



TANA AT 10:

REFLECTIONS ON THE 10 YEARS OF THE TANA HIGH-LEVEL
FORUM ON SECURITY IN AFRICA

HESPHINA RUKATO
FOREWORD BY H.E OLUSEGUN OBASANJO

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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 2021, 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 (IPSS), the African Union Commission (AUC) and related African institutions of higher learning to provide intellection back-up 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 Peace Security 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 able 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



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and government, ministers, 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 considering 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 (PCS), and the development and implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), as well as the African Governance Architecture (AGA).

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, 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 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 (OOPPL), 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.

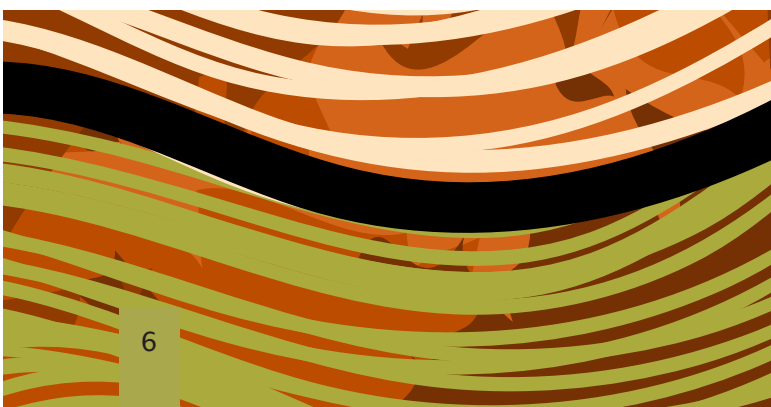
On behalf of the German Federal Government, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) has provided technical and financial support to the Tana High-Level Forum since its inception. Our commitment to fostering sustainable peace and development worldwide based on global knowledge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

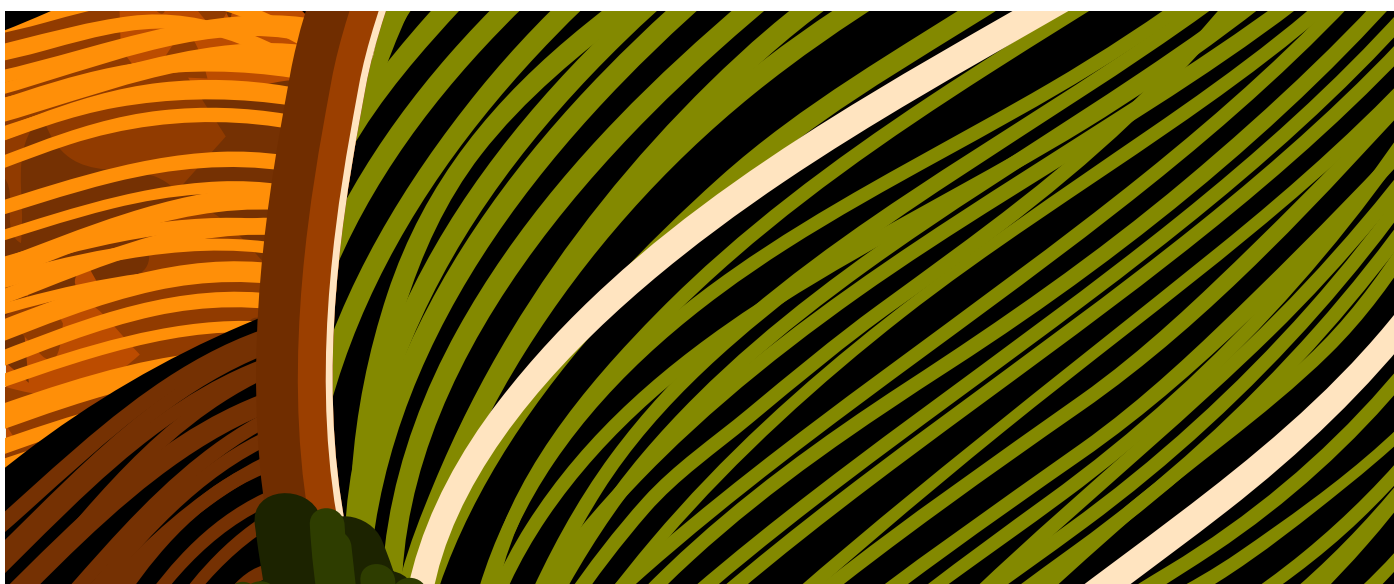
Over the years, the Tana Forum has evolved into a catalyst for change. As a platform for candid, strategic dialogue among key African decision-makers, it has shaped policies, inspired collective action and promoted a shared vision for a peaceful and prosperous global order. More crucially, perhaps, the 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. In particular, 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 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 Chairman, 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, the African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, provided much-needed time for an interview amid 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 Gebrehiwot; Dr. 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, 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, Kerry and Janah.

Hesphina Rukato, 16 April 2024, Harare, Zimbabwe.



INTRODUCTION

A review and analysis of the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa must be understood within the context of its purpose and objectives. It also needs to be understood within the context of the continent's peace and security situation at the time of the forum's conceptualisation.

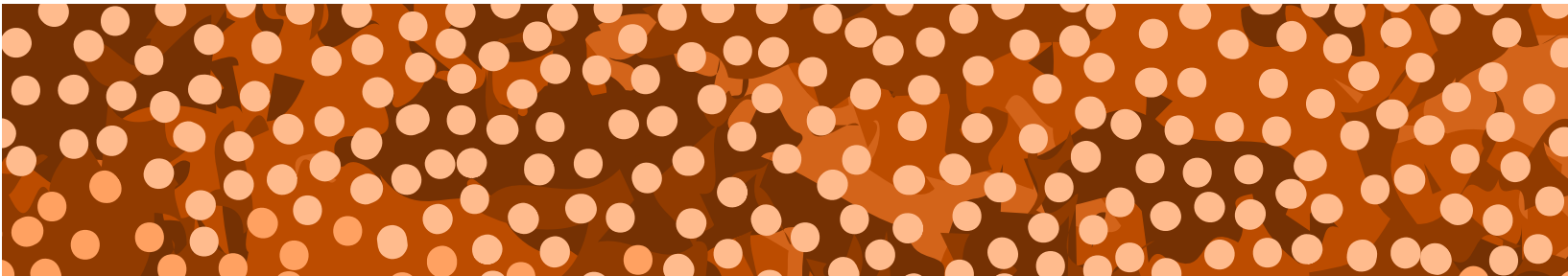
The forum was launched in 2012, in the aftermath of the so-called Arab Spring, at a time when the events that shifted the political landscape in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya were still very fresh in the minds of Africans. Mali and Guinea-Bissau were also experiencing some turmoil, and Somalia was also embroiled in conflict. The African Union (AU) and the Peace and Security Council (PSC) were seized with these matters. The Tana Forum was not meant to compete with the work of the AU Commission, but rather to complement the formal meetings of the AU in a spirit of collaboration and partnership.

The Tana Forum was not designed to make decisions or statements on its deliberations. At the outset, the main objectives of the Tana High Level Forum on Security in Africa were to:

1. Exchange experiences and insights on peace and security issues, with a view to exploring common approaches and taking home practical lessons learned.
2. Promote the strategic and proactive management of African peace and security issues.
3. Work towards effective African-led solutions to the continent's most pressing security challenges.
4. Contribute to building stronger ownership of, and a larger constituency for, such solutions.
5. Build on African voices for both African and global security dialogues.
6. Provide participants with unlimited opportunities to network.

The Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa was launched in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia, on 12 April 2012, after close to two years of conceptualisation and preparation. The forum has now become a major event on the global peace and security calendar. Each year, the Tana Secretariat undertakes rigorous and complex preparations, which include conceptualising a relevant theme, structuring a robust agenda and content, logistics (e.g. travel, accommodation and ground transportation) and communications. Forum security is provided by the Ethiopian government. Crucially, the preparation work also involves engaging with African diplomats within and outside Ethiopia.

These preparations are aimed at ensuring that all participants feel welcome and at ease during the two-day event, which is normally now preceded by related side events such as the Bahir Dar University Lecture, also known as the Vice-Chancellor's



Lecture Series – which is typically held on the day before the forum’s formal opening – and followed by the Meles Zenawi Lecture Series on the morning after the forum’s opening. Both events have become an integral part of the Forum’s programme.

In October 2022, the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa marked its 10-year anniversary. Many stakeholders reflected on the experience of the forum over the previous decade, with a dedicated session for sharing their reflections. While this was a valuable exercise, many of the shared reflections were anecdotal, and shared in sessions of less than an hour each. Given the forum’s importance as a platform for agenda-setting on peace and security in Africa, I conducted an in-depth review and analysis as part of what will, hopefully, become an ongoing process of archiving the forum’s evolution and outcomes.

This documentation and analysis will point to what needs to be done in future based on the forum’s identified successes and challenges to date. It will also act as a repository of the forum’s history, so that it forms an integral part of the history of peace and security in Africa. The review will consider new and emerging issues shaping the forum’s role in the continent’s broader peace and security agenda, including by considering issues such as the changing global order and the implications of artificial intelligence on global and African peace and security.

The publication and [video recordings](#) produced as part of this project will offer a reflection on the Tana Forum, which Africans in the peace and security sector have embraced as their own. Additionally, the forum’s best practices will serve as “lessons learnt” to inform policy, attitudes and behaviours for relevant institutions and practitioners across sectors. While the Tana Secretariat has a comprehensive archive of the Tana processes, this publication aims to further enhance the forum’s knowledge management and archiving.

MY INVOLVEMENT IN THE TANA FORUM

My initial role upon joining the Institute of Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) in July 2011, was to be Senior Adviser for High-Level Advocacy and Networking. I was responsible for delivering the following:

- A solid, high-level institutional network that is active

- Developing a framework for institutionalising the forum’s high-level network
- Ensuring a large constituency for, and ownership of, the forum in Africa

This was done under the auspices of the then IPSS Director, Dr Mulugeta Gebrehiwot, as well as the Head of the institute’s Africa Peace and Security Programme (APSP), Ms Michelle Ndiaye, and the APSP Programme Director, Mr Markus Koerner, who played an advisory role in the context of GIZ’s support to the IPSS. Prof. Andreas Eshete later became the forum’s Chief Executive Officer. As Special Adviser to the Ethiopian Prime Minister with the post of Minister, Prof. Eshete reported directly to the Office of the Prime Minister. At that time, we still had not received a date for the inaugural forum. When that date was eventually announced in 2012, Ms Ndiaye had left the IPSS and I was appointed as the coordinator of the first-ever Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa.

In this paper, I draw on my personal reflections on the evolution of the Tana Forum in its first 10 years. I also draw on the experiences of colleagues who have participated in and worked closely with the Tana Forum and its secretariat over time. I have further augmented these views with insights drawn from past forum reports, papers and the forum’s website, among other sources.

I pay special attention to the first Tana Forum, and how it set the tone and built a strong foundation for subsequent forums. It is also my intention for this publication to provide behind-the-scenes reflections on the foundational milestones of what has become a platform of global importance.

The story that follows will identify and analyse the successes and challenges of the Tana Forum in its first 10 years of existence. It will also identify and analyse the key sustainability factors for the Tana Forum’s future. It will make recommendations for the next 10 years of Tana, based on what worked and what did not work in the forum’s first decade. It also serves to provide a platform for African stakeholders to reflect on the benefits of the Tana Forum and share its best practices.

I hope that you will find this archiving of the Tana Forum journey enjoyable and enlightening.

Hesphina Rukato, 16 April 2024, Harare, Zimbabwe.

THE ORIGIN



The genesis of the Tana Forum on Security can be traced back to the 2009 Tripoli Declaration on the Elimination of Conflicts in Africa and the Promotion of Sustainable Peace. Through the adoption of the Tripoli Declaration, the African Union Assembly articulated the fact that creation and maintenance of peace, security and stability on the continent is the responsibility of all Africans. The assembly challenged academic institutions to take up peace and security as an intellectual and academic challenge. The declaration states that:

“*Making and sustaining peace and security is also an intellectual challenge. We therefore undertake to build the capacity of our universities and research institutes to explore the nature of African conflicts, to investigate what succeeds and what fails in conflict resolution efforts, and to arrive at African-centred solutions, drawing from our own distinctive and unique experience.*”

Considering this, the University of Addis Ababa's Institute of Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) embraced the call for academic institutions to contribute to addressing the intellectual challenge of peace and security in Africa. The IPSS then engaged the AU Commission (AUC), resulting in the two organisations entering into a partnership.

THE ADDIS ABABA ROUND TABLE

While the IPSS engaged with the AU Commission on partnership and collaboration, it was also in conversation with then Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the late Meles Zenawi, on the conceptualisation of what ended up being the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa. Hence, the Tana Forum

ended up being a conference convened and hosted by the IPSS and the Ethiopian government, with the strong participation of the AUC.

Prior to the establishment and Tana Forum's launch in April 2012, an important event, the Addis Ababa Round Table on Peace and Security in Africa, was held in 2010 with the theme, "African security in the face of asymmetrical threats." Key target participants for the convening included ministers of defence of African states.

