

Challenges Annual Forum 2023



CHALLENGES ANNUAL FORUM REPORT 2023
ADDIS ABABA, 26–27 OCTOBER

Towards Stronger Global–Regional Peace & Security Partnerships

The Challenges Forum is a global partnership that uses its convening power to generate innovative ideas and promote results for more effective peace operations. The partnership consists of more than 50 organisations in 24 countries, and it provides an impartial and informal platform for dialogue and convenes key actors for deliberations on different approaches to peace. Central to the Challenges Forum founding concept is the hosting of the Challenges Annual Forum. The summary of the discussions held at the Forums constitutes one of the main collective outcomes of the partnership.



More than 130 partners and key stakeholders from over 40 countries, gathered at the UN Conference Centre in Addis Ababa for CAF23.

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This report is produced by the Challenges Forum International Secretariat, in consultation with the co-host Training for Peace. It does not necessarily represent the voices of all Forum participants.

1. Introduction



Per Olsson Fridh, Director General of Folke Bernadotte Academy; Bankole Adeoye, African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security; and Pernilla Rydén, Director of the Challenges Forum International Secretariat.

The Challenges Annual Forum 2023 (CAF23) gathered more than 130 partners and key stakeholders from over 40 countries and including partners from the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, on 26–27 October, in Addis Ababa to reflect on and share experiences on Global–Regional Peace & Security Partnerships. Peace efforts are more important than ever, but today’s polarised world prevents the United Nations (UN) from delivering on the Charter. However, more could be done by using regional arrangements more effectively.

Discussions focused on strengthening the multi-lateral peace and security toolbox through deepened and more fit-for-purpose partnerships, with a focus on the African Union (AU) and sub-regional organisations. In addition to several innovative high-level panel discussions, the CAF23 centred its group discussions around three sub-themes: (i) improved political and strategic coherence, (ii) predictable financing of AU peace support operations, and (iii) strengthening AU–UN capabilities and inter-operability. The Forum was co-hosted by the Training for Peace Programme¹.

¹ The Tfp Programme is the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ flagship capacity-support programme to the African Union Commission (AUC). It is comprised by a three-tier partnership between African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) in South Africa and the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUP).

2. Renewed multilateralism through enhanced global-regional partnerships

The world is facing an increasingly fragmented global geopolitical landscape, and the number of armed conflicts is growing. Core values and aspirations of the UN are under pressure, and in some cases directly undermined. Today's large number of conflicts are increasingly driven by regional instabilities, transnational threats, and economies of violence in fragile states, while being accelerated by cyber and technological developments. In many places, there is no peace to keep. Climate-related security risks are also increasing, especially in conflict areas, and the world is falling behind on delivering on its Sustainable Development Goals.

Against this backdrop, it is unsettling that the number of UN peace operations is gradually decreasing. It has taken 75 years to develop these peace tools and a global infrastructure for UN peace operations – with deployable resources, specialised competencies, training and agreed standards – and this broad palette of different multilateral peace operations remain viable instruments to address violent conflicts today.

However, the Challenges Forum partnership is of the firm belief that the declining number of UN peace operations, combined with the emergence of new forms of conflict, signals an urgent need to rethink, complement and strengthen the traditional multilateral peace operations toolbox.

One of the most important additions should be to create more strategic and mutual beneficial partnerships with regional organisations, such as the one between AU-UN. In the words of the UN Secretary-General, it is time for new generation of peace operations, with AU's own capacities and

funding, supported by UN funding and expertise. In doing so, it will be essential to operationalise the principles of subsidiarity and complementarity, also with sub-regional organisations. This requires clearer leadership roles for strategic coherence, a clear division of labour, and leveraging comparative advantage guided by more systematic joint analysis.

This is not the time to step back from our UN commitments to international peace and security. On the contrary, this is the time to step up and do our best to consolidate a reformed and re-energised multilateralism. In an interconnected world, threats to international peace and security are a concern for us all.

“The reason why we are having this crisis of multilateralism is precisely because everything that was promised under the Charter of global peace, security and development are not met.”

Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the AU and Head of the UN Office to the AU, United Nations

“Looking back at 75 years of UN peacekeeping, this tool, despite its shortcomings, has had a demonstrable record of success (...). However, contemporary threats to peace and security in Africa and elsewhere are placing new demands on the UN which require adjustment to our response mechanism.”

Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General
for Peace Operations, United Nations

Alhadji Sarjoh Bah Director of Conflict Management within the Political Affairs Peace and Security Department, AU Commission, and David Haeri , Director, Policy, Evaluation and Training Division, Department of Peace Operations, United Nations. During the high-level panel on UN support to AU and African-led peace enforcement operations.



3. Need for more coherence, better financing and stronger capabilities



Above: Atul Khare, USG for Operational Support at United Nations gave a digital presentation to the CAF23 participants.

Left: Ntunji Chella, Training and Development Officer at the Zambian Police Service and Camille Vern, research fellow at ANCIP.

3.1 Political and strategic coherence of peace operations.

In times of increased global polarisation, the UN should consolidate its core values and develop functioning approaches and operational concepts. As highlighted in the UN Secretary-General's policy brief the New Agenda for Peace (NAP), the world organisation needs to supplement its multilateral toolbox, where regional organizations like the AU and European Union (EU), need to shore up their capacity to prevent and respond to conflicts. This will require mutual respect, common understanding and strategic coherence, based on leveraging comparative advantages.

A sub-regional mission invited by the host country

Anchored in the example of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM), CAF23 participants discussed how strategic coherence between the UN, AU, and sub-regional/other organisations, could be developed and sustained. In June 2021, SADC approved the deployment of SAMIM to assist the Government of Mozambique in tackling the insurgency threat of violent extremists in the province of Cabo Delgado. The troops – comprising eight Personnel Contributing Countries from the region – work in collaboration with the Mozambique Defence Forces and others to combat acts of terrorism and violent extremism. The AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) endorsed the deployment of the Mission in January 2022. As SADC was invited by Mozambique, no UN Security Council authorisation was required.

“We need a robust bottom-up approach between local realities and local initiatives, reinforcing regional, continental and the UN perspective”

Onyinye Nkechi Onwuka,
Director Early Warning Directorate,
ECOWAS Commission

SAMIM's deployment has contributed to improving the overall security situation in Cabo Delgado. However, it has proven difficult to sustain military gains due to a lack of strategic coherence and insufficient operational coordination between SAMIM and the forces of the Government of Mozambique and troops from Rwanda.

“We must dwell more on lessons learned and ensure that the lack of strategic convergence is addressed and turned into opportunities.”

Amb. Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner
for Political Affairs, Peace and Security,
African Union Commission



reconstruction efforts and providing training to the Mozambique armed forces. However, it remains unclear to which extent EU is leveraging its support to these various actors, to achieve greater cross-sectoral strategic coherence.

In line with the transition under the African Stand-by Force Policy Framework, SAMIM needs to develop a multidimensional comprehensive strategy addressing the drivers of violent extremism in the region. Better coordination and strategic coherence is needed among SAMIM and the other security as well as the Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus actors in Cabo Delgado to ensure that their efforts are coherent with Mozambique's national priorities and address the socio-economic needs on the ground.

Although the AU PSC endorsed SAMIM's deployment and provided logistical support to the Mission, the strategic coherence between the AU Commission (AUC) and the Mission remains insufficient as no effective coordination mechanism is in place, and SAMIM is not systematically sharing information with the AUC. Strategic coherence between EU and the Mission could also be improved. The European support to SAMIM includes the provision of funding through the European Peace Facility, targeted to cover non-military aspects of the Mission's mandate. Additionally, the EU is supporting SAMIM's Peace Building Support Programme, funded by the African Peace Facility's Early Response Mechanism. EU is also financially supporting the Government's

“What we really need to look towards is creating a set of tools which are adaptable, which can interact to meet different requirements, depending on which actors are able to come in.”

