.7 billion malaria cases and 10.6 million malaria deaths averted globally, 82 per cent and 95 per cent respectively were from the Africa region, and of the $3.3 billion invested in malaria in 2020, 79 per cent went to the WHO Africa Region (ibid., XVII, XIX). Additionally, of the 191 million Artemisinin-based combination therapies (ACTs) distributed to the public sector by national malaria programmes in 2020, 95 per cent were distributed to the public sector in sub-Saharan Africa (ibid.).

In 2020, there was a flat trend in tuberculosis deaths in Africa, compared to 2019 when the region accounted for 25 per cent of recorded cases (WHO 2019, 23), despite an increase in most other WHO regions as well as a record of faster decline in incidence of tuberculosis in the region. Also in 2020, the Africa region was declared polio-free (ibid., 27). However, the highest proportion in the world of coinfections of HIV and tuberculosis were recorded in countries in the Africa region (WHO 2021b, 9). According to the 2021 *UNAIDS Global AIDS Update*, in 2020, 67 per cent of the global population living with

HIV lived in sub-Saharan Africa (UNAIDS 2021, 12). Also in 2020, adolescent girls, who make up 10 per cent of the population in sub-Saharan Africa, accounted for 25 per cent of HIV infections (ibid., 25). In 2021, only 57 per cent of women in sub-Saharan Africa had access to modern family planning and contraceptive methods, the lowest level of access in the world.

African states have adopted a health systems approach to addressing health challenges in the region, noting the importance of resilient health systems to achieving universal health care, developing the capacity to provide essential services, and fostering health security across populations (WHO Africa 2020, 1). While there has been some progress towards achieving the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other milestones over the past several years, the Covid-19 pandemic placed a considerable strain on health systems globally, particularly in the already challenged health systems in the Africa region. Given these acknowledged obstacles, the AU has prioritised health as an important development area and a key aspect of the regional development agenda.

For decades, the AU – and its precursor, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU, 1963–2002) – has introduced health policies and programmes to tackle general and specific health challenges. These have formed part of the comprehensive development agenda of the organisation through its various policies, programmes, and projects. The AU is committed to supporting member states in developing constructive health systems that will enhance the health and living standards of citizens and promote economic development across the region (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2020*, 108).

In addition to the institutional and regulatory challenges and critical capacity deficits that impact health indices and the livelihood of citizens in the Africa region, the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted the performance of health agencies and institutions in achieving the SDGs and other health-related goals. Nevertheless, as indicated in the existing data, there have been some wins, for example the recorded eradication of polio in the region and improvement in access to sexual and reproductive health services (see, for instance, AUDA–NEPAD 2022). In its continued response to the Covid-19 pandemic and its commitment to pursuing the attainment of the highest standard of health for the region's population, the African Union continues to engage with its members and partners to develop robust programs and interventions.

3 Health Sector Developments and Interventions

As noted above, the AU has, since its inception, prioritised health as an important aspect of development, as was done by the OAU before it. Consequently,

the organisation has developed legal, policy, and institutional mechanisms that address different aspects of health governance, including, inter alia, humanitarian intervention, health financing, and disease surveillance, as well as the strengthening of health systems. Health is also included as an important aspect of the regional development agenda, as recognised in the 2000 *Constitutive Act of the African Union* (OAU 2000) and in several decisions and resolutions on health and on development, including Agenda 2063. Below, some key health sector developments, interventions, and performance indicators are discussed.

3.1 *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*

In 2021, the African Union continued its efforts to contain the spread of the Covid-19 virus through comprehensive campaigns, an impressive vaccine rollout, and a detailed data collection and sharing mechanism, among other things. Nevertheless, the pandemic had severe effects on health infrastructure and services and on social and economic conditions in the region (AUDA–NEPAD 2022, 64). In the 2022 assessment of the implementation of Agenda 2063, comprising a data review of the 7 aspirations and 20 goals that make up the regional development agenda, the regional performance was recorded for the various health-related points as follows.

Goal 1: A High Standard of Living, Quality of Life and Well-Being. The regional performance on this goal was recorded as 31 per cent, down from 56 per cent in 2019. For that period, prevalence of undernourishment was at 24 per cent, way below the anticipated target of 9 per cent; population with access to clean drinking water was 64 per cent, below the anticipated target of 97 per cent. The regional performance in several priority areas, including hunger, was poor, owing largely to the Covid-19 pandemic (ibid., 15).

Goal 3: Healthy and Well-Nourished Citizens. The regional performance on the achievement of this goal was recorded as 77 per cent, revealing significant progress towards protecting the health and nutrition of African citizens. Despite an increase in malaria incidence and neo-natal mortality rate of 24.4, compared to the target of 15.5 out of 1,000 deaths, increased investment in health saw improved performance in overall health services and infrastructure (ibid., 20).

Goal 17: Full Gender Equality in all Spheres of Life. As part of its efforts to ensure that women and girls, in particular, are not discriminated against on the basis of their gender and to ensure that their health needs are not undermined, this goal seeks, inter alia, to tackle sexual and physical violence against women and girls – an important health issue. The report recorded a decline in the occurrence of physical violence from 41.6 per cent in 2013 to 21.2 per cent

in 2021 and a decline in the percentage of the female population aged 15–49 years subject to female circumcision or cutting from 38 to 27 per cent during the same period (ibid., 43).

In addition to the above health-related goals and performances, the African Union also supported several initiatives impacting health in 2021. The Partnerships for African Vaccine Manufacturing (PAVM) was introduced in April 2021 to accelerate Covid-19 vaccine production in Africa while strengthening the ongoing work of the *Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan for Africa* (PMPA) and supporting the goals of the AMA (ibid., 65). The African Union Smart Safety Surveillance (AU–3S) programme, initiated in 2020, was one of several surveillance and testing mechanisms introduced to aid monitoring and observation of Covid-19 trends and general disease surveillance in the region. The AU also continued to work with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) like the East African Community (EAC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to strengthen their coordinated responses, in addition to guiding pilot programmes for vaccination production and distribution as well as testing and surveillance in member states (ibid., 66).

3.2 *Health Financing*

Resource allocation is an important aspect of achieving health goals, hence the continued commitment to meeting the endeavours of African governments in the 2000 *Abuja Declaration* to allocate up to 15 per cent of their national budgets to health expenditures. In 2019, the *African Leaders Meeting* (*ALM*)–*Investing in Health Declaration* was endorsed by the AU Assembly (see *Yearbook of the African Union 2020*, 108), following the recommendations of the ALM-Investing in Health event that brought together African leaders, private sector actors, and global development institutions to work alongside the AU Assembly, to discuss the critical issue of health financing (AU Assembly 2019b). Rwandan president Paul Kagame was appointed as the 'Leader of Domestic Health Financing', to work closely with the AUC Health and Humanitarian Affairs Division to improve domestic health financing in Africa (AU Assembly 2020).

In its pursuit of improving domestic health financing, the technical working group set up under the implementation of the ALM-Investing in Health Declaration proposed the establishment of several tools and programmes, such as regional health financing hubs, to be set up within the RECs; the ALM tracker, to track domestic health financing trends; private engagement in the health sector; and the *ALM Accountability Framework* to present 'the roles and responsibilities of different ALM Declaration stakeholders' (ibid., 5). These

anchor programmes are expected to boost and monitor domestic health financing as a priority for improved and sustainable health infrastructure and services across the continent.

The ALM-Investing in Health initiative is expected to support existing programmes, such as the *African Scorecard on Domestic Financing for Health*, a tool that combines indicators linked to various databases with relevant datasets to help AU member states plan and track their health expenditures.[1] Concerns about health financing lie at the core of Africa's health systems challenges, with limited capacity to drive the infrastructure and services needed to effectively improve healthcare and access in member states and across the region. Therefore, health financing remained a core focus in 2021 for the AU and its partners, for instance the African Development Bank (AfDB), which introduced schemes such as the $10-billion Covid-19 Response Facility, announced in April 2020.[2] The comprehensive facility was established to provide funding to governments and the private sector 'to maintain vital health services, expand social protection, and protect jobs and businesses' (AUDA–NEPAD 2022, 65).

3.3 *Research and Innovation*

The Africa Health Strategy (2016–2030) provides a broad strategic and programmatic framework for the regional health agenda. It covers a broad range of issues, including leadership and good governance, multi-country collaboration, disease surveillance, and health research and innovation, among others (see *Yearbook of the African Union 2020,* 108). To facilitate the implementation of the strategy and to promote scientific development, innovation, and research for health objectives, the AU Specialised Technical Committee on Health, Population and Drug Control (STC–HPDC) mandated the African Union Development Agency (AUDA)–New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to develop, in collaboration with partners and stakeholders, a research and innovation strategy to facilitate the implementation of the overall strategy. This was a response to calls from the AU Assembly for the AU to address the science, research, and innovation needs of the continent, in collaboration with member states and the RECs (AU Assembly 2015a, 2015b).

In May 2019, the *Health Research and Innovation Strategy for Africa* (HRISA) was adopted in collaboration with the AUC and other stakeholders, including AU member states and the RECs. In the strategy, several gaps were identified as impeding the growth of research and innovation in the region's health sector,

1 See 'African Scorecard on Domestic Financing for Health Information Page', ULR: <https://scorecard.africa/info#:~:text=The%20Africa%20Scorecard%20on%20Domestic,to%20the%20source%20data%20websites> (accessed: 30 June 2022).

2 *African Development Bank Newsletter* [Abidjan], 8 April 2020.

including limited financing, poor private sector participation, limited human capacity on the continent, weak health research systems, and limited South-South collaboration and coordination (AUDA–NEPAD 2019, 13–14). Existing opportunities that would aid in bridging these gaps were also specified, including access to mobile technology, integration of information and communications technology in healthcare manufacturing, global interest in Africa's health systems, improved infrastructure investment, and a favourable demographic dividend, among others (ibid., 14). Consequently, the strategy set the following objectives to guide its intervention:

i. To strengthen capacity for sustained, integrated, coordinated and collaborative research, innovation and translation [sic!] for health
ii. To develop and implement sustainable mechanisms for investment and financing in research and innovation for health
iii. To generate new knowledge aligned to health goals and targets and advocate for its translation into products, services, policies and practices to improve health
iv. To strengthen data-sharing platforms and systems to optimise health delivery
v. To advocate for the adoption of emerging technologies and supporting platforms to improve health
vi. To strengthen and harmonise regulatory, ethics and intellectual property systems in order to maximise the benefits from African-led research and innovation for Africa and the global community (ibid., 16).

Certain fundamental principles underpin the strategy, including health as a human right, sound decision-making in public health policy, country ownership, the need for multi-sectoral approaches, and research and innovation as critical components for building resilient health systems, among others (ibid., 16). The following priority interventions were specified:

i. Developing human capacity for sustained health research and innovation
ii. Developing a conducive environment for research and innovation
iii. Promoting sustained investments and financing mechanisms in research, development and innovation for health
iv. Supporting the generation of new knowledge and its translation into products, services, policies and practice to improve health
v. Generating, warehousing, sharing, and utilising data to inform and guide decision making in terms of health delivery
vi. Support the development and adoption of emerging and existing technologies to improve health
vii. Developing and strengthening regulatory systems, intellectual property and ethics that leverage the benefits of health research (ibid., 6–7).

3.4 *Vaccine Access and Production*

Following the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and the ensuing vaccine race,[3] the AU has ensured that the continent has not been left behind (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2000*, 120–122). In addition to efforts to improve vaccine access and awareness,[4] regional programmes have also been introduced to pursue and promote vaccine availability and production on the continent, including the African Medical Supplies Platform (AMSP), African Vaccines Acquisition Trust (AVAT), introduced by the African Vaccine Acquisition Task Team (AVATT), and African No Fault Compensation Scheme Trust (ANFCST). The Africa CDC has also been at the fore of implementing important projects, such as the African Medicines Supply Platform (AMSP). These represent the large-scale regional endeavours to transform the narrative and experience of vaccine access, depicted by the poor vaccination rate in Africa of 5 per cent, compared to the global rate of 50 per cent.

In November 2020, the AU Assembly established AVATT to lead the regional vaccine acquisition strategy. AVAT was set up by AVATT as a special purpose vehicle to facilitate the implementation of Africa's Covid-19 vaccination strategy, based on a whole-of-Africa approach that aims to leverage economies of scale for the procurement of vaccines and achieve vaccination status for at least 70 per cent of the African population. The whole-of-Africa approach is meant to consolidate vaccine acquisition and ensure that all African countries have access to a collective pool rather than piecemeal vaccine acquisition by member states. While this coordinated approach has been in operation, there have also been bilateral vaccine donations and acquisitions outside AVAT. Consequently, AVAT, together with the Africa CDC and the Covid-19 Global Vaccine Access (COVAX) initiative, issued a *Joint Statement on Dose Donations of Covid-19 Vaccines to African Countries* on 29 November 2021, acknowledging that AVAT and COVAX had facilitated the donation of more than 90 million vaccine doses to Africa. This amount did not include the millions of more of dose donations that were made through

3 *GAVI* [Geneva], 12 January 2022. URL: <https://www.gavi.org/vaccineswork/covid-19-vaccine-race> (accessed: 30 June 2022).

4 The *Continental COVID-19 Vaccine Development and Access Strategy* was launched in 2020 to promote vaccine access across the continent. See the preamble to the communiqué of the Virtual Summit on Expanding Africa's Vaccine Manufacturing for Health Security (April 2021). See *Africa CDC News* [Addis Ababa], 16 April 2021. URL: <https://africacdc.org/news-item/african-union-and-africa-cdc-launches-partnerships-for-african-vaccine-manufacturing-pavm-framework-to-achieve-it-and-signs-2-mous/> (accessed: 30 June 2022).

bilateral channels.[5] However, the statement noted the effectiveness of the donations had been undermined by the donation method, which was sometimes ad hoc and with short notice, leaving little room for donors to plan for distribution through vaccine campaigns, given the short shelf life of the vaccines. Therefore, the statement called for adherence to the following standards for vaccine dose donations: *quantity and predictability* (ensuring delivery of large quantities in a predictable manner); *earmarking* (granting unearmarked donations to support storage capacities and facilitate equitable distribution); *shelf life* (ensuring donations with a shelf life of not less than ten days, except in specified instances); *early notice* (providing at least a four-week notice to recipients before delivery in-country); *response times* (facilitating rapid response by all stakeholders of essential information regarding any donation or offer); and *ancillaries* (including all vaccination ancillaries, such as vaccination accessories, freight costs, and other supplementary items that can increase costs and delays).

Another key continental initiative with respect to vaccine access and production is the *Partnership for African Vaccine Manufacturing* (PAVM), launched in April 2021 during a virtual summit on 'Expanding Africa's Vaccine Manufacturing for Health Security'.[6] The PAVM was adopted by the AU Executive Council as the main partnership mechanism for fostering regional vaccine manufacturing, under a coordinated strategy and framework of action that would provide the required support to all stakeholders, including AU member states, financiers, and manufacturers, with a goal to increase the continent's manufacturing proportion from 1 to 40 per cent by 2040 (AU Council 2021a). To this end, the mandates of the PAVM are

a. Steward a continental strategy that maintains scale and cost-competitiveness of local manufacturing and promotes equity and security for all
b. Support partnerships to create a conducive business environment that will encourage the emergence of a thriving manufacturing base
c. Play intermediation and partner role between Member States and the global community of supporters on an as-needed basis
d. Communicate updates and serve as the central source of information for Africa vaccine manufacturing (ibid.).

5 Africa CDC and COVAX 2021. 'Joint Statement on Dose Donations of COVID-19 Vaccines to African Countries', 29 November. URL: <https://africacdc.org/news-item/joint-statement-on-dose-donations-of-covid-19-vaccines-to-african-countries/> (accessed: 30 June 2021).

6 See footnote 4.

Underlying the PAVM mandate is the need for regional regulatory support and coordination, which will allow member states to cooperate effectively for their individual and collective benefits. Therefore, the AMA has been recognised as a fundamental institutional base for the advancement of the PAVM. The *AMA Treaty* was adopted by the AU Assembly in February 2019 and entered into force on 5 November 2019, upon ratification and deposit of instruments by 17 member states.[7] The AMA is expected to 'enhance capacity of State Parties and AU recognised Regional Economic Communities (RECS) to regulate medical products in order to improve access to quality, safe and efficacious medical products on the continent'.[8]

3.5 *Coordination and Partnerships*

Given the multi-sectoral approach to development and integration that is embodied by the African Union, health as an important theme is not undertaken in a vacuum but involves coordination among units and institutions of the AU and partnerships with external organisations whose plans fit the interest areas of the AU. In 2021, the AU continued to pursue the most effective coordination mechanisms and partnerships to coalesce the work of stakeholders in their commitment to tackle the health needs of the region.

Within the AU institutional framework, there are several divisions, agencies, and programmes with health-related objectives and concerns, thereby causing overlapping interests and activities. Consequently, there have been efforts to ensure that the various endeavours are coordinated to form a comprehensive regional health plan for the benefit of all member states and their citizens. Within the AU, the department responsible for health-related matters is the AUC Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development, which houses the Health and Humanitarian Affairs Division and the Health Systems, Disease and Nutrition Division. In addition to the department, the Africa CDC is a specialised technical institution of the AU responsible for disease control and surveillance, and several other AU programmes and agencies have been established to address health matters or health-related matters across the region. Consequently, there are common areas of interest and intervention, requiring coordination – and sometimes cooperation – among institutions, agencies, and programmes with common interests.

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7 *AU Press Release* [Addis Ababa], 9 November 2021. By November 2019, the following 17 states had ratified the treaty: Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Mauritius, Namibia, Niger, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, and Zimbabwe.

8 See footnote 7.

Regarding coordination, the AU Executive Council, in its October 2021 *Decision on the Report of the AU Commission on the Operationalization of the AU CDC*, stressed the need for 'coordination between Africa CDC, Africa Medicines Agency (AMA) and the Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development (HHS)' (AU Council 2021a, §7). The PAVM is also expected to operate in coordination with the AMA, the AU's *Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan for Africa* (PMPA), and related forums with the objective of fostering pharmaceutical manufacturing and vaccine access and production in Africa.[9] The African Vaccine Manufacturing Summit (April 2021) was co-convened by the Africa CDC, the AMA, the AUDA–NEPAD, and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

In addition to matters of internal coordination, there are also important partnerships that have been introduced with external collaborators to foster health-related interventions. The AfDB's 2020 Covid-19 response investment for the AU, member states, and businesses impacted by the pandemic is also a health-related partnership.[10] And the AfCFTA has been a partner in several aspects of regional health response and planning. For example, during a meeting of stakeholders of the African vaccine manufacturing initiative, the role was acknowledged of the Agreement Establishing the AfCFTA, and in particular the Intellectual Property Rights Protocol of the AfCFTA, in the market taking shape 'for Covid-19 vaccines, development of value chains in pharmaceutical products, private sector engagement and removing trade policy-related barriers with measures, including harmonizing standards'.[11] Consequently, it was agreed that collaboration with the AfCFTA was necessary to facilitate Covid-19 vaccine and other pharmaceuticals manufacturing and intra-African trade for such products.

In 2021, the European Union initiated a €1 billion partnership with the AU to promote medicine and vaccine access and manufacturing in Africa.[12] Noting that Africa currently imports 99 per cent of its vaccines and 94 per cent of its medicines, the EU initiative is meant to

9 See footnote 4.

10 See footnote 2.

11 *Africa CDC News* [Addis Ababa], 7 December 2021. URL: <https://africacdc.org/news-item/communique-on-progress-made-on-vaccine-manufacturing-in-africa-kigali-rwanda-06-07-december-2021/> (accessed: 30 June 2022).

12 *European Commission News* [Brussels], 21 May 2021. URL: <https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/news/eu1-billion-team-europe-initiative-manufacturing-and-access-vaccines-medicines-and-health_en> (accessed: 30 June 2022).

> support Africa with over €1 billion and expertise to help develop its own pharmaceutical, biotech and medtech industries, and ease equitable access to quality and safe products and technologies. The Initiative will also help develop a number of regional manufacturing hubs across the continent, so that the whole of Africa can benefit.[13]

These regional manufacturing hubs are meant to be developed in collaboration with the AU and Africa CDC through technology transfer and support for the AMA from the European Medicines Agency.[14]

AVATT partnered with the World Bank to secure the delivery of 400 million vaccines to African countries, to enable the purchasing and distribution of vaccines by governments across the region. The principal partners of AVATT, in seeking to acquire Covid-19 vaccines for Africa, are the AU, the Africa Export–Import Bank (Afreximbank), Africa CDC, and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

These coordinative frameworks and projects within the AU institutional structure as well as the partnerships with non-AU institutions have helped to harmonise related pursuits so as to properly manage resources and avoid duplicating efforts. As seen in the case of vaccine donations, poor coordination can hamper otherwise beneficial initiatives and create a burden for stakeholders.

3.6 *2022: The Year of Nutrition*

In October 2021, based on a proposal by the government of Côte d'Ivoire, the AU Executive Council adopted a concept note titled 'Build Momentum for the African Union 2022 Theme: "Building Resilience in Nutrition and Food Security on the African Continent: Strengthen Agriculture, Accelerate the Human Capital, Social and Economic Development"' (AU Council 2021b). Noting the deleterious effects of malnutrition and undernutrition on health morbidity and mortality in African countries and on socioeconomic development, the concept note acknowledges that given the multifaceted nature of nutrition, a multi-sectoral approach is necessary for truly understanding and tackling nutrition challenges. It also recognised the importance of nutrition as a critical issue area, in light of the growing global activities on nutrition and the need to take stock of related AU programmes and initiatives, such as the *African Nutrition Strategy* (2015–2025) and the *Detailed Programme for the Development of African Agriculture* (2015–2025). The AUC was requested to '(a) develop and implement an advocacy strategy in support of the activities of the AU theme of the year and

13 See footnote 12.

14 See footnote 12.

the AU Nutrition Champion [i.e., King Letsie III of Lesotho]; (b) mobilize key partners in the nutrition sector in support of the implementation of the theme on Nutrition and food security' (ibid., §9).

The following strategies underscore the nutrition focus of the AU, with the objective of improving human capital for comprehensive health and economic development:

– building resilience
– multisectoral and interdisciplinary approach
– link between agriculture and nutrition
– improving nutrition requires systemic change
– investments in nutrition
– commitments to action (African Union 2022).

The following priority areas were also designated as guiding elements for the 2022 theme:

– data management and information systems, knowledge generation and dissemination, to inform decision making
– advocacy for increased commitment and nutrition investment
– partnerships and mutual accountability platforms for harmonised action and transparency
– institutional capacity enhancement and enabling environment for intensified action and delivery of results and impact (ibid.).

The overall objective is to improve commitment and investment in nutrition at the national, subregional, regional, and continental levels and to foster implementation of nutrition-related programmes to help address the continent's lingering nutrition challenges. This would involve tracking progress in nutrition-related initiatives, enhancing cooperation with partners, and facilitating dialogue and knowledge-sharing among stakeholders (ibid.).

The 2022 theme can be expected to contribute to the fulfilment of the region's health agenda, address food security challenges by pursuing agricultural development and expansion, and promote economic development across the continent.

4 An Analysis of the AU's Health Performance and Interventions

In 2021, the African Union's health agenda was widespread and multifaceted, but the Covid-19 pandemic remained a priority issue. As the AUC and other regional institutions developed a coordinated response, regional plans remained anchored to the context and goals of broader global and regional agendas, such as the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063. The

AU tracked its progress in achieving the set global and regional goals while addressing subsisting challenges. The available information reveals that there has been progress in some areas and setbacks in others, but overall, the AU has worked with its partners to keep building and supporting the institutional frameworks to pursue well-intentioned goals and strategies.

While regional activities continued to focus on addressing critical endemic diseases, there was a key focus on research and innovation as well as developing regional capacities to devise scientific and technological solutions to health challenges, especially in pharmaceutical production. Vaccine acquisition was essential to improving access, but that demand also fuelled the emphasis on facilitating local (regional) manufacturing to meet the vaccine requirements of the region's populations. Access to Covid-19 vaccines has been a major priority, but such innovations also entail developments that could be used in other target areas, including malaria.

Given the multifaceted nature of health interventions, the adoption of coordination among AU institutions and partnerships with non-AU institutions in various areas from vaccine distribution to vaccine manufacturing and the pandemic response, among others, depict a collaborative health agenda that encourages communication, cooperation, and coordination in addressing health challenges and promoting development. The AU incorporates a system that undertakes regional initiatives in a diffused way for the benefit of national and subregional stakeholders, whereby collaboration ensures that stakeholders are part of regional endeavours that will trickle down to the target beneficiaries.

Finally, the AU theme for 2022 was introduced in 2021 with the aim of prioritising nutrition interventions in member states, with the support of regional and global partners. The intrinsic connection between health and nutrition will allow the AUC to address nutrition-related health challenges in a multifaceted way that will bring diverse stakeholders to the table and contribute to the region's broader development agenda.

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CHAPTER 8

Infrastructure

Tim Zajontz

1 Background

Infrastructure has experienced a remarkable political renaissance in development planning at national, regional, and continental scales in Africa over the past two decades (see Wethal 2019; Zajontz and Taylor 2021). Expanding and upgrading the continent's road networks, railways, ports, power plants, energy grids, waterways, fibre cables, etc. is now commonly accepted as a prerequisite for advancing Africa's economic integration and industrialisation. For the African Union (AU), infrastructure has therefore steadily crystallised into a distinct policy field. In its *Agenda 2063*, the AU has pledged to work towards 'world class, integrative infrastructure that criss-crosses the continent' by 2063 (African Union 2015, §20). The agenda contains several 'flagship' projects in the infrastructure sector, including the African Integrated High-Speed Railway Network, an integrated e-economy, and the establishment of a Single African Air-Transport Market (SAATM). For other key integration projects, infrastructure development is frequently described as the main enabler. According to the AU's high representative for infrastructure development in Africa, Raila Odinga, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) can 'only be realized through sound infrastructure in transport and energy sectors'.[1] Generally, expectations are widespread and high that the improvement of economic infrastructure will boost Africa's intra- and interregional trade, spur economic growth, and facilitate the continent's integration into the global economy.

The political renaissance of 'big' infrastructure in Africa has received further impetus following the global financial crisis of 2007–2008 and the emergence of a global regime of 'infrastructure-led development' (Schindler and Kanai 2021), which is geared towards integrating hitherto less connected regions and so-called frontier economies into the global economy by means of large-scale networked infrastructure. Competing global connectivity initiatives, such as China's *Belt and Road Initiative* (BRI), the European Union's *Global Gateway*

1 *AU News Release* [Addis Ababa], 6 July 2021.

initiative, and the US-led *Build Back Better World* (B3W), have actively courted African governments and regional organisations for projects in the transport, energy, information and communications technology (ICT), water, and other sectors. Questions of the extent to which such initiatives correspond with the goals of African integration and the structural transformation of African economies have become salient in recent years. In this highly dynamic global infrastructure landscape, the AU has graduated into an increasingly important supranational broker and is faced with the challenging task to mediate various interests across a number of scales (see also Ulf Engel, this Yearbook, chapter 11).

Aligning continental and regional infrastructure projects with national development priorities has remained a key challenge for the AU and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) (see Lisinge and van Dijk 2022). Moreover, public funds and private investments are deemed insufficient to close the continent's often invoked 'infrastructure financing gap', which the African Development Bank (AfDB) quantifies at $68–108 billion per annum (AfDB 2018, 63). The progress of the AU's flagship infrastructure projects has been at best mixed, as a recent implementation report on the Agenda 2063 reveals (AUDA–NEPAD 2022, 31–33). The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated some of these challenges while simultaneously having added urgency to a concerted pan-African approach towards infrastructure development. As the AU commissioner for infrastructure and energy, Dr Amani Abou-Zeid, underlined:

> The COVID-19 pandemic also accelerated digitalisation, exposed the gaps in energy in rural areas and the gender divide, and highlighted the need to develop infrastructure that is smart, climate resilient, inclusive and sustainable.[2]

Infrastructure has developed into an increasingly important matter not only of the AU's internal politics but also of the AU's external relations. In 2021, several AU institutions and key individuals continued to shape the continent's infrastructure agenda (see also *Yearbook on the African Union 2000*, 129–131).

2 Decision-Making and Implementation

The appointment of the new African Union Commission (AUC) during the 34th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (virtual, 6–7 February 2021) has

2 *Virtual PIDA Information Centre* [Addis Ababa], 7 February 2021.

brought both leadership continuity as well as further prioritisation of infrastructure. In his bid for re-election, AUC Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat has accentuated the importance of Africa's infrastructure for his second term. He called the AU's infrastructure development agenda one of the 'key integration projects' and stated that

> [t]he issue of infrastructural development is particularly important to me. I would do everything possible to ensure that this term effectively witnesses the launch of one of our major regional infrastructure projects. … We must choose these regional projects according to the relevance, feasibility and our resource mobilisation capacities. The Department of Infrastructure and the Development Agency would be called upon to serve this exciting ambition. In relation to this infrastructure issue, I will call upon the innovation and dynamism of our private sector, whose role in the Pan-Africanist project must be strengthened. (AUC Chairperson 2021)

The reappointment of Abou-Zeid as the commissioner for infrastructure and energy is a clear vote of confidence and will ensure continuity within the AUC in the fields of infrastructure and energy. It can be presumed that her 30 years of professional experience in international organisations, inter alia at the AfDB and the *United Nations Development Programme* (UNDP), have helped her to liaise with key stakeholders in the sector. During the term of the first Faki AUC, Abou-Zeid's department has been very proactive in driving continental infrastructure initiatives, and the commissioner herself has been vocal about issues such as gender sensitivity and climate resilience in the infrastructure sector (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2020*, 136f.).

Within the *Institutional Architecture for Infrastructure Development in Africa*, which was institutionalised in 2012, the AUC's Department of Infrastructure and Energy oversees infrastructure policies and prepares decision-making on infrastructure-related matters for the Council for Infrastructure Development (CID). It is advised by the Infrastructure Advisory Group, which convenes meetings with infrastructure experts and high-level officials from relevant bodies at least biannually. The CID for its part is composed of top officials from the AUC, the RECs, the AfDB, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and provides programmatic guidelines for the sector, arbitrates and approves programmes and harmonisation measures in the sector, and advises the specialised technical committees (STCs) and the AU Executive Council, which in turn is answerable to the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government (AU Commission 2017). Together with AUDA–NEPAD (an integration of

the African Union Development Agency and the *New Partnership for Africa's Development*), which is the AU's lead implementing agency in the infrastructure sector, the AUC's Department of Infrastructure and Energy has successfully managed the transition from the first to the second priority action plan of the AU *Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa* (PIDA), which has entered a second 'life cycle' in 2021, as will be discussed further below.

Between 28 and 30 June 2021, the 3rd Ordinary Session of the STC on Transport, Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructures, and Energy (STC–TTIIE) convened virtually. The STC–TTIIE brings together the ministers of transport and/or infrastructure as well as other key stakeholders from the member states, the RECs, and relevant continental institutions and agencies. It is one of two STCs that are commonly concerned with infrastructure-related decision-making, the other one being the STC on Communication and Information Communications Technology (STC–ICT). The STCs receive advice from the CID and report to the AU Executive Council, which in turn is answerable to the AU Assembly (AU Commission 2017).

The STC–TTIIE had last convened for an ordinary session in Cairo, Egypt, in April 2019 – hence before the onset of the pandemic. The third ordinary session was therefore fittingly themed 'The Role of Infrastructure and Energy in the Post COVID-19 AFRICA: Towards Sustainable Economic Recovery, Resilience, Jobs, Industrialization and Trade'. Lesotho took over the rotating chair of the STC–TTIIE from Egypt. Addressing representatives from member states, the RECs, and specialised agencies, the AU commissioner for infrastructure and energy, Abou-Zeid, emphasised the need to intensify efforts in the infrastructure realm amidst challenges arising from the pandemic:

> Investments in infrastructure will enhance the continent's resilience, sustainability, and preparedness to future crises while stimulating recovery. … The post COVID-19 era requires more agile decision-making and coordination of efforts by all stakeholders. We must be able to make use of the challenges to our own benefit shifting to digitalised and decarbonised pathways with value addition and new business models at the centre for more inclusive, resilient and sustainable societies.[3]

Post-pandemic infrastructure finance was high up on the agenda at the STC–TTIIE meeting. The ministerial session validated the *Financing Strategy* for the PIDA *Priority Action Plan 2* (PIDA PAP 2). The ordinary session also extended

3 *AU Press Release* [Addis Ababa], 6 July 2021.

the mandate of the PIDA Task Force, which it had set up in Cairo in 2019 to steer preparations for PIDA PAP 2.[4] Moreover, the ministerial session of the STC–TTIIE approved the *Road Safety Action Plan for the Decade 2021–2030*. The African continent trails behind other regions in global road safety statistics, with an estimated road traffic fatality rate at 26.6 per 100,000 inhabitants, compared to 17.0 per 100,000 in Southeast Asia and 9.3 per 100,000 in Europe. The plan was finalised at a workshop organised by the AUC and UNECA in May 2021. It foresees various measures to halve traffic fatalities by 2030, including the tightening and continental harmonisation of legal instruments, capacity-building, road safety audits, and human and financial resource mobilisation (UNECA 2021). In December 2021, Commissioner Abou-Zeid participated in a United Nations high-level meeting in New York in preparation for the General Assembly on Road Safety, to be held in July 2022.

The 3rd Ordinary Session of the STC–TTIIE also deliberated on the dispute settlement mechanism for the SAATM. The SAATM, another flagship project of Agenda 2063, is aimed at establishing a continent-wide, integrated market for air transportation by removing bureaucratic and legal hurdles and streamlining consumer protection, competition, and safety regulations under the auspices of an executing agency, the African Civil Aviation Commission. By 2021, 35 member states, representing 89 per cent of intra-African air traffic, had signed a solemn declaration to operationalise the SAATM (AU Commission 2021a, 15–16). The ministerial meeting at the STC–TTIIE session furthermore revised the so-called Windhoek targets on aviation security and facilitation, a set of rules and targets initially adopted by the ministers in charge in 2016.

Throughout 2021, the AU's high representative for infrastructure development, who was appointed by AUC Chairperson Faki in 2018, used several public occasions to remind member states of their responsibility to live up to their commitments in the infrastructure sector. The fact that the position was given to a high-profile politician like Odinga, who is Kenya's former prime minister, must be seen as an attempt to add political weight to the supranational agency of the AUC in championing the AU's infrastructure agenda. At the regional infrastructure master plan roundtable organised by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in November 2021, Odinga said:

> Regional priority projects … need to be incorporated in national development plans and also get prioritised in regional economic communities' infrastructure master plans. … Infrastructure projects that cut

4 The Task Force is composed of representatives from the AUC, AUDA–NEPAD, the AfDB, and UNECA.

> across national boundaries and are regional can all be developed simultaneously, with each country committing to do its part while the RECs provide supporting and coordinating roles.[5]

Throughout the year, Odinga has also continued to advocate the 'establishment of an Africa fund for infrastructure to support important and necessary project preparation and development of a pipeline of bankable infrastructure projects'.[6] At a two-day high-level conference organised by the AUC and AUDA–NEPAD at the Expo 2020 (Dubai, United Arab Emirates, October 2021), the high representative pointed out that African pension funds managed approximately $350 billion in assets in sub-Saharan Africa, a pool of capital that the AU should tap into by offering bankable infrastructure projects through a dedicated African infrastructure fund.[7] Some key developments of AU infrastructure policies are discussed next.

3 Major Developments in 2021

In the infrastructure realm, the African Union initiated the year 2021 with its 6th PIDA Week, a four-day event that brought together relevant stakeholders to deliberate on developments in the infrastructure sector. Discussions at the PIDA Week traditionally also centre around the nexus between infrastructure and regional integration, transformative economic growth, and job creation. Due to the pandemic, events took on different virtual formats this time. The 6th PIDA Week was themed 'New decade, new realities, new priorities: Positioning PIDA and infrastructure development in Africa's continued growth and economic recovery'. The PIDA Week saw events on resource mobilisation, the African Single Electricity Market (AfSEM), cyber security, the African Integrated High-Speed Railway Network, the AfCFTA, PIDA PAP 2, gender-responsive infrastructure finance, and a session on the *PIDA Jobs Outlook* programme. The forum also hosted a session of the Continental Business Network, which focused on the role of the private sector in accelerating infrastructure development (AUDA–NEPAD 2021c).

Later in the year, alongside the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26, Glasgow, United Kingdom, 31 October–13 November 2021), the African Energy

5 *The East African* [Nairobi], 3 January 2022.

6 See also *Reuters* [New York NY], 19 February 2021. URL: <https://mobile.reuters.com/article/amp/idUSKBN2AJ0TG?__twitter_impression=true&s=03>.

7 *AU News Release* [Addis Ababa], 31 October 2021.

