

Conference Report

Why do we need the African Union?

28 September 2016 | The Hague

In partnership with:



Kingdom of the Netherlands



About the European Centre for Development Policy Management

The European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) was established in 1986 as an independent foundation to improve European cooperation with the group of African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP). Its main goal today is to broker effective partnerships between the European Union and the developing world, especially Africa. ECDPM promotes inclusive forms of development and cooperates with public and private sector organisations to better manage international relations. It also supports the reform of policies and institutions in both Europe and the developing world. One of ECDPM's key strengths is its extensive network of relations in developing countries, including emerging economies. Among its partners are multilateral institutions, international centres of excellence and a broad range of state and non-state organisations.

About the Knowledge Platform on Security and the Rule of Law

The Knowledge Platform Security and the Rule of Law (KPSRL) is a joint project of the Conflict Research Unit of Clingendael and The Hague Institute for Global Justice. It aims to build a bridge between global issues and Dutch expertise on security and rule of law, and to contribute to international knowledge, policy development and implementation, both in fragile and conflict-affected environments and in the Netherlands.

About the Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

The Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the African Union (AU), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and other Addis Ababa situated multilateral organisations is a long-standing partner to the AU and has supported the AU's efforts particularly in the areas of peace and security as well as human rights.

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Background

The European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) and the Knowledge Platform on Security and the Rule of Law (KPSRL), in partnership with the Representation of the Netherlands to the African Union (AU) in Addis Ababa organised an interactive meeting on the 28th of September 2016 titled, ***"Why do we need the African Union?"***

The meeting brought together more than 60 participants including African experts working for and on the African Union (AU), representatives of the AU and the European Commission (EC), representatives of international organisations (ILO, ICC, etc.), members of the Dutch parliament. Representatives of the Foreign Affairs Ministry of the Netherlands, Representatives of the Defence Ministry of the Netherlands, African ambassadors represented in the Hague and officials from their offices as well as participants from various civil society organisations and think tanks.

The goal of the meeting was three-fold:

1. To understand the role of the AU as an emerging actor in the African and global arenas;
2. To explore the role that AU and other regional actors play in peace and security, justice and migration;
3. To guide the Netherlands as it seeks to strengthen its strategic partnership with the AU, building on its current engagement.

The meeting was held under Chatham House Rules. This report summarises the meeting and highlights some of the key messages emerging from it.

For more information regarding this meeting, feel free to contact Faten Aggad, Head of Programme of ECDPM's Africa's Change Dynamics Programme (fa@ecdpm.org)

Is the AU a relevant actor and how can international partners best engage with it?



An established global actor

The AU's convening power has enabled 54 African countries to engage as a block in international fora. The AU has become a key global player, particularly in efforts towards finding solutions to conflicts, promoting peace, security and stability.



Emerging areas of engagement

The AU also plays a role in other areas of international cooperation (e.g. migration and justice). Its role in these areas is evolving. Its future impact on debates in these areas will depend on its perceived added value by actors, especially its member states as well as the resources at its disposal. Furthermore, partnerships with international partners are crucial to tackling common global challenges.



Tackling common challenges as equals

To effectively tackle global challenges together, new forms of partnerships are needed. Any future partnership should tackle the issue of trust head-on. African participants have therefore promoted the implementation of the Mutual Accountability Framework as a tool to cultivate trust and promote a culture of mutual accountability between equal partners.



Common assessment of challenges for effective solutions

The starting point for a partnership should be a common assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of all relevant stakeholders. The current partnership does not allow for an honest exchange on challenges. For instance: what type of capacity is actually needed by the AU and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs)? Is burden sharing understood in the same way? What are the priority areas on which to focus support? How to balance short- and long-term concerns?



It is not only about the money

Partnership with the AU is not only about resources. It is also about supporting diplomatic efforts of the AU internationally (e.g. securing the support of the UN in the quest to find alternative resources to finance AU initiatives notably in the area of peace and security).

1. The African Union: Track record and prospects

Key Messages

- 1) “Do not panic [about the state of the African Union]. This is how evolution happens.”
- 2) “The AU is not a rising actor. It is an actor”. An example of the importance of the AU is the success story of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) that has made tremendous contribution in conflict prevention, management and resolution in the continent.
- 3) To successfully address the challenges facing the continent in future, the AU will need to adapt its approach and structures. “Content should follow context”.