David Haeri, Director Policy, Evaluation and Training Division, Department of Peace Operations, United Nations



Lessons from strategic coherence of SADC mission in Cabo Delgado (SAMIM)²

a. Roles and responsibilities: Under the principle of subsidiarity, AU and SADC could better define their specific roles and obligations to enhance strategic coherence. AU and SADC could further develop a joint framework on the type and frequency of information that needs to be shared.

b. Joint vision: SAMIM, Rwanda, and the Mozambique Government need to develop a joint vision to strengthen their strategic coherence, in order to achieve and sustain long-term peace in Cabo Delgado.

c. Information sharing and planning: Strategic coherence and operational coordination among all actors across the Human Development Partner nexus can be improved by sharing information, resources, and best practices. As well as developing joint and comprehensive strategies for preventing the spread of violent extremism. These joint strategies should include peacebuilding, development assistance and community-embedded prevention.

d. Multidimensional mission: SAMIM needs to develop a strategic plan, to operationalise its transition to a multidimensional mission. Such a plan should be aligned with the Government's and international partners' priorities, to ensure that the security support SAMIM is providing is coherent with and complements the humanitarian, development, and reconstruction efforts.



Norwegian Ambassador to Ethiopia and AU Stian Christenssen and Per Olsson Fridh, Chair of the Challenges Forum Partner meeting.

² See background paper

<https://challengesforum.org/paper/background-paper-samim-in-cabo-delgado-what-lessons-for-political-and-strategic-coherence/>

Key takeaways from CAF discussions on strategic coherence:

- **Strategic fit-for-purpose partnerships.** Strengthening the AU-UN peace operations partnership is a means to 1) address the urgent and complex peace and security deficit in many parts of Africa; that will 2) pave the way for consolidating a more multifaceted peace and security “toolbox”. This could moreover be applicable in other conflict contexts.
- **No actor can do it alone.** In a time of networked multilateralism, a successful AU-UN partnership should be grounded in a mutual understanding of what needs to be accomplished, and an equitable political recognition of what different partners bring to the fore. It is key to deepen and consolidate a value-driven and smart partnership, with a shared understanding and common vision to resolve conflicts. Clear mandates, also vis-à-vis Regional Economic Commissions, should assign leadership for strategic coherence roles. A leadership guided by more systematic joint analysis, a clear division of labour and leveraging comparative advantage, across human, material, and financial spheres.
- **AU PSO part of the toolbox.** Many parts of Africa face complex security challenges, without a peace to keep. In these contexts, there needs to be a tangible option for a new generation of AU peace support operations (AU PSOs), supported by the UN. As part of the future of peace operations, it is time to review and expand the global “toolbox” with these AU PSO’s, alongside the full range of available multilateral mechanisms. These tailor-made operations could be short-term and composed of special forces with offensive capabilities.
- **Primacy of politics.** It is key to avoid an over-militarisation of responses. Peace enforcement should always be founded in the primacy of politics principle, and be complemented by holistic and comprehensive approaches, addressing the drivers of conflict and state fragilities. The primacy of politics approach needs to deliver functioning political strategies and be built on political unity.
- **Maintain an adaptable set of tools.** The development of UN peace and security instruments, along with the global framework for UN peace operations, has been a gradual process spanning 75 years, with deployable resources, specialised competencies, training and agreed standards. The broad palette of different UN peace operations, including peacekeeping, remain viable instruments to address violent conflicts today. These established mechanisms must be preserved and remain ready for re-occurring situations.
- **Host state consent.** Regional or sub-regional peace support operations may have greater legitimacy in the eyes of host governments and local populations. It is nevertheless important to underline that consent can evolve over time, e.g. when missions do not fully deliver on mandates or expectations. As such, AU PSO’s can also face challenges to host country consent, particularly when trying to address drivers of conflict related to national elite interests and power balances.

3.2. Financing of AU peace support operations

The UN Secretary-General has called for a new generation of peace enforcement missions, which could supplement UN's established spectrum of peace operations. They should be led by regional forces, with guaranteed and predictable funding.