Commission, the AU's specialised agency in charge of developing, coordinating, and harmonising policies and legislation in the energy sector, hosted a virtual side event to deliberate on the question 'Opportunities and Challenges for African Energy Transition: What will it take for Africa to reach Net-zero Emissions?' Among other high-level participants, the meeting was addressed by the AU commissioner, Abou-Zeid; Algeria's minister of energy transition and renewable energy, Benatou Ziane; and Germany's then minister for economic cooperation and development, Dr Gerd Müller. Commissioner Abou-Zeid stressed that

> [t]he availability of abundant renewable energy resources on the continent such as hydropower, solar, wind, geothermal and bio-energy can transform Africa's energy sector to modern and sustainable energy through both grid and off-grid systems. These resources offer opportunities to accelerate clean energy access on the continent through energy transition and especially factoring natural gas as an energy transition fuel for power and clean cooking.[8]

Abou-Zeid called upon COP26 delegates to commit to measures to 'address the huge financing gap to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050'. Müller hailed the proposed *Africa–EU Green Energy Initiative* as a suitable instrument to facilitate bi-continental cooperation to fight climate change and advance decarbonisation.[9] Concrete progress in further institutionalising the integration of Africa's energy market was made earlier in the year.

3.1 *The Launch of the African Single Electricity Market*

The AfSEM was officially launched in a virtual event on 3 June 2021. The AfSEM was first conceived in 2015 in the AU programme on the harmonisation of regulatory frameworks for the electricity market in Africa, which was funded by the EU. The ultimate goal of the AfSEM is achieving 100 per cent access to electricity in the continent by 2030, in line with the AU Agenda 2063 and the UN Sustainable Development Goal number 7.[10] Currently, 600 million people on the continent still lack access to electricity. The AU is determined to reach the above goal by harmonising regulatory frameworks in the electricity sector, by aligning national and regional master plans, and by coordinating and successively integrating power generation, transmission, and distribution at the

8 *AU Press Release* [Addis Ababa], 9 November 2021.

9 Ibid.

10 *AU Press Release* [Addis Ababa], 3 June 2021.

continental level. Infrastructure development in the context of the AfSEM is aimed at linking all the power utilities within the five regional power pools,[11] interconnecting these pools, and ultimately connecting the continent's power infrastructure with Europe, the Middle East, and Asia (ADF 2021, 1–2).

The EU's Technical Assistance Facility has assisted the AUC's Department of Infrastructure and Energy in drafting the AfSEM policy paper and in proposing a roadmap and a governance structure in consultation with member states, the RECs, the five regional power pools, and continental energy institutions. These documents were adopted by the AU Assembly at the 34th Ordinary Session. The AfSEM is targeted to be fully operational by 2040. If fully implemented, it would be the world's largest single electricity market. At the virtual launch on 3 June 2021, the deputy chairperson of the AUC, Dr Monique Nsanzabaganwa, reminded the member states of their responsibility to live up to the ambitious plan, stating that

> [i]t is important that the AU Member States take ownership in the development and implementation of these continental initiatives. This is necessary to ensure access to reliable energy services, as well as providing the necessary policy and financial instruments for one continental electricity market, and one continental interconnection grid at all levels. (AUC Deputy Chairperson, 2021)

The AUC has since started to establish a permanent technical unit responsible for the implementation of the master plan to ensure smooth coordination as well as skills transfer between the AU and the five regional power pools and to align the plan with existing infrastructure projects, including PIDA energy projects. In line with a previously conducted baseline study, a first phase of the AfSEM was started (due to be achieved by 2023) by initiating the *Continental Master Plan* project with a 30-month implementation period and envisaging a project cost of $17.5 million. It is co-financed by the EU, the World Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, Agence Française de Développement, the International Renewable Energy Agency, and the International Atomic Energy Agency and has the following main objectives: to develop a continental transmission master plan, to update and align regional master plans, and to improve the

11 The five power pools are the Central African, East African, Southern African, and West African Power Pools as well as the Maghreb Electricity Committee. For their respective membership and a discussion of energy governance on the continent, see Medinilla et al. (2019).

capacity and efficiency of the executing agency, namely AUDA–NEPAD, and the regional power pools (ADF 2021).

3.2 *The Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa* (*PIDA*)

The year 2021 concluded a transition period within the AU's PIDA. On 7 February 2021, the 34th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly adopted PIDA PAP 2 (2021–2030), after it had been approved by ministers of infrastructure in a virtual meeting in January. The formal validation followed an evaluation process of PIDA PAP 1 (2012–2020) and stakeholder consultations with the RECs and member states on the priorities for the second action plan (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2020*, 133–136). In a meeting in December 2020, the STC–TTIIET finalised the preparations for PIDA PAP 2, including a priority list of 69 projects whose costs were projected to total $161 billion. The sectoral distribution of projects can be seen in Figure 8.1. The project list of PIDA PAP 2 is significantly shorter than the one of the previous action plan (PIDA PAP 1, which listed more than 400 individual projects). This is a clear reaction to overall low implementation rates of PIDA PAP 1 projects and the so-called infrastructure funding gap. Put differently, the stakeholders proposed a more realistic priority list for PIDA's second project period. This was expressed by the chief executive officer of AUDA–NEPAD, Dr Ibrahim Mayaki, at the 6th PIDA Week:

> The lessons which we can take forward into the implementation of PIDA-PAP II is that we need to have efficient use of scarce project preparation funds for early stage project preparation to take projects to bankability.[12]

However, the evaluation of PIDA PAP 1 revealed not only scarce infrastructure funds as a major obstacle for PIDA, but also the fact that 'not all of the selected PIDA projects were considered priorities at their country level, leaving them without the much-needed political support and hindering their progress' (AUDA–NEPAD 2020, 28). Furthermore, the evaluation process for PIDA PAP 1 has identified constraints in both the construction sector and administrative capacity, limitations arising from climate change and the environment, issues of political stability and political commitment, and concerns about gender inclusivity (ibid., 29). To improve the overall performance of PIDA projects, the AUC and AUDA–NEPAD have adopted an Integrated Corridor Approach (ICA)

12 *Virtual PIDA Information Centre* [Addis Ababa], 21 January 2021.

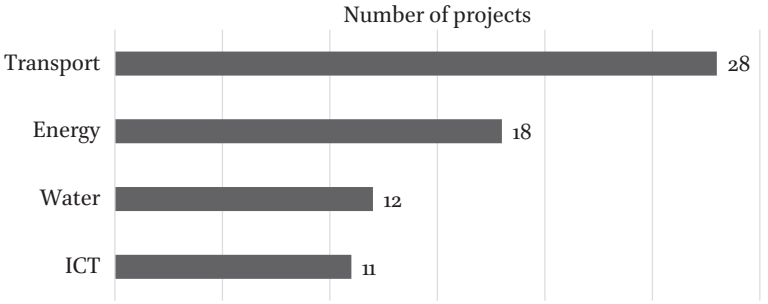

FIGURE 8.1 Sectoral distribution of PIDA PAP 2 projects
SOURCE: AUTHOR'S COMPILATION, BASED ON AUDA–NEPAD (2021B)

as the guiding concept for PIDA PAP 2. As AUDA–NEPAD chief executive officer Mayaki explained:

> Before the onset of PIDA, regional infrastructure projects were not prioritised. When we moved from PIDA Priority Action Plan 1 to PIDA Priority Action Plan 2, we took on a corridor approach, in order for us to think beyond country boundaries. The corridor approach is the main change in paradigm in our continent's infrastructure development. Africa is therefore ready for investment – it has gone through a process of consultation, prioritisation and development of tools with strong political will. (AU Commission 2021b)

The ICA incorporates Agenda 2063 principles and aims at improving the effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of PIDA projects. The ICA has two main characteristics: (1) it prioritises cross-sectoral infrastructure, whereby different infrastructure sectors, such as transport, energy, and ICT, are planned in a coordinated manner and linked to create synergies, and (2) it emphasises projects that maximise employment creation, gender sensitivity, climate friendliness, and urban-rural connectivity (AUDA–NEPAD 2020, 31; African Union 2020, 7–8). Furthermore, climate resilience and smart technologies became important selection criteria for PIDA PAP 2 projects.[13]

In May, AUDA–NEPAD convened a two-day virtual technical meeting to appraise the status of the 69 PIDA PAP 2 projects. The meeting was attended by representatives from the AUC, the AfDB, UNECA, the RECs, and the member states. The meeting discussed strategies on implementation, financing,

13 *Virtual PIDA Information Centre* [Addis Ababa], 21 January 2021.

and partnerships, and the RECs presented their respective projects in separate meetings. AUDA–NEPAD, as the lead implementing agency for PIDA, presented several instruments and mechanisms that are aimed at improving and accelerating the implementation of PIDA projects – namely the Job Creation Toolkit, the Service Delivery Mechanism, the PIDA Quality Label (PQL), the Quick Check Methodology, and the Continental Business Network.[14] The PQL, for instance, was introduced in 2021. The label is awarded to PIDA projects that excel at adhering to international best practices in infrastructure development. AUDA–NEPAD collaborates with the Switzerland-based not-for-profit organisation Sustainable Infrastructure Foundation, which administers a global information technology platform that acts as a unique delivery system for the world's best practices in infrastructure project preparation.[15]

The PIDA Financing Strategy, developed by the AfDB, was agreed to by the ministerial session of the STC–TTIIE in June. With the strategy, the AU hopes to address financial bottlenecks that severely compromised the progress of many PIDA projects during the first action plan. The Covid-19 pandemic has put an additional strain on government budgets across the continent. Rising sovereign debt levels and protracted debt restructuration talks have negatively affected governments' abilities to borrow money at international capital markets, with infrastructure lending from multilateral development banks and bilateral creditors having become markedly more restrictive (see Zajontz 2022). The Financing Strategy foresees reinforced coordination among stakeholders to foster an enabling environment and political support in the preparation of projects and aspires to mobilise alternative financing, not least from the private sector, throughout the entire life cycle of the projects.[16] As noted above, the AU aspires to raise more capital within Africa for regional infrastructure projects, including from the private sector and institutional investors. However, these efforts are unlikely to yield sufficient results in the short term. Cooperation with external partners, such as China, the EU, and the USA, will remain pivotal for the AU.

4 Belts, Gateways and Better Worlds: The AU's Growing Brokerage Role in Global Connectivity Initiatives

Announcements made by the US government and the EU in 2021 have reinforced the 'global race to build Africa's infrastructure' (see Gil et al. 2019), as

14 *Virtual PIDA Information Centre* [Addis Ababa], 5 May 2021.
15 *Virtual PIDA Information Centre* [Addis Ababa], 21 January 2021.
16 *AU Press Release* [Addis Ababa], 6 July 2021.

the West has launched an attempt to 'catch up' with China's outward investments in infrastructure in Africa (and other parts of the Global South). On 12 June 2021, the US government announced details about its B3W initiative, through which the US government, together with its partners from the Group of Seven (G7),[17] plans to 'help meet the tremendous infrastructure need in low- and middle-income countries … [by catalysing] hundreds of billions of dollars of infrastructure investment'. As the guiding principles of the B3W, the White House lists that it is value driven and climate friendly, that it pursues good governance and strong standards as well as strong strategic partnerships, and that it mobilises private capital and enhances the impact of multilateral public finance.[18] US president Joe Biden used the COP26 in November 2021 to promote the B3W initiative, which aspires to 'deliver high-quality, sustainable infrastructure … [which] prioritizes the fight against climate change from the moment the spade goes in the ground, and jumpstarts the green economic growth' (Biden 2021). While Biden did not mention China's BRI explicitly, he emphasised that 'we offer positive alternatives to debt – to debt traps and corruption', thereby alluding to controversies around issues of debt sustainability and transparency that have arisen in the context of some Chinese-funded large-scale infrastructure projects in Africa and elsewhere (see Zajontz 2022; Carmody et al. 2022).

Biden has since sent Secretary of State Antony Blinken to Kenya, Nigeria, and Senegal for a first 'listening session' to discuss African infrastructure needs. In Abuja, Nigeria, Blinken tellingly stressed that the US government would not

> limit your [African governments'] partnerships with other countries. We want to make your partnerships with us even stronger. We don't want to make you choose. We want to give you choices.[19]

However, the US government has communicated rather bluntly that the B3W is a political reaction to growing geopolitical and geoeconomic competition with China. The US government seems no longer willing to leave infrastructure development in the Global South to Chinese firms, not least in strategic and security-sensitive sectors such as ICT and energy.

The same applies to the EU, whose commission president Ursula von der Leyen officially launched the Global Gateway initiative in December 2021, stating that

17 Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the USA.

18 The White House, *Press Release* [Washington DC], 12 June 2021.

19 *The East African* [Nairobi], 27 November 2021.

> with this Global Gateway, we are showing that we now step outwards to support around the world the investment in infrastructure that is necessary for our partners. We all know that there is a huge investment need out there, when it comes to global infrastructure. … Global Gateway is the European Union's plan, or you may call it roadmap, for major investment in infrastructure development around the world. We want to take a different approach. We want to show that a democratic, value-driven approach can deliver on the most pressing challenges. (quoted in European Commission 2021b)

The EU has pledged to mobilise investments worth $300 billion between 2021 and 2027, drawing on a combination of EU and member states' sources, European financial institutions, and the private sector. According to a joint communication from the EU Commission, the Global Gateway will focus on physical infrastructure, such as fibre optic cables, clean transport corridors, and clean power transmission lines, with the aim of strengthening digital, transport, and energy networks (European Commission 2021a, 1–2).

Cooperation in the infrastructure sector has long been an important aspect of AU–EU interregionalism. The EU has directed funding and human resources towards continental infrastructure programmes, such as PIDA, and has provided technical assistance and capacity-building to the AU and the RECs. Under the banner of the Global Gateway initiative, the EU now hopes to increase Europe's leverage in Africa's infrastructure sector. Just as in the context of the B3W, official narratives implicitly contrast the Global Gateway initiative with China's BRI by emphasising its democratic underpinnings. According to the EU, the

> Global Gateway is about increasing investments promoting democratic values and high standards, good governance and transparency, equal partnerships, green and clean, secure infrastructure.[20]

In the energy sector, the initiative proposes the Africa–EU Green Energy Initiative to support Africa's green transition in the energy sector by increasing renewable energy capacity. The EU pledges to mobilise €2.4 billion in grants for sub-Saharan Africa and €1.08 billion for North Africa to support renewable energy, energy efficiency, and the just transition and greening of local value chains (European Commission 2021a). The executive vice president of

20 European Commission *Press Release* [Brussels], 1 December 2021.

the European Commission, Frans Timmermans, underlined at the 8th Special Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (virtual, December 2020): 'Our two sister continents can leapfrog to an economy where the energy we produce is renewable, affordable and accessible' (European Commission 2020b). The European Commission describes the proposed Africa–EU Green Energy Initiative as complementary to the AfSEM and expects it to contribute to the development and integration of regional energy markets (European Commission 2020a, 6). The EU plans to deliberate on the Global Gateway and the Africa–EU Green Energy Initiative at the 6th EU–AU Summit (Brussels, Belgium, February 2022).

Both Western connectivity initiatives – the B3W and the Global Gateway – must be understood as strategic attempts to counter the predominance of Chinese state-owned enterprises (and banks) in many infrastructure markets in the Global South – and the geopolitical implications of this pre-dominance. According to official Chinese sources, Chinese companies implemented 31.4 per cent of all infrastructure projects on the African continent in 2020 (PR China 2021). Since the inception of the Forum on China–Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2000, Chinese companies have been involved in the construction or rehabilitation of 10,000 km of railways, nearly 100,000 km of highways, nearly 1,000 bridges, and 100 ports and 66,000 km of power transmission and distribution networks. Chinese firms, moreover, installed a power-generating capacity of 120 million kW, resulting in communications networks spanning a 150,000 km that serve 700 million user terminals (ibid.).

Over the past decade, the Chinese government has actively 'regionalised' its engagement in the African infrastructure sector, not least to account for the fact that many major infrastructure projects on the continent depend on their successful implementation for planning and coordination at the continental and regional levels of governance. In 2015, the AU signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Chinese government to spur cooperation in developing continental transport networks, including high-speed railways, aviation and highways, and other infrastructures to support Africa's industrialisation. In official narratives, BRI connectivity projects have been described as furthering the AU's infrastructure development agenda as well as the AfCFTA. Yet, questions have been raised about the 'presumed harmony of interests between the AfCFTA and the BRI in view of potential issues of competition' (Large 2021, 111).

The Chinese government and the AU have recently further institutionalised their cooperation. In December 2020, the chairman of China's National Development and Reform Commission, He Lifeng, and the chairperson of the AUC, Faki, signed the *Cooperation Plan between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the African Union on Jointly Promoting the Building of the*

Belt and Road Initiative. In January 2021, the head of China's mission to the AU, Ambassador Liu Yuxi, explicated that

> China will establish a coordination mechanism for the BRI cooperation with the AU Commission in a bid to effectively link the related executive departments and resources of both sides, establish channels and mechanisms for exchanges, communication and consultation, and solve problems encountered in planning and executing projects in a timely manner, thus promoting the smooth implementation of the Cooperation Plan under Belt and Road. … China is working with Africa to jointly formulate the China-Africa Infrastructure Cooperation Plan to support Chinese enterprises in participating in Africa's infrastructure development through the investment-construction-operation model. The two sides will focus on strengthening cooperation on energy, transport, information, telecommunications and cross-border water resources. China and Africa will join hands to implement a number of key connectivity projects. (Liu 2021)

The Chinese government evidently further institutionalises its cooperation with the AU in the context of the BRI, which will strengthen the role of the AU in co-determining infrastructure projects with Chinese involvement on the continent and will further complement China's bilateral dealings with African governments in the infrastructure sector.

The 8th Ministerial Conference of the FOCAC (Dakar, Senegal, 29–30 November 2021) reiterated the central importance of infrastructure in Sino-African development cooperation (see Ulf Engel, this Yearbook, chapter 11). As Chinese loan financing for infrastructure has significantly decreased in the past years as a result of concerns over growing debt sustainability, the FOCAC's *Dakar Action Plan* (2022–2024)

> note[s] the persistent infrastructural gap in Africa and pledge to resolve the problem by encouraging and promoting innovative and favorable Chinese financial support in infrastructural projects in Africa over the next three years. (FOCAC 2021, §3.2.1)

The plan furthermore pledges to 'create synergy between China-Africa infrastructural cooperation' and PIDA PAP (ibid.). Chinese firms are explicitly encouraged to enter into public-private partnerships and to pursue trilateral and multilateral cooperation to advance projects in Africa. The Agenda 2063 flagship projects, such as the African Integrated High-Speed Railway Network,

the SAATM, and the integrated e-economy, are explicitly mentioned (ibid., §3.2.3).

Growing competition between China and Western powers for influence and market shares in Africa's infrastructure sector could potentially help attracting more overall investment into African infrastructures. The role of the AU as a broker for continental and regional infrastructure projects is thereby getting increasingly complex. The AU has to not only mediate between national and regional/continental interests and priorities but also ensure that Africa's inclusion into global connectivity initiatives that are driven by external actors aligns with the AU's own development and integration goals. No doubt, the AU will be an increasingly sought-after dialogue partner in Beijing, Brussels, and Washington in the coming years.

5 Outlook

Ameliorating the negative repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic and efforts to boost the recovery of African economies will be at the forefront of AU policy-making in 2022. Infrastructure will remain central to these debates, just as the pressing question on how infrastructure finance can be solicited in times of extremely strained public budgets. It remains to be seen whether the anticipated dedicated African Infrastructure Fund is going to see the light of day in the coming years. Considering that many member states are facing enormous social and economic challenges, the AU's task to ensure that they live up to their commitments to regional and continental infrastructure projects is unlikely to get any easier in 2022. In terms of implementation, the PIDA Task Force will concentrate efforts to mobilise funds for new PIDA priority projects to ensure that PIDA PAP 2 does not suffer the same fate as its predecessor. In the energy sector, the preparation of the Continental Master Plan for the AfSEM will require significant coordination work at AUDA–NEPAD.

After the announcement of the EU's Global Gateway initiative and the explicit emphasis that Africa is meant to play a significant role in it, the upcoming 6th AU–EU Summit (Brussels, Belgium, February 2022) can be expected to give first indications of how AU–EU interregionalism in the infrastructural realm is going to evolve in the coming years. For the AU, it will be decisive to what extent the priorities of the Global Gateway initiative will align with its own infrastructure agenda, including the PIDA and the Agenda 2063 flagship projects. As China, the EU, and the USA are competing for influence in Africa's infrastructure sectors, the AU has become an increasingly important supranational broker with the challenging task to mediate various interests across a number of scales.

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CHAPTER 9

Peace and Security

Dawit Yohannes Wondemagegnehu

1 Introduction

> The security situation of the continent today is deeply marked by the metastasis of terrorism and the dangerous resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government. Furthermore, the two phenomena establish causal links known to all. One finds its pretexts in the significance and expansion of the former, and the necessary fight against the latter produces the illusion that the second is the answer to proven failures in the fight against the first. (AUC Chairperson 2022b)

The year 2021 is an opportune moment to reflect on the vistas of possibilities, capabilities, and limitations that the establishment of the African Union (AU) has opened up over the last nearly two decades. Its creation was driven primarily by the dire necessity to effectively respond to the continent's multiple peace, security, and governance challenges at the turn of the century. To their credit, the AU, the Regional Ecnomic Communities (RECs)/Regional Mechanisms (RMs) and their international efforts have since embarked on a serious experiment of developing norms, institutions, and structures for conflict prevention, management, and resolution, broadly known as the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). They have also made significant attempts at mobilising the political resolve of their member states and allocating modest resources for the noble cause of sustainable peace on the continent. Such efforts have led to the deployment and utilisation of different response mechanisms, including AU-led Peace Support Operations (PSOs), political missions, and stabilisation strategies, albeit with varying levels of outcome and impact. However, as the AU inches closer to celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2022, the different forms of instability and crises that once bedeviled the continent have resurfaced in various shapes and intensity (see Döring et al. 2021).

Taking these trends as a starting point, this chapter offers a tour d'horizon of the state of peace and security on the continent, focusing on the AU's response to conflict trends and dynamics in 2021. Once again, the AU was confronted with the nearly impossible task of dealing with various conflicts and issues

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with a fairly complex degree of correlational and causal linkages (see *Yearbook on the African Union* 2020).

The threat of violent extremism persisted, sparing none of the continent's regions. Different violent extremist groups continued to be a major source of instability in the Sahel, the Lake Chad Basin (LCB), Libya, Somalia, and Mozambique. The threat made worrying inroads into areas that were traditionally less affected. Countries such as Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Uganda, and Togo experienced terrorist attacks. Sustaining political transitions proved difficult, be it from a repressive to democratic order (The Gambia), restoring state presence in the middle of armed conflict (Libya, Somalia, and the Central African Republic [CAR], Mali), or consolidating political stability (Côte d'Ivoire, South Sudan, and Sudan). Leadership tussle among key political actors and electoral contestation exacerbated the fragile political and security situations in Libya and Somalia.

Long-standing governance deficits and the related implications became more acute in different parts of Africa. In some cases, dissatisfaction and pressure that had built up over decades fuelled popular resentment against ruling regimes, particularly over the failure to provide 'good enough' security and livelihoods. This trend has consequentially enabled the resurgence of coups d'état as in the case of Mali and Guinea. Similarly, Chad and Sudan witnessed the military takeover of power, with each of the incidents driven by their own unique political and security trajectories (see Powell et al. 2021).

The violent conflict in northern Ethiopia, which started in November 2020, took a more violent turn. It evolved into a major headline-grabbing series of events with dire humanitarian consequences, large-scale human rights abuses, and precarious regional reverberations. Although interstate disputes were not the primary source of conflict across the continent, there were tensions in some cases. The relations of Burundi and the DRC with their respective neighbours – Uganda and Rwanda – improved. Kenya and Somalia, which severed their relationship in December 2020, restored diplomatic relations in October 2021. However, the ruling by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the maritime dispute between the two nations, immensely tested their bilateral relations.[1]

In response to these challenges, the AU sought to fulfil its primary role as a facilitator of timely and efficient responses by rolling out an array of response strategies and mechanisms through the varied engagement of the Peace and Security Council (PSC). The AU also engaged in various conflict situations

1 *ICG Q&A* [Brussels], 15 October 2021. URL: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/kenya/un-court-decision-fresh-test-kenya-somalia-ties> (accessed: 30 June 2022).

through the high-level activities of the chairperson of the AU Commission (AUC). The AUC and its organs implemented decisions of the PSC and the AU Assembly through various ways. The AU deployed high representatives or special envoys to the Horn of Africa and Chad, among other places, and coordinated the deployment of fact-finding, needs assessment, and evaluation field missions (to South Sudan, Mali, Chad, and the CAR). It also mobilised resources and implemented projects related to peace, security, and governance. The AU was also involved in efforts to maintain the deployment of political missions, its PSOs in Somalia (the African Union Mission in Somalia, AMISOM), and AU-authorised security arrangements, such as the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel) and the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF). While the AU led responses in some crises, it also played secondary and supportive roles vis-à-vis the RECs/RMs, especially in responding to the different instances of power grab by the military in Chad, Guinea, and Mali.

On balance, 2021 was a year in which only few conflicts showed signs of abating, but many intensified and even saw the emergence of new crises through the resurgence of coups d'état. The net effect of crises continues to test the AU's capacity and resolve in shouldering the continent's peace and security responsibilities. Many factors were at play in limiting the AU's bandwidth to troubleshoot the continent's multiple crises – not all of them being placed at the AU's doorstep. The AU identified the narrow reading of the ideal of subsidiarity and the question of sovereignty as the foremost challenges to the AU's decision-making role in responding to Africa's security challenges (AUC Chairperson 2022b).

Constraints persisted, emanating from the inconsistent commitment of member states to interpret, uphold, and implement the norms, policies, and decisions related to peace, security, and governance and to avail themselves of the requisite resources. The PSC's stance on Chad was considered an anomaly to the AU's prior effort to enforce its norms related to Unconstitutional Changes of Government (UCGs). However, the PSC defended its decision citing the peculiar situation of the country (AU PSC 2021h). It traded very carefully, sometimes too cautiously, to deal with some of the protracted issues and emerging hot conflicts in a more timely manner (for example, in Cameroon, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Western Sahara). The PSC faced limitations to keep simmering tenuous situations on its radar and act on its conflict-prevention mandate (Guinea). The AU's existing engagement was overshadowed by more kinetic and dynamic developments in particular regions. For example, while the AU is a guarantor of South Sudan's peace agreement, its involvement in the country appeared to have been overshadowed by two high-profile and rapidly evolving situations in the region, notably the conflict in northern Ethiopia and the

derailed transition in Sudan. In other cases, the AU struggled to find its feet in regional contexts marked by uncoordinated engagement by a plethora of international and regional interveners (for instance, the CAR, the DRC, Libya, and the Sahel).

The following section offers a broad analytical overview of these complex trends structured around region- and country-specific discussions. Alongside responding to these crises, the AU kept developing its policies and strategies, enhancing its capacity, deepening its strategic partnerships, etc. But these critical activities will not be covered in this chapter.

2 Regional Overview of the AU's Peace and Security Engagement

2.1 *The Horn and East Africa*

2.1.1 Ethiopia

Unlike the previous years that saw a spike in a patchwork of turbulences, communal and ethnic clashes subsided transiently in different parts of the country in 2021. At the same time, the Tigray conflict in Ethiopia inarguably stood out as one of the most tumultuous and violent set of events on the continent. The conflict passed through different phases, and it became the locus of a plethora of peacemaking efforts, including by the AU.

Peacemaking efforts by the AU and others ebbed and flowed to the tune of the conflict dynamics within the different phases of the conflict. The conflict passed through four major phases. In the first six months of 2021, government forces gained the upper hand in the war and controlled Tigray's capital, Mekelle. The second phase saw a reversal of the government's military gains in the region. Except for the contested western part, the insurgents managed to control most of the Tigray region and advanced into the neighbouring Afar and Amhara regions. Together with the government's massive mobilisation effort, the third phase saw a southward advance of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) forces, threatening to march on the capital. In the fourth phase, government forces and their regional allies reversed the rebels' advance in November and December.[2]

In contrast to 2020, the AU had engaged in quantitatively more ways, with a questionable qualitative impact in changing the course of the conflict arguably due to the AU's lack of robust action in the lead-up to the conflict and the early days of the war in 2020. The AU engaged with the crisis by convening PSC

2 Interview with an Ethiopia analyst, Addis Ababa, 28 February 2021.

sessions, the appointment of a high representative for the Horn of Africa (see below), issuing public statements through the office of the AUC chairperson, and meeting Ethiopian government officials on issues of particular concern.

The PSC discussed the conflict only twice, on 7 March and 8 November 2021. In the March meeting of the PSC, held at the level of African Heads of State and Government, the situation was discussed under 'Any Other Business' (AOB). During the meeting, the Ethiopian government delivered a statement defending its track record in various ways. It downplayed accusations of human rights abuses by its forces, outlined efforts to redress the humanitarian crisis, and expressed its readiness to work with continental institutions to investigate rights abuses.[3] This particular PSC meeting did not discuss the situation itself, and hence the PSC was not expected to pass a formal decision or action (Amani Africa 2021). The crisis was substantively discussed at the PSC only at an emergency session on 8 November 2021, apparently triggered by the Tigrayan forces southward advance and speculations around the imminent fall of Addis Ababa. Arguably, this meeting's only significance was the assurance of the AU's support for the preservation of Ethiopia's sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity, as well as expression of the AU's strong anti-war stance and advocacy for a negotiated political end to the conflict (AU PSC 2021z).

On 26 August, former Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo was appointed as AU high representative for the Horn of Africa. He made several trips to the region to engage with Ethiopian government officials, the Tigray Regional Administration leadership, regional leaders in the Horn of Africa, the European Union (EU), and the United Nations (UN). Throughout 2021, the good offices of the high representative remained the only avenue for a preliminary exploration of the needs, interests, and perhaps positions of the warring parties that is acceptable to both sides. His engagement unveiled the complexity and intricacies of future mediation efforts and the imperative for 'baby steps and many steps' than aiming for an immediate and comprehensive resolution of the conflict.[4] He also helped to create an understanding among the warring parties (though individually) on the political nature of their differences and the necessity to find a political solution through dialogue (UNSC 2021a). Nonetheless, the high representative's role remained constrained for a significant part of 2021 as the conflict was not 'ripe for resolution', and the warring parties continued to aspire to achieve a military victory as a way out of the conflict.

3 Abiy Ahmed, 9 March 2021. URL: <https://twitter.com/abiyahmedali/status/1369313761358647307?lang=en>.

4 Interview with an Ethiopia analyst, Addis Ababa, 28 February 2022.

The AUC chairperson issued three statements in 2021 (25 and 29 June and 3 November). Despite changes in the conflict dynamics and the specific situations that triggered the statements, these statements had consistent themes and messages, namely urging the parties to find a peaceful resolution through dialogue. In addition, the AU officials also engaged with their Ethiopian counterparts on specific thematic issues in Ethiopia. A case in point was the meeting on 11 March 2021 between the AUC chairperson and the deputy prime minister and foreign minister of Ethiopia. The meeting discussed the modalities of engagement of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) in investigating alleged human rights violations in the Tigray region.

The AU's efforts unfolded side by side the efforts of other actors, albeit with limited coordination and sometimes in apparent competition and overlap among the various actors. The Tigray conflict embodied a typical case of a dysfunctional international peacemaking arena marked by a proliferation of initiatives and tension between the self-interest of certain actors and their drive for collective action in resolving the crisis.

Whereas largely absent from peacemaking efforts in 2020, the US increasingly assumed a prominent and vocal role in 2021. President Joe Biden's administration imposed sanctions to persuade the warring parties to resolve the crisis peacefully. The US also threatened to delist Ethiopia from preferential trade access provided under the 2000 *African Growth and Opportunity Act* (AGOA). The US also appointed former UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman as special envoy for the Horn of Africa. However, these efforts appeared to have limited impact in forcing the warring parties to commit to a negotiated end to the conflict. Likewise, the EU levied a budget freeze on Ethiopia, contingent on fulfilling specific conditions. It also supported the initiative by the AU's high representative for the Horn of Africa, mainly by reinforcing its messaging in support of the latter's effort.

Arguably, the UN was heavily involved in efforts to resolve the conflict through the political role of the UN Security Council (UNSC) and its various agencies. The UN humanitarian agencies expanded their operations to deal with the humanitarian crises, including famine, hunger, and supporting internally displaced persons (IDPs). Ethiopia featured in a number of the UNSC meetings, with the humanitarian situation in northern Ethiopia taking centre stage in these discussions. The UNSC discussed the situation in Ethiopia ten times: 'five times under AOB, four times in a public meeting and once in an informal interactive dialogue meeting'.[5]

5 *Security Council Report Monthly Forecast* [New York], 'In hindsight', 4 April 2022.

Though no significant binding decisions came out of these meetings, a clear fault line emerged among the members of the UNSC in terms of arriving at a tangible course of action to reverse the conflict trajectory. The UNSC, in general, struggled to agree on any strong outcome, despite issuing press statements in April and November 2021. During the significant part of the UNSC meetings, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Ireland increasingly pushed for stricter measures against the warring parties. Conversely, the Russian Fedaration, the People's Republic of China, and the three African members of the UNSC refrained from supporting punitive measures to end the crisis. The year also witnessed the expulsion of seven UN staffers from Ethiopia for alleged interference in the internal affairs of the country and providing support to the rebels – marking the low point of the UN's relationship with the Ethiopian government in recent times. In addition, states from the region and its vicinity engaged in efforts to end the conflict. In this regard, Kenya's role stood out, pushing for a ceasefire in the conflict in a timely and substantive manner.

The conflict revealed the AU's continued inability to intervene in major crises in a timely manner, owing mainly to limits imposed by strict interpretation of the principle of national sovereignty, the lack of political will to deal with thorny issues on the continent, and the lack of concerted regional action from the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). The PSC's engagement in the war in Tigray remained minimal (only one substantive discussion), bespeaking the continued challenge of discussing troublesome issues in this central AU platform.

The warring parties' contrasting political strategies and conflicting end state also left little room for the AU to manoeuvre. The Ethiopian government mainly framed the war as a 'law enforcement campaign' to ensure the sustenance of the Ethiopian state. On the other hand, the Tigrayan forces, though they explicitly expressed their desire to topple the regime in Addis Ababa, remained ambivalent in terms of their position for the continuation of the Ethiopian state. Also, there is little indication that the conflict had reached a 'hurting stalemate' throughout 2021, which could have induced a desire among the warring parties to negotiate.

2.1.2 Somalia

A raft of internal and external factors significantly shaped Somalia's political and security environment. These factors mainly include contention around elections, uncertainty about the future of AMISOM, constant threat from al-Shabaab, Somalia's maritime dispute with Kenya and spillover effect of the strained relations between the two countries, and continued political rivalry among the country's political elites. As a net effect of the country's multiple

trends, discussions around Somalia unsurprisingly dominated the PSC agenda, culminating in five meetings.

The modalities and conditions of a general election remained contested. When the Somali's government mandate expired in February, the country entered into a political limbo, pitting the president against his political opponents and some of the Federal Member States (FMS). The PSC issued two communiqués concerning the resultant dangerous stand-off. On 9 February, following the conclusion of the Dhusamareeb consultation (1–6 February) – ending without an agreement – the PSC called on all relevant stakeholders 'to refrain from undertaking any unilateral or non-consensual measures that might further complicate the situation and deepen the current political impasse' (AU PSC 2021c, §4).

In the aftermath of a controversial decision by Somalia's House of the People to extend the sitting president's mandate by two years, the PSC issued a strong statement on 22 April. It condemned the decision, claiming that it would effectively delay the elections and undermine Somalia's unity, stability, and nascent democracy. The PSC also requested the AUC chairperson 'to immediately appoint a High Representative as Special Envoy for Somalia' (AU PSC 2021h, 9). The AUC acted upon this request and on 8 May appointed the former president of Ghana, John Mahama, as the high representative for Somalia. The Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) received this decision negatively in general, and later rejected the appointment, accusing Mahama of having close ties with Kenya's top leadership. The PSC's condemnation of the extension put the AU–FGS relations on difficult grounds, contributing to the rejection of the high representative's appointment thereafter. This contestation notwithstanding, the AU claims to have contributed, through AMISOM, to mediation efforts that led to the electoral agreements of 17 September 2020 and 27 May 2021 between the FGS and the FMS (AU Assembly 2022a, §14).

The fate of AMISOM also hung in the balance for a significant part of the year owing to inconclusive negotiations on the post-2021 AU involvement in Somalia and the nature of the mission replacing AMISOM (AU PSC 2021y). AMISOM's transition became one of the sticking points between the prominent security actors, including Somali authorities, the AU, the UN, and the EU. With the looming planned exit of the mission in March 2021, the FGS adopted a stance pushing for quick but not necessarily immediate transfer of security responsibilities to local security forces. The year notably witnessed diverging positions on AMISOM's future among Somalia's government, the AU, the UN, and the EU, the mission's major financier. Respective assessments conducted by the UN (in 2020) and the AU (in 2021) and statements by the Somalia governments on the outcome of these assessments reflect the differing positions of these critical stakeholders.

Based on the PSC decision taken on 9 February, the AU established its Independent Assessment Team. While the AU agreed in principle to AMISOM's departure, it advocated a more realistic approach that considers the existing threats, the limited capacity of Somalia's security forces, and the need for a commensurate multidimensional mission.[6] Out of the various options proposed by the assessment team, the PSC endorsed the establishment of 'an AU-UN Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in Somalia, deployed under Chapter VII of the UN Charter' (AU PSC 2021y, §11). On the other hand, the FGS rejected the AU's plan to modify AMISOM as such.