The round table was held in the context of the African Union's 2010 Year of Peace and Security, even though the long-term objective was to institutionalise the concept of an annual gathering of high-level African leaders and personalities to discuss peace and security matters on the continent. In communication on the budding partnership with the AUC, the then director of the IPSS, Dr Mulugeta Gebrehiwot, at the time stated that:

“The partnership between the IPSS and the African Union on the Addis Ababa Round Table is part of a broader collaboration that includes the provision of advanced training for African peace and security professionals, as well as the development of a network of researchers. Through this collaboration, the IPSS also benefits from German support, in this case provided by GTZ.”ⁱⁱ

The round table was thus the first initiative towards the Tana Forum by the three key actors.

After rigorous consultations with relevant stakeholders, the IPSS decided to focus on the following critical areas within the African peace and security space:ⁱⁱⁱ

- **Applied research:** aimed at providing policy advice to the AU and its Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and promoting networking among African research institutions
- **Training:** bringing together decision-makers to build capacity and inform the IPSS's Africa Peace and Security Programme (APSP) about their needs as practitioners, to feed the other components of the programme. Capacity building in peace and security, which culminated in the ongoing Managing Peace and Security in Africa (MPSA) initiative – an executive training programme, the delivery of which ensures that participants do not have to take time away from work
- **Outreach:** building the APSP profile and visibility through networking and partnerships
- **The Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa:** fostering regular interactions between policymakers and setting the agenda on peace and security for the AU, linked to the early-warning system of the AU, and addressing the continent's structural problems. This culminated in a round table in 2010, and ultimately the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa in 2012

According to the IPSS, it is within this context that in 2010:

“The AU, the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) of Addis Ababa University and the German government entered into a tripartite agreement to enhance the capacity development of personnel working at the AUC, the RECs and member states. This is how the Managing Peace and Security in Africa programme was born. This Pan-African programme aims to promote advanced education anchored on understanding how African institutions function and to develop the wherewithal – technical competencies – to support these institutions.”^{iv}

This background is important for highlighting that the launch and continued delivery of the Tana Forum was not an overnight event. Rather, it was a deliberate and well-conceived initiative meant to address real structural challenges in Africa's quest for peace and security. In the same way that the MPSA had a dedicated process for its operationalisation,



a different strand was required for the operationalisation of the agenda-setting conference on peace and security in Africa. In short, the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa was initiated by the IPSS, with Ethiopian Prime Minister Zenawi its champion.^v

AT THE CORE OF THE TANA FORUM

The Tana Forum is for “... promoting dialogue as a fundamental, peaceful and durable means to resolving conflict, and to demonstrate that diversity is strength, and not a source of conflict.”^{vi}

The forum’s objectives are to:

- Promote strategic and proactive management of African peace and security issues
- Work towards effective, African-led solutions to the continent’s most pressing security challenges
- Contribute to building stronger ownership of, and a larger constituency for, such solutions
- Build an African voice for both African and global security dialogues^{vii}

Among the attributes that set the forum apart from other peace and security gatherings is the high intensity and frankness of dialogue by participants on African peace and security. For this to happen, it was intended that the forum would bring together around 70-90 participants who would include heads of state and government. The format would include panel presentations, followed by intense discussions. The forum’s success was to be measured by the quality of discussions and how these discussions would assist the AU to be proactive in setting its peace and security agenda.

The principle of inclusivity is at the forum’s core, and H.E. Zenawi was emphatic in realising this from the onset. He particularly endeavoured to ensure the buy-in of key political players on the continent – especially South Africa and Nigeria given their strategic importance in Africa, both economically and politically. H.E. Zenawi’s view was that for the conference to survive, these two needed to understand and agree to its objectives and its value-addition to African peace and security policy.

Even though the Tana Forum was conceptualised as an African initiative, H.E. Zenawi understood the fact that the forum’s successful launch and delivery required sustainable and diversified sources of funding. Therefore, he appreciated and was grateful that the German government was willing to fund the conference launch. However, the conference was to “... be fully owned by Africans”. Other funding opportunities that were being considered at the time included from Chinese and Indian partners. Attempts to diversify the sources of funding for the forum were aimed at ensuring full African control of agenda-setting, without financial limitations and over-reliance on any one funder.^{viii}

H.E. Zenawi committed financial support from the Ethiopian government, which has been channelled through Ethiopian Airlines in the form of sponsored air tickets for invited guests and participants. Indeed, concessions have been provided by the airline for participants over the past 10 years. The Prime Minister also supported that the conference be named the Lake Tana High-Level Security Conference, and that its venue be in Bahir Dar. He was emphatic that serious consideration be given to the conference venue to ensure good standards. His view was that if the venue was to be Bahir Dar, then the preparatory team would need to work closely with hotels to ensure they would meet the required standards. At the time, there were very few hotels in Bahir Dar.

Notably, the forum's success hinged on its relationship with the AU. The late Prime Minister proposed that it should not be organised in collaboration with the AU. Even though that might have been a political imperative, its practicality was in doubt mainly because the AU's mandate would not enable it to undertake such an initiative outside its usual summits. His view was that just the mere fact of bringing such an idea to the AU Summit would result in member states competing for hosting it. Such a scenario would have been awkward for Ethiopia, as it was already playing a leading role in the forum's inception and preparation.

As such, it was decided that the best way of bringing in the AU was through harnessing the bilateral support of key member states to launch the forum, after which the AU could ride on it without taking direct ownership of it. This was the basis upon which the Prime Minister then encouraged the IPSS to continue preparing for the conference, while he focused on acquiring political buy-in from key member states and exploring diversified financial support.

In his letter to former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, H.E. Zenawi stated, "The Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) of Addis Ababa University is working together with the AU Commission and a number of other African institutions of higher learning to provide intellectual back-up for the commission's work on peace and security".^x



African political decision-makers will interact and consult with a broad-based constituency, as well as with global actors and scholars, within a substantive, open debate on peace and security issues that are of strategic importance to the continent. The High-Level Forum complements regular formal meetings of African leaders, regional institutions and African Union Member States.^{xii}

Prime Minister Zenawi saw the forum as a complementary mechanism to the work of the AU on peace and security in Africa. He underscored the critical need to strategically link the forum to the AU, while avoiding a situation in which the AU or its organs directly hosted or led it.

THE FORMAT

The forum's format is mostly informal in terms of setting. The forum is high level, and the number of participants is limited.

Its targeted participants are "... heads of states and/or governments; distinguished leaders of regional and sub-regional bodies, the private sector and concerned civil society from Africa; eminent personalities from politics and media; as well as representatives of African and non-African multilateral bodies and important partner countries".^x The forum is meant to complement, and not compete with, the regular and statutory meetings of African leaders, be it at the level of the AU and its organs or RECs.

The setting and format were meant to allow participants to "exchange experiences and insights on peace and security issues in view of exploring common approaches and taking home practical lessons learnt". This was to be done through panel discussions and interactions with participants on the floor. The panellists and the floor would share their insights, guided by a moderator who would ensure efficient time management while working to achieve the broader objective of each session in a transparent manner^l.

By the time of its launch, the forum had already been designated an annual event with a specific focus on "prevailing peace and security issues on the continent". Each year, a limited set of African leaders would meet to exchange views on the state of peace and security on the continent. They would be joined by international eminent persons, chief executive officers (CEOs) from the private sector and civil society representatives, as well as think tanks^{xi}. Former President Obasanjo summarised the forum as a platform where:



It is a platform for rich, free and personal discussions that are not burdened by institutional representations. Over time, this approach would result in the strengthening of the African voice in African and global policies on peace and security.

During the Second Forum in 2013, forum CEO Prof. Andreas Eshete went further, suggesting that the forum was:

“ ... An opportunity to interrogate, and even stretch, the limits of legitimate public deliberation on Africa public policy on matters of peace and security. In light of Africa's intractable and swiftly changing problems of peace and security, the reflective search for unexplored options and fresh perspectives [was] a matter of urgency.”^{xiii}

THE VENUE

As noted earlier, the choice of venue for the conference was very deliberate. From the onset, a decision had been made at the highest level that the Tana Forum would be held in Bahir Dar, the capital of Amhara National Regional State, situated on the shore of Lake Tana. The main reason was to ensure that the participants would focus on the business at hand, and not be distracted by the hustle and bustle of Addis Ababa or the complexities of diplomacy. Early on, the Tana Secretariat visited the proposed venue and its surrounding areas.



Image 1: The Tana Secretariat team on the initial site visit to Bahir Dar, 2011. Pictured here are (from left) Dr Hespina Rukato, Ms Billene Seyoum, Ms Karoline Klose and Ms Lettie Longwe of the Tana Secretariat.



Image 2: 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 choice of venue for the forum was very much modelled on the Munich Security Conference. Bahir Dar was strategically chosen not just for its beauty, but its historical and tourism attributes. As noted by Prof. Eshete:

“*Bahir Dar is one of the leading tourist attractions in Ethiopia, situated along the shores of Lake Tana, Ethiopia’s largest lake and the source of the Blue Nile. Other than the breathtaking view of Lake Tana, the city gets its beauty from the avenues lined with palm trees and a variety of colourful flowers. Bahir Dar is a rich part of Ethiopian history.*”^{xiv}

After the initial visit to assess the venue, the team concluded that it was not suitable, primarily because it was not sufficiently secure due to its proximity to the lake and the incomplete construction of the main hotel. After the visit, the secretariat team compiled a report in which it proposed that other locations in Ethiopia be considered for hosting the main forum venue – for example, Addis Ababa or Hawassa. The feedback from the Office of the Prime Minister was for the team to focus on logistical preparations for holding the Forum in Bahir Dar. In hindsight, it is clear that at that stage the preparatory team had become bogged down in the forum’s technical aspects, while neglecting to give enough space to consider the intricacies of the forum’s strategic positioning from the host country’s perspective.

From the start of organising the forum, the main confirmed sponsor was GIZ. Since this was the first such event of its kind, officials from the GIZ office in Addis Ababa also joined the secretariat on the venue exploratory visit. With such a large investment into the forum’s launch, it is understandable that GIZ wanted to ensure that its financial support would be put to good use.

FORUM LOGO: WHY THE BAOBAB TREE?

Symbolism is important, especially in the African context. As such, the team acknowledged that the Tana Forum had to have a logo that symbolised something important for Africa, aligned to the forum’s peace and security agenda. After much consultation, we chose the baobab tree as the logo of the Tana Forum. The choice of the baobab tree was premised on the historical belief and – as stated on the Tana website – the understanding that:

“*... Kings and elders would hold meetings under the baobab tree, with the belief that the tree’s spirits would guide them in decision-making. In more modern times, the baobab tree is commonly used as a venue for community meetings or even as a classroom.*”^{xv}



Image 3: The Tana Forum logo, signifying the baobab tree.



Image 4: A baobab tree.

Thus, the baobab tree represents a sense of community, human interconnectedness, the sharing of wisdom, and conversations between village elders and the youth.

COURTING THE CHAIR

Initially, various names were shortlisted for the role of Chairperson of the forum. There was at least one candidate per region of the continent (East, Central, North, South and West Africa)^{xvi}. Among the most important attributes for the role were that the candidate had to be a former head of state and government, someone who commanded respect and had “persuasive powers”. This was critical because some of the forum’s participants were to be both former and current heads of state and government. It was therefore important to have a chairperson who could engage with heads of state and government at their level. Experience with international and African diplomacy, and the ability to interact across all levels of society, were also important attributes.

After some brainstorming, the team proposed that then Prime Minister Zenawi consider H.E. President Olusegun Obasanjo for the role. H.E. Zenawi subsequently sent a letter to H.E. Obasanjo, inviting him to be the forum’s first Chairman, highlighting the important role the forum would play in the continent’s peace and security agenda. The letter was delivered to H.E. Obasanjo by the Director of the IPSS at the time, Dr Mulugeta Gebrehiwot, and me, in my capacity as Tana Forum Coordinator.

FIRST AND SECOND MEETINGS WITH H.E. OBASANJO

The IPSS team held its first meeting with former President Obasanjo at his home in Nigeria on 8 August 2011. The team comprised Drs Gebrehiwot and Rukato. The purpose of the meeting was to deliver a request from then Prime Minister Zenawi for former President Obasanjo to chair the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa.

The team also presented the former President with a letter from Prime Minister Zenawi, in which he requested that H.E. Obasanjo “support the IPSS in its efforts in hosting a successful forum, and for him to favourably consider the request to chair the forum”.^{xvii} After some initial discussion, H.E. Obasanjo agreed to chair the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa. He proposed that the first forum be held from 10-11 December 2011. He further proposed that he would write a welcome letter to all invitees, with a view to encouraging them to participate. His letter would accompany the invitation letter from H.E. Zenawi.

In the meeting with H.E. Obasanjo, we also discussed the formation of an advisory group which would work closely with the forum's Chair and the secretariat to institutionalise and prepare future annual forums. H.E. Obasanjo advised that the advisory group be international in composition and that it be comprised of not more than seven people. He was of the view that members needed to be committed individuals who would diligently attend to the functions and role of the group. He added that ideally, the group would meet annually in June to ensure that its discussions could be factored into the forum's planning process in December each year. H.E. Obasanjo committed to writing to proposed members of the advisory group, to request their participation.

In line with former Prime Minister Zenawi's recommendation that sources of financing for the forum be diversified and sustainable, the IPSS proposed the formation of an endowment fund to the Chairperson, who was supportive of the idea and an initial funding target of US\$10-million was agreed to as a start. In the short term, the IPSS would work to secure confirmed funding for three years, while also seeking to diversify the forum's long-term funding sources.

The Chairperson was also willing to convene a round table of private sector stakeholders to explore the option of private sector support. The idea at the time was for this round table to be held in Addis Ababa at a date yet to be decided on, and H.E. Zenawi was expected to participate at the event, along with other high-level dignitaries.

