



Security Council

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Letter dated 30 December 2010 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 2010, as endorsed by the members of the Working Group (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex were circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ruhakana **Rugunda**
Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on
Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa



Annex to the letter dated 30 December 2010 from the Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa addressed to the President of the Security Council

Report on the activities of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa for 2010

I. Introduction

1. The Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa was established by a note by the President of the Security Council (S/2002/207). The note, which delineated the composition, chairmanship, methods of work and duration of the Working Group, also set out its mandate, as follows:

(a) To monitor the implementation of recommendations contained in presidential statement S/PRST/2002/2 and previous presidential statements and resolutions regarding conflict prevention and resolution in Africa;

(b) To propose recommendations on the enhancement of cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council as well as with other United Nations agencies dealing with Africa;

(c) To examine, in particular, regional and cross-conflict issues that affect the Council's work on African conflict prevention and resolution;

(d) To propose recommendations to the Security Council to enhance cooperation in conflict prevention and resolution, between the United Nations and regional (African Union) and subregional organizations.

2. The present report describes the activities conducted by the Ad Hoc Working Group in 2010, under the chairmanship of Uganda.

II. Activities conducted

3. During the reporting period, the Ad Hoc Working Group held four meetings. In accordance with its mandate, the Working Group reviewed and considered issues that affect the work of the Security Council on conflict prevention and resolution in Africa, including strengthening the Council's cooperation with the African Union and its subregional organizations. The priority issues considered were:

(a) How conflict early warning and response mechanisms can be made more effective;

(b) How countries emerging from conflict can be better supported in building sustainable peace and avoiding relapse into conflict;

(c) Strengthening the working relationship between the Council and the African Union on conflict prevention and resolution in Africa;

(d) The strategic partnership between the African Union and the United Nations on security sector reform.

4. On 18 June 2010, the Working Group held a meeting to adopt its programme of work.

5. On 20 July, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Lynn Pascoe, briefed the Working Group on the proposed establishment of a United Nations Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and the role that it would play in promoting peace and security in the broader context of conflict prevention in the Central African subregion. In this regard, he said that the purpose of the meeting was to receive a briefing on UNOCA, what its envisaged mandate would be and what value it was expected to add. The Chair of the Working Group, Ambassador Ruhakana Rugunda, recalled that in December 2009 the Secretary-General, in a letter to the President of the Security Council (S/2009/697), had expressed his intention to establish UNOCA. At the time, however, some delegations had requested further clarification and explanation on a number of issues. He said that subsequently, a number of informal interactions had taken place with regard to the proposed Office. The Under-Secretary-General informed members that the rationale behind the establishment of a Regional Office for Central Africa stemmed from continued calls by States of the region for the setting-up of a United Nations political presence. He added that States members of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) had also written to the Secretary-General on several occasions to request the establishment of a United Nations Office for Central Africa, similar to the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA).

6. The Under-Secretary-General said that, in fulfilling this mandate, the Office would be guided by the following functions, as identified in the letter from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council, dated 11 December 2009:

(a) Liaising with and assisting key regional organizations, United Nations country teams and other key partners in the promotion of peace and stability in the subregion in order to help build institutional capacity towards a harmonized subregional approach to peace and security;

(b) Carrying out good offices roles and special assignments in countries of the subregion on behalf of the Secretary-General, including in the areas of conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts;

(c) Strengthening the capacity of the Department of Political Affairs to advise the Secretary-General on matters relating to peace and security in the subregion.

7. The Under-Secretary-General also said that the Office would provide an operational and analytical focal point for the engagement of the United Nations and the Department of Political Affairs in contributing to peace and security. On the value added through the establishment of the office, he noted that UNOWA had demonstrated that regional offices were privileged partners of subregional organizations in strengthening their capacity in the field of peace and security. Secondly, UNOCA would have a unique mandate in that it would be the only presence in the Central African subregion mandated to bring together key regional actors, including United Nations presences, Governments and regional organizations, at the highest level to address threats and challenges and agree on a comprehensive and integrated approach. Thirdly, the Office would create synergies among the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, other departments of the Secretariat and specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations. On funding, he said that every effort was being made to keep down costs.