To resolve these differences and other related matters, the AU, through the AUC, engaged with the FGS. The Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) undertook a technical mission to Somalia in December 2021, which culminated in an agreement that outlined the principles and modalities for a follow-up mission in Somalia (AU Assembly 2022a, §14). In addition, the PSC renewed the AMISOM mandate until 31 December 2021, and the UNSC approved a technical rollover of the mission's mandate for three months, effective from January 2022 (AU PSC 2021j).

On top of these internal security dynamics, Somalia's external relations with Kenya also reached a new low in 2021. After severing their diplomatic ties in 2020, they re-established their relations, although not fully resolving the underlying issues of their dispute.[7] One significant development in the Kenya–Somalia relations in 2021 was the ICJ ruling on 21 October 2021 on their disputed maritime boundary. The ruling largely considered as favouring Somalia, which led to Kenya rejecting the decision in its totality and accusing the ICJ of being biased. Even though the AU was engaged with the matter in 2020 in various ways (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2020*, 160f.), no pronouncement came from it on the ruling in 2021, neither a statement from the AU chairperson nor the PSC. A regional analyst opined that the latter was expected as Kenya was a member of the PSC. The council had a track record of not discussing issues involving some sitting PSC members.[8]

Overall, the AU's involvement in Somalia in 2021 remained mixed. Inarguably, the AU, through AMISOM, continued to contribute to creating a modicum of stability and some level of political governance. The AU's interaction with the FGS reached a low point, leading to far-reaching consequences. Disagreement between the two entities tainted their relations and spilt over into other

6 Interview with a Horn of Africa analyst, 25 February 2021 (virtual).

7 Somalia alleges Kenya interferes in its internal affairs by supporting rival politicians in some of its regions.

8 Interview with a Horn of Africa analyst, 25 February 2021 (virtual).

realms, for instance discussing the future fate of AMISOM or the AU beyond 2021. The latter had implications for AMISOM and a possible further limiting of what the mission could do in the interim to reverse its defensive position into an offensive one, expand territorial gains, and stabilise these territories.[9]

2.1.3 Sudan

Sudan witnessed an intensification of existing political instability and crisis of governance. The AU characterised Sudan as a fluid situation, attributing the major fault lines to the fractures between the military and the civilian components of the transitional government occasioned by the military takeover of October 2021 (AU Assembly 2022a, §16).

Up until October 2021, Sudan's Sovereign Council, composed of military and civilian leaders, presided over a fragile political and security environment. Occasional popular protests and tensions marked the political landscape. Sudan's political elites were wrangling over implementing the transitional arrangement that came in the wake of the removal of President Omar al-Bashir in 2019. During this period, a critical defining feature of Sudanese politics was a flawed joint military-civilian governing body marked by inherent cleavages and competing interests.[10] Besides the contestation between the military and civilian members of the Sovereign Council, infighting, factionalism, and disagreement prevailed within the respective camps.[11]

As a reflection of the military's long-standing dominant role in the country's politics, the military staged a coup on 25 October 2021, detaining Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, his officials, and other political leaders. In addition, the military declared a state of emergency and suspended articles 12, 15, 16, 24 (3), 71, and 72 of the *Constitutional Document*, in effect dissolving the Sovereign Council and the Council of Ministers (UNSC 2021b). To justify its action, the military cited the failure of the civilian administration to drive forward the reform agenda. However, the reluctance of the military to hand over the rotating leadership of the Sovereign Council in November may have been a critical factor behind the military's power grab.[12] Nonetheless, the coup effectively ended Sudan's turbulent transition. It also primed the country for further instability, primarily arising out of anti-democracy protests across the country and the risk of returning it to a pariah status among the international

9 Interview with a Horn of Africa analyst, 25 February 2021 (virtual).

10 'Will Sudan's new agreement hold this time around?', *ISS Today* [Pretoria], 12 December 2021.

11 Interview with a researcher, 30 March 2021 (virtual).

12 Ibid.

community. Besides fallout over the fragile transition at the centre, insecurity prevailed across the country in various forms (see UNSG 2021b).

The year had also witnessed continued unmet demands for justice and accountability for various forms of crimes and atrocities, including those perpetrated against pro-democracy protestors and other victims of state abuse during the Bashir regime.[13] Regionally, Sudan's external relations with Ethiopia piqued over two main issues. Disagreement over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) remained unresolved due to a stalemate in the AU-led negotiations. Dispute over the al-Fashaga border also remained volatile due to the regional ramifications for the war in Tigray.

The AU responded to Sudan's unfolding peace and security dynamics in different ways. Sudan featured in four of the PSC's discussions, including the session in March, which did not result in any public document. On 13 April, the PSC discussed the report of the council's field mission to Sudan from 30 March to 1 April 2021 (AU PSC 2021f). Noting some of Sudan's concerning situations, the PSC initially signaled a largely favourable assessment of the political and security developments on various fronts. It commended the progress made in terms of the implementation of the 2019 *Constitutional Declaration*, particularly the signing of the 2020 *Juba Peace Agreement*; the formation of the new transitional government; and the recent signing of the *Declaration of Principles* with the chairperson of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement–North (SPLM–N), Abdel Aziz El Hilu. The PSC also welcomed the collaboration between the Sovereign Council and the transitional government (AU PSC 2021f).

The tone of the PSC's subsequent session and its outcome contrasted with the above-mentioned seemingly favourable assessment. The PSC session on 26 October took place under the shadow of the military takeover of power and dissolution of the transitional government. Framing the unfolding situation as a UCG, the PSC suspended Sudan from all AU activities until the effective restoration of the military-civilian partnership (AU PSC 2021x). The PSC also decided to undertake a mission to Sudan to engage with all stakeholders to find an amicable solution to the current political stalemate. However, the latter did not take effect as Sudan rejected to receive the AU's emissary (Amani Africa 2022). Prior to this meeting, on 25 Ocotber the AU chairperson had issued a statement that underscored the vitality of dialogue and consensus as a way out of Sudan's current woes.

13 Interview with a researcher, 30 March 2021 (virtual).

The AU's decision to suspend Sudan was contested, including among the PSC members, in terms of the steps the council should follow. According to the Amani Africa (2022, 6):

> Some members were of the view that a fact-finding mission should be dispatched first to assess the situation on the ground [as the PSC did in the case of Chad] … while others stood by the established norms and practices of AU and argued for the immediate suspension of Sudan.

The AU was also engaged in broader efforts to resolve the political impasse, including supporting the dialogue efforts by the UN.

The subsequent session on Sudan on 24 November 2021 looked at the military government's reinstatement of the prime minister, based on the 12 November 2021 agreement. The PSC welcomed this development and underscored the importance of dialogue, an inclusive transitional government, etc. (AU PSC 2021a1). Nonetheless, the PSC stopped short of lifting the sanction despite the expectation of some PSC members (Amani Africa 2022).

Many had expected the AU to play a more prominent role in Sudan, given its crucial contribution to shepherding the country's transition in 2019 and the mediation process that culminated in the transitional arrangement. The AU's decision to suspend Sudan can be considered swift as it did not equivocate to denounce the military power grab as it did in the case of Chad. Among others, the PSC's stance on Sudan appears to be driven by the limited likelihood of a concerted regional response from the REC in question – in contrast to Mali from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). In this case, IGAD was unlikely to take any decisive action, as Sudan was the current chair of IGAD, and the latter's responses were traditionally muted in relation to emerging governance-related dynamics in the region. At the same time, some consider the AU's response was limited to providing a decisive course correction mainly to challenges emanating from the military's power grab. The AU's call to return the status quo ante was considered one that 'legitimises' the military role, which pro-democracy protestors rejected under the slogan 'No negotiation, No partnership, No compromise'.[14] In addition, questions could be raised as to the impact of the AU's decision and the weight it carries in comparison to the action of other actors, including the US and the World Bank, that responded more swiftly and decisively at the time and arguably had greater impact in shaping the military's position.[15]

14 *ISS Today* [Pretoria], 13 December 2021.

15 Interview with a researcher, 30 March 2021 (virtual).

2.1.4 South Sudan

South Sudan remained on the Union's radar in 2021, albeit with limited attention being paid to the country compared to the previous years. For the major part, the key issue had been uncertainties around the slow pace of implementing the 2018 *Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan* (R–ARCSS). Despite all its flaws to fully addressing the deep causes of the crises, the R–ARCSS remains a critical political mechanism that warrants attention, not least for its contribution to 'halting most fighting between the main parties in the country's civil war'.[16]

The agreement saw some progress, such as forming national and state executive and legislative bodies.[17] The government made some progress in the inclusion of opposition MPs in the new parliament and the final drafting of the nation's constitution. Nevertheless, the agreement's full implementation was lagging, especially with regard to transitional security arrangements, the enactment of key legislation by the Transitional National Legislative Assembly, and the establishment of transitional justice mechanisms.[18]

While there may be many factors explaining the slow pace of implementing the agreement, fractures within political and armed opposition was the most cogent one. The Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLM–IO) was rocked by defections of its high-level officials, sometimes joining the government camp. Such challenges within the major opposition may further slowdown the agreement's implementation, with clear implications for security sector reform (SSR)/disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) processes and greater political stability in the country. The surge in communal violence was another major trend in South Sudan in 2021, not least driven by the faltering power-sharing arrangement and slow implementation of the armed forces' unification.

The AU's most notable involvement in South Sudan in 2021 was the PSC's field mission (24–26 March) and a council meeting on 13 April 2021 to consider the report findings of the mission. Reflecting on the limited progress of the peace agreement, the PSC called for the enhanced implementation of different aspects of the R–ARCSS, such as transitional security arrangements; a DDR programme; human rights and transitional justice; and timeous preparations for credible, transparent, and democratic elections at the end of the current transition (AU PSC 2021g). Although the AU is the guarantor of the R–ARCSS, its engagement in the country appears to have been overshadowed by two

16 *ICG Briefing* (179) [Brussels], 25 February 2022.
17 *Security Council Report Monthly Forecast* [New York], 'South Sudan', 28 February 2022.
18 Ibid.

high-profile and more kinetic dynamics in the region, notably the conflict in northern Ethiopia and the derailed transition in Sudan.

2.1.5 The Comoros

The ramifications of the contested 2018 referendum and the 2019 elections continued to have ripple effects on the political stability of Comoros. The opposition persisted in their rejection of President Azali Assoumani's authority, who won the election boycotted by the opposition camp (AU Assembly 2022a, §17). The PSC convened two sessions on the Comoros, which had a history of coups and prior attempts to declare unilateral independence by some of the islands. On 1 June, the PSC requested the AUC to deploy a technical early response mission (TERM) to establish facts and report back to the council. And on 19 October 2021, the PSC considered the TERM report that was undertaken from 12 to 15 September 2021. It called for several requirements, including various mechanisms for institutional and justice reforms, as well as mediation and dialogue, especially national dialogue and preparations for elections in 2024. The PSC also authorised the deployment of a follow-up AU multidimensional mission (AU PSC 2021w).

2.2 *Southern Africa*

As in the previous years, Southern Africa remained comparatively more stable than the other regions in 2021, especially when it comes to armed conflicts. To a lesser extent, the violent extremist insurgency in Mozambique, the pro-democracy protests in Eswatini, and the mass riots in South Africa were notable exceptions within this broad characterisation. On the positive side, the presidential election in Zambia, which led to the transfer of power from an incumbent to an opposition candidate, was also a major step forward. This is noteworthy in a region where ruling regimes have stayed in power for decades, sometimes holding out against contested electoral processes.[19]

In March 2021, the insurgents in Mozambique launched their biggest attack since the start of the conflict in 2017, targeting economic infrastructure in the Palma region. This attack precipitated the decision by Total, one of the leading developers of Mozambique's liquefied natural gas reserves, to suspend its operations – a major setback for the country's economy.[20] In addition, by the end of 2021the violence, which was initially associated with the Cabo Delgado province, expanded into neighbouring Niassa.[21]

19 Interview with an analyst on Southern Africa, 7 March 2021 (virtual).

20 *ISS PSC Report* (138) [Pretoria], August 2021, 7–8.

21 *Voice of America* [Wasgington DC], 17 December 2021.

At the same time, the Mozambican government reinforced its counterinsurgency efforts by the two separate deployments by Rwanda and by the Southern African Development Community (SADC). On 9 July 2021, the Rwandan government started deploying 1,000 soldiers and police through a bilateral arrangement to support 'efforts to restore Mozambican state authority by conducting combat and security operations, stabilisation and security sector reform'.[22] Two weeks later, an Extraordinary Summit of SADC Heads of State and Government (Maputo, Mozambique, 23 June 2021) authorised the deployment of the SADC Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM), as of 15 July 2021, 'to be deployed in support of Mozambique to combat of terrorism and acts of violent extremism in Cabo Delgado' (SADC 2021, §7).

The two missions initially were unsynchronised and raised questions about the various aspects of the deployments. Some media reports indicated that SADC was 'concerned about a non-member country deploying soldiers in the region without its approval and ahead of the bloc's troops'.[23] In addition, the timing of Rwanda's deployment – being ahead of SADC's arrival – has been described initially as 'regrettable' by Dr Stergomena Tax, SADC's outgoing executive secretary.[24] The level of coordination between the two military interventions in their areas of operations also seems limited. These initial perceptions notwithstanding, the deployments achieved some gains in countering the threat of the insurgents. Considering these achievements, SADC extended the SAMIM mandate until April 2022 (AU Assembly 2022a, §19). Likewise, Rwandan forces supported efforts to dislodge insurgents from the harbour town of Mocímboa da Praia, which had been occupied since August 2020. They also helped in restoring security in Palma, where services resumed, and some displaced people could return to their homes.[25] Despite these gains, the insurgency continued throughout 2021.

As in the previous year, the AU's response to the growing insurgency in Mozambique was a mixed bag. The AUC chairperson issued a statement on 31 March 2021 condemning the most prominent terrorist act, pledging its solidarity with Mozambique, and calling on its member states to support efforts to curb terrorism in the country. The AU provided its political backing to both external deployments by Rwanda and SADC and broader peacemaking efforts. On 10 July 2021, the AUC chairperson applauded the deployment in his tweet 'as a strong and concrete act of African solidarity to support a fellow Member

22 *Janes* [Coulsdonn], 12 July 2021.
23 *Deutsche Welle* [Cologne], 13 July 2021.
24 *ISS PSC Report* (138) [Pretoria], August 2021, 7.
25 Interview with an analyst on Southern Africa, 7 March 2021 (virtual).

State to fight terrorism and insecurity'.[26] In September 2021, the AU commissioner for PAPS visited Mozambique. He reaffirmed the Union's commitment to assist in the training of the Mozambican defence and security forces.[27] He also announced the AU's pledge of $100,000 to support efforts to stem the conflict in Cabo Delgado.

The crisis raised important questions regarding the commitment of the AU and its member states to utilise APSA instruments such as the ASF. Statements by the AU endorsed the deployment of the SAMIM while underlining the mission's deployment within the framework of the ASF. Likewise, a letter by the SADC executive secretary to UN secretary-general states that the deployment to Mozambique of the SAMIM was 'under scenario six' of the African Standby Force (Svicevic 2021). Nonetheless, it was evident that SADC deployed the mission without any PSC authorisation, and the PSC did not discuss Mozambique until the end of 2021. Mozambique featured on the PSC's initial monthly agenda for May 2021 but was later removed from the agenda as Mozambique had insisted that this was a 'SADC matter'. It seems that SADC had not informed the AU of its deployment, though it was not legally obliged to do so.[28] As such, the conflict in Mozambique continued to typify three ongoing and emerging challenges around the policy discourse on African peace and security. First, it refers to contested notions in operationalising the principle of subsidiarity that underpins AU–REC relations. Second, it highlights the emerging questions concerning the viability of APSA to address violent extremism-induced threats across the continent. And third, it also showcases the imperative for a continental-level discussion on ad hoc deployments as crisis response and management tools.

2.3 *North Africa*

Libya was one of the main countries that the AU engaged in 2021 in the Northern African region. The AU characterised the situation in Libya as 'relatively stable' in 2021 (AU Assembly 2022b, §[x]87). This comparative stability resulted from several milestones met in the preceding year and 2021. These milestones include the signing of the *Permanent Ceasefire Agreement* on 23 October 2020, the UN-facilitated Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF), the establishment of an interim Government of National Unity (GNU), and the 5+5 Joint Military Commission (JMC) (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2020*, 151–153).

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26 Moussa Faki, 10 July 2021. <https://twitter.com/auc_moussafaki/status/1413869560374104069?lang=en>.

27 *Club of Mozambique* [Maputo], 10 September 2021.

28 *ISS PSC Report* (138) [Pretoria], August 2021, 7.

Despite favourable assessment of the political and security landscape indicated above, Libya continued to grapple with three significant issues: withdrawal of foreign fighters and mercenaries, uncertainty around electoral processes, and making the ceasefire stick. Though Libya witnessed a sharp decrease in 1,055 violent events (or a 91% decline in political violence), the *Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project* (ACLED) marked Libya as one of the places where ceasefires obscured persistent fragility in 2021 (ACLED 2022). The AU had engaged with these critical issues, albeit at varying levels.

The first issue was the ongoing challenge of returning foreign forces and mercenaries. Towards the full implementation of the ceasefire agreement, the JMC remained the central framework for coordinating the removal of foreign forces from Libya (UNSG 2021a). Reflecting the continental stance on this critical issue, the PSC on 18 May 2021 called for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all foreign fighters and mercenaries within the three-month timeframe stipulated in the Permanent Ceasefire Agreement (AU PSC 2021l). However, save the departure of about 350 Syrian fighters, progress in removing foreign security entities remained limited.[29] On 8 October 2021, the JMC agreed and signed a comprehensive *Action Plan for the Withdrawal of Mercenaries, Foreign Fighters, and Foreign Force*, which envisages to be 'the cornerstone for the gradual, balanced, and sequenced process of the withdrawal of mercenaries, foreign fighters and foreign forces'.[30] The AU took part in the various meetings to implement the action plan, notably in the ministerial meeting of the neighbouring countries of Libya, held on 30 August 2021 in Algiers (AU PSC 2021u; AU Assembly 2022a).

The second major challenge was the difficulty in convening presidential and parliamentary elections on 24 December 2021. Libyans were supposed to go to the polls in line with the provisions of the road map established within the framework of the inter-LPDF, held in Tunis in November 2020. Depite the establishment of the GNU being a major highlight of the year, the elections could not take place due to disagreements over candidates and a disputed legal framework (ibid.).

This discord broadly underpinned the High National Elections Commission's announcement that it could not hold the presidential election on 24 December 2021 and its suggestion to postpone the election until 24 January.[31] To support the electoral processes, the AU initially planned for a multidimensional needs assessment mission and, on that basis, to deploy a short-term

29 Interview with a North African analyst, 11 March 2021 (virtual).

30 *UNSMIL Statement* [Geneva], 8 October 2021.

31 *Security Council Report Monthly Forecast* [New Yoek], 28 December 2021.

election observation mission (EOM). However, the deployment of these missions did not take effect, given the postponement of the elections (AU Assembly 2022b, §[x]92).

Apart from the contestation over the election date and modality and the presence of foreign fighters, some worrying security concerns persisted throughout the year. Tripoli and north-western towns were affected by rivalry and renewed competition between armed groups over territorial control (UNSG 2021a). Criminal activities, including killings, kidnappings for ransom, and trafficking in illegal substances and fuel continued in the eastern region. Southern Libya was also affected by growing tensions and confrontations among armed groups in southern Libya and Da'esh's increased violent activity (ibid.).

Overall, the AU strived to keep its hand in Libya's complex and multiparty peacemaking landscape. In comparison to the previous year, the AU's visibility was reduced in terms of the frequency of the meetings of the High-Level Committee on Libya, summit-level and PSC decisions and deliberations, and the engagement of the AU Contact Group for Libya. This seems understandable as 2020 was a monumental year that witnessed many critical political developments, including signing the comprehensive peace agreement and developing a political road map. In addition, conflict resolution remained dominated by many global and regional actors that continue to exert more influence and deploy more political and financial resources than the AU. As such, Libya continues to typify a multiparty mediation environment led by actors that have a direct interest in the outcome, and their involvement has made it difficult to resolve the conflict.[32]

As in the previous year, the absence of a meaningful and coordinated subregional platform that could complement the AU's effort also continued. Whereas the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) mainly lacked meaningful involvement, visibility of the North African Regional Capability (NARC) remained under the radar regarding conflict prevention, management, and resolution.

Besides Libya, the PSC considered Western Sahara to be a part of the council's agenda (AU PSC 2021e). To be sure, Western Shahara's demand for independence and international recognition has been prolonged, with no significant progress in the intervening years. However, confrontations between Algeria and Morocco in 2021 accounted for the AU's renewed focus on Western Sahara. Tensions between the two countries rose in 2021, among others, due to their divergent positions, Morocco claiming sovereignty over Western Sahara and Algeria backing the latter's independence.

32 *ISS PSC Report* (131) [Pretoria], December 2020/January 2021, 13.

At the level of African Heads of State and Government, there was a discussion of Western Sahara on 9 March. In line with a 2018 summit decision, the AU Assembly in 2020 had called for the revitalisation of the troika mechanism, comprising the outgoing, the current, and the incoming chairs as well as the chairperson of the commission to engage Morocco and Western Sahara (AU Assembly 2020b). The troika was envisaged as a mechanism that supports UN-led efforts and engages the concerned parties. Against this background, the PSC called for the urgent revitalisation of the troika's engagement with Morocco and the Saharawi Arab Republic; requested Morocco and Western Sahara to immediately cease hostilities and resort to dialogue; asked the AUC to open its liaison office in Laayoune, Western Sahara; and committed to undertake a field visit to the region (AU PSC 2021e). These decisions notwithstanding, the AU did not operationalise the troika in 2021. The efforts made to convene the troika's maiden meeting on the margins of the 2019, 2020, and 2021 AU Assemblies did not come to fruition (Amani Africa 2022).

2.4 *West Africa*

2.4.1 The Gambia and Guinea

In 2021, the most salient issue in The Gambia has been sustaining the political transition that commenced with the removal of Yahya Jammeh's regime. The presidential elections and transitional justice processes were arguably crucial markers of the country's political transition, which was facing critical challenges. There were warning signs of a looming crisis, such as political factionalism, delayed institutional and constitutional reforms, ethnic polarisation, and constant socioeconomic challenges.[33]

The elections became all the more critical mainly because of an unexpected political manoeuvre in the form of an agreement between the current president Adama Barrow's National People's Party and Jammeh's Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction. The alliance led to dual concerns that former President Jammeh would interfere in the election and the current president's intention to win the election in any way possible.[34] In addition, the possible re-entry of Jammeh into politics was deemed detrimental to the fight against impunity for crimes committed during his reign, jeopardising national cohesion and stability.[35]

Unlike the previous years, the PSC did not have a dedicated session on The Gambia, but the AU had engaged in the country in other ways. The AU deployed

33 Interview with a West African analyst, 30 March 2021 (virtual).

34 *Bloomberg* [New York], 5 September 2021.

35 Ibid.

a long-term EOM in The Gambia on 20 October, which was joined later by more observers on 22 November 2021.[36] More or less in line with the pronouncement of the EU and the US, the AU EOM announced that the poll was 'conducted in a peaceful and democratic environment' and in line with 'national and international standards'.[37]

Beyond the deployment of the EOM, the AU highlighted The Gambia as one of the cases where it extended substantial electoral assistance. These interventions sought to foster electoral integrity and overall democratic consolidation, peace, stability, and effective governance. In addition, the AU claimed to have supported The Gambia through other mechanisms. These include the deployment of a consultative mission in support of the *Constitutionalism and Rule of Law* initiative, a preventive diplomacy-based measure in December 2021, a multidimensional needs assessment mission, and the implementation of quick impact and peace-strengthening projects, as well as needs assessment and deployment of SSR experts (AU Assembly 2022a). The AU terminated the AU Technical Support Team to The Gambia (AUTSTG) in 2020 for funding reasons (see AU PSC 2020). However, the AUTSTG indicated that the small, agile, and embedded AU deployment teams that are built around national ownership, institutional development, and a comparatively light footprint are valuable.[38] In light of the various achievements, experts recommended that the PSC mandate a follow-up support mission to phase one of the AUTSTG. However, the AU did not authorise or deploy the mission throughout 2021.[39]

The coup that led to the removal of President Alpha Condé in Guinea and the military's assumption of power on 5 September was another significant political situation in the region in 2021. Although Guinea had been confronted with ongoing structural challenges, the coup was particularly precipitated by the extension of the term limit and the president's running for a controversial third term in the face of stiff resistance in October 2020. Popular protests persisted before, during, and after the election, paving the way for the military's takeover of power on 5 September 2021. On the very day of the military takeover, the DRC's president, acting as the AU chairperson, and the AUC chairperson issued a joint statement. They condemned any seizure of power by force, demanded the immediate release of Condé, and invited the PSC to

36 *African Union Press Release* [Addis Ababa], 3 December 2021.
37 *ICG Crisis Watch* [Brussels], December 2021.
38 ISS *PSC Report* (141) [Pretoria], November 2021, 11–12.
39 Interview with a West African analyst, 30 March 2021 (virtual).

meet urgently to consider the new situation in Guinea and take the appropriate measures.[40]

Successive PSC meetings followed the joint statement and culminated in a decision that contrasted with the AU's stance on a similar situation of the military takeover of power in Chad earlier in April. On 6 September, the AU held an emergency session, which did not culminate in any outcome document (Amani Africa 2022). Four days later, and calling the situation a UCG, the AU suspended Guinea (AU PSC 2021t). The AU's decision mirrors ECOWAS' decision to suspend Guinea on 9 September.

The AU's subsequent engagement came in the wake of an ECOWAS meeting that took place on 16 September. This meeting appraised positively the commitment of the coup leaders to the swift restoration of constitutional order, including their decision to hold consultations with the relevant stakeholders. Yet, ECOWAS decided to uphold Guinea's suspension, sanction the coup leaders and their families, and call for elections within six months (ECOWAS 2021b). It seems the Guinean coup leaders 'failed to rollout a timetable for the return of constitutional order four months after the coup', thus raising the question of whether the PSC and/or ECOWAS are going to impose more sanctions or extend the duration of the transition (Amani Africa 2022, 11).

In general, two main observations can be made regarding the AU's involvement in the situation in Guinea. The first refers to the PSC's failure to have Guinea on its radar before the outbreak of the crisis, acting on its conflict prevention mandate. Despite continuing instability, the PSC did not discuss Guinea in 2020 and for the major part of 2021, except after the coup. The AU did not equivocate in calling the situation in Guinea by its name, that is to say, a coup d'état. In comparison to the situation in Chad, this also raises questions regarding the AU's commitment to consistently uphold its norms, the importance of a 'strong sub-regional actor', and finally calls for a discussion of the military's role in politics on the continent.

2.4.2 The LCB Region and the Threat of Boko Haram

As in the previous years, the Boko Haram insurgency continued as a key threat to the countries in the LCB, along with other overlapping sources of instability. The battle-related death of Abubaker Shekau, the leader of Boko Haram on 19 May 2021 is one major event that affected the course of the insurgency. His demise set in motion a range of interrelated dynamics representing a major

40 *Joint Press Statement*, 5 September 2021. <https://twitter.com/africa_amani/status/1434597208498790400>.

turn in the course of the insurgency.[41] The Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP), a splinter of Boko Haram and rival faction, consolidated its territorial gains and took over some of Shekau's fighters. Also, a wave of disengagement of former fighters and civilians under the insurgents' control ensued. Simultaneously, the year also witnessed the resurgence of Ansaru, a faction that was dormant for some time, which showed signs of relaunching itself.[42] Overall, there was a reduction of attacks in north-eastern Nigeria (HIIK 2022, 69).

The threat of violent extremism persisted together with other security challenges. While not entirely new in 2021, countries in the region continued to grapple with intercommunal clashes, leading to fatalities and displacement of peoples in the region. Some countries in the region, such as Nigeria, also saw a rise in banditry and abduction. Just between January and June 2021, there were 2,944 cases of kidnapping, as compared to 2,860 for the whole of 2020.[43]

As in the previous year, the response by the AU, regional actors and their partners to the Boko Haram threat, especially to violent extremist elements, assumed two major dimensions. Throughout the year, national armies in the region intensified the military pressure on the violent extremist groups, including aerial attacks on the different factions. In addition to operations by national armies, notably by Nigeria, the MNJTF maintained its operations. The PSC renewed the MNJTF's mandate for an additional twelve months, starting on 31 January 2021 (AU PSC 2021a). The AU also continued to provide support to the MNJTF through its technical section at the force's headquarters in N'Djamena, Chad. Another major response was the continued implementation of the *Regional Strategy for the Stabilisation, Recovery and Resilience of the Boko Haram-affected Areas of the Lake Chad Basin Region* (RSS). On 19 July 2021, the PSC reviewed the strategy's implementation (AU PSC 2021p).

2.4.3 The Sahel: Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger

The security situation in the Sahel remained 'highly volatile' due to increased terrorist attacks, local conflicts, non-state armed groups, and transnational organised crimes (AU Assembly 2022b). According to ACLED (2021), fatalities from clashes between the state forces and armed groups linked to Islamic State, al-Qaida, and criminal gangs across Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger showed an increase of 18 per cent against 2020. On 14 November 2021, Burkina Faso notably witnessed the worst violent extremist attack on a gendarmerie outpost in

41 Interview with a Central African analyst, 31 January 2021 (virtual).
42 Interview with a Lake Chad Basin analyst, 26 January 2021 (virtual).
43 *HumAngle* [Abuja], 12 December 2021.

the northern region of Soum, which claimed the lives of 49 policemen and 4 civilians.[44]

The existing trend of violent extremism witnessed some qualitative changes. According to ACLED (2022), violent extremist groups shifted their activities to geographic areas beyond the immediate reach of external forces due to military pressure in the Liptako-Gourma region. This was accompanied by renewed engagement in local conflicts, allowing jihadist militant groups to enlarge their scope of action, reassert their influence, remobilise, and gain resources to rebuild (ibid.). In addition, the expansion of attacks to the coastal states of Western Africa became more pronounced. This was evidenced, for example, by attacks on Côte d'Ivoire in October and northern Togo in November 2021. Civilians bear the brunt of insecurity in the Sahel, not just from attacks by jihadists but also due to the actions of the security forces. The region also witnessed increased friction between the Malian transitional authorities and some of their international partners in the fight against violent extremists. Key milestones were France's decision to draw down its forces and the growing involvement of the Russian private military company, the Wagner Group.

The region also saw an increase in local conflicts, mostly between farmers and herder communities – compounding the current instability in the region. Furthermore, the spike in political unrest in the Sahel added another layer to the complex security situation of the region. The region witnessed a coup in Mali, an attempted coup in Niger, and calls for Burkina Faso's president to resign.[45] Such instances of political instability were primarily driven by citizens' dissatisfaction over governments' failures to address the security challenges and were underpinned by long-standing governance deficits. Violent extremist groups continued to exploit these local grievances effectively.

The PSC discussed the situation in Mali at the ministerial level on 24 May 2021, coincidentally a few hours before the coup (Amani Africa 2022). The military took power by arresting the transition president of Mali, Bah N'Daw, and the prime minister, Moctar Ouane. This incident interrupted Mali's fragile transition to civilian rule emerging from an earlier military takeover in 2020. On 25 May, the PSC convened its 1,000th session to consider the situation in Mali.[46] The PSC condemned the arrest of the leaders of the civilian-led transitional government and called for their release (AU PSC 2021m). In addition, it called for a return to the civilian-led transition and indicated possible sanctions

44 *Africanews.* [Lyon], 15 November 2021.

45 *Voice of America* [Washington DC], 31 December 2022.

46 The inaugural session of the PSC was held on 25 May 2004.

should the defence and security forces fail to comply with the implementation of the PSC's communiqué.

In its subsequent meeting held on 1 June, the PSC suspended Mali from all its activities until the restoration of constitutional order in that country (AU PSC 2021n). The PSC's stance endorsed ECOWAS' decision, which included Mali's suspension from the regional bloc, the call for a new civilian government, and the nomination of a new civilian prime minister (ECOWAS 2021a). Meanwhile, the National Transition Council (NTC) adopted an ambitious *Government Action Plan* (GAP) for 2021–2022, aspiring to prepare for presidential and legislative elections in February and March 2022. The PSC also deployed an evaluation mission to Mali (14–17 July 2021). On 2 September, the PSC received the mission's report and appraised progress made in the implementation of the GAP. The PSC particularly called on the Malian authorities to establish 'a clear, precise and realistic chronogram, delineating the period and implementation of reforms and the elections within the collectively agreed 18 months transition period' (AU PSC 2021s, §3).

The AU also took part in various other initiatives to resolve the governance crises in Mali, shepherding the transition process and ultimately organising free, fair, and credible democratic elections. The AU Mission for Mali and Sahel (MISAHEL) was part of the Local Transition Monitoring Committee (LTMC), composed of the special representative of the UN secretary-general for Mali and head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the representatives of ECOWAS, and the AU itself. This initiative is primarily aimed at fostering dialogue with the Malian transitional authorities and ensuring the implementation of preceding recommendations and decisions of the PSC and ECOWAS. The committee had various meetings with transition authorities and national interlocutors, aiming to prioritise reforms and publish an updated timeline for the elections planned in February 2022 (UNSG 2021b). MISAHEL took part in the LTMC's dialogue efforts to broker the release of leaders of the former transition president and the prime minister, who were under house arrest.[47] The AU supported Mali's transition by mobilising resources and initiating the recruitment of technical experts to help the government implement its transition road map (AU Assembly 2022a, §§9–11).

As in the previous year, the AU attempted to be part of the broad international effort to respond to the region's persisting security threats. The AU's responses came through various interventions centred around MISAHEL

47 Interview with a Sahel analyst, 31 March 2022 (virtual).

and the Nouakchott process – both underpinned by the *AU Strategy for the Sahel Region*, developed in 2014. MISAHEL continued to play its role as the implementation arm of AU's decisions and strategies on the Sahel. MISAHEL sought to support various strategic and operational efforts in the region in the area of security, governance, and development processes. The mission's support includes capacity-building of local actors in border governance; awareness-raising around the prevention of violent extremism, especially in Mali; enhancement of the competences of Election Management Bodies (EMBs); and facilitation of consultations for the constitutional court.

The mission provided operational and technical support, such as supporting a radio programme on the peace and reconciliation process in Mali, continued monitoring and compliance of the human rights situation in Mali, and supporting training on human rights and implementation of a project on the prevention of sexual violence. MISAHEL also organised awareness-raising workshops regarding the various AU instruments in governance, gender, and the promotion of human rights; facilitated the organisation of training workshops on decentralisation and local conflict resolution techniques; and provided technical assistance to the various structures responsible for electoral operations and reforms.[48]

MISAHEL continued its participation in the Peace Agreement Monitoring Committee (Comité de suivi de l'accord, CSA) of the 2015 *Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Mali*. The last session of the CSA took place on 5 October 2021. However, relations between the signatory parties have continued to deteriorate, despite the international mediation efforts. Making real progress towards its full implementation was limited, mainly owing to the parties' lingering differences underscoring the need for the renewed commitment of all stakeholders (UNSG 2021b). In spite of MISAHEL supporting the implementation of this agreement and other endeavours in the broader region, it remained understaffed and inadequately resourced. Bolstering the mission remained a critical consideration, especially as the AU expanded the mission's mandate to assist Guinea's transition.[49]

The AU also made limited efforts to create momentum around the Nouakchott process (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2020*, 154–155). The AU established this platform for information and intelligence-sharing and a tool for combatting terrorism and extremism in 2013. The process was credited with creating a culture of exchange and cooperation among security actors.[50] However, political

48 Ibid.

49 *ICG Briefing* (166) [Brussels], 3 February 2021.

50 *ISS Today* [Pretoria], 25 June 2018.

momentum around the process was losing steam due to the lack of political will among the key actors in the region, particularly to dedicate the requisite financial resources. In November 2021, MISAHEL convened meetings on the Nouakchott process in Bamako and other capitals in the region with the participation of military advisors and African defence attachés to sensitise the stakeholders, encourage their participation, and revitalise the process.[51]

The Joint Force of the G5 Sahel maintained its deployment as a crucial instrument in the fight against terrorist groups in the region. Though not an AU mission in the strictu sensu, as a mandating authority, the PSC on 6 July 2021 renewed the mandate of the Joint Force of the G5 Sahel for another year, starting on 13 July 2021 (AU PSC 20210). The renewal was made in consideration nof the mission's effort to restore durable peace and stability in the region. Nonetheless, the Joint Force of the G5 Sahel operated in the face of critical challenges that risk losing the gains made in the preceding years. The report of the UN secretary-general on the joint force underscored that the mission needed a more predictable funding through assessed contribution-instead of relying on unpredictable partner financing, better regional ownership, and a more complementary approach between military, political and development endeavours (UNSG 2021d, 23).

In 2020, the AU Assembly authorised the deployment of a MNJTF comprising 3,000 troops in order to further impair terrorist groups in the Sahel (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2020*, 154–155). However, limited progress was made in 2021 in implementing this decision despite the finalisation of the development of the concept of operations (CONOPS) for the deployment of the troops. When the AU took the deployment decision, key states in the region, Nigeria and Ghana, had criticised the AU for insufficient consultation with ECOWAS on the deployment of the MNJTF.[52] Apparently to address this criticism and create momentum around the force, the PSC, on 6 July 2021, requested the AUC chairperson 'to continue consultations with the concerned stakeholders on the deployment of the 3000 troops in the Sahel region' (AU PSC 20210, §11).

