

**SECOND RETREAT OF THE PANEL OF THE WISE
WITH SIMILAR REGIONAL MECHANISMS
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
11-12 APRIL 2013**

Institutionalizing the Pan-African Network of the Wise (PanWise):

Contribution to Pan-africanism and African Renaissance

**FRAMEWORK FOR THE OPERATIONALISATION OF
A PAN AFRICAN NETWORK OF THE WISE (PanWise)**

INTRODUCTION

- I. Pursuant to the relevant provisions of the *Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union* (PSC Protocol); the *Protocol on Relations between the African Union and Regional Economic Communities*; the *Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Area of Peace and Security between the AU, the RECs and Stand by Brigades of Eastern Africa and Northern Africa* (MoU); the *Modalities for the Functioning of the Panel of the Wise* (AU); and, finally, the experiences and lessons learned as regards cooperation, collaboration and harmonization between the AU Panel of the Wise and its counter-parts at sub-regional level, this framework proposes a series of steps for the operationalisation of a “Pan African Network of the Wise”.

- II. The “Pan-African Network of the Wise” shall comprise, as core members, the AU Panel of the Wise and its existing and future counterparts at sub-regional level including: the Economic Community of West African States’ (ECOWAS) Council of the Wise; the Southern African Development Community’s (SADC) Mediation Reference Group and Panel of Elders; the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa’s (COMESA)

Committee of Elders; and the Intergovernmental Authority for Development's (IGAD) Mediation Contact Group. The secretariats of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), East African Community (EAC), Union of Maghreb States (UMA) and the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CENSAD) shall be part of the network while, and until such time as these organisations develop and implement their respective Panels. To enhance the effectiveness of "Pan African Network of the Wise", its shall also include, as partners, institutions and personalities working at different levels in the area of conflict prevention and mediation, such as the Forum of Former African Heads of State, the African Association of Mediators and others. When appropriate to the agenda of the "Pan African Network of the Wise", the AU Chairperson as well as African mediators Special Envoys, Special Representatives, Chief Mediators and their Mediation Teams shall be invited to participate in network activities.

- III. The establishment and conduct of the "Pan African Network of the Wise" shall not, in any way or form, be detrimental, affect or otherwise deviate members from their specific missions, objectives, functions and activities at their respective home organizations. Furthermore, the establishment of the "Pan African Network of the Wise" shall not be, in any way or form, prejudicial to the independence of each Panel, the confidentiality required of them as they perform their roles within their respective home organisations, as well their latitude in choosing partners, donors and other stakeholders. In conducting its activities, the "Pan African Network of the Wise" shall at all times be cognizant that its members may be actively engaged in preventive diplomacy, mediation and related activities with parties engaged in a dispute or conflict, and therefore discretion, respect for confidentiality and careful consultation with members on deliberations should be observed.

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

- IV. At an institutional legal and normative levels, it should be recalled that the PSC Protocol states in §16 that the Regional Mechanisms are part of the overall security architecture of the Union, the Chairperson of the Commission tasked with working closely with Regional Mechanisms to ensure effective partnership as well as harmonizing and

coordinating the activities of the Regional Mechanisms in line with the objectives and principles of the AU. Furthermore, the *Modalities for the Functioning of the Panel of the Wise* stipulate that the AU and RECs shall, where appropriate and within the framework of their conflict prevention strategies, establish structures similar to the Panel of the Wise, as provided for by Article 11 of the PSC Protocol.

- V. In defining the principles, rights and obligations to be applied in the relationship between the Union, the RECs and the Coordinating Mechanisms, in matters relating to the promotion and maintenance of peace, security and stability in Africa, the *Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Area of Peace and Security between the AU, the RECs and Stand by Brigades of Eastern Africa and Northern Africa* (MoU) specifies its objectives, including *inter alia*: the institutionalization and strengthening of cooperation and coordination of activities; the full operationalisation and effective functioning of APSA; regular exchange of information on all pertaining activities; a closer partnership and enhanced coordination; and the development and implementation of joint programmes and activities in the area of peace. In the pursuit of these objectives, adherence to the principles of subsidiarity, complementarity and comparative advantage is required. Constructive interaction is to be promoted and sustained.
- VI. Focusing specifically on conflict prevention, management and resolution, the MoU requires the parties to (i) intensify their efforts towards the prevention of conflicts through, among other things, fostering policies aimed at promoting democratic principles and practices, good governance, the rule of law and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for the sanctity of human life and international humanitarian law; and, (ii) work together and draw on each other's expertise to contribute to the implementation of regional and continental instruments relevant to the promotion and maintenance of peace, security and stability in Africa.
- VII. Furthermore, the MoU calls for further cooperation between the parties to enhance their capacity to anticipate and prevent conflicts and actions that may lead to genocide and crimes against humanity; and where conflicts have occurred, parties shall cooperate in peace-making and peace-building activities to resolve these conflicts and prevent their