The second meeting, held on 15 August 2011, ended with the Chairperson reiterating his commitment to work with the IPSS to make the forum a success and to develop it into an international event. He proposed to have a follow-up meeting a week after the initial meeting of his planned visit to Addis Ababa.

Following the first meeting with the Chairperson at his home in Nigeria on 8 August 2011, the IPSS team met him again, at the Hilton Hotel in Addis Ababa. The IPSS delegation consisted of Dr Gebrehiwot, Mr Frank Djan Owusu and me. The meeting was important for finalising several logistical and technical areas for moving the forum into its final stages of conceptualisation. For example, we informed the Chairperson that the list of participants was being finalised in consultation with the Office of the Prime Minister.^{xviii}

During the meeting, the Chairperson agreed that a forum flyer be shared widely and be used on the website. The Chairperson was also briefed that H.E. Meles Zenawi had approved of the dual themes in the form they had been presented to him, namely "Managing Diversity and State Fragility". The meeting also finalised the Chairperson's quote and photograph for the Forum, which were to be shared where appropriate. The meeting also discussed the Chairperson's letter of welcome, as well as the draft funding strategy.



Image 5: Dr Hesphina Rukato, H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, and Dr Mulugeta Gebrehiwot.

DISCUSSION ON ENGAGEMENT WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR

In this second meeting, we presented a list of private sector stakeholders that we viewed as ideally suited for being invited to the round table. H.E. Obasanjo reviewed it and was satisfied. He informed the meeting that he would be visiting Addis Ababa “very soon” to meet with H.E. Zenawi on a matter related to the AU. He said that after this meeting, he wanted to meet with the IPSS and the Prime Minister to discuss the forum, and how best to bring the private sector on board. He noted that it would be important to get H.E. Zenawi’s endorsement before signing the invitation letters to private sector stakeholders who had been earmarked for involvement.

The Chairperson proposed that we organise a breakfast meeting with the private sector on 11 December – on the margins of the forum – instead of having a separate event before the forum. He proposed that invitation letters to private sector CEOs specify that the Prime Minister and the Chairperson would co-host a private sector breakfast session. There would not be more than 33 private sector participants drawn from across the continent. He also planned to discuss the matter of the round table separately with the Prime Minister.

MEETING BLOOPERS

The third meeting with the Chairperson was a success. However, it also ended in one of this writer’s most embarrassing personal moments in the history of the forum: the technological failure the IPSS team experienced when it came time to take a photo with the Chairperson. The camera simply jammed, and the Chairperson teased the team for its lack of technological preparedness. After some desperate shaking, pressing, and switching the camera on and off, we managed to shoot the photo below (*Image 6*). Unfortunately, Mr Owusu is not in the picture as he had kindly volunteered to take it.

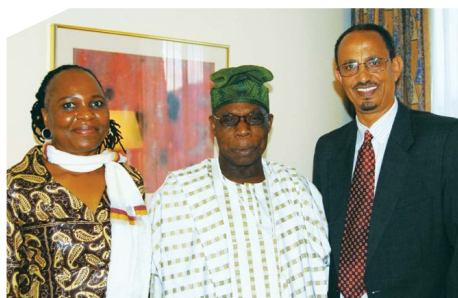


Image 6: After much difficulty with getting our camera to work, we documented the end of the third meeting with H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo with this photo. Frank Djan Owusu, who also attended the meeting, took the photo. From Left: Dr Hesphina Rukato, H.E. Obasanjo and Dr Mulugeta Gebrehiwot.



Image 7: The IPSS team visit to the forum Chairperson. From left: Dr Mulugeta Gebrehiwot, the Director of the IPSS, Dr Hesphina Rukato, Coordinator of the Tana Forum, Prof. Andreas Eshete, CEO of the Tana Forum, and H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, Chairperson of the Tana Forum.

THIRD MEETING WITH H.E. OBASANJO

The third and last visit by the IPSS team to the forum's Chairperson was held on 2 March 2012, and was led by Prof. Andreas Eshete, who had been appointed the forum CEO, Dr Mulugeta Gebrehiwot and me. The purpose of the meeting was to update Chairperson Obasanjo on three key developments:

1. After the second meeting, Prof. Eshete had been appointed as the forum CEO. This was a proposal by Prime Minister Zenawi, meant to ensure that he was kept updated on the strategic issues relating to the forum.
2. The proposed list of forum Board members for the forum had been finalised, and we needed the Chairperson to sign the invitation letters to the selected individuals.^{xix}
3. To ask the Chairperson to come to Addis Ababa and have a press conference on the Forum for the international community.

CONTENT PREPARATION



Image 8: A part view of the Kuriftu Resort & Spa Lake Tana



Image 9: Members of the first Tana Forum content preparation team.



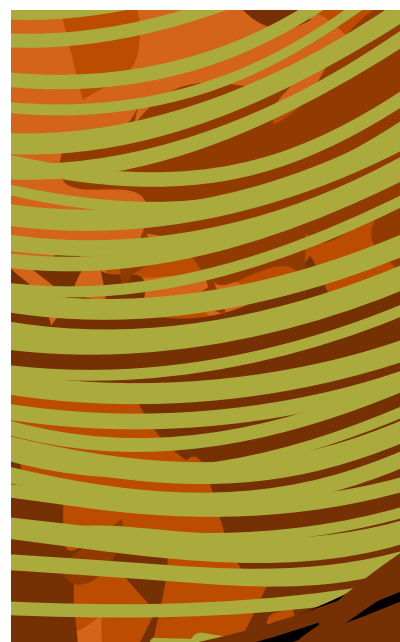
Image 10: First Tana Forum preparation workshop participants.



Image 11: Work is done on the content preparation workshop for the first Tana Forum.



Image 12: Not leaving anything to chance – content preparation continues.



As part of the preparations for the first forum, the IPSS held a preparatory workshop in Bahir Dar from 29-30 September 2011, with a view to ensuring that preparatory documents aptly captured the peace and security landscape of the continent. We invited key players and experts in the regional peace and security sector to participate, with the aim of capturing regional and continental perspectives.

AMBASSADORS' BRIEFINGS AND THE PRESS CONFERENCE

Prior to the Tana Forum each year, the Tana Secretariat convenes ambassadors' and press briefings targeted respectively at ambassadors and journalists based in Addis Ababa (images 12 and 13). The main purpose of the ambassadors' briefing is to appraise diplomats on the background to the forum, the forum's themes for the year, and invited guests and speakers, as well as the forum's expected outcomes. Ambassadors are also expected to share this information with their capitals, especially those whose heads of state and government have been invited. The press briefings are targeted at local, regional and international media based in Ethiopia. The main benefit of such briefings is ensuring that all participants have the same level of understanding of the forum's substance, etiquette and logistics. The media is particularly important for raising awareness about the forum before, during and after it is held.

INITIAL PARTICIPANTS AND SPEAKERS

For most of the high-level participants, the IPSS Secretariat held briefings with relevant embassies in Addis Ababa to ensure that they would be prepared to receive their delegations and brief them accordingly. This engagement was aimed at ensuring that all delegates had the same level of information.



Image 13: The first press conference for the inaugural Tana Forum. From left, Dr Hesphina Rukato, H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, Prof. Andreas Eshete.



Image 14: Prof. Andreas Eshete responds to questions from members of the media.

Key principles and criteria that guided the choice of participants included:

- Expertise in peace and security
- Experience in peace and security
- Personal representation, not institutional, which is why the presentation of papers and prepared statements was not allowed
- Regional representation
- Gender considerations
- Youth considerations

The invitations were specific. This presented a challenge in cases where a head of state and government could not attend. For such cases, we agreed that the ambassador in Addis Ababa could not represent their leader, making it clear that the invitations were personal and non-transferrable.

To attract the most relevant speakers, the secretariat engaged targeted participants by clarifying the forum's concept and enticing them to participate. For example, we had to go to Maputo, Mozambique, to engage with the former Prime Minister of Mozambique, Dr Luísa Diogo. (Image 15).



Image 15: On a mission to brief the former Prime Minister of Mozambique on the objectives of the Tana Forum: Dr Luísa Diogo (left) and Dr Hesphina Rukato.

UNIVERSITY LECTURES

The Bahir Dar University Lecture was launched alongside the first edition of the forum. The lecture had two key objectives: the first was to foster an intellectual buzz in the city and within the academic, policy and practitioner circles that would be interested in, or attending, the forum. In this way the lecture acted as a teaser or a sort of a warm-up to the conference.

The second objective was to give high-level African personalities the opportunity to engage the university's students and staff on issues pertinent to Africa. The Bahir Dar University Lecture, and the Vice-Chancellor's Dialogue, have become permanent features of the forum for the past 10 years.

THE FIRST TANA FORUM BEGINS

The week before the forum launch was busy with final preparations. The Tana Secretariat had been meeting with the Ethiopian authorities to finalise details with respect to flights, hotel accommodation both in Addis Ababa and in Bahir Dar, and scheduling flights with Ethiopian Airlines.

The team was excited; even though we had spent close to a year preparing for the inaugural forum, no one knew what to expect, since such an event had never been held in Africa. An early source of comfort had come when almost all the invitees had confirmed participation, including the VIPs. All infrastructure works at Bahir Dar Airport had been completed, and the Blue Nile Resort was ready to host the expected large number of guests, for the first time. The entire team was ready in terms of substantive and logistical preparations.

The programme of the first Tana Forum was very simple, but effective^{xx} (Annexure I). It comprised four sessions over the course of the three days. Each session comprised approximately two-and-a-half hours of presentations (one hour), discussions (one hour) and closing (30 minutes). The limited number of themes under discussion allowed for in-depth discussions, and most participants had a chance to make interventions.



Image 16: Dr Hesphina Rukato delivers remarks on behalf of the IPSS team.



Image 17: Prof. Andreas Eshete delivers his opening remarks



Image 18: Former President Olusegun Obasanjo speaks



Image 19: Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi delivers his opening remarks.



Image 20: Group photo at the end of the 1st Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa.

A SUMMARY OF TANA FORUM THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OVER 10 YEARS

The first Tana Forum ended on a high note, laying a strong foundation for the forums to come. This chapter provides a summary of Tana Forum themes from 2012-2022, together with recommendations arising from each discussion held under each theme. As highlighted earlier, implementation of the recommendations stemming from Tana Forum discussions is not the responsibility of the Tana organisers. Rather, it is the duty and responsibility of all participants to take these recommendations and implement them in their own spaces.

2012-2022 TANA THEMES AND THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS

Below is a summary of the themes covered by the Tana Forum over the past 10 years. The themes were chosen on the basis of their relevance and timeliness to Africa's peace, security and stability agenda. There was rigorous strategic preparation for each of the forums, involving the Advisory Board, the Technical Committee and the Tana Secretariat.

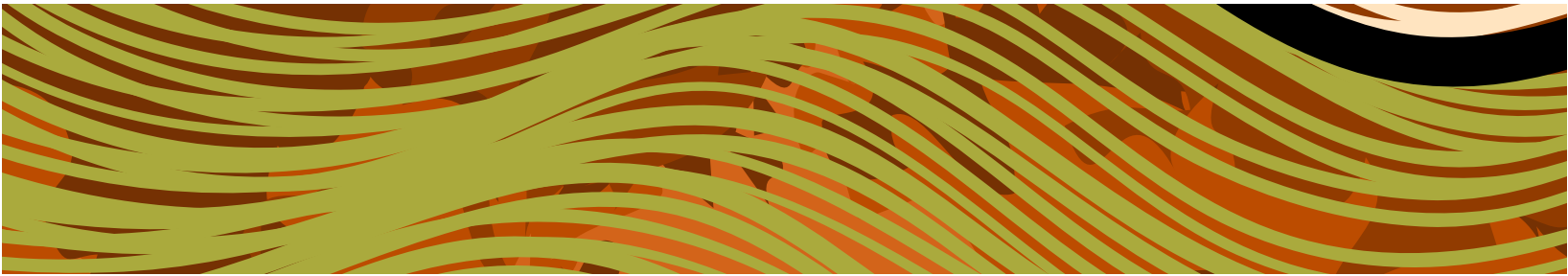
In each case, additional expertise was brought on board to provide support and generate background research papers for the themes. These papers now constitute part of the knowledge base of the Tana Secretariat and are a critical part of the knowledge legacy of the Tana Forum.

Details of each of the theme discussions and background papers are available on the Tana Forum website, at <https://tanaforum.org/>. This section will simply highlight the recommendations of each of the forums as these are key to the setting of the AU's implementation agenda. It is therefore clear that the Tana Forum has done a superb job in identifying key peace, security and stability threats to the continent.

What now remains is for implementing agencies, civil society and the private sector to implement these recommendations, with the support of the international community and the United Nations.

1. MANAGING DIVERSITY AND STATE FRAGILITY, 11-12 APRIL 2012

The issue of managing diversity was seen as critical to governance in Africa, and intrinsically linked to conflict and instability on the continent. Poor, or lack of, diversity management continues to be the source of conflict on



the continent. Diversity could be economic, tribal, ethnic or religious.

State fragility was also identified as a key factor in the continent's peace and security spectrum. After intense discussions, the forum made some recommendations that could be implemented by relevant stakeholders towards managing diversity and state fragility in Africa.

RECOMMENDATIONS:^{XXI}

The forum recommended a reassessment of Africa's policies towards "fragile states" to consider the African context. It stressed the need for peace building to focus on negotiating inclusive agreements and arrangements among the elite, instead of focusing on institutions that take a long time to build.

