

“Enhancing UN-AU-RECs Cooperation towards Silencing the Guns by 2020 in the Context of the First 10-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063”

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As we are all aware, the causes of conflicts in Africa are namely social and economic exclusion; competition over natural and mineral resources, proliferation of weapons, gender and income inequalities, discrimination on religion and ethnic grounds and the violation of Presidential Constitutional terms in Office.

As the implementing pillars of the African Governance Architecture, the Regional Economic Communities have equally adopted regional specific policies aimed at preventing conflicts and securing peace and stability. However, all this efforts and instruments needed to be owned by the African citizen.

Within the context of Regional economic Communities, many of them have taken measures in terms of framework development toward silencing the guns as recommended by the Vision 2020. Different mechanisms are in place in various RECS'. In the East African Community for instance there is an on-going implementation of the Protocol on Good Governance, ECOWASs is implementing its Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance. IGAD is also implementing its Protocol on Democracy, Governance and election while SADC is implementing its Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections.

In the Lake Chad Region Nigeria Niger and Chad combined since 1990 their respective military forces into a Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) to tackle cross –border security issues in the Lake Chad region. Currently and due to the permanent treat of the Boko Haram rebellion, the MNJTF joined by Benin is entirely focused on the fight against Boko Haram.

In contributing to accelerate implementation of the target on silencing the guns by 2020, more efforts needed to be made to strengthen Africa's conflict interventions. The same must apply to strengthen cross-border cooperation in resolving disputes. Therefore, there is need to develop and support inclusive conflict resolution programmes. The most welcomed African Human Security Index must be finalised while the African Peace and Security Architecture of the AU will must be fully supported and implemented. To that end, the Standby Force and Rapid Development Capability needed to be developed as part of pillars of the Africa Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)

To address the role of non-State actors such as suppliers, financiers, transit point and recipients of illicit weapons, coercive legislations needed to be put in place by ensuring that they are abiding to all member States and that they are effectively coming into force. Ensure that there is effective collaboration between police services within Africa and those of the countries manufacturing and selling the arms. Customs services, as well as financial institutions and banks must collaborate to prevent illicit movement of financial flows.

In enhancing cooperation between UN- AU and REC's many efforts have been made to prevent conflicts and secure peace and stability in Africa. In conflict prevention for example, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the African Union Commission collaborated with ECOWAS and SADC to organize regional consultations that adopted the Accra and Maseru Declarations on the establishment of national infrastructures for peace. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the African Union Commission launched also the Youth network for a culture of peace in Africa in December 2014.

Currently, most of Africa's regional efforts on democratic governance are organized under the aegis of the African Governance Architecture, which was established in 2010 as the overarching political and institutional framework for promoting democratic governance in Africa and became operational in 2012. The Architecture has been instrumental in enhancing collaboration and synergy between the African Union, the regional economic communities, the United Nations and other stakeholders across five interrelated areas: democracy and elections, human rights and transitional justice, governance and anti-corruption, constitutionalism and the rule of law, and humanitarian affairs.

While commendable efforts are made by the REC's toward silencing the Guns in Africa by 2022, more emphasizes must be put to pro-active engagement, as distinct from reactive engagement, to avoid fire- fighting and crisis situations...as stipulated in framework for a renewed UN/AU Partnership on Africa 's Integration and Development Agenda (PAIDA). Therefore, there is a great need to more involving civil society, Youth and Women organisations to support the various frameworks set by the RECS in order to have African Citizenry buy-in toward the efforts made in silencing the Guns by 2020