



Security Council

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Letter dated 30 December 2013 from the Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa for the period 2013, as endorsed by the members of the Working Group.

I would be grateful if the present letter and the attached report could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Eugène-Richard **Gasana**
Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on
Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa



Report on the activities of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa for the period January-December 2013

I. Introduction

1. The Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa is a subsidiary organ of the Security Council, established pursuant to presidential statement [S/PRST/2002/2](#), in which the Council recognized the need for adequate measures to prevent and resolve conflicts in Africa and indicated its intention to consider the setting up of an Ad Hoc Working Group to monitor the recommendations contained in its presidential statement and to enhance coordination with the Economic and Social Council.

2. The Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations, Eugène-Richard Gasana, was appointed as Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group for the period ending 31 December 2013 (see [S/2013/2](#)). The present report reflects the activities of the Ad Hoc Working Group that were conducted in 2013.

II. Report on the meetings of the Working Group in 2013

3. On 19 March 2013, the Working Group met to consider its activities for 2013 as proposed by the Chair. Following discussion among the members, the proposed programme of work was agreed upon by the members of the Working Group.

4. On 31 May 2013, the Working Group held a meeting devoted to assessing its work and discussing ways in which it might have a more concrete and positive impact on the daily work of the Security Council and the country-specific situations on its agenda, particularly from the standpoint of prevention. The Working Group was briefed on that occasion by Tété António, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, and Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat.

5. Ambassador António noted that the Working Group had generated a number of innovative ideas over the years, but that the implementation of previously agreed upon recommendations remained a challenge. This was attributed in part to the rotating nature of the Group's chairmanship, as a result of which the recommendations set out by the departing Chair were not always followed up on by the succeeding Chair in the following year. It was also pointed out that some recommendations or mandates associated with the Working Group had lost their relevance over time. It was noted, for example, that the Group's role in promoting cooperation between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council had become irrelevant with the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, whose Chairs reported directly to the Security Council. It was therefore essential to assess the relevance of previous recommendations and their possible impacts on the work of the Security Council.

6. On the other hand, Ambassador António noted that the African Union was undergoing a deep organic transformation with the implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture, at the heart of which was conflict prevention. He suggested that it would be important for the Working Group to adapt not only to the changing dynamics between the United Nations Security Council and the African

Union Peace and Security Council, but also to the operational mechanisms that had been established to promote cooperation between the Commission of the African Union and the Secretariat of the United Nations, such as the High-level Joint Task Force on Peace and Security and the periodic desk-to-desk meetings.

7. In offering possible recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of the Working Group, Ambassador António suggested that it contribute to the preparation of the annual joint consultative meetings of the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council; engage with the African Union, including through the African Group advocacy mechanism, on issues related to peace and security in Africa; and assist the Security Council in shaping its doctrine in the area of peacekeeping, taking into account new challenges posed by the cases of Mali and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

8. The Assistant Secretary-General said that, with the rise of the strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union, the Working Group could help maintain the proper focus on issues which the two organizations were tackling together, such as Mali, Guinea-Bissau, the Central African Republic, the Sahel and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The recent strengthening of the United Nations Office to the African Union was evidence of the growing partnership, and the Assistant Secretary-General indicated that the Head of that Office, Special Representative Haile Menkerios, could brief the Working Group in order to sensitize the Security Council on issues on which it was not focused. He added that the Heads of the United Nations Regional Offices for West Africa and Central Africa could do the same.

9. Members of the Working Group as well as representatives of other Member States in attendance at the meeting welcomed the opportunity to take stock of the Group's past activities and offered a number of suggestions for making its work more effective. Many speakers emphasized that Security Council resolution [2033 \(2012\)](#) remained a useful guidepost for enhancing effective cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations.

10. A number of participants suggested that the Working Group shift its focus to specific geographic issues. It was pointed out that in cases such as Somalia, the Sudan and South Sudan, and the Central African Republic, debates in which the various stakeholders, including the African Union, participated could be useful to the work of the Security Council. Other participants supported horizon-scanning with a view to prevention, and suggested that the results of United Nations-African Union interaction on early warning and response be brought more systematically to the Group. Briefings to the Group following meetings of the United Nations-African Union Joint Task Force on Peace and Security, and additional briefings by the African Union Observer Mission and United Nations regional offices, were also suggested as ways to ensure that the Group had sufficient information and analytical capabilities to practically assist the Security Council.

11. Several members of the Working Group suggested that the Security Council take advantage of periodic mandate renewals to discuss relevant issues, such as proposals for innovative forms of peacekeeping or the latest monitoring technology, within the Group. The importance of seeking synergies between the Group and other institutions, such as the Peacebuilding Commission, was also underscored by some speakers.

12. Some members of the Working Group suggested that the Security Council hold periodic discussions on the status of the Group as a way to ensure that its mandate was kept up to date, that its vision and work programme were concrete, and that there was clarity regarding responsibility for implementing decisions, such as those contained in resolution [2033 \(2012\)](#).

13. On 26 July 2013, the Working Group held an open meeting to discuss institution-building and good governance as conflict prevention tools in Africa. The invited panellists included: Tekeda Alemu (speaking in his capacity as both the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations and the representative of the Chairperson of the African Union); João Honwana, Director of the Africa II Division of the Department of Political Affairs; Jordan Ryan, Assistant Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); and Andrew Tomlinson, Director of the Quaker United Nations Office.

14. Ambassador Alemu contrasted the past history of Africa with the current situation, in which Africa was taking the lead in resolving and preventing conflicts on the continent, and African Union mechanisms (such as the African Peer Review Mechanism, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and the African Union Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Framework) were helping to ensure economic progress, good governance, accountability and democracy. In his view, as informed by the history of his own country's emergence from conflict, strong State institutions were necessary for a thriving democracy and economic growth. Only in such a scenario could sustainable development serve as a mechanism for prevention.