There was also a call for the private sector to be brought to the table for inclusive partnership building. Another call was made for the regulation of political competition at the national level to ensure that available resources are channelled towards strengthening post-conflict stability and economic growth.

2. SECURITY AND ORGANISED CRIME IN AFRICA, 20-21 APRIL 2013

The theme, "Security and Organised Crime in Africa", was declared relevant for Africa at the time given the conflicts that were flaring up on the continent, from the Arab Spring in North Africa to instability in Mali, as well as other parts of Africa.

Such conflict situations were seen as breeding grounds for organised crimes such as human trafficking, the trade in illegal weapons, weapon sales, sexual slavery, organ harvesting, piracy and illegally exploiting natural resources.

The post-Gaddafi era in Libya is an example of how power vacuums create a multiplicity of factors that give rise to organised crime, with various factions asserting independence and power. In this case, the spill-over effects have been felt in the whole of the Sahel region, with uncontrolled movement of weapons into neighbouring states.

The Darfur conflict was rooted in a lack of resources but was worsened by arms dealings and other organised criminal activities. Other factors such as the scramble for political power, for example in the Central African Republic; election-related violence, such as in Kenya; or competition over resources, such as in Sudan, all give rise to organised crime. Other factors include ethnic-based conflict, intra-state conflict and terrorism-related activities, such as in Somalia.

RECOMMENDATIONS:^{XXII}


There was a strong call for the implementation of existing legal instruments that are aimed at curbing, deterring and monitoring money laundering and related criminal activities. The adoption and implementation of mediation activities was also recommended as a strong mechanism for deterring individuals from joining criminal groups and become law-abiding citizens.

Establishment of vocational training programmes is an approach to ensure that young people are gainfully occupied. Diversity management and inclusion in the mainstay of the economy are also ways of deterring citizens from criminal activity.

Only strong African leadership, comprising both the young and the elderly, can stem the tide of organised crime. No single generation can do it alone. With respect to drug trafficking, Africa should identify the extent of the problem based on its own self-interest and realities, and reject external definitions coined by other interests. Africa should develop its own strategies for combating drug and human trafficking. Overall, the AU should take the lead in ensuring the peace, security and stability of the continent. The international community should be there to support the AU's efforts.

3. IMPACT OF ILLICIT FINANCIAL FLOWS ON PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA, 26-27 APRIL 2014

Historically, the impacts of illicit financial flows (IFFs) on peace, security and stability have gone unnoticed



and unrecorded. Yet the net loss of IFFs affects countries and companies through loss of revenue, investment, markets and legitimacy.

Ultimately, this results in the disenfranchisement of citizens, exposing them to violence and lack of access to basic services. Ultimately, countries lose much-needed revenue^{xxiii}. The Thabo Mbeki Report on IFFs revealed that:

“African countries lose on average \$50-billion annually through illicit financial flows. Commercial activities by the private sector are by far the largest contributor to IFFs, followed by organised crime, then public sector activities.”^{xxiv}

The huge implications that IFFs have on the continent's economic, human and social security made this a prime topic for discussion at the 3rd Tana Forum.

RECOMMENDATIONS:^{xxv}

The forum recommended that Africa should have visionary leadership that is conscious of, and committed to fight, IFF across the continent. The executive arm of governments should strive to root out endemic corruption within their systems. National, regional, continental and international mechanisms should be developed to enhance transparency and law enforcement.

It was also recommended that the secrecy behind jurisdictions that establish IFF-facilitating industries should be exposed. At the core of fighting IFF is the creation of democratic developmental states that are inclusive. Importantly, African governments should prioritise addressing tax evasion by multinational companies. However, this can only be possible if African think tanks and research institutions undertake empirical research in the area of investment.

For their part, governments should establish financial intelligence units and harmonise tax policies across the continent. Non-state actors such as civil society should also play a key role in fighting IFFs. Lastly, the AU and RECs should develop common standards to combat IFFs.

4. SECULARISM AND POLITICISED FAITH, 18-19 APRIL 2015

The 2015 theme was prioritised due to then-nascent faith-based movements whose actions were having widespread impacts on peace, security, and stability throughout Africa.

The theme was prioritised during a period when Africa was experiencing several faith-based acts of terrorism; from Al-Shabaab attacks at a university residence in Garissa, Kenya, to violent reaction in Niger to the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo; the Boko Haram kidnapping of young girls in Nigeria; and sectarian conflict in the Central African Republic. According to the IPSS:

“Faith, be it organised religion or traditional beliefs, continues to play a major role in the lives of ordinary Africans. But our Africa in 2025 is a continent where secularism is under attack with faith-based systems continually manipulated to meet political ends, address grievances and recruit disenchanted youth.”^{xxvi}

The negative impact of faith-based conflicts on the peace and security fabric of the continent cannot be over-emphasised. The forum held insightful discussions on the theme, and key recommendations emerged.^{xxvii}



RECOMMENDATIONS:^{xxviii}

Participants recommended the design and implementation of mechanisms that enable early detection of religious beliefs, tenets and practices that have potential to endanger both state and citizen security.

African leadership should acknowledge the presence of diversity and develop strategies to manage it, including through multi-stakeholder engagements with a view to fostering nation-building and co-existence of diverse groups.

All stakeholders and institutions should endeavour to monitor the role and activities of radicalised groups to protect peace and stability. Governments should also create spaces for inclusivity across sectors of society, especially of marginalised groups whose voices need to be heard and expectations met. Emphasis should be on women and girls.

In this context, governments should enforce and demonstrate their commitments to human dignity, human rights, inclusion, tolerance, equity and the rule of law.

5. AFRICA IN THE GLOBAL SECURITY AGENDA, 16-17 APRIL 2016

The 5th Tana Forum was held under the theme, “Africa in the Global Security Agenda”. The forum was also a celebration of its fifth anniversary, a milestone that bolstered much hope and optimism on the impact the forum was having on Africa’s peace, security and stability agenda. In his opening remarks at the forum the Chairperson, H.E. Obasanjo, remarked that



“For us to be able to explore Africa’s standing in the international security architecture, we have to ask ourselves critical questions, such as how we perceive ourselves as Africans and how others perceive us.”^{xxix}

Given the duality of the exploration of Africa’s place in the global sphere, the Chairperson called on both African and non-African participants to discuss the continent’s current and prospective role openly and frankly, in a world that is increasingly becoming interconnected.


RECOMMENDATIONS:^{xxx}

The forum took note of the need to place the continent in the centre of decision-making within the global multilateral system, with particular emphasis on the United Nations Security Council. It is within the Security Council that “issues relating to the continent’s security interests, priorities and alternative futures are discussed and determined”.^{xxxi} In this context, participants discussed the theme and the following key issues and recommendations emerged.

Human security should be prioritised by all governments through the provision of well-being and access to subsidised socio-economic opportunities, as well as citizen security over that of regime security.

Collective interest should take precedence over narrow national interests if Africa’s voice is to be heard globally, especially with respect to its presence in the UN Security Council.

There is urgency in ensuring that the key pillars of the African Peace and Security Architecture are made fully functional and responsive in terms of conflict prevention, conflict management, conflict resolution, and tackling the challenges of post-war reconstruction and development. AU member states should also give more power to amplifying and unifying Africa’s voice on the global platform,



including ceding part of their sovereignty to the AU. Member states should comply with agreed-upon Africa common positions, including ratification and domestication of all AU decisions.

As part of strengthening its position globally Africa, through the AU, must reform and reposition its own institutions that must work in unison, as part of leveraging its authority over peace and security challenges bedevilling the continent.

Importantly, the AU must increase its domestic resource mobilisation for it to discharge its duties more effectively. Africa should also develop a clear strategy of dealing with the changing and complex nature of conflicts in Africa, as well as enhance coordinated responses with relevant institutions on the continent.

6. NATURAL RESOURCE GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA 22-23 APRIL 2017

Africa is endowed with many natural resources, some of which are increasingly a source of conflict across the continent, hence the choice of this theme for the 6th Tana Forum.

It was discussed under four sub-themes: “Managing Natural Resources in Africa – Challenges and Prospects”; “Natural Resource Governance in Africa: Unlocking the Potentials for Conflict Prevention and Sustainable Development”; “Land, Inland Water and Oceans Resources: Governing Access, Control and Usage”; and “Managing Forestry and Biodiversity for Environmental Security and Sustainable Development”.

Below are the recommendations that emerged from each of the sub-theme discussions.

RECOMMENDATIONS:^{xxxii}

Managing Natural Resources in Africa – Challenges and Prospects

The forum emphasised that Africa should adopt a long-term view when developing natural resources management policies. The benefits derived from resource extraction must accrue to rural communities.

Transparency is key in this sector and as such, transparency mechanisms should be developed at national, regional and global levels so that governments and multi-nationals are held accountable. Civil society organisations should monitor adherence to the transparency initiatives.

It is important that African countries engage with the rest of the world based on their own long-term needs. Mechanisms should be developed and implemented to address natural resource-based conflict and human rights violations.

Natural Resource Governance in Africa: Unlocking the Potential for Conflict Prevention and Sustainable Development

In this area the forum once again stressed the need for transparency and the curbing of corruption by the elites. It called on governments to develop capacities for contract negotiations that would result in benefits accruing to local communities. In this vein, stronger global frameworks and their implementation were demanded to counter a race to the bottom in standards. The adoption of a long-term, sustainable perspective was also recommended.

Land, Inland Water and Oceans Resources: Governing Access, Control and Usage

Given the trans-border nature and usage of many land and inland water resources across Africa, the forum called for coordination between national and regional mechanisms. It also recommended that support be given to landlocked countries to increase their access to the sea, and unlock development potential. Coordination at the multilateral level was recommended to ensure justice in dealing with Africa’s natural resources, and to promote inter-African collaboration on land and water across the continent.

Managing Forestry and Biodiversity for Environmental Security and Sustainable Development

Capacity development was recommended as a key imperative for those who are charged with managing, protecting and governing forestry. The use of environmental diplomacy was recommended for dealing with land and forestry issues to avoid conflict, and ensure inclusive participatory practices with youth, women and other community representatives.



7. OWNERSHIP OF AFRICA'S PEACE AND SECURITY PROVISION: FINANCING AND REFORMING THE AFRICAN UNION, 21-22 APRIL 2018

The 7th Tana Forum was held under the theme, “Ownership of Africa’s Peace and Security Provision: Financing and Reforming the African Union”. Previous forums had called for a strengthened AU that would amplify and unite Africa’s voice in the global arena, particularly with respect to the reform of the multilateral system, and the UN Security Council in particular.

The Forum sought to create a common understanding of what ownership means with respect to Africa’s peace and security agenda. A common understanding of the concept is important in order to delineate the role of Africans and external forces in peace building and state building.

The AU is aware that continued dependency on development partners’ funding of its peace and security architecture undermines its authority and leadership in the sector. It also makes the implementation of the APSA unpredictable. Self-reliance is therefore a key factor in the AU’s demonstration of leadership and ownership of the continent’s peace and security agenda. Domestic resource mobilisation is fundamental to this goal.

RECOMMENDATIONS:XXXIII

Conflict prevention is a more effective way of managing peace and security on the continent than post-conflict resolution. Conflict prevention saves money and human lives. Ownership and partnership are also two sides of the same coin, given the global nature of some conflicts.

In this context, the forum recommended that Africa must be the architect of its own fortune by setting the narrative, agenda and funding of its peace and security agenda, based on Africa’s common understanding of the concept of self-reliance.

To this end, African leaders must demonstrate political will for the mobilisation of financial and other resources required to fund the continent’s peace and security

programmes and operations. Africans also need to have a full understanding of the complex nature of existing and emerging peace and security challenges, and develop the capacities to face them head-on.

The end goal of the reform process must be an AU that is fit for purpose. This will require the strengthening of African institutions, and engaging citizens, especially previously marginalised groups such as women and youth, for them to appreciate the benefits of institutional reforms on their lives.

8. POLITICAL DYNAMICS IN THE HORN OF AFRICA: NURTURING THE EMERGING PEACE TRENDS, 4-5 MAY 2019


The choice of this theme was influenced by ongoing political dynamics in the Horn of Africa at the time. These included the Ethiopia-Eritrea negotiations, as well as the signing of the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan in September 2018.

Regardless of these milestones, the region still faced peace, security and governance challenges. The conversations at the 8th Tana Forum centred around three panel discussions: a high-level panel on peace prospects in the Horn of Africa; a panel on the new era of inter-state engagement in the Horn and its implications for regional integration; and migration and free movement of people in the Horn region.

The forum advanced recommendations that are outlined below.

RECOMMENDATIONS:XXXIV

Countries in the Horn of Africa were urged to collectively identify the fundamental challenges in the region, such as structural vulnerabilities, and take ownership of solutions guided by the overriding principle of multilateralism. Revitalisation of the eight-member Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) was recommended as a key element towards progress, as the institution would take a lead and work closely with the AU, the UN and



the rest of the international community in finding peace in the region.

The forum also recommended the development and implementation of an inclusive framework that would create a platform for dialogue, cooperation and collaboration around shared interests in the Red Sea space.