Similarly, the review of the AU Strategy for the Sahel Region did not observe much progress in 2021. The strategy was developed in 2014 to 'identify synergies, avoid unnecessary duplication and promote an action-oriented approach of the various initiatives for this region' (AU PSC 2014, §16). The need for better coherence and coordination has become more pronounced throughout the years in light of the proliferation of actors, response mechanisms, and strategies in the region. The PSC requested the 'AUC to finalise the Stabilization

51 Interview with a Sahel analyst, 31 March 2022 (virtual).

52 *ICG Briefing* (166) [Brussels], 3 February 2021.

Strategy for the Sahel … to ascertain a comprehensive and actionable strategy on countering violent extremism in the region' (AU PSC 2021s, §9). The revitalisation of the strategy could contribute to bolstering a more comprehensive solution to multiple crises in the region beyond the dominance of the military approach and carve out a role for the AU towards better Africanisation of counterinsurgency and counter violent extremism efforts in the region.[53]

2.5 *Central Africa*

2.5.1 Central African Republic

The CAR's political and security dynamics continued to evolve in 2021. Although deeply steeped in the history of instability in the country, the CAR's contemporary challenges originated primarily in the contestation around the 2020 election and the military offensive launched by the rebels in the preceding years.

On the political front, President Faustin-Archange Touadéra was declared the winner of the election. In the previous year, the credibility of the election was fiercely contested by the Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC), a loose alliance of armed opposition groups that was established in the first place to stop the electoral process (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2020*, 167). The CAR's political turmoil showed some signs of relative stability as contestation around the presidential election took a back seat, albeit temporarily, following the president's inauguration on 30 March and the establishment of a new government on 23 June. Howeverime, the resignation of the prime pinister on 10 June was taken at the same time as signs of continued political fragility within the current government.

Security-wise, the government was able to check the advances of the rebel forces that were looming to capture the capital of Bangui in January 2021 and even reverse the rebels' territorial gains. UN peacekeepers, Russian paramilitaries, advisors, and mercenaries, and the Rwandese military contributed to the government's efforts to counter the rebel's offensive. The offensive liberated around 80 per cent of the national territory from the grip of armed groups.[54] A fragile status quo had ensued where the territorial control and the power balance appeared to favour the government, at least for a significant part of 2021. However, the situation remained precarious as violence continued in different parts of the country, particularly in the west and centre (UNSG 2021c). The offensives by government forces and its foreign allies as well as reprisal attacks

53 Interview with a Sahel analyst based in Bamako, 13 April 2022 (virtual).

54 See ULR: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/central-african-republic> (accessed: 30 June 2022).

and attempts to recapture territories by the rebels again resulted in displacement and tension among civilians and local communities (ibid.).

The quest for lasting solutions to the CAR's peace and security woes took different forms, constituting a loosely interlinked peace architecture. Launching a republican dialogue with all the nation's active forces and the setting up of the Preparatory Committee on 1 September was one significant political instrument announced in 2021 (AU Assembly 2022a, §5). However, disagreement was not avoided as it was not clear who would participate in the planned dialogue, that is to say, mainly if the government would allow the CPC, which it accuses of major atrocities, to participate.[55] The political opposition also criticised the composition of the Preparatory Committee for its 'large representation of public authorities and those affiliated with the ruling party' (UNSG 2021c, §4).

The announcement of a unilateral ceasefire by the president on 16 October was another critical development. The announcement came on the back of a flurry of diplomatic efforts, including high-level engagement of envoys and the adoption of a *Joint Road Map for Peace for the CAR*. The road map, among others, called for the government to declare a ceasefire of its operations to combat armed groups in the country and called for an inclusive dialogue supporting the AU-brokered 2019 *Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic* (PAPR–CAR), which urged the government to declare a ceasefire.[56] Despite its limited implementation, the agreement remained the only viable framework for sustainable peace. According to the UN secretary-general's quarterly report on the CAR, the political agreement was sidetracked owing to 'attention focused on preparations for the republican dialogue and the ICGLR initiative' (UNSG 2021c, §8).

As in the previous year, the AU's role has been to ensure the sustenance and support of the various peace initiatives, notably the PAPR–CAR, through two PSC sessions, a PSC field visit, a high-level engagement of the AU chairperson, and initiatives by the commissioner for PAPS, such as a joint AU, UN, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and EU high-level mission; video conferences with the CAR president and the CAR's partners; and deployment of the AU's military advisors (AU Assembly 2022a, §5).

On 16 February 2021, the PSC offered its political backing for the CAR's election and ongoing efforts for peacemaking, especially its support for the PAPR–CAR. The PSC welcomed the election result while condemning the CPC's attempted coup on 13 January 2021. The PSC issued a stern warning against spoilers and violators of the PAPR–CAR, including requesting the AU

55 Interview with a CAR analyst, 3 March 2021 (virtual).

56 *Security Council Report Monthly Forecast* [New York], 29 October 2021.

Commission to submit a proposal for criteria for the punitive measures and possible targets of the sanctions (AU PSC 2021d).

The PSC also undertook a field mission to the CAR (27 June–1 July 2021). The mission was intended to show solidarity with the people and the government of the CAR (AU PSC 2021d). Based on the field mission report, the PSC convened another meeting on 21 July. It stressed the PAPR–CAR as the 'only viable approach for holistically addressing CAR's multifaceted challenges' and urged the signatories to recommit to the peace process and prioritise dialogue in their quest for lasting solutions (AU PSC 2021q, §5).

Another key instrument of the AU's involvement has been the deployment of the Military Observer Mission to the Central African Republic (MOUACA). In spite of its delayed deployment, which was indicative of one of the critical gaps in the implementation of the PAPR–CAR, the military observers remained deployed throughout 2021.[57] However, the PSC had not received a briefing on the MOUACA, as indicated by its 936th and 979th sessions (Amani Africa 2022).

In a nutshell, the CAR shows some emerging trends and policy imperatives regarding the AU's engagement in the continent's peace and security landscape. First, it indicates the limitation of the AU to articulate a common African position towards external intervention in conflict settings where the Union has been involved historically as well as how to contend with some of the shifts related to these intervenions. Second, the involvement of Russian mercenaries and Rwandan forces in the CAR helps to showcase two major emerging trends in Africa's peace and security. At one level, it illustrates the ascendance of Russia (for example, in Mali and the CAR) and Rwanda (Mozambique and the CAR) as external interveners in some of the conflict hotspots on the continent. The CAR also became a battleground for growing superpower rivalry on the continent, in this case between France and Russia, as the latter dislodges the former's influence, including from areas considered France's traditional mainstay and historical partners.[58] Third, the situation in the CAR also signifies the AU's persisting constraints regarding implementation capabilities and the political will to maintain its involvement. Finally, on the positive side, the CAR also demonstrates how the AU has collaborated with regional actors – such as the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and ECCAS – and global players – notably the UN and the EU – without insisting on taking a lead role in the quest towards sustainable peace in the country.

57 Interview with a CAR analyst, 3 March 2021 (virtual).

58 *ISS PSC Report* (136) [Pretoria], June 2021, 2–3.

2.5.2 Chad

The year 2021 was a tumultuous one for Chad as unfolding internal political and security dynamics triggered regional and continental ripple effects. On 19 April, presidential elections were held in the face of rebel offensives and in a political environment force marked by little challenge from the opponents of incumbent President Idriss Déby. The election culminated in an unsurprising victory but was followed by a major turn of events. The country's military announced that the president died of wounds sustained in the battlefield; one day before, provisional results had indicated his re-election for a sixth term. Déby's death set in motion complex consequences for Chad, the region, and even for the AU. In Chad, the question over succession to power immediately came to the fore. The constitution provides for the speaker of the parliament to take charge of the country in case the president dies. In an apparent departure from this provision, the military announced the establishment of a Transitional Military Council led by Déby's son, General Mahamat Déby. Across the region, uncertainties emerged about whether or not Chad could maintain its crucial role in the fight against violent extremism in the LCB and Sahel regions. For the AU, it was a critical test for its handling of the military's takeover of power.

The AU followed a more circuitous and contested route in handling the transition. In short, it did not proceed to sanction Chad as it did earlier in the case of the coup in Mali in 2020 or in other subsequent cases of military takeover of power in 2021 in Mali (for a second time in May), Guinea (September), and Sudan (October). In a clear policy departure from these cases, rather than sanctioning Chad, the PSC authorised the deployment of a PSC fact-finding mission to engage with Chadian authorities on all issues of the transition, including an investigation into the killing of the president and restoration of constitutionalism (AU PSC 2021h).

The fact-finding mission took place from 29 April to 5 May 2021. Its report highlighted Chad's precarious security standing, including external aggression, the threat of mercenaries, and terrorist attacks by Boko Haram, the ISWAP, and other armed groups operating in the LCB (AU PSC 2021k). The PSC spared Chad from any immediate sanctions – justifying its decision on Chad's unique role and contributions to the fighting terrorism in the LCB and the Sahel regions, as well as the country's complex political and security predicament. At the same time, it called for a civilian-led, inclusive and consensual transitional process within an 18-month review of the Transitional Military Council's transitional charter. Following the PSC's call, on 24 May the AU also appointed Ambassador Basile Ikouébé as the AU special representative of the AUC chairperson and head of the AU Office in Ndjamena. Prior to Ambassador Ikouébé's appointment, Chad refused the decision to have Ibrahima Fall fill the same post owing

to a lack of consultation in the process.[59] The AU also established the AU Support Mechanism (AUSM) to facilitate and coordinate the various efforts to assist Chad's transition following the request of the 996th session of the PSC (AU PSC 2021k).

The PSC's subsequent engagement with Chad was its 1016th session on 3 August 2022. The PSC appeared to have a relatively positive appraisal of the progress made, notably the establishment of a civilian transition government and the process for establishing the NTC. In addition, it called for an all-inclusive dialogue, insisted on the completion of the transition in 18 months, and strongly indicated that the members of the Military Transition Council should not stand as candidates for the elections at the end of the transition (AU PSC 2021r).

Notwithstanding Chad's political and security situation remaining volatile, the country did not follow a chaotic path as initially predicted. There were concerns that Déby's death may lead to the deterioration of Chad's role in the fight against terrorism in the region; nonetheless, it continued to fulfil its regional commitments within the G5 Sahel arrangements and the MNJTF. The AU's attempt to perform a balancing act by not sanctioning Chad in the wake of the military takeover of power was to set a disturbing precedent.[60] The AU appeared to have nearly averted such precedent by making a course correction in the succeding cases of Mali, Guinea, and Sudan. Nonetheless, it remains one indication of the ambivalence of the AU and its member states in dealing with UCGs as stipulated in the relevant norms laid out in the 2007 *African Chater on Democracy, Elections and Gvernance* and the 2000 *Lomé Declaration* (see also the op ed by the first AU commissioner for peace and security, Djinnit 2021).

2.5.3 Burundi

In 2021, the AU characterised Burundi as one of the country situations that has made progress (PSC 2021i; AU Assembly 2022a, §9). The AU highlighted improvements in Burundi's political and security situation that 'culminated in the successful organization of the election in 2020, the formation of a new government, and the betterment of its relations with its neighbours' (AU PSC 2021i, §1). Considering the overall improvement of the political and security conditions indicated above, the PSC decided to end the mandate of the AU Human Rights Observers and Military Experts Mission in Burundi on 31 May 2021 and to remove Burundi from the agenda of the council (ibid.). This follows a similar decision by the UN in December 2020. However, concerns over

59 *ICG Commentary* [Brussels], 30 September 2021.
60 *ISS Today* [Pretoria], 2 June 2021.

human rights violations continued throughout, as evidenced by, for example, Human Right Watch.[61]

2.5.4 Cameroon

The situation in Cameroon showed signs of intensification by different measures. The situation in parts of Cameroon was unfolding owing to several factors: confrontations between the Cameroon army and armed separatist groups from the two Anglophone regions, incursions by armed groups affiliated with Boko Haram in the Far North region as well as local conflicts between farmers and herders (AU Assembly 2022a). According to the Heidelberg Conflict Barometer, the crises over autonomy or secession, which it characterised as 'limited war' in 2020, escalated into war in 2021 and the violent number of causalities saw a sharp rise since 2020 (HIIK 2021, 69). Even though the separatist groups did not exert much territorial control, they resorted to the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and launching sporadic attacks on the military, the police, and other state representatives.[62]

For the major part, the government maintained a militarised approach in responding to the conflict, framing it as an internal security matter to be addressed through the full range of the state's law and order mechanisms and therefore not warranting external intervention.[63] However, the government also took some non-kinetic measures to respond to the crises, even though the real impact of these measures has yet to be seen. The government was also preparing to host the African Cup of Nations, including in stadiums located in the anglophone region.

As in the previous year, Cameroon did not see much AU engagement in 2021. Despite the evolution of the conflict and its likelihood of continuing in the future, regional and continental actors, including the AU, did not give it the attention it deserved.[64] The conflict did not feature in the PSC's or the AU Assembly's discussions in 2021. As Cameroon is a member of the PSC, it could have exerted diplomatic pressure so that the PSC would not discuss the conflict in its anglophone regions. In this sense, Cameroon typifies the AU's challenge to deal with the question of the sovereignty of states while it strives to foster collective response to peace and security issues on the continent. Despite the lack of the PSC-level engagement, the AU acknowledged Cameroon as one of

61 See URL <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/burundi> (accessed: 30 June 2022).

62 Interview with a regional analyst, Addis Ababa, 12 April 2021.

63 Ibid.

64 *ISS PSC Report* (142) [Addis Ababa], December 2021/January 2022, 12.

its member states that had received its support to further stability in the country. This included support in the development, elaboration, and/or review of the respective *Counter-Terrorism* (CT) *Strategies and Programmes of Action* and being one of the beneficiaries of a joint project to support the implementation of the *Africa Amnesty Month* (AU Assembly 2022a, §24).

2.5.5 Democratic Republic of Congo

The AU framed the DRC as one of the country situations that is showing improvements despite ongoing violence in parts of the eastern DRC, principally due to the activities of local and foreign armed groups as well as intercommunal tension (AU Assembly 2022a, §10). However, this assessment may not sufficiently reflect the state of affairs in the country, including the multiple sources of instability. For instance, the Heidelberg Conflict Barometer designated the DRC, along with Ethiopia, as a country with the highest number of full-scale wars in 2021 (HIIK 2022, 65). Major security woes emanated from the militant activity in the eastern provinces and North Kivu, usually in close proximity to depots of mineral resource exploration; the large-scale, violent attacks by the Islamist Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in different parts of the country; as well as clashes between Burundian opposition groups, on the one hand, and the governments of Burundi and the DRC and the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), on the other (ibid.). In an unprecedented move to contain and possibly eradicate the activities of the armed groups, DRC president Félix Tshisekedi launched *l'Etat de siege* on 6 May 2021 in North Kivu and Ituri to deal with what he called 'negative forces'. The military and judicial operation was initially planned to last three months but remained in place throughout 2021 to ensure stability for the population, according to the administration.

In addition, political tension mounted over the National Independent Electoral Commission and the shifting of alliances among the country's key political actors to form a new ruling coalition, which took an entire year. As the newly elected president, Tshisekedi started to assert his power after emerging from the shadows of former President Joseph Kabila, testing old coalitions and unveiling new alliances. The new president started to engage more actively in the region and with its neighbours as it relates to the security situation in the eastern DRC. In fact, the DRC's relations with Rwanda and Uganda showed signs of improvement owing to regular high-level meetings among their leaders (see Hans Hoebeke and Onesphore Sematumba, this Yearbook, chapter 4.)

Like the previous year, the PSC did not have a session dedicated to the situation in the DRC; however, it was part of its discussion of the Great Lakes region on 21 January. The PSC welcomed UNSC Resolution 2556 (2020), which extended

the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) until 20 December 2021 (AU PSC 2021b). Significantly, the AU has not featured prominently in responding to the situation in the DRC, owing to the highly intractable nature of the conflict, but most importantly to the complex web of actors in the country.

3 Outlook

The worrying peace and security trends that prevailed for a significant part of 2021 leave little room for an optimistic outlook on 2022. The 'hodgepodge of negative factors' that beleaguered Africa in 2021 is likely to spill over into 2022, including the scourge of violent extremism, a resurgence of UCGs, and intrastate conflict (AUC Chairperson 2022a). Such bleak assessment is underpinned by the deep roots of the multiple crises, notably governance deficits and socioeconomic malaise, that will continue in the coming years. A range of factors is also at play in compounding Africa's peace and security predicament. Growing confrontation between Russia and the West over Ukraine and other forms of big power rivalry are likely to escalate, with clear implications for the global economic and political situation and likewise for Africa. Coupled with the Covid-19's lingering impact on African economies and harsh climate change across the continent, such disputes will worsen the social and economic drivers of conflicts on the continent. It is worth highlighting some of the most salient conflict trends and troubling situations that will continue to test the AU in 2022.

Addressing governance deficits and making political transitions work: A few more UCGs are expected as militaries in beleaguered states position themselves as providers of solutions to the entrenched challenges highlighted above. In addition, complex political transitions ushered in by the military usurpation of power in 2021 will enter a difficult implementation phase in Chad, Guinea, Mali, and Sudan. The resolve of the AU and the RECs, which have already sanctioned coup leaders in some of these contexts, will be critically tested if military juntas decide to extend their sojourn in such transitions.

For instance, Sudan will embark on a complex dialogue process to conclude the transition process. The dialogue will be challenging owing to the gradual hardening of the positions of the various actors involved.[65] The primary fault line will be between those who wish to see a civilian-led democratic rule and those seeking the status quo that allows the military to remain in power.

65 Interview with a researcher, 30 March 2021 (virtual).

Likewise, 2022 will be a crucial year for South Sudan, which marks the third and final year of the transition period. The country's stability hangs in balance on the extent it can meet crucial milestones regarding the R–ARCSS, which remains a difficult endeavour mainly due to slow progress in integrating armies and resolving elite political contestation.

Dealing with violent extremism: Violent extremism will continue to be the primary source of instability across the continent. In the Sahel, the threat of violent extremism continues to interlace with communal conflicts, socioeconomic deficits, and the influence of global terrorist groups. Violent extremist groups in West Africa will likely threaten to further spread towards the coast, targeting countries such as Ghana, Togo, and Côte d'Ivoire. Moving from the prevailing securitised approach to dealing with crises to a more comprehensive approach that considers politics and a development-centred approach will remain a lacking imperative. Cracks within the international coalition against violent extremism will likely widen with growing tension, especially between France and Russia. In the LCB region, the Boko Haram threat and the group's territorial control may see further reduction due to the military offensives of the MNJTF and countries in the region. However, possible leadership contest within the ISWAP will likely occur, together with potential repercussions for counterterrorism operations. In addition, countries in the area will be confronted with the complex tasks of effectively dealing with former combatants leaving the various terror groups.

In Southern Africa, major operations by the Mozambican government, Rwandan forces, and the SAMIM will continue throughout the year and contribute to restricting the capacity of the insurgents to control territories and launch attacks on major economic infrastructure. This might entail a change in the nature of warfare or how Islamic militants may decide to continue their insurgency. Insurgents may embrace possible strategies and tactics such as spreading violence to northern Malawi and southern Tanzania instead of concentrating their operations in the coastal areas and holding the harbour town of Mocimboa da Praia in the previous year, as they did in 2021.

Ending protracted conflicts and full-scale wars: Some protracted conflicts are unlikely to be resolved; rather, they will be compounded by unfolding political and security dynamics. Somalia will continue to struggle with political contestation between the current president and his political opponents, and the road to the planned election will be a bumpy one. Such political dispute will have direct consequences for the mission that will replace AMISOM, undermining the solid political foundation that needs to accompany the mission's operations. In the DRC, contestation over electoral processes will exacerbate the country's security predicament. Even with the election being set for 2023, 2022 will be a crucial year in which uncertainties over the electoral process will

play out side by side the persisting insecurity as a result of the various armed groups in the country. Likewise, Libya will face a similar challenge in terms of conducting the election, which is envisaged to take place when the political and security conditions are not conducive for this critical political exercise.[66] Also, the withdrawal of foreign fighters and mercenaries may not be fully completed. Instead, challenges will likely remain, among others, regarding the willingness of the conflict parties to commit to relevant agreements and the future fate of these foreign security elements. The rivalry between the USA and Russia will continue to hamper crisis response arrangements on global platforms, notably the appointment of a UN special envoy to Libya, thereby undermining the UN's position and, to a lesser extent, the AU's involvement in the Libyan dossier.

The stalemate around Western Sahara will most likely continue. Rivalry among the region's major powers, Algeria and Morocco, may de-escalate; however, their competition will continue to frustrate global and continental efforts to resolve the Western Sahara issue. The AU may succeed in revitalising the engagement of the troika, but the latter's contribution hinges on the composition of its members.

While the war in northern Ethiopia has temporarily subsided, a lasting resolution will not be in sight in 2022. A number of interrelated political processes must be watched keenly to comprehensively address the country's multiple sources of instability, namely the onset and progress of a national dialogue, possible mediation efforts with Tigray's insurgents, and discussions of how prominent international actors engage with the resolution of the crises constructively. In Cameroon, the government is likely to intensify its offensive campaigns against the separatist groups. Despite there being a broad recognition that the government's current militarised approach is insufficient, a continuation of a similar course is expected in 2022.

In conclusion, the combined effect of the above-mentioned trends and other crises will continue to weigh heavily on the AU's ability and commitment to ensure stability in the continent. To avert a looming crisis of legitimacy and relevance, the AU is increasingly called upon to revisit the vitality of its peace, security, and governance architectures. The AU may initiate new processes and reinvigorate existing ones to scrutinise its role in responding to UCGs and addressing the governance deficits; find better ways of dealing with violent extremism, reigning in the security sectors in effective governance frameworks; and enhance its relations with the RECs/RMs.

66 *PSC Insights* [Pretoria], 17 December 2021.

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CHAPTER 10

Regional Integration and Trade

Bruce Byiers

1 Background[1]

No discussion of economic integration in Africa today is complete without reference to the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Even if the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and other regional organisations have continued to advance their own processes, the AfCFTA is high on political and policy agendas (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2000*, 178–182). It is *the* trade and integration initiative of the moment, seeking as it does to

> create a single market for goods, services, facilitated by movement of persons in order to deepen the economic integration of the African continent and in accordance with the Pan African Vision of 'An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa' enshrined in Agenda 2063. (African Union 2022a)

This implies connecting 1.3 billion people across 55 countries with a combined GDP valued at $3.4 trillion, with an estimated impact of lifting 30 million people out of extreme poverty by 2035 (World Bank 2020).

Having gathered broad political momentum since its opening for signature in 2018, the AfCFTA is seen as a way to shift the African economic development model away from raw material exports towards greater investment and economic diversification, thus helping address the economic effects of Covid-19 (see, for instance, Macleod and Luke 2022). Indeed, the African Union (AU) Executive Council policy decisions of October 2021 refer to the AfCFTA *only* in terms of its role in Covid-19 economic recovery (AU Council 2021a, §58). By providing a basis to develop regional value chains that go beyond existing regional free trade areas (FTAs), the hope is that the AfCFTA can increase intra-African trade from a current average of 18 per cent of overall trade – even if this figure underestimates current trade by ignoring informal trade and is

1 The author would like to acknowledge the helpful review comments and input from Trudi Hartzenberg, Alan Hirsch, Wumi Kolawole, Jamie Macleod, Jaime de Melo, and Jan Vanheukelom. Any errors remain those of the author alone.

arguably skewed due to the dominance of a few commodity exports (Fofack and Mold 2021).

Postponed since July 2020 due to the effects of Covid-19, trade under the AfCFTA was officially launched on 1 January 2021 (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2020*, 178). It now counts 54 signatory countries, and as of 31 December 2021, 38 countries had deposited their instruments of ratification with the AU (tralac 2022). The AfCFTA secretary-general, Wamkele Keabetswe Mene, sworn into office on 19 March 2020, has been omnipresent in African and international discussion fora, articulating the logic, potential benefits, and status of the AfCFTA while building up a secretariat in Accra, Ghana, to oversee negotiations and implementation of the agreement.

Though trade reportedly took place under the new agreement in early 2021 – two shipments of alcoholic products and cosmetic goods from Ghana to South Africa[2] – this was only symbolic. By the end of 2021, negotiations on tariff offers, rules of origin (RoOs) and schedules of commitments are still ongoing among state parties, with numerous steps still to be taken by national governments before trade can meaningfully take place under the agreement. As Luke and Macleod (2021) put it, 'the AfCFTA is stuck somewhere between its "negotiation" and "implementation" phases. At several points, AU summits have celebrated the near-completion of the AfCFTA, yet effective implementation has been elusive'.

As would be expected for such a large and ambitious agreement, the institutional set-up for governing the AfCFTA is also a work in progress. A range of ongoing, multi-level, complex interactions of public and private actors, as well as formal and informal processes, will shape the final form of the AfCFTA commitments and how they are how implemented. In this phase, beyond national negotiating teams, the array of AfCFTA actors includes the newly established AfCFTA Secretariat, the AU Commission (AUC) portfolio department for Economic Development, Trade, Industry and Mining (ETIM), as well as the RECs and other sub-regional customs unions.[3] Presented as 'more than a trade agreement' in terms of political ambitions for the continent, the array of stakeholders goes beyond those directly involved in trade issues to include infrastructures, standards, and industrialisation, with competing institutional interests between new and existing continental initiatives and regional organisations, depending on how broadly the AfCFTA and regional mandates are interpreted.

2 *Xinhuanet* [Beijing], 6 January 2021.

3 ETIM became ETTIM as of February 2022 with the addition of tourism (AU Council 2022a, §77).

Though there are some rumblings about slow progress in completing the AfCFTA negotiations – *The Economist* magazine cites 'more launches than NASA' and 'a lack of urgency'[4] – the AfCFTA secretary-general has been consistent with his message that FTAs are long-run processes, made more complicated by having 54 signatories, and that such endeavours are undertaken over decades. This position was shared in a statement to the AU Assembly in late 2020 (Mene 2020). Although this may be true, 2021 has seen progress but has also raised challenges, as discussed in this chapter.

The remainder of this chapter is structured as follows: section 2 briefly touches on decision-making and implementation structures, with the main body of the discussion on decisions, contested issues, and implementation challenges coming in section 3 on key developments in 2021. Section 4 provides a brief outlook.

2 Decision-Making and Implementation Structures

Two broad dimensions of the AfCFTA decision-making structures merit attention. First is the creation and build-up of the AfCFTA Secretariat, a new autonomous body operating within the AU structures. Second is the mandates of key bodies and the division of labour with other key actors involved in continental trade, most notably the AUC, the RECs, and other regional organisations with pre-existing trade agreements. The interest in these mandates is partly about seeking clarity, but also ensuring the necessary participation, collaboration, and coordination, as well as credibility and predictability.

2.1 *AfCFTA Secretariat Establishment*

Following the decision made at the 13th Extraordinary Session of the AU Assembly (Johannesburg, South Africa, 5 December 2020), coordination of the AfCFTA negotiations was transferred from the AUC to the AfCFTA Secretariat (AU Assembly 2020a). The secretariat has begun building up its staff capacity, to be continued over two phases spread over four years and subject to budget availability. The annual estimated full staff costs were estimated to be $29.39 million, covering offices for the secretary-general the deputy, and seven directorates. The approved 2022 budget was $13.7 million, reflecting the phased recruitment approach, with 56 per cent of this to be sought through partner funding programmes (ibid.). Overall, the AfCFTA seeks to fill 296 posts (AU

4 *The Economist* [London], 26 March 2022.

Council 2021a, §3[f]).[5] This compares with a proposed staff of only 53 in the AUC portfolio department for ETIM (AU Assembly 2020e).[6] Combined with the broad scope of the AfCFTA – covering not only trade in goods and services but also intellectual property rights, investment, e-commerce, competition etc. – the secretariat may become more politically important than its name suggests.

The AfCFTA Secretariat is a 'functionally autonomous' institutional body within the AU system, with an independent legal personality. This implies the right to make administrative and operational decisions, including on recruitment, without requiring AUC approval, much as with other AU institutions and organs such as *New Partnership for Africa's Development* (NEPAD) and the Pan-African Parliament (Sodipo 2019).

As defined in the *AfCFTA Agreement*, the AU Assembly is to provide oversight of and strategic guidance to the secretariat, and the Council of Ministers (of Trade) is responsible for implementation and enforcement of the agreement, considering reports and overseeing the secretariat. It will also direct the Committee of Senior Trade Officials, which in turn can direct the secretariat to undertake specific assignments (African Union 2018). The overall institutional structures are presented in Figure 10.1.

Because of its autonomy from the AUC, the AfCFTA secretary-general is accountable to African Heads of State and Government rather than the AUC hierarchy. The decision on whether the AUC should serve as secretariat for the AfCFTA rather than a establishing a new body was reportedly subject to 'intensive debate', with the final decision meaning that the secretariat is 'divorced from the political processes of the AUC' and does not have 'to wait for approvals' (Sodipo 2019, 5). In hierarchical and thus reporting terms, the secretary-general is 'above' the AUC trade commissioner. Further, although the AfCFTA Agreement does not mention the AUC, it is implicitly a part of defining the division of labour with the RECs and other regional bodies.

2.2 *Division of Labour with Regional 'Building Blocks'*

The AfCFTA is an agreement among signatory states, who therefore also negotiate its content. While members of customs unions must make the same tariff offers in order to maintain their union, membership of other regional FTAs

5 The directorates are for trade in goods and competition; customs administration; trade in services; investment, international property rights, and digital trade; dispute settlement and legal affairs; administration of human resources management; finance; and institutional matters and programme coordination.

6 It also compares with a staff of 1,681 at the AUC after the institutional reform across *all* departments (see Ulf Engel, this Yearbook, chapter 3).

FIGURE 10.1 Institutional framework for implementing the AfCFTA
SOURCE: AFCFTA SECRETARIAT AND UNDP (2020, 25)

adds a further dimension to AfCFTA institutional relations. This is particularly so given that the formal place of the RECs and customs unions in the AfCFTA is still being clarified.

The preamble of the AfCFTA Agreement recognises 'the RECs FTAs as building blocs towards the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area' (African Union 2018, 2). This is repeated in Article 5 on the principles of the agreement, with the *Protocol on Trade in Goods* also stating that members of the RECs 'which have attained among themselves higher levels of elimination of customs duties and trade barriers than those provided for in this Protocol, shall maintain, and where possible improve upon, those higher levels of trade liberalisation among themselves' (African Union 2018, §8[2]).

Together, these imply that the AfCFTA is an agreement for establishing an FTA among states that will govern trade *between* the eight AU-recognised RECs with existing FTAs or customs unions. They also imply that where there is an FTA or customs union, trade *within* the RECs will continue to be governed regionally. Despite this, their role is defined as observers: 'The RECs shall be represented in the Committee of Senior Trade Officials, in an advisory capacity' (African Union 2018, §12).

As Apiko et al. (2021) describe, together the RECs pose numerous institutional challenges. Firstly, the eight AU-recognised RECs are very different in terms of history and political and institutional structures, each with different geographic and economic sizes being influenced by the nature of its larger member states. They are also at different levels of integration – the East African Community (EAC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are customs unions, whereas others such as the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) or the Intergovernmental Agency for Development (IGAD) in the Horn of Africa have no FTA. Nonetheless, all the RECs are represented in the Committee of Senior Trade Officials.

Secondly, the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) and the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) operate as customs unions within their respective RECs. Given their common external tariff, customs union member states must therefore coordinate their negotiating position, implying that they should participate in negotiations and play a role beyond an advisory capacity, even though they are not AU-recognised RECs. In addition, prior to the AfCFTA, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA), and the EAC had established the Tripartite FTA to govern trade among themselves, requiring four more ratifications to enter into force and begin trading.[7] If these relationships are not clarified and well managed, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) (2021a, 95) suggests that instead of being 'building blocks', existing REC FTAs may become 'stumbling blocks' in the implementation of the AfCFTA. In recognition of this, reflecting a pragmatic approach that goes beyond the letter of the agreement, SACU and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) have now been invited to participate in meetings where the RECs are present, though the need also for CEMAC to be invited was raised in 2021.

The AfCFTA Secretariat met with the heads of the RECs on 20 September 2021 to discuss options for coordinating between secretariat and the secretariats and/or commissions of the RECs, as well as develop mechanisms for effective collaboration between the AfCFTA Secretariat and the secretariats/commissions of the RECs.[8] At the same time, as part of the AU reform process, 2019 saw the first Mid-Year Coordination Meeting (MYCM) between the AU and the RECs, repeated in 2020 and 2021, themselves part of an ongoing exercise to formally define the division of labour between the AU, the RECs, and member states. However, the AU Assembly in early 2021 decided that 'the

7 *Kenyan Wall Street* [Nairobi], 24 February 2021.

8 AfCFTA Secretariat official, 20 September 2021. <https://twitter.com/afcfta/status/1440009224885579779>.

Mid-Year Coordination Meeting shall be the *principal forum* for the African Union and RECs to align their work and co-ordinate the implementation of the continental integration agenda' (AU Assembly 2021, §11, emphasis added), with an expectation that the AfCFTA Secretariat and the RECs are expected to work within this framework, raising questions of the legality of the relationship between the AfCFTA and the RECs and African Heads of State and Government (through the AU Assembly) as well as the relationship between the AfCFTA secretary-general and the AU commissioner for ETIM. The nature of, and practical implications for, decision-making between the RECs, the AUC, and the AfCFTA Secretariat therefore appear contested. This also arouses concerns for external partners seeking to support the AfCFTA, who reportedly lack clarity in terms of where to allocate their support and whom to engage with to do so. As discussed in section 4 below and represented in Figure 10.1, state parties and regional bodies are currently preparing implementation strategies and establishing national and regional AfCFTA committees – as these become more concretised, the above issues will surely remain prominent in discussions.

3 Key Developments in 2021

As the above discussion highlights, despite considerable progress and political momentum, the practicalities of the AfCFTA are still at a preliminary stage (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2000*, 182–186). This section provides a brief analysis of developments during 2021 with respect to key aspects of the implementation of the AfCFTA. As it shows, progress has continued across a wider range of issues, despite the disruptions brought about by Covid-19, which hindered travel to summits and, perhaps more importantly, physical presence at trade negotiations. Nonetheless, the issues raised above around the division of labour between continental and regional actors remain important for all that follows.

3.1 *AfCFTA Ratifications*

Just before its launch in January 2021, AfCFTA ratifications stood at 34.[9] By the end of 2021, these had risen to 38, suggesting a slow but continuing political momentum behind the agreement (tralac 2022). The latest additions include

9 These states were Angola, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. See African Union (2022b).

Malawi, Zambia, Algeria, Burundi, and Seychelles, while Somalia has ratified domestically but not yet deposited its instrument with the AUC (ibid.). Those countries yet to ratify the AfCFTA are the following: Eritrea, the only African state not to sign the agreement; Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Mozambique, and Tanzania – all SADC states; South Sudan in the EAC region; Benin, Cape Verde, Liberia, and Guinea-Bissau in the ECOWAS customs union; and Libya, Morocco, and Sudan.

At recurring summits since its launch in 2019, African Heads of State and Government have been urged to accelerate the ratification process, putting pressure on the remaining states to do so. Though only 16 countries, their reticence to ratify is important. In particular, Botswana – reportedly reluctant to ratify until all aspects of the agreement have been established – is also member of SACU, hindering its ability to implement the AfCFTA until all members ratify. The same goes for the ECOWAS countries, where Benin and Liberia reportedly continue to analyse the implications of ratification.[10] Similarly, Mozambique is reportedly concerned about the trade-off between capacity to implement and actual benefits, given the predominance of SADC in its intra-African trade and having left COMESA in 1997 for the same reason.

As efforts continue to encourage ratification by remaining states, actual trade can only take place once this has been translated into domestic law and published for public and private sector users. Though this is straightforward in theory, as documented by UNECA (2021, 30), the differences in legal system of anglophone African (common law) countries and francophone African (civil law) countries can also complicate the domestication process. In francophone member states of, say, ECOWAS or SADC, regional laws and regulations can be appealed in the courts of member states, whereas this is not the case in anglophone states, where international laws must be promulgated at the national level to have the force of law.

3.2 *AfCFTA Negotiation Status: Tariff Offers and RoOs*

By the end of 2020, 41 countries or customs unions had submitted their tariff offers to other state parties (Mene 2020). By November 2021, this had risen to 43 offers, 29 of which complied with the need to cover 90 per cent of tariff lines. This has since risen to 33 offers, as reflected in the recently launched AfCFTA database (including customs union members that have not ratified

10 See *Financial Afrik* [Dakar], 15 February 2022.

such as Benin, Liberia, and Guinea Bissau in ECOWAS) (UNCTAD 2022).[11] Luke and Macleod (2022) suggest that the relatively low level of tariff offers reflects the hesitancy of countries to commit in the absence of clarity regarding the rules of origin and their implications. Carlos Lopes, the former executive secretary of UNECA, from 2012 to 2016, and AfCFTA booster, recognises a change in dynamic 'from one of wanting to achieve results quickly, to one of wanting to wait more to see some of the benefits or impact at the national level', particularly among the large countries.[12]

At least part of the blame for the shift in dynamic lies with RoO negotiations. Despite the expectation that these would be finalised by June 2021 (Mene 2020), this did not happen. Although RoOs had been agreed for 87.7 per cent of tariff lines, as of April 2022 (AU Assembly 2022, §86), some 81 per cent of these had already been agreed upon by December 2020 (AU Assembly 2020b, §11).