Although the African Union has a long history around decolonisation and liberation struggles of various African countries, it is still a young organisation. African participants noted that the challenges that the AU faces today are not uncommon. The history of the European Union (EU) itself illustrates how regional bodies evolve. In that respect, one of the panellists argued that there is “no need to panic [about the state of the African Union]...this is how evolution happens”. Understanding the history of the AU and the context in which it operates are important when considering the value proposition of the AU.

Context is dynamic. The role of the AU in the last decade and a half was shaped by the need to respond to challenges that emerged in the late 1990s. The AU’s engagement was successful in areas such as peace and security, but the organisation needs to continue “reinventing” itself to respond to the changing context if it is to remain relevant.

What are the successes?

Discussions at the meeting revolved around the success of the AU in two areas; namely **peace and security** and the role of the AU in **representing African perspectives in international debates**. Participants largely agreed that these are the two areas where the AU has succeeded in implementing its mandate.

With respect to the role of the AU in the international arena, African participants argued that the AU “put Africa on the map” during international negotiations (e.g. on peace and security, the SDGs, climate change). The AU also acts as an advocacy entity for African countries on issues such as climate change and other issues where there is need for block negotiations. The most significant role that the AU offers is therefore that of a platform that brings together the African voice in the global arena. For international partners, the rise of the AU could provide them with single interlocutor as opposed to 54 countries.

While there have been challenges, the AU has also become a key actor in the area of peace and security through its **African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)**. More specifically, the AU has developed its capacity to respond to conflict by deploying peace operations. Participants argued that APSA has made tremendous contribution in conflict prevention, management and resolution in the continent, showing that the AU is not just an emerging actor but already a significant global player in the area of peace and security. Further, the AU has been responsible for initiating a normative framework in the area of governance. These were viewed to be important tools to harmonise governance standards in Africa and to tackle root-causes of conflicts.

However, important challenges need to be addressed...

Participants identified a number of challenges facing the AU and its role on the continent in future. These include the need to speed up the **implementation of the AU's key frameworks**, the importance of a clearer **division of labour between the AU and sub-regional bodies**, the importance of **leadership**, the need to **connect to citizens and the urgency of raising additional funds**.

Participants stressed the need to speed up the **implementation of AU frameworks**. It was for instance argued that sophisticated early warning tools were developed. But the AU was largely handicapped by the principle of sovereignty (despite the AU's Constitutive Act empowering the AU to intervene in the domestic affairs of its member states). As a result, it has proved to be difficult for the AU to act despite the availability of analysis regarding potential conflict situations.

Other participants, however, questioned the notion that the AU should be responsible for implementation. They argued that the AU's focus should be on norms setting and on using its "convening power" to bring member states together while harnessing the **comparative advantage** of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs). Referring to the APSA and the subsidiarity principle, some participants argued that the RECs should ensure compliance with AU norms. They should also undertake early warning actions following a mandate by the AU's Peace and Security Council (PSC).

Yet, some European and African participants questioned the assumption that the RECs are best positioned to implement decisions. Some participants pointed to what they assess to be inadequate capacities of the RECs. This was compared to the relatively more advanced capacity of the AU in areas such as mediation. In this respect, participants proposed that the AU could in theory undertake an intra-African capacity building exercise to strengthen the RECs. Until such capacities are built, the AU should continue to play a lead role in implementation. A pragmatic approach is therefore desirable, whereby the AU could engage on implementation in a situation where the REC is particularly weak (e.g. mediation) or where there is a sense that political interest will limit it from advancing a given agenda (e.g. when deploying its missions). It is hoped that attempts to revise the existing MoU between the RECs and the AU will allow for a clearer division of labour between the different regional bodies on the basis of their respective comparative advantage.

Meeting discussions also reflected on the challenge of **securing predictable financing** to fund the AU's programmes. African participants criticised the claim that African countries do not contribute to the AU's programmes. They pointed to the 'human cost' of engaging in peace operations.¹ Participants noted that the spirit of burden sharing should be respected. They noted that some conflict situations (e.g. Somalia, Libya) are not an "African problem" alone. The responsibility of the international community in addressing them is therefore important.