8. The Under-Secretary-General noted that the offer by the Government of Gabon to provide office space would significantly decrease the overall budget of the Office, which was expected to amount to approximately \$5 million per year.

9. The members of the Working Group and Mr. Pascoe exchanged views on how the mandate of the proposed office could be streamlined, within the context of strengthening the cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations, so that it could discharge its role effectively and complement conflict prevention and resolution efforts of ECCAS and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, as well as other subregional organizations.

10. On 16 August, the Working Group held an open interactive panel discussion on the role of conflict early warning mechanisms in the prevention and resolution of conflicts in Africa. The Directors of the conflict early warning mechanisms of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Raymond Kitevu and Yoro Kone, respectively, were invited by the Working Group to serve as panellists for the discussion. Participants included members of the Security Council, representatives of the Department of Political Affairs and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, non-members of the Council, and observers.

11. The panel discussion provided an opportunity for an exchange of views with key practitioners of conflict early warning mechanisms on the continent. The discussion focused on how these mechanisms could be optimally utilized, the challenges being faced, and how the United Nations and the international community could support the African Union and its subregional organizations in making the mechanisms function more effectively. The panellists outlined the roles that the respective conflict early warning and response mechanisms were playing in the collection of information from multiple sources and in taking advantage of information and communications technology, which had proved to be useful in providing early warning on potential conflicts. They stressed the importance of political will for response to be made or action to be taken, which involved all stakeholders, including civil society. The panellists also emphasized the need for additional support, in terms of resources, to facilitate greater linkage between Headquarters and the field, as well as the need for training. Most speakers commended the work being done by the IGAD and ECOWAS conflict early warning mechanisms, and noted that with greater support they would be even more effective. A concept note for the panel discussion is attached (see enclosure).

12. The Working Group continued to focus on security sector reform as one of the key prerequisites for peace and stability, especially in fragile and post-conflict African countries. On 2 December, the Working Group held a panel discussion on the strategic partnership between the African Union and the United Nations on security sector reform. The Chief of the Security Sector Reform Unit of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Adedeji Ebo, and the Permanent Observer of the African Union, Ambassador Tété António, briefed members on the progress made so far towards the finalization of security sector reform policy framework of the African Union. The panellists observed that, as a result of greater engagement and sensitization, the initial apprehension and sensitivities regarding the issue of security sector reform were diminishing. They informed the Working Group that African Union member States had provided input at the subregional level

to the security sector reform policy framework, which was in the final stages of consideration before being submitted for adoption.

III. Conclusion

13. It has been an honour for Uganda to chair the Ad Hoc Working Group for the past two years. The Security Council has recognized the value that the Working Group continues to add to the process of embedding preventive diplomacy practices in the conflict management architecture of the United Nations. I should like to recommend that the practice of holding more open interactive meetings be maintained by the Working Group, as it provides an opportunity for participation and input of perspectives by more Member States and stakeholders.

14. It is essential that the Council continue to support conflict prevention and resolution efforts in Africa in order to reinforce the commitment and resolve shown by the African Union in this regard.

15. Finally, I am grateful to the members of the Working Group for the support and cooperation extended to me in the discharge of the mandate of the Working Group. I also thank the Secretary of the Working Group, Oseloka Obaze, and all the members of the Secretariat who facilitated our work.

Enclosure

Concept note: Panel discussion on the role of conflict early warning and response mechanisms in the prevention and resolution of conflicts in Africa

Introduction

There is an increasing emphasis on the prioritization of conflict early warning and prevention in subregional, regional and multilateral organizations, including the United Nations, as well as greater political will for more effective institutional approaches. In Africa, the African Union and most of its subregional organizations have developed elaborate conflict early warning and response mechanisms.

African Union

The Protocol relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (2002) established the Continental Early Warning System to ensure early responses to contain crisis situations so as to prevent them from developing into full-blown conflicts. The System consists of two components: (a) an observation and monitoring centre (the Situation Room) at African Union headquarters, which is responsible for data collection and analysis on the basis of appropriate early warning indicators; and (b) parallel observation and monitoring units at the subregional level, which are supposed to link up to the Situation Room. It is planned that the System will deliver standardized and timely early warning reports as well as effective policy options for consideration by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.