The remaining tariff lines are particularly contentious, relating as they do to automobiles, textiles, sugar, and fisheries.[13] For these outstanding sectors, Gourdon et al. (2021) find that these sectors have, on average, more restrictive product-specific rules in existing FTAs, as well as that their preferential margins are considerably higher than those sectors where rules have been agreed, underlining why their negotiations are stalling. While some countries argue for stringent RoOs to avoid benefits contributing to those outside the AfCFTA FTA, 'others – generally the least developed countries with weaker productive capacities – advocate more flexible, pro-developmental rules that allow them to source input from the cheapest and most competitive locations' (Fofack and Mold 2021, 5). As they discuss, more stringent RoOs risk stimulating negligible changes, with press reports reflecting concerns in Nigeria and South Africa about over-lenient RoOs that would make Nigeria a 'dumping ground'.[14] At the same time, some argue that more stringent RoOs are necessary in order to encourage the investment required to promote industrialisation and regional value chains (Ismael 2021), key objectives of the AfCFTA.

Other delays to negotiations have come from the need to agree reciprocally on issues, such as the treatment of customs unions. The position of Nigeria to argue for the whole ECOWAS region to be allowed a ten-year tariff phase-down period for its main tariff reductions, normally meant only for least developed

11 Nonetheless, only offers from customs unions whose members have ratified the instrument or whose rules allow for individual implementations will be allowed to trade in accordance with the AfCFTA according to Mengistie (2021).

12 *African Business* [London], 4 February 2022.

13 *African Business* [London], 12 April 2022.

14 *ICIR* (International Centre for Investigate Reporting) [Abuja], 6 March 2022.

countries (LDCs), rather than five years reportedly, created delays (though recorded initial offers reflect this position as having been maintained – UNCTAD 2022). The AU Assembly confirmed in 2022 that the dismantling of tariffs should be 'annual tariff cuts based on the date of start of trading on 1 January 2021' (AU Assembly 2022, §11).

Although negotiations are still ongoing, the period over which to reduce tariffs is passing and fears of a loss of momentum are rising. A ministerial directive in October 2021 has stipulated that preferential trade may begin based on the 28 technically verified offers that meet the minimum threshold of 90 per cent of tariff lines and RoOs agreed (ibid., §10) with the AfCFTA Secretariat now due to publish the AfCFTA Tariff Book, allowing state parties to translate this legislation into national law for implementation (ibid., §13). Rather than a 'single undertaking' approach common with FTAs, this approach risks creating a partial FTA by lowering the pressure to conclude negotiations on remaining sectors.

3.3 *Trade in Services and Beyond*

In addition to negotiations to liberalise trade in goods being incomplete, those on trade in services have also been delayed. Following the signing of the AfCFTA Agreement on 31 March 2018, the 31st Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (Nouakchott, Mauritania, 1–2 July 2018) agreed to focus service trade negotiations on five priority sectors: business services, communications, finance, tourism, and transport.[15] By the end of 2020, 34 signatories had submitted initial offers, a figure that had risen to 46 by April 2022.[16]

The deadline for completing negotiations has repeatedly been pushed back. It is not clear if that deadline will be met. According to some, given the form of negotiation 'it is not guaranteed that actual services sector liberalisation will be achieved' (tralac 2020). Countries reportedly only make commitments that bind existing practices when negotiating under the 'positive listing' approach that is being applied. At the same time, services trade liberalisation is seen as critical to maximising the benefits from increased trade in goods, as evidenced by UNECA's focus on trade in services in their 2021 *Assessing Regional Integration in Africa* (ARIA) report that cites their role as embedded components in

15 *Africa Union Press Release* [Addis Ababa], 20 March 2018.

16 Angola, Algeria, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Cape Verde, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Eswatini, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, São Tome and Príncipe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

other economic activities (UNECA 2021b), though the data in order to make informed negotiation decisions are recognised as widely lacking.

The interconnection of trade in both services and goods are perhaps best highlighted in the AfCFTA ambition to promote industrialisation, particularly through the creation of regional value chains (RVCs). This is cited as an ambition in the initial AfCFTA Agreement and has led to efforts to identify and create conditions for greater cross-continental cooperation. In this context, the AU Specialised Technical Committee of Ministers of Trade, Industry and Minerals (STC–TIM) requested that the AUC, the RECs, and other partners carry out a mapping of existing RVCs by way of seeing the potential for building on these (African Union 2021). This is seen by some as the key goal of the AfCFTA – with 'the increasingly favourable environment for foreign investment and lower trade barriers associated with the AfCFTA' seen as key to RVC development (Fofack and Mold 2021, 3) – while a flurry of other reports by international organisations examine the different stages and potential input and trade opportunities in value chain development, often focused on the automobiles sector, textiles, and other key sectors, notably also those that are most sensitive in current RoO negotiations (as discussed above).

3.4 *Phase II Negotiations*

The above negotiations on trade in goods and services represent phase I of AfCFTA negotiations. The year 2021 saw the establishment of the committees to facilitate negotiations on phase II topics, namely investment, competition policy, intellectual property rights, e-commerce, and women and youth in trade. Some but not all of these were able to begin discussions (see AU Assembly 2022a). For example, the Committee on Investment was established and was able to develop and adopt their terms of reference, together with the *Negotiating Modalities and Guiding Principles* for negotiating the *Protocol on Investment* (ibid.).

The issues included in phase II cover a vast array of issues covered by national legislation, often yet to be covered or harmonised by existing regional bodies, partly due to the difficulties in doing so, for example implementing an investment protocol, or because these are relatively new topics, such as e-commerce. One recent study on digital trade policy looks at four countries as they prepare for phase II negotiations and concludes that, having considered their national policies and domestic regulations and where harmonisation would be needed, they must decide 'whether AfCFTA is the right platform for achieving this efficiently' (Tavengerwei et al. 2022, 4). Further, as Sodipo (2021, 12) highlights, the mandate for phase II issues was given to the *African Union member states* rather than AfCFTA state parties, implying that they will

be negotiated not just between countries that have ratified the agreement, but also those yet to ratify. This potentially adds a layer of complication to negotiations, with questions remaining about how they will be acceded to – whether those who have already ratified have automatically also ratified phase II in advance, or whether it will require separate ratification, a process that could lead to 'cherry-picking' parts of the phase II agreement.

Phase II negotiations were initially scheduled to be concluded by December 2020 and phase III negotiations to commence immediately after their conclusion (AU Assembly 2020c, §22). Given Covid-19 disruptions, and perhaps the extended time being taken for phase I negotiations, a new deadline of 31 December 2021 was set for the conclusion of phase II and III negotiations (AU Assembly 2020d, §15) – though this was also surpassed, leading to a new request by the AU Assembly to 'fast track the conclusion of all Protocols on Phase II issues by September 2022' (AU Assembly 2022a, §38).

3.5 *Adjustment Fund and Payment System*

A key partner to the AfCFTA Secretariat has been the Cairo-based African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank). They are together credited with establishing a $1-billion facility to support the automotive sector in Africa (AU Assembly 2022a, §44), thus supporting the potential for RVC creation in that sector and reportedly helping unblock RoO negotiations. Afreximbank is also behind establishment of the AfCFTA Adjustment Facility, a fund to offset the disruptions governments and the private sector are suffering as a result of AfCFTA implementation. The facility shall be part of the AfCFTA Secretariat, and the Afreximbank serves as its fund manager, with secretariat staff to be financed from the interest earned from the investments managed by the fund manager (ibid., §§41–42).

The criteria for access to the fund remain to be clarified, though it will reportedly be made up of a 'Base Fund', with contributions from state parties, grants, and technical assistance funds 'to address tariff revenue losses as tariffs are progressively eliminated' and other provisions implemented; a general fund to mobilise concessional funding; and a credit fund to mobilise commercial funding to support both the public and private sectors in their adjustments to AfCFTA implementation effects.[17] The adjustment fund is regarded as requiring some $10 billion over the next five to ten years, and it has reportedly committed $1 billion in order to launch the facility.

17 *Afreximbank Press Release* [Cairo], 9 February 2022.

Afreximbank is also behind the Pan-African Payments and Settlement System, created to facilitate the cross-border payments that will underpin intra-African trade while reducing the foreign currency content and related transactions costs. Though created, it is still in an initial phase, with a pilot phase focused on the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ), and work continues to develop a regulatory framework on cross-border payments to support the operationalisation of the system (ibid., §43). Working through the *African Collaborative Transit Guarantee Scheme*, to help mitigate cross-border transport friction (Fofack and Mold 2021, 6), and with African financial institutions, the goal is to create a system to provide transit bonds, thereby further offering ways to improve the efficiency of cross-border trade.

3.6 *External Relations*

The high profile relationship between the AfCFTA Secretariat and Afreximbank stand in contrast to that with external development partners. Although a range of partners are acknowledged by the AU as supporting the AfCFTA process – namely the European Union (EU), Germany's Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Denmark, Canada, the USA, Australia, the UK, France, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Organisation International de la Francophonie (OIF), the UN Development Program (UNDP), the World Bank Group, and the Islamic International Trade Finance Cooperation (AU Assembly 2020b) – these partnerships have been kept low profile. Anecdotally, there is a perceived attempt by the AfCFTA Secretariat to distance itself from international partners. This would perhaps be an astute approach, given the risk of criticism of being unduly swayed by external interests, and is in line with the frequent reference to the AfCFTA as an agreement to redress Africa's economic model, which remains too closely connected to that of the colonial period.[18] But it also poses challenges given the interest in accessing external financial assistance to support more than half of the AfCFTA Secretariat budget (AU Assembly 2021b) or indeed supporting the adjustment fund, and for partners seeking clarification of *who* to support and how, between the AUC, the AfCFTA Secretariat, the RECs, and other relevant partners.

Beyond financial support, the AfCFTA also raises issues related to external trade relations. One aspiration cited by both African and European policymakers, for example, is for a future continent-to-continent trade agreement (AU/EU 2021). That would require that the AfCFTA become a customs union,

18 One example of this point from the AfCFTA secretary-general: *Ocnus.Net*, 1 January 2021. URL: <http://www.ocnus.net/artman2/publish/Business_1/The-AfCFTA-s-Wamkele-Mene-It-s-going-to-be-difficult-but-we-ve-got-to-do-it.shtml> (accessed: 30 June 2022).

something that is seen as only a long-term goal given current concerns with establishing the FTA.

Beyond that, commentators, such as Carlos Lopes, cite 'the European Union aggressively pushing bilateral and sub-regional trade deals with African countries' as one of 'the main obstacles to a successful AfCFTA'.[19] Despite the AfCFTA, some countries are negotiating trade agreements with third actors such as the EU, the USA, and China, a pattern blamed by some on 'misaligned and divisive incentives cast upon African countries and regional groupings', with 'EU trade policy towards Africa today … a major part of the problem' (Luke et al. 2021) given its focus on regional sub-groups (themselves not all consistent with established regional communities).[20]

On the one hand, this line of thinking arguably underestimates African agency and the ability of its politicians to determine matters of national interest – a point eloquently made by the then Ghanaian minister of foreign affairs and regional integration in a letter to the European Parliament in 2016 on their signing of the interim Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the EU (MFARI 2016). It further continues a debate that began in the early 2000s when the EU and African countries began negotiating EPAs to align with World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules, highlighting the challenge that African policy-makers face in promoting the AfCFTA, although a large share of their trade remains with external partners. On balance, some suggest that policy-makers should 'not let a preoccupation with a continent-to-continent FTA divert attention away from other avenues to foster constructive EU–Africa collaboration on trade'.[21]

3.7 *The AfCFTA and the Private Sector*

As Mattli alternatively puts it, successful regional integration has historically depended on the interaction of demand from business and supply from politicians who are interested and able to promote the agenda (Mattli 1999, 12–13). Although the AfCFTA is currently still being negotiated by governments, its impact will only be felt if and when it is applied and used by businesses. Work by Stuart (2021) for UNECA suggests that preference utilisation rates for existing trade agreements are rather low, with the utilisation rate of ECOWAS preferences of a basket of Nigerian exports to Ghana, for example, just below 5 per cent, lower than data for the EAC and COMESA, though there too utilisation

19 *African Business* [London], 4 February 2022.

20 For example, the EU as an interim EPA trade agreement with Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, and Zimbabwe.

21 *ECPDM Briefing Notes* [Maastricht], 25 October 2021.

rates have room to increase. The limited use of existing trade preferences can reflect the lack of knowledge of their existence, or perceived limited benefits, when compared to the bureaucratic burden of complying. As such, the need for efforts to further engage the private sector is increasing.

Beyond their input in national negotiating positions, where positions clearly vary across sectors and countries, there are increasing efforts to engage the private sector in discussions of AfCFTA implementation. Some of this has come from the private sector itself, for example the *AfroChampions Initiative*, established in 2018 as a public–private partnership bringing together major African business leaders to push for investment to underpin the AfCFTA. Described as 'an official platform of exchange between the African private sector and the leaders of the African Union',[22] with a 'trillion dollar investment framework' that was adopted at the AU Assembly in 2020 (AU Assembly 2020c, §27), African business leaders have been visible in public events in an attempt to trigger investment to accelerate implementation of the AfCFTA and have been frequently cited in discussions of the private sector. The African Business Council (ABC), an independent private sector institution of the AU, offers another forum to promote and lobby for pan-African business interests.[23] The question these forums raise relate to their representativeness, with politically connected firms being a common feature across African economies.

The AfCFTA–REC coordination meetings held by the AfCFTA Secretariat in 2021 reportedly included private sector representatives from the ABC and AfroChampions as well as regional groupings, including the East African Business Council (EABC), COMESA Business Council (CBC), the Federation of West Africa Employers Association (FOPAO), and the Federation of West African Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FEWACCI).

Although the above suggests attempts to enhance private sector participation, the participating organisations primarily represent formal (and large) businesses. One proposal tabled to be more inclusive, and perhaps increase preference utilisation under the AfCFTA, is to introduce a simplified trade regime (STR), similar to what exists at certain border posts in the COMESA region (Karkare et al. 2021). However, implementation of such an STR has not been without challenges. Beyond the problem of the need to update common lists of goods, without which traders end up paying duties on goods that should be exempt, the STR still implies conformity to other formal procedures, such as sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) requirements, other licenses, and certificates, as well as value-added tax (VAT), excise duties, and other local taxes. Indeed, studies show that the existence of such a simplified system, even when

22 *Africa Union Press Release* [Addis Ababa], 20 March 2018.

23 See URL: <https://africanbusinesscouncil.org/#aboutUs> (accessed: 30 June 2022).

accompanied by more information and capacity-building, can in fact have the detrimental effect of increasing avoidance.

3.8 *Women and Youth*

A core part of the discussion around the STR is to protect women. Gender is a regular feature in discussions of the AfCFTA and the related negotiations, with widespread concern – among international organisations at least – to ensure that the AfCFTA Agreement can and does promote gender equality. Although the agreement itself does not make specific commitments to gender, it refers to 'inclusive socio-economic development, gender equality and structural transformation of the State Parties' among its main objectives (AU Assembly 2018, §3[e]), with the *Protocol on Trade and Services* citing the need to improve women's export capacity (ibid., §27[2]d). This is the first time that the achievement of gender equality has been explicitly stated as an objective in an African trade agreement, though it lacks specific commitments and tools (Laperle-Forget 2021). In response, a *Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade* was being developed with a legal framework that guides AfCFTA state parties to support women and youth to 'meaningfully leverage trade opportunities under the AfCFTA' (Mene 2022). The AfCFTA was working with the UNDP and UN Women in 2021 to consult on ways to take this forward. However, Laperle-Forget (2021) finds that most AfCFTA state parties have already taken firmer commitments on gender equality and women empowerment in other regional and multiparty trade agreements. The challenge then is whether these can again serve as building blocks, or rather reflect commitments that have yet to be met. Further, contributors to the joint report by the AfCFTA Secretariat and the UNDP (2020, 19) state that 'the expected benefits for women should be tempered with realism', with many of the issues being faced relating to issues beyond the scope of the AfCFA, such as women's rights, access to finance and other assets, and the gender wage gap, which may even drive competitiveness in exports.

Although women and youth are likely to be affected differently according to the impact of the agreement on specific sectors, efforts to increase their inclusion are often closely connected. A Women and Youth in Trade Committee has been established as part of the formal AfCFTA institutional architecture (AU Assembly 2022, §34), together with an Independent Continental Youth Advisory Council on the AfCFTA (ICOYACA) comprising affiliated national chapters. These represent positive steps in helping the AfCFTA engage a wider societal cross section if they can move beyond formal, bureaucratic processes to wider societal engagement.[24] But as with the discussion above, these national and

24 The ICOYACA describes itself as an affiliate initiative of *You Lead Africa, a Youth Leadership Programme*, which is a joint initiative of a Tanzanian training centre (MS–TCDC)

continental youth advocacy platforms join a range of pre-existing regional youth platforms, themselves often struggling to ensure their relevance in questions of youth unemployment and inclusion in the interaction of regional initiatives and national interests (see, for instance, Pharatlhatlhe and Byiers 2019). Even reports ostensibly about the AfCFTA opportunities for youth are often more descriptions of the challenge of youth unemployment, the need for the AfCFTA to act, examples of successful young entrepreneurs, and exhortations to invest in education, training, and mechanisms to promote them further (see AfCFTA Secretariat and UNDP 2020; ITC 2021). While all valid proposals, these are not uniquely related to the AfCFTA, with a common point being the need for national policies and programmes to help youth access regional supply chains and trade opportunities (AfCFTA Secretariat and UNDP 2020).

Wider societal knowledge of the agreement and its implications are only now beginning to spread. Surveys conducted in 18 African countries in late 2019 and early 2020 suggest that Africans are split between 'support for restrictive trade policies that protect local industries (47%) and a preference for open international trade (49%)' (Appiah-Nyamekye Sanny and Patel 2021).[25] Although the majority (58%) of respondents reportedly want to allow foreign-owned retail shops and access to low-cost goods, a large share (38%) want trade in consumer goods to be reserved for nationals (ibid.). While only indicative, these figures nevertheless not only reflect the challenge faced in those countries still considering AfCFTA ratification today, but also undoubtedly present the challenge when actual AfCFTA implementation is undertaken and the real effects begin to be felt.

4 Outlook

Although initial deadlines have been delayed, progress around AfCFTA negotiations and the establishment of necessary organisations and supporting measures continued in 2021 in spite of the continuing disruptions of Covid-19. Nonetheless, the emerging challenges described here, in terms of institutional relations and the AfCFTA negotiations themselves, will remain and perhaps require renewed efforts to maintain the political traction established thus far. Some have suggested that this will take concessions from some 'regional powers',

associated with the international NGO ActionAid Denmark and the EAC, 'under the AfCFTA Youth Inclusion Accelerator Project', a GIZ and MS-TCDC initiative.

25 This reflects the percentage of respondents who agree/agree very strongly with the following statements: (1) 'In order to develop, our country must rely on trade with the rest of the world, including by opening our borders to foreign imports'; or (2) 'In order to develop, our country must rely on local production and protect local producers from foreign competition'.

particularly to overcome the apparent RoO stalemate (Macleod and Luke, 2022). Only once negotiations on trade in services and phase II topics gather momentum will it be possible to discern what their impact might be and how they can meet expectations in further underpinning trade in goods and ensuring the expected benefits are realised. Once agreement is reached *on paper*, the implementation steps to domesticate agreed texts and inform those officials required to apply them are relatively clear, with credible enforcement of agreed rules of origin and instruments for regulating competition and dispute settlement likely to be key for building confidence in the AfCFTA (Fofack and Mold, 2021). National and regional AfCFTA implementation committees are being established, and governments and regional bodies have been preparing AfCFTA implementation strategies, often with the support of UNECA. These all suggest substantive progress, from the continental to regional and national levels. At the same time, the question is how and whether they will be able to deliver.

A need to show concrete progress has led the AfCFTA Secretariat to explore areas where aspects of the AfCFTA can be put into practice on the ground. The AU Assembly in early 2022 therefore commended the AfCFTA Secretariat 'on the progress made on trade facilitation on the Abidjan–Lagos Corridor' in West Africa and endorsed its adoption of a corridor approach to trade facilitation as a way to implement the AfCFTA (African Union 2022). Though trade facilitation is a core part of the AfCFTA Agreement in formal terms, and widely understood as a key aspect to ensuring trade liberalisation leads to increased trade and the benefits thereof, the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor is explicitly within ECOWAS, underpinning intra-ECOWAS trade that is therefore governed by the REC. As established above, the AfCFTA is an FTA among existing FTAs and countries. As this further illustrates, the division of labour between the AUC, the AfCFTA Secretariat, and regional organisations may yet require clarification in order for effective implementation to take place.

Further, the AfCFTA is a complex, long-term undertaking, requiring negotiation and agreement, not to say coordination and collaboration across multiple actors and agencies, within and between multiple regions and countries. As Fofack and Mold (2021) state:

> [AfCFTA] success hinges on the capacity of countries and governments to adopt and sustainably implement a wide range of complementary policies addressing multiple challenges to enhance the emerging nexus between trade, industrialization and services. These include reducing non-tariff barriers, removing the limitations to the development of productive capacities and providing the necessary trade-enabling infrastructure, trade finance and information, and improvements in factor market integration.

As this chapter highlights, thus far the focus has (understandably) been on what Byiers et al. (2019) call formal structures and channels. But actual integration goes beyond these to include more informal relations and 'bottom-up' dynamics and necessitates a focus on institutional function rather than form. There is a risk of overinvesting in a quest for ideal forms, with insufficient attention being paid to what is needed for the necessary functions of the AfCFTA to be implemented and to deliver results. The real challenge is therefore to build up the capacity to address these multiple, overlapping, complex agendas and in particular to do so where domestic politics meet regional and continental commitments – for regional integration, 'when it functions at all, it functions as a political project' (Mkandawire, 2014). At the same time, the *AUC Report Card 2017–2021* states that:

> Despite achievements towards regional integration of Africa, the continent continues to face several challenges. Limited implementation of Assembly and Executive Council Decisions and slow reporting to AU treaty monitoring bodies on measures undertaken by Member States to implement their commitments remain persistent challenges. Unless the rate of Member States complying with and implementing decisions of the Union is accelerated, it will be difficult to realise regional integration. This is compounded by slow ratification and domestication of key legal instruments of the Union.

Though not explicitly about the AfCFTA, it highlights the challenges faced. While some propose that 'national governments would be prudent to put the long-term goal of regional integration above short-term domestic consideration' (Fofack and Mold 2021, 7), experience suggests that national politics invariably trump regional commitments.

In light of the complex arrangements around the AfCFTA, the Council of Ministers Responsible for Trade (Accra, Ghana, 10 October 2021) 'recognised the critical importance of the role of the Assembly in advancing progress in the implementation of the AfCFTA' and recommended an annual Extraordinary AfCFTA Summit (African Union 2022a). This may go some way to ensuring political momentum and deciding on clear task division. UNECA (2021b) further proposes the creation of 'working teams, multi-stakeholder dialogue mechanisms and inter-ministerial and legislative cooperation committees to create cohesion across critical agencies', where these might share responsibility with national bodies for liaison and cooperation with civil society, domestic regulators, private sector representatives, and academia and think tank representatives (UNECA 2022). This may allow a more 'problem-driven' approach

that can focus on function and offer a pragmatic way to overcome the multiple challenges ahead.

Lest this chapter appear overly pessimistic, it is useful to return to *The Economist*. Referring to 'lack of staff', 'lack of powers to enforce decisions', and 'dreadfully slow decision-making procedure', the article concluded that the treaty 'is not being applied'. But the article was not on African integration but Europe in 1982.[26] With the benefit of hindsight, the African continent can avoid some of the more obvious pitfalls, learn the 'right lessons' (Mold 2021), and in the long run realise many of the expectations being placed on such a momentous continental free trade agreement.

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CHAPTER 11

Strategic Partnerships

Ulf Engel

1 Introduction

Since its inception, the African Union (AU), as much as its predecessor, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), has tried to build alliances with multilateral and bilateral international partners. This constitutes a key strategy to undergird what I would call the specific globalisation projects of both the OAU and the AU (see Engel 2022b). Over time, these projects certainly have changed in nature: While the OAU primarily focused on protecting the newly won independence of its member states, establishing some form of pan-African identity, and fighting apartheid and colonialism, the AU has concentrated on grappling with the challenges of violent conflict (see Dawit Yohannes, this Yearbook, chapter 9) and changing the conditions for its member states' integration into current processes of economic globalisation (see Bruce Byiers, this Yearbook, chapter 10).[1]

In the 1960s and 1970s, the OAU mainly forged strategic partnerships with Arab and Asian states, partly organised in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). In the 2000s, this policy field was reorganised (see Adebayo 2021). Yet the term 'strategic partnership' was not applied right away. After the transformation from the OAU to the AU, it took some time for the new body to settle in. In January 2007, the AU Executive Council received a report from a Task Force on Africa's Strategic Partnership with Emerging Powers of the South, established by the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC).[2] The task force requested the AU Commission (AUC) 'to deploy necessary efforts to develop a new type of partnership of a horizontal nature in order to maximize mutual benefits' (AU Council 2007, §3). A year later, the AU Executive Council received the AU Commission's first report on the implementation of strategic partnerships

1 In this respect, see also the elaboration on the AU's common positions by the commissioner for political affairs, peace and security (Adeoye 2020).

2 Spelling in AU documents varies between 'Permanent Representat*ives* Committee', Permanent Representat*ive's* Committee', and 'Permanent Representat*ives'* Committee' (italics by the author).

(AU Council 2008a). The year 2007 was also when relations with the European Union (EU) and UN were taken to a new level and referred to as 'strategic'.

Today there are two main dimensions of what the AU describes as strategic partnerships: those with international organisations – the Arab League (or League of Arab States, LAS), the EU, and the UN – and those with (currently) five individual countries: China, India, Japan, South Korea, and Türkiye (formerly: Turkey). Some 'emerging powers of the South', however, are absent from this list – Brazil is a case in point (although in the past there was an attempt to include 'South America' and also Iran into the group of partnerships; see AU Council 2008b). Historically, both multilateral and bilateral partnerships have followed different trajectories. So far, the AU has not published a coherent partnership strategy, or a related policy framework (see AU Council 2022, §38), as requested by the 36th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 6–7 February 2020).[3] Throughout 2020 and 2021, the Covid-19 pandemic has derailed the meeting schedule (AU Council 2021a, §80).

2 Multilateral Partnerships

2.1 *Arab League*

The Arab League, or League of Arab States, was founded in 1945; today it comprises 22 states in the broader Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.[4] The origins of the Afro–Arab cooperation can be traced back to 1974 when the OAU Council of Ministers called for its first joint ministerial conference with a view to developing an Afro–Arab development strategy (OAU Council 1974; see also OAU Assembly 1975). But as it stands today, this strategic partnership is developing only very slowly. Between the first summit (Cairo, Egypt, 1977) and the second summit (Sirte, Libya, 2010), a stunning 33 years have passed.

A brief attempt to revive relations between the AU and the LAS was made in 2010 when the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the then LAS PSC held its 1st Annual Joint Consultative Meeting (18–19 December 2010). A third summit was held in Kuwait in 2013 and a 4th in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, in 2016.[5] On 15 January 2018, the two organisations made another attempt at

3 See AU Council (2020, §4[A]79).

4 The member states are Algeria, Bahrain, the Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Yemen. This means that 10 out of 22 member states are also belonging to the AU.

5 But Morocco, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Yemen, Oman, and Somalia withdrew at short notice over conflict regarding the question of Western Sahara and participation in the

resuscitating their relations (AU PSC 2018). The 5th Arab–African Summit is now planned to be held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in 2022.

The return of Morocco to the AU in 2017, Egyptian offers (after the coup d'état in 2013) to move closer to the AU (inter alia, by hosting the AU Centre for Post-Reconstruction and Development, which was officially launched on 21 December 2021), as well as the rapprochement between Israel and a number of Arab states in 2020, have changed the political equilibrium in Afro-Arab relations. During the 9th AU/LAS General Cooperation Meeting (Cairo, Egypt, 1 February 2021), the main themes discussed between the two organisations concerned the ongoing conflicts in Libya and Sudan as well as border conflicts between Sudan and Ethiopia, as well as between Somalia and Kenya (see AU/LAS 2021, §5). The meeting also discussed the conflict around the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) between Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia (see Dawit Yohannes, this Yearbook, chapter 9).

2.2 *European Union*

The partnership between the African Union and the European Union is a case of strategic 'interregionalism', seeking sovereignty-boosting effects for AU member states (see Engel 2018a). The cooperation is based on the 2007 *Joint Africa–Europe Strategy* (JAES) and the *Plan of Action* that was adopted at the 2nd EU–Africa Summit (Lisbon, Portugal, 8–9 December 2007).[6] Within this framework, regular meetings are being held at several levels: summits, ministries, between the two commissions (called 'college-to-college' meetings), between the AU PSC-to-Political and Security Committee, the EU Military Committee (EUMC), and the AU Military Staff Committee (MSC), as well as crises management teams on both sides (the Joint Africa–EU Expert Groups, JEGs). In addition, regular consultations between African and EU heads of delegation in Addis Ababa, Brussels, and New York take place (on the substance of the relations, see Haastrup et al. 2021).[7]

The 2nd AU–EU Ministerial Meeting (Kigali, Rwanda, 25–26 October 2021) took stock of developments since the 5th AU–EU Summit (Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 2017) (AU Council 2022, §40). Among the topics discussed were joint responses to the Covid-19 pandemic, investments in 'green and digital

meeting of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic. *AlArabiya News* [Dubai], 23 November 2016.

6 The first Africa–EU Summit was held on 3–4 April 2000 in Cairo, Egypt.

7 See also the regular chapters on AU–EU relations in the *Africa Yearbook* (see Erforth and Keijzer 2021).

transformation', questions of peace and security, and migration (AU/EU 2021). The next summit is planned for February 2022.

Trade as well as peace and security cooperation remain the two most important pillars of the strategic partnership. The 2000 *Cotonou Partnership Agreement* between the so-called ACP countries (Africa, Caribbean, Pacific), under which preferential trade access was granted by the EU, expired in 2020. The post–Cotonou Agreement was initiated by the chief negotiators on 15 April 2021 (see Bruce Byiers, this Yearbook, chapter 10). In the mid-term, Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) between the EU and sub-blocs of African states – which are not the same as the five African regions or the eight officially recognised Regional Economic Communities (RECs) – will gradually replace the Cotonou Agreement (see Hurt 2020). Regarding Central Africa, Cameroon remains the only EPA signatory (2016), 8 out of the 27 EU member states have not yet ratified the agreement (among others, France and Germany) (here and in the following: European Commission 2022). In West Africa, Côte d'Ivoire (2008) and Ghana (2016) signed bilateral EPAs, and Mauritania signed an association agreement (2017). The agreement with Ghana has not yet been ratified by 20 EU member states, and the one with Côte d'Ivoire still has 7 countries missing. In 2014, all EU member states and 13 West African countries signed a regional EPA (The Gambia and Mauritania followed in 2018). Nigeria is the only country in the region that has not signed this EPA. In Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA), Mauritius, Seychelles, Zimbabwe, and Madagascar signed an interim EPA (2009), and the Comoros applied in 2019. The regional EPA for the East African Community (EAC, 2014) so far has been signed by Kenya and Rwanda (2016). The regional EPA for the Southern African Development Community (SADC) was established in 2016. A separate EPA with South Africa was concluded in 2014, and the provisional application for Mozambique started in 2018. Meanwhile, Angola has formally requested accession to the EPA. Although applications have been provisionally granted, 15 EU member states still have to ratify the EPA (among others, France and Germany).

Since 2003 the African Peace Facility (APF) has been a major source of financially supporting the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). Under this scheme, almost €3.5 billion has been allocated and €2.7 billion disbursed through the AU to both the Union and the RECs (see European Commission 2020). The funds were mainly used to support AU-led Peace Support Operations (PSOs, ca. 93%), with the bulk going to support the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).[8] Smaller amounts went to support capacity-building

8 This was against the European Union's original intentions as it expected that AMISOM would be taken over by the United Nations. In 2016, it therefore cut direct spending to AMISOM by

efforts (6%) and the Early-Response Mechanism (ERM, 1%). In December 2020, an agreement was reached to replace the APF by the European Peace Facility (EPF). The new global facility will be endowed with a budget of €5 billion for the period 2021–2027.[9] For the first time, direct arms supplies will be possible under the new arrangement. The previous coordination and harmonisation role of the AU vis-à-vis the RECs will end.

In 2021, the European Union maintained its PSOs and other support missions on the continent, including the Central African Republic (EU Military Training Mission [EUTM RCA], since 2016, and the civilian advisory mission EUAM RCA, since 2020), Libya (the EU Border Assistance Mission [EUBAM Libya], since 2013), Mali (EUTM Mali, since 2013, and the civilian capacity-building mission EUCAP Sahel, since 2014, respectively), Niger (EUCAP Sahel, since 2012), Somalia (EUTM Somalia, since 2010, and EUCAP Somalia, since 2012), as well as the EU's Regional Advisory and Coordination Cell for the Sahel (RACC) in support of the G5 (since 2019). In addition, there are the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) naval missions off the coast of Libya (EUNAVFOR MED IRINI, since 2020) and Somalia (EUNAVFOR, or Operation ATALANTA, since 2008). In 2021, the EU began a new mission, the EUTM Mozambique, to assist fighting the insurgency in the country's northern province of Cabo Delgado. Against the backdrop of the second coup d'état in Mali within nine months (18 August 2020 and 24 May 2021), increasing dissonances between the military government and France (but also other troop-contributing countries), as well as the emergence of the Russian private military company, Wagner Group, debates have started in several EU member states to end its support mission in Mali.

2.3 *United Nations*

Traditionally the African Union and the United Nations have maintained very close relations in several policy fields (see Engel 2018b, 267f.). Since 2007, a strategic partnership has developed that centres around peace and security (UN/AU 2017). As part of this partnership, regular management and working-level meetings have developed, including annual consultations between the AU PSC and the UN Security Council (UNSC). Besides regular meetings between the AU commissioner for peace and security (now for political affairs, peace and security) and the UN special representative for the AU, there are

20 per cent (for a critical assessment of European funding of the APSA, see European Court of Auditors 2018). In the current budget, the AU still assumes that most of the funding for AMISOM would come from international partners (see Ulf Engel, this Yearbook, chapter 3).

9 See *ICG Africa Report* No. 297 [Brussels], 14 January 2021.

biannual desk-to-desk meetings. In New York, the UN Office of the Special Adviser on Africa organises an annual event held during Africa Week, every year in October, alongside the UN General Assembly's Debate on the Development of Africa. During the same period, along with the AU and the RECs, the UN Office of the Special Adviser on Africa prepares the *RECs Briefing* for UN member states. Since 2009, the AU maintains a Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations, and in July 2010, the UN established an Office to the African Union (UNOAU; see UNSG 2021, §§67–76).

The 15th Annual Joint Consultative Meeting between the AU PSC and the UNSC was held virtually on 17 December 2021, the second attempt because of the Covid-19 pandemic (see AU PSC/UNSC 2021). It discussed several security situations in Africa, including the future of AMISOM post-2021 and also the newly launched SADC Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM). The two councils also reviewed two missions in West Africa, the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and the G5 Sahel Joint Force (see also Dawit Yohannes, this Yearbook, chapter 9). From 10 to 12 March 2021, the 14th UN/AU/RECs consultative (desk-to-desk) meeting on the prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts was convened (UNSG 2021, §10).[10] The UN Secretariat and the AU Commission fielded joint high-level missions, among others, to the Central African Republic (CAR) (3–5 June) and Ethiopia (26–27 July) (ibid., §11). Finally, the 5th Annual Conference between the AUC chairperson, Moussa Faki Mahamat, and UN secretary-general, António Guterres, took place in New York, on 2 December 2021. Major topics of these deliberations concerned trade, climate change, and the further development of the strategic partnership. They also reviewed the ongoing challenges to peace, security, development, and human rights in, among others, the CAR, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan (UN/AU 2021).

Throughout 2021, the United Nations maintained its seven peacekeeping missions on the continent (see UNSG 2021, §§39–52; with a critical perspective on the partnership, see Nagar 2022; Coleman and Job 2021). The approved budget for all 12 UN peacekeeping missions for the financial year (FY) 2021/2022 was $6.37 billion (FY 2020/2021). The seven missions in Africa account for 88.63 per cent of the total costs. They include Abyei (UN Interim Security Force for Abyei [UNISFA], $280.58 million), the CAR (UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR [MINUSCA], $1.12 billion), the Democratic Republic of Congo (UN Organisation Stabilization Mission in the DRC [MONUSCO], $1.12 billion), Mali (UN Multidimensional Integrated

10 On UN/RECs cooperation, see also UNSG (2021, §§60–66).

Stabilization Mission in Mali [MINUSMA], $1.26 billion), Somalia (UN Support Office for AMISOM [UNSOS], $560.07 million), South Sudan (UN Mission in South Sudan [UNMISS], $1.2 billion), Darfur/Sudan (UN/AU Hybrid Operation in Darfur [UNAMID], $45.72 million), and Western Sahara (UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara [MINURSO], $60.91 million).[11]

For Africa's global role, the UN Security Council remained an important platform. In 2021, the non-permanent African members of the UNSC (the so-called A3) were Kenya, Niger, and Tunisia. On 4 March 2021, the AU PSC issued a communiqué on the theme 'Unified role of the African Members in the United Nations (UN) Security Council (A3) in the UN Security Council'. It addressed the division of labour between the AU in Addis Ababa and the A3 in New York and emphasised the need for 'cohesion, cooperation and coordination among the A3' (AU PSC 2021, §2). The AU PSC also called on the AUC chairperson 'to take urgent steps to further strengthen the institutional capacity of the AU Permanent Observer Mission to the UN' (ibid., §9).