¹ By some estimates, 1000 African soldiers lost their lives in AMISOM alone. See Tardy, T. 2016. The EU and Africa: A changing security partnership. EUISS Brief (5 February). European Union Institute for Security Studies.

Another issue that was discussed during the meeting is **leadership**. Participants noted that the elections for the AU Chairperson have been postponed to 2017 after a lack of consensus among member states is both a good sign – considering that initial list of candidates has been rejected – and a bad sign – considering the absence of adequate screening mechanisms to ensure that countries put forward strong candidates prior to the election.

Furthermore, participants that the **AU needs to reconnect with the citizens especially the youth**. They noted that Agenda 2063 aims to focus on citizen participation but more needs to be done to ensure that the new generation of African connects with the Pan-African agenda.

Looking forward, participants noted that the AU needs to ‘reinvent’ itself again – as it did in the late 1990s – to tackle new issues facing the continent (e.g. non-conventional sources of conflict such as climate change, etc.). A ‘business as usual’ approach will not allow the AU to take the next leap. It will need to pre-empt some of the key challenges and let the context drive the content of its action. The foreseen reform of the AU could take this into account.

What’s the role of AU member states?

The ownership of African member states over the AU was also discussed. Several member states representatives indicated their country’s commitment to the AU. Several country cases were discussed (see Box 1 as an example).

Responding to the issue of implementation, African member states’ representatives also shared their respective perspectives. They argued that weak implementation is inevitable in a context of incoherence between African interventions on the one hand and those of international partners on the other hand. One African Ambassador, for instance, illustrated this by referring to the position that the AU adopted on a country situation following the Arab Spring (to suspend one of its member states following what was defined by the AU as a coup) and the opposing stance taken by international partners, including the EU (maintaining relations with the incoming leadership of the country). He argued that this undermined the effectiveness of the AU decision.



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Photo courtesy of Steven Lanting

Box 1: Case study: Kenya and the AU

Kenya signed the Constitutive Act of the African Union on the 2nd of March 2001 and ratified it by the 4th of July 2001. Since then, the country has been an active and key player within the AU, acceding to and ratifying many of the African Union treaties, conventions, protocols and charters. For Kenya, the AU Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 will be implemented via its own set vision 2030 for Sustainable Development. Vision 2030 is Kenya's long-term vision and plan.

Key to Kenya's AU relations is cooperation, collaboration and agenda furthering in the areas of:

Peace and security: Kenya is a key supporter of AU's peace operations and fully supports the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The country is among those that have deployment troops in Somalia to launch a military offensive against *al-Shabaab*. Kenya has supported the AU's peace efforts in Burundi and South Sudan. Kenya has also supported work in peace processing through the UN peacekeeping efforts in the international system including offering \$100,000 to the UN peace fund. Kenya also increased its financial contribution to the AU in 2016 and 2017.

Further, in the area of peace and security, the AU maintained its position on the need for the facilitation of peace processes after the indictment of President Kenyatta and his deputy, William Ruto to the ICC, as the peace process was necessary for reconciliation after the 2007-2008 post-election violence in Kenya.

Integration trade and investment: Kenya continues to support the AU's efforts to further regional integration efforts through furthering trade and investment links within its regional organisations like the East African Community (EAC) and the Market for Eastern and Southern Common Africa (COMESA). Regional integration is the AU's continent-wide economic, social and cultural development push.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) & the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) - Kenya was among the African states to adopt NEPAD as the policy framework for Africa's development, in 2001. NEPAD has led to great developments: in agriculture, environment, infrastructure, health, peace and security and even more the formation of APRM. NEPAD also continues to support the AU's efforts within the global arena in areas of trade, debt relief, commodities, ODA and south-to-south cooperation. Kenya's president is the current chair of APRM and has sought to cultivate and deepen partnerships with various development partners.

Environment-Kenya has supported the AU in sectoral areas of environmental focus including: agriculture, coastal and marine resources, climate variability and climate change including assessment, natural resources conservation, disaster risks reduction, flood and drought monitoring, fisheries, forestry monitoring, land degradation mitigation, livestock management, monitoring of wildfires, and water resources management.