recurrence, including through good offices, mediation, conciliation, enquiry and deployment of peace support in missions, as provided for in the PSC Protocol and other relevant regional instruments.

VIII. The MoU calls for capacity-building and knowledge sharing activities urging parties to engage in staff exchange and secondment programmes, as well as sharing of best practices and lessons learnt. On cooperation the MoU focuses among others on exchange of information, analysis and assessments; encouragement of networking, including through establishment of desk-to-desk consultation; meetings and other mechanisms for enhancing cooperation (regular consultations both at political and technical levels); institutional presence (establishment of liaison offices); and joint activities and field coordination (workshops and seminars; coordination of operational activities, including through regular consultations and coordination between their representatives in a given area or country).

IX. In light of the provisions above, a “Pan African Network of the Wise” assumes the following rationale:

- a) the articulation of a “Pan African Network of the Wise” contributes to mitigating some of the current challenges for the full operationalisation of the APSA, particularly the level of coordination between the PSC, the Panel of the Wise and similar structures in the RECs/RMs;
- b) in light of the many obstacles that typically affect the work of conflict prevention, a “Pan African Network of the Wise” can strengthen the ability of Panels to ensure political buy-in from their organisations and member states as regards actions in Member-States;
- c) a degree of system-wide coordination, even if loosely defined under a “Pan African Network of the Wise” has the potential to strengthen the ability of Panels to more efficiently overcome obstacles to their action, whether in conflict prevention missions (including good offices, fact-finding, conciliation, confidence-building) or mitigation and resolution (mediation, negotiation, etc);

- d) at a practical level, a more sustained and predictable networking arrangement has the potential to strengthen the support that the various Panels provide to their respective institutions on on-going peacemaking efforts (as this will become an increasingly growing portfolio of activities).
- e) by strengthening formal and informal communication linkages, Panels can in a more efficient and predictable way join forces to give their pronouncements on key (often controversial) issues a stronger level of authority, legitimacy and therefore influence;
- f) a “Pan African Network of the Wise” can enable collaboration in the development and conduct of research, thereby strengthening Panels’ thematic focus and ‘horizon scanning’ function;
- g) a “Pan African Network of the Wise” can enable collaboration on communication strategies, providing information about Panels’ mandate and work, helping promote interaction with other actors, including a wider African audience;
- h) by pooling their strengths together in a more systematic way will contribute to assuring Panels’ independence – a unique characteristic of these mechanisms; and, finally.
- i) not every REC/RM has a formal panel or committee, but may in fact be creating one – in which case such a network would be ideally placed to support the process.

FOCUS, REQUIREMENTS, NEXT STEPS

Without prejudice to the decisions taken by members of the network in the upcoming planning meeting (see final section below) members should pay special attention to the following:

- X. *Retreats*: the “Pan African Network of the Wise” shall meet two times per year at the very minimum. While one of these meetings can take place immediately before or after other AU-RECs meetings’ (including AU Panel of the Wise workshops, meetings and retreats), members of the “Pan African Network of the Wise” shall rotate the hosting of one of the yearly retreats as this gives added visibility and relevance at both continental and sub-regional levels. Members of the network shall agree on the retreat’s agenda beforehand on the basis of the focus areas and activities detailed below.