Other priorities that were identified and recommended for action include:

- Improving bilateral relations in the region
- Adopting and implementing human-centred solutions
- Instituting lasting solutions to the displacement crisis, supporting integration efforts that would allow the free movement of people and the building of people-to-people relations
- Urging development partners to align their efforts with the region's priorities
- Strengthening the AU-UN partnership in the region
- Fast-tracking regional development, as well as the regional integration agenda

9. THE AfCFTA: REVITALISING PAN-AFRICANISM FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA, 19-24 OCTOBER 2020

The 9th Tana Forum was held during the Covid-19 pandemic. Owing to travel restrictions, the forum was held in hybrid format, comprising both physical and virtual participation. This was the longest and busiest forum in its history, as evidenced by the various agenda items covered.

In addition to the forum's main theme, which was dedicated to discussing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the forum also discussed the sub-themes comprising the following: "Rebuilding After Covid-19 and the Lessons for Effective Governance and Sustainable Peace and Development in Africa"; "Accelerating the AfCFTA in the Context of Global Governance and Covid-19"; "Feminist Considerations

for the implementation of the AfCFTA"; "The role of the AfCFTA in Conflict Transformation"; "Peace and Stability as Ingredients in the Recipe for the Successful Implementation of the AfCFTA"; and "Making the AfCFTA Work".

RECOMMENDATIONS:^{XXXV}

Various recommendations were made during the six-day forum, summarised below.

While noting progress with the implementation of the AfCFTA and its integration thrust, the forum recommended that the distinct and diverse cultural attributes of each of the continent's regions be retained.

The forum also recommended that the coordinated regional responses started by African countries in 2020 in the context of multilateralism should be replicated in the process of AfCFTA implementation.

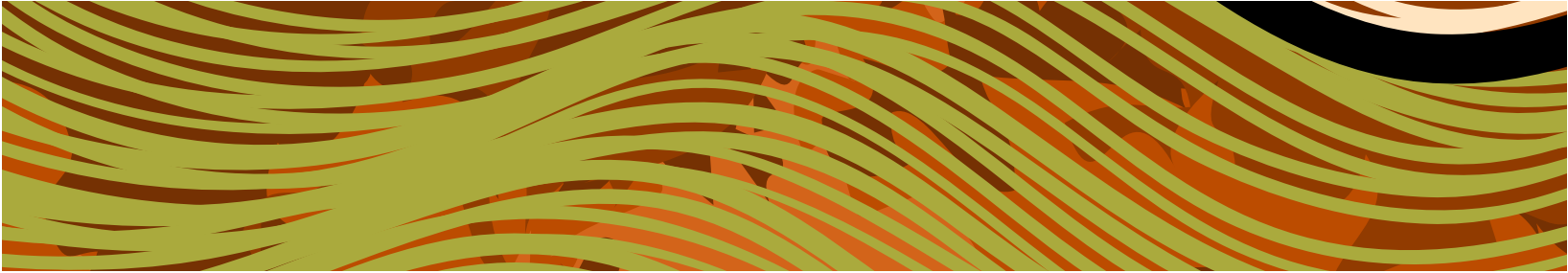
Importantly, the AfCFTA implementation should be used as an opportunity to address human security issues, prioritising women and youth, and at the same time address the persistent political, social and economic obstacles to participation of marginalised groups in society, which hinder peace and stability as well as development.

The AfCFTA implementation should also spur a green economy on the continent, and guard against environmental destruction.

On financing, the forum recommended that the AfCFTA implementation should be debt-neutral, meaning that member states should not be fiscally and monetarily worse off at implementation than before.

The forum also recommended that the AfCFTA implementation should be accompanied by the free movement of people, and member states, RECs and the AU were called upon to invest in coupling the implementation with the advancement of the free movement of people.

The forum also called for the development and implementation of a robust AfCFTA awareness



programme, particularly targeting grassroots and marginalised stakeholders such as women, the youth and the poor.

In relation to the Covid-19 pandemic, the forum recommended the continuation of multilateral responses to the pandemic, as well as regional coordination especially around strengthening disaster predictions and response capabilities. It further recommended the strengthening of national health systems, and fast-tracking vaccine development capabilities was seen as critical.

The forum recommended that AfCFTA knowledge and skills be integrated into educational curricula, and that African private sector involvement and engagement with the AfCFTA be strengthened. There should also be increased participation of women at the macro-level, both in policy and practice.

On women's participation, it was recommended that the AfCFTA be structured in ways that benefit current cross-border traders, the majority of whom are women. In addition, a continental fund should be established to support the participation of women in the formal economy. This should in turn be supported by financial resources allocated to mitigating the impacts of gendered economic shocks.

Lastly, the forum recommended that the continent should develop robust "conflict prediction, detection, mitigation and resolution mechanisms" at all levels, and that international development entities should include the AfCFTA in their current and future peace-building programmes.

10. MANAGING SECURITY THREATS, BUILDING RESILIENCE FOR THE AFRICA WE WANT, 14-16 OCTOBER 2022

The Tana Forum returned to Bahir Dar after a two-year hiatus prompted by the Covid-19 pandemic, which had curtailed travel and in-person participation. This was

also a special session, as it marked the 10th anniversary of the Tana Forum.

The theme of the forum's 10th session was relevant given the various peace and security threats the continent was facing, both internally and externally. Internally, the continent had experienced a series of military coups in West Africa, and intra-state conflicts persisted in various countries. Externally, the Russia-Ukraine war posed a threat to Africa's stability. The Covid-19 pandemic had also demonstrated the fragile nature of global peace, security and stability. It was therefore an opportune moment for Africa to explore the current and future implications of these threats to its peace, security and stability.

Six sub-themes were discussed over the two days of the forum. These were: "The Impact of Global Insecurity on the Continent"; "Climate Change, Preparedness, Adaptation and Financing"; "Harnessing Africa's Cultural Heritage for Resilience and Integration"; "Emphasising African-centredness and People in the Framing of Development Strategies in Africa"; "Evaluating the Continent's Peace and Security Landscape: Facilitating Enduring Transitions"; and "The Ten Years of the Tana High-Level Forum, and Africa's Peace and Security Discussion".

RECOMMENDATIONS:^{XXXVI}

The forum recommended that the effects of the Russia-Ukraine war should serve as a wake-up call for Africa to innovatively grow its agriculture sector, to ensure food security.

On climate change, the forum recommended the desecuritisation of climate risks and putting more emphasis on climate risk mitigation and adaptation.

After much discussion on Africa's cultural heritage, the forum recommended that the continent's cultural heritage be promoted and that its cultural diversity be harnessed, including collective efforts to recover the continent's "lost" cultural artefacts.



THE SUCCESSES OF THE TANA FORUM TO DATE

The forum called for the strengthening of the continent's governance institutions for sustaining enduring democracy on the continent beyond the holding of elections. The AU, RECs and member states were urged to be consistent in their responses to unconstitutional changes of government and coups on the continent.

The forum also called for a multilateral system that will treat Africa fairly. In order for this to happen, Africa must have a synchronised and bold diplomatic agenda with which to engage the UN and the multilateral system at large.

The forum further recommended the prioritisation of conflict prevention today to avoid costly conflict resolution measures in future. This means that the APSA should place more emphasis on preventive diplomacy,

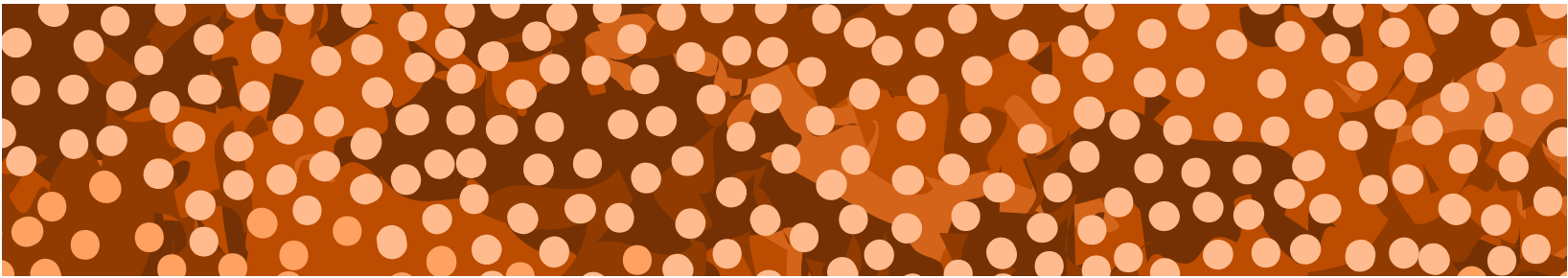
early-warning systems, risk assessments and intelligence-sharing as crucial components for strengthening conflict analyses, and ensure that policy responses are adequate and fit for purpose.

The forum also recommended the development of mutually beneficial partnerships between Africa and the rest of the world.

Another key recommendation was that the Tana Forum be revitalised to further deepen conversations and the exploration of challenging issues on peace, security and development. In addition, the Tana Forum should intensify its mandate as a platform to critically examine the efficiency and relevance of formal institutions and frameworks established in Africa, as well as engagements with external strategic partners.



Image 21: Celebrating the decade of the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa, led by the forum's Chairperson, H.E. John Mahama.



Speaking about the track record of the Tana Forum and its successes in the past 10 years during an interview on 10 October 2023, H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo said:

“ *The first thing I want to make clear is that the forum was not meant to be a peacemaker, or a conflict resolver. The forum was meant to be a meeting place of all those that have responsibility for peace, security and stability in Africa. Before the Tana Forum we never had a place where politicians, those in government, civil society, diplomats, friends of Africa could meet and talk and exchange views and even confront the issues, as we did in Tana Forum. As a platform for that purpose, Tana Forum has excelled. There is no doubt about that.* ”^{xxxvii}

He said that the successes of the Tana Forum must be evaluated on the basis of its set objectives:

“ *There is nothing that compares with it in Africa, where you get presidents and prime ministers sitting down even with the opposition, AU, ECA [Economic Commission for Africa], international community, people in finance and even people in farming, like me, people from different walks of life. For that we must give kudos to the Tana Forum. But if we are now saying the situation in Africa, peace- and security-wise, has changed, that is a different issue, and we can talk about it.* ”^{xxxviii}

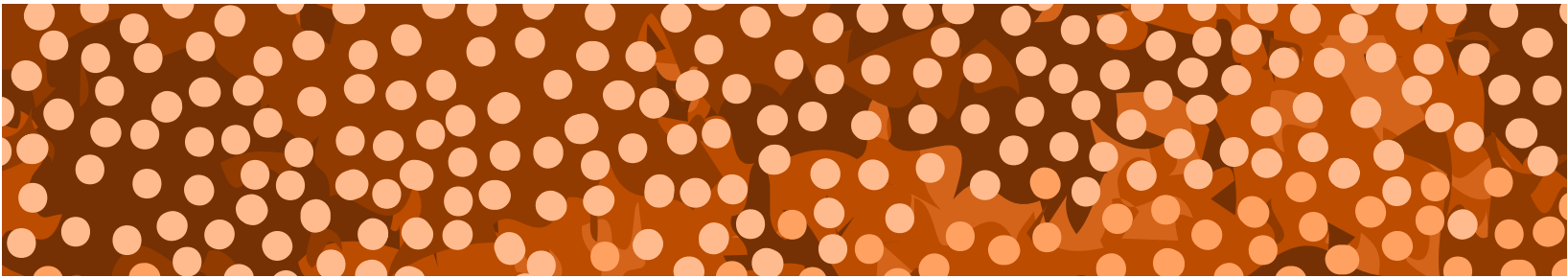
At its launch on 11 April 2012, the Tana Forum showcased one of its important attributes – that of informality – when the Chairperson took off his hat and his agbada (robe), and threw them to the floor. He wanted to demonstrate that the Tana Forum was meant to be informal, not a stiff suit-and-tie event. He encouraged participants to be respectful and open-minded, and exchange ideas. The mood in the room was electric, with everyone wondering what would happen next. Indeed, the debates became heated from the very start. This is the mood which the Tana Forum has carried over the past 10 years. This set the tone for the many successes that the forum has recorded over the years.

“ *If Tana Forum has discussed a theme, it has done its job. If it got its leaders at the political, economic, social, civil society and private sector, it is now up to them to go and act after they have had the opportunity that Tana Forum has established and exposed us to.* ”^{xxxix}

It is therefore important to always assess the successes of the Tana Forum based on the parameters according to which it was set up

AGENDA-SETTING

One of the main objectives of the Tana Forum was to identify critical peace and security issues that needed the attention of Africa’s leaders, the AU and its Regional Economic Communities, as well as national governments.



As such, agenda-setting remains one of the forum's pivotal roles. The implementation of recommendations coming out of the forum's discussions is meant to be the responsibility of implementing agencies such as the AU Commission, RECs, national governments, civil society, academics, partner organisations such as the United Nations and development partners.

To this extent, the Tana Forum has been successful in identifying key issues, undertaking research to inform the discussion at each of the forum sessions, and making recommendations for implementation. A summary of the themes that have been discussed in the 10 forum sessions and the related recommendations is provided below.

RESEARCH

One of the critical outputs of the Tana Forum has been its research outputs, which are developed by experts in each of the annual thematic areas. Papers are shared as background reading to the themes that are discussed at each of the sessions. In addition, the papers also serve as resources for policy, academia, peace and security experts, and peace and security practitioners in Africa and globally.