Economic Community of West African States

In its Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) established a subregional peace and security observation system for early warning. This mechanism also established an Observation and Monitoring Centre at ECOWAS headquarters, as well as four observation and monitoring zones with monitoring units within the subregion (Zonal Bureaus). The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) has been engaged by ECOWAS to assist in data collection for the purpose of early warning.

WANEP is a subregional civil society organization based in Ghana. Since 2002, when a memorandum of understanding was signed, WANEP has been officially charged with facilitating the ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN). WANEP collects data on human security issues, most notably human rights and democracy, food shortages, unemployment, arms flows, civil-military relations, and droughts and flooding. The ECOWAS system is an innovative approach insofar as it combines data collection by civil society with that carried out by Government officials.

Intergovernmental Authority on Development

The seven States members of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) created the Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) for the Horn of Africa region. The mandate of CEWARN is to receive and share

information concerning potentially violent conflicts as well as their outbreak and escalation in the IGAD region. CEWARN initially adopted an incremental approach by focusing exclusively on pastoralist conflicts. Its ultimate aim is to report on all violent conflicts in a broadly defined human security area, not just on national or State security issues. CEWARN operates through monitors, country coordinators, national research institutes and conflict early warning and response units at the national level.

East African Community

The five States members of the East African Community (EAC) established the Nyerere Centre for Peace Research in 2007 as an institution of the Community.

The vision of the Nyerere Centre is to become a global centre of excellence for peace and conflict research, while its mission is to build capacity in the area of conflict prevention, mitigation and resolution through research and training.

Its operational objectives include the promotion of peace and security as a means of enhancing regional integration and development, and collaboration with local, regional and international organizations, inter alia.

The Centre conducts research on themes related to refugees and internally displaced persons, conflict early warning systems, traditional dispute and conflict resolution methods, resource-based conflicts, terrorism and small arms and light weapons. The Community is also in the process of establishing its own conflict early warning and response mechanism.

Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa

The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) established its Conflict Early Warning System (COMWARN) in June 2009. COMWARN endeavours to respond to the COMESA mandate of conflict prevention through preventive diplomacy, by focusing on structural factors of conflicts. The entry points for COMWARN are structural vulnerability and enabling COMESA to respond at the earliest possible stage. COMWARN, which is currently being developed, will include a comprehensive early warning and analysis system capable of identifying the conditions, processes and actors that cause the eruption, escalation and persistence of conflicts. COMESA is in the process of developing, in close collaboration with civil society actors, the indicators to be used in the structural vulnerability assessments.

Southern African Development Community

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) is in the process of establishing a Regional Early Warning Centre, expected to be operational in 2010. It will be tasked with gathering data on all developments in the region. Member States are expected to launch national centres to record internal information and establish trends in situations of national instability.

The information gathered by national centres will be channelled to the Regional Centre, based in Botswana, for sorting and analysis of potential threats to regional stability. The establishment of the Centre was recommended by SADC Heads of State and Government to equip member countries with instruments capable

of predicting conflicts and the interference of third parties in the regional organization's internal affairs.

Economic Community of Central African States

The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) established the Central Africa Early Warning Mechanism (MARAC) as a technical organ of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX). The standing orders for COPAX, including those for MARAC, were adopted in June 2002 at the tenth ordinary session of ECCAS, held in Malabo.

Rationale and objectives

These conflict early warning and response mechanisms are a very useful tool for conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. However, the true measure of the effectiveness of conflict early warning systems is their ability to generate timely analysis, effective response options and early action.

In many cases, early warning is made, but is not matched with early response and action. It is therefore important to focus on how these mechanisms can be made more effective.

The objectives of the open panel discussion, which is scheduled to be convened on 16 August 2010 by the Ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, will be to consider and exchange views on:

- (a) The experience of IGAD and ECOWAS in implementing conflict early warning mechanisms;
- (b) The strengths, weaknesses and challenges of existing conflict early warning mechanisms;
- (c) What needs to be done to ensure the optimum utilization of conflict early warning mechanisms in the efforts of the African Union and its subregional organizations to predict and prevent violent conflict;
- (d) How the United Nations and international partners can support the efforts of the African Union in this regard.

The Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group has invited the Director of CEWARN and a representative of ECOWAS to serve as panellists. The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and the Special Adviser on Africa (or their representatives) are also expected to attend.