An AU PSO mandated by the Security Council

Participants discussed the issue of funding future AU peace support operations mandated by the UN Security Council (UNSC), based on lessons learned from the AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS). This mission is a multidimensional military, police and

civilian mission, authorised by the AU and mandated by the UNSC. ATMIS became operational on 1 April 2022, following the end of the previous AMISOM mandate. The new mission is focused on creating conditions for both military and institutional autonomy of the Somali government. Over the years, AMISOM and subsequently ATMIS have benefited of support from multiple actors, including AU, UN, the EU as well as Troop and Police-Contributing Countries (T/PCCs), and other partners. UN-assessed contributions have been a critical funding source for AMISOM/ATMIS, with a comprehensive financial, logistical, and technical support package provided through the UN Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS).

“Without finding appropriate financing mechanisms (...), we will continue to have challenges to peace and security that invariably will not only affect the African continent but will go beyond.”

Hanna Serwaa Tetteh, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa, United Nations

Roland Kobia, EU Ambassador to Ethiopia and acting Head of Mission to the AU; Harold Adlai Agyeman, Permanent Representative of Ghana to the UN ; and Hanna Serwaa Tetteh, Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa.



Lessons from AMISOM/ATMIS in Somalia on UN financing of AU PSOs³

a. Operationalising partnerships: The AMISOM/ATMIS experience has offered an opportunity to test and put into practice critical elements of global-regional partnerships: complementarity, comparative advantage, burden-sharing, jointness, and subsidiarity. The AMISOM/ATMIS experience has also underlined the need for defined and clear reporting lines between the UN Security Council and the AU PSC, on questions of compliance and accountability with human rights due diligence frameworks.

b. UN support models: The set-up of AU PSO in Somalia helped experimenting with specific modalities of UN financial and logistical support packages, in a highly volatile context with kinetic military action. Coupled with the experience of other African-led missions, such as the G5-Sahel, the Somalia experience indicated that UN's operational support arrangements, created for traditional peacekeeping, "may not be optimised to meet the requirements and operational tempos of African PSO's".

c. Mandates with clear financing: AMISOM/ATMIS has evolved in a unique way, largely shaped by exogenous and endogenous factors, and has been highly dependent on EU funding. A key lesson from this experience is the importance of linking mission mandates with clear financing strategies.

d. Funding uncertainties effect mission effectiveness: The imbalance between voluntary and UN-assessed contributions has left AMISOM/ ATMIS with an uncertain financing situation. Financial uncertainty for the AU peace support mission support SAMIM is providing is coherent with and complements the humanitarian, development, and reconstruction efforts.

"Burden sharing is not just the fact that Africa should do more, it's the fact that other states that are not contributing enough towards peace operations should step in."

Roland Kobia, Ambassador to Ethiopia, Head of Mission
of the European Union to the African Union a.i., European Union

³ See background paper
<https://challengesforum.org/paper/background-paper-atmis-in-somalia-what-lessons-for-assessed-contributions/>



The working group discussions created a high level of engagement, with different perspectives and experiences.

The AU Consensus Paper on predictable, adequate, and sustainable financing, as well as the consecutive Reports (2017, 2023) of the UN Secretary-General on the financing of AU PSO's, both indicate a preference for two funding models: (i) the establishment of a UN support office financed through UN assessed contributions; (ii) a joint financing of an UN-AU hybrid mission. Although both models have been tested, further innovative calibration of UN support is needed for time-critical high pace AU PSO's. Certain types of support are appropriate for some missions, but others are not. Flexibility is needed to allow for tailored responses on a case-by-case basis.

CAF23 participants deemed there is a need to be more precise on what can and cannot be done within current UN regulatory frameworks, i.e., what types of contributions, through which channels, and what types of mission. For example, UN assessed contributions cannot be used for forces primarily operating within the territories of participating countries, like the MNJTF and G5 Sahel Joint Force. It was also unclear to participants whether UN assessed contributions could be used for sub-regional PSOs and Ad hoc security initiatives.