15. Mr. Honwana noted that, in addition to strong institutions, good governance was required to build national unity and a strong citizenry. The Department of Political Affairs had witnessed smooth electoral processes when partnerships had been enlarged to include not only the Government concerned, but also civil society, the United Nations country team and the larger international community. He also stressed the importance of being aware of the specific challenges inherent in promoting good governance and institution-building in particular contexts.

16. Mr. Ryan focused on ways of developing the institutions and infrastructure required to enable conflict-prone countries to prevent violence and address the root causes of human suffering. He explored linkages between weak institutions and exclusionary governance and the perpetuation of conflicts. He added that key areas of collaboration between the African Union, regional economic commissions and UNDP included: building civilian capacities; constitutional support; elections; institution-building; early warning; insider mediators; women in peacebuilding; and conflict prevention. Under next steps, he proposed that flexible means be established to facilitate the sharing of knowledge between nations on the establishment of infrastructures for peace.

17. Mr. Tomlinson recalled that the importance of good local governance in preventing conflict had been cited in the Secretary-General's 2006 progress report on the prevention of armed conflict ([A/60/891](#)). He said that institutions must reflect underlying realities and that institution-building should be a bottom-up process that took into account informal, ad hoc and traditional systems that might already be in place. He also stressed how vital it was for skills to be transferred to the institution-building target, and he underlined the importance of South-South cooperation in that

regard. It was not sufficient to build a Government that was merely competent, but one that was perceived as fair, inclusionary and legitimate.

18. Some members of the Working Group stressed that the judiciary, civil society and independent media played key roles in ensuring that institutions were robust and that people's needs were met. Others underscored the efforts of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office as well as the African Union in support of national efforts to establish effective institutions. The holding of successful elections alone was not sufficient to achieve lasting peace, it was noted, since security sector reform, reconciliation and economic development (including addressing youth unemployment) were equally important. One participant recalled that the May 2013 report of the High-level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda made clear reference to institution-building and good governance, which his delegation felt should be focus areas of the work of the United Nations as well as of United Nations-African Union cooperation. Another member alluded to the importance of economic and natural resource governance as well as of regional economic integration.

III. Other activities of the Working Group in 2013

19. In September 2013, the Working Group launched a completely revamped webpage on the United Nations Internet site (<http://www.un.org/sc/committees/ahwga/>). The new webpage brings together in one place a wealth of disparate materials related to the Group, including relevant Security Council decisions, reports of the Secretary-General, annual reports of the Group and joint communiqués of the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council.

20. In early October 2013, the members of the Working Group met to discuss the draft joint communiqué to be adopted at the 7th consultative meeting between the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council and negotiated agreement on the text with their African Union counterparts. The joint communiqué (S/2013/611, annex) was adopted at the 7th annual joint consultative meeting between the two Councils, held in Addis Ababa on 8 October 2013.

IV. Conclusions

21. During the tenure of Rwanda as Chair of the Working Group, the Chair placed significant emphasis on opening the Group's meetings to non-members of the Security Council as well as to civil society organizations, especially those active on the ground. The Chair encouraged open and frank discussions in order to cultivate ideas that could positively contribute to the enhancement of the work of the Council, especially since its agenda is predominantly focused on issues concerning Africa.

22. The Chair would like to recommend that the Working Group continue to hold more open meetings of this nature. During his tenure, the Chair drew on the diverse expertise and experience of members of academia, officials of the Secretariat and other practitioners, greatly enriching the Group's discussions. The Chair therefore encourages the continuation of this practice. Furthermore, the Chair encourages the periodic revisiting of some topics in order to examine in greater depth the challenges that persist in Africa, with a view to identifying mitigating mechanisms through continuous dialogue.

23. In addition, it should be recalled that, in paragraph 18 of its resolution [2033 \(2012\)](#), the Security Council decided to follow up on the communiqués of the annual consultative meetings of the two Councils, including through its Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa. The Working Group should thus continue to exercise this important mandate entrusted to it by the Security Council.

24. The Ad Hoc Working Group could implement this Council mandate by following up on the joint communiqué issued at the conclusion of the 7th annual joint consultative meeting in October.

25. Furthermore, it would appear that the evolution and strengthening of the African Peace and Security Architecture as well as the growing partnership between the United Nations and the African Union offer a number of opportunities for the Working Group to reinvigorate its work programme by serving as an expert body that could advise the Security Council on the basis of information and analysis it receives from United Nations and African Union sources on specific issues on the Council's agenda, including in the areas of early warning and prevention.

26. The Chair notes that the various meetings have produced highly useful recommendations regarding the relationship between the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council, as well as on enhancing the rule of law in post-conflict settings, all of which could enhance the work of the Security Council. In this connection, the Chair would like to propose that the Council hold an interactive discussion or retreat based on these recommendations in order to consider those that could be incorporated into the work of the Council. It would be important to infuse the valuable outcomes of the Working Group discussions into the country-specific and substantive work of the Council.

27. The Chair would like to express his personal gratitude and that of the delegation of Rwanda to the members of the Working Group for their collaboration and the support extended to him in the discharge of the mandate of the Group. The appreciation of the Chair is also extended to the organizations and individuals who greatly enriched the discussions of the Group.

28. Finally, I would like to thank the Secretariat for assisting us in fulfilling our mandate, in particular James Sutterlin, Marilyn Alfred and Oseloka Obaze, who had previously assisted us. The Chair wishes his successor all the best in continuing the important work carried out by the Working Group.
