

The emblem of the African Union, featuring a map of Africa in the center, surrounded by a laurel wreath, and a banner at the bottom with the Amharic word 'ግንባር' (Ginbar) meaning 'reconstruction' or 'rebuilding'.

# **The Nexus between Regional Integration and Conflicts in Africa**

**John Ikubaje and Khabele Matlosa**  
**Department of Political Affairs**  
**African Union Commission, Addis  
Ababa, Ethiopia**

# PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- Introduction
- Key Triggers of African Conflicts
- RECs and RMs in Africa
- Regional Integration
- Impact of Conflicts on Regional Integration
- OAU/AU Response to conflicts
- Way Forward



# Introduction



- The theme of this colloquium is germane to the vision of the **African union**;
- The vision of the AU is “***an integrated, peaceful and prosperous Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena***”

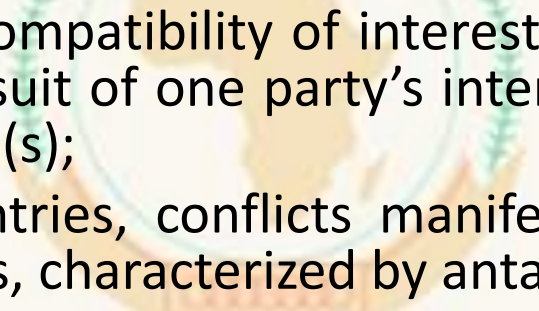
# Introduction (Cont)

- **Four (4)** Fundamental elements of AU Vision are pertinent to the discussion in this Colloquium
  - Pursuit of continental INTEGRATION through RECs as building blocks;
  - Through continental INTEGRATION, The AU aims to achieve PROSPERITY for African peoples;
  - The continental body recognises that both INTEGRATION and PROSPERITY can only be achieved fully if they are DRIVEN BY CITIZENS and not governments alone;
  - INTEGRATION, PROSPERITY and CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT will all add value in efforts aimed at ensuring that that AFRICA REPRESENTS A DYNAMIC FORCE IN THE GLOBAL ARENA.

# Introduction (Cont)

- While Integration is a pre-requisite for prosperous Africa, conflicts remains a clog in the wheel of a successful political and economic integration on the continent.
- A successful and sustainable integration therefore requires peace, stability and political order.
- While African Union is led by the African Union Member States and government, there is now an emphasis on citizens being at the driver's seat of policy formulation, implementation and evaluation. (The Union of African Citizens)
- As part of pursuing meaningful regional integration, it is important for AU and RECs to prioritise not only free movement of goods and services across borders, but also **FREE MOVEMENT OF AFRICAN PEOPLES**.

# Key Triggers for Conflicts in Africa

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- Conflict refers to incompatibility of interests between two or more parties, wherein pursuit of one party's interests results in a loss on the part of the other (s);
  - At the level of countries, conflicts manifest disagreement within state or among states, characterized by antagonism and hostility;
  - Conflicts can be covert or overt; they can also be peaceful or violent; they can be constructive or destructive;
  - Conflicts, are, thus, part and parcel of human existence; they cannot be wished away;
  - Therefore, the problem in Africa is not that there are conflicts on the continent;
  - But rather, the main problem is the mismanagement of conflicts;

# Key Triggers for Conflicts in Africa

- **Resource-driven conflict** is brought about by a limited amount of resources. The groups or individuals involved then comes into conflict to attain the most of these resources, thus bringing forth hostile behaviours among those involved (natural resources)
- **Identity-based conflict** is brought about socio-cultural and politico-economic differences among individuals. These identity cleavages include ethnicity, religion, region, class, gender, age, race etc. Mismanagement of diversity is often the main cause of identity based conflicts in Africa.

# Key Triggers for African Conflicts (Cont.)

- **Power-driven conflict** occurs when the parties involved intend to maximize their influence and authority in a social setting. The best known power contestation is the competition for state power either through the ballot (elections) or through the bullet (military coups).