During 2021, the UNSC met on 188 occasions (both in person and by webcast) and passed 56 resolutions; 3 draft resolutions were vetoed. Regarding its Africa agenda, the UNSC met 15 times to discuss the situation in Sudan and South Sudan. In addition, there was one meeting on sanctions against South Sudan. The other situations on the continent were Somalia (12 meetings), Libya (10), the CAR (6) and the central African region (2), the DRC (5), Mali (5), peace consolidation in West Africa (3), the Great Lakes region (1), and Western Sahara (1). The new rubric peace and security in Africa was discussed 8 times (based on UNSC 2022).

Out of the total of 59 draft resolutions, 48 were adopted by consensus, leaving 11 resolutions to a vote. On two occasions, the A3 did not vote in unison. On the imposed sanctions to force the warring parties to implement the 2018 *Revitalised Agreement for the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan*, Kenya abstained, while Niger and Tunisia supported the resolution (R–ARCSS; UNSC 2021a). On the issue of Western Sahara, Tunisia abstained, whereas the other two African members of the UNSC voted in favour of the resolution (UNSC 2021b). On all 11 occasions, Niger voted with the P3 (i.e., France, the United Kingdom, and the United States), and Kenya and Tunisia 10 times. However, voting behaviour was rarely in agreement with the rest of the P5 (i.e., the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation). Kenya only voted 3 times the way China did and only once with Russia, Niger voted 4 times like China and only once

11 In addition, there are $40.27 million budgeted for the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, Uganda. See *UN General Assembly Press Release* [New York NY], GA/AB/4368, 29 June 2021.

with Russia, and Tunisia voted 3 times like the new P2 (based on UNGA 2022).[12] Controversial votes related to the situations in the CAR, Somalia, South Sudan, and Western Sahara.

3 Bilateral Partnerships

Critically reflecting on its previous overcommitment in summits and meetings, in 2016 the AU Executive Council approved a five-year cycle of meetings with bilateral partners, limited to two partnership meetings per year, starting in 2017 (AU Council 2016, §20). In 2020, the AU Assembly decided that the 'African Union/African Continent shall be represented at the Statutory Meetings of partnership between the African Union/African Continent and a partner country by the Members of the Bureau of the Assembly of the Union, the Chairpersons of [the] Regional Economic Communities (RECS), the Chairperson of the Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee (HSGOC) of AUDA–NEPAD and the Chairperson of the AU Commission' (AU Assembly 2020, §6).

The scope and intensity of the AU's bilateral partnership differ quite substantially. While with China and Japan there may be more substantial engagement, relations with India, South Korea, and Türkiye have not yielded the same levels of results or magnitude.

3.1 *China*

High-level consultations between the African Union and the People's Republic of China are held every three years at the Forum on China–Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). It was launched in October 2000 in Beijing, China, with the AU as a full member, although this is a bilateral format between China and AU member states. Some of the meetings were 'upgraded' to a summit level when the Chinese president participated.[13] Subforums are the China–Africa People's Forum (6th meeting, Beijing, 15 November 2021), China–Africa Young Leaders Forum (5th meeting, virtual, 7 December 2021), a ministerial Forum on China–Africa Health Cooperation (virtual, 29 November 2021), the Forum on China–Africa Media Cooperation (virtual, 26 November 2021), the China–

12 Most A3 votes were also in line with the other non-permanent UNSC members: Estonia, Ireland, Mexico, Norway, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, as well as Vietnam (somewhat of an outlier in this respect was India).

13 This includes the meetings held on 10–12 October 2000 in Beijing, 4–5 December 2015 in Johannesburg, and 3–4 September 2018 again in Beijing.

Africa Poverty Reduction and Development Conference (virtual, 7 December 2021), the FOCAC Legal Forum (which met last time in 2013), the Forum on China–Africa Local Government Cooperation (4th meeting, Beijing, 16 November 2021), and the China–Africa Think Tanks Forum (10th meeting, Hangzhou, 20–21 October 2021).

The 8th FOCAC Ministerial Conference took place in Dakar, Senegal, on 29–30 November 2021 (AU Council 2021b, §85; see Tim Zajontz, this Yearbook, chapter 8). Symbolically the FOCAC 'triennial spectacle' (Large 2022, 300) is the centrepiece of the Chinese Communist Party's way of fostering its global ambitions with African elites. The meeting adopted the *FOCAC Dakar Action Plan* (2022–2024). The Action Plan focuses on four broad areas of cooperation: (1) social development cooperation (including public health, education, and cyber security), (2) cultural and people-to-people exchanges, (3) peace and security cooperation (including counterterrorism), and (4) 'green development' (including ecological protection and climate response, maritime cooperation, and energy and natural resources) (PR China 2021). The previous emphasis on infrastructure' seem to have disappeared from the agenda (see Sun 2021). The 9th FOCAC Ministerial Conference is planned to take place in China in 2024 (AU Council 2022, §60).

The new AU building in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, has become a strong symbol of China's ambition to become *the* world power by 2049 and the importance it is attaching to bring African states to its side. The 'Chinese building' represents a 'gift of the Chinese people'. It was constructed between 2009 and 2012 at an estimated cost of $200 million.[14] It was China's largest 'development assistance project' in Africa after the 1,860-km long Tanzania-Zambia Railway project (the TAZARA was built between 1970 and 1975). Since 2018, media reports have revealed that the building, at least partly, is a Greek gift. First it was reported that China had bugged the building and was regularly transferring data from servers since the inauguration of the building until 2017, when the hack was discovered.[15] The AU chairperson at the time, President Paul Kagame from Rwanda, downplayed the issue by stating: 'I don't think spying is the speciality of the Chinese. We have spies all over the place in this world … But

14 See the Chinese Ministry of Commerce's portrait of the building and its history in the context of the country's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). URL: <http://www.mofcom.gov.cn/article/beltandroad/africanunion/enindex.shtml> (accessed: 30 June 2022). Conversely, the Julius Nyerere Building for the then AU Peace and Security Department was donated by the German government. See *Ethiopian Herald* [Addis Ababa], 15 February 2011.

15 *Le Monde Diplomatique* [Paris], 26 January 2018.

I will not have been worried about being spied on in this building'.[16] Despite official denials by both the government of China and the AU Commission, various sources within the AUC have confirmed the issue. Almost three years later, the story broke that a group of Chinese hackers, called Bronze President, 'had rigged a cluster of servers in the basement of an administrative annex [the old C Building] to quietly siphon surveillance videos from across the AU's sprawling campus'. The cameras covered 'offices, parking areas, corridors, and meeting rooms'.[17]

3.2 *India*

The first and second India Africa Forum Summits (IAFS) were held in Addis Ababa in 2008 and 2011, respectively. Both sides committed to a wide range of activities at various levels, including business communities and also the RECs. However, in a critical review of the bilateral partnership India's former ambassador to the AU, Gurjit Singh, reflected in January 2021 that 'the AUC did not live up to its expectation of being a strong implementing partner. Its decisions to award projects at the pan-African level were political and not rooted in ground realities. It was unable to enthuse many countries or RECs to implement their commitments' (Singh 2021). The third summit held in 2015 then followed a different format, with AU member states brought to the fore and less emphasis on the AU and the RECs.

Following the mid-term review meeting of the Strategic Cooperation Framework of the Africa-India Forum Summit III (New Delhi, India, 11–12 September 2019), the 38th Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 3–4 February 2021) requested the PRC to strengthen the joint monitoring and evaluation mechanism of the Africa-India partnership through regular consultations and engagements (GoI 2019; AU Council 2021a, §81). Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the fourth summit was postponed and is now expected to be held in Mauritania in 2023 (AU Council 2022, §63). Apart from projects in the domain of new technologies, two areas of mutual interest in the bilateral cooperation stand out: first, the health sector (including the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention and the Africa Medical Agency) and second, peace and security (including support for *Silencing the Guns* by 2020, the African Standby Force, maritime security, mapping of the continental shelf, as well as extremism and counterterrorism).

16 *The Guardian* [Manchester], 30 January 2018. It is interesting to see that this story was hardly taken note of in African newspapers.

17 *Reuters* [London], 16 December 2020. See also *Voice of America* [Washington DC], 5 January 2021.

3.3 *Japan*

The 1st Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) was held in 1993 with meetings of heads of state and government following every five years to discuss African development initiatives. Then the format was changed to a three-year meeting schedule. The African Union became a partner in this process in 2010. In February 2021, the AU Executive Council reiterated to need to finalise the 2019 *Yokohama Action Plan* as well as the AU's availability to host TICAD 8 in Tunisia in 2022 (AU Council 2021a, §81[II, III]). The Joint Monitoring Committee met virtually on 15 July 2021, followed by a ministerial meeting on 6 November (AU Council 2022, §52).

3.4 *South Korea*

Bilateral relations between the African Union and South Korea are one of the lesser known and prominent of the AU's strategic partnerships. As in the case of India, the emphasis is more on state-to-state relations. Bilateral ministerial meetings have been, since November 2006, under the Africa-Korea Forum format (in 2013, the AU concluded a Memorandum of Understanding on the Korea-AU Cooperation Fund). Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the 5th Africa-Korea Ministerial Forum has been postponed several times (see AU Council 2021a, §81, 2021b, §77). Finally, a proposal was made for it to held it on 3 March 2022 (AU Council 2022, §56). Meanwhile, the 3rd Korea-African Union Policy Consultation Meeting was held virtually in Seoul, South Korea, on 24 February 2022. The AU was represented by PRC chairperson Jean Leon Ngandu Ilunga (DRC).

3.5 *Türkiye*

The partnership between the African Union and Türkiye goes back to 2008 when the 1st Africa-Turkey Summit was held (Istanbul, Türkiye, 18–20 April). It was followed by an *Implementation Plan* (2010–2014). The second bilateral meeting was convened in 2014 (Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, 21 November). It adopted a *Joint Implementation Plan* (2015–2019). Key priority projects were identified in the areas of trade and investment; peace and security; culture, tourism, and education; youth empowerment; technology transfer, rural economy, and agriculture; energy, information and communications technology (ICT), and transport infrastructures; as well as health and media. To promote investment, three Turkey-Africa Economic and Business Forums were held (Istanbul, Türkiye, 2–3 November 2016; 10–11 October 2018; virtual [due to the corona pandemic], 8–9 October 2020).[18]

18 For a detailed overview, see African Union (2022).

Following the 2nd Ministerial Review Conference (Istanbul, Türkiye, 12 February 2018), the 3rd Africa–Turkey Summit was held in 2021 (Istanbul, Türkiye, 17–18 December) (AU Council 2022, §§47–49). The summit came up with an *Africa-Türkiye Declaration* and the *Africa-Türkiye Partnership Joint Action Plan* (2022–2026). The latter focuses on five priority areas: peace, security, and governance (traditionally there is a strong mutual interest in anti-terror policies); trade, investment, and industry; education, science, technology, and innovation (STI) skills, and youth and women development; infrastructure development and agriculture; as well as resilient health systems. It was also agreed to hold the 3rd Ministerial Review Conference of the partnership in Africa in 2024, as well as the 4th Partnership Summit in Africa in 2026 (ibid., §50).

4 Outlook

With a draft policy framework on strategic partnerships in place since November 2021, there is a chance that the African Union will release its policy on this matter in 2022. In the meantime strategic partnerships with the European Union and the United Nations remain central for the African continental body, with bilateral partnerships being very much left to member states.

After two years of the Covid-19 pandemic, the African Union's multilateral and bilateral relations seems to have been reinvigorated once again. In most cases, the number of activities and direct face-to-face meetings has been increasing since late 2021 – or at least have been planning to do so in 2022. The meeting calendar for 2022 has quickly filled: the 6th AU–EU Summit will be held in person in Brussels, Belgium, on 17–18 February 2022 (AU Council 2022, §42); the 5th Arab–Africa Summit in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in May 2022 (AU Council 2021b, §66), and the TICAD 8 Summit in Tunisia, on 27–28 August 2022.

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CHAPTER 12

Women and Youth

Awino Okech

1 Introduction

This chapter offers an overview of priority interventions made by the African Union (AU) in 2021 concerning women and youth as policy fields. It is worth noting that while women and youth are considered alongside each other in this chapter, they have evolved as separate political projects within the AU. This chapter is divided into three major sections. The first section offers an understanding of the institutional policy landscape that guides programmes and initiatives on youth and women (see *Yearbook on the African Union 2000*, 214–217). The second section examines the major policy developments in 2021, clustered around six major areas. The final section offers closing reflections on the 2022 outlook for the AU in the policy fields of women and youth.

2 Institutional Landscape

The institutional landscape in the policy field of women and youth is framed by the 2003 *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa* (also known as the *Maputo Protocol*; African Union 2003a), and the 2004 *Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa* (SDGEA) (African Union 2004). The Maputo Protocol is an international human rights instrument that guarantees comprehensive rights to women. Coming into effect on 25 November 2005, it covers a wide range of concerns pertaining to women, gender power relations, and gender equality, encompassing the right to take part in political processes, social and political equality, and reproductive and bodily autonomy, as well as freedom from cultural, political, social, and economic discrimination (African Union 2003a). In addition to the Maputo Protocol, the 2000 *Constitutive Act of the African Union* notes the 'promotion of gender equality' as one of its guiding principles (OAU 2000, §4). The 2003 *Protocol on Amendments of the Constitutive Act of the African Union* also recognises the critical role women play in promoting inclusive development and calls for the AU 'to ensure the effective participation of women in

decision-making, particularly in the political, economic and socio-cultural areas' (African Union 2003b, §3).

An additional framework that is committed to women as a policy field is *Agenda 2063*, which is a continental strategic 'master plan for transforming Africa into the global powerhouse of the future' (African Union 2015). Developed in 2013 at the height of global discussions on the United Nations' (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), Agenda 2063 is considered a framework that sets Africa's development agenda on its own terms beyond international commitments to sustainable development. Agenda 2063 provides a road map for pan-African 'inclusive growth and sustainable development' (African Union 2015, §8). Importantly, Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063 calls for 'an Africa, whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children' (ibid.). Agenda 2063 aims at establishing a more inclusive society in which all citizens can participate in political processes, regardless of gender, political affiliation, religion, ethnic affiliation, locality, age, or other factors.

Finally, the *AU Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment* (2018–2028) (GEWE) is an important strategic instrument in this field. Adopted at the 31st AU Ordinary Assembly (Nouakchott, Mauritania, 1–2 July 2018), this strategy acts as a road map for the implementation of gender-related commitments (African Union 2018a, 5). The strategy aims to achieve gender equality in all spheres of life. It is informed by the findings of a 2009 policy evaluation that focused on gender mainstreaming in all sectors including legislation and legal protection, economic empowerment and peace and security (ibid., 10). The strategy includes four main pillars: achieving economic autonomy for women, protecting their rights in times of peace and conflict, strengthening institutional capacities, and establishing women's leadership in all its dimensions (ibid.).

Collectively, the above listed policy instruments have framed debates, activism, and policy positions in relation to women's rights and gender equality (see Haastrup 2021).[1] Coordinating these efforts is the Women, Gender and Development Directorate (WGDD) within the AU Commission (AUC). It leads, guides, defends, and coordinates the AU's efforts on gender equality and development, including ensuring that African countries comply with the Maputo Protocol.

In relation to youth, the 2006 *African Youth Charter* is the central framework guiding the AU's engagement with youth as a policy field (African Union 2006).

1 For a critical reflection on the realisation of women's human rights to access justice, see Ntlama-Makhanya and Lubisi-Bizani (2021).

The charter focuses on the mainstreaming of youth across policy discussions and provides a legal basis for guaranteeing youth presence and participation in government structures and forums at national, regional, and continental levels. The 2011 *Malabo Declaration on Creating Employment for Accelerating Youth Development and Empowerment* was issued at the 17th AU Assembly (Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, 30 June–1 July 2011) (African Union 2011). The key commitments in this declaration focus on states' commitment to reducing youth and women unemployment by at least 2 per cent annually over the next five years; improving education and training; expanding social protections; and developing a comprehensive youth employment pact in collaboration with the African Development Bank (AfDB) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) (ibid.). Furthermore, the 2018 *Technical and Vocational Education and Training* (*TVET*) *Continental Strategy* provides a comprehensive framework for designing and developing national policies and strategies to address the challenges facing education and technical and vocational training in order to support economic development, create national wealth, and contribute to poverty reduction through youth entrepreneurship, innovation, and employment (African Union 2018b).

3 Major Developments

3.1 *Conflict and Forced Migration*

In 2021, the AU published a report on the *Status of Women's Rights in Refugee and Internal Displacement Settings in Africa* (AUC WGDD et al. 2021). It outlines the challenge of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), unmet health needs, livelihood insecurity, limited educational opportunities, physical insecurity, as well as the barriers to women's participation in decision-making processes. A central part of the policy recommendations focuses on ensuring assessed contributions are paid towards the fund for refugees, returnees, and internally displaced persons (IDPs) while requiring that at least 30 per cent of those funds directly benefit women and girls who are forcibly displaced. In addition, a policy brief titled *Multidimensional Approaches Towards Migrant Health in the African Union* highlights two trends that are exacerbating the need for quality healthcare across the continent (African Union [2021]). The first is the Covid-19 pandemic and second is the complex emergencies across the continent and responses to the related humanitarian needs, with particular focus on forced displacement. Concerning the last point, an interrelated development is the call on 3 June 2021 by the Centre for Human Rights (CHR) at the University of Pretoria in South Africa for the roll-out of the AU

passport. The centre draws attention to the need to increase the level of ratification of the protocol on the free movement of persons (African Union 2018c) by AU member states by ensuring the rapid roll-out of the African passport for all African citizens by the beginning of 2022. The open letter also calls for the creation of better conditions for migrants, social protection, and labour laws (CHR 2021). The open letter makes a connection between forced migration and the imperative of creating safe havens across African countries through the free movement of people as well as connected barriers created by national passports and associated visa regimes.

3.2 *Gender-Based Violence*

The AU's December 2020 policy report, *Gender-based Violence in Africa during the COVID-19 Pandemic*, focuses on intensified violence against women and girls due to lockdowns creating conditions for closer proximity to abusers, isolation from legal and other social services, and the increased burden of care for women and girls (AUC WGDD et al. 2020). This position was corroborated by Oxfam in its policy paper *The Ignored Pandemic: The Dual Crises of Gender Based Violence and COVID-19* (Oxfam 2021). Comparing the prevalence and responses to intimate partner violence in 2018 to coordinated responses to Covid-19, Oxfam argues that governments have proved capable of intervening when it comes to a health crisis but not being able to do the same relating to gender-based violence (GBV). During this Covid-19 period, the AU focused on the need for institutional mechanisms in member states that are fully responsive to the rights and needs of women and girls while calling on member states and development partners to support the strengthening of data and evidence concerning incidents and responses to GBV and commitment to adequately funding strategies for ending GBV.

The WGDD, which is responsible for promoting the integration of the GEWE, developed guidelines to assist in the promotion of gender equality since the onset of the pandemic (African Union 2020a). The framework covers women and the economy, food security and agriculture, healthcare, access to education, physical and psychological integrity, participation in decision-making, peace and security, and legal protection and access to information. GBV is covered under physical and psychological integrity. The guidelines call for budgetary allocation from special funds to have resources directed and dedicated specifically for national rapid response, setting up free hotlines to report domestic violence and strengthening services for survivors, and disseminating information and developing awareness-raising campaigns during lockdowns. They also advocate establishing and strengthening GBV shelters, providing psychosocial support for survivors as well as online counselling services,

enabling police to deal with GBV specifically during the Covid-19 period, and creating special mechanisms to ensure perpetrators are prosecuted and convicted speedily (for critical reflections on the insufficiencies of Africa's responses towards economic and psychological violence against women, see Budoo-Scholtz and Murungi 2021).

As part of initiatives that address harmful social norms that include GBV, the reorganised WDGG – now the AUC Women, Gender, Development and Youth Directorate (WGDY) – held a two-day meeting in June 2021 to focus on practical solutions for ending violence against women and girls and harmful practices in Africa.[2] Including Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Uganda, and Zimbabwe, the Annual Continental Coordination Platform focused on tracking progress made in National Spotlight Programmes, concentrating on eliminating all forms of violence against women and children. This regional programme aims to assist and support the overall responses for addressing SGBV, harmful practices, and sexual and reproductive health and rights. It also responds to the AU's aim to end child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM) across the continent.

3.3 *Women, Youth, Peace and Security*

Under these themes, a few conflicts contributed to a series of actions largely coordinated via the Office of the Special Envoy (OSE) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), Bineta Diop. In April 2021, regarding the ongoing conflict in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado province (see Dawit Yohannes, this Yearbook, chapter 9), the AU special envoy, the African Women's Leadership Network, and civil society organisations organised a virtual solidarity mission to respond to the human rights violations, SGBV, and escalating humanitarian crisis, which had a disproportionate impact on women (AU OSE WPS 2021). Plan International, drawing on analysis from four resettlement centres in Nampula and Cabo Delgado provinces, notes that of the more than 714,000 civilians that have been internally displaced to escape the violence, 46 per cent are children and around 3,000 people have been killed due to the jihadist insurgency (Yengo and Langa 2022). The virtual solidarity mission resulted in a call to action that emphasised enhanced coordination of humanitarian action while concomitantly prioritising women and girls in responses to the crisis. The OSE WPS also convened the 2nd Africa Forum on Women, Peace and Security to discuss implementation challenges of the WPS agenda in the face of the continuing Covid-19 pandemic (virtual, 13–14 December 2021).[3]

2 *AU Press Release* [Addis Ababa], 18 June 2021.

3 *AU Press Release* No. 123/2021 [Addis Ababa], 13 December 2021.

In keeping with Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) integrated the advancement of women and girls and meaningful participation in peace and development processes on the continent. On 22 March, the PSC met at the ministerial level under the theme 'Women, Peace, Culture and Gender Inclusivity' (AU PSC 2021). It recognised the patriarchal dimensions of social and cultural values as a key driver of the challenges that women and girls on the continent face. Recognising the importance of creative industries, the AU special envoy emphasised the role they play in building cultures of non-violent coexistence. Interventions around cultures of coexistence play an important role in building sustainable peace, which is essential to the WPS agenda (see also Wilén 2022).

The OSE WPS also developed the Continental Result Framework (CRF) to track the implementation of the WPS agenda by member states (African Union 2019a). A report on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 was also launched in September 2021. The CRF provides 28 indicators, agreed upon by member states, for tracking and reporting on the implementation of the WPS agenda in Africa. The indicators are structured around the four pillars of UNSCR 1325 – prevention, participation, protection, and relief and recovery (see UNSC 2000) – with the incorporation of an additional theme on 'WPS in the context of emerging security threats'. In addition, the framework provides 13 indicators to monitor the implementation of the WPS agenda within the AUC. The recommendations in the report on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 focus on women's active participation in peacebuilding and peace management, addressing women's economic empowerment and encouraging financial inclusion.

In relation to youth, the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted the work of the first cohort of African Youth Ambassadors of Peace, who were appointed in 2020. The youth ambassadors advocate and promote active and meaningful participation of young people at all levels of policy formulation, implementation, and monitoring in regard to peace and security decisions and agreements. The youth ambassadors also facilitate coordination between youth and relevant stakeholders to plan and evaluate interventions that promote peace and security.[4] The second AUC chairperson's special envoy on youth, Chido Mpemba (Zimbabwe), was appointed on 1 November 2021 (also to commemorate the African Youth Charter, which was adopted exactly 13 years earlier). She will be responsible for welcoming the second cohort of youth ambassadors from five of Africa's geographical regions.[5] The AU continued to demonstrate

4 *ISS Insights* [Pretoria], 13 December 2019.

5 *ISS Insights* [Pretoria], 25 April 2021.

an interest in providing a platform for young people as co-leaders. In 2021, it was also in the process of launching, under the AU Panel of the Wise, the WiseYouth network.

3.4 *Women and Political Participation*

Overall, the second continental report on the implementation of Agenda 2063 by the AU Development Agency (AUDA–NEPAD) indicates that indeed over the period under review there had been an increase in women's participation in parliaments, regional, and local bodies (AUC and AUDA–NEPAD 2022). The policy recommendations assert that member states ensure equal participation and effective representation and leadership of women and girls in decision-making processes; guarantee the meaningful engagement and active participation of refugees as well as displaced and returnee women in peace processes; ratify, domesticate, and implement the provisions of the *African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child* and the *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa* while removing reservations where they exist; provide support to the AU's *All for Maputo Protocol Programme*; adhere to reporting obligations; engage civil society and women's rights and child rights organisations in state reporting processes; repeal discriminatory laws and criminalise harmful practices that exclude and discriminate against women and girls; invest greater resources in addressing corruption, sexual exploitation, and abuse; create a conducive environment for whistle-blowers to expose corrupt practices to ensure funds reach intended populations, particularly those most in need; and pay particular attention to vulnerable populations within the broad umbrella of women and girls (AUC and AUDA–NEPAD 2022).

In relation to youth, the *Guide to Youth Participation in Political and Electoral Processes*, which followed the *Youth Engagement Strategy* (2016–2020), highlights the gaps in youth participation in political and electoral processes (AU Commission 2021a). The report calls for increased and meaningful contribution by young people on the continent in electoral and political life. Furthermore, the *Roadmap for the Implementation of the African Union Transitional Justice Policy* (African Union 2019a) is a policy document that came out of the adoption of the African Union Transitional Justice Policy (AUTJP) by the 32nd AU Assembly (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 10–11 February 2019). The road map declares that there will be a programme that focuses on training youth on transitional justice, as well as a youth fellowship on transitional justice across AU institutions and member states and higher education institutions.

3.5 *Food Security*

The second major area of focus for the AU in this policy field was food security. Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063 strives for an Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential offered by the African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children. The second continental progress report on Agenda 2063 illustrates that there has been an increase in the proportion of women in agricultural population who have ownership and land rights. The report highlights that 'the figure rose from 16% in 2013 to 23% in 2021. However, the performance falls short of the 2021 target value of 39%' (AUC and AUDA–NEPAD 2022, 43). While the performance fell short of overall aims, there are initiatives that are included within Agenda 2063 to support the promotion of women within agricultural space to grow (NEPAD 2022).

The 2021 *Global Report on Food Crises Joint Analysis for Better Decisions – Regional Focus* presents an overview of Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda – countries where there is high number of people facing acute food insecurity and malnutrition (FSIN and GNAFC 2021). The Pretoria-based Institute for Security Studies (ISS) highlights that the rising food prices could ignite unrest across the continent.[6] It suggests that clear policy certainty on issues such as land reform, the stimulation of investment in the broader food supply value chain, the moderation of tariff and non-tariff barriers to intra-African trade between net food exporters and importers, and innovation across food supply chains should be incentivised and rewarded.

Linked to this, the AUC published a report in February 2021, *The Seed Sector in Africa Status Report and Ten-year Action Plan (2020–2030): A Summary*, as part of its efforts to initiate and develop strategies to facilitate agricultural and rural transformation by improving productivity and growth (AU Commission 2021b). In the report, the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture emphasises that women and youth should be empowered to increase their participation in decision-making in agricultural projects as key value-chain actors. Women and youth should also have relationships and social capital that increase their capacity for action, together with the the appropriate enabling environment that allows women and youth to participate in a more meaningfully way in the seed value chain.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the AU also published a framework that speaks to some of the objectives outlined in the seed sector report. The *Framework for Boosting Intra-Africa Trade in Agricultural Commodities*

6 *ISS Today* [Pretoria], 13 June 2022.

and Services is a shift towards tangible programmes and actions to expand trade among AU member states within the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The free trade area would 'support closer regional economic integration and the removal of barriers to unlock the potential of the agricultural sector to contribute to sustainable and inclusive growth for Africa's rapidly growing and urbanising population' (FAO and AUC 2021, v). The framework aims to support the growing intra-Africa market opportunities and as such the transformation from subsistence to market-orientated productivity, thereby creating greater competitiveness. Moreover, the framework outlines that the benefits of such a transformation will be reaped by the most vulnerable parts of the population, which includes smallholder farmers, rural women, and youth. This transformation of the agricultural sector, according to the framework, will 'help build and maintain a resilient sustainable food system, which is imperative for minimizing the social, economic and human impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as meeting the food security needs of Africa's growing population' (ibid., 1).

Finally, the *AU Continental Declaration on Biofortification* endorses the process of conventionally breeding staple food crops that are naturally enriched with micronutrients (AUC 2021c). The process is said to be particularly beneficial for smallholder farming families who rely on staple crops for the bulk of their diet and who have limited access to other important nutrition interventions. Micronutrient deficiency – also known as hidden hunger – affects almost 2 billion people across the world, with a huge proportion of that figure comprising women and children on the African continent with deficiencies in vitamin A, zinc, and iron at the highest (ibid., 1). The notion of biofortification also relates strongly to the global spread of hunger, which disproportionally affects African women and children, as well as food insecurity, which has been exacerbated by the global pandemic. The AU proposes guaranteed leadership, commitment, and strategic planning by elevating universal access to biofortified crops and other nutrient-rich foods on the political agenda as well as investment in effective delivery strategies for poor smallholder producers, both men and women, and in gender-sensitive extension guidance and public sector procurement (ibid., 4). Improving the livelihoods of vulnerable groups, primarily women and children in rural areas of the continent, is at the heart of this policy.

3.6 *Labour, Digitisation and Employment*

In 2019, the AUC chairperson launched the initiative *1 Million by 2021*, which recognises young people as partners, leaders, and beneficiaries in building a democratic culture on the continent (African Union 2022). The initiative is centred around four pillars called the 4E's – education, employment,

entrepreneurship, and engagement. The education programme, through the AU Youth Empowerment Toolbox, allowed the AUC education sector response to Covid-19 technical and vocational education training to reach 1,297 young people. The employment programme, through the AU Youth Volunteer Corp (AUYVC) programme, the African Young Women Fellowship (AfYWF), and the Volunteer Linkage Platform (VLP), reached 2,140 young people. For entrepreneurship, the initiatives in this regard created opportunities through entrepreneurial grants, training, and mentorship programmes, reaching just over 40,000 young people. Engagement reached 8,731,375 young people, who were able to benefit through implemented activities that enabled and amplified youth voices to address the challenges and barriers that young people are facing in Africa.[7] Overall, the initative 1 Million by 2021 reached close to 900,000 young people, which Covid-19 being acknowledged as one of the reasons the AU fell short of its target. The successor of this initiative, *1 Million Next Level*, promises to focus on delivery, scale, and impact.

The 2021 launch of the 50 Million African Women Speak Platform in Kenya, in partnership with the East African Community (EAC), adds to the support for women empowerment initiatives by providing access to information on financial and non-financial services and business networks. Finally, the implementation of the *Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa* (2020–2030) (African Union 2020b), adopted by the 33rd AU Assembly (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 9–10 February 2020), has been initiated through ten AU Digital and Innovation Fellows. The fellows will harness digital technologies and innovation to transform African societies and economies by working in the AUC for a period of 12 months and contributing to national, regional, and global initiatives aimed at advancing the aspirations in Agenda 2063.[8]

4 Outlook

As the African Union looks ahead to 2022, the interconnected concerns around the long-term impact of Covid-19 on the socioeconomic and political landscapes remains key for the women and youth policy fields. Oxfam outlines the devastating impact the pandemic has had on different sectors, especially at the intersection of health and displacement, which makes conditions more difficult. Women and people with disabilities are particularly at risk due to the

7 *AU Press Release* [Addis Ababa], 7 February 2022.

8 *AU News* [Addis Ababa], 6 April 2022.

barriers to vaccination. Women in humanitarian-displaced contexts are getting vaccinated at a slower rate than their men counterparts (Oxfam 2021).

In relation to economic growth, attention to gender and youthhood in the implementation of the AfCFTA remains fundamental for dealing with the precarity of work that shapes the lives of women and youth (see also Bruce Byiers, this Yearbok, chapter 10). Finally, the question of sustainable financing for the AU has been front and centre since 2016 (see Ulf Engel, this Yearbook, chapter 3). Most financial investments at the AU are funded by external actors. International cooperation is an important part of forging global alliances and advancing collective interests in all matters, especially on gender and youth equality. However, there is need for independent African resourcing for commitments to the policy fields of youth and women, which would allow the AU to drive the priorities in these policy fields with greater flexibility and focus on contextual demands than is currently the case.

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PART 3

Book Reviews

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New Publications on Continental Matters

Book review editors: Katharina P.W. Döring and Jens Herpolsheimer

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Katharina P. Coleman, Markus Kornprobst, and Annette Seegers (eds.) 2020. *Diplomacy and Borderlands: African Agency at the Intersections of Orders.* London: Routledge, xv + 273 pp. ISBN 978-0-367-27332-3 (hbk), £120.00; ISBN 978-1-032-08694-1 (pbk), £36.99; ISBN 978-0-429-29614-7 (ebk), £27.74.

Aiming to complement, reorient, and diversify research on 'Africa's internal and external international relations' (p. 1), the collective volume *Diplomacy and Borderlands: African Agency at the Intersections of Orders* – edited by Katharina P. Coleman, Markus Kornprobst, and Annette Seegers[1] – sets out to engage in an effort that is not only very laudable but also indeed essential, focusing on a variety of African actors and their agency in reading, interpreting, and shaping orders at different scales between the local and the global. To that end, Coleman, Kornprobst, and Seegers propose three concepts as analytical lenses. In addition to the more obvious 'orders' (in the plural, including functional and geographic ones), these concepts are 'borderlands' – mostly to highlight intersections of different orders – and 'diplomacy', or rather 'diplomats' – to focus on different actors, including both traditional ones, such as states and international organisations, and non-traditional ones, 'players' that are internationally recognised on 'diplomatic stages' without representing state governments or intergovernmental bodies (p. 1).

These conceptual lenses tie together a selection of 11 chapters, in addition to the volume's introduction and a conclusion by the editors, written by a group of seasoned scholars and some junior scholars, based across Europe, Canada, and Africa.[2] Many chapters concentrate on contested norms and

1 Katharina P. Coleman is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of British Columbia. Markus Kornprobst holds the Chair of Political Science and International Relations at the Vienna School of International Studies. Annette Seegers is Professor Emeritus at the University of Cape Town, and, in addition to several prestigious visiting fellowships, served as visiting professor at the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University for almost two decades.

2 Of the four scholars currently based in Africa, three are based in South Africa, and one in Nigeria and South Africa.

discourses, for example human rights in South Africa (Chapter 1, by Maxine Rubin and Masana Ndinga-Kanga, and Chapter 2, by Seegers), non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear material (Chapter 7, by Kornprobst), and non-impunity (Chapter 9, by Martin Welz), as well as collectivist/human security in Africa (Chapter 10, by Thomas Tieku). Moving beyond state agency (e.g. Chapter 2; Chapter 4, by Jan Erk; Chapter 5, by Sonia Le Gouriellec; and Chapter 9), the chapters also focus on the agency of African exile diplomats (Chapter 3, by Collin Hendrickx) and political oppositions (Chapter 2); civil society actors (e.g. Chapter 1; and Chapter 11, by Eghosa Osaghae); international bureaucrats at the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union (AU), and the United Nations (UN) (Chapter 6, by Stefan Gänzle, Jarle Trondhal, and Nadja Kühn; Chapter 8, by Coleman; and Chapter 10); as well as personnel deployed in UN peacekeeping missions (Chapter 8).

This breadth of topics and actors – all of which, in one way or another, work at the intersections of multiple orders and draw on them, often selectively, to pursue their objectives – is clearly a strength of the volume, which successfully broadens and nuances the understanding of African agency as an active and often constitutive element of global orders. However, while the presented chapters are very interesting with lots of fascinating empirical examples and materials, most of them only work with the volume's key concepts very loosely, not really making full use of their potential. Some authors have tried to reframe their previous research in these terms, which appears to result either in almost everything (e.g. norms, fields, and regions) automatically becoming an 'order' or a 'borderland' or in every actor becoming a 'diplomat'. While the need to keep these terms open to some extent is clear, in order to capture what has previously been overlooked, it also risks rendering these concepts rather pale and unspecific (being metaphors only), which is even more regrettable considering the rich existing academic literatures on diplomacy and borderlands. In some cases, other terms and concepts might have been more apt to identify and make sense of the phenomenon or dynamic at hand.

As a consequence of such rather loose or missing engagement with the volume's key concepts, several aspects remain underexplored. First, in many chapters, it appears that actors simply find themselves and act at the intersection of different orders. As a result, efforts to actively create these intersections (or disconnect orders) are not investigated. Second, and closely related, imagination as a central element of orders appears to be overlooked entirely in the volume. Orders are also essentially always imagined orders that actors try to establish, with varying success, and always only become stable temporarily. Accordingly, what can be observed, more often than not, is the ordering rather than the orders as such. Third, with the exception of chapters 4 and 8, the

actual spatiality of borderlands, even if only functional ones, is largely ignored in the volume. In most chapters, the orders and the borderlands emerging at their intersections are assumed to be ideational, somewhere, or potentially everywhere. However, this fails to acknowledge that such ideas, norms, and discourses are also always anchored, constructed, and contested in physical spaces. Therefore, identifying and analysing where (in physical space) orders and borderlands are – and importantly also where they are not – are crucial practices.