The papers are accessible on the IPSS website. Responding to the question of the value addition by the Tana Forum, Ms Betty Bigombe, a former Tana Forum Advisory Board member and forum participant, highlighted that the research papers produced as background reading to the forum added significantly to knowledge generation by the forum.^{xi}

NETWORKING

One of the forum's most significant ongoing successes is the various networking opportunities it presents to participants. The informal nature of the setting enables an easy mix of political decision-makers and various stakeholders in ways that formal AU gatherings do not allow, especially from a security and diplomatic perspective. The fact that participants are away from day-to-day office duties allows them to focus on matters at hand, and network in a dedicated manner. In retrospect, the choice of venue away from the hustle and bustle of Addis Ababa's diplomacy and officialdom has lived up to the expectations

set by the team that conceptualised and launched the first edition of the forum. The forum has become a platform for connecting Africans with each other, as well as with participating global stakeholders.

NETWORKING OF IDEAS

Another important benefit provided by the Tana Forum is the generating and exchanging of ideas and practical solutions to ongoing challenges on the continent. It is now common practice to see delegations from participating heads of state and government shuttling to arrange meetings with current and former heads of state and government, to informally discuss ongoing challenges. These initial bilateral consultations typically find their way into the mainstream channels of AU decision-making processes. So, for those stakeholders who sometimes ask, "Where is the Tana Report?" or "What are the outcomes of the forum?", the answer is that a key outcome of the forum is in the planting of ideas, to be implemented in other spaces at national, regional and continental levels.

PARTNERSHIPS

At the forum's 10th anniversary in October 2022, it was clear that many participants valued the partnerships gained through participation in the forum over the preceding decade. The only jocular regret among friends was that there was no evidence yet of a Tana human offspring, but many projects and partnerships were born. For example, Dr Cedric de Coning, former Tana Forum Technical Committee member and peace and security expert, said he was impressed by the networking that happened during the Tana Forum, allowing people who had been only communicating virtually to meet in person.^{xli}

SHOWCASING ETHIOPIAN CULTURE AND HOSPITALITY

The Tana Forum has provided Ethiopia an opportunity to showcase its culture and hospitality to the rest of the world. Each time guests arrive in Addis Ababa for the forum, they are received and treated with warm hospitality. The reception gets even better at Bahir Dar Airport, where

guests arrive to the beautiful sound of musical instruments, the sight of Ethiopian traditional dancing and – of course – fresh, hot Ethiopian coffee.

Guests and participants are also allocated a logistics officer, who takes care of logistical requirements for the duration of the forum and facilitates their departure for the airport. Back in Addis Ababa, the same hospitality continues, with guests typically returning to an overnight stay at the Sheraton Hotel before departure the following day.



Image 22: Participants adorned with the scarf that has become synonymous with the Tana Forum.

UNWAVERING LEADERSHIP

Once the date for the forum's launch had been set, there was no turning back. Logistics had to be of the highest standards. Shortly after the announcement of the date, stakeholders had to be mobilised to ensure that all preparations were made. Several stakeholders made significant contributions that enabled the forum to happen, each one demonstrating an understanding of the potential impact the event could have, and showing formidable leadership. For example:

- Ethiopian Airways offered concessions for delegates' flights
- The Sheraton Hotel provided accommodation in Addis Ababa
- Relevant Ethiopian ministries and departments facilitated the provision of security, accreditation and other relevant protocols
- Hotels in Bahir Dar worked tirelessly to prepare facilities and rooms
- Local and international media all came on board

If ever there was demonstration of the saying “where there is a will, there is a way”, it was the preparation for the Tana Forum’s launch. H.E. Zenawi provided the necessary leadership and every other ministry, department and partner followed suit. The leadership provided at this stage laid a strong foundation for all subsequent forums. The standard had been set high, just as the then Prime Minister had wanted during the forum’s conceptualisation. Such leadership should be emulated across the management of projects in Africa, where failure should not be an option.

The former Ethiopian Prime Minister, Hailemariam Desalegn, stated that Ethiopia has supported the Tana Forum to the tune of 60% of its total annual budget:



Image 23: Interview with H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn at his foundation in Addis Ababa, on 11 July 2023.

“If you look at the Tana Forum, most resources come from Africa. When I was Foreign Minister and Prime Minister, we covered all the logistics and accommodation, which were more than 60 percent of the hosting of the forum. It is an African-owned, and African-led, process.”^{xlii}

LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION

One of the Tana Forum’s successes has been its demonstration of the importance of leadership changes. In the 10 years of the forum, it has experienced leadership changes at the highest level (two chairpersons). The hosting institution has witnessed four changes in directorship and the coordination of Tana has been under three leads. It is worth noting that for the forum’s entire 10-year existence, it has always been coordinated by women. Two lessons arise out of this. The first is that leadership renewal is critical for the success of peace and security processes in Africa. However, a strong foundation is vital for the leadership changes to be viable. The second is that women leadership is critical for sustaining peace and security efforts. The Tana Forum has demonstrated that fact (Image 15).

SEAMLESS LOGISTICS

The forum’s logistical arrangements have remained excellent. According to Dr Tabani Moyo, a Zimbabwean journalist who attended the forum for the first time on its 10th anniversary: “The logistics, travel, accommodation and reception were exceptional and reflective of the status of the forum.”^{xliii}

The reception, from the airport in Addis Ababa to the layover at the Sheraton Hotel, the flight to Bahir Dar and the cultural reception at Bahir Dar Airport, is always heart-warming. Of course, there will be slip-ups here and there, but this part of the forum has neared perfection over time.

THE TANA FORUM BAG AND SCARF

One of the legacy gifts to participants has been the leather Tana Forum bag. It is a beautiful and functional souvenir conceptualised by the conference organisers. It is made locally and serves to promote the local economy in the leather industry. A decision was made early in the organising of the first forum that all gifts would be made locally. It is now a tradition – another plus for the forum.

The Tana scarf, made of local cotton, has become a symbol of the generosity of Ethiopians. Each year, the scarf is of a different colour. It also demonstrates the beauty of Ethiopian art and the textile industry.



Image 24: The Tana Forum bag.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN THE TANA FORUM



One of the great things about the choice of the IPSS as the convener of the Tana Forum is the inclusion of young people in the team. For the first edition, the fact that it was the first time to convene the forum meant that none of the team members could claim having previous experience of it. As such, the IPSS leadership had to rely on both young and older ingenuity. I remember Dr Mulugeta Gebrehiwot and I laughing at the fact that Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, in his letter inviting President Olusegun Obasanjo to chair the forum, had said:



“Your chairing of the meeting would give us the opportunity for us to meet again. It would also encourage these young people to persevere in their worthy cause. I therefore hope that you can give them a positive response.”^{xliv}

While Dr Gebrehiwot and I may not have been “young”, H.E. Zenawi recognised the importance of youth participation in the Tana Forum. This trend has continued throughout the 10 years of Tana. Obviously, some of the team members who were in their youth then are now older.

More broadly, the forum has created opportunities for youth participation. This includes organisation of, content creation for and participation in the forum itself. Partnership with the University of Bahir Dar has created a sustainable way for more young people to be involved in the forum’s activities by removing the constraints that usually come with travel, accommodation and food costs.

Various essay competitions held before the forum – with winners being recognised at the event – are testimony to the forum organisers’ acknowledgement of the central role youth play in peace and security on the continent. Their participation and observance of power at work is also a good training ground for the continent’s future leaders.



Image 25: Younger team members of the Tana Secretariat for the first Tana Forum.

One of the best practices for which the Tana Forum has been highly commended is its inclusion of the youth in all its processes. For example, most of the team that organised the inaugural forum in 2012 were youths. The essay competitions that are an integral part of the annual Tana Forum are essentially targeted at the youth in universities. The Vice-Chancellor's Dialogue, which is also held annually on the margins of the Tana Forum, is a further demonstration of the Tana Forum organisers' commitment to youth inclusion.

Youth inclusion is significant for various reasons. Firstly, when young people sit at the same table with former and current heads of state and government, diplomats, captains of industry, civil society and religious leaders, the experience opens their horizons and imparts a clear message that anything is possible. Secondly, the inclusive stakeholder platform also demystifies power, thereby encouraging the youths to engage with leaders at all levels to address issues of concern, including peace, security and stability. Thirdly, in the case where young people are involved in organising and implementing, the opportunity to learn by doing has immeasurable benefits for them.

The Tana best practice of youth participation has also opened doors for stakeholders, and the youth, to push for increased youth inclusion in other areas of peace and security as a matter of policy, and not the benevolence of organisers or institutions. Additionally, young people have a substantive contribution to make, and not just for optics. Ms Cynthia Chigwenya, a peace and security expert, and Tana Forum participant, emphasised during an interview on 14 October 2023:

“One of the advantages that governments and conference organisers can tap into is moving away from inclusion for the sake of inclusion towards realising that some of the global challenges we face, like violent extremism and terrorism, are going to require cooperation with young people and different demographics and different components of our population. Young people would and can play a major role in enhancing the security sector, both in Africa and globally.”^{xlv}

Ms Chigwenya added that youth participation in peace, security and stability matters should go beyond participation in the forum, into the leadership practice and implementation space. She proposed that consideration should be given to having young people who are in the technology space work closely with governments and other entities in the defence industry, to promote the use of artificial intelligence (AI) as well as drone technology to enhance defence forces within the region, and within regional borders.

On youth and leadership practice in the peace, security and stability sector, former President Obasanjo had some messages for young people, emphasising that they should take leadership seriously, and immediately. His message to the youth was:



“

“One of the advantages that governments and conference organisers can tap into is moving away from inclusion for the sake of inclusion towards realising that some of the global challenges we face, like violent extremism and terrorism, are going to require cooperation with young people and different demographics and different components of our population. Young people would and can play a major role in enhancing the security sector, both in Africa and globally.”^{xlv}

Youth participation in leadership is only logical, given that 60% of Africa’s population is made up of the youth. It is therefore important that the youth use their majority to their advantage. If change is taking too long to occur, it may be necessary to embrace “positive disruptive action”^{xlvii} to accelerate it.

“

Do not let anyone tell you that you 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. So, you must be part of leadership and it must be their responsibility to also make sure that youth are part of leadership.”^{xlvi}







THE FUTURE OF THE TANA FORUM

The future and sustainability of the Tana Forum should be viewed beyond just financial sustainability. The more critical factor for its sustainability is its continued relevance in contributing to addressing Africa's peace, security and stability challenges, both current and emerging. Whereas in the past 10 years the Tana Forum excelled in creating a platform for dialogue and debates, conversation around the position of the continent and how it should bring people together to pursue peace, security, stability and development, this may not be the distinctive imperative for the Tana Forum in the next 10 years.

The political, peace and security situation in Africa is worse than it was before the launch of the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa. Since 2012, Africa has witnessed coups in Sudan, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Gabon. At the same time, global threats to peace and security have also become more complex, demonstrating that insecurity in one part of the world can have ripple effects in other parts of the globe. For example, the Russia-Ukraine war has presented new security threats for Africa, leading seven African heads of state and government or their representatives (Comoros, Senegal, South Africa, Zambia, Egypt, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda) to visit Moscow and Kyiv to present a 10-point agenda representing Africa's concerns about the war and its spill-over effects.

The ongoing Israel-Palestine war is further demonstration that diplomacy and early warning are no longer bulletproof preventive conflict measures. Climate change continues to cause further threats to human security, in Africa and globally. Under such circumstances, it is only logical that the leadership of the Tana Forum should reconsider its relevance and anticipated impact in the next 10 years. If the global and African peace, security and stability situation has changed, surely the Tana Forum should also adapt to be more suitable to addressing these challenges, both in Africa and globally? The emergence of fora such as the Dakar International Forum on Peace and Security in Africa^{xlviii} and the Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development^{xlxi} demonstrate that dialogue as a critical mechanism for preventing conflict. The Tana Forum remains Africa's first and foremost reference platform for the creation of other regional platforms. In this respect:



“

“There is room for everyone as long as they are working towards positive change. What is imperative is that Tana has maintained its positioning as the only truly neutral and pan-African forum, withstanding the external influence of partners (especially western powers). This should be maintained and harnessed by, among others, a closer linkage into the AUC’s agendas, harnessing impact and increasing financing by African partners. Further opportunity to collate action and goodwill exists for the Tana Forum to collaborate with other forums on the continent by bringing them under the umbrella to present the regional dialogue discourses from their regions to the main Tana Forum. Maintaining dominance, rather than competition, would be a more productive approach for the Tana.”

Within that context of substantive adaptation, continued relevance, impact and sustainability, the Tana Forum should seek ways to reinvent itself before its relevance and exceptional delivery mode is overtaken by events. This may include considering the hybrid delivery of a dialogue and conversation platform, some mode-of-implementation role, or the active monitoring of implementation of its previous recommendations in partnership with the AU Commission, RECs, AU member states, civil society, the private sector and development partners.