2. Global partnerships for the future?

Key Messages

- A new form of partnership is needed between the AU and its international partners. Such partnership should focus on complementarities rather than the weaknesses. Further, it is important to move beyond a money-focussed debate when discussing partnerships. There is a need to focus more on the comparative advantage of actors when tackling shared global problems.
- Trust is lacking between Africa and partners such as the EU. A clear (re) commitment to and implementation of the Mutual Accountability Framework is desirable.
- There is no common assessment of challenges (e.g. capacity, thematic priorities). Solutions are as a result seen as imposed and not owned by the AU.
- Subsidiarity with international actors (e.g. UN) needs to be further refined.

The AU has cultivated a host of international partnerships. One of the most significant partnerships for the AU, both politically and financially, is the EU-Africa partnership. In addition to bilateral relations with EU member states, the two Unions have also developed a framework for cooperation as reflected in the Joint Africa-EU Strategy's (JAES) Action Plan, which identifies five pillars of cooperation, namely:

1. Peace and Security
2. Democracy, Good Governance and Human Rights
3. Human development
4. Sustainable and inclusive development and growth and continental integration
5. Global and emerging issues

The European participants pointed out that the added value of working at the Pan-African level is in: ensuring a transparent, democratic and accountable environment for democracy, Human rights and governance, advancing human development, (see roadmap 2014-17²) the coordination of research, higher education (clear added value to African citizens) like Erasmus for the EU and in 'Everything that relates to growth', for example: infrastructure, implementation of common standards and regulations.

They also recalled that a conversation on the future relationship between the EU and Africa is timely in light of the debate on the post-Cotonou framework. In this respect, participants were informed that the European Commission (EC) intends to issue its main political orientation on post-2020 and the implementation of the SDGs by end of November 2016. A discussion on the role of the AU in those two processes is thus important.

Turning to the challenges encountered in the EU-Africa partnership, the meeting reflected on a number of issues highlighted by the European participants. The latter noted that the partnership was affected by the structural challenges facing the AU, including:

² <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2014/04/pdf/fourth-eu-africa-summit-roadmap-2014-2017/>.

- Lack of clarity on the subsidiarity between AU and RECs
- Insufficient ratification, domestication, implementation and enforcement of the legal instruments, decisions and policies of the AU at the national level
- Funding remains a key problem as member states do not pay their dues thereby leading to reliance on external funders. This lack of control over funding is connected to the lack of ownership of the AU's activities as some end up being seen as imposed by external actors.

Common assessment of challenges

African participants argued that there is disconnect between the problem analysis of European partners and that of African partners. This is particularly applicable to the issue of capacities. African participants felt that capacity building initiatives are imposed on them rather than owned by them. They also criticised the lack of recognition of the expertise already available within their institutions and the context in which they operate. They called for a more relevant engagement that takes into account their self-identified needs rather than “perceived needs”.

A new form of partnership

The 21st century engagement is not about the AU working in isolation. It's about common and shared global problems like climate change and migration flows. The meeting participants agreed that the AU and EU should both benefit from creating a partnership. However, participants pointed to the lack of trust that hampers the two regions from building an even stronger partnership. In order to address this challenge, African participants called for the application of the mutual accountability frameworks. They argued that in as much as African leaders need to be held accountable, so do European partners.

The meeting also tackled the issues of mutual understanding and respect. In this respect, participants called for more efforts to be made to promote joint problem analysis and joint efforts to design effective solutions.



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3. Fire fighting or prevention? What pathways to addressing peace and justice in Africa

