Call for Papers

“An Agenda for Sustainable Peace, Security and Development in Africa”

11-12 December 2019
Aswan, Egypt
Africa’s potentials are immense but not fully realized. Today, the continent is home to at least half of the fastest growing economies of the world. It is rich in resources and is riding a wave of urbanization, industrialization and economic diversification. Its importance in the global economy is rising, both as a market and as an engine of global growth. Moreover, the continent is the youngest region of the world. By 2030, one in every five people in the world will live in Africa.

This great promise, however, is under threat; undermined by a myriad of crises, challenges and risks to peace, security and development. The continent remains the most burdened with conflict, which inflicts devastating human suffering, damage economies and social fabrics, and destroy physical infrastructure.

Moreover, the numbers of migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) are at record highs. The menace of terrorism is also on the rise. By exploiting weaknesses and vulnerabilities of weak states and conflict zones, terrorist organizations are now able to seize and hold territory; a dramatic transformation with unsettling consequences. Equally alarming is the convergence of terrorist and criminal organizations into a new and hybrid threat, that recognizes no borders.

While similar in some respects to old challenges that the continent has faced, today’s conflicts and other threats to peace, security and development in Africa are unique in many ways. First, their scale, concurrence, frequency and consequences are unprecedented. Second, they don’t necessarily lend themselves to traditional ways of settling and resolving conflicts. Third, they expose serious weaknesses, vulnerabilities and shortcomings of the continent’s security structures and mechanisms. Moreover, they are happening at a time of shaking global structures, in a world distracted by a plethora of other ongoing and potential crises.

Amidst these crises, Africa’s leadership is indispensable. It is, indeed, the responsibility of this generation of African leaders, policymakers and intellectuals to provide the home-grown solutions, that the continent so desperately needs, to protect the present and secure the future for generations to come.
THE ASWAN FORUM

Acting in its capacity as the Chairman of the African Union, and the Champion of Post-Conflict Reconstruction, Development, and Peacebuilding in Africa, Egypt is taking the initiative to launch the Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development. The forum will provide the first of its kind platform in Africa to address the interlinkages between peace and development, champion Africa-led solutions through strengthening the policies-practices linkages. It will inspire thought leadership on Africa’s future trajectory.

The Forum will bring together heads of states and governments, leaders from national governments, regional and international organizations, financial institutions, private sector, and civil society, as well as visionaries, scholars, and prominent experts for a context-specific, action-oriented, and forward-looking discussion on the threats and challenges, as well as opportunities, ahead.

The Inaugural Meeting of the Aswan Forum, titled “An Agenda for Sustainable Peace, Security and Development in Africa,” will take place on 11-12 December 2019 in Aswan, Egypt. The focus of the discussions will be on “operationalizing” the links between the “sustainable development” and “sustaining peace” agendas in the African context, on the local, national (nation states), regional (RECs/RMs) and continental levels (African Union). It will present concrete recommendations to African heads of states and governments, leaders from national governments, regional and international organizations and financial institutions, the private sector, and civil society. Those recommendations will be captured in the “Aswan Peace and Development Report” and the “Aswan Declaration on Sustainable Peace and Development.”

CALL FOR PAPERS

Acting in its capacity as the Executive Secretariat of the Aswan Forum, the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding (CCCPA), is placing this call for papers. Proposed research must be evidence-based and policy-oriented, with concrete recommendations for policymakers on the national, regional, continental and international levels. Purely academic papers will not be accepted.

Submissions by research institutions, individual or group researchers, scholars, and experts are welcome. African research institutions, scholars and experts are especially encouraged to apply. Young researchers are particularly welcome.

REQUIREMENTS AND PROCESS

- A Policy Paper is 8-10 pages long. It includes an executive summary/abstract, key points, an introduction to the topic of the paper, body, conclusion and recommendations. Case studies are encouraged.

- Selected authors will get the chance to participate, either in one of the preparatory workshops, or the Aswan Forum itself. Travel, accommodation, and lodging costs will be fully covered by CCCPA.