As a matter of fact, non-traditional diplomats also in this volume remain outnumbered by more traditional ones, as the editors readily admit in their conclusion. Nevertheless, and this is a point also made by Coleman, Kornprobst, and Seegers in their conclusion, the volume needs to be understood 'more as a beginning than an end' in the discussion and further research on Africa's global international relations (pp. 264f.). Whereas this discussion may also draw on other conceptual lenses to be explored in the future,[3] as the editors rightly observe, *Diplomacy and Borderlands* provides a solid, rich, and very promising starting point.

Jens Herpolsheimer

Toni Haastrup, Luís Mah, and Niall Duggan (eds.) 2021. *The Routledge Handbook of EU–Africa Relations.* Abingdon, New York NY: Routledge, XXVIII + 368 pp. ISBN 978-1-138-04730-3 (hbk), £190; ISBN 978-1-315-17091-6 (ebk), £29.99.

The intellectual point of departure of this handbook is the overtly Eurocentric nature of the mainstream literature on the relations between the European Union (EU) and Africa. Much of the related scholarship, the editors argue in the preface to the volume, 'continues to place the EU materially and normatively in a hegemonic position over Africa' (p. XXIII).[4] Therefore, the editors aim at approaching the various legacies of Europe's colonial rule over most parts of Africa from a post-colonial perspective. However, the individual

3 A similar point and several alternative suggestions for conceptual lenses are offered in the volume edited by Katharina P.W. Döring, Ulf Engel, Linnéa Gelot and Jens Herpolsheimer 2021. *Researching the Inner Life of the African Peace and Security Architecture: APSA Inside-Out*. Leiden, Boston: Brill.

4 Toni Haastrup is a senior lecturer in international politics at the University of Stirling in Scotland, United Kingdom; Luís Mah is a lecturer in development studies at the Lisbon School of Economics and Management (ISEG), Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal; and Niall Duggan is a lecturer at the Department of Government and Politics at University College Cork, Ireland.

contributions to the handbook represent a variety of academic approaches, which is characteristic of the academic field concerned with the relations of the two neighbouring continents.

The handbook is structured into 5 parts and 27 chapters. In the first part, 'Theorising Africa–EU Relations through History', following an introduction by Toni Haastrup, three perspectives are discussed (Chapters 1–3): the place of EU–Africa relations in political science international relations literature seen from a constructivist angle (Olukayode A. Faleye, Iyamho); the study of the relation between the two continents through the lens of regionalism and interregionalism (Frank Mattheis, Brussels); and post-colonialism (Rahel Weldeab Sebhatu, Malmö).

The second part, 'Evolving Governance in EU–Africa Relations', introduced by Mary Farrell (Plymouth), is made up of six chapters (Chapters 4–9), starting with a historical account of the main legal frameworks that govern relations between the EU and African states, from the *Rome Treaty* (1957–1963), the *Yaoundé Convention* (1963–1975) and *Lomé Convention* (1975–2000) to the *Cotonou Agreement* (2000–2020) (António Raimundo, Lisbon). This is followed by a chapter on EU foreign policy-making from the 1993 *European Security Strategy* to the 2016 *EU Global Strategy* (Lesley Masters, Derby, and Chris Landsberg, Johannesburg). Next, the European External Action Service (Nele Marianne Ewers-Peters, Baltimore) and the *European Neighbourhood Policy in the South Mediterranean* (Anthony Costello, Liverpool) are introduced. The last two chapters of part 2 discuss the evolution of the *Joint Africa–EU Strategy* (2007–2020) (Fergus Kell and Alex Vines, both London) as well as the role of the African Union in the relationship between the two neighbouring continents (John Akokpari and Primrose Z.J. Bimha, both Cape Town).

Part 3, 'Issues in EU–Africa Relations', is introduced by Nicoletta Pirozzi and Bernardo Venturi (both Rome). It comprises seven chapters (Chapters 10–16), dealing with EU development cooperation with Africa (Sarah Delputte and Jan Orbie, both Ghent); democracy and human rights promotion (Edalina Rodrigues Sanches, Lisbon); peace and security (Ueli Staeger, Geneva, and Tshepo T. Gwatiwa, Johannesburg); regional integration (Giulia Piccolino, Loughborough), interregionalism and bilateralism (Andrzej Polus, Wrocław); trade and the rather infamous Economic Partnership Agreements (Victor Adetula, Uppsala, and Chike Osegbue, Igbariam); as well as cooperation in the field of science, technology, and innovation (John Ouma-Mugabe and Petronella Chaminuka, both Pretoria).

Part 4, 'External Actors in Africa's International Politics and the Africa–European Union Relationship', is introduced by Andrew Cottey (Cork). It comes in four chapters (Chapters 17–20), which cover the United Nations (Norman

Sempijja, Pamplona), China (Obert Hodzi, Liverpool), Brazil (Carolina Pavese, São Paulo, and Guilherme Ziebell de Oliveira, Porto Alegre), and non-state actors (Mark Langan, Newcastle, and Sophia Price, Leeds).

The final part 5, 'Opportunities to Cooperate on New Global Challenges', is introduced by Asteris Huliaras (Tripolis) and Sophia Kalantzakos (Abu Dhabi). It brings together five chapters (Chapters 21–25). The topics discussed include migration across the Mediterranean (Ana Paula Moreira Rodriguez Leite, Thauan Santos, and Daniele Dionísio da Silva, all Rio de Janeiro), environment and climate change (Simon Lightfoot, Leeds), civil society (Uzoamaka Madu, Brussels), agriculture and land (Edward Lahiff, Cork), and gender (Laura Davis, Brussels). This is followed by the editors' conclusions.

To start with, this is a thematically broad, empirically rich, well-researched, and extremely useful handbook. The editors have managed to put together a comprehensive guide to EU–Africa relations. Editing such a handbook is a brave undertaking, which can easily be criticised from two interrelated choices the editors had to make: the volume could bring together either too many or not enough perspectives. Given the nature of the publication strategies of the big publishing companies, such as Routledge, Palgrave, or Oxford University Press, some overlap with competing projects cannot be avoided (mainly with *The Palgrave Handbook of Africa and the Changing Global Order*, published in 2022),[5] and at the same time, there are obvious thematic gaps. But it would be pointless to overemphasise this issue, although topics such as energy, health, infrastructure, African policy-making in EU institutions, the African diaspora in many places across Europe, varied interests and policies of EU member states vis-à-vis the African continent, etc. could have added to the bigger picture.

Interestingly, the editors' framing of the long-standing relationship between the two continents is juxtaposing the European Union, and not 'Europe', with 'Africa',not the African Union. While in real politics, the absence of Morocco from the AU, until January 2017, was the reason for labelling the summits between the two organisations 'EU–Africa', the editors' epistemological reasoning for this preference is less clear. One reason seems to be institutional: the volume is published as part of the Routledge handbook series Europe in the World, concentrating on EU regional relations (the series' editor is Wei Shen, previously the EU Jean Monnet chair at Lancaster University, now at Deakin University in Melbourne).

One effect of bringing together perspectives on the relations between the EU, an intergovernmental-cum-supranational organisation, and Africa

5 Edited by Samuel O. Oloruntoba and Toyin Falola (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2022).

unintentionally is a reification of 'Africa'. This Africa is constructed in different ways in each of the contributions to this handbook. Thus, a clearly defined EU meets a less clearly demarcated Africa, which contradicts the increasing recognition of 'African agency' (if one would, for instance, be interested in the agency of the AU and/or the Regional Economic Communities, RECs). Despite the editors' post-colonial impetus, most contributors are looking from Europe to Africa, not the other way around – this commonplace perspective is also reflected in the choice and range of the sources quoted. In addition, by favouring an EU perspective, other post-colonial legacies are fading into the background. Think of the role of the British Commonwealth, La Francophonie, or the Community of Portuguese Language Countries.

Nevertheless, this handbook is a welcome and timely contribution to debates on African agency, multilateralism, the future of regionalism, and the changing nature of the global condition (or world order). Most chapters are well researched and, despite the above critique, the editors must be applauded for bringing together a fascinating array of intellectual perspectives.

Ulf Engel

Stephen M. Magu 2021. *Explaining Foreign Policy in Post-Colonial Africa*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, XVI + 349 pp. ISBN 978-3-030-62929-8 (hbk), €128,39; ISBN 978-3-030-62930-4 (ebk), €96.29.

Explaining Foreign Policy in Post-Colonial Africa, by Stephen M. Magu, is a welcome addition to the increasing number of books dealing with African agency within the international sphere.[6] While books about the domestic politics of African states abound, a flurry of books and articles during the 1960s and 1970s that sought to disaggregate the components and dynamics of what informed post-colonial African foreign policies have faded out. Therefore, this is a welcome book and an interpretation of the considerations that have informed the choices made.

Comprising nine chapters, Magu undertakes a tour de force. Chapter 1 deals with issues around the early developmental stages of post-colonial foreign policy. Chapter 2 seeks to locate the discussions within several conceptual

6 The author is an assistant professor of political science at Hampton University, USA, where he teaches courses on history, international relations, and political science. In addition to his academic writing, he has also published two volumes of poetry.

frameworks and how they help explain, where possible, their applicability to African statecraft. Subsequently, chapters 3 and 4 touch on a theme that the book finds critical in positioning Africa within the wider international system, and here the author focuses on what he terms 'residual colonization'. Combined with this idea are issues of geography, statehood, territoriality, Cold War dynamics, and apartheid. Dealing with the canker of secessionism, which has challenged the very idea of state sovereignty either in federated or unitary forms, chapters 5 and 6 in broad strokes focus on the developmental trajectories of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and its follower institution, the African Union (AU), trying to tackle this vexed question. Chapter 8 introduces the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) and new forms of engagements that African states have sought to chart new paths of independence and establish new alliances with states having similar experiences, as well as to expand and create opportunities and choices for engagement. In assessing the performance of states until 2020 and 'imagining the future', in chapter 9, Magu confronts the reader with some of the most complex and difficult choices facing Africa's post-colonial states.

In writing this book, Magu posits that any such endeavour that seeks to articulate an African foreign policy 'evokes intellectual disquiet, even suspicion' (p. 1). But this does not need to be so if and when the boundaries of what is being undertaken are clearly spelt out. And herein lies the books greatest weakness: in all the chapters, there are too many topics and subject matter areas that (a) are not linked to the title of the chapters, (b) include various digressions that lose the reader, (c) use way too many acronyms that are left unexplained, and (d) mention tectonic developments only in a cursory manner. Overall, there is a general disjointedness among the different chapters that makes it difficult to grasp the core arguments being presented in a succinct and clear manner, especially for those who are not conversant with Africanists.

A critical fallacy that Magu unintendedly perpetuates is the argument of the 'largely ineffective' inability of the OAU 'to address the most critical issues' (p. 6). Perpetuating this fallacy in a potentially useful and informative book is untenable. The OAU was established specifically to achieve three things: (a) decolonise the continent, (b) respect the colonially inherited boundaries, and (c) end apartheid. The OAU managed to achieve all these issues, albeit against momentous challenges. To denigrate this success in the light of the nature of the international system, which resisted African endeavours to demonstrate African agency, needs a revision. Other superfluous statements hardly help clarify the critical focus of the book. Magu postulates that '[m]ost issues affecting African countries can generally be classified as domestic policy, or

foreign policy issues' (p. 6). One wonders what the point is here and whether a printer's devil has not played a role in this sentence. Both policies feed into and impact on each other and are characteristic of how statecraft manifests everywhere.

While seeking to present a critical take on discourses about how foreign policy is practised in Africa's post-colonial societies, too many oversights and hasty and wrongful factual presentations suffuse the work in an unacceptably unfortunate manner. For example, considering this quote, 'the actual practice of non-alignment was most unsuccessful' (p. 10), one wonders what the criteria for this conclusion have been. The same applies to the characterisation of the successful actions by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in The Gambia in 2017 as a 'near-intervention' (p. 12). Moreover, applying a bureaucratic politics model to explain foreign policy-making processes, the author posits that 'weak domestic audiences and lack of checks and balances mean that executives single-handedly make decisions' (p. 40). Not only is this a fallacious and porous argument, but it also certainly overlooks and shows a gross misunderstanding of the policy formulation and implementation processes in most African countries. Historicising aspects of the analysis to ensure that particular epochs are well captured would have helped the author to limit the criticisms that might arise from such generalised statements. Certainly, since the early 1990s and even in the immediate post-independence period, there were processes that sought to curtail executive power and control over policy processes.

Although the above arguments have pointed out several difficulties and weakness of the book that detract its potential usefulness to students and teachers, there are several specific subsections in different chapters that can be useful to the general reader. Here, I want to highlight chapters 8 and 9, which sought to shed light on decisive, positive, and concerted African engagements in changing both the narrative and instituting policies, identifying new partners for engagement through the BRICS framework, and imagining an alternative future for the continent. In this way, *Explaining Foreign Policy in Post-Colonial Africa* is a useful and welcome addition to the panoply of literature on Africa's post-colonial politics. However, its potential has not been fully demonstrated and will need fundamental and extensive revision to make its arguments more incisive and appreciated.

Kwesi Aning

Kathryn Nash 2021. *African Peace: Regional Norms from the Organization of African Unity to the African Union*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, x + 232 pp. ISBN: 978-1-5261-5281-7 (hbk), £85.00; ISBN: 978-1-5261-5280-0 (ebk), GBP 76.00.

'Who contributes to the ideas or norms that govern the international system?' (p. 1). This question not only is the entry point of *African Peace: Regional Norms from the Organization of African Unity to the African Union*, by Kathryn Nash,[7] but also is at the centre of a whole spectrum of research on the creation and dissemination of norms in the international system. Yet, what Nash, and certainly others, observe in this literature is a heavy emphasis of actors, agencies, and events in the Global North. The book reviewed here attempts to counterbalance these accounts by adding an in-depth examination of regional organisations in the Global South. To that end, the author examines the creation and evolution of regional peace and security norms, notably the shift from non-interference under the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to non-indifference under the African Union (AU). The book, which is based on the author's dissertation (from 2018) at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, aims to show how African regional organisations not only adapted to prevailing international norms but also created new norms based on their own experiences. To explore this conundrum, it highlights the influence of shared regional ideas and interests (most prominently pan-Africanism and the collective experience of colonialism) as well as key events and advocacy by leaders since the beginnings of the OAU in the 1960s up until the formation of the AU.

The author advances her argument in ten chronologically organised chapters, not including the introduction and conclusion. Chapters 3 to 5 basically provide the historical background to the creation of the OAU as well as an overview of its legal framework, institutional design, and policies. Special emphasis is laid on the entangled history with different interpretations of pan-Africanism and its internally contested attempts at institutionalisation that ultimately culminated in the OAU founding conference in 1963. Following this, chapters 6 to 9 focus on different decades in the history of the OAU, each highlighting certain key events and actors that fostered the erosion and development of (new) regional norms. Chapter 10 contrasts these developments with broader trends in international conflict management after the end of the Cold War, drawing on emerging notions of human security and sovereignty as a responsibility within the system of the United Nations (UN)

7 The author is a Chancellor's fellow at the University of Edinburgh Law School.

and beyond. Finally, chapter 11 recounts the transformation from the OAU to the AU.

Chapters 6 to 10 provide the richest empirical accounts. Especially the reform attempts since the 1970s convincingly illustrate the interplay between internal norm contestation and the emergence of new norms. The cases in point are the experiences with atrocities in the Central African Republic under Jean-Bédel Bokassa and Uganda under Idi Amin and the resulting advocacy by leaders, such as Julius Nyerere (Tanzania) and Félix Houphouët-Boigny (Côte d'Ivoire), to reform the Union. One such reform attempt was the proposal for a Political Security Council, as suggested by Sierra Leone in 1980, which is roughly equivalent to today's AU Peace and Security Council. Although it never materialised, the author shows how the idea for such an institution did not simply emerge after the end of the Cold War in correlation with changing international norms. Moreover, by highlighting these internal forms of contestation and negotiation, the book also succeeds in correcting the view that the OAU was merely a homogeneous 'dictators' club'.

Additionally, the book ably illuminates the agency of regional norm entrepreneurs in negotiating and contributing to new international peace and security norms, who are frequently omitted in norm research. Specifically in chapter 10, Nash challenges prevailing arguments of norm localisation in Africa regarding the *Responsibility to Protect*. As the author suggests, ideas and perceptions of sovereignty as responsibility were already narrated and debated on the continent, for example, at the Kampala Forum in 1991 as well as through the works of Francis Deng in the 1990s. Thus, they preceded the 2001 *Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty on the Responsibility to Protect*. In contrast to treating regional organisations as mere receptors of international norms, the book zooms in on both the OAU and the early years of the AU. It highlights their agency not only in adopting or repudiating existing international norms but also in creating their own regional norms.

Another welcome perspective Nash suggests is to approach the transition from the OAU to the AU on a continuum, in terms of both regional norm and institutional development. This rejects simplistic accounts of the collapse of one organisation (OAU) and the creation of a new one (AU) amid changing global dynamics after the Cold War. Hence, instead of isolating the 1990s, the author examines the longue durée of norm formation and development within the OAU, from its formative years during the 1960s until the 2000s. This allows the author to present the development of norms as a multistage and

incremental process involving contestation and negotiation among various actors and with a long-term perspective.

Yet, as intriguing as these arguments are, the empirical and theoretical parts suffer at times from the same problems as contemporary norm diffusion theory in political science and international relations theory. For example, it remains unclear how ideas and norms are put into practice. It would have been interesting to read about the role of actors beyond state elites in promoting processes of organisational and normative change. For example, in chapter 8, the author refers to former OAU Secretary-General Salim A. Salim as a key driver in managing organisational change. However, the chapter merely summarises the 1990s report on 'Fundamental Changes Taking Place in the World and Their Implications for Africa: Proposals for an African Response', without mentioning the implications for managerial responses to these changes in terms of staffing, budgeting, and institutional realignment. Here the book slides back into an analysis and interpretation of formal AU documents that all too often falls short of explaining the inner workings of the OAU/AU bureaucracies.

In addition, although the book broadens the view on long-term processes of organisational change, it overemphasises ideas and perceptions as key drivers by downplaying the very actors of that change. This may be due to the author's approach to institutional change, which is based on a theory by Mark Blyth. To better illuminate these actors and how they influence organisational change, it would have been helpful to employ, for example, a public administration approach to the OAU Secretariat, which would have been in line with more recent advances in the literature on organisational change in regional organisations.

By and large, the book adds to a growing literature on African agency in global affairs, with a special interest in peace and security norms. Given its methodological approach of combining research at the AU Commission archives with interviews of AU officials, the narrative is extremely detailed. The author also reminds her readers that institutional design is constantly in the making, which also extends to the underlying norms that govern contemporary African peace and security efforts. Finally, the book is well researched and is a pleasant read. Therefore, it is highly recommended not only to scholars of (African) regional organisations and norm diffusion and African agency but also to those interested in the history of the OAU.

Enrico Behne

Kenneth Omeje (ed.) 2021. *The Governance, Security and Development Nexus: Africa Rising.* Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, XXIX + 397 pp. ISBN 978-3-030-49347-9 (hbk), EUR 96,29; ISBN 978-3-030-49348-6 (ebk), €74.89.

The 'Africa rising' discourse continues to colour discussions about Africa's economic and political development. *The Governance, Security and Development Nexus: Africa Rising*, edited by Kenneth Omeje, brings together scholars to discuss the extent to which Africa is uniformly rising, the sustainability of Africa's rise, and the extent to which non-performing African states complicate the rise of Africa.[8] More than this, the contributors of this volume are critical of the teleology of the neo-liberal model of development and situate their understanding of African governance and development by asking how Africa's rise – if there is one – impacts the citizens and living conditions within African countries. Each of the contributors of this edited volume is trying to make sense of why Africa has not substantially transformed, despite the progress many African countries are making via economic indicators and substantial improvement in some areas of good governance and regional integration.

The volume is divided into four parts, which explore the conceptual background of the Africa rising narrative, the global dimensions of Africa rising, the regional dynamics, and the national contexts of Africa rising. The volume is ambitious in its attempt to cover the governance, security, and development nexus in breadth and depth. For instance, the book highlights interregional dynamics between Africa and the European Union (Chapter 3), security regionalism between the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) (Chapter 11), state and society relations and state capacity in Somalia (Chapter 14), and policy recommendations to consider the prospects and challenges of the African Continental Free Trade Area (pp. 385–388). Each of the contributions in this volume take into consideration African actors' performance across scales of governance.

While the contributions focus on a range of areas, many of the chapters rely heavily on secondary data. They are highly descriptive, limiting the ability to align with the empirical agenda laid out in the introduction of the volume. For example, chapter 4, on Africa–US trade relations, traces US foreign direct investment (FDI) in Africa. It suggests a declining influence of the United States in the region. Still, the conclusions in this chapter do not tie back to the volume's impetus to examine the impact of the *African Growth and Opportunity*

8 Among others, Kenneth Omeje is the director of the Manifold Crown Consulting Services in Bradford, United Kingdom, and a visiting professor at the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) in Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia.

Act (AGOA) on the (lack of) transformation of Africa. Similarly, chapter 6, on FDI, comes after the chapter on AGOA, which reads more as a literature review than a chapter empirically engaging with the Africa rising narrative. The chapters on the role of regional organisations and Africa rising (Chapters 7–11) read more as indictments of the regional project and could do more to bring together how the RECs either advance or limit the Africa rising dynamics. There is room for the contributors to move beyond describing governance dynamics and gathering data to address the central questions that critically animate the volume. Specifically, the section on regional dynamics offers an opportunity for deeper questions about if the RECs possess transformational power in terms of governance outcomes in Africa.

Despite the excessive description by many of the contributors, the volume does offer interesting insights into the governance and development nexus. For example, in their chapter on economic growth, authoritarianism, and human rights, Aymar Nyenyezi Bisoka and Hilde Geens (Chapter 13) address the intersection of neo-liberalism, poverty reduction, and modernisation critique in Rwanda. The authors argue that the modernisation model used in Rwanda leads to domination of the population by the governing elite, which fosters authoritarian control (p. 267). Thus, while one would expect to see continued economic growth in Rwanda, the authors highlight that growth statistics obscure the well-being of poor people in the country. This chapter represents what this volume is trying to do: highlighting how African actors both buy into and deviate from conventional development practices while also questioning how governance practises impact the lived experiences of African citizens.

Another area where the volume offers potential for further research is in the periodisation of development. Many of the contributions do well to situate the empirical puzzles in a context of global developmental shifts over time. For example, Ibrahim Bangura proposes an insightful context around 'economic convergence' in the twentieth century as a response to Cold War politics and argues that economic convergence in this period is unique because it retains the competitive aspects of prototypical market demands while simultaneously creating the conditions for new market actors and stakeholders to emerge to change the nature of development aid (pp. 62–64).

Similarly, Temitope J. Laniran's chapter on the political economy of Africa rising (Chapter 2) tracks the economic growth of sub-Saharan African countries from 1960 to 2017 and juxtaposes the growth trends in Africa with significant global events (pp. 33–35). Yet, while the periodisation is useful in situating the activities of African countries in a global context, the chapter does not develop the empirical connection between economic growth and leadership, which it attempts to do implicitly. Laniran offers an interesting puzzle alongside the

central question of inclusivity in the Africa rising narrative: to what extent does leadership and regime type mediate economic growth in African countries? The chapter instead focuses on the question of whether the economic performance of one or a few countries drives the narrative of Africa rising. The conclusion is a repeated narrative that African countries must diversify their economies and domestic production. There is a missed opportunity here to tell us what the statistics do not say and engage with the qualitative factors that limit the Africa rising narrative. For instance, while the chapter mentions conflict trends briefly, it would be helpful to explain explicitly how conflict fits into the chapter's explicit question about inclusivity.

The contributors took on a seemingly impossible task of trying to understand and unpack the meanings and practices associated with the Africa rising narrative. The volume is strongest where contributors engage directly with the narrative and tackle questions that interrogate the variation of progress made by African states, such as Ethiopia's economic growth (Chapter 12). However, while the editors have set up a fascinating and compelling empirical puzzle, the contributions could be more rigorous in terms of developing some theoretical perspectives, methodological approaches, or policy prescriptions that take up the mantle of critiquing the African rising narrative. It seems like the overall book is doing too much and could use a little more focus. Despite this, the collective volume offers an interesting and compelling survey that will be a valuable contribution to the Africa rising debate.

Emmanuel Balogun

Francis Onditi, Gilad Ben-Nun, Edmond M. Were, and Israel N. Nyadera 2021. *Reimagining Security Communities: Systems Thinking Approach for Africa.* Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, LIX + 477 pp. ISBN 978-3-030-70868-9 (hbk), €139,09; ISBN 978-3-030-70869-6 (ebk), GBP 94,48.

Reimagining Security Communities, co-edited by Francis Onditi, Gilad Ben-Nun, Edmond Were, and Israel Nyadera,[9] aims to address conceptual and policy-oriented gaps in research on the multilayered African Peace and

9 Onditi is a senior lecturer and a head of department at the School of International Relations and Diplomacy, Riara University, Nairobi, Kenya; Ben-Nun is a senior researcher at Leipzig University's Research Centre Global Dynamics, Germany; Were is an associate professor of peace and conflict studies at Kisii University, Kenya; and Nyadera is a graduate student at the Department of Government and Public Administration at the University of Macau.

Security Architecture (APSA). The book also seeks to bridge the gap between micro and macro approaches in international/regional security studies, to provide alternative approaches, and to provide insights into how to better design and develop African Peace Support Operations (PSOs) (p. xxx). While facing new peace and security threats, the solutions put forward through APSA and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) seem to be ad hoc and not to provide lasting solutions. Against this backdrop, the book explores the question of what 'an effective framework for institutional coordination in responding to the emerging peace and security threats in Africa' would look like (p. XXXIX). In response, across 14 chapters, Onditi and his colleagues develop a systems thinking–based framework for regional security that could serve as an alternative to existing frameworks.

The book starts with a discussion of Karl Deutsch's concept of 'security communities' (Chapter 1) and Barry Buzans's regional security complex (RSC) theory (Chapter 2), attempting to apply these notions to the African peace and security landscape and to provide regional and global views of the RSCs in Africa on the basis of systems thinking. Assessing the intricacy of regional security arrangements in Africa, chapter 3 contends that reconfiguring APSA and adopting systems thinking would help to improve relations between the organs of the African Union (AU) and the RECs. The book then proceeds to unpack APSA – its structure, process, and experiences – and discusses the central principle of subsidiarity (Chapter 4), before turning to the African Standby Force (Chapter 5) and analysing the historical development of African PSOs from a pan-African perspective (Chapter 6).

Chapters 7 to 12 form the core of the book. They deploy the proposed systems thinking model and use its principles to call for a reconfiguration of the framework of Africa's regional security communities. The chapters present the principles of systems thinking, its elements, and its application to institutional design. These parts of the book indicate that the African-led peace operations are incapacitated, that the AU faces technical and political challenges in realising a regional collective security (Chapter 8), and that incongruences exist in the PSO multi-actor approach to deployment (Chapter 9). But they also, positively, indicate that the security challenges in Africa present an opportunity to test century-old systems and merge them with the one developed in the book (Chapter 10). The book proposes a system design of PSOs based on four principles: purpose; people and systems; systems behaviour and environment; and relationship between AU oversight, the RECs, and other auxiliary structures.

Chapter 12, the last contribution, provides a new theoretical framework for studying regional integration and argues for the need to include and account for the 'human factor', incorporating the cultural and psychological aspects

when considering any arrangement of regional security communities. The book concludes by pondering whether the AU could ever attain the status of a regional security community.

In short, *Reimagining Security Communities* attempts to offer a solution to the security problems that bedevil some African countries. Although it provides some useful insights into efforts to solve problems in Africa's security hotspots as well as into the prospect of addressing the problems through the adoption of a regional security approach informed by systems thinking, the book falls short of achieving that mammoth task.

For one, it seems to me that the book is premised on the wrong question concerning the problem at hand. The question should perhaps rather be about what form of community actually defines African regional integration schemes? That is, can the AU and the RECs be considered security communities? This is what scholars initially expected what the RECs would eventually become. The four conditions on which this expectation was based included inclusive processes involving states and civil society; institutionalisation of processes; a schedule for realising objectives; and active handling of development and security challenges. However, although they have achieved some milestones, the RECs still have yet to fulfil most of the cited conditions for security communities. Moreover, regarding the motivation to establish a security community in the case of Africa and the RECs, theory and actual practice seem rather contradictory. Furthermore, traditional security – as used in the book – does not seem to have been the original priority and motivation for integration. In addition, the divergent national interests of many African countries often translate into member states' refusal to surrender national sovereignty to foster regional integration. This dims the prospects of Africa and the RECs developing into security communities.

Interestingly, the book also discusses the evolution of (in)security, laying the foundation for the following discussion in the volume. It provides a decent historical overview of the evolution of traditional security perspectives as well as attempts to deploy Buzan's regional security complex theory (Chapter 2). That theory posits that regional security complexes dominate the societal, political, and military sectors. However, the book does not really engage with or interrogate the theoretical contributions of critical views on the subject. For example, it does not juxtapose the non-traditional dimensions presented by scholars such as those of the Welsh/Aberystwyth school of thought, the Paris school, or the Copenhagen school of security studies with traditional thoughts that focus on the physical and military definition of security. Juxtaposing them could help incorporate the role that factors that relate to human (in)security (e.g. poverty, the environment, resources and resource distribution, and the

desire for access to and control of economic resources) play in conflict and, in doing so, integrate them into the search for solutions. Nevertheless, the book does a good job at acknowledging increasing terrorism in Africa and the sophisticated characterisation of military insurgency as factors that shape and complicate conflict on the continent, potentially as a result of the combination of political, social, and economic structural aspects.

A couple of issues concerning the methods and theoretical approaches used in the book also affect the ability to achieve its aim – using systems thinking principles to offer solutions to security problems in Africa. The analysis in the book is informed by documentary sources from institutions in East Africa, the Horn of Africa, and West Africa, specifically in Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Ghana. In addition, the book draws on information gathered by the authors in their interactions with peacekeepers in regional seminars held under the auspices of governments in the RECs and development partners, as well as from interviews with officials and experts at the AU Commission and the RECs. However, it is not clear how representative the data is and to what extent inferences can be extended to the rest of Africa. Moreover, trying to frame the discussion, the book uncharacteristically deploys multiple theoretical views and principles (e.g. Deutsch's security community, Buzan's RSC, 'Dominiatrian' thought, and systems theory). In my view, this renders the volume somewhat unfocused, lacking a solid, consistent, and systematic theoretical underpinning.

Overall, however, the book provides helpful insights into how to better organise Africa-led PSOs on the continent. If well executed, and with proper political support and commitment, the interagency approach and multidimensional peace operations, involving civil-military coordination – which are endorsed in the book – are commendable and could help change the security landscape in Africa. I think it could even be more effective if initiated at the local level, within respective member countries of the AU and the RECs. In general, many governments of AU member countries domestically work in silos, adding to challenges associated with heavy administrative duties that affect the application of 'soft' power in peace operations by various professionals in African military formations (pp. XXIV, 459, 461). The military itself in some of these hotspot countries should, first, be professionalised to reduce chances of the military becoming a threat to civilian governments and to reduce aspirations of some military personnel to step into politics. Students, policy-makers, civil society, and other actors interested in African security issues and regional governance will find some of the ideas in the book valuable.

Christopher Changwe Nshimbi

PART 4

Appendices

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APPENDIX 1

Chronicle, 2021

18 Jan.	renewal of the mandate of the MNJTF against the Boko Haram terrorist group until 30 January 2022
20–21 Jan.	43rd Ordinary Session of the Permanent Representatives Committee (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)
31 Jan.	3rd Extraordinary Session of the Specialised Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security (STC–DSS) (Addis Ababa)
3–4 Feb.	38th Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council (Addis Ababa)
6–7 Feb.	34th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of the Heads of State and Government (Addis Ababa)
15 Mar.	swearing-in of newly elected AUC commissioners
25 Mar.	30th African Peer Review Forum of Heads of State and Government (virtual, Addis Ababa)
4–8 Apr.	4th Ordinary Session of the STC on Social Development, Labour and Employment (STC–SDLE)
14 Apr.–4 May	68th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (hybrid, Addis Ababa)
27–29 Apr.	2nd Conference of State Parties to the *African Charter on the Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration* (virtual, Addis Ababa)
8 May	appointment of John Dramani Mahama (Ghana) as high representative for Somalia
8 May	High-Level Emergency Meeting of African Ministers of Health on Covid-19
11 May	renewal of the AMISOM mandate until 31 December 2021
25 May	*Charter for African Cultural Renaissance* entered into force
25 May	1,000th PSC meeting
17–21 May	4th Ordinary Session of the STC on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration (STC–FMAEPI)
30 May–1 Jun.	violent clashes in the Pan-African Parliament (Midrand, South Africa) over rules applying to the election of the PAP president
1 Jun.	following a coup d'état, suspension of Mali from all AU activities
24 Jun.	meeting of the Bureau of the AU Assembly (virtual)
28–30 Jun.	3rd Ordinary Session of the STC on Transport, Transcontinental, and Interregional Infrastructures, and Energy (STC–TTIIE)
6 Jul.	renewal of the mandate of the G5 Sahel Joint Force until 12 July 2022

15 Jul.	launch of the new five-year continental *Green Recovery Action Plan 2021–2027*
22 Jul.	AU observer status granted to Israel amid resistance from LAS and some SADC member states
24 Aug.	Algeria cuts diplomatic ties with neighbouring Morocco
26 Aug.	2nd Annual Consultative Meeting between the PSC and the peace and security organs of the RECs/RMs
26 Aug.	appointment of Olusegun Obasanjo (Nigeria) as high-representative for the Horn of Africa
3 Sep.	3rd Ordinary Session of the STC on Trade, Industry and Minerals (STC–TIM)
10 Sep.	following a coup d'état, suspension of Guinea from all AU activities
11–12 Sep.	6th Pan-African Forum on Migration (Dakar, Senegal)
4 Oct.	meeting of the Bureau of the Assembly and the chairs of the RECs (virtual, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo)
22–24 Sep.	6th Ordinary Session of the STC on Justice and Legal Affairs (STC–JLA)
28 Sep.–1 Oct.	42nd Ordinary Session of the PRC (Addis Ababa)
14–15 Oct. 21	39th Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council (Addis Ababa)
16 Oct.	3rd Mid-Year Coordination Meeting between the AU, RMs, and RECs (virtual, Addis Ababa)
25–26 Oct.	2nd AU–EU Ministerial Meeting (Kigali, Rwanda)
25–27 Oct.	4th Ordinary Session of the STC on Communication and ICT (STC–CICT)
26 Oct.	following a coup d'état, suspension of Sudan from all AU activities
1 Nov.	appointment of Chido Cleopatra Mpemba (Zimbabwe) as special envoy for youth
1–3 Nov.	12th Annual High-Level Retreat of High Representatives, Special Envoys, and Special Representatives of the Chairperson of the Commission (SRCCs on the Promotion of Peace, Security and Stability in Africa under the theme 'Improved Coordination and Harmonisation for Impactful Mediation' (Nairobi, Kenya)
8–12 Nov.	4th Ordinary Session of the STC on Migration, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (STC–MR&IDPs)
15 Nov.–5 Dec.	69th Ordinary Session of the ACHPR (virtual, Banjul, The Gambia)
19–24 Nov.	Africa's Summit on Industrialisation and Economic Diversification (Niamey, Niger)
30 Nov.	5th UN–AU Annual Conference (New York, United States)
2–9 Dec.	10th High-Level Dialogue on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (Addis Ababa)

2–4 Dec.	8th High-Level Seminar on Peace and Security in Africa: 'Assisting Incoming African Members of the United Nations Security Council (A3) in Preparing to Address Peace and Security Issues on the Continent' (Oran, Algeria)
13–17 Dec.	4th Ordinary Session of the STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment (STC–ARDWE)
15–17 Dec.	2nd Extraordinary Session of the STC on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration (STC–FMAEPI)
16–18 Dec.	3rd Africa–Turkey Summit (Istanbul, Turkey)
16–21 Dec.	6th Ordinary Session of the STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (STC–GEWE)
21 Dec.	official launch of the AU Centre for Post-conflict Reconstruction and Development (Cairo, Egypt)

APPENDIX 2

Inventory of AU Decisions, 2021

General Notes

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, in March 2020 the African Union (AU) started adopting decisions by Online Silence Procedure (OSP).

Peace and Security Council (PSC): reference is to 'communiqués' and 'press statements' only (in addition there is a considerable amount of dated, but not numbered 'press releases'). In 2021, PSC meetings number 973 (16.01.) to 1056 (30.12.) were held. For the following PSC meetings, there is no documentation available at ULR: <http://www.peaceau.org/en/resource/documents>: 977, 980–981, 985, 988, 991–992, 997–999, 1003, 1008–1009, 1013, 1015, 1018, 1020–1023, 1025–1026, 1028, 1031, 1034, 1038, 1046, 1048–1049, 1052–1054 (in most cases, that would imply that a meeting was held, but no decision was taken). *Note: 993 refers to three situations discussed at two meetings (22.04.21 and 27.04.21).