Participants highlighted that each of the funding models has its benefits and drawbacks. In theory, UN models can provide more adequate, predictable, and sustainable funding. In reality, late payments by Member States often create liquidity challenges in missions. Participants also warned that budget preparation process was very burdensome requir-

"There is a need for predictability in partnerships (...) accompanied by flexibility and adaptation, which builds trust and is plugged in to universality as articulated in the New Agenda for Peace"

Fonteh Akum, Executive Director,
Institute for Security Studies

ing considerable involvement on administrative and budgetary matters by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), and the Fifth Committee. As an alternative, the ad hoc subvention model highlighted in the 2017 Report of the UN Secretary-General was seen as an option that should not be forgotten. It could provide a way for the UNGA to help fill financing gaps incurred by AU PSOs authorized by the UNSC for which the AU's own funding sources may not fully cover all requirements. The broader question however remained whether existing UN support and financing models were adequate or whether there needed to be 'out of the current toolkit' thinking.

Key takeaways from CAF discussions on predictable financing:

- **UN assessed contributions.** Sustainable and predictable financing of peace support operations is of fundamental importance to AU, and to the world. There is growing consensus that time has come for UN assessed contributions to complement and address funding shortfalls in AU PSO's, in fulfillment of the UN's primary responsibility for peace and security as part of global solidarity as enshrined in the UN Charter, and in compliance with International Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law. Fundamentally, this model should be applicable to all continents, but with a current and needs-based focus on Africa.
- **Tested funding models need further calibration.** Previous reports indicate a preference toward two models: 1) the establishment of a UN support office financed through UN assessed contributions; 2) a joint financing of an UN-AU hybrid mission. Although both models have been tested, further innovative calibration of UN support is needed for time-critical high pace AU PSO's. A key question is whether existing support and financing models are adequate, or whether there needs to be 'out of the current toolkit' thinking. Certain types of support are appropriate for some AU missions, while others are not. Flexibility is necessary to allow for tailored responses on a case-by-case basis.
- **Financing is not the panacea.** It is important to emphasise that funding is not the silver bullet solving all problems. Questions remains over AU absorption capacities and broader capability issues, including requisite personnel, institutional set-up, and infrastructure. It may be essential to revisit the AU's framework for undertaking PSO's, including the African Standby Force, considering current peace and security challenges.
- **Burden-sharing.** It is crucial that the entire international community remains committed to financing AU PSO's, as part of global solidarity, which is highlighted in the NAP. Progress has been made in operationalising the AU Peace Fund, which is projected to have US\$400 million by the end of 2023, with most contributions from AU Member States. However, continued commitment from African Member States is needed. Amid diminishing resources and growing demands, there is a need for more solidarity as well as more political and financial commitment from African countries for Africa.

3.3. Addressing capability gaps more systematically

Deeper AU-UN partnership arrangements need to address capability gaps of AUPSOs more systematically, with EU as a key partner in this context.

An ad hoc regional initiative without an AU or UN mandate

Participants discussed lessons learnt from the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in Lake Chad Basin, for addressing capability gaps more systematically. The task force was re-activated in late 2014 by the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), as an ad hoc security arrangement to fight the spreading threat of Boko Haram in the region. MNJTF is comprised of troops from five Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs), namely Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Cameroon, and a smaller contingent from Benin. In early 2015, the AU PSC authorised the operationalisation of the MNJTF mandate.

MNJTF is not deployed by AU and does not operate under its command-and-control structures but the AU supports the MNJTF with planning and coordinating partner support and advocacy. However, there is a general sense that AU could do more and play a bigger role in supporting the task force, to

acquire more equipment and fund-ing. Furthermore, it is widely argued that AU should be more engaged in supporting the LCBC and its Regional Strategy for the Stabilisation, Recovery and Resilience Secretariat. This support needs to be more effective to coordinate efforts of stakeholders and member states, and to ensure intelligence and experience sharing across borders.

“The recommendation here would be for other African countries to also prioritize the process of putting in place national action plans that could be used as a framework to facilitate the inclusion of young people in peace support operations.”