# Regional Integration

- Integration is defined to mean a combination or the process of combining into completeness and harmony.
- Regional Integration is the process by which two or more nation-states enter into a regional agreement to co-operate and work closely together to achieve peace, stability and wealth through regional institutions and rules
- Usually integration involves one or more written agreements that describe the areas of cooperation in detail, as well as some coordinating bodies representing the countries involved.

# Forms of Integration

- **Economic Integration** is the process by which different countries agree to remove trade barriers between them. Trade barriers can be tariffs (taxes imposed on imports to a country), quotas (a limit to the amount of a product that can be imported) and border restrictions
- **The Single Market Integration** is the midpoint of the integration scale between political and economic integration. It is the point at which the economies of the co-operating states become so integrated that all barriers to the movements of labour, goods and capital are removed. At this stage the integrating states set a common external tariff on goods from other countries—this is called a customs union. A further step in the process of economic integration might be adoption of a common currency, with monetary policy regulated by a single central bank.

# Forms of Integration (Cont)

- **Political integration:** As the economies of the co-operating countries become completely integrated into a single market, there appears a need for common policies in social policy (education, health care, unemployment benefits and pensions) and common political institutions. This is political integration and its culmination occurs when the co-operating countries are so integrated that they share the same foreign policies and merge their armies. In effect, they form a new country.

Sources: John McCormick. *The European Union: Politics and Policies*. Westview Press: Boulder Colorado, 1999.

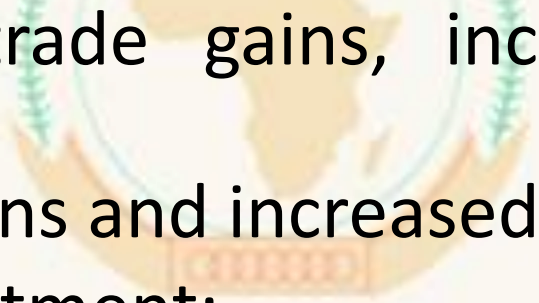
# Drivers of Integration

- **Economic and market-driven integration:** Economic comparative Advantages and the need for trade relationship among states
- **Security-driven integration:** Insecurity in one or more countries having a spill over effects in other countries of the region collaboration for regional Peace and Security:
- **Political relevance at the international levels:** a need for a dynamic force at the continental and global levels.

# Drivers of Integration

- **Colonial and cultural driven integration:** Some countries with similar colonial history and heritages have come together as an integrated block, e.g. the Commonwealth of Nations and the regional financial and economic integration at the regional level in Africa in West and Central Africa are good reference.

# Benefits of Regional Integration

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- International trade gains, including food and social security:
  - Increased returns and increased competition
  - Increased Investment:
  - National and regional Security
  - Better and cheaper social and economic services
  - Free movement of person, good and services (ECOWAS)
  - Establishment of free trade area etc

# Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Regional Mechanisms (RMs) in Africa

The Arab Magreb Union (UMA);

The East African Community (EAC);

The Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS;

The Southern African Development Community (SADC);

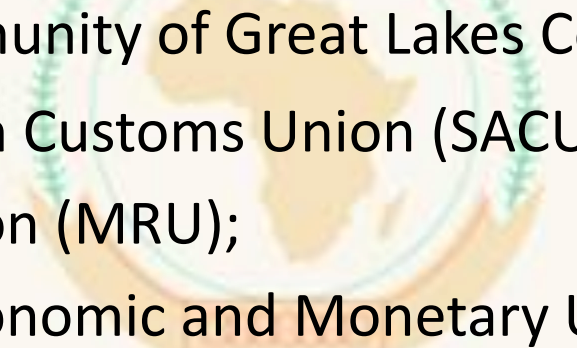
The Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD);

The Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD);

COMESA and

The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)  
etc

# **Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Regional Mechanisms (RMs) not Recognized by AU**

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- The Economic Community of Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL);
  - The Southern African Customs Union (SACU);
  - The Mano River Union (MRU);
  - The West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA);
  - The Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC),
  - The Indian Ocean Commission (IOC)