Abbreviations

A	AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government
C	AU Executive Council
EO	extraordinary meeting
MYCM	AU/RECs Mid-Year Coordination Meeting
PSC	AU Peace and Security Council

Syntax

Year: number (volume and, in the case of the PSC, exact date):
Dates are referenced: (DD/MM).

Africa-China Forum on China–Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) **C** 2021: 1126(IV) G (XXXIX)
Africa-Japan (*see* Tokyo International Conference on African Development)
Africa-Korea, partnership **C** 2021: 1126(IV)E (XXXIX)
Africa-Turkey partnership **C** 2021: 1126(IV)F (XXXIX)

Africa's strategic partnerships **C** 2021: 1107(v)B–C (xxxviii), 1126(iv) A (xxxix)
African candidatures for posts in international organisations **C** 2021: 1120 (xxxviii), 1139 (xxxix)
African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (achpr)
C 2021: 1113 (xxxviii), 1135 (xxxix)
psc 2021: 1019 (10.08.)
elections **C** 2021: 1139 (xxxix)
African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (acerwc) **C** 2021: 1111 (xxxviii)
elections **C** 2021: 1121 (xxxviii)
African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (AfCHPR, *see African Court of Justice*) **C** 2021: 1112 (xxxviii)
elections **C** 2021: 1121 (xxxviii)
African Energy Commission (afrec) **C** 2021: 1107A (xxxviii)
African Inclusive Market Excellence Centre (aimec) **C** 2021: 1118 (xxxviii)
African Mechanism for Police Cooperation (afripol) **psc** 2021: 1014 (26.07.)
African Peace and Security Architecture (apsa) **psc** 2021: 986 (18.03.), 1007 (08.07.)
Peace Support Operations (psos) **psc** 2021: 986 (18.03.)
au Border Programme (aubp)
African border governance **psc** 2021: 1024 19.08.)
au Master Roadmap (*see* Agenda 2063) **psc** 2021: 1004 (17.06.)
conflict prevention **psc** 2021: 1014 (26.07.)
... climate change **psc** 2021: 984/1 (09.03.), 1043 (29.10.), 1051 (26.11.)
Peace and Security Council (psc)
briefings to psc, African Centre of the Study and Research on Terrorism (acsrt) **psc** 2021: 1014 (26.07.)
1,000th meeting **psc** 2021: 1000 (25.05.)
high-level seminar **psc** 2021:1056 on hls 9 (30.12.)
implementation matrix **psc** 2021: 1000 (25.05.)
retreat **psc** 2021: 1004 (17.06.)
working methods **psc** 2021: 1004 (17.06.)
Peace Fund (*see au finances, scale of assessment*) **C** 2021: 1119 (xxxviii)
Post-Conflict Reconstruction Development (pcrd) **psc** 2021: 1017 (05.08.), 1047 (12.11.)
resource mobilization **psc** 2021: 975 (27.01.)
African Risk Capacity [Agency] (arc) **C** 2021: 1116 (xxxviii)
African Union
A3 **psc** 2021: 983 (04.03.), 1056 (30.12.)
accession **psc** 2016: 617 (12.08.)
Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa cdc, *see* Covid-19, Ebola, health, hiv/Aids) **C** 2021: 1130 (xxxix)
Agenda 2063
ministerial committee **C** 2021: 1140, 1141 (xxxix)
Chairperson **A** 2021: 809 (xxxiv)
finances (*see* institutional reform)

audit **C** 2021: 1107(III) (XXXVIII), 1126A (XXXIX)
budget **C** 2021: 1107(B), (C) (XXXVIII)
budget supplementary **C** 2021: 1126(A) (XXXIX)
scale of assessment **A** 2021: 802 (XXXIV) | **C** 2021: 1119 (XXXVIII), 1138 (XXXIX)
implementation of previous decisions **C** 2021: 1127 (XXXIX)
institutional reform (*see finance reform*)
A 2021: 798 (XXXIV)
C 2021: 1107(H) (XXXVIII), 1126 (XXXIX), 1097(I) (XXXVII)
member states quota **A** 2021: 805 (XXXIV) | **C** 2021: 1107D (XXXVIII)
observer status **C** 2021: 1142 (XXXIX)
Permanent Representatives' Committee (PRC), structural reform **C** 2021: 1126 (XXXIX)
rules of procedure **A** 2021: 806 (XXXIV)
Specialised Technical Committees (STC) **C** 2021: 1108 (XXXVIII)
STC Justice **C** 2021: 1137 (XXXIX)
anti-personnel landmines **PSC** 2021: 1032 (16.09.)
AU Advisory Board against Corruption **C** 2021: 1114 (XXXVIII), 1136 (XXXIX)
election of members **C** 2021: 1123 (XXXVIII)
AU Commission (*see also African Union*)
Chairperson, election **A** 2021: 799 (XXXIV)
Commissioners, elections **C** 2021: 1125 XXXVIII), 1133 (XXXIX)
Deputy Chairperson, election **A** 2021: 799 (XXXIV)
Pension Fund **C** 2021: 1107E (XXXVIII)
Specialised Office **A** 2021: 808 (XXXIV)
staff, recruitment **C** 2021: 1107(F), (H) (XXXVIII)
AU / RECs coordination MYCM **A** 2021: 801 (XXXIV)

Boko Haram
PSC 2021: 973 (18.01.), 1010 (19.07.)
border disputes (*see* conflicts, AU Border Programme) **PSC** 2021: 1024 (19.08.)

children, in armed conflict **PSC** 2021: 994 (11.05.)
cluster ammunition **PSC** 2008: 137 (20.06.)
conflicts
Burundi **PSC** 2021: 993 (27.04.)
Central African Republic (CAR) **PSC** 2021: 979 (16.02.), 1011 (21.07.)
Chad **PSC** 2021: 993 (22.04.), 996 (14.05.), 1016 (03.08.)
Comoros **PSC** 2021: 1001 (01.06.), 1039 (19.10.)
Ethiopia **PSC** 2021: 1045 (08.11.)
Guinea **PSC** 2021: 1030 (10.09.), 1036 (05.10.)
Libya **PSC** 2021: 1035 (30.09.)
Mali (*see also* Sahelo-Saharan region) **PSC** 2021: 1000 (25.05.), 1001 (01.06.), 1027 (02.09.)
Sahelo-Saharan region (*see also* Mali) **PSC** 2021: 1035 (30.09.)
Somalia **PSC** 2021: 978 (09.02.), 993 (22.04.), 994 (11.05.), 1037 (07.10.), 1042 (28.10.)

South Sudan **PSC** 2021: 990 (13.04.)
Sudan **PSC** 2021: 990 (13.04.), 1041 (26.10.), 1050 (24.11.)
Covid-19 (*see* AU Africa CDC) **A** 2021: 797 (XXXIV) | **C** 2021: 1110 (XXXVIII), 1129 (XXXIX) | **PSC** 2021: 976 (29.01.)
crime prevention and criminal justice **C** 2004: 170 (VI)
Cuba, lifting of US sanctions **A** 2021: D2 (XXXIV)

Decade of African Roots and Diasporas **A** 2021: 807 (XXXIV)
decolonisation, Mauritius/United Kingdom, Chagos Archipelago **A** 2021: 812 (XXXIV)
desertification **A** 2021: 812 (XXXIV)
disaster management **PSC** 2021: 1043 (29.10.)
Special Emergency Assistance Fund for drought and famine in Africa **C** 2021: 1107(VI) (XXXVIII)

Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) **C** 2021: 1115 (XXXVIII)
elections **PSC** 2021: 976 (29.01.), 982 (25.02.)

G5 Joint Force **PSC** 2021: 1006 (06.07.)

health, financing **A** 2021: 810 (XXXIV)
humanitarian, situation **C** 2021: 1109 (XXXVIII)

Israel, observer status **C** 2021: 1142 (XXXIX)

Multinational Joint Task Force **PSC** 2021: 973 (18.01.), 1010 (19.07.)

NEPAD, African Union Development Agency (AUDA) **A** 2021: 800 (XXXIV)

Pan-African Forum for the Culture of Peace in Africa-Biennale **A** 2021: 811 (XXXIV) | **C** 2021: 1117 (XXXVIII) | **PSC** 2021: 1033 (21.09.)
Pan-African Parliament (PAP) **C** 2021: 1128 (XXXIX)
Pan African University **C** 2021: 1124 (XXXVIII), 1134 (XXXIX)
peace and security
climate change **PSC** 2021: 984/1 (09.03.)
prevention of genocide **PSC** 2021: 989 (12.04.)
medical facilities and personnel in armed conflict **PSC** 2021: 1044 (05.11.).

refugees **PSC** 2021: 1002 (08.06.)

terrorism **PSC** 2021: 1040 (22.10.)
Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) **C** 2021: 1126(IV)C (XXXIX)

Women, Peace and Security **PSC** 2021: 987 (22.03.)

Year of Arts, Culture and Heritage **A** 2021: 796 (XXXIV) | **C** 2021: 1131 (XXXIX)

APPENDIX 3

Key AU Office Holders, 2021

Chairs of the Assembly of the African Union, 2021

Feb. 2020–Feb. 2021	Cyril Ramaphosa (South Africa)
Feb. 2021–Feb. 2022	Félix Antoine Tshisekedi (DRC)

Chairperson of the AU Commission and Commissioners, 2021

Chairperson	since Mar. 2017	Moussa Faki Mahama (Chad)
Deputy Chairperson	since Feb. 2021	Monique Nsanzabaganwa (Rwanda)
Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security	since Feb. 2021	Bankole A. Adeoye (Nigeria)
Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy	since Jan. 2017	Amani Abou-Zeid (Egypt)
Commissioner for Economic Development, Trade, Industry and Mining	since Jan. 2017	Albert M. Muchanga (Zambia)
Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment	since Jan. 2017	Josefa Leonel Correa Sacko (Angola)
Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development	Jul. 2017–Jul. 2021 since Jul. 2021	Amira Elfadil Mohammed (Sudan) Minata Samate Cessouma (Burkina Faso)
Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology and Innovation	Jul. 2017–Oct. 2021 Oct. 2021*	Sarah Anyang Agbor (Cameroon) Belhocine Mohammed (Algeria)

*Official handover ceremony only in Jan. 2022

Members of the Peace and Security Council, 2021

Central Africa	Burundi	2019–2022	
	Cameroon		2020–2022
	Chad		2020–2022
East Africa	Kenya	2019–2022	
	Djibouti		2020–2022
	Ethiopia		2020–2022
North Africa	Algeria	2019–2022	
	Egypt		2020–2022
Southern Africa	Lesotho	2019–2022	
	Malawi		2020–2022
	Mozambique		2020–2022
West Africa	Nigeria	2019–2022	
	Benin		2020–2022
	Ghana		2020–2022
	Senegal		2020–2022

Members of the Panel of the Wise, 2021

Central Africa	since Jul. 2017	Honorine Nzet Bitéghé (Gabon)
East Africa	since Jun. 2014	Speciosa Wandira Kazibwe (Uganda)
North Africa	since Jul. 2017	Amr Moussa (Egypt)
Southern Africa	since Jul. 2017	Hifikepunye Pohamba (Namibia)
West Africa	since Jul. 2017	Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (Liberia)

Note: All three-year terms of office have expired in 2020. Members are eligible for reappointment only once.

Index

Abarry, Abdou 49
Abou-Zeid, Amani 34, 75, 121, 122, 123, 124, 126
Adeoye, Bankole A. 34, 35, 87, 95, 154, 166
Africa CDC. *See* African Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
African Cup of Nations 170
African Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. *See also* Covid-19, health 51f., 104, 111, 113–115
finances 19, 23f., 26
African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG). *See also* African Governance Architecture 36, 83, 94
African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) 24, 37, 84, 144
African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). *See also* regional integration, trade 26, 35, 114, 120, 133, 179–202, 206
adjustment fund and payment system 190–191
international partners 191–192
phase II negotiations 189–190
private sector 192–194
rules of origin 186–188
services 188–189
women and youth 194–195
African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (AfCHPR) 24, 26, 37
African Development Bank (AfBD) 50, 109, 121, 221
African Energy Commission 125f.
African Export-Import Bank 190
African Governance Architecture (AGA). *See also* African Peace and Security Architecture, unconstitutional changes of government 83–101
African Human Rights Commission 26
African Medicines Agency (AMA) 35, 104
African National Congress (ANC) 90
African Observatory for Science, Technology and Innovation (AOSTI) 70
African Peace Facility (APF). *See also* European Peace Facility 18, 26, 206
African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). *See also* African Governance Agenda, African Standby Force, Continental Early Warning System, Panel of the Wise, Peace Fund, Peace and Security Council 139–174
2002 *Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the PSC* 36, 50
African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). *See also* African Governance Architecture, New Partnership for Africa's Development 5, 24, 26, 50, 84–87, 93, 100, 101
APRM report 85f.
APRM/PSC retreat 92f.
African Single Electricity Market (AfSEM) 125, 126–128, 133, 135
African Standby Force (ASF) 154, 212
African Union (AU). *See also* AU Assembly, AU Commission, Organisation of African Unity, Regional Economic Communities, strategic partnerships 1, 19–45
Constitutive Act 4, 32, 67, 83, 96, 107, 219
election observer missions 155f., 157f.
flagship projects 2*n*.4, 4, 4*n*.5, 50, 74, 78, 83, 100, 120f., 124, 125, 134f.
key programme areas 5*n*.6
ratification of legal instruments 35–36, 76–77, 79
statutory meetings 19
Theme of the Year 3, 77, 89
Year of Nutrition 115–116
20th anniversary VII
African Union Handbook 2
African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) 20, 26, 141, 145–148, 173, 206, 208
Akufo-Addo, Nana 33*n*.18, 54
Agenda 2063. *See also* African Union, flagship projects 2, 2*n*.4, 4, 17, 50, 59, 62, 67, 71, 73, 75, 76, 78, 83–85, 93, 94, 96, 98, 104, 107–108, 116, 120, 124, 126, 129, 134, 135, 179, 220, 224, 225, 226, 228

Algeria 22, 23, 35, 39, 56, 78, 113*n*.7, 156, 174, 186, 188*n*.16, 204*n*.4
Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction 157
Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) 48, 55, 171
al-Bashir, Omar 148
al-Shabaab. *See also* peace and conflict 145
AMISOM. *See* African Union Mission in Somalia
Angola 22, 46*n*.2, 48*n*.3, 53, 87, 185*n*.9, 188*n*.16
Annual Report on the Activities of the African Union and its Organs 2
Anyang Agbor, Sarah 34
APRM. *See* African Peer Review Mechanism
APSA. *See* African Peace and Security Architrecture
Arab League. *See* strategic partnerships 204–205
Arab Maghreb Union (UMA). *See also* regional economic communities, Mid-Year Coordination Meetings 1fn2, 19*n*.1, 98*n*.16, 156, 184
Assembly of Heads of State and Governance (AHSG). *See* AU Assembly
arts, culture and heritage. *See also* education, science, and technology 77–79
  Encyclopaedia Africana Project 78
  Great Museum of Africa 78
ASF. *See* African Standby Force
Assoumani, Azali 152
AU Assembly. *See also* African Union, AU Commission, AU Executive Council, Bureau of the AU Assembly 1*n*.1, 4, 14f., 19, 21*n*.5, 22, 30, 31–33, 36, 39, 46, 47, 54, 56, 58, 69, 71, 76, 77, 79, 84–86, 93*n*.10, 95, 108, 109, 111, 113, 121–123, 127, 128, 141, 164, 181, 182, 184, 185, 188, 190, 193, 196, 197, 204, 210, 220
AU Border Programme (AUBP) 29
AU Commission (AUC). *See also* African Union, AU Assembly, AU Executive Council chairperson. *See also* Faki Mahamat 14, 21*n*.5, 31–33, 37–39, 46, 52, 54, 55, 56, 57, 60, 122, 124, 133, 139, 143, 144, 146, 147, 153, 157, 158, 164, 168, 208–210, 227
  corruption 38
  Department of Economic Development, Trade, Industry and Mining 181
  Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) 16, 28–30, 87, 88, 93, 94, 101, 147, 154
Department of Social Affairs of the AU Commission 104
  elections 32–35
  financial reform 16–18, 20–27
    audit 22
    budget 20f., 24f., 25, 26–27
    financial dependence 14, 21f.
    Peace Fund 16, 17, 20, 21, 23, 23*n*.7
    sanctions 16, 21, 21f.4, 21*n*.5
    scale of assessment 22–23
    supplementary budgets 23
  institutional reform 15–18, 27–32, 70
    AUC Transition Plan 26, 28, 30
    merger of DPA and PSD. *See also* AU Border Programme, Continental Early Warning System 16, 29, 87f.
    recruitment 30
    staff size 29f.
  Office for Mali and Sahel (MISAHEL) 162–164
  Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) 203
  sexual harassment 38
AU Development Agency (AUDA). *See also* New Partnership for Africa's Development 5f., 24, 26, 31, 37, 71, 73, 83f., 109, 114, 122f., 125, 127f., 129f., 130, 135, 225
AU ECHO 2
AU Executive Council. *See also* African Union, AU Assembly, AU Commission 19–24, 26, 28–30, 32, 34, 37–40, 56, 58, 59, 70, 74, 76, 88, 112, 114, 115, 122, 123, 179, 197, 203, 210, 212, 213
AUBP. *See* African Union Border Programme
AUC. *See* AU Commission
AUC–RECs. *See* Mid-Year Coordination Meetings
AUDA. *See* AU Development Agency 24
A3. *See* UN Security Council

Barrow, Adama 157
Barkat Daoud, Hasna 33

Belhocine, Mohamed 34, 70
Ben Achour, Rafaa 37
Beya, François 47
Benin 21, 21*n*.4, 113*n*.7, 140, 186, 187, 188*n*.16
Biden, Joe 131, 144
Biennale of Luanda 53
Blinken, Antony 131
Boko Haram. *See also* peace and conflict 159–160, 168, 170, 173
Borrell, Josep 59
Botswana 61, 86, 87, 91, 186, 188*n*.16
Brazil 204
Bureau of the AU Assembly. *See also* AU Assembly 15, 19, 31, 36, 210
Burkina Faso 53, 113*n*.7, 160–161, 185*n*.9, 188*n*.16
Burundi 21, 48, 53, 140, 169–170, 171, 186, 188*n*.16

Cameroon 21*n*.4, 58*n*.15, 87, 113*n*.7, 141, 170–171, 174, 185*n*.9, 188*n*.16, 206
Canada 131*n*.17
Cape Verde 21*n*.4, 186, 188*n*.16
Central African Republic (CAR) 21*n*.4, 50, 58*n*.15, 140, 141, 142, 165–168, 185*n*.9, 188*n*.16, 207, 208, 209, 210
CEN–SAD. *See* Community of Sahel-Saharan States
Cessouma, Minata Samaté 34
CEWS. *See* Continental Early Warning System
Chad 69, 91, 93, 113*n*.7, 140, 141, 150, 159, 168–169, 185*n*.9, 188*n*.16
Chagos Archipelago 39
China, People's Republic of. *See also* strategic partnerships 52, 59, 145, 204, 209, 210–212
  Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). *See also* infrastructure 120f., 131, 132, 133–135
climate change politics 58
Coalition of Patriots for Change 165
COMESA. *See* Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). *See also* regional economic communities, Mid-Year Coordination Meetings 1*n*.2, 19*n*.1, 96, 98*n*.16, 99, 184, 186, 192, 193
Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN–SAD). *See also* regional economic communities, Mid-Year Coordination Meetings 1*n*.2, 19*n*.1
Comoros 21*n*.4, 36, 39, 152, 186, 188*n*.16, 204*n*.4, 206
Condé, Alpha 158
Congo 21, 46*n*.2, 58*n*.15, 53, 87, 185*n*.9, 188*n*.16
conflict *see* violent extremism and terrorism, violent conflict
Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) 29
Continental Report on the Implementation of Agenda 2063 2
Correia Sacko, Josefa Leonel 34
Côte d'Ivoire 115, 140, 161, 173, 185*n*.9, 188*n*.16, 206
Covid-19. *See also* Africa CDC, health 18, 51–53, 71, 72, 84, 85, 90–94, 104, 106, 116f., 121, 122, 130, 208, 222–223

Dahmani, Nawel 78*n*.13
Déby, Idriss 168, 169
Déby, Mahamat 168
Democratic Alliance (DA) 90
democracy. *See* African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance; African Peer Review Mechanism; African Governance Architecture
diaspora 79
Diop, Bineta 223
Djibouti 21*n*.4, 39, 56, 204*n*.4
Djinnit, Said 28*n*.9
DR Congo 36, 46–63, 85, 87, 140, 142, 171–172, 173f., 186, 188*n*.16, 209
Du Bois, W. E. B. 78

EAC *see* East African Community
East African Community (EAC). *See also* regional economic communities, Mid-Year Coordination Meetings 1*n*.2, 20*n*1, 61, 97f., 98*n*.16, 108, 184, 206, 228
ECCAS. *See* Economic Community of Central African States
Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). *See also* regional economic communities, Mid-Year Coordination Meetings 1*n*.2, 19*n*.1, 61f., 98*n*.16, 166, 167, 184

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). *See also* regional economic communities, Mid-Year Coordination Meetings 1*n*.2, 19*n*.1, 51, 54, 56, 96, 98*n*.16, 108, 150, 159, 162, 184
Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) 184
ECOWAS. *See* Economic Community of West African States
education, science, and technology. *See also* arts, culture and heritage 67–82
  African Space Policy and Space Strategy 76
  Continental Education Strategy for Africa (2016–2025) 71–72
  Continental Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training 72f.
  Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa 75
  facts and figures 67–69
  Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 72
Egypt 22, 23, 36, 39, 56–57, 69, 123, 185*n*.9, 188*n*.16, 204*n*.4, 205
elections 89–93
  elections postponed 91–92
Elfadil Mohammed, Amira 34
Eliodia, Tumwesigye 70
El Hilu, Abdel Aziz 149
El-Sisi, Abdel Fattah 57
Equatorial Guinea 21*n*.4, 58*n*.15, 87, 185*n*.9, 188*n*.16
Erdoğan, Recep Tayip 59, 60
Eritrea 186
Eswatini 21*n*.4, 152, 185*n*.9, 188*n*.16
Ethiopia. *See also* Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam 23, 56f., 57, 91, 141f., 142–145, 174, 185*n*.9, 205, 208
European Union (EU). *See also* African Peace Facility, strategic partnerships 100, 114f., 143, 146, 192, 205–207
  Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) 206
  European Peace Facility (EPF) 18, 206
  Global Gateway. *See also* infrastructure 120f., 131–133, 135
  military training missions 207
Eyadéma, Faure Gnassingbé 54

Faki Mahamat, Moussa 33, 54, 60, 122, 124, 133, 144, 153f., 158, 208
Fall, Ibrahima 168f.
Feltman, Jeffrey 144
Forces démocratiques de liberation du Rwanda (FDLR) 171
food security 226–227
France 131*n*.17, 161, 167, 209
France-Africa Summit on Financing African Economies 52

Gabon 39, 58, 69, 87, 91, 113*n*.7, 185*n*.9, 188*n*.16
The Gambia 21*n*.4, 33, 91, 140, 157–158, 185*n*.9, 188*n*.16
gender and governance 96–98
Germany. *See also* GIZ 131*n*.17
Ghana 35, 58, 113*n*.7, 164, 173, 185*n*.9, 188*n*.16, 206
GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit). *See also* Germany 71, 74, 100, 191
governance. *See also* African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance 83–103
Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) 56f., 149, 205
Grand Inga Hydropower Project 50, 59
Guinea 8*n*.8, 35, 113*n*.7, 141, 158–159, 169, 172, 185*n*.9, 188*n*.16
Guinea-Bissau 21*n*.4, 186, 187, 188*n*.16
Guterres, António 208
G5 Sahel Joint Force 141, 164, 169, 207, 208

Hamdok, Abdalla 148
health. *See also* Covid-19 104–119
  coordination and partnerships 113–115
  facts and figures 105–106
  financing 108–109
  Health Research and Innovation Strategy for Africa 109–110
  performance 116–117
  research and innovation 109–110
  vaccine access and production 109–112
He Lifeng 133
Hichilema, Hakainde 61
human rights. *See* African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance; African Governance

Architecture; African Court on Human and People's Rights; African Peer Review Mechanism

Ibn Chambas, Mohamed 33*n*.18
IGAD. *See* Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)
Ikouébé, Basile 168
Imani, Aboud 37
India 204, 212
infrastructure. *See also* African Single Electricity Market, Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa, Specialised Technical Committees 120–138
Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). *See also* regional economic communities, Mid-Year Coordination Meetings 1*n*.2, 19*n*.1, 124, 98*n*.16, 145, 150, 184
International Centre for Girls and Women Education in Africa (AU/ CIEFFA) 70
International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR). *See also* regional economic communities 49, 167
International Court of Justice (ICJ) 140, 147
International Monetary Fund (IMF) 52
Ireland 145
Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP). *See also* peace and conflict 160, 168, 173
Islamic State of Iraq and Syria DRC. *See also* peace and conflict 55–56
Israel 205
  observer status 38–39, 56
  Italy 131*n*.17

Jammeh, Yahya 157
Japan. *See also* strategic partnerships 131*n*.17, 204, 210, 213
Johnson, Boris 58
Johnson Sirleaf, Ellen 54

Kalala-Ngoy, Marie Madeleine 49
Kabila, Joseph 46–50, 171
Kagame, Paul 15, 27f., 31, 46, 52, 54, 60, 198, 211
Kenya 46*n*.2, 53, 61, 69, 86, 91, 96, 110, 131, 140, 145, 146, 147, 185*n*.9, 188*n*.16, 205, 206, 209
Kenyatta, Uhuru 46, 61
King Letsie III 116
Kodjo, Edem 49
Kuliane, Awale Ali 33
Kwesi-Quartey, Thomas 38*n*.27

Lake Chad Basin (LCB) 140
League of Arab States. *See* strategic partnerships
Lesotho 21, 123, 185*n*.9, 188*n*.16
Lewat, Osvalde 53
Liberia 91, 186, 187, 188*n*.16, 223
Libya 21, 22, 39, 91, 140, 142, 154–156, 174, 186, 204*n*.4, 205, 207, 209
Liu Yuxi 134
Lopes, Carlos 187
Lords' Resistance Army (LRA) 50
Lourenço, João 53
Lukonde, Jean-Michel 60
Luaba, Alphonse Ntumba 51*n*.6
Luanga, Faustin 61
Lutundula, Christophe 59

Macron, Emmanuel 52, 55
Madagascar 186, 188*n*.16, 192*n*.20, 206
Magosi, Elias M. 61
Mahama, John 146
Malawi 35, 69, 87, 173, 186, 223
Mali 8*n*.8, 39, 53, 77, 113*n*.7, 140, 141, 150, 160–164, 168, 169, 172, 185*n*.9, 188*n*.16, 207, 209, 223
Maloka, Edward 84
Mamabolo, Jeremiah Kingsley 35
Matengu, Kenneth Kamwi 74
Mauritania 21*n*.4, 23, 55, 87, 188*n*.16, 204*n*.4
Mauritius 39, 69, 113*n*.7, 185*n*.9, 188*n*.16, 192*n*.20, 204*n*.4, 206
Mayaki, Ibrahim Assane 5, 37, 128, 129
Mbabazi, Pamela Kasabiiti 33
Mbokazi, Sabelo 38*n*.27
Mene, Wamkele Keabetswe 51, 180
Merkel, Angela 52
Michel, Charles 60
Mid-Year Coordination Meetings (MYCM). *See also* AU Commission, regional economic communities 19, 31–32, 95, 184f.
Military Observers Mission to the Central African Republic (MOUACA) 167

MNJTF. *See* Multinational Joint Task Force, Nigeria
Mobutu Sese Seko, Joseph 48
Morocco 22, 39, 156–157, 174, 186, 188*n*.16, 204*n*.4, 204*n*.5, 205
Moukoko, Pierre 15
Mozambique 21, 21*n*.4, 140, 141, 152–154, 173, 186, 206, 207, 223
Mpemba, Chido 224
Muchanga, Albert 34
Müller, Gerd 126
Mugabe, Robert 50
Multinational Joint Task Force in the Lake Chad Basin (MNJTF). *See also* peace and security 26, 141, 160, 164, 169, 173, 208
Mushikiwabo, Louise 60
Muyumba, Francine 49
MYCM. *See* Mid-Year Coordination Meetings

Namibia 35, 39, 48*n*.3, 62, 69, 86, 110, 113*n*.7, 185*n*.9, 188*n*.16
National People's Party 157
N'Daw, Bah 161
NEPAD. *See* New Partnership for Africa's Development
New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). *See also* African Peer Review Mechanism, AU Development Agency 5, 24, 71
Ngandu Ilunga, Jean Leon 213
Ngoy Lumbu, Rémy 37
Niger 21*n*.4, 53, 86, 91, 110, 113*n*.7, 160, 161, 185*n*.9, 188*n*.16, 207, 209, 223
Nigeria. *See also* Multinational Joint Task Force 22, 37*n*.24, 40, 86, 92, 110, 131, 160, 164, 185*n*.9, 187, 188*n*.16, 192, 206, 223
Nkrumah, Kwame 78
Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) 203
North African Regional Capability (NARC) 156
Nsanzabaganwa, Monique 33, 38, 127
Ntsebeza, Dumisa Buhle 37
Nzinzi, Pierre Dominique 74

OAU (Organisation of African Unity). *See also* African Union 1, 1*n*.1, 36, 39, 48, 70, 106, 203, 204
Obasanjo, Olusegun 37, 57, 143
Odinga, Raila 50, 120, 124, 125
Ofosu-Appiah, Lawrence H. 78*n*.12
Ogude, Audrey Nthabiseng 74
Ouane, Moctar 161
Ouedraogo, Mahama 70

Palestine 39
Pan-African Institute for Education for Development (IPED) 71
Pan-African Parliament (PAP) 24, 26, 37–38, 88–89, 182
Pan-African University (PAU) 24f., 26, 67, 70, 74–75
peace and security, state of. *See also* Peace and Security Council, UN Security Council, violent conflict, violent extremism and terrorism 139–178
Peace and Security Council (PSC). *See also* African Governance Agenda, Peace and Security Council, violent conflict, violent extremism and terrorism 16, 40, 140, 143, 149, 152, 161, 164f., 167, 168, 169, 170, 171f., 224
Peace Support Operations (PSO). *See also* AMISOM 13, 17, 20, 22, 24–27, 139, 141, 206, 207
Pobee, Martha Ama Akyaa 33
Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) 123f., 125, 127, 128–130, 134, 135
Pricewaterhouse-Coopers (PwC) 22, 34, 38
PSC. *See* Peace and Security Council
PSOs. *See* (AU) Peace Support Operations

Qhobela, Molapo 35

Ramaphosa, Cyril 51f., 52, 57
Ratebaye, Alexandre T. 14–18
RECs. *See* Regional Economic Communities
Regional Co-operation Initiative for the Elimination of the LRA (RCI–LRA) 50
regional economic communities (RECs). *See also* African Union, Mid-Year Coordination Meetings, regional mechanisms 1, 1*n*.2, 15, 19*n*.1, 72, 94–96, 139, 179, 182–185, 206

regional integration and trade. *See also* African Continental Free Trade Area 179–202
regional mechanisms (RMs). *See also* regional economic communities, Mid-Year Coordination Meetings 15, 31, 32*n*.15, 94, 139
RMs. *See* regional mechanisms
Russian Federation 52, 145, 161, 165, 167, 172, 173, 174, 209f.
Rwanda 48–49, 52, 56, 91, 113*n*.7, 140, 153, 165, 167, 185*n*.9, 188*n*.16, 206

Sacko, Modibo 37
SADC. *See* Southern African Development Community
Sahel 140, 142, 160f.
Sahle-Work Zewde 57
Sahli-Fadel, Maya 37
Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) 23, 185*n*.9
Sall, Macky 47, 52, 54, 57, 60, 69
Sallah-Njie, Janet Ramatoulie 37
Sama Lukonde Kyenge, Jean-Michel 55
Samba-Panza, Catherine 54
São Tomé and Príncipe 21, 21*n*.4, 91, 185*n*.9, 188*n*.16
Sassou Nguesso, Denis 53, 54
science. *See* education, science, and technology
Scientific, Research and Innovation Council (ASRIC) 70f.
Scientific, Technical, Research Commission (STRC) 70f.
Senegal 21*n*.4, 36, 40, 52, 69, 110, 131, 185*n*.9, 188*n*.16
Seychelles 87, 113*n*.7, 186, 188*n*.16, 192*n*.20, 206
sexual and gender-based violence 54, 96f., 222–223
  Positive Masculinity Programme 54
Shekau, Abubaker 159
Sierra Leone 35, 69, 113*n*.7, 185*n*.9, 188*n*.16
Specialised Technical Committees (STC)
  Communication and Information Communications Technology 123
  Education, Science and Technology 70
  Health, Population and Drug Control 109
  Trade, Industry and Minerals 189
  Transport, Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructures, and Energy 123, 124, 130
Solomon Ayele Dersso 37
Somalia 21, 91, 140, 145–148, 173, 186, 204*n*.4, 204*n*.5, 205, 207, 208, 209, 210
South Africa 22, 36, 52, 53, 56, 86, 90f., 152, 185*n*.9, 187, 188*n*.16
South African Institute for International Affairs (SAIIA) 86
South Korea. *See also* strategic partnerships 204, 213
South Sudan 21, 140, 141, 151–152, 186, 208, 209, 210
Southern African Customs Union (SACU) 184
Southern African Development Community (SADC). *See also* regional economic communities, Mid-Year Coordination Meetings, Southern African Mission in Mozambique 1*n*.2, 19*n*.1, 39, 48, 49, 55, 56, 61, 62, 96f., 98*n*.16, 108, 153, 154, 184, 206, 208
Southern African Mission in Mozambique (SAMIN). *See also* Southern African Development Community 55, 152–154, 173, 208
Sow, Idrissa 37
strategic partnerships 1, 203–218
  China 210–212
  European Union 60
  Forum on China-African Cooperation (FOCAC) 59f., 134
  India 212
  Japan 213
  League of Arab States 204–205
  South Korea 213
  Türkiye 59, 213–214
  United Nations 207–210
Sudan 8*n*.8, 21, 23, 39, 56f., 140, 142, 148–150, 169, 172, 186, 188*n*.16, 204*n*.4, 205, 208, 209
Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLM–IO) 151

Sudan People's Liberation Movement–North (SPLM–N) 149
sustainable development goals (SDGs) 68, 84, 106, 116, 126, 220
Syria 155

Tambajang, Fatoumata Jallow 33
Tanzania 21*n*.4, 53, 173, 186, 188*n*.16, 211
Tax, Stergomena 153
technology. *See* education, science, and technology
Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus 52
Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) 142–145
Timmermans, Frans 132f.
Togo 87, 140, 161, 173, 185*n*.9, 188*n*.16
Topsy-Sonoo, Ourveena Geereesha 37
Touadéra, Faustin-Archange 165
trade. *See* African Continental Free Trade Area, European Union, regional integration
Tshisekedi, Félix Antoine 4, 31, 36, 46–63, 62, 158, 171
Tunisia 21*n*.4, 23, 39, 69, 87, 91, 113*n*.7, 185*n*.9, 204*n*.4, 209
Türkiye. *See also* strategic partnerships 204, 210, 213–214

UCG. *See* unconstitutional changes of government
Uganda 23, 48, 56, 61, 86, 91, 110, 140, 185*n*.9, 188*n*.16, 223
UMA *see* Arab Maghreb Union
unconstitutional changes of government (UCG). *See also* African Governance Architecture 139, 141, 161, 172f.
  Guinea 158–159
  Mali 161–163
  sanctions 8*n*.8, 150, 159, 162, 168
  Sudan 148–149
United Kingdom 39, 52, 131*n*.17, 145, 209
United Nations (UN). *See also* strategic partnerships 143, 145
United States (US) 52, 57, 131*n*.17, 145, 209
  Build Back Better World (B3W). *See also* infrastructure 120f., 131–132
UNDP. *See* UN Development Programme
UNSC. *See* UN Security Council
UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) 71
UN Development Programme (UNDP) 29, 122
UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) 71
UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) 71
UN International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) 72
UN peacekeeping 208–209
UN Security Council (UNSC) 144–145
  African Group (A3) 58, 145, 209, 210*n*.12

violent extremism and terrorism (VET). *See also* al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, peace and security, violent conflict 55, 55–56, 139–178, 223
Vila Nova, Carlos 53
violent conflict. *See also* peace and security, violent extremism and terrorism 139–178
von der Leyen, Ursula 131f.

Wagner Group 161, 165
West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) 184
West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ) 191
Western Sahara 141, 156–157, 174, 204*n*.5, 209, 210
women. *See also* sexual and gender-based violence, youth 219–232
  conflict and forced migration 221–222
  Continental Result Framework (CRF) 224
  food security 226–227
  institutional landscape 219–221
  political participation 225
  women, peace and security (WPS) 54, 223–225
  woman rights 54
World Health Organization (WHO). *See also* Africa CDC 52, 70, 104, 105

Yearbook on the African Union (*YBAU*) VII, 1–6

youth. *See* women 219–232
governance 98–99
labour, digitisation and employment 227–228
youth ambassadors 224

Zambia 35, 61, 97, 152, 176, 186, 188*n*.16, 211
Ziane, Binatou 126
Zimbabwe 48*n*.3, 50, 86, 87, 92, 113*n*.7, 185*n*.9, 188*n*.16, 192*n*.20, 206, 223