

AU POLICY CONFERENCE

Promoting the
Peace, Security,
& Development
Nexus:

The Promise of
Regional Integration

25th - 27th
October 2022
Tangier,
Kingdom of Morocco

CONCEPT NOTE



1. BACKGROUND

The interlinkages between peace, security and development and their implications on realizing the African Union's vision of “creating an integrated prosperous and peaceful continent driven by its citizens”, are well established in the foundational instruments of the African Union. Moreover, the preamble of the Constitutive Act and the objectives of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, affirms the promotion of peace, security and stability as prerequisites for sustainable development.

The quest for promoting these interlinkages has perennially informed the activities of the Peace and Security Council's activities and the African Union Commission as a whole. This nexus approach has been complemented by the African Union's reflections on resilience, mitigation, and adaptation strategies given the heavy toll of climate change on peace and security.

Africa's development, peace and security, and integration landscape has registered several achievements over the last decade. These outcomes have included sustained levels of economic growth, several successful election cycles, and sustained cooperation between the AU and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Regional Mechanisms (RMs) to promote integration and develop mechanisms to address complex security challenges. However, the resurgence of unconstitutional changes of governments, with the varying intensities of armed conflicts, popular uprisings, violent confrontations, and violent extremism have continued to derail the continental development agenda.

Furthermore, Africa's vision for enhanced regional integration was brought to focus with the entry into force of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in January 2021 which marked a major milestone in Africa's regional integration agenda. In fact, the pace of ratification of the AfCFTA is unprecedented in the AU's history and the Agreement is now effective in the 41 countries (76% of the 54 signatories) that have already ratified it. With an estimated Gross Domestic Product of USD 2.5 trillion and a market of over 1.2 billion people, the AfCFTA is expected to be a game-changer in Africa. It could significantly boost intra- regional trade, increase manufacturing output, and lift millions of people out of poverty.

2. RATIONALE

Africa's regional integration plans, including the AfCFTA, are wholly dependent on its ability to ensure a climate of peace and security, which will de facto promote the business environment in Africa and facilitate the attractiveness of the continent for Foreign Direct Investment.

Conflict and insecurity inhibit development and integration by diverting resources to military purposes. In 2021, military expenditure in sub-Saharan Africa totaled \$20.1 billion, 4.1 percent higher than in 2020. Today, the amounts that AU member states are allocating to military spending places significant strains on national budgets, threatening debt sustainability, and negatively impacting budget allocations to social investments in health, education, water, and sanitation.

The triple nexus approach underscores that security is a public good and can no longer be de-coupled from the continent's economic development and prosperity. Security issues must, therefore, be factored into investments and development interventions. If the current trend in escalation of conflicts and insecurity goes unabated, the momentum generated by the AfCFTA, and other AU regional integration initiatives will eventually wane.

It is, therefore, critical to engage and reflect on ways to amplify the potential of the regional integration initiatives to promote peace, security, investments, and development. There is need for deeper and more

meaningful engagement at the strategic and policy levels. There is need to open new channels of dialogue and exchanges among defense and finance officials, diplomats, military academics, private sector, and civil society to increase mutual trust and understanding and tackle the root causes of insecurity.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFERENCE

In view of the above, the African Union in partnership with the African Development Bank, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Afrexim Bank and the Africa Capacity building foundation will organize the 1stContinental Policy Conference under the theme “Promoting the Peace, Security, and Development Nexus: The Promise of Regional Integration.”

The conference will provide an opportunity for the AU, its partners and the RECs to reflect on measures and strategies to simultaneously promote development, regional integration, and peace and security. The conference will bring together high-profile representatives from the AU, the RECs, governments, academia, defense and finance officials, private sector, civil society, and development partners to discuss:

- Actions needed to help countries address the root causes of insecurity, especially corruption, extreme rural poverty, youth unemployment, and environmental degradation;
- Identify measures to mainstream conflict prevention and management at national, regional, and continental levels;
- Explore innovative financial and non-financial instruments to enhance the capacity of countries to protect investments, livelihoods, and rehabilitate communities and infrastructure in regions impacted by insecurity;
- Discuss practical strategies and programs to enhance synergies between development, regional integration, and peace and security.
- Explore the normative and institutional architectures provided by AU and RECs in terms of peacebuilding and reconstruction and development post-conflict;
- Recommend the best ways to ensure synergy and coordination of the various bodies in charge of sustainable development and peace and security, at the continental level;
- Establish a clear roadmap for the implementation of a Pact for Collective Action towards building peace in Africa, through the nexus between peace, security, governance and development;
- Explore new ways and mechanisms to respond to the emerging challenges and threats facing African development, such as climate change and cyber- security, notably in fragile countries.

4. STRUCTURE OF THE CONFERENCE

The conference will take the Davos-style format inclusive of technical sessions and High-level engagements. The roundtables will be held under the Chatham House rules to enable open and frank discussions. Selective sessions like the plenary could be open to the public.

5. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The conference will offer a unique opportunity for the defense and development policy communities to exchange on the practical implementation of this nexus. The policy conference will also be an occasion to reaffirm the relevance and critical role of investment and development finance in supporting Africa's peace and security efforts. The policy conference will provide for an opportunity to launch new initiatives that seek to foster the effective delivery of the triple nexus. A final declaration, the Tangier Declaration, will be deliberated with a view of outlining the key outcomes of the three-day discussions. The Tangier Declaration will charter a path for enhanced engagement in delivering on the triple nexus while promoting regional integration.