# Impact of Conflicts on Regional Integration

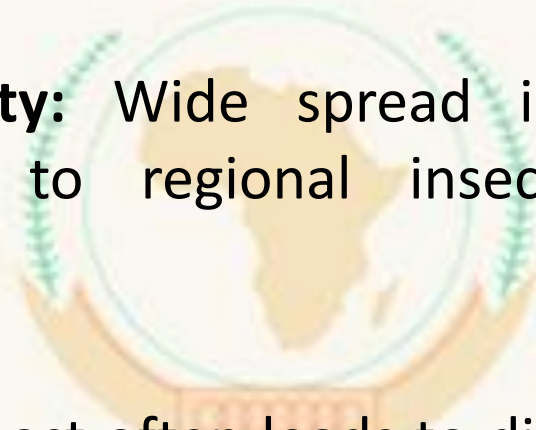
**Economic Impacts:** Conflicts most often reduces and in some cases stop economic activities thereby impacting negatively Regional cooperation on trade

**Disagreement and Disunity among States :** Ethnic groups cut across different nation states, when conflicts break out, ethnic collaboration and support between and among states are common. A reference point here is the conflict in Burundi, Rwanda and DRC

**Integration Setback:** When there is intra or inter conflicts within and between states in a union of states, it most often set back regional integration on the path of progress that had been made. (Egypt)

# Impact of Conflicts on Regional Integration

- **Regional Instability:** Wide spread intra and inter state conflicts leading to regional insecurity and economic instability
- National conflict most often leads to displacement of Persons (DPs) within the regions leading to establishment of refugee camps in some of the integrating member states



# AU Response to Conflicts

Conflict crises on the continent have generated huge awareness on the role of the states alongside regional structures on armed conflict among neighbors.

The awareness therefore creates regional and continental mechanisms for dealing with national and inter-state conflicts in Africa..

# AU Response to Conflicts

Since the end of the Cold War, Africa leaders have provided different frameworks and mechanisms for peace making and management in Africa. Some of these include normative and Institution frameworks at the regional and Continental levels.

# AU Response to Conflicts

There is now a transformation from the OAU Policy of Non-Interference to the AU Policy on Non-Indifference.

This transformation affected conflicts crises on the continent in different ways at different time.

The non interference affected negatively the Rwanda genocide and the latter has been very helpful in some countries in recent times.

# AU Response to Conflicts

The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). Its framework rests on five pillars namely: the Panel of the Wise, the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), the African Standby Force (ASF) and the Special Fund.

Traditional mechanism and approach to peace making and conflict management in Africa (Council of Elders)

# Way Forward

1. African countries need to address structural root causes of conflicts and not mere symptoms: the structural root causes of conflicts are principally three namely (a) power contestation; (b) distribution of resources; and (c) diversity management. Africa Countries must prioritize these three issues as they embark on regional and continental integration
2. Related to the above recommendation, the African Union, RECs and its Member States should prioritise the effective implementation of the African Governance Architecture (AGA) and the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) within the context of the AU Agenda 2063 and the Common African Position on Post-2015 Development Agenda
3. Africa must pursue socio-economic integration in tandem with politico-cultural integration; economic integration may not be easily achieved without political integration; in fact, it could be that the latter must precede the former as the the founding father of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah proclaimed “seek ye first the political kingdom and all else shall be added unto you”.

## Way forward (contd)

4. In addressing conflicts and driving the regional integration agenda, the AU, RECs and their member states should prioritise domestic resource mobilisation with a view to reducing their overwhelming external dependence; (Obasanjo's Panel on domestic resource mobilization a pragmatic initiative but need commitment)
5. In order for the AU, RECs and their member states to make a headway in managing conflicts and deepening regional and continental integration, they should commit to ceding part of their sovereignty for the purpose of the regional and continental good; this is commonly referred to in the literature as pooling of sovereignty: a critical ingredient for deep and developmental integration.



# Way Forward (Cont.)

6. In pursuit of deep and developmental integration, the AU and RECs, must balance state-centered integration with people-centered integration through, for instance, free movement of people across borders (e.g. ECOWAS experience)
7. In their efforts to assist their member states address the problem of violent conflicts which in turn retards regional integration, AU and RECs should invest more in utilisation of African traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution, reconciliation and mediation (such as Mato oput in Northern Uganda and the Gacaca system in Rwanda etc)

**Finally,**



We thank you for your attention