Such consideration would also address the constructive inputs of some stakeholders who view the Tana Forum as elitist and far removed from the lives of the victims of insecurity, conflict and instability. According to Aichatou Tamba, former Tana Secretariat team member and peace and security expert, red-flagging of issues is no longer enough:

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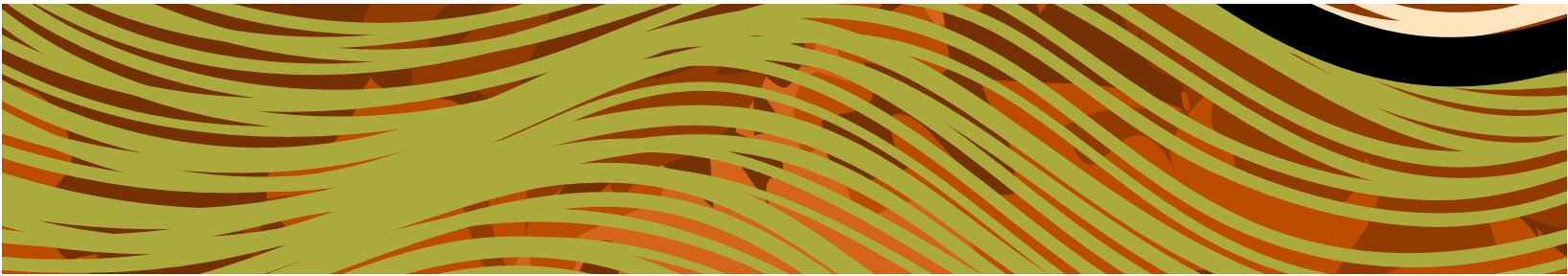
The current format was good for the first ten years of the Forum, it set the tone and the framework for highlighting key challenges. However, in future there is a need to take the Forum to another level.”ⁱⁱ

Red-flagging or early warning at the Tana Forum is no longer adequate given that even after such early warning, nothing is done to prevent unconstitutional changes of government, as has happened in Sudan, Mali, Niger, Gabon and Burkina Faso.

Tamba’s assertion aptly resonates with AU Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) Commissioner Bankole Adeoye’s view that the Tana Forum has:

“

... Served and continues to serve as a veritable platform, all-inclusive, taking forward the discourse of peace and security of the continent. It is for us at the African Union a good and viable opportunity that has been created over the years to push the agenda of the African Union in terms of making peace happen, silencing the guns, making sure that the aspirations, particularly 3, 4 and 7 of Agenda 2063, will be implemented in a generic and specific multi-stakeholder forum.”ⁱⁱⁱ



However, going forward, the AU will focus on programmatic activities to deliver on peace, security and stability for the continent, including the implementation of critical recommendations to have come out of the Tana Forum. According to Aichatou Tamba, there is huge scope for the Tana Forum to utilise the innovation it demonstrated in the first 10 years of its existence, and enter the realm of a hybrid of action, dialogue and conversation. There seems to be dwindling appetite for more studies and more dialogue. There is a loud call for resolving real issues on the ground and alleviating the suffering of people who deal directly with the daily consequences of conflict and instability: “People just want their lives to be better,” says Tamba.^{liii} The Tana Forum therefore needs to immerse itself in the realm of action if it is to remain relevant. The money will follow the action.

AFRICAN OWNERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP

On the issue of African leadership and ownership of the Tana Forum, former President Obasanjo again referred to the forum’s objectives, which is a meeting place for idea generation and networking. He then gave an example of how ideas discussed at the Tana Forum can influence action by institutions such as the AU.


Remarking on the 2022 mediation between Tigray and the government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, he noted:

“ I undertook the issue of mediating between Tigray and the federal government of Ethiopia. That is a typical example of African solutions to African problems. We can say all of us involved in that, and the whole of Africa, can take solace in that on 2 November 2022 in Pretoria, we were able to broker peace, Africans doing it for Africa.”^{liv}

He further enunciated that when Africans speak of African solutions to African problems, this does not imply an exclusion of external agents and partners. It simply means that Africans must take a lead and take charge of the peace, security, and stability agenda of the continent. Such was the approach that led to the end of apartheid in South Africa, and the problems in Angola.

H.E. Obasanjo noted that Africans have repeatedly demonstrated success in bringing about peace, security and stability in Africa, wherever and whenever the global community has given them space to take the lead. In cases where the international community has ignored African leadership and solutions, peace, security and stability have remained elusive. Such is the case in Libya, in relation to which H.E. Obasanjo remarked:

“Where we have been cast aside, or swept aside, or not allowed to play the role that we should play, it has been a failure. The African leaders had what they called a blueprint, and no one in the international community was prepared to listen and the mess is still in our hands until today.”^{lv}



Citing his own involvement in Ethiopia and Kenya in 2022, former President Obasanjo noted that Africans should not underestimate their contribution to creating peace, security and stability in Africa. However, they should also not overrate it. While it is important to celebrate progress when it is made, there are unresolved situations in Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Conakry, and more recently Niger and Gabon.

A lesson derived from H.E. Obasanjo's reflection is that the demonstration of the symbiotic relationship between Africa's instability, insecurity and peacelessness, and the rest of the global community, is that instead of limiting invitations to the Tana Forum to African leaders only, consideration should be given to inviting those international leaders whose actions and influence either cause or derail Africa's efforts towards the attainment of peace, security and stability. Such people could be in the political, economic, social, technological or financial spheres.

The Munich Security Conference, upon which the Tana Forum is partially modelled, invites African leaders. In the same vein, non-African leaders can also learn a few lessons from the Tana Forum on how to conduct themselves in Africa. The Tana Forum would thereby facilitate international/global dialogue. Africans must take their narrative into the global arena through engagements at the Tana Forum.

FUNDING OF THE TANA FORUM AND THE AU PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA

It is not acceptable that African leaders and stakeholders should expect a programme that is as essential as the Tana Forum, be funded by development partners. Africans need to find innovative ways of funding their critical priorities. During an interview at his home in Abeokuta on 10 October 2023, former President Obasanjo gave an example of such innovativeness by citing the Economic Community of West Africa States' (ECOWAS) 0.5% duty, which is levied on all imports into the community, and how this mechanism has raised a lot of money for ECOWAS. It is, therefore, imperative that the AU and its

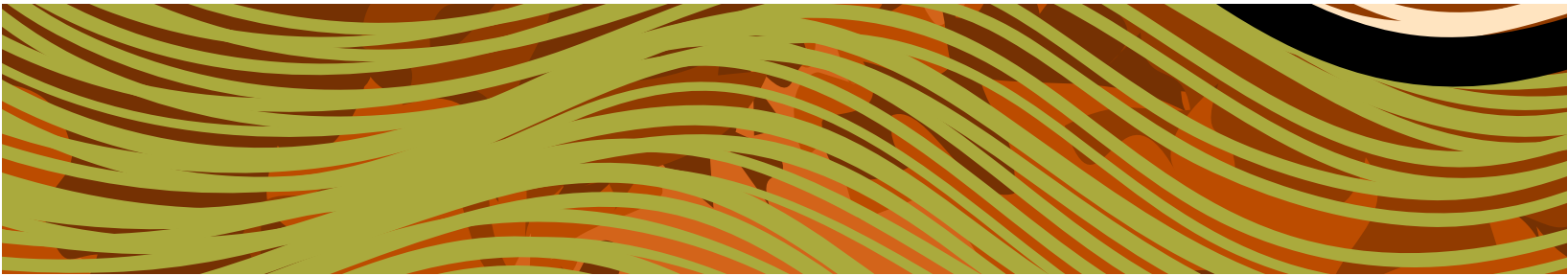
member states rally to raise money for peace and security in the same manner.

In an interview on 11 July 2023, former Ethiopian Prime Minister H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn also weighed in strongly on the matter of Africans funding not just the Tana Forum, but all peace and security programmes. He reflected on progress being achieved with the replenishment of the African Union Peace Fund, the establishment of which had demonstrated the AU's quest to take responsibility for the funding of the continent's peace and security agenda. While the replenishment of the African Union Peace Fund has improved since 2020, there is still a long way to go. The former prime minister opined during the interview:

“To me, as compared to funding what has already happened, it is better to make Africa more peaceful so that we do not look for funding of deployment missions and standby forces. Paying for them is less sustainable than having a peaceful situation on the continent.”^{lvi}

Reiterating the importance of the African Union Peace Fund for demonstrating the AU's objective of reducing over-reliance and dependence on partner funding for the AU's peace and security programmes, the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs and Peace and Security (PAPS), Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, stated during an interview on 29 August 2023 in Harare, Zimbabwe, that the fund was endowed with over US\$360-million, and the target was to reach US\$400-million. He said that the fund was a game-changer, as it would enable the AU to address its own peace and security challenges.

He said that as of August 2023, US\$2-million in funding had already been allocated to supporting the fight against al-Shabaab in Somalia, and the same amount had also been invested in a new start-up enforcement mission in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, under the auspices of the East African Community Regional Force. While AU ownership and leadership is a prerequisite for ensuring



peace, security and stability in Africa, the Commissioner called on the international community to come on board and support the AU's efforts.

In addition to mobilising for the peace fund, the Commissioner revealed that the AU is also seeking to access UN-assessed contributions to complement African efforts. In furtherance of these efforts, the AU Assembly adopted a common African position in February 2023. The common position advances a new financing structure that can be utilised by the international community to support the AU on a case-by-case basis.

On Tana Forum funding specificities, former Ethiopian Prime Minister H.E. Desalegn cited progress with the establishment of the Tana Foundation. He said the establishment of the Tana Foundation would provide funding predictability and flexibility, as well as ensure the sustainability of the forum until such time as it has served its purpose. All partners wishing to support the Tana Forum could then contribute towards the foundation. For its part, the Foundation could also generate its own money.


MANAGING THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS AND SIDE EVENTS

Due to overwhelming interest in taking part in the Tana Forum, there have been challenges in ensuring that adequate time is allocated to all participants who may want to speak. As such, there have been suggestions to review and better focus the forum programme, so that issues on the programme can be discussed in detail.^{xlvii}

However, the forum's intention was never to exhaust all issues, or to provide any one solution. The idea was to instigate new perspectives and ways of looking at peace and security issues on the continent. The responsibility of participants is then to take up these issues at home and in their institutions.

The original concept was to limit the number of participants to 50-70 for the inaugural forum. However, by the time of the 10th forum, the number of participants exceeded 250. This has both substantive and cost implications. It is substantive in that the more the participants, the more the requests for a speaking opportunity; this then affects the time allocated for in-depth discussions. H.E. Desalegn, who is also an Advisory Board member, reflected on this matter during an interview on 28 July 2023 and emphasised that the Tana Forum is not an advocacy and awareness forum, but rather an idea-generating platform that does not require too many people. He said:

“*This was meant to ensure focused and in-depth discussions and the generation of ideas that can be used in the peace and security processes. But nowadays you see 400 people, and it is not easy to discuss in a very short time of two days. It has become like any other forum now. So, I suggested that let us go back to the initial conceptualisation and how our leaders were thinking about this issue. Having fewer people reduces costs and increases its effectiveness as initially conceptualised.*”^{lviii}



He particularly expressed dissatisfaction with the crowded agenda and programme of the 10th Tana Forum, citing that having many agenda items on the main agenda as well as numerous side events made it difficult to have focused and in-depth discussions. The increased number of participants is also linked to the number of supporting partners who, once they have contributed to the forum, expect an invitation to attend. According to former Prime Minister Desalegn in an earlier interview, on 11 July 2023:

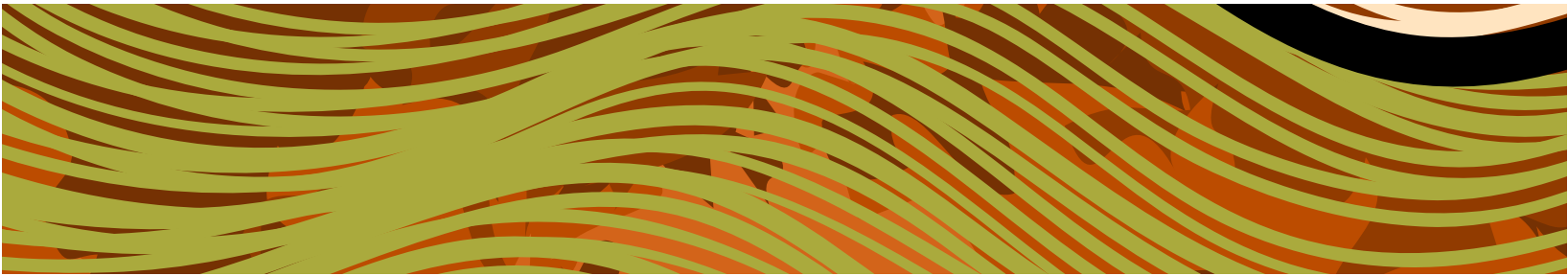
“The more support groups you bring to the forum, the more people you bring, which derails the ideals of the forum in-depth discussions on the African peace and security landscape. So, reducing the number has a big implication because you also reduce the cost of the forum.”^{lix}

Professor Tim Murithi added another dimension to limiting the number of participants, especially of development partners and international institutions. He noted that the Tana Forum presented Africans with an opportunity to discuss their challenges frankly and openly, in peace and security. Such a family discussion should be given the privacy it deserves. While the role and place for external stakeholders is appreciated, certain spaces should be reserved for Africans to converse about their domestic issues by themselves. It is therefore possible that in future, certain sessions could be reserved exclusively for African stakeholders.^{lx} Similar sentiments were expressed by Mme Bineta Diop, the African Union Women, Peace and Security Special Envoy when articulating the importance of Africans discussing their peace and security business in private. In a virtual on 12 December 2023, she said:

“When Africans are invited to Europe or Norway, they will be talking about Africa’s peace and security. They invite us to talk about Africa’s peace and security. But when they are talking about their own peace and security, do they invite us? They bring their voice to us, but we have no voice in their peace and security architecture. Perhaps Africans need to rethink this approach with respect to the Tana Forum”.^{lxi}



Image 26: Former Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn has expressed disappointment over the Tana Forum’s overloaded programme.



A balance needs to be struck between the participation in the Tana Forum of development partners and other external actors, and the privacy that is necessary for Africans to converse about their peace and security imperatives by themselves.