Rehema Mussanzi, Executive Director,
Centre for Conflict Resolution (DRC)



Lessons from addressing capability gaps more systematically in MNJTF⁴

- a. Close key capacity gaps:** MNJTF should prioritise policing capacities through training, rostering, and experience-sharing. MNJTF should also focus on closing capacity gaps in intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance as well as detecting improvised explosive devices.
- b. Strengthen information sharing:** MNJTF should enhance its intelligence posture with dedicated intelligence officers and training them on how to use appropriate equipment. MNJTF should establish regional intelligence networks, including with the G5 Sahel Joint force, Accra Initiative and Nouakchott Process.
- c. Intensify governance and developmental interventions:** MNJTF should prioritise and properly resource good governance and socioeconomic recovery, as well as environmental, youth empowerment, and other programs that restore ties between the population and the state in tandem with civil society.
- d. Funding uncertainties effect mission effectiveness:** The imbalance between voluntary and UN-assessed contributions has left AMISOM/ ATMIS with an uncertain financing situation. Financial uncertainty for the AU peace support mission support SAMIM is providing is coherent with and complements the humanitarian, development, and reconstruction efforts.

The MNJTF has managed to consolidate significant gains, such as the neutralisation of Islamic State West Africa Province terrorists, the clearing of local towns and villages as well as the creation of a conducive environment for refugees and internally displaced persons to return home. Despite the relative success of its short-term military operations, the MNJTF has not been able to protect, hold and stabilise liberated areas for longer periods of time, due to limited policing capacities. This has allowed terrorist groups to reclaim territories. The military is often required to conduct policing tasks without either proper capacities or resources. MNJTF also lacks appropriate information due to limited equipment for intelligence analysis and training of its personnel.

“Partnership needs to be anchored in the principles of mutual respect and mutual benefaction”

Alhadji Sarjoh Bah, Director, Conflict Management within the Political Affairs Peace and Security Department, African Union Commission

⁴ See background paper <https://challengesforum.org/paper/background-paper-mnjtf-in-lake-chad-basin-what-lessons-for-addressing-capability-gaps-more-systematically/>

Key takeaways from CAF discussions on capabilities:

- **African own capacities.** Over the past two decades, AU has become a key actor in preventing and responding to conflicts on the African continent. However, the lack of predictable funding, procurement delays and lack of capacities, can limit the efficacy and impact of AU PSO's. It is key for the AU to further develop its operational and logistical capabilities, as well as its ability to plan, deploy, manage, sustain, and finance its peace support operations. A more systematic and coordinated approach together with international partners and peacekeeping training centres is needed, to ensure AU PSO's are well trained and equipped.
- **Inter-operability.** Joint UN-AU planning guidelines will allow for better inter-operability of UN-supported AU operations. More systematic coordination of international and bilateral supportive efforts is also needed.
- **A win-win investment.** To better address and resolve operational capacity gaps is a win-win approach for both the organisation that is leading an operation, as well as all the actors supporting it. Models for reporting results and measuring performance should ideally be developed within the respective partnerships. Existing and adopted approaches should be used as much as possible.
- **Power of Youth as real partners of change.** Since over 70 per cent of the African population is under the age of 30, young people should not have to prove their value. They should be given a "real" role in peace processes as 'partners of change' and political agents. The transformational role of the youth should be used in addressing gaps in conflict prevention and the protection of civilians in mission transitions. It is paramount to involve and engage African youth in shaping a more peaceful and prosperous future for a continent with so much untapped potential. Investing in young people's organizations is the pathway to sustainable peace.

4. Conclusions and ways forward

The Challenges Forum partnership gathered in Ethiopia at an opportune time, ahead of a possible UNSC resolution on the financing of AU Peace Support Operations (PSOs), and the UN Summit of the Future in autumn 2024. To strengthen the multilateral peace and security architecture to better prevent and respond to conflicts, CAF23 participants underlined the importance of deepening partnerships with regional organisations such as the AU.

In a time of networked multilateralism, a successful AU-UN partnership should be driven by values and a shared understanding of a common vision to resolve conflicts. Clear mandates, also vis-à-vis regional arrangements such as the Economic Commissions, should assign leadership for strategic coherence roles, leveraging comparative advantages guided by more systematic joint analysis.