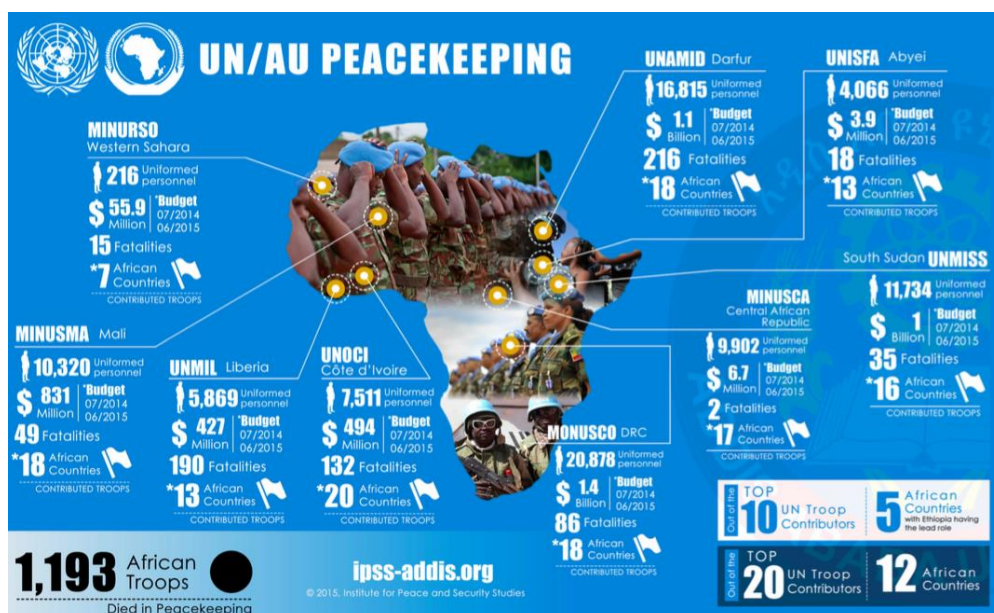
Key Messages: A new approach to dealing with conflicts

- The response of the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) with regards to conflicts in Africa has been around two things: conflict prevention by mediation and peace support operations
- Good governance is necessary to address the triggers of conflict.
- More efforts should be made to improve the understanding between Europe and Africa on the justice challenges in Africa.
- The AU's reliance on external sources of funding has resulted in a cash-flow problem and in supply driven funding. This perpetuates a culture of dependency.

The AU and the RECs have been partly successful in reducing the threats posed by conflict and insecurity in Africa. The number of violent conflicts in Africa has reduced tremendously since the launch of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) in 2002. The response of the AU and the RECs has been around two things: conflict prevention by mediation and peace support operations. While the APSA has succeeded in bringing down the levels of conflicts and of security in Africa, there are still challenges due to the changing dynamics and complexities of conflict in Africa.

An improved responsive capacity

The meeting discussed the enormous developments made with the AU's capacity in deploying peace and security operations (PSOs). Currently Africa constitutes 50% of the UN PSOs. AU PSOs deals with cases where the UN cannot intervene and are also important for stabilisation efforts.



The AU has over the years also given more support to mediation, mission support, administrative and post conflict reconstruction and development. However, additional efforts need to be made to ensure that more focus is given to conflict prevention. The current incentives, some participants argued, continue to promote a reactionary approach to conflict.

A changing nature of conflict requires a new approach

One of the key features of conflict over the past five to 15 years is that the nature of conflict is changing, new non-traditional actors have emerged, and are posing very serious problems for the peace architecture of our continent. Also, there are a lot of identity-related conflicts around issues of citizenship, religious identity, ethnic identity within various cultures and thirdly we also have new transnational threats that are posed by migration from heavily conflict-afflicted zones of the continent as well as what participants pointed out as non-conventional threats such Ebola, that affected parts of West Africa. So the performance of AU in terms of peace and security will not only depend on the architecture, which is really advanced and well designed, but also on its ability to adapt to respond to these new threats. These threats, participants argued, are constantly evolving, complex, and in a way they are outpacing the capacity and the ability of the AU.

Additionally, good governance is necessary to address the triggers of conflict. The African Governance Architecture (AGA) is thus necessary in strengthening the effectiveness of African governance institutions and initiatives. Panellists argued that unless there is investment in good governance, the AU would not be able to secure sustainable solutions.

Who does what?

The subsidiarity principle was also discussed during the meeting. The Peace and Security Council (PSC) Protocol allows the PSC to set up subsidiary bodies, as it deems necessary, for the performance of its functions. RECs are mentioned as the building blocks and as having a comparative advantage. However, participants noted that there is still a lack of clarity on the issue of subsidiarity. Participants noted that an effective application of the subsidiarity principle would require the following issues to be addressed:

1. **Political will:** some member states are not always committed to implementing the mandate from the PSC. How could this be addressed?
2. **Operational competences:** In some cases RECs do not have the capacities to take up the operational role they are expected to take. The AU, however, was able to develop its capacities in some areas (e.g. mediation). Therefore, it needs to support the RECs in capacity building by looking at the necessary competences to implement the mandate and mobilise rapidly.
3. **Political legitimacy:** who has the authority to intervene? At times this has also led to tension between the AU and RECs. Furthermore, participants noted that some RECs are not the best 'First Responders' due to vested political interests. The AU could provide an alternative in such situation.
4. **Financing:** participants argued that availability of resources – or scarcity thereof – is a determining factor. Therefore, the current efforts that are led by Donald Kaberuka to raise at least 25% of PSOs from within Africa are critical.