- XI. *Joint Missions*: the “Pan African Network of the Wise” shall strengthen collaboration with a view to jointly undertaking information/fact-finding missions, pre-election and post-election assessment missions, election observation missions and post-conflict assessment missions. In these cases, the network shall explore the possibility of developing joint reports and joint briefings.
- XII. *Collaborative research*: members of the “Pan African Network of the Wise” shall undertake collaboration on thematic research and ‘horizon scanning’. Over and above the active participation of REC associated panelists in the AU Panel’s thematic work and related workshops, the network shall aim at systematically developing collaborative thematic research projects and activities.
- XIII. *Experience sharing, best practices and lessons learned, joint training and capacity-building initiatives*. Either as part of the agenda of their retreats or at workshops especially convened for the purpose, the network shall focus on experience sharing with a view to strengthening the support that the various Panels provide to their respective institutions on on-going conflict prevention and peacemaking efforts. The network shall also work together on improving and strengthening their respective institutions’ capacity to document and record experiences and lessons learned; as well as joint development and sharing of the “Roster” of envoys and technical mediation experts currently being developed at AUPSD.
- XIV. *Policy Harmonisation and Strategic Orientation on Conflict Prevention and Peacemaking*: the “Pan African Network of the Wise” shall reflect on and address some of the more strategic and normative policy harmonization dimensions of conflict prevention and peacemaking within the context of the APSA. This shall entail thinking through in detail proposals for the modalities of practical interaction between the AU and the RECs as regards preventive diplomacy and peacemaking. Members shall jointly reflect on and co-develop a set of recommendations to be translated into operational guidelines which interpret existing normative principles and best practice to deepen the degree of institutionalised cooperation between the AU and the RECs in conflict prevention and peace-making.

- XV. *On-going contact and communication.* Members of the network shall strengthen their day to day contact and communication, either directly through their Secretariats and/or through the Liaison Offices (RECLOs/RMLOs) at AU headquarters in Addis Ababa. Nevertheless, and in terms of preventive diplomacy and peacemaking, additional efforts may be required in terms of on-going desk to desk contact, sharing of information and analysis; co-development of strategies and plans for conflict prevention where appropriate; awareness raising, etc. In this regard, all members of the network should endeavor to establish their Panel's Secretariats, or at the very minimum a point person, as soon as possible.
- XVI. *Making use of an existing networking platform: the CEWS Portal.* The network shall explore the possibility of using the CEWS Portal for the development of more systematic and predictable connections between them. Developed to allow for information and analysis exchange between the CEWS and the REC's early warning systems, this web based portal could easily include the work of the Panel and similar mechanisms at the RECs. This would ensure regular flow of information between Panels and hence feeding into the AU Panel and the REC's Panels initiatives in their respective fields of operation.
- XVII. *Awareness raising and guardianship of institutional norms in light of conflict prevention and peacemaking activities on the ground.* The "Pan African Network of the Wise" shall support the AUC as well as its equivalents at REC level in awareness raising and monitoring of observance of normative principles agreed to by member states (treaties, protocols and decisions at the AU, RECs, RMs and member states) with relevance to peace and security but also governance, human rights, in light of conflict prevention and peacemaking activities conducted by Special Envoys, Special Representatives and Chief Mediators on the ground.
- XVIII. *Coordination between Panels and other APSA Pillars:* in addition to the Liaison Officers currently deployed on behalf of the RECs at the AUC, the "Pan African Network of the Wise" shall coordinate the interaction between Panels and other pillars of the architecture, particularly the CEWS and the African Standby Force.

XIX. *Other Regular Joint Activities:* in addition to the above, members of the network shall endeavor to develop and implement regular joint initiatives; participation by the staff of each mission in the activities of the other missions; public action to demonstrate unity between the organisations, such as joint press conferences; development of common responses to local dynamics; and joint fundraising.

XX. *Coordination of the Pan African Network of the Wise:*

- a. The coordination of the “Pan African Network of the Wise” rests with the Secretariat of the AU Panel of the Wise.

African Union Commission (AUC)

PAPS Digital Repository

<https://papsrepository.africa-union.org/>

Mediation & Dialogue

Panel of the Wise

2013-04-12

Second Retreat of the Panel of the Wise with Similar Regional Mechanisms, 11-12 April 2013, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

African Union

African Union Commission

<http://172.16.3.59/handle/123456789/1377>

Downloaded from PAPS Digital Repository, Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS)