

TANA AT TEN: A CELEBRATION



HESPHINA RUKATO
FOREWORD BY H.E OLUSEGUN OBASANJO

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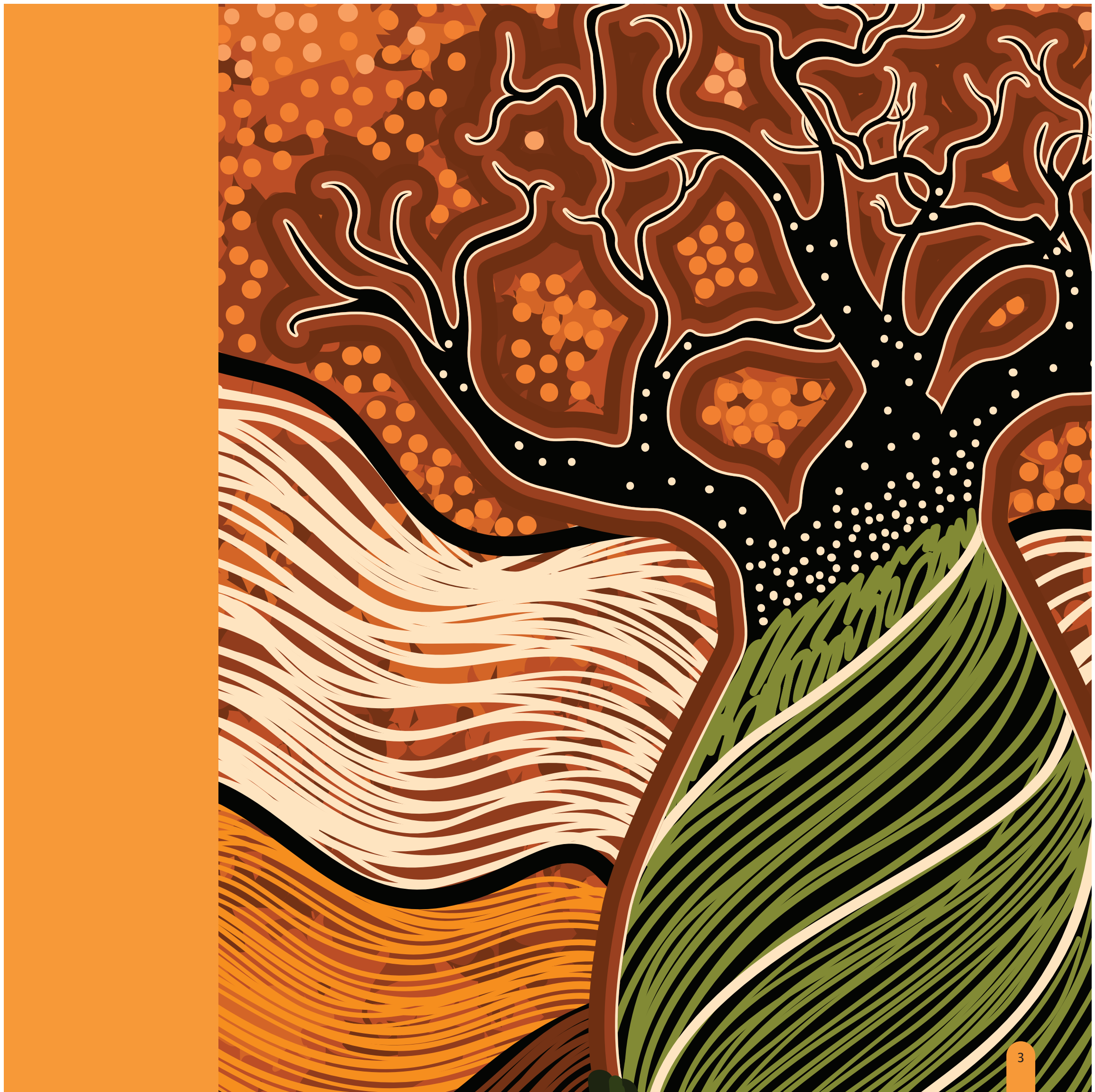
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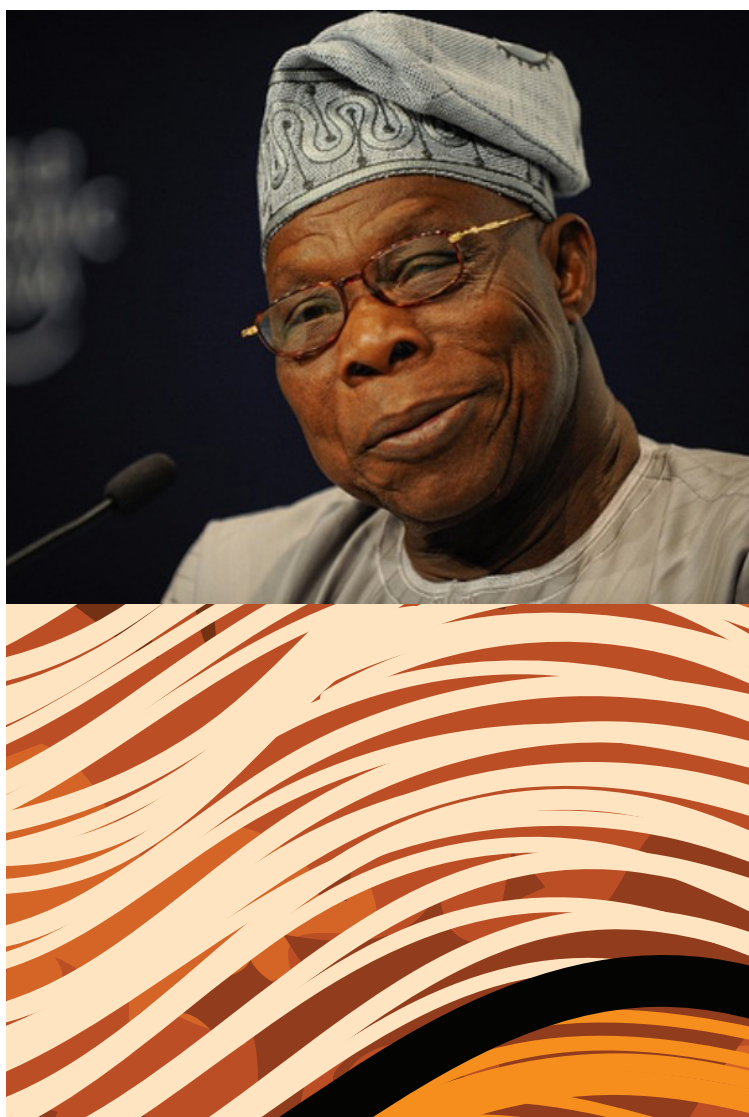
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FOREWORD

H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, former Chairman of the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa, and Former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.



The African Union (AU) held a summit in Tripoli in 2009. The outcome of the summit was the AU's Declaration on the Elimination of Conflicts in Africa and the Promotion of Sustainable Peace. In the declaration, the African heads of state and government pronounced that peace and security is a collective “intellectual challenge”. They also highlighted the need to further elaborate on the concept of African-centred solutions to peace and security. This was the genesis of the Tana Forum.

On 9 August 2011, I received a letter from the late Prime Minister of Ethiopia, His Excellency Meles Zenawi, informing me of the collaboration between the University of Addis Ababa's Institute for Peace and Security Studies, the African Union Commission and related African institutions of higher learning to provide intellection backup for the commission's work on peace and security.

Prime Minister Zenawi introduced his vision to me of holding an annual security conference on the shores of Lake Tana, the source of the Blue Nile. He informed me that the forum was expected to evolve into something akin to the Munich Security Conference. He then invited me to chair the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa and emphasised the need to start the conference on a good footing.

I feel honoured to have been involved in the launch and evolution of the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa as its first Chairperson from 2011-2018. For eight years I worked with a dedicated team from the forum's Advisory Group and the Tana Secretariat to deliver excellent sessions for the forum. The secretariat was ably supported by various experts as part of the Technical Committee of the forum. I interacted with various stakeholders who included former and current heads of state and government, ministers,



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state governors, representatives of multilateral organisations, private sector representatives, global security actors, peace and security experts, representatives of civil society organisations, Africa's development partners, academics, and young men and women from across the African continent.

It is from this vantage point that I accepted to write a foreword for this book, which offers an African reflection on the 10 years of the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa. The analysis and recommendations in the book provide insights into what stakeholders believe to be the main successes of the Tana Forum to date. It also offers recommendations on what needs to be done to ensure that the forum continues to be a valuable mechanism for peace and security on the continent. Lastly, the book offers some key lessons learnt from the Tana Forum experience, which can be adapted to initiatives in other sectors on the continent.

I would like to categorically state that the Tana Forum was established as a multi-stakeholder platform to discuss and explore ideas in relation to peace, security and stability on the continent. It is not an implementation agent of this mechanism. Once ideas have been generated on resolving Africa's peace, security and stability challenges, the onus is on participating organisations such as the AU, its Regional Economic Communities, national governments, the private sector, civil society and academics to take these ideas back home and implement them. In this context, it is my pleasure to say that as far as its objectives are concerned, the Tana Forum has delivered beyond our expectations.

On the implementation side, the AU has made great strides in addressing the continent's peace and security challenges since its launch in 2002. Of particular importance is the AU's departure from the erstwhile principle of non-interference to one of non-indifference and the right to intervene. Increasingly, the African Union has been driven by the principle of using African solutions for African problems, taking into consideration the role of partners such as the United Nations (UN) and key development partners.

Related key developments in the peace and security sphere have been the establishment of the Peace and Security Council, and the development and implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture, as well as the African Governance Architecture.

The distinction between an idea generation role of Tana and the implementation role of the AU Commission is further demonstrated by the numerous peacekeeping missions the AU has undertaken, such as those in Burundi, the Comoros, Somalia, Darfur, the Central African Republic and, more recently, in Ethiopia. The UN has been a strong partner to the AU in its quest for establishing peace and security in Africa. In addition to providing peacekeeping missions in various parts of Africa, the UN has also adopted resolutions and mechanisms aimed at strengthening Africa's capacity to maintain peace and security. This has been complemented by financial and technical support in various forms.

The Tana Forum continues to be a strong idea-generating platform and policy-initiating assembly, and its ideas and recommendations are of great importance to the AU implementation agenda. It is, therefore, important that African governments and other stakeholders continue to support it both financially and in kind. That said, the financing of the continent's peace, security and stability agenda cannot be left to our partners. They can come in to supplement our efforts. We have to be the leading architects of our fortunes.

It is my hope and expectation that you will find this review of the 10 years of the Tana Forum that follows of immense value to your work, and that its recommendations will spur the Tana Forum to greater heights for the next 10 years.


OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
November 19, 2023

Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library (OOPIL), Abeokuta, Ogun State of Nigeria

REFLECTIONS ON A DECADE OF AFRICAN-LED SOLUTIONS ON PEACE AND SECURITY: GIZ'S PARTNERSHIP WITH THE TANA HIGH-LEVEL FORUM ON SECURITY IN AFRICA



It is with profound pleasure that we introduce Dr Hesphina Rukato's vivid and captivating reflections on the origins of the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa and its transformative journey over the past decade.

On behalf of the German Federal Government, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) has provided technical and financial support to the Tana High-Level Forum since its inception. Our commitment to fostering sustainable peace and development worldwide based on global knowledge and local agency is fully aligned with the Forum's vision of advancing African-led solutions to Africa's challenges.

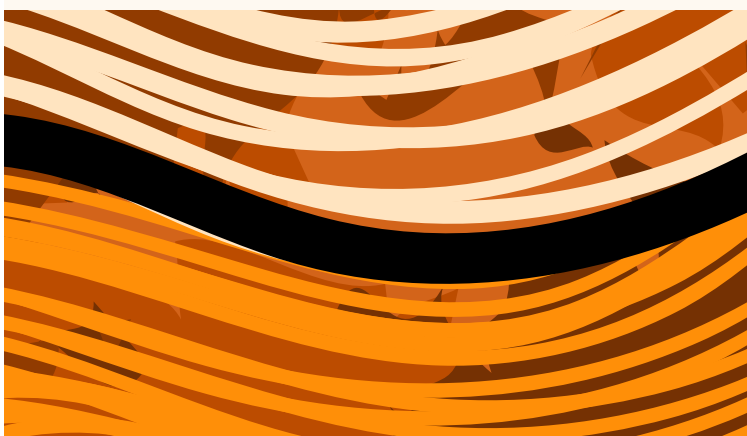
Over the years, the Tana Forum has evolved into a catalyst for change. As a platform for candid, strategic dialogue among key African decision-makers, it has shaped policies, inspired collective action and promoted a shared vision for a peaceful and prosperous global order. More crucially, perhaps, the forum's inclusion of diverse voices and collaborations with a wide array of partners have ensured Tana's continental and global reach.

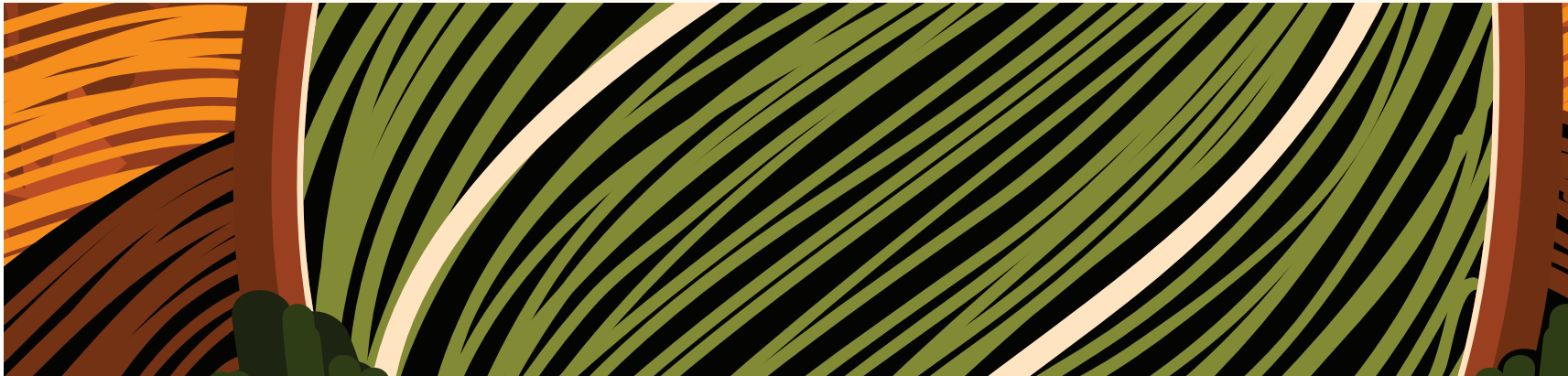
This publication testifies to the rich tapestry of experiences and perspectives, lessons learnt, and innovative solutions shared by African leaders, policymakers, scholars and practitioners over the past decade. It celebrates the determination and commitment of Africans to forge a peaceful, stable and prosperous future for the continent.

With the same disarming candidness as the deliberations during the Tana Forum itself, Dr Rukato pertinently highlights some of the forum's challenges. Amid a plethora of new dialogue fora on the continent, it is crucial that Tana maintains robust ownership of African leaders, secures stable and diversified sources of funding to guarantee its autonomy and strengthens its institutional governance structures. These are essential preconditions to guarantee both smooth proceedings and high-level participation.

As a partner of the Tana High-Level Forum from its early days, we extend our gratitude to every individual, institution and government that has been instrumental in shaping its development. With many challenges that create new opportunities on the horizon, we hope that this publication about Tana's remarkable journey will serve as a source of inspiration and guidance to ensure that the Forum remains well-positioned for spearheading dialogues that shape Africa's peace, security and development trajectory.

Dr Tobias Thiel
Director
GIZ African Union





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Iwould like to thank several people and institutions who made this project possible. First, I would like to thank the Institute for Peace and Security Studies at the University of Addis Ababa for affording me the opportunity to work on the Tana Forum, first as Senior Adviser on the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa and later as the Coordinator for the first Tana Forum. I would like to thank Dr Mulugeta Gebrehiwot, Mr Markus Koerner, and Ms Michelle Ndiaye. I would also like to thank the rest of the Tana Board and the Secretariat, who worked tirelessly to make the Tana Forum an unforgettable experience. I would also like to thank the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the African Union Commission for their support.

My gratitude also goes to H.E. former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo for being available for an interview on his experience with the Tana Forum as its first Chairperson, and for agreeing to write the foreword for this book. I am also grateful to H.E. former Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn for the interview I conducted with him and for taking the time to share his experiences. Lastly, African Union Commissioner Bankole Adeoye provided much-needed time for an interview during a critical project, for which I am grateful.

I thank the following people who have helped me with interviews reflecting on the Tana journey by sharing their time and valuable insights: the Honourable Betty Bigombe; Mme Bineta Diop; Prof. Tim

Murithi; Dr Martha Mutisi; Prof. Cedric de Coning; Ms Cynthia Chigwenya; Dr Mulugeta Gebrehiwot; Prof. Noha Bakr; Ms Aichatou Tamba; and Dr Tabani Moyo.

Thanks also go to Ms Lettie Longwe, the interim Tana Forum Coordinator, for providing much-needed support for this project.

The following colleagues respectively assisted me with recording the interviews in Zimbabwe, Ethiopia and Nigeria: Wellington Ziduche and Keith Tafadzwa Chimbi, Aschalew Chala and Daniel Sync. Thank you for the collaboration.

I would like to thank the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) for its technical support for this project, which started as a personal journey of reflection and has now developed into a comprehensive assessment of the history and growth of the Tana Forum, which includes the views and reflections of other stakeholders who played central roles in the conception and growth of the forum. I would like to thank Ms Irene Ndungu, of the GIZ African Union Office, for the engagements and support she offered for the duration of the project.

I am grateful to the core review team: Gamu, Celia, Wadeisor, Kerryn and Janah.

Dr Hesphina Rukato, 21 April 2024, Harare, Zimbabwe



INTRODUCTION

The Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa was launched on 12 April 2012. At the time of writing this publication, a total of 10 forums have been held, each covering two days except in 2020, which was a hybrid physical and virtual format over five days.

Overall, thus, African stakeholders in the peace and security sector have convened over 23 days of deliberations. Immeasurable preparations have been invested into ensuring that those 23 days of deliberations went smoothly and delivered on the forum's objectives. While some preparations may have been in the public glare, the great majority have been behind the scenes. It has been 10 years full of research, writing, consultations – diplomatic and technical, resource mobilisation – both financial and human, partnership building and political manoeuvring.

The forum's success is thanks to a dedicated team of Africans and non-Africans, who have worked relentlessly to ensure that it remains one of the most valuable vehicles for the attainment of peace and security on the African continent. This should be acknowledged and commended.

This coffee table publication seeks to capture, record, analyse and share the experience of the 10 years of the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa. Additional to the main proceedings and outcomes, which are captured in summary after each session, the forum has several other deliverables, namely:

- The Meles Zenawi African Leadership Lecture Series
- The Vice-Chancellor's Dialogue at the University of Bahir Dar
- The annual Tana Forum Book Launch
- The Tana Forum Annual Essay Competition
- Tree planting during each of the forum sessions

This publication captures detailed views of some of the stakeholders I interviewed as part of a 10-year review of the Tana Forum. These include recommendations on how to keep the Tana Forum relevant and current in addressing Africa's peace and security challenges. The 10-year review is a separate but related publication depicted below. The interviews are also captured in video format. The videos can be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/@hesphinarukato>

This publication is an attempt to take you through the 10 years of the Tana Forum by way of pictures, analysis and the reflections of selected stakeholders. If you have been part of the Tana Forum journey, I hope that you can sit back and smile at how far we have come together. If you are new to the journey, I hope that you will be able to track our footsteps and marvel at what has been an incredible experience.

Either way, I trust you will find this publication insightful and engaging.

Dr Hesphina Rukato, Harare, Zimbabwe, 5 May 2022



The Institute for Peace and Security Studies offices at the University of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: the home of ideas and preparations for the Tana Forum.

To the women who have carried it forward – the three Tana Forum coordinators from 2012 to date!



Dr Hespina Rukato 2011-2012



Ms Michelle Ndiaye 2012-2020



Ms Lettie Longwe 2020-present (interim)



The IPSS, Ethiopian security and GIZ teams inspect the venue in Bahir Dar for the first time, in 2011. From left to right, an Ethiopian security official, an unnamed GIZ colleague, and Ms Karoline Klose and Dr Hespina Rukato of the IPSS.



The Tana Secretariat team at Bahir Dar Airport departure lounge in June 2011, after a site visit. Pictured here (from left is), Markus, Michelle, Hespina, and Karoline



The late Ms Raheemat Momodu lends her strong and eloquent voice to the technical planning for the 1st Tana Forum, at the preparatory workshop on the shores of Lake Tana.



From left, then IPSS Director Dr Mulugeta Gebrehiwot, IPSS Africa Peace and Security Programme Director Ms Michelle Ndiaye, IPSS-GIZ APSP Director Mr Markus Koerner and colleagues thrash out ideas for themes for the 1st Tana Forum, on the shores of Lake Tana.



The beautiful Kuriftu Resort & Spa Lake Tana, which is among the many accommodation options for Tana Forum delegates.



Youthful and fun: one of the commendable attributes of the Tana Secretariat has been the involvement of young people in all its Tana Forum preparations and hosting. In-between the serious sessions, fun was also had. Here part of the team is lunching at a restaurant in Addis Ababa in 2011.

The Tana Forum logo

Part of the preparations for the Tana brand was the development of a logo. This image of a baobab tree has become synonymous with the Tana Forum. The baobab tree symbolises a meeting place where communities and individuals gather to share stories, conversations and wisdom among the young and elders, as well as participate in community activities. It has become recognisable within the peace and security community in Africa and globally.



The team of experts that finalised preparations for the first Tana Forum, at the Kuriftu Resort & Spa Lake Tana in 2011.



Young team members of the Tana Secretariat during the technical preparations workshop in Bahir Dar: Ms Aichatou Tamba (left) and Ms Anita Amaanwi Wanki.



Part of the Tana Forum's advocacy involving engaging targeted participants to explain the forum's rationale and objectives to them. Here Dr Hesphina Rukato (right) has travelled to Mozambique to meet with former Prime Minister Dr Luísa Diogo, who participated in the 1st Tana Forum and later became a member of the Tana Forum Advisory Board.



From left to right-Dr. Hesphina Rukato, former president Obasanjo, and Mr. Mulugeta on their first visit to court the Chair, carrying the letter from then Ethiopian PM Zenawi.



Second meeting with the Chair: Left to Right: Dr. Hesphina Rukato, former President Obasanjo, and Dr. Mulugeta



Third meeting with Chairperson at his residence in Abeokuta-Left to right-Dr. Mulugeta, Dr. Rukato, Prof. Andreas Eshete, and former president Obasanjo



IPSS team-Sunday Okello, Karolina Klose, Lettie Longwe, Michelle Ndiaye, and Hesphina Rukato

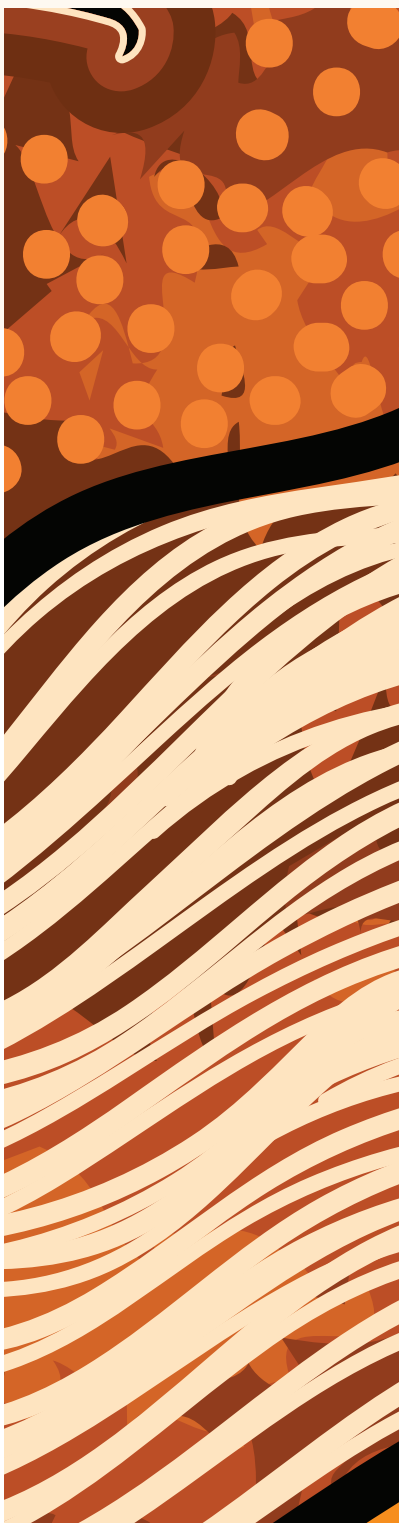


Tana Forum CEO Prof. Andreas Eshete answers questions about the first forum during the pre-event press conference.



Forum Chairperson Olusegun Obasanjo briefs the media at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Addis Ababa, a week before the forum launch in Bahir Dar.

REFLECTIONS



H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, former Chairperson of the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa, and former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Former President Obasanjo shares his experience and reflections of the Tana Forum from the time he started chairing the forum in 2012. He reflects on how he was invited to chair the forum by H.E. Meles Zenawi, then Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, and how he accepted the invitation as he shared the same values on peace and security in Africa.

“The late PM of Ethiopia invited me. He had a dream and decided to actualise the dream about the Tana Forum. He gave it the name, and he gave me the orders to move on with it. That is how it began. More than 10 years ago.”

Unfortunately, the peace and security situation on the continent has deteriorated since the Tana Forum was launched.

H.E. Obasanjo makes it clear that the forum was not meant to be a peacemaker, nor a conflict resolver. Rather, it was meant to be a meeting place for all those who have responsibility for peace, security and stability in Africa. It was designed



Inspecting the venue in Bahir Dar for the first time: IPSS team, Ethiopian Security team, and GIZ team: left to right, Mr Markus Koerner, Ms Michelle Ndiaye, Ms Karoline Klose and Dr Hesphina Rukato, all of the IPSS.

as a novel platform where politicians, those in government, civil society, diplomats and friends of Africa could meet and talk, and exchange views and even confront the issues, as we have done in the Tana Forum.

He is emphatic that “as a platform for that purpose, the Tana Forum has excelled. There is no doubt about that.” For this, he says, we must give kudos

to the Tana Forum for having fulfilled its role. However, if we are saying that the situation in Africa has changed, then that can be explored.

The former President explains that in contrast to the Tana Forum, the African Union Commission is both a talking and acting arm of the African Union (AU). Under this mandate, he mediated between the Tigray region and the federal government of Ethiopia in 2022. This is a typical example in practice of African solutions being found to African problems. Africans can celebrate the fact that on 22 November 2022, peace was brokered by Africans doing it for Africa. Africans welcome the support from the international community, but it should be under the leadership of Africans. Wherever Africans have had the chance to negotiate for peace, they have succeeded. Conversely, whenever African efforts have been shunned by the international community, peace efforts have not succeeded. The case of Libya is a perfect example: the international community rejected the AU's peace plan and more than 10 years later, that country is still in shambles.

On the issue of funding for the AU's peace and security programmes and operations, the former President is clear that the problem is not a lack of funding: "The problem is that we do not put our money where we should."

When one compares how much it costs to host the Tana Forum, and how much is wasted by governments through corruption, it is evident that corruption and misplaced priorities are the problem. It is not acceptable that the AU or/and African governments rely on:

"... the European Union to dole out something, the French government to dole out something, the German government to dole out something. I think it is a question of misplaced priorities on the part of our governments. And I am not excusing any African government in this case. All of them."

He urges African governments to find innovative ways for resource mobilisation. He cites the example of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), where imports from outside the regional bloc are charged a duty of between 0.5-35%. This has contributed a lot of money to ECOWAS.

It is inconceivable that issues of peace, security and stability in Africa are not a very important fundraising priority for Africa, but which should be.

"If development partners and friends want to join us in a particular aspect of peace and security programme, yes, we should encourage it. But we should be the architects of our fortune and people."

Referring to one of the two themes of the 1st Forum, on management of diversity, H.E. Obasanjo explains that more than 75% of peace and security problems in Africa are caused by mismanagement or lack of management and diversity. He says that there is no country in Africa that does not have diversity of one form or the other, but it has to be properly managed. There is diversity of race, tribe, culture, religion and language, and these are diversities we should manage. He says:

"I always say that God is a God of diversity. If God had been God of sameness, that everything created is the same, it would be so boring, monotonous. God being so wise, he created diversity."

Unfortunately, when leaders come into office, they either ignore or mismanage diversity. This is a fundamental cause of lack of peace, security and stability in Africa.

The former President reflects that in as far as peace building and conflict resolution are concerned, Africans should not underrate what they are doing and achieving. However, they should also not overrate what they are doing.

On his message of hope to African citizens, particularly the youth, he says that people must not lose hope:

"I believe that God is not a God of despair. You must have faith, you must have hope, you must have love. If you lose hope, you lose everything. And God is also a God of wonder. God makes things happen. I am talking to you today because of God's mercy on me."

He tells the youth not to allow anyone to tell them that they are the leadership of tomorrow:

"No, you are part of the leadership of today. That tomorrow they are telling you to wait for, may never come."

He concludes by reminding us that 60% of Africa's population are boys and girls, and men and women under 25, which makes them the majority. As such, they should use their majority to their advantage. Africa needs "positive disruptive action" to embrace change.



THE LAUNCH: 1ST TANA FORUM, 2012

FORUM THEMES:

MANAGING DIVERSITY, AND STATE FRAGILITY

The 1st Tana Forum took place on 11-12 April 2012. It was held under two themes, namely Managing Diversity and State Fragility. The inaugural forum set the tone for subsequent forums by entrenching the values of frankness and embracing a divergence of views, inclusivity in gender and intergenerational participation, and demonstration of Ethiopian hospitality, as demonstrated by the gifting of what has become the forum's emblematic scarf. It also highlighted the significance of the venue and setting of the forum in Bahir Dar; Lake Tana is the source of the Blue Nile. In his opening remarks, Forum Chairperson H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo said that:



... This is the first time in the history of Africa that such a distinguished group of leading multi-stakeholder personalities are meeting in an informal setting to discuss peace and security challenges facing our continent. Rarely in the African development and peace and security process do we have civil society, the private sector, think tanks, scholars, diplomats, government and intergovernmental organisations, as well as former and current heads of state and government, sitting together to discuss issues of peace and security and to find appropriate steps and measures to strengthen peace and security on the continent.”



Dr Hesphina Rukato, Coordinator of the 1st Tana Forum, welcomes participants on behalf of the IPSS and the organising team.



Prof. Andreas Eshete, CEO of the Tana Forum, makes his welcoming remarks at the launch of the 1st Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa.



Former Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi welcomes delegates to the 1st Tana Forum.



H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and first Chairperson of the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa, delivers his opening remarks to the 1st Tana Forum. This was after he had dramatically removed his agbada (traditional robe) to emphasise the informality of the Tana proceedings. When interviewed in October 2023 for this book, he asked if someone had taken a photograph of him taking off his agbada. Unfortunately, there is no such image, only because the moment had been unexpected and passed before anyone could capture it. This points to the need for recording and sharing special moments in the Tana Forum processes.



Participants listen attentively as the forum's nature, objectives, format and ground rules are laid out for the first time by the Chairperson.



A panel discussion on state fragility, one of the 1st Tana Forum's themes, starts. From left are future Sudanese Prime Minister Dr Abdalla Hamdok, AU Commissioner for Peace and Security Mr Ramtane Lamamra, former South African President Thabo Mbeki, former Mozambican Prime Minister Dr Luís Diogo and panel chairperson Dr Funmi Olonisakin.



The hot debates begin: Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has the floor while to his left the late Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and former South African President Thabo Mbeki, and his right President Ahmed, Sheik Sharif of the Republic of Somalia listen intently.



The Tana Forum scarf has become an annual gift from the Amhara local government – a symbol of Ethiopian generosity and beautiful cultural fashion. Here participants in the 1st Tana Forum show off the scarf as they enter the venue for the event's launch.



After a very successful inaugural Tana Forum, some of the high-level delegates pose for a group photograph. In the front row, from left to right, are Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, Somali President Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, Tana Forum Chairperson and former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, former South African President Thabo Mbeki, and Ekiti State (Nigeria) Governor Mr Kayode Fayemi.



The so-called 'Tana bag' has become an expected gift for each forum, courtesy of the IPSS. Made of Ethiopian leather and manufactured locally, bags are presented to all participants before each forum. In this way, the Tana Forum contributes to the growth of the local leather manufacturing industry.

2

REFLECTIONS



H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn, former Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Tana Forum Advisory Board member.

In an interview on 28 July 2023, the former Prime Minister expresses his views about, and experience with, the Tana Forum since its conceptualisation.

He reflects on the genesis of the Tana Forum, which he says came about in response to challenges we have with our formal institutions, such as the AU, where there is no open and frank dialogue and debates on issues. The Tana Forum is therefore wonderful:

“... [It is the] brainchild of African intellectuals and thinkers. With this in mind, our leaders and intellectuals tried to bring about this idea and they conceptualised that we need a forum that is not like other forums, which have a big number of participants, but a few who contribute to this process and can come up with ideas. Idea generation is very important for any problem solving and strategic thinking and perspectives that

can be seen by our people, to see that Africans take issues by the horns. This is where Tana Forum was conceptualised and came to implementation.”

At the time the Tana Forum was conceived, H.E. Desalegn was the Ethiopian Foreign Minister (he later became Deputy Prime Minister, and ultimately Prime Minister). In this capacity, he was very much involved in the logistics and the international relations related to the Tana Forum. He has participated in all the forums to date.

H.E. Desalegn identifies poor leadership transition as one of the primary causes of conflict and instability in Africa. Leadership transition can happen in two ways: in an orderly, peaceful and democratic manner, or in a violent way, such as the coups that the continent is currently experiencing. By way of example of a peaceful transition, he cites his own experience in Ethiopia. He says:

“I want to thank my own predecessor, the late Prime Minister Zenawi, who instructed our party that we need a succession plan, and



our party started documenting studies and thinking about a strategy for succession to take place. I am a result of that succession planning. By the time he passed away, early preparation had been made. We had some little hiccups, but even after his passing the transition was managed properly.”

After some time, he wanted to leave office because of long-standing political and ideological issues. So, he decided that there was a need for:

“... A deep renewal both in the party and in the country at large and that led to my resignation, to lead a way for more reforms and more transformations that have to take place within the country.”

With this process, the transition was smooth. He handed over properly to his successor in an orderly manner, ushering in a new chapter in Ethiopian politics as well as upholding democracy. This is an example of the kind of transitions Africans want and deserve.

The former Prime Minister acknowledges the importance of partnerships and the support that Africa receives from the international community, which in turn also aspires to see Africa succeed because it has a stake in the continent. If something goes wrong in Africa, for example, Europe also suffers. The Covid-19 pandemic, which started in China but engulfed

the global community, demonstrates the interconnectedness of the world today. The same logic applies to climate change, peace and security, and terrorism, which are all global in their impact and requiring all of us to cooperate.

On the issue of funding for the Tana Forum, H.E. Desalegn clarifies that the majority of its resources come from Africa.

“When I was Foreign Minister and Prime Minister, we covered all the logistics and accommodation, which were more than 60% of the hosting of the Forum. It is African owned, and an African-led process.”

On funding for AU peace and security programmes and operations, African leaders have decided to beef up the African Peace Fund, which is being replenished. However, there is still a long way to go in ensuring financial stability and predictability for Africa’s peace and security agenda.

Ultimately, Africa should aim at conflict prevention and maintaining peace, which is cheaper than deployment missions and standby forces. A mindset change is required in Africa for this vision to be a reality.

On potential areas of improvement for the Tana Forum, for it to be more impactful and sustainable, H.E. Desalegn proposes the following:

- Stick to the forum’s original format.
- Have fewer participants.
- Have fewer agenda items.
- The Meles Zenawi Lecture Series should always maintain its name.
- The Tana Foundation should be made functional, so that all partners can contribute towards it. This will provide financial stability and predictability for the forum.

In conclusion, the former Prime Minister emphasises the need to nurture the Tana Forum, an African brainchild. He expresses his ongoing support for the forum and calls upon all other stakeholders to do the same. He is concerned at the deterioration of governance standards on the continent, as demonstrated by recent developments in Guinea-Conakry, Burkina Faso, Mali and Guinea-Bissau, as well as Niger. He says the negative situation on the continent is further reason to have the Tana Forum strengthened, with support from all quarters. The private sector and civil society should also come on board. “I call upon all of us to be vigilant, and support the forum.”

2ND TANA FORUM, 2013

FORUM THEME:

AFRICA IN THE GLOBAL SECURITY AGENDA

When the 2nd Tana Forum was held in 2013, the Chairperson, H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, declared that the event had been institutionalised. It had in place its Advisory Board, Technical Committee and fully fledged Secretariat. He said:

“I want to appreciate the services and commend the Institute for Peace and Security Studies and the entire team of 94 people, composed of Ethiopians and African nations, of the Tana Forum Secretariat ... Within a year of the existence of the forum, progress is obvious not only in the number of staff employed but also in the impact that is being made.”

The 2nd Tana Forum was held under the theme: “Africa in the Global Security Agenda.”



From left, Tana Forum Technical Committee member Dr Charles Abugre, AU Commission Chairperson Dr Jean Ping, Rwandan President Paul Kagame and Tana Forum CEO Prof. Andreas Eshete kick off the forum's panel discussions.



Then Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn delivers the opening address at the 2nd Tana Forum.



Forum Chairperson Olusegun Obasanjo welcomes delegates to the 2nd Tana Forum.



Newly instituted Tana Advisory Board member the Hon. Betty Bigombe speaks at the forum.



The Tana Trio: from left, Prof. Andreas Eshete, H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo and Ms Michelle Ndiaye.



Forum Chairperson Olusegun Obasanjo (second from left) interacts with participants.



H.E. Michael A Battle, Ambassador of the United States Mission to the African Union, has the floor.



At the 2nd Tana Forum, organisers were still able to keep participants to the set number. Over time, the number of participants has increased to close to 300.



From left, Tana Forum Advisory Board members Prof. Ndioro Ndiaye, the Hon. Betty Bigombe, Ms Michelle Ndiaye, H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, Prof. Mahmood Mamdani and Prof. Andreas Eshete during the 2nd Tana Forum.



Listening intently to forum proceedings: former South African President Thabo Mbeki, Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir and Rwandan President Paul Kagame.



Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn (left) chats with H.E. Youssouf Ouédraogo, Special Adviser to the President of the African Development Bank and former Burkina Faso Prime Minister.



Former South African President Thabo Mbeki (left) and academic Prof. Mahmood Mamdani.

3

REFLECTIONS



Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs and Peace and Security (PAPS)

The Commissioner says that the Tana Forum has come a long way, and that it has served (and continues to serve) as a great platform for dialogue. It is all-inclusive and advances the discourse around peace and security on the African continent. The forum is a good and viable opportunity to push the peace agenda of the AU, and ensuring that its Agenda 2063 development aspirations, particularly goals 3 (healthy and well-nourished citizens), 4 (transformed economies) and 7 (environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient economies and communities), are realised in a multi-stakeholder setting.

While more forums have subsequently come on board, the Tana Forum has been the pioneering pacesetter: it has created critical momentum for the AU agenda. But more still needs to be done. More emphasis needs to be put on implementing the forum's recommendations. The high-level nature of the forum's stakeholders is very good for the AU and its organs, the African Governance Architecture (AGA) and the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), to come together in a more synergistic manner. The forum is thus a critical stakeholder and platform we must all continue to support, says Amb. Adeoye.

The AU is moving towards programmatic activities. Thus, the Tana Forum's recommendations must be supported and owned by AU organs: the Assembly, the Executive Council, the Peace and Security Council, and all stakeholders. The AU Commission has expanded the space in which the Tana Forum's recommendations can be embedded in populaces via regional knowledge exchange networks.

The Commissioner reflects that it is important for the AU to demonstrate commitment to funding the continent's peace and security agenda. This is a priority and part of ongoing AU institutional reform. He added that the AU's African Peace Fund has been revitalised and is endowed with over US\$360-million. He said this is a 100% contribution by Africans, which is commendable as it has never happened before. The target is to raise US\$400-million for the fund.

Allocations from the African Peace Fund have been made to help the fight against al-Shabaab in Somalia, and a new start-up enforcement mission in the eastern DRC under the auspices of the East African Community Regional Force. These demonstrate delivery on the part of the AU. The Commissioner calls on the international



Dr Rukato interviews Ambassador Bankole Adeoye in Harare on 25 August 2023.

community to step in and supplement AU efforts, given that the maintenance of peace and security is a global imperative.

In the context of funding support by the international community, the Commissioner reveals that the AU is pushing for the UN Security Council's consideration of the AU consensus paper adopted in February 2023. The consensus paper provides for a new financing structure that can be used by the international community to support the AU peace agenda on a case-by-case basis.

On the state of democracy in the continent, the commissioner expresses joy at the fact that AU member states continue to observe the AU normative frameworks on democracy, good governance and elections, as well as the tenets of the AU's Constitutive Act. He states:

“Democracy has come to stay. The AU has remained resolutely solid in emphasising its zero tolerance against unconstitutional changes of government, in whatever form. No justification, no excuses are acceptable to the AU.”

The AU has made it clear that it will not accept military rule in government. He proceeds to give an example of the suspension of Niger from the AU just a few days before this interview, on account of its unconstitutional change of government. There is no other international intergovernmental body on the continent, or in the world that suspends member states who have fallen foul of their democratic creed, says Amb. Adeoye. That some member states are falling short on democracy should not be seen as a universally accepted practice on the continent.

While the Tana Forum sets the agenda for current and emerging peace and security challenges, the AU is on the ground, working with regional economic communities and members states to “make peace happen”, and to work towards the AU's vision and Agenda 2063 aspirations. Amb. Adeoye concludes:

“I wish the Tana Forum many more years, but the focus should now be on taking forward its recommendations and the African Union stands ready to work with the IPSS, as well as all stakeholders in every field, for the betterment of our continent.”

3RD TANA FORUM, 2014

FORUM THEMES:

THE IMPACTS OF ILLICIT FINANCIAL FLOWS ON PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA

The nexus between illicit financial flows in Africa and conflict and instability is indisputable. The impacts of illicit financial flows include lost revenue, investments, markets and legitimacy. Citizens are also disenfranchised, and exposed to violence and health risks. They also suffer financial losses.

The Tana organisers chose the theme, The Impacts of Illicit Financial Flows on Peace and Security in Africa, given the pervasiveness of the problem and the fact that there is not enough action to curb it.



Students participating in the Vice-Chancellor's Lecture at Bahir Dar University, the day before the forum.



Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn welcomes participants to the 3rd Tana Forum.



Forum Chairperson Olusegun Obasanjo welcomes participants to the forum.



Former Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa Dr Carlos Lopes delivers the keynote address on the impacts of illicit financial flows on peace and security in Africa.



The Hon. Betty Bigombe (left) and Ms Ndioro Ndiaye enjoy the proceedings.





Former Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa Dr Carlos Lopes delivers the keynote address on the impacts of illicit financial flows on peace and security in Africa.



Academic Prof. Funmi Olonisakin facilitates a session at the 3rd Tana Forum.



Catching them young: Bahir Dar University students listen to the Vice-Chancellor's Dialogue.



Dr. Khabele Matlosa, Director, Department of for Political Affairs, African Union Commission, and Tana Forum Technical Committee Member, addresses the forum.



Never too high-level to have fun: Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn (right) shares a lighter moment with his colleagues, to his right, Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir, Puntland President Abdiweli Gaas and former Central African Republic Prime Minister Anicet-Georges Dologuélé.



The Tana Forum has been commended by stakeholders during interviews for the high level of participation by women in its panels,. Here Dr Attiya Waris, Senior Lecturer, University of Nairobi, takes the floor.



Hot debate continues as academic Prof. Funmi Olonisakin has the floor.



A photo opportunity: from left, South Sudanese President Salva Kiir, Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, Tana Forum Chairperson Olusegun Obasanjo, Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn and Burundian President Pierre Buyoya.



One of the great Tana Forum attributes: current and former heads of state and government interact with all participants with respectful informality.



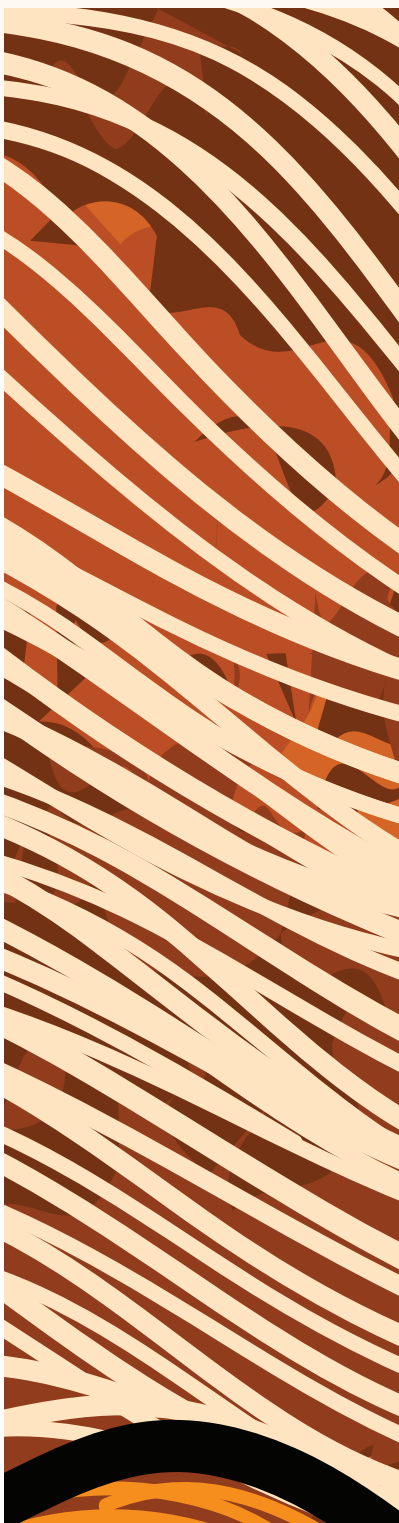
The Tana Forum offers great networking opportunities. Left to right, Ethiopian International Institute for Peace and Development Executive Director Mr Sebat Nega, eleni LLC co-founder Ms Eleni Gabre-Madhin, Legal Adviser to the Regional President of Bahir Dar Mr Merhatsidk Mekonnen, and Bahir Dar University President Prof. Baylie Damtie.



Another opportunity to build relationships for peace: from left, South Sudanese President Salva Kiir, Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir and Tana Forum Chairperson Olusegun Obasanjo.

4

REFLECTIONS



Hon. Betty Bigombe: Senior Director for Fragility, Conflict and Violence, World Bank, former Tana Advisory Board member, conflict and peace negotiation expert, and participant.

Ms Bigombe participated in the 1st Tana Forum in 2012 and was appointed an advisory board member from 2012-2014. She indicated that from 2015 onwards she was not invited. This points to one of the forum's practices from its inception: that one was invited to any one of the forum sessions did not guarantee future invitations. This is because all invitations were guided by the themes under discussion, and only relevant experts are invited. However, personalities who have served on the Board should be considered for continuous participation in order to build a critical mass of "Tana Ambassadors".

She says that she was initially very impressed with the idea of bringing together former and current heads of state and government to discuss African issues. She found the deliberations very enriching. It was beautiful to see a lot of positive energy, which gave hope. The forum went from strength to strength. It was very encouraging and motivating to see African leaders having so much energy to tackle hard issues.

Ms Bigombe recommends that in order to build a strong network of participants, all forum reports should be shared with all previous participants

instead of only those of a particular forum, and especially with the pioneer participants.

In terms of substance, the Tana Forum's choice of themes was particularly relevant to Africa. Ms Bigombe notes that the research papers and the deliberations that followed were beneficial to participants. The research papers were especially relevant to Africa's peace, security and conflict challenges. The forum was able to bring out issues normally swept under the carpet in Africa's peace and security discourse. She cites the example of illicit financial flows and the extractive industry as having been relevant to the situation on the continent, and that relevant experts were able to bring out the critical issues on the subject.

Ms Bigombe, however, questions who benefits from such discussions. Is it the AU, the regional economic communities or member states? If so, what is the end result? Who are the consumers of Tana's products? This rhetorical question has been asked by many stakeholders: can the Tana Forum go beyond highlighting issues, and follow up on implementation of the recommendations coming out of the sessions?

Ms Bigombe also highlights the issue of leadership accountability and responsibility. Tackling the issues



Hon. Betty Bigombe

in discussions is one thing, but can leaders walk the talk after the robust discussions at Tana? If they do not take the forum's recommendations to implementation, then there is a huge leadership problem in Africa.

On the matter of African ownership and leadership of the Tana Forum, Ms Bigombe says that Africa's development partners are invited because they pay for or contribute to the Forum: "They are invited because it is their money." For Africans to fully own these spaces, they must learn to contribute.

"Contributing is ownership. Lead by doing. As long as we are not ready to spend any money and we must beg for money, there is no ownership," says Ms Bigombe. Contributing ideas is important, but resource contribution is fundamental to ownership.

On whether the AU or AU Commission has the capacity to implement recommendations coming out of the Tana Forum, Ms Bigombe's view is that the AU has none. She gives the example of the Great Lakes Region, where she says the AU is not even listened to. She also questions the impact of

sanctions that are imposed on those countries that have unconstitutional changes of government. If AU member states were implementing all of the AU's resolutions and decisions, the continent would not be as fragile as it currently is. There is more fragility now than before the Tana Forum was launched in 2012.

Regarding potential areas of improvement for the Tana Forum, Ms Bigombe suggests that there be institutional evaluation of the Tana structures, starting with the Secretariat and including the Technical Committee and the Advisory Board. To whom do they report? At heads of state and government level, what is the role of other African heads of state and government, besides waiting for an invitation to participate in the forum? Are they consulted in decision making, and how often? Is there consensus building in the forum?

To Ms Bigombe, it seems that ownership or decision making rests with the host country, Ethiopia, and the major donors. She recommends that a survey could be done to assess the extent to which other heads of state and government know about the Tana Forum, its role and its objectives in

Africa's peace and security landscape. A wider and more inclusive forum discourse would be helpful in looking at the future of Africa, closing the gaps and challenges using a platform that fosters fraternity. Other Heads of State and Government would also feel compelled to contribute to running the forum, as well as to innovative ways of addressing peace and security challenges on the continent.

Ms Bigombe also recalls a statement by one of the participating heads of state and government at the Tana Forum launch in 2012: "We as leaders do not tell one another the truth. That is why we can't prevent conflict." It is therefore imperative that heads of state and government open up to each other about the real challenges in their countries, so that they can get the relevant support and advice.

As one of the pioneers, getting involved right at the conception of the Tana Forum, she says:

"The forum was conceived by Africans, so they set the agenda. And I must say, looking back where we started from and where we are today, there is remarkable progress that has been made and I must commend the Secretariat with the help of the Ethiopian government and development partners, who have been able to stay on and fund the process and make sure it moves on. We have achieved a lot in terms of research that has been conducted, which usually forms the agenda of the discussions every year. They are high-quality agendas that give a true picture of what is going on in Africa."

In this regard, Ms Bigombe is encouraged: "The Tana Forum is setting an agenda for Africa's peace and security architecture, which is very important."

With all the achievements that the Tana Forum has made, Ms Bigombe has to mention this:

"The recent coups d'état in Africa, Mali, Burkina Faso and in Niger gives us a question, with all these intense, thorough discussions we have and

high-level discussions, of different people, which is inclusive, is it being translated into reality? Because Africa is drifting back to the days of wars and not to mention the war in Sudan, and South Sudan, it looks like Africa is drifting back into the days of coups d'état. If you see what is happening in Niger, the demonstrations, the celebrations by the youth, and the welcoming of the coup by ordinary people."

Ms Bigombe further asks if African governments are managing triggers of conflict such as poverty, marginalisation of people, disparities between rich and poor, and population growth:

"Are they managing? If so, why are we having all these coups d'état, and why are they being celebrated? I can go further and say, what about elections, are leaders accountable to their people, do they believe in these elections? Because today, leaders who are elected, and I am not just talking of heads of state, I am talking about members of parliament as well, are they accountable to the citizens? So, people do not have faith in elections any more, that is why they take up arms to fight, because elections are marred by rigging and vote-buying, and all kinds of activities. Do we not, with all these powerful people coming in, need excellent research, don't we need to go to the drawing board and translate some of these issues into action?"

As opposed to academics or policymakers who return home and say the forum was fantastic but do not act upon it, if we are setting the agenda, are we translating this agenda into action so that we can prevent conflict? This is what Ms Bigombe sees as lacking.

Ms Bigombe has questions. Can we go back and evaluate the impact of our intellectual discussions and forums? How are the ideas under discussion

having an impact, or are they just being shared among elites? How are they being imparted? Are they being translated for the grassroots?

The Tana Forum has made excellent progress, and Ms Bigombe is very proud to have been a part of it from the beginning, but believes more should be done. There are gaps in translating the forum's outcomes into action, and sharing those outcomes more widely than universities; they should permeate to the grassroots.

What is needed is evaluation of the forum's impact: what has been achieved in the past 10 years, beyond actually hosting the forum, on the ground. Whether the forum is making a difference in conflict resolution, or bringing effectiveness to the AU's peace and security architecture.

The coups d'état stopped in the 1980s and 1990s, but it appears the AU is powerless because the coups are beginning to increase once again. Ms Bigombe asks, do sanctions really work? Do they have an impact? We need to rather invest in conflict prevention. Can we translate all these wonderful ideas into action? Can we do more to convince leaders about the drivers of conflict? We also need to examine democracy, which is the root of elections. Are they working in the African sense or is the concept very European, with people going to vote without really understanding the candidate manifestos.

All these issues fuel conflicts, says Ms Bigombe. We need to step back and reflect. Where are the gaps? What needs to be done to prevent conflict? Are sanctions enough?

Look at the 2023 military coup in Niger, she argues: could it have been prevented? Sometimes we sense that people are disgruntled, but we do not take measures to address the problem that is coming, we wait until it happens. There is a need to implement early-warning systems that were established a long time ago. Are they gathering dust? We need to develop more tools, for example national dialogue, as mechanisms of conflict prevention. If our leaders embraced well-designed national dialogue, giving people the opportunity to speak freely, this could help prevent conflict, she says. There are problems – journalists highlight issues every day – but we bury our heads in the sand until problems blow up. We need to be more innovative, practical and pragmatic, instead of just lecturing and presenting papers. How can we translate talk into action?

On conflict prevention: getting leaders to be more realistic and address the fundamental causes of conflict early enough and not to be insensitive to the complaints of the people is important, says Ms Bigombe. Basically, it is marginalisation of groups or parts of a country, and levels of poverty plus provision of basic services, that triggers conflict.

For example, meeting with rioting youths in Uganda, she wanted to find better ways of communicating their message to the government, instead of marching in the streets and burning tyres, where they came into conflict with police and soldiers.

The youths asked, "The government keeps telling me 'GDP', [but] what is GDP? What is it to me when I cannot send my child to school? When I can no longer afford sugar when we used to drink tea before. Moving from being a least-developed to middle-income country does not make a material difference to the people on the ground. Complacent leadership and not really listening to citizens are things leaders could be more honest about.

On democracy: holding elections is not enough; being accountable to the people is vital. This includes MPs, she says, who need to be more on the ground, listening to people and carrying their messages to the right platform.

On corruption: endemic corruption is destroying Africa. Leaders must be more innovative to find out how they can fight corruption. What is taken by corruption is more than what eventually reaches beneficiaries. Leaders should be serious about fighting corruption, and just not make empty promises, raising people's expectations but eventually not doing anything.

Conflict in Africa can be avoided if we eradicate poverty, marginalisation, discrimination against groups, whether religious or any group, says Ms Bigombe. Leaders must be accountable to people, listen to them, and practise real democracy as opposed to rigged elections, violence, then Africa's peace and security outlook would change. The Tana Forum has the leverage and ability to get these messages across the continent and to African leaders.

The Tana Forum's leaders should open up and discuss these issues, says Ms Bigombe. There can be no development when there is conflict and people are divided, when state resources are shared among the few and the majority does not benefit. So, we need to be more on the ground and address these triggers of conflict.

Then we can talk with confidence. We blame our colonial masters, but it has been 60 years since we got independence and an opportunity to correct all the evils that had been done. Those evils are still there but we could fight them if there is commitment and solidarity among African leaders. We could fight the vestiges of colonialism. There must be political will and commitment, plus solidarity.

Therefore, Ms Bigombe argues, the Tana Forum should not confine itself to conferences and should engage with communities on the ground.

4TH TANA FORUM, 2015

FORUM THEME:

SECULARISM AND POLITICISED FAITH

The 4th Tana Forum was held under the theme, Secularism and Politicised Faith. At the time of choosing the theme, the continent was experiencing an increase in faith-based acts of terrorism.



Addressing Ambassadors ahead of the forum: from left, Institute for Peace and Security Studies Director Dr Kidane Kiros, Tana Forum Secretariat head Ms Michelle Ndiaye, Tana Forum Chairperson H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, Ethiopian Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Chief of Protocol Ms Yeshe Tamrat.



Mr Abdul Mohammed, Chief of Staff for the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel for Sudan and South Sudan, and Programme Director, leads a panel discussion.



Mr Thomas Silberhorn, Parliamentary State Secretary, Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development.



Ethiopian Foreign Minister Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus (left) speaks to former United Nations Economic Commission for Africa Executive Secretary Dr Carlos Lopes.



Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has the floor.



Panel discussion on the topic, Politicisation of Faith, Fundamentalism and Human Security: left to right, UN Special Representative to the AU H.E. Haile Menkerios, former UN Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, and Tunisian politician Mr Rachid al-Ghannoushi.



Panel discussion on the topic, African Secularism and Faith-branded Security Threats.



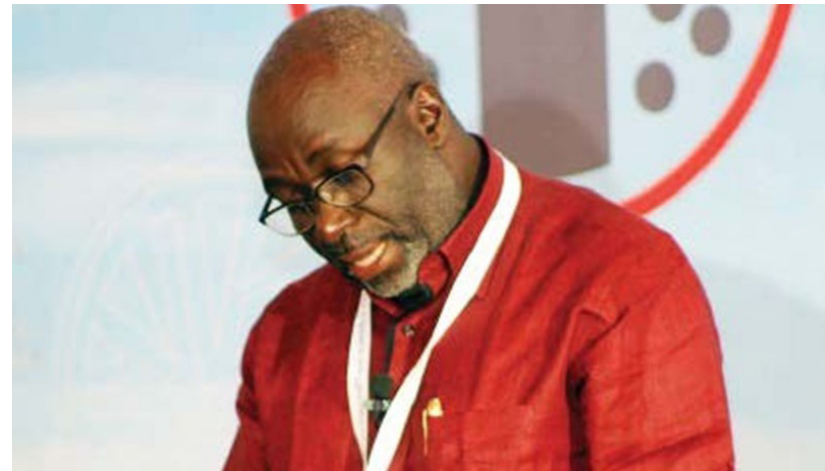
A time for greetings: Tana Forum Chairperson Olusegun Obasanjo (left) and Rwandan President Paul Kagame.



Forum Chairperson Olusegun Obasanjo shakes hands with Kenyan Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs Amina Mohamed.



H.E. Matthew Hassan Kukah, Roman Catholic Bishop of Sokoto, Nigeria, has the floor.



The Meles Zenawi Lecture Series on Kwame Nkrumah is delivered by businessman Mr Ali Mufuruki, CEO of Infotech Investment Group, Tanzania, controversially declaring that “pan-Africanism is dead”.



African Union High-Level Implementation Panel for Sudan and South Sudan Chief of Staff Mr Abdul Mohammed, sociologist Prof. Alioune Sall and His Highness Muhammad Sanusi II, Emir of Kano.



Former Botswanan President Festus Mogae speaks from the floor.



His Highness Muhammad Sanusi II, Emir of Kano, plants a tree at Tana Forum Park.



Forum Chairperson Olusegun Obasanjo plants a tree at Tana Forum Park.



Kenyan Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs Amina Mohamed planted a tree at Tana Forum Park.



His Highness Muhammad Sanusi II, Emir of Kano, engages with participants.



Essay competition winner: Collins Etchi Ako.



The brains behind the forum's organisation: the Tana Secretariat, with its then head, Ms Michelle Ndiaye (first on the left).

5

REFLECTIONS



Dr Cedric de Coning: research professor with the Peace, Conflict and Development Research Group at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, peace and security expert, and a former member of the Technical Committee of the Tana Forum.

Dr De Coning highlights that Tana is a place where Africa's peace and security community gathers to reflect on the continent's situation, including where we come from, where we are and where we are going. It is also a great networking platform.

He was part of the Tana Technical Committee, and this has made him appreciate that preparing for something as big as the Tana Forum takes a lot of effort, as there are many factors to consider. He notes that when one is involved on a day-to-day basis in something such as the Tana Forum, one becomes more aware of the tensions at the surface, and the interests and personalities that one must balance and manage. At the same time, one must keep an eye on the forum's overall objectives.

To that extent the Tana Forum is a microcosm of the larger African governance challenges we face. It is therefore essential for us to learn and adapt to reflect on where we are and explore how we get to where we want to be, and to make an extra effort to learn; that is the importance we give to knowledge and experience in this process. "That is where I always end up at adaptive leadership and adaptive governance," Dr De Coning says.

On the issue of African leadership and ownership, he reflects that he values the origins of the Tana Forum, coming from inspirational people such as former Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and former South African President Thabo Mbeki. He also appreciates how the forum's Technical Committee is composed of African minds who come together to brainstorm the substantive content and programmes of each forum, including the identification of experts.

The technical committee may not always get everything right, but the effort it demonstrates is commendable. Another laudable effort of the Tana Forum is the involvement of younger thought leaders, its student essay competition, and its efforts to involve the private sector. The establishment and convening of the Meles Zenawi Lecture Series also offers an opportunity for Africans to reflect on African leadership legacies, to reflect on what we can learn from people such as Kwame Nkrumah, through their good and bad attributes. Dr De Coning says that all these are examples of how within the Tana Forum we tried to focus on African issues, involve African thought leaders and focus on African history.

According to Dr De Coning:

“We are nothing without the history. If we want to foster the spirit of pan-Africanism and pan-African history. It was interesting to hear various stakeholder voices such as Thabo Mbeki, from private sector and academic thought leaders. We can learn a lot from them.”

Dr De Coning also highlights university engagement as an important opportunity for forum participants to connect with the Bahir Dar community. The local university's Vice-Chancellor's Dialogue series is also an acknowledgement of the importance of education and knowledge in the larger reflection of the Tana Forum.

On possible ways to improve the Tana Forum for the future, Dr De Coning notes that there is a need to ensure that the forum programme allows more time and space for participants to speak. He says:

“There are always so many individuals and organisations who need to be acknowledged and want a speaking slot somewhere. That means that they end up not having enough time for everyone to engage on the issues. Towards the later years we ended up having all these specialised sessions, organised by the partners. That meant that there would be three or more parallel sessions taking place at the same time.”

He proposes that certain sessions be held in the plenary and others in parallel, to give participants the opportunity to engage in topics of their choice, where they can speak instead of just listening. He also recommends that the forum engages the private sector more than is currently the case, with a view to having a better understanding of economics, climate change, technology, values and cultures, and benefiting from that broader community.

While commending the Tana Forum leadership for having curated the event in a way that reflects on the past and analyses the present, Dr De Coning posits that we could do well to also focus on the future in line with the AU's Agenda 2063 development blueprint. This will include improving the AU's capacity to work towards that future.

Overall, Dr De Coning says the spirit of pan-Africanism never felt more real than on the shores of Lake Tana, in the context of the Tana Forum. “That is what the Tana Forum means to me,” he says.

He reiterates that peace and security are critical for sustainable development and economic growth:

“It is not something we need to achieve one hundred percent before there can be economic growth. But without investment in peace and security, we will not see the development that we want. Peace and security are not something that we can just achieve through military means or political endeavours or the work of experts in peace building and security, it is part of the value system we need to encourage in our societies and communities.”

Dr De Coning concludes by saying that the Tana Forum is extremely important for peace, security and governance in Africa. It is vital that it continues in its role of bringing together all stakeholders, and curating a programme for reflecting on where we come from, how to manage the moment we are in, and how to manage the future.



Dr Cedric de Coning.

5TH TANA FORUM, 2016

FORUM THEME:

AFRICA ON THE GLOBAL PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA

For Africa to take its rightful place in the global peace and security arena, it is important for the continent to self-reflect and to understand how the rest of the world perceives it.

This theme was chosen with a view to sharpening Africa’s identity and strategies, as a stepping stone to addressing the continent’s peace and security challenges.



Celebrating the 5th anniversary of the Tana Forum: from left, forum Chairperson Olusegun Obasanjo, Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, former South African President Thabo Mbeki and former Malawian President Joyce Banda.



Former Botswanan President Festus Mogae (centre) engages the panel.



A networking opportunity for Tunisia and France.



Germany has been a consistent supporter of the Tana Forum since its inception.



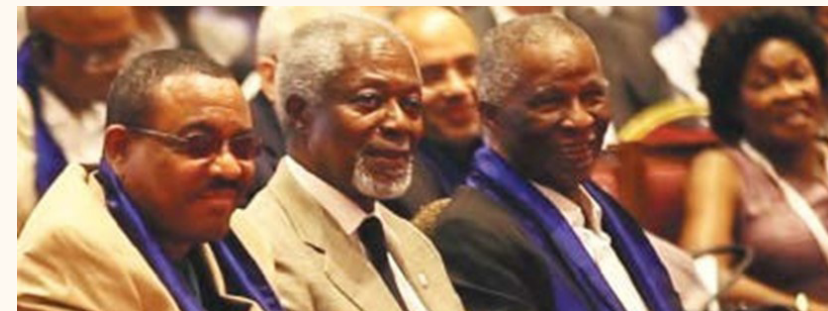
The Tana Forum Secretariat after expert preparation for, and delivery of, yet another excellent forum.



Former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan discusses peace support operations in Africa.



Relaxed atmosphere: former South African President Thabo Mbeki (far left), and in the centre forum Chairperson Olusegun Obasanjo, former Mozambican President Joaquim Chissano and former Burundian President Pierre Buyoya.



Lighter moments in-between serious discussions: Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and former South African President Thabo Mbeki, with the Hon. Betty Bigombe in the background at right.



The Tana Advisory Board at work: from left, Prof. Funmi Olonisakin, with Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus of Ethiopia, H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, the Hon. Betty Bigombe and Prof. Ndioro Ndiaye.



One of the Tana Forum's most enjoyable moments is the cultural dance on arrival and departure at the Bahir Dar airport.



Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan presents the keynote address at the 5th Tana Forum.



Some pay close attention to what is being said at the podium, while others take notes.

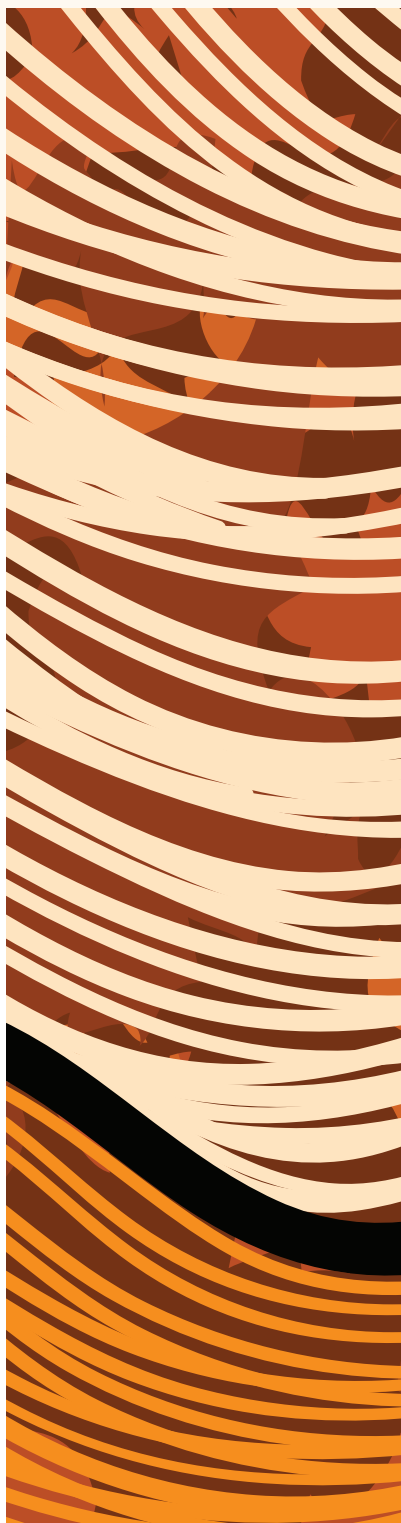


Former Tana Forum Advisory Board member Prof. Funmi Olonisakin provides insightful inputs.



The Hon. Betty Bigombe, former Tana Forum Advisory Board member.

REFLECTIONS



Ms Cynthia Chigwenya: Tana Forum participant, peace and security expert, AU Youth Ambassador for Southern Africa (2022-2024).

Ms Chigwenya first participated in the 10th Tana Forum, in 2022. As a first-time participant, she says that she had an outstanding experience and was particularly impressed by the forum's multi-stakeholder nature, where prime ministers and presidents, the private sector and development partners come together discuss peace and security.

She thinks that marking the forum's 10th anniversary is important, because taking a step back and reflecting is necessary in order to chart a more certain way forward. Noting that partnerships are key in advancing the continent's peace and security agenda, Ms Chigwenya says she enjoyed the discussion on Africa-Europe relations. She rated her overall experience as "outstanding".

She commends the forum organisers for ensuring the participation of young people, noting that the annual students' essay competition is a great way of involving the youth in peace and security issues. This demonstrates that the Tana Forum is on par with global trends, where youth participation is now a mainstream standard and not an exception.

An area which Ms Chigwenya identifies for potential improvement or consideration by the forum organisers relates to leveraging technology and having more young people participate online: "How do we bring in new technologies to make Tana bigger than it was even 10 years ago?"

She also calls for the deliberate inclusion of young people with disabilities, and marginalised groups. Underscoring her message on inclusivity, especially of the youth, Ms Chigwenya refers to the maxim: "Anything about us without us is against us." She also references Mahatma Gandhi, who said, "If you do something for me without including me, even with the best of intentions, I may think that you are against me."

Still on inclusion, Ms Chigwenya stresses that governments and conference organisers should move away from inclusion for the sake of it, towards realising that some of the global challenges we face – such as violent extremism and terrorism – are going to require cooperation with young people, as well as other population components. Young people can – and will – play a major role in enhancing the peace and security sector, both in Africa and globally.

At a more practical level, Ms Chigwenya notes that governments should seek to understand and tap into the value that young people offer, such as in harnessing technology. For example, she proposes the employment of young people in the tech space to drive the use of drones to enhance regional or national border defences. These are the kind of dialogues that young people would like to see, she avers.

On her message of hope to African youth, Ms Chigwenya noted that already, institutions such as the Tana Forum, the UN, the AU and even the Southern African Development Community are increasingly realising the importance of young people, and are ramping up efforts for the inclusion of young people in their programmes.

“And my message is if there are those opportunities within your community and your country for young people to engage with the national government, even if this is not a very popular option, engage with your national government and engage with your local council. You may not have the same political views, but when it comes to issues of development, these are issues that affect all of us. It is getting more and more important for all of us to contribute towards a better country and a better Africa, as well as a better world. So, get involved, and also make use of the opportunity of institutional changes in organisations.”

In her concluding comments on peace and security in Africa and in general, Ms Chigwenya reminds young people that the betterment of the African continent is a shared responsibility. Young people have to take responsibility to make Africa a better continent.

“We are not going to work up tomorrow with a better Africa, a safer Zimbabwe, a safer South Africa, if we ourselves are not intentional about contributing to that. And therein lies the essence of leadership. You may not need to join a big organisation, but where you are, what can you do about someone else or future generations? The betterment of our continent,

and the world, is a shared responsibility and we each have a role to play.”

Ms Chigwenya expresses appreciation to the Tana Forum for its inclusion of youth in its work, urging it to continue with this practice. She adds:

“Also, to our partners, national governments, external organisations, development partners, please continue to support such initiatives that bring young people to the decision-making table.”

Her message in parting is clear: “Through our collaborative efforts, we are going to realise a more peaceful Africa and a peaceful world.”



Ms Cynthia Chigwenya.

6TH TANA FORUM, 2017

FORUM THEME:

NATURAL RESOURCE GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA

The natural resources governance theme was chosen because, according to the Report of the 6th Tana Forum, “A clear association has been drawn between natural resources and conflicts – up to 60% of internal armed conflicts in the last 60 years are directly related to resources. Although our continent is greatly endowed with natural resources, we continue to encounter substantial problems directly related to community marginalisation, environmental degradation and inequality.”

It was therefore necessary that Africans reminded themselves of what is at stake around natural resources and conflict.



Forum Chairperson Olusegun Obasanjo welcomes delegates to the 6th Tana Forum.



Networking is key: youth participants share details.



Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn (left) and Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni have been consistent in their Tana Forum participation, with the former not having missed one. Here they are seated with Botswana Vice-President Mokgweetsi Masisi. H.E. Desalegn has before and since participated in various capacities, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Deputy Prime Minister and Prime Minister of Ethiopia, and as former Prime Minister and Tana Forum Advisory Board member.



A press conference, with Ms Michelle Mendi of the Tana Secretariat with Tana Forum Chairperson Olusegun Obasanjo.



The Tana Secretariat team, always ready to serve.



Development partner participation in the Tana Forum has increased over the years.



Pressing the flesh: Tana Forum Chairperson Olusegun Obasanjo engages with a participant.



H.E. Desalegn takes the floor, while H.E. Museveni (left) and H.E. Obasanjo (right) listen.



Tana Forum Chairperson Olusegun Obasanjo makes a comment during the Vice-Chancellor's Dialogue at Bahir Dar University. Technical Committee member Dr Hesphina Rukato (right) looks on.



The Vice-Chancellor's Dialogue gets under way at Bahir Dar University.



Tanzanian businessman Mr Ali Mufuruki (left) and Ambassador Günter Nooke, Germany's Personal Representative of the Chancellor for Africa in the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), take part in a discussion.



Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni (left) and the then AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chergui, participate in a panel discussion.



When it is time, it is time: former South African President Thabo Mbeki (right) seems to be signalling to former Malawian President Joyce Banda and Ugandan President Museveni (middle).



Former Liberian Interim President Prof. Amos Sawyer engages with a panel.

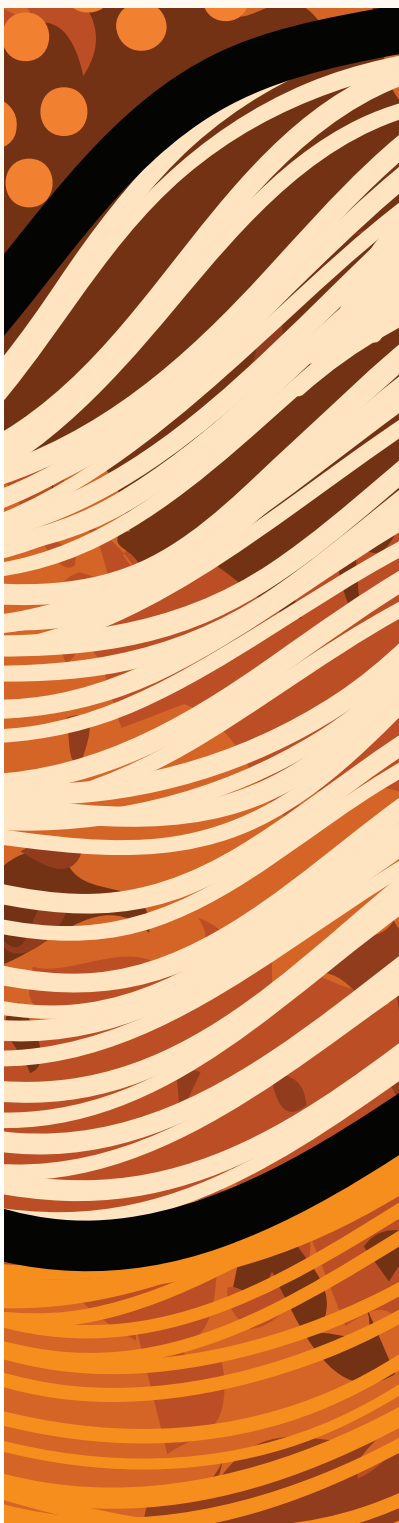


Ms Stergomena Tax, Executive Secretary of SADC, addresses the forum.



The programme is going well: Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni and forum Chairperson Olusegun Obasanjo bump fists.

REFLECTIONS



Mme Bineta Diop, women's rights activist, AU Chairperson's Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security.

Mme Diop was involved with the Tana Forum from its very first iteration, and has participated in most of the first 10 forums. She identifies five peace and security challenges that Africa needs to deal with, namely:

- Inability to silence the guns
- The increasing number of coups d'état and other unconstitutional changes of government
- The Covid-19 pandemic and its aftermath
- Climate change
- Violence against women, including in conflict areas

On reflecting on the Tana Forum, Mme Diop says that from the start it has been an innovative platform where African leaders can interact with stakeholders in the peace and security sector. She commends the forum for ensuring gender representation in all its sessions; she notes that such representation is the result of a historical push by women, for women, and that today all Tana Forum sessions include women in discussing peace and security. She says:

“We have made efforts to understand that women will speak and must be at the table, whether men like it or not. Women are going to be part of the solution.”

The forum venue, on the shores of Lake Tana, is also great for inspiring conversations.

The fact that others have emulated the Tana Forum concept (for example, the Dakar International Forum on Peace and Security in Africa and the Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development) is a sign that the originators had foresight. “When people start copying you,” she says, “it means you are doing a good thing.”

Even though the Tana takeaways are for participating individuals to implement in their own spaces, Mme Diop notes that lack of implementation of Tana recommendations remains a huge gap for the forum. She proposes that there be a channel or mechanism for the Tana Forum's

recommendations to be forwarded to the AU Assembly, so that they can be implemented. She stresses:

“When we have decisions and recommendations, we need to have people who carry out those decisions, including the heads of state; they need to be accountable. The essence of Tana is that we talk and influence, but how is it going to influence without bringing it to the AU? Let us single out decisions and say who is supposed to do the follow-up. You need to have champions in the room, those who have been to Tana, so that it can be taken up in the Assembly.”

While Africa is, indeed, not an island and some of its conflicts originate in the global realm, Mme Diop raises concern that of late, an increasing number of development partners have participated in the forum. This is because many of them are supporting the forum financially. This has opened doors for too many external voices, which are now drowning out African conversations within the forum. She asks whether the forum is still a safe place for African leaders to speak freely.

Mme Diop suggests that this is an aspect that needs to be reflected on by the forum’s organisers. Related to this is the fact that when Africans are invited to Europe, Africa will be on the agenda. However, when the Europeans are discussing their own security issues, there will be no African voice. Africans should therefore think of how they can also influence the global peace and security architecture, so that there is a balance of inputs into the global peace and security narrative.

Mme Diop raises concern over the fact that Africa is unable to fully fund its peace and security programmes and operations, as well as the Tana Forum. She highlights that Africa has abundant natural and human resources, including its youth. The continent should therefore look inward for its peace and security solutions, along with a well-balanced partnership with the rest of the world that should be based on Africa’s needs.

In the spirit of the Tana Forum, Mme Diop underscores the importance of dialogue in achieving peace and security. She says, “Without dialogue, you cannot have peace.” This is why, on the global stage in war-torn places such as Ukraine, African women have been advocating for dialogue and ceasefire.

On what gives her hope for the continent, Mme Diop says hope for Africa lies in citizen engagement, governance, strong institutions and leadership. Governments must involve young people because they are the ones on the streets; they are the ones migrating. Let Africa use its own natural and human resources for its development, she argues:

“Why are our member states going overseas to beg? What we need is to accelerate unity, and develop tools through alliances and partnerships, unity and common purpose.”



Mme Bineta Diop

7TH TANA FORUM, 2018

FORUM THEME:

OWNERSHIP OF AFRICA'S PEACE AND SECURITY PROVISION: FINANCING AND REFORMING THE AFRICAN UNION

The challenge of the AU's leadership, and ownership of its peace and security agenda, continues to be a challenge in conflict resolution in Africa. Linked to this has been the need for institutional reform.

The 7th Tana Forum was dedicated to unpacking these challenges.



The 7th Tana Forum.



Forum Chairperson Olusegun Obasanjo presents the State of Peace and Security Report.



Women participation in the Tana Forum: Adviser to the Chairperson of the AU Commission, and former Nigerian Ambassador, Ms Hadiza Mustapha speaks.



Tackling the issues: from left, former Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa Dr Carlos Lopes, former Rwandan Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Minister Ms Louise Mushikiwabo, and former Nigerian Education Minister Obiageli Katryn Ezekwesili.



The AU Commission Special Envoy on Women and Peace and Security, Mme Bineta Diop, emphasises that there can be no peace, security and stability in Africa without women's participation in decision-making.



Farewell to the Tana Forum's outgoing first Chairperson: H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo and the forum's first Coordinator, Dr Hesphina Rukato.



Visiting Professor at King's College London's African Leadership Centre Prof. Abdoulaye Bathily (left) chats to sociologist Prof. Alioune Sall.



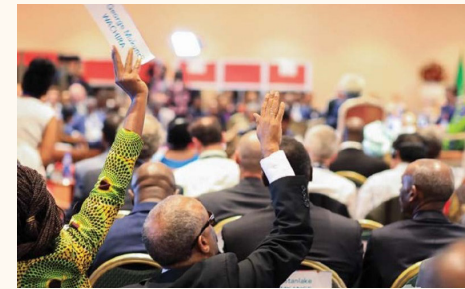
Some of Africa's conflicts have external and global triggers. It is important to hear other views.



Leadership transition is fundamental to good governance, peace, security and stability in Africa. After chairing the Tana Forum for eight years, H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo (middle) hands over the reins to H.E. John Dramani Mahama (right), former President of the Republic of Ghana. Witnessing the handover is former Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn (left).



Participants in the 7th Tana Forum listen intently to the proceedings.



Raise your hand, raise your voice, be heard!



Networking of ideas is a key attribute of the Tana Forum: Mozambican politician and humanitarian Mrs Graça Machel, former Nigerian Education Minister Obiageli Katryn Ezekwesili, and former South African President Kgalema Motlanthe.

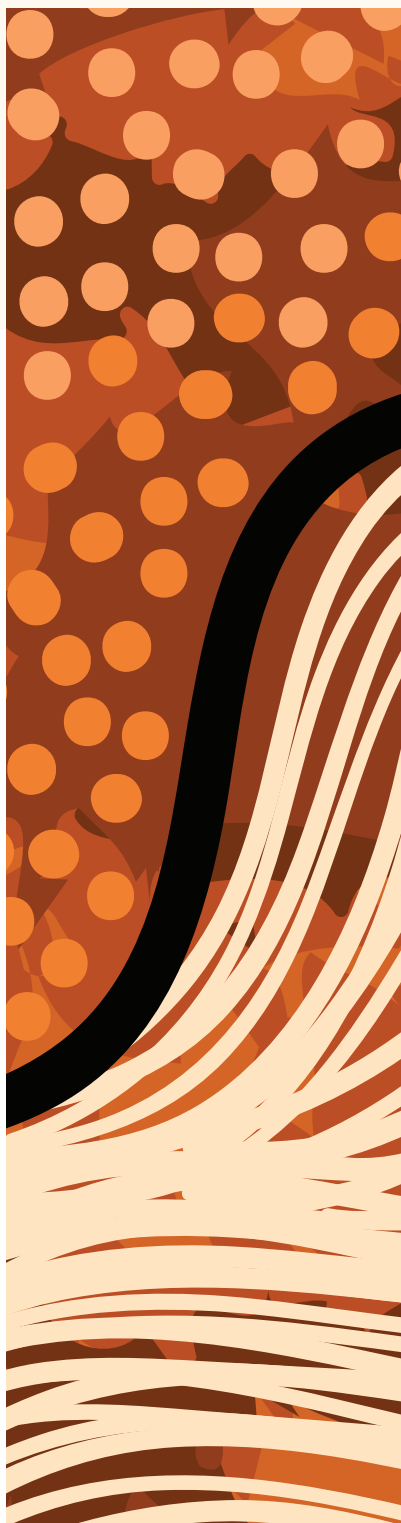


Outgoing Tana Forum Chairperson H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo receives a farewell gift from former Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn.



A leadership that listens: former Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn and outgoing Tana Forum Chairperson Olusegun Obasanjo listen to the proceedings.

REFLECTIONS



Dr Mulugeta Gebrehiwot, former Director of the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) at Addis Ababa University.

Dr Gebrehiwot was the Director of the IPSS during the Tana Forum's conceptualisation and launch. He has intimate knowledge of the process that led to the forum's development. He shares his reflections on how the Tana concept evolved into a globally renowned platform for promoting peace and security in Africa.

His reflections go back to a meeting with the chief executive officer of the Munich Security Conference, Mr Wolfgang Ischinger, in 2010. They exchanged ideas on lessons from the Munich conference that could be adapted for a similar initiative in Africa, such as where to host the forum:

"The reason that they took the conference from Bonn, which is the former capital of Germany, to Munich: they advised that if you call senior politicians, heads of state and government into that conference in the capital, then their ambassadors will be lining up with so many duties. It becomes an opportune moment for

ambassadors to brief their heads of state and bring several issues to their attention. That would distract them and split the conference time and focus."

A retreat-like environment was therefore recommended for the participants to focus on the conference programme.

A second piece of advice was that the conference was such a huge endeavour, and the IPSS a small institute attached to Addis Ababa University; this necessitated champions at head of state level who would push it among their peers. If the IPSS was to bring heads of state and government to Ethiopia, then it was necessary for the Ethiopian head of state to be a part of it. Dr Gebrehiwot also understood that if heads of state and government were to be a part of it, they would likely shape the conference in any way or form they wanted.

The Munich conference organisers asked for three potential champions to invite to the 46th edition of the Munich Security Conference so that they would understand the set-up, be exposed to what it was all about "... and support me conceptually. I was also invited as an observer."

The IPSS approached then Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, former South African President Thabo Mbeki and then AU Commission Chairperson Jean Ping, who were all willing to participate. Unfortunately, the conference had limited space, and it only invited H.E. Zenawi. He saw it and he loved it, says Dr Gebrehiwot, and he loved the setting. “I had a meeting with him, and he suggested a few more things,” including that the IPSS name three candidates for consideration as the new forum’s chairperson:



Dr Mulugeta Gebrehiwot

“We put the candidates in rank order. We had our own reasons. He picked the third one, who was former President Obasanjo, and he had good reasons for not taking up the first and second ones, which was excellent. He then promised to write us a support letter to give to President Obasanjo, asking him to be Chairperson of the forum. At that time, we had already set a meeting appointment with former President Obasanjo at his residence in Nigeria. We had also recruited a head of the secretariat. Initially we recruited a high-level lady, Michelle Ndiaye, but she took another responsibility. And then we found a replacement, Dr Hesphina Rukato, who had served as deputy CEO of NEPAD, a very, very organised lady, very focused, very much duty-bound and disciplined. So, we bought her. She was very much instrumental in this high-level networking.”

A second suggestion from H.E. Zenawi was to avoid putting the AU in the conference’s driving seat; otherwise, any decision about the conference would have to be done through the AU Assembly, where there would be contestation about its hosting and its venue. The politics would start and decision making would be slow. Ultimately, says Dr Gebrehiwot, the IPSS took the lead in the



forum's organisation, with the idea that the AU would benefit from the conference outcomes.

The choice of Bahir Dar, in north-western Ethiopia, as the host city presented challenges:

- Even though it is a beautiful city, situated on the picturesque shores of Lake Tana, Bahir Dar didn't have a big enough airport at that time. Transporting heads of state and government in and out by bus was out of the question
- Ethiopia had no experience in hosting such a meeting outside Addis Ababa. As such, the Foreign Ministry's heads of protocol, as well as security and VIP protection, had to innovate. The IPSS worked closely with them
- Everything had to be done from the scratch, from logistics to security and VIP protection. But with the collaboration of all stakeholders, it was possible to create a second international city in Ethiopia in Bahir Dar

On the forum's objectives, Dr Gebrehiwot reiterates that the key goal was helping the AU with proactive agenda-making around peace and security. This required several things of the forum, namely:

- The number of participants should be strictly limited to 70
- Invitations would be personal and non-transferrable
- A maximum of two agenda items or themes would be up for discussion

"Part of our measurement for success was that if participants left with more questions than answers, then the forum would have achieved its objectives. We would have influenced the agenda of the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities," says Dr Gebrehiwot. Networking was seen as a by-product of the forum's main objective of setting the peace and security agenda.

Another unique aspect of the forum was its informality. "Former President Obasanjo made it excellent. He just said, 'You are not going to address each other formally. You just call me Obasanjo. I call you Meles, Andreas, Mamdani.'" There were 68 participants on the floor, plus some observers on the sidelines. This allowed participants enough time to discuss the conference themes. The forum's results were outstanding, and its substance good beyond expectation. "We were extremely happy," says Dr Gebrehiwot.

The Ethiopian government supported the IPSS a lot in making the conference ready. But, he adds, several partners made crucial contributions:

"Ethiopian Airlines gave us subsidised tickets, and we could book a full plane to Bahir Dar. They gave us extra flights to fly people back and forth from Bahir Dar. The protocol and security teams came to help us at the cost of government. And the Sheraton Hotel and its owner, Mohammed Hussein Al Amoudi, sponsoring the conference, food and catering as well as accommodation, including accommodating heads of state and government at the Avanti Blue Nile Hotel. There were literally no complaints."

The Tana Forum's second edition, in 2013, went through a similar process and then once it started picking up, many people became interested:

"People started thinking 'Oh, so this is a place where important people in Africa meet. And that's a wonderful place. I should come in.' So, people started putting pressure on the organisers of the conference to secure a seat. And there was very, very serious pressure on me and the rest of the organisers. But I said, 'This is a rule that we have. We invite 70 people as set.'"

From the third forum the organisers started giving in to the pressure, however, and that conference had about 170 participants. The agenda was also losing focus, and there was no substantive discussion.

"That was the last time I participated in the conference for several reasons, but mainly because I was never invited thereafter. The second is that I was not sure I would attend the conference since I had



seen what had happened during the third conference, which had derailed the original objectives of the conference. So, I think it has turned into a networking event, which was original. A networking event is important by itself, but that was not the key objective set for the conference, so I think it has derailed from its original objective as designed.”

Dr Gebrehiwot says, however, that the Tana Forum was a great experience for him. He adds that as Africans, we are good at starting initiatives, but equally good at killing them. Tana was a great initiative. “Everybody talked loud about it. Everybody appreciated it. Everybody loved it. I can see the spirit that I witnessed during the first and second editions. And then suddenly, other interested parties started pulling in.”

He says a lot of leadership challenges come to mind: “How do we maintain novel ideas and novel experiments so that they can be sustainable? Because I don’t think this is the first time, but there are similar initiatives that are initiated, and they just die. What is leadership’s response to this? There must be an African-wide movement pushing original thinking, original ideas, original initiatives into practice.”

His parting advice is that the Tana Forum needs to “reboot” to its original design:

“Reboot it if you know that is what you do with your computer. You play with it and then at one point your computer gets confused. So, if you want to save it, what you usually do is you reboot it. Move away from networking. Networking should be a by-product of substantive discussions. Limit the agendas. Limit the participants. Make the invitation personal.”

8TH TANA FORUM, 2019

FORUM THEME:

**POLITICAL DYNAMICS IN THE HORN OF AFRICA:
NURTURING THE EMERGING PEACE TRENDS**

At the time of holding of the 8th Tana Forum in 2019, the peace and security situation in the Horn of Africa had become worrisome. Discussion around the political dynamics in the Horn of Africa was thus prioritised.



The Tana Forum Secretariat team, organisers of the 8th forum.



Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia President Sahle-Work Zewde gives her welcoming remarks for the 8th Tana Forum.



H.E. John Dramani Mahama, incoming Chairperson of the Tana Forum, at the 8th forum.



The former AU Commission Director for Peace and Security, and former Chief of Staff/Chief Adviser to the AU Commission Chairperson, Mr El-Ghassim Wane (middle), participates in the forum.



Former Tana Advisory Board members take the front row: former Central African Republic President Catherine Samba-Panza (left) and former Malawian President Joyce Banda (middle).

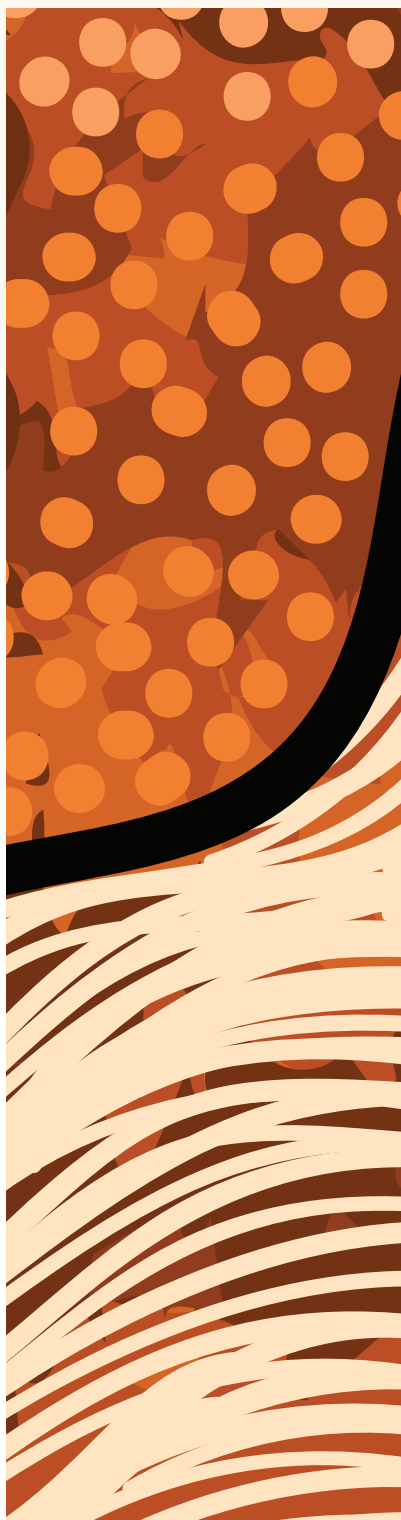


Ethiopian President Sahle-Work Zewde (right) catches up with AU Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat.



Tea breaks provide great networking opportunities at the 8th forum.

REFLECTIONS



Prof. Tim Murithi: Head of the Peacebuilding Interventions Programme at the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation in Cape Town, and Extraordinary Professor of African Studies at the Centre for Gender and African Studies, University of the Free State. DrProf. Murithi has participated in the Tana Forum as a peace and security expert, and a Technical Committee member since its early days. During the 10th Tana Forum in 2022, he was awarded the Tana @Ten Award, which recognised 10 individuals and institutions. He was recognised for three decades of contributing to peace, security, transitional justice and governance research and practice across Africa.

In sharing his views, reflections and experience of the Tana Forum's first 10 years, Prof. Murithi's notable reflections are on his role as a Tana Forum Technical Committee member for three years (2016-2019). Working with other team members and the Tana Forum Secretariat, this role involved designing the concept and programme as well as identifying speakers. Prof. Murithi views the Forum as a space to:

"Engage deeply on the challenges of peace and security on the African continent ... and bring decision-makers closer to thinkers, analysts and researchers to create some kind of exchange in a very informal way."

Prof. Murithi notes that the symbol of the baobab tree in the Forum logo, which derives from the African tradition of sitting together, reflecting on key challenges and issues, and coming up with solutions, was aptly chosen. The combination of this symbol, the forum's informal format, and the historically significant and magnificent venue of Bahir Dar, sets the perfect scene for value creation.

Reflecting on Africa's peace and security challenges, Prof. Murithi says the continent is facing a crisis of leadership because many of its challenges could be addressed by Africans, but there seem to be some inertia and political obstacles, or "administrative and bureaucratic bottlenecks". Africa has a plethora of normative frameworks on peace and security but there is no action, pointing to a leadership deficit, Prof. Murithi notes.

Another challenge is that African conflicts are frequently sourced and resourced from outside Africa: "sometimes regionally, sometimes continentally, and sometimes globally". The Tana Forum is supposed to break out of the current state of stagnation, but it struggles to achieve this:

"When you go to Tana, you hear lots of positive ideas and things we can do together. But as soon as we leave Tana we revert to old practices; nothing seems to shift significantly forward."

Prof. Murithi expresses a cautious belief in African leaders; cautious simply because citizens are not seeing the actions they expect.

In its early years, the Tana Forum exuded a strong sense of African ownership and leadership through strong personalities such as then Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo. However, gradually, the forum almost became too successful for its own good. Suddenly, external actors who have an interest in the African continent started “imposing themselves” on the Tana Forum. In the forum of today:



Prof. Tim Murithi

“You see now a much more nuanced set of debates that almost have to take into account the influence of external actors, US, China, Russia ... without necessarily focusing on the African agenda as strongly as we should.”

Discussions end up being sucked into either a Western or Eastern agenda at the expense of pan-Africanism and solidarity.

Another concerning aspect for Prof. Murithi is the increasing number of side and parallel events at the forum. This has resulted in multiple agendas drowning out the African voice that was initially meant to speak to itself. There is almost a barrier now, and heads of state come to make their speeches and then leave:

“And Africa doesn’t seem to be speaking to itself enough. We tend to be speaking in multiple tongues: Francophone, Anglophone, Lusophone, but never Afrophone.”

On the future of the Tana Forum, Prof. Murithi recommends going back to the original idea of limiting participation, limiting external platforms and limiting agendas. Some external partners can meet either before or after African conversations have taken place, even in Addis Ababa. Prof. Murithi emphasised the need to return to pan-African conversations, rather than the global jamboree that the forum has become.

“Unfortunately, Tana is almost exclusively dependent on external funding, so the fact that the donors

are keen on inserting themselves into the agenda becomes a challenging issue to address.”

On funding the Tana Forum, Prof. Murithi’s view is that if the AU had a robust and actionable domestic mobilisation plan, it could end up funding initiatives such as the Tana Forum. This is the only way to demonstrate African ownership and leadership.

“I say for the sake of the continent, to ensure our independence as a continent and an institution, the AU and RECs need to start moving slightly away from the old strategies of hoarding national resources and going to beg for resources to sustain our continental institutions, which we need to protect ourselves and to build peace among ourselves.”

Decisions require boldness if we are to attain the objectives and aspirations of the AU’s Agenda 2063 development blueprint, he says.

Prof. Murithi urges Africans not to lose hope, however. People should have faith and inner belief, and aspire to do everything in their power to advance our continent.

“I always say as Africans, we are not going anywhere. The African continent is not going anywhere. We are the ones who must change the system. Don’t wait for other people to come and solve your problems, or issues or challenges, look deep within yourself. I believe we have agency as Africans. I believe we have ability. We have insight. But we need to find ways to marry that with political action that will in fact shift the agenda on the African continent. This is my belief, and I will continue working along these lines with the hope that all the young people, all the women, all the men of this continent, will join us on this quest to build a much more peaceful and prosperous Africa going forward.”

Prof. Murithi ends with a quotation by Kwame Nkrumah: “Africa must unite, or disintegrate individually.”

9TH TANA FORUM, 2020

FORUM THEME:

**THE AfCFTA: REVITALISING PAN-AFRICANISM FOR
SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA**

The launch of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) has energised the continent's efforts towards regional integration and pan-Africanism as a means to achieve peace and stability in Africa. The 2020 Tana Forum discussed exploring how the continent can optimise the opportunities presented by the AfCFTA for sustainable peace and development in Africa.

The forum was held at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic; accordingly, participation was both physical and virtual. This partially explains why there were few photographs of participants.



Ethiopian President Sahle-Work Zewde arrives for the 9th Tana Forum.



United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) Executive Secretary Dr Vera Songwe arrives for the 9th Tana Forum.



Participants network during the forum: Institute for Peace and Security Studies Director Dr Yonas Adaye Adeto (far left) and Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General to the AU Hanna Tetteh (far right), with unidentified colleagues.



Putting a point across during the forum: Tana Secretariat Interim Head Lettie Longwe speaks.



Participants exchanging views.



H.E. Sahle-Work Zewde, President of Ethiopia, at the 9th Tana Forum.

REFLECTIONS



Dr Martha Mutisi, former Tana Forum Technical Committee member, and peace and security expert.

Dr Mutisi shares her views on the Tana Forum from the perspectives of having been a participant as a Technical Committee member, as well as an expert on peace and security. For her, the Tana Forum has created a space for people from different backgrounds to converge and discuss Africa's peace and security issues. It has provided a mechanism for regional, continental or national policymakers, researchers, private sector exponents and development partners, as well as civil society, to come together for unfettered, intellectual conversations on peace and security issues affecting the continent.

That this is done without judgement, and with honesty, has been the biggest contribution of the Tana Forum. Dr Mutisi recalls a key reason for creating such a forum: some of the peace and security challenges being experienced in Africa were linked to intellectual deficit. A lack of knowledge and ideas in terms of how to confront such challenges has contributed to the persistence and protracted nature of conflict situations.

The forum touches on critical themes such as the African Continental Free Trade Area, natural resources management, governance and illicit financial flows, she says:

“So, for me, I think it was a moment of reckoning just to see researchers and academics being honest with the policymakers and the decision-makers. Without necessarily, you know, fear of backlash. It’s a platform that has not yet been replicated at the national level, where policymakers can have an honest conversation.”

The challenge for her has been how to take away the Tana Forum's great ideas and translate them into implementation; that remains a challenge. Of course, that is outside the scope of the Tana Forum, but at least it has catalysed conversation.

In terms of youth participation, Dr Mutisi thinks that a lot has been done towards institutionalising and fostering meaningful youth participation. For example, at the pre-Tana events that are undertaken across Africa at various universities, there is a competition for young researchers to provide thought leadership articles. These are thought-provoking pieces on some of the thematic areas that were being discussed during the Tana Forum.



Dr. Martha Mutisi

“I think that has really been a big, big contribution for the Tana Forum. Involving young people in such conversation has been quite critical. And of course, in line with our recognition that in Africa, the youth are our demographic dividend.”

On leadership, Dr Mutisi posits that the Tana Forum provides various leadership experiences. Having been a Technical Committee member, whose responsibilities included reviewing background documents and planning the forum programme, means that her process has largely been participatory, inclusive and based on the recognition of people’s expertise.

“For me, the lesson on leadership really speaks to the need for leadership to be inclusive. Leadership should also pay attention to issues such as gender, but also leadership being something that is based on legitimacy. If you have expertise in a certain area, obviously the Tana Forum would engage you either as a speaker or as a writer of a background, or in a capacity that befits your qualifications. So, for me, this was also one of the critical lessons in making use of Africa’s intellectual capacities in various spaces.”





She also cites the participation in 2015 of the late Tanzanian businessman Mr Ali Mufuruki as a ground-breaking experience, in that a private sector individual was a keynote speaker for the first time in the history of Tana. It was exhilarating to see a private sector person engaging with African presidents and demystifying what pan-Africanism means, and the legacy of pan-Africanism. He had flipped the topic and said that based on his experience, former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere had not been a pan-Africanist. It was refreshing to see a person from the private sector engaging with political leaders on the African continent, and challenging long-held assumptions about what pan-African means. There's a tendency for peace and security practitioners and experts to speak among themselves, not knowing that economists also have a way of looking at peacefulness and "peacelessness" from their own very angle. The sessions also had excellent moderators.

Great speakers from different parts of the continent have come to the Tana Forum, says Dr Mutisi: "So, for me it is a recognition of the various skill sets that exist on the African continent, but also a demystifying of what peace and security means." For a long time, politicians and experts have tended to look at peace and security from a narrow perspective, and from economics and governance perspectives.

Dr Mutisi affirmed the fact that the Tana Forum has lived up to its name of being African-owned in terms of the curation of the programme and the agenda, a selection of thematic annual focus areas. The themes lend relevance to the inclusive and consultative process. For example, in 2020 the African Continental Free Trade Area discussion was timely, given the progress that Africa was witnessing with its implementation. In that context, how can we revitalise Pan Africanism for sustainable peace and development?

"So, you can see that the selection of topics is very much African-owned. It's not necessarily influenced by any development partner. It is influenced by us as Africans, the intellectuals, the policymakers, the civil society actors, the youth, the women who

are consulted. However, the ownership is not yet being reflected in ourselves as the continent is not funding the forum and putting our money where our mouths are.”

Not privy to the forum’s finances, Dr Mutisi says her assumption is that it is largely funded by development partners. That is where Africans are missing the point of ownership and leadership. Do member states believe that such a forum is important to the extent that they can also say, “You know what, from our own budget, we also commit to putting an agreed amount on the table as the African Union”? She adds, “And can we also take 0.05% of African countries’ GDP towards stimulating intellectual conversations that will allow us to reflect on peace and security challenges facing the continent, rather than taking a reactive approach?”

The private sector needs to be engaged more aggressively to support peace and security initiatives such as the Tana Forum. During the Covid-19 pandemic, one saw the business sector come together; whether it was MTN, Vodacom and Econet, they came together and millions of dollars were raised. But why should this be a one-time occurrence? Where is the Africa Business Council, for example, to say, “We want conversations that address the peace and security threats on the continent because it is in the best interest of the business sector to operate in an environment that is peaceful”?

But Dr Mutisi says that even though the number of conflicts is increasing, what many are not seeing is high-level political will, appetite to resolve conflict using peaceful means. Using mediation in negotiation as a means of resolution, the conflicts that we witnessed maybe 20 years back resulted in the victor and the vanquished, she argues – but right now, we are also seeing the institutionalisation, internalisation and normalisation of preventive diplomacy. We are also seeing the internalisation of negotiation and mediation. People might not be seeing, in the background, how many more conflicts are being averted.

Through the active work of Africans, including various parts of the African peace and security architecture, quiet diplomacy happens behind the scenes with would-be belligerents. Unfortunately, we don’t see that making the news – but to anyone who is despairing, Dr Mutisi says:

“We have put in place preventive diplomacy architecture like the AU’s Panel of the Wise and FemWise-Africa, the Elders, the SADC panel of Elders and things like that. I think that reflects that there is so much that is happening behind the scenes that we might not be seeing.”

Dr Mutisi asserts that the fact that there are more conflicts in Africa than when the Tana Forum was launched in 2012, should be viewed in the proper context and has no causality with the forum. This is because the Tana Forum creates a space for conversation, but it is not a conflict resolution mechanism.

She also calls on Africans to recognise that some conflicts are transnational in nature, globalised matters that in turn tend to drive conflict in Africa; the issues that contribute to some conflicts in Africa are thus beyond the scope of the continent. There are also situations where geopolitical crises outside the continent have had telling impacts on Africa.

10TH TANA FORUM, 2022

FORUM THEME:

MANAGING SECURITY THREATS:

BUILDING RESILIENCE FOR THE AFRICA WE WANT

Building resilience against all types of fragility became a necessity in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic and its impacts. The imperative to build resilience also requires the prioritisation of human development, and innovative approaches to governance and peace-building. The forum took cognisance of the long-term nature and resource-intensiveness of building resilience. The role of citizens is critical, and so is that of the international community.



*Tana Technical Committee member
Ms Hafsa Maalim calls the 10th Tana Forum
to order.*



*African Union Commission Chairperson
Moussa Faki Mahamat delivers the keynote
address virtually.*



*Forum Chairperson John Dramani
Mahama delivers the Tana Forum's 10th
anniversary message.*



*Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed speaks
at the opening of the 10th Tana Forum.*



Ugandan Vice-President Jessica Alupo delivers her statement at the 10th Tana Forum.



Celebrating 10 years of the Tana Forum: Chairperson John Dramani Mahama (in black) and the Tana Forum Secretariat team.



A high-level panel discussion during the 10th Tana Forum: left to right, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General to the AU Hanna Tetteh, former Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, University of Johannesburg Centre for Africa-China Studies Director Dr David Monyae, and US Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa Mr Mike Hammer.



Lighter moments when Africa's intellectuals gather: constitutional and international human rights law researcher Dr Solomon Dersso (left), and politics and economics academic Prof. Adebayo Olukoshi.



Cutting the 10th anniversary celebration cake. From left to right, Dr Jide Martins, Dr Hesphina Rukato, Tana Forum Chairperson John Dramani Mahama, a representative of the Amhara region, and Egyptian diplomat and Tana Forum Advisory Board member Ms Soad Shalaby.



Robust panel-led discussions on the theme, Managing Security Threats: Building Resilience for the Africa We Want.



A reflective moment for the Tana Forum Interim Coordinator, Ms Lettie Longwe.



Dr Hesphina Rukato, the Tana Forum's first coordinator and the author of this publication, engages with the forum theme.

10

REFLECTIONS



Prof. Noha Bakr: academic and member of the National Council of Human Rights in Cairo, Egypt. Former Tana Forum Technical Committee member, and peace and security expert.

Prof. Bakr participated in the Tana Forum as a Technical Committee member, as well as an expert. She is impressed with the forum, as it enabled her to meet different people from different countries. She has found the Forum to be eye-opening, enabling her to hear and see what she had previously only been able to read about:

“You feel the vibes of pan-Africanism, which is not very strong in North African countries. So, when you go to the Tana Forum, you feel pan-Africanism very much. Obviously the first one was very exciting for me. It was the first time to see heads of state speaking in such an informal manner.”

Prof. Bakr is happy with the choices of forum themes and topics, because of their importance for the continent’s peace and security agenda. She particularly appreciates the choice of climate change in one of the forums, and how African leaders are frank and open with European ambassadors. The fact that there is a mix of African leaders and ambassadors from partner countries

is important for her, she says, because it allows the North to hear from the South directly.

She is also fascinated by the young people at, and youth engagement in, the forum, as well as the youth’s ability to speak their minds.

Prof. Bakr participated and moderated many forum events, including the Vice-Chancellor’s Dialogue.

With respect to the forum’s format, Prof. Bakr has found it frustrating that some of the moderators took the role of speakers, so they would end up repeating what the speakers would already have said. “But for me, these are minor things,” she adds.

Prof. Bakr’s key takeaway on leadership is that although some African countries attained their independence more than 60 years ago and have very good Constitutions, they still do not have mechanisms that allow for smooth transitions of power. Transitions are commonly violent and not inclusive. Governance is therefore elitist and non-inclusive:

“We know how to write about it, we know how to have very good Constitutions. But when it comes to

implementation we have serious difficulties, and this is not a political issue only. This is an issue that has to do with our education and our ability to listen to each other.”

She says Africans need to accept differences and be more tolerant of divergent views. Governance is not a happy story for African countries, and we are all seeing what is happening currently in Sudan, Nigeria, Niger and Gabon. Similar trends have been in North Africa with the Arab Spring – which turned to be a sandstorm. “It has become a pattern of how we make change in Africa and how power rotation happens. It is unfortunate,” she says.

On funding of the Tana Forum, Prof. Bakr expresses her wish for it to be financed by African countries; this would give Africa, and the forum, independence. Nevertheless, Prof. Bakr says that even though the Tana Forum is funded by external donors, this does not affect the quality of solutions found for Africa by Africans.

Another success story for the Tana Forum, she feels, is high-level networking. People benefit more when they exchange ideas at a technical level, which they can take and implement in their own countries. The forum’s student essay competition is one of the ways in which it fosters pan-Africanism. The Tana Annual Book Launch initiative is also a way of encouraging African intellectualism, by recognising and rewarding intellectual contributions to peace and security in Africa. This adds significant value to the one already created by the generation of the background research papers.

Prof. Bakr thinks that the travel logistics need some improvement, especially for those participants who have flight connections. She notes that the visa and protocol sections at the airport in Addis Ababa need to be more proactive and make it easier for participants when they arrive. So, the organising team should give more detailed attention to logistics.

On regional representation at the forum, Prof. Bakr proposes that the North Africa region be better represented. She would like people from Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria to also experience the goodness and richness of the Tana Forum. And when it comes to the forum’s Advisory Board, there should be more diversity. “I feel that is as if North Africa is one thing, and the rest of Africa is another. Tana should be a melting pot of Africans.”

On her message of hope for Africa and young people, Prof. Bakr has this to say:



Prof. Noha Bakr

“To my generation, I think we need to adapt to all this new technology and artificial intelligence and be able to use them to empower the concepts of peace and security, which will not come without confronting our challenges of human rights, disrespect or exclusiveness. So, we have a duty to do more for the new generation.”

Turning to the youth, Prof. Bakr thinks that they are luckier than the older generation. They can travel more, to see and meet each other more. They are given more scholarships than their parents were, and so she thinks they should seize the opportunity to embark on security studies.

“I would want to advise young people to be patient. They need solutions immediately and our continent unfortunately does not have the financial capacity and know-how to change things too quickly.”

Prof. Bakr’s parting message: “United for African solutions.”



MELES ZENAWI LECTURE SERIES

The Meles Zenawi Lecture Series was launched in 2013 as a way of celebrating and honouring the life and contribution of the late Ethiopian Prime Minister, who had been behind the conceptualisation and launch of the Tana Forum. H.E. Zenawi passed away in August 2012, while still in office.

The lecture series presents a historical perspective of individual leaders who have left a strong legacy for Africa and the world in the social, economic and political arenas. It also keeps Africa's history alive and is a platform for the youth to learn leadership qualities from those who have passed on.

Over the years, several African leaders and their legacies have been acknowledged through the lecture series as follows:

2013: Meles Zenawi, Ethiopia, delivered by President Paul Kagame

2014: Nelson Mandela, South Africa, delivered by Prof.Adebayo Olukoshi

2015: Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana, delivered by Mr Ali Mufuruki

2016: Patrice Lumumba, Democratic Republic of Congo, delivered by Prof. Elikia M'Bokolo

2017: Wangarĩ Muta Maathai, Kenya, delivered by Mr Akere T Muna

2018: Gamal Abdel Nasser, Egypt, delivered by Ms Samia Nkrumah

2019: Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, South Africa, delivered by Prof.Adebayo Olukoshi

2020: Benjamin William Mkapa, Tanzania, delivered by Prof.Adebayo Olukoshi

2021: Thandika Mkandawire, Malawi, delivered by By Prof.Adebayo Olukoshi

2022: Kenneth Kaunda, Zambia, delivered by Ms Mundaula Kaunda and Dr Sishuwa Sishuwa



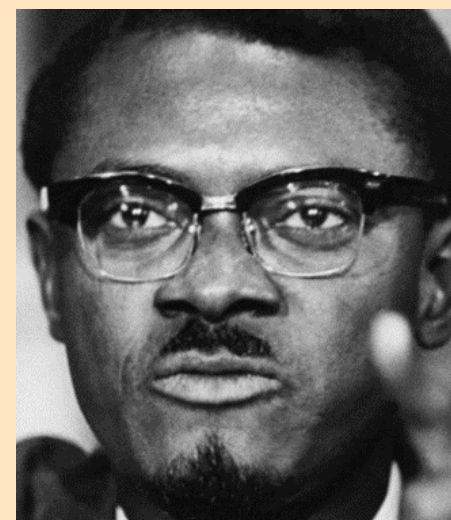
Meles Zenawi, Ethiopia, 2013.



Nelson Mandela, South Africa, 2014.



Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana, 2015.



Patrice Lumumba, Democratic Republic of Congo, 2016.



Wangari Maathai, Kenya, 2017.



Gamal Abdel Nasser, Egypt, 2018.



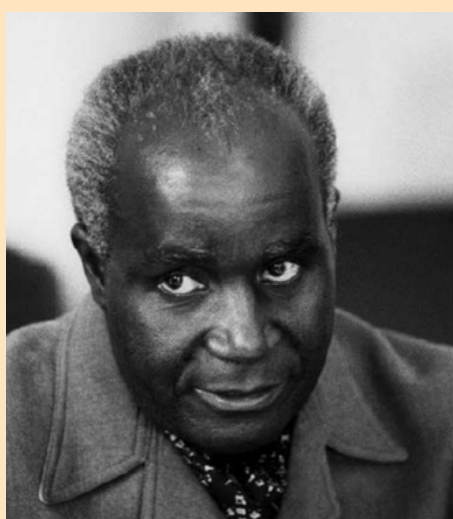
Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, South Africa, 2019



Benjamin William Mkapa, Tanzania, 2020



Thandika Mkandawire, Malawi, 2020



Kenneth Kaunda, Zambia, 2022



The 2018 Meles Zenawi Lecture on the legacy of Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, delivered by Ms Samia Nkrumah.

THE TANA FORUM ANNUAL ESSAY COMPETITION AND BOOK LAUNCH



Tana Forum African Annual Essay Competition winners for 2022: from left to right, third-placed Theodros Fisseha Admassu, of Ethiopia, on IGAD and the Mediation of Conflict in the Horn of Africa; overall winner Humphrey W Mrema, of Tanzania, on Using a Socio-Political Framework to Counter Climate Insecurities in Africa; and second-placed Noubadoumadji Bonidjita, of Chad, on Innovative Approaches to Combat Climate Insecurity in Africa. On the far right is the Tana Forum's Mr Sunday Okello, introducing the winners.



Tana Forum Annual Book Launch during the 6th Tana Forum in 2017: Making Africa Work: A Handbook for Economic Success, co-authored by Dr Greg Mills, Dr Jeffrey Herbst, Maj-Gen. (Rtd) Dickie Davis and H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo. Here Dr Mills, H.E. Obasanjo and former Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn introduce the book.



The Tana Forum Annual Book Launch in 2022.



Knowledge sharing at the IPSS publications stand.



Prof. Tim Murithi (right) receives the Tana @Ten Award issued on the 10th Anniversary of the Forum, with which 10 individuals and institutions were honoured, from forum Chairperson John Dramani Mahama. His award was for “three decades of contributing to peace, security, transitional justice, and governance research and practice in Africa”.

TREE PLANTING



Their Excellencies at the Tana Forum Park: (from left) H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, H.E. Paul Kagame, H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn and H.E. Yoweri Museveni.



Tree planting during the 10th Tana Forum, in 2022.



SOME OF THE **KEY** **INTERVIEWS** CONDUCTED TO MARK TEN YEARS OF THE TANA FORUM



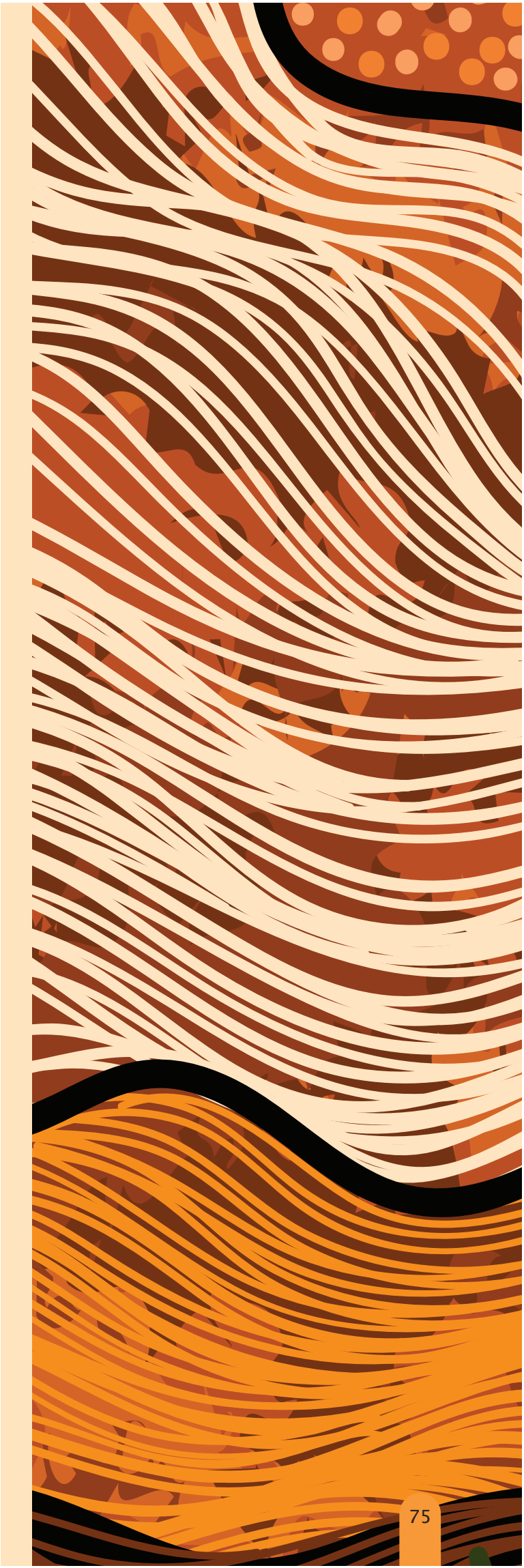
Interview with former Ethiopian Prime Minister and Tana Forum Advisory Board member Hailemariam Desalegn, 28 July 2023, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.



Interview with AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security Adeoye Bankole, 25 August 2023, Harare, Zimbabwe.



To the next 10 years of the Tana Forum.



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