Many parts of Africa are facing complex security challenges, without a peace to keep. In these contexts, there needs to be a tangible option for a new generation of AU instruments, including

PSO's, with support from the UN, both financially but also in building capacities through training and joint planning, among other things. Regional and sub-regional peace operations need to be part of future international peace operations. Hence, now is the time to complement and expand the UN's "toolbox" with regional peace support operations, alongside the full range of available multilateral mechanisms, and in compliance with the UN Charter and international humanitarian and human rights law.

"The world is not what we want it to be, but perhaps together we can push it further towards where we would like it to be."

Per Olsson Fridh, Chair, Challenges
Forum Partner Meeting & Folke Bernadotte
Academy Director-General at CAF23





In doing so, it will remain key to avoid an over-militarisation of responses. Peace enforcement should always be founded on the primacy of politics principle, and be complemented by holistic and comprehensive approaches, addressing the drivers of conflict and state fragilities. Armed actions alone cannot solve instability and volatile security situations.

Sustainable and predictable financing of peace support operations is of fundamental importance to Africa, and to the world. There is a growing consensus that time has come for UN assessed contributions to more systematically complement and address funding shortfalls in AU PSO's, in fulfilment of the primary responsibility for peace and security as part of global solidarity as enshrined in the UN Charter. It is crucial that the entire international community remains committed to financing African-led peace operations as part of global solidarity.

AU and its Member States should also pursue avenues for greater burden sharing and mitigate an over-reliance on partner funding for its peace efforts. Amid diminishing resources and growing demands, there is a need for more solidarity as well as more political and financial commitment, also from countries on the African continent.

It is, however, important to emphasise that funding is not the "silver bullet" solving all problems. It is of key importance for the AU to further develop its operational and logistical capabilities as well as its ability to deploy peace support operations. A more

systematic and coordinated approach, together with international partners and peacekeeping training centres, is needed to ensure AU PSO's are well trained and equipped.

The Summit of the Future offers an important opportunity to engage in debates on the way forward for regional security mechanisms. UN member states and Challenges Forum partners should critically engage in these discussions, with adequate and crucial preparations at regional levels, including at the AU and EU. It is our hope that the valuable CAF23 findings and recommendations will feed into ongoing deliberations on the Summit of the Future and the subsequent Pact as well as broader reform and future of UN Peace Operations.

"Together, we will continue to work on our preparedness to address new challenges of a shifting peace operations paradigm in this continuously evolving world."

Atul Khare, Under-Secretary-General
for Operational Support, United Nations

ABOUT THE EVENT

The **Challenges Annual Forum** serves as a platform for launching research, concepts and policy initiatives in the area of peace operations reform. The Annual Forum is hosted yearly on a rotating basis by partner organizations. The Challenges Annual Forum 2023 (CAF23) was organized by the Training for Peace Programme, at the UN ECA in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Training for Peace (TfP) programme is the Royal Norwegian MFA's flagship capacity support programme to the African Union Commission (AUC). TfP is a three-tier partnership between: The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) and the Challenges Forum partners Institute for Security Studies (ISS) and Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI).

ATTRIBUTIONS

This summary report captures some of the discussions and recommendations that emerged during the two-day forum from a range of individuals, serving in peace operations and engaged in the reform of peace operations as part of the Challenges Partnership. The Annual Forum report was written by the Challenges Forum International Secretariat, on behalf of the Challenges Forum partners and Forum participants. It does not necessarily represent the views of all participants at the Forum.

ABOUT CHALLENGES FORUM

The **Challenges Forum** is a global partnership that uses its convening power to generate innovative ideas and promote results for more effective peace operations. It consists of more than 50 organisations in 24 partnering countries.

The Challenges Forum consists of Partners from:


 Argentina

 Armenia

 Australia

 Canada

 China

 Egypt

 Ethiopia

 France


 Germany


 India

 Indonesia

 Japan


 Jordan


 Nigeria

 Norway


 Pakistan

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