- Accepted papers will be also published on the Aswan Forum website and widely publicized on its social media platforms, ahead of the Forum. It will also be circulated as background papers during the Forum and be used in the preparation of the “Aswan Report on Sustainable Peace and Development”.
Suggested themes and guiding questions are not meant to be mutually exclusive or exhaustive. Authors are invited to combine multiple themes or recommend additional research questions, so long as they fall under the purview of sustainable peace and development in Africa.

Interested authors should send an abstract of no more than 600 words to the following email: aswanforum@cairopeacekeeping.org, no later than 20 September 2019, with the following title for the email: “Submission of Policy Paper Proposal.”

Draft papers should be sent to the same email address.

CCCPA reserves the right to edit the papers before publication, in consultation with the authors.

INDICATIVE LIST OF RESEARCH THEMES AND QUESTIONS

The Future of the African Peace and Security Architecture

- Mindful of the ever-evolving nature of the threat environment in Africa, how adequate is the current African Peace and Security Architecture and the response it provides throughout the continuum of peace interventions (conflict prevention and resolution, peacekeeping and peacebuilding)? What are the major challenges that faced the implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture Roadmap 2016-2020? And how should they be addressed in the post-2020 roadmap?

With the “Silencing the Guns by 2020 Master Roadmap” coming to an end, what are the lessons learned from its implementation thus far? What are the major strategic and operational obstacles that hindered achieving its stated objective? What are actionable recommendations for African national, regional and continental actors that can ensure that future efforts achieve better results?

Conflict Prevention in Africa

The last few years have seen a renewed focus on conflict prevention on the global, continental and regional levels, reflected in normative frameworks, such as AU Continental Structural Conflict Prevention Framework (2015), the sustainable Development Agenda (2015), the “Sustaining Peace” twin resolutions (2016), and the joint UN-WB study on Pathways for Peace (2018):

- How can the African Union’s current focus on "operational prevention" (early warning, mediation, etc.) be complemented with concrete measures to advance “structural prevention”?}

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

- 5000 words, not including referencing;
- Manuscripts are written in English in Microsoft Word;
- Manuscripts are single-spaced, uses a 12-point font, Times New Roman, with 2 cm margins;
- Referencing Style: Harvard;
- Papers are not already published or being considered for publication by any other conference or journal;
- Manuscripts should be sent to the following email address: aswanforum@cairopeacekeeping.org
• How to enhance complementarity and coherence between the APSA, the African Governance Architecture (AGA), and the AU’s development work to advance conflict prevention in Africa?

• How to achieve better coherence and complementarity between national, regional and international efforts of preventing conflict and sustaining peace (across the continuum of peace interventions and the peace-development nexus)?

The Future of Peacekeeping in Africa

Significant efforts are underway in both the UN and the AU to reform their peace and security architectures, and to make peace operations more fit for purpose, including the UN Secretary General’s “Action for Peacekeeping” (A4P) initiative and the subsequent “Declaration of Shared Commitments on Peacekeeping Operations.”

• Are the current doctrine, structure and modalities of deployment of the African Standby Force (ASF) responsive to current and future crises in Africa? If not, what measures need to be taken to enhance the capacity of the African Union to plan, deploy, effectively manage and draw-down peace support operations? What should be the future relationship between the African Standby Force (ASF), the African Capability for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC) and regional security coalitions (such as the G5 and MNJTF)?

• How to improve on the strategic partnership between the UN-AU to advance an operational partnership in peacekeeping, beyond the issue of access to assessed contributions? How can such partnership contribute to ongoing efforts to operationalize the policy framework for peace support operations (PSOs)?

Peacebuilding in Africa

• What are the lessons learned from previous successes and failures of PCDR and peacebuilding efforts in Africa (Liberia, South Sudan, Burundi, Sierra Leone, etc.)? How can coherence and complementarity be achieved between national, regional and international efforts to address the needs of countries and communities emerging from conflict? How can we bridge the gap between policy and operational realities in specific contexts?

• What measures are needed to operationalize the AU Policy on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development? What role for the newly established AU Center for PCRD?

Africa’s Forcibly Displaced: From Ad Hoc Responses to Durable Solutions

The scale of the current forced displacement crisis is unprecedented. Despite its global nature, Africa continues to be disproportionately impacted. The continent accounts for one-third of refugees globally, with the bulk of African refugee movements happening within Africa. According to the UNHCR Global Trends Report, half of the ten countries with the highest refugee population relative to national populations are in sub-Saharan Africa.