African participants also raised the issues of how relations between the AU and EU need to be on an equally footing. There was a perception from the African participants that some countries like China, approach the AU as a more equal partner than the EU does. Changing this means a shift from focusing on the capacities – or lack thereof – to a focus on what can be mutually achieved in a certain situation.

The ICC debate

The meeting also provided an opportunity to share perspectives on the role of the ICC in Africa. It was argued that, from the African perspective, the challenge is to balance concerns of justice with efforts to secure peace agreements. Sequencing interventions is therefore important. However, it was also noted that civil societies working on human rights, justice and governance are of the view that African leaders should be held accountable. Country examples including: Senegal and the case of Habre and Rwanda were given as those where justice has prevailed.

It was clear that the real debate is on what should be prioritised: is it justice and reconciliation and peace? Or should it be peace over reconciliation and justice? The consensus was that you cannot have a one size fits all solution. It has to be in consideration of the history and the pluralities of each case. A lot of care has to be taken to end the culture of impunity, that has driven a lot of this gross violation of human rights by state parties to conflict and by non-state actors that have complete disregard for international human rights law. Further, a lot has to be done to ensure that the culture of impunity is completely eroded out of the African continent. It will take a lot of work and civil society has a leading role to play.

The challenge of financing: Hard cash and non-cash-based forms of partnerships

Concerning financing, the AU relies mostly on external funding. External partners fund 98% of the programme budget and 99% of the PSOs. The member states payments to the AU are often late thus resulting in a cash-flow problem and so the AU reliance on external funding results in supply driven funding and perpetuates a culture of dependency. The AU is moving away from such dependence as seen in its 2015 decision on financing and the 2016 Kaberuka Report, which proposed a 0.2% levy on imports as an alternate source of funding for the AU. If this funding materialises, participants argued, it would mark a radical shift from the AU's dependence on external funding, which could in turn radically change the relationship between the AU and its partners.



From left to right: Philip Bob Jusu (Socio-Economist, Permanent Mission of the AU to the EU), Bram van Ojik (Netherlands' Special Envoy on Migration), Maureen Achieng (Representative of IOM to the AU), Caroline Njuki (Regional Migration Coordinator, IGAD), Awil Mohamoud (Director, African Diaspora Policy Centre), Koos Richelle (Chair of the Netherlands' Advisory Committee on Migration Affairs & Deputy Chairman of the ECDPM Board).

However, participants agreed that supporting African initiatives, African institutions, and African research does not necessarily mean money. There are other kinds of non-monetary resources to be used to support African initiatives (e.g. diplomatic support). Sharing of experiences and lessons were also highlighted as opportunities to cooperate beyond financing. Participants argued that Africa may not need to reinvent the wheel on certain fronts, but could benefit from experiences from other regions (including in the global south) in fields such as post-conflict reconstruction, peace building, reconciliation and justice issues.

4. Migration: Key narratives in Europe and Africa

The Migration Dilemma

- Migration is a complex topic and as a result narratives in Europe and Africa differ.
- Within the European context, migration is viewed as a security issue, while in Africa it is often seen as a mode of development. This has affected where it's placed on the agendas of the EU and the AU.
- The 2015 Valletta summit on migration between EU and African Heads of State and Government and its resulting political declaration and action plan are perceived to be undermining the AU's role and efforts in tackling migration issues, thus lowering trust between the two institutions.
- There is a duplication of efforts, disconnected and at times competing agendas that undermine common efforts to address migration.
- A more open and frank dialogue, including in official meetings, is needed between the two continents.

The migration debate is perceived to have weakened rather than strengthen the partnership between Europe and Africa. To understand the rift, it is important to look at the perspectives of the different partners. Participants highlighted the different viewpoints on migration in Africa, which they argued are in sharp contract to the current security-focused and containment approach adopted by Europe. These are:

- It is justified and premised on the long history with Europe;
- It is a fact of life. It is difficult to prevent mobility;
- It is a useful source of income, including through remittances;

The AU recognises the value of mobility as evidenced by its policies and documents on migration. The historical background of the AU's efforts in migration is important. The 1991 Abuja Treaty recognised the value of regional integration and movement. In 2006 the AU adopted the African Common Position on Migration and Development and the AU Migration Policy Framework for Africa. The AU also adopted a Common Position on Migration ahead of the Valletta Summit. But it was only in 2007, during the Lisbon Summit, that migration became a topical issue in EU-Africa relations.

La Valetta: Signed on different islands?

African participants expressed concerns about the approach that was adopted by the EU pre, during and post Valetta summit. They argued that while the Valetta Action Plan is all-encompassing, subsequent discussions on the implementation of the Action Plan limited the remit of cooperation. Currently, the focus is on the EU's Migration Compact. The Compact was criticised for attempting to insert elements that were not agreed upon at the Valletta Summit.

Concerns were expressed on how the EU engages with the AU on migration as evidenced in the Valletta Summit, Khartoum and the Rabat processes. All three processes, African participants argued, are seen as EU led and driven while the AU is only 'invited' to participate. It was argued that dialogue forums on migration should be all-inclusive to ensure impact.

From the European perspective, it was argued that the forums provided a platform for constructive dialogue, allowing the institutions to agree on tangible joint initiatives.

Participants reflected on the lessons that could be drawn from the process leading up to the Valetta summit. These include:

A stronger focus on ownership. The Valletta process was a panic reaction due to the enormous influx of refugees in Europe. The influx showcased the weaknesses in Schengen system. On the African side, however, the migration flow was not seen as an African crisis. A common dialogue framework existed (in the context of the EU-Africa partnership) that could have been used for a more structured, longer-term discussion on migration. European participants, however, noted that by and large, the Valetta Action Plan did reflect the content of the Migration and Mobility Partnership of the JAES and as a result the Valetta Summit should be seen as the culmination of a dialogue process.

It was not always very clear how the partner countries were involved in the entire process and in shaping the commitments that were made. Also, the basis on which some decisions were made on EU Emergency Trust Fund was not transparent. Greater transparency and dialogue would be welcomed.

There was also the perception from the African participants that many of the EU member states engaged in 'double talk' and lacked coherence with regards to what their agenda was in the lead up to and during the Valletta summit. This issue came up at the summit during discussions on repatriation and readmission. Clear agenda setting is thus necessary for future negotiations.

Participants agreed that the EU and AU need to overcome the distrust and work to improve future outcomes. Notwithstanding the process of Valetta, there is a validity that is in the content of the Action Plan. There is an unequal discourse with too much focus on migration management but not enough on migration and development.

Where to put the resources?

African participants noted that funding to migration initiatives is not transparent. They particularly criticised EU member states for redirecting the resources to their own development agencies. For example, Germany is giving it to GIZ, France is giving to Expertise France, and Spain is giving to FIAD. This is very serious as it gives the perception that African institutions are not to be trusted.

Value of engaging regionally

Responding to a question on whether the AU is an effective actor in the area of migration (in comparison to the RECs for instance), African participants noted that the AU works closely with RECs as its building blocks. The AU and the RECs division of labour in the area of migration is based on their added value and the nature of the issue being addressed. For instance, ambitious initiatives such as the Joint Labour Migration Programme (JLMP) and the continental free movement are more effectively implemented at a continental level.

Participants also called for more cooperation to produce more analysis on migration. In collaboration with the AU, they encouraged the EU to support efforts to advance African expertise on migration and develop a continental perspective on migration, as the dynamics within Africa are significant.



From left to right: Maureen Achieng (Representative of IOM to the AU), Bram van Ojik (Netherlands' Special Envoy on Migration), Philip Bob Jusu (Social Economist, Permanent Mission of the AU to the EU), Caroline Njuki (Regional Migration Coordinator, IGAD), Awil Mohamoud (Director, African Diaspora Policy Centre), Koos Richelle (Chair of the Netherlands' Advisory Committee on Migration Affairs & Deputy Chairman of the ECDPM Board)

Further reading

For more information on the issues discussed in this meeting, we invite you to read the following articles:

ECDPM. 2016. *The African Union: What role in Tackling Africa's Challenges?* ECDPM's latest Social Shorthand Story providing an overview of the role of the AU in conflict prevention, justice, migration and the organisation of the African voice internationally.