• How to achieve better integration, synergies and coordination, including in financing and programming, between humanitarian response, development support, and peacebuilding interventions, that would inform a shift from ad hoc responses to durable solutions to forced displacement in Africa? (Case studies are encouraged)

• What concrete recommendations should inform the evolution of the African Humanitarian Architecture (AHA)? How can synergy and coordination be achieved between the AHA, the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), and the AU’s developmental work?
Women, Peace and Security

- In the lead up to the 20th anniversary of the UNSCR 1325, what progress has been made and what obstacles still hinder the meaningful contributions of women to peace and security in Africa? How can the African Union better support national efforts to overcome those obstacles?

- 25 African countries have developed National Action Plans (NAPs) to advance the implementation of the WPS agenda. Have these NAPs been successful as tools to enhance women’s meaningful contribution to peace and security? (Case Studies are encouraged).

- What has been the contribution of the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation (FemWise) to efforts of conflict prevention and resolution and sustaining peace in Africa? How to further enhance its role?

Dealing with a New Typology of Armed Conflicts and Groups

The evolution of armed groups, combined with the growing terrorism-crime nexus, presents peace and security, development and humanitarian actors with formidable strategic, operational and legal challenges. Among these challenges are the increasingly blurring lines between civilians, combatants, and individuals associated with terrorist groups, as well as the multiplicity of legal frameworks operating at the national, regional and international levels.

- The ever-evolving nature of armed conflict and the rise of new armed actors present legal experts with significant challenges and exposes serious gaps in existing IHL instruments. This is further exacerbated by the multiplicity of legal frameworks and the lack of a clear definition of what constitutes a “terrorist group”. In light of this, how should IHL apply to non-state actors? Should there be distinctions between combatants and individuals associated with terrorist organizations? Further, how should legal experts differentiate between combatants associated with terrorist groups and those associated with other types of armed groups?

- To what extent are existing regional and international legal frameworks (relevant UNSC resolutions, the revised IDDRS, Madrid Guiding Principles, Key Principles for the Protection, Repatriation, Prosecution, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration of Women and Children, AU Operational Guidance Notes, etc.) capable of responding to the challenges arising from the new typology of armed conflicts and groups in Africa? And what are the opportunities and challenges facing their operationalization?

- How can international and regional efforts contribute to strengthening state institutions in post terrorist-governed local orders (beyond the simplistic formula of extension of state authority, by means of provision of public services), advance a new social contract between state and society, leverage local pillars of peace, mitigate underlying conditions of fragility, and boost community resilience to extremism conducive to terrorism?
The complex nature of contemporary threats to peace and security presents formidable challenges to sustainable peace and development in Africa. Although some advancements have been made in the continent, key sectors still lag behind, namely: 1) banking and financial services; 2) ICT and telecommunications; 3) Energy; and 4) Infrastructure.

Africa suffers from a myriad of issues (energy poverty, lack of financial exclusivity and banking penetration, infrastructural deficit, and unequal access to ICT services...etc.) which necessitate a shift away from top-down state-centric approaches and towards fostering new forms of collaboration and dialogue, both within governments and across sectors. Private sector actors must be actively and meaningfully engaged in efforts to operationalize the sustainable peace-development nexus. Furthermore, national governments must adopt more nuanced approaches to incentivize and encourage private investment and deployment of critical infrastructure necessary for sustaining peace and development.

Papers under this theme should discuss the challenges faced by any of the aforementioned sectors (or a combination of sectors) and present action-oriented recommendations aimed at advancing different areas of the sustainable peace-development nexus. Specifically, papers should explore avenues for: improving synergies between public and private sectors, advancing investments, ensuring business practices are conflict-sensitive, diversifying modalities of funding, and facilitating inclusive decision-making.

Papers should address the contributions by the following sectors to advancing sustainable peace and development in Africa:

- Banking and Financial Services Sector
- CT and Telecommunications Sector
- Energy Sector
- Infrastructure Sector