Lanting, S. 2016. Why do we need the African Union? Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law, 29 September 2016.

Miyandazi, L. 2016. Is the African Union's financial independence a possibility? ECDPM Talking Points blog, 24 August 2016.

Miyandazi, L. 2016. There is more to the African Union than meets the eye. ECDPM Talking Points blog, 14 October 2016.

Mukundi Wachira, G. 2016. Can Africa and Europe strengthen ties to address global challenges? Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law, 14 October 2016.

Annex 1: Programme

9h30 – 10h00	Opening and introductions - Netherlands and Africa relations: Robert-Jan Siegert (Deputy Director DAF, Ministry of Foreign Affairs) - Framing the meeting: Doris Voorbraak (Representative, Permanent representation of The Netherlands to the African Union)
10h00 – 12h00	Opening Session - The African Union today
	<i>Introduction and moderation: Faten Aggad, Head of Programme, ECDPM</i> Speakers: - Vasu Gounden (Director, ACCORD, Durban) - Francoise Moreau (Head of Unit, EU-Africa relations and African Peace Facility, European Commission) - Michelle Ndiaye, (Programme Director, IPSS, Addis Ababa) - Awil Mohamoud, Director (African Diaspora Policy Centre, The Hague) - H.E Ms. Rose Makena Muchiri (Ambassador of the Republic of Kenya to the Netherlands)
	<i>Key questions to be addressed by the Panelists:</i> - Is the AU making a difference in the global arena? If yes what are the indicators and what role does it play? - How is the AU relying in its growing portfolio of partnerships in its international engagement? - How is the AU influencing the peace and security agenda globally? - What are the enablers that would allow the AU to increase its autonomy as an actor (including financially) and what is being done to strengthen it?
12h00 – 13h00	Lunch Break & networking
13h00 – 14h45	Session 1 - Firefighting or prevention? What pathways to addressing peace and justice in Africa
	<i>Introducer: Leen van Hijum, Defense attaché, Embassy of the Netherlands, Ethiopia</i> <i>Moderator: Volker Hauck, Head of Programme, ECDPM</i> Speakers: - Michelle Ndiaye (Programme Director, IPSS, Addis Ababa) - Cedric de Coning (Senior Research Fellow, ACCORD & NUPI, Oslo) - George Mukundi (Coordinator, African Governance Architecture, AUC, Addis Ababa) - Cyril Obi (Program Director, Social Science Research Council, New York – joining by pre-recorded video)
	<i>Key questions to be addressed by the Panelists:</i> - Is there an African peace and security agenda? - How is the peace and security agenda (defined broadly beyond peace operations) being shaped in Africa? - How is Africa tackling the issues of justice to ensure peace on the continent? What are the different narratives regarding the role of international bodies, such as the International Criminal Court (ICC)? - What direction can we expect the debate on peace and security to take place in the coming years? Why?

	5. What role for international actors in strengthening the role of the AU in these areas?
14h45 – 15h00	Coffee / Tea break
15h00 – 16h45	Session 2 - Migration: Key narratives in Europe and Africa
	Introducer: Mariko Peters, Regional Migration Coordinator, Netherlands Embassy in Ethiopia Moderator: Frauke de Weijer, Programme Associate, ECDPM Speakers: • Bram van Ojik (Netherlands' Special Envoy on Migration) • Maureen Achieng (Representative of IOM to the AU, Addis Ababa) • Caroline Njuki (Regional Migration Coordinator, IGAD, Addis Ababa) • Philip Bob Jusu (Socio-Economist, Permanent Mission of the AU, Brussels) • Koos Richelle (Chair of the Netherlands' Advisory Committee on Migration Affairs & Deputy Chairman of the ECDPM Board)
	<i>Key questions to be addressed by the Panelists:</i> 1. How is the migration issue viewed by the different actors? What are their incentives? 2. What are the key challenges in Africa in the area of migration? 3. What is the merit of engaging regionally (including with the African Union) on migration versus bilateral engagement? 4. How will the migration debate shape relations between Europe and Africa in future?
16h45 – 17h30	Closing Session: Key considerations from the afternoon sessions and implication for the Netherlands' engagement Summary by facilitator and reactions from Doris Voorbraak
17h30 – 18h30	Cocktail drinks and networking