TIME MANAGEMENT

A related concern is inadequate time and programme management at the forum. A common recommendation from interviews is that session chairpersons should limit themselves to introductory remarks about the topic of discussion and stimulate conversations with the rich network in attendance. This would replace the frequent long presentations by panellists, which take away discussion time and can be frustrating for experts who would have travelled far to share their ideas. The session chairs can then guide and focus the discussions. This was the original format of the forum, which has thinned over the years.

ROBUST HEADS OF STATE PARTICIPATION

The purpose of including heads of state and government is to enable a mix of practical ideas from experience on the ground and the perspectives of academics, experts and diplomats. However, over time, the heads of state and government have tended to leave after the opening sessions once they have made their contributions. This is the usual AU practice, which the Tana Forum was meant to debunk. It is therefore recommended that all participating former and current heads of state and government stay for the entire duration of the forum. This is what partially demonstrates the African ownership and leadership spirit of the Tana Forum.

THE MELES ZENAWI LECTURE

The annual Meles Zenawi Lecture was established at the second forum in 2013, in tribute to the late Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, H.E. Meles Zenawi, who had passed away in 2012. The lecture series is in recognition of his leadership legacy in Ethiopia, Africa and globally.

The following African leaders have been recognised by way of the lecture:

- 2013: Meles Zenawi, Ethiopia
- 2014: Nelson Mandela, South Africa
- 2015: Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana
- 2016: Patrice Lumumba, Democratic Republic of Congo
- 2017: Wangari Muta Maathai, Kenya
- 2018: Gamal Abdel Nasser, Egypt
- 2019: Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, South Africa
- 2020: Benjamin William Mkapa, Tanzania, and Thandika Mkandawire, Malawi
- 2021: there was no forum, owing to the Covid-19 pandemic
- 2022: Kenneth Kaunda, Zambia



In his reflections, during an interview with him on 28 July 2023 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, former Ethiopian Prime Minister Desalegn expressed gratitude that the Tana Forum Advisory Board had recommended that the lecture series be named for H.E. Zenawi. It was important that Africans recognised their forefathers and past leaders, and their legacies, through the lecture series. It was the forefathers who had laid the foundation of African Unity and the spirit of pan-Africanism. Therefore, it was imperative that this legacy be imparted to younger generations to ensure the continuity of pan-African values.

It was a great idea to recognise H.E. Zenawi's "brilliant mind" and the fact that he had been the visionary behind the Tana Forum. However, H.E. Desalegn noted with concern the fact that the 10th Tana Forum had not named that year's lecture as an H.E. Zenawi Lecture Series. Instead, the series was referred to as the Tana Forum Lecture Series on Leadership in Africa. According to the Tana Forum's Outcome Report for that year, "Pre-forum events featured a tribute lecture series in honour of late President Kenneth Kaunda..." The report and programme did not specify the name of the lecture series.

He was unequivocal about the need for the forum organisers to remain consistent and retain the Meles Zenawi Lecture name.

The abovementioned list also demonstrates that most of Africa's leaders have been male. He expressed hope that "in the future, when we have exhausted our forefathers' legacies, we will also see outstanding women and youths who have contributed to the pan-Africanist agenda".^{lxii}

While it is indeed commendable that the Meles Zenawi Lecture continues to honour its late (and mostly male) leaders, as emphasised by H.E. Desalegn above, it is now an opportune time to be more deliberate about future recognitions. This will require striking a deliberate balance between men and women, as well as the young and the old. More importantly, Africans need to start celebrating their leaders while they are still alive.

In this regard, it is recommended that a leadership retreat be convened where some of those leaders are honoured and celebrated in their own lifetime. These leaders will not be confined to peace, security or stability only. It will be leaders across sectors who have contributed to Africa's standing.

FUNDING AND PARTNERSHIPS

It is evident that the Tana Forum has generated substantial interest among partners in the peace and security landscape, within the continent and beyond. At its launch, the forum had financial and in-kind support from six funders and partners. Besides GIZ, the core of the support in 2012 was from Ethiopian entities. In 2022, 10 years later, the list of funders and partners had grown to 26. This is a sign of success in mobilising resources and fulfilling the initial vision of H.E. Zenawi to diversify the forum's financial support.

However, increased funding has also resulted in dilution of the forum's format and programme. This is evidenced by the increasing number of side events held on the forum's margins. Most of these events are being organised by the partners, who are interested in gaining visibility for their contributions. This affects the quality of the forum's debates because more time is being allocated to partners' side events.

The risks resulting from more partners coming on board are summed up by the adage, "He who pays the piper calls the tune." H.E. Obasanjo has very strong words to African governments on the matter of supporting the AU's peace, security and stability agenda. In an interview at his home in Abeokuta on 10 October 2023, he said:

“ On funding, the problem is not lack of funding. The problem is that we do not put our money where we should. How much does it take to host Tana? When you see what is wasted by our governments, all of them, which is stolen, what is corruptly appropriated, you will see that the problem is not money. How much does staging Tana cost, it can't be more than US\$3-million? So, is that too much, if you understand the budget and what you can get out of it? Why should we be waiting for the European Union to dole out something, the French government to dole out something, the Germany 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.”^{lxiii}



Image 27: Dr Hesphina Rukato's interview with H.E. former President Obasanjo, 10 October 2023 ^{xlvi}

Experience, with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Africa Peer Review Mechanism and even the AU itself, shows that when too many people demonstrate interest in something that is going well in Africa, that initiative is bound to be diluted and lose focus.

For example, the original intention of keeping the number of participants to 70-90 is no longer observed. Initially, there were only two side events, namely the Bahir Dar Lecture and after the passing away of Prime Minister Zenawi, the Meles Zenawi Lecture series. Now there are many side events, even during the evenings. While this may satisfy those who feel the forum should have an open season, it diminishes the forum's originally intended currency. Of course, as time passes, there is a need to adapt the forum to suit new realities, but certain principles should be non-negotiable. According to academic, and peace and security expert and one of the interviewees for this publication, Professor Tim Murithi:

“Gradually, I think what you saw with time, Tana almost became too successful for its own good and all of a sudden, all the external factors that have interests in the African continent have unfortunately now almost imposed themselves onto the Tana platforms in a sense. And if you compare Tana today and Tana at the very outset, you see a very definite change”^{ixiv}

These sentiments are now largely shared by stakeholders that are concerned that the Tana Forum is drifting too far from the original concept. The Tana Board, Secretariat and Technical Committee therefore need to take this into account as they steer the Tana ship in the next 10 years.

TANA FORUM LEADERSHIP AND COORDINATION

The Tana Forum Secretariat is an offshoot of the Institute of Peace and Security Studies (IPSS), University of Addis Ababa. It works under the direct strategic oversight of an Advisory Board, currently chaired by the former President of Ghana, H.E. John Dramani Mahama. There is a technical committee that works closely with the Tana Forum on substantive and organising matters.

For the past 10 years the Tana Forum has been coordinated by three women. They are: myself, up to the end of the first forum in April 2012, Ms Michelle Ndiaye after the first Forum (2012-2020), and Ms Lettie Longwe (from 2020 till writing of this publication) (Image 28 below)



Dr Hesphina Rukato: 2011-2012



Ms Michelle Ndiaye: 2012-2020



Ms Lettie Langwe: 2020-Current

Image 28: The three Tana Forum Coordinators from 2012 to date.

Excellent management of the forum over its first decade has demonstrated women's ability to deliver on and manage peace and security institutions and processes. The IPSS has also demonstrated commitment to giving women an opportunity to manage novel initiatives, such as the Tana Forum. This is a highly commendable best practice and should be emulated both in the peace and security sector, and in other development sectors across the AU, private sector, civil society, academia and politics.

Amongst us, we have demonstrated significant innovativeness, adaptability, inclusiveness and professionalism, while working with a diverse range of stakeholders from across Africa and globally. It is my hope that more women will become visible, and charged with important assignments in the peace and security sector in Africa.

TEN YEARS ON – LESSONS LEARNED



The Tana Forum was conceptualised as an innovative peace and security initiative for Africa. As such, its methods and processes were novel in many respects. The first decade of the forum's existence has demonstrated which of these novel methods and processes have worked, in some cases providing best practices that could be adopted by other African programmes and institutions. Below is a discussion of lessons learnt out of the Tana Forum, and some resulting best practices.

LEADERSHIP

The success of any event or programme is dependent on good leadership. The successes of the first edition of the Tana Forum are mainly due to the leadership it received from former Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi at inception, and from both H.E. Zenawi and former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo at its launch.

Their leadership endeared the forum to various funding partners, as had originally been intended. It also ensured sustained interest in the Forum by various stakeholders. The fact that the chairmanship was by a former head of state and government, who was also charismatic in his own right, was a further credit to the forum. The Chairperson's strong leadership built a strong foundation upon which the forum continues to stand.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

In addition to strong leadership, the Tana Forum's success was due to very strong technical support by its secretariat and all the experts who had been invited to support the creation of the forum's background papers. For example, a content preparatory workshop was held for the forum's first edition. This was to ensure that the forum's success would not be left to chance. After the first forum, a technical committee was established to continuously provide support to the secretariat during and between forums.

REPRESENTATION

In a continent as large and diverse as Africa, the issue of representation is critical. This relates to geographical (Central, East, North, Southern and West African regions), gender and youth representation. The Tana Secretariat had to ensure that there was gender representation among both the speakers and participants. Lastly, the organisers had to ensure that there was intergenerational representation. The most important criteria for participation were expertise, knowledge of and experience in the subject matter. Satisfying all these requirements is a guarantee for the success of any initiative.

SUCCESS HAS MANY PARENTS, BUT FAILURE IS AN ORPHAN

The forum's increasing number of participants, funders and partners gives meaning to the saying that "success has many parents, but failure is an orphan". The excitement that is commonly associated with new initiatives on the continent needs to be tempered with consistent rebranding and leadership.

Examples that come to mind are the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and the Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), where over-reliance on financial support from development partners continues to gnaw at the very principle of African ownership and leadership. Once the initiative loses its lustre, development partners/funders will simply move to the next fashionable event. By then it will be the responsibility of Africans to resuscitate the initiative.

LUCK IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN OPPORTUNITY MEETS PREPARATION

By all measures, the Tana Forum has been hugely successful. However, this success has not been achieved by chance. It is due to the intense preparation that takes place ahead of the forum, sometimes in the public eye, but mostly behind closed doors. The structures that have been put in place to prepare in between the forums have contributed to their success. These include the forum's advisory board and the technical committee, which work together with a competent secretariat.

These structures and the secretariat have also shown the dividends of teamwork and learning together. The preparations, especially of the first Tana Forum, required significant risk-taking and intuition as there was no exact African reference point at that time from which to draw context. Outside of more distant examples of similar events, such as the Munich Security Conference or the Davos World Economic Forum (WEF), the only reference was in intention.

INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE

In terms of institutional governance and the frank nature of the Tana Forum, an anonymous interviewee raised a concern regarding conflict of interest for the forum's leadership. By way of example, the interviewee questioned why it was that in 2024, the then Chairperson of the Tana Forum, H.E. John Dramani Mahama of Ghana, continues to participate in domestic politics in his country. Yet it was very clear from the start that people to be considered for this position ought to have retired from domestic politics to maintain the forum's integrity. It is therefore recommended that the Tana Forum Advisory Board engages itself on this matter in order to ensure consistency in the application of the forum's principles.



CONCLUSION

The Tana Forum has become one of the most significant platforms for discussing the critical issues of peace and security in Africa. In the 10 years since its launch in 2012 it has lived up to its initial aim of agenda-setting, as well as proactively identifying emerging peace and security issues on the continent. The African Union has also embraced the forum as originally intended.

The forum's multi-stakeholder nature has endeared it to many institutions, both in Africa and globally. It has also managed to diversify its funding and partnerships, which speaks to the forum's sustainability. Many lessons have been learnt in the forum's 10 years, including the importance of leadership, women leadership in peace and security processes, youth and women participation, the importance of preparation, inclusivity and ownership of African initiatives, as well as leadership renewal.

There are also a few challenges. These include Africans demonstrating ownership of the forum by making financial contributions. Another challenge that needs addressing is the forum's format, so that participants have adequate time for discussions. This is also related to managing the ever-increasing number of participants and partners, which negatively affects the forum's focus. There is also a need to ensure that the forum is protected, so that its currency remains solid and not diluted by the many partners that now have vested interests in it.

Finally, a formal review of the forum is necessary as part of marking its 10th anniversary and adapting it to new and emerging factors that may have arisen in the past decade.

Fortunately, all the identified challenges are surmountable. Addressing these challenges is important in further deepening the Tana Forum's foundation. This 10-year review offers a reflective opportunity for entrenching and institutionalising what has worked, and ridding the forum of those aspects that would otherwise weigh it down in the next decade. These improvement areas can be as small as time management, or as big as resource mobilisation or the very identity and ownership of the forum itself.

Overall, Africans should be proud of having sustained such an innovative and impactful initiative over the past 10 years. This demonstrates that where there is a will, there is a way.

On a personal level, my Tana Forum experience has been deeply fulfilling. Participating in the forum's early conceptualisation and watching it blossom has been humbling, particularly given the role the forum now plays in Africa's peace

and security landscape. In retrospect, except for the challenges cited above, I would not change anything in the way the forum was launched and has been implemented over the past 10 years.

My overall take-away lesson from the first 10 years of the Tana Forum is that when Africans are determined to achieve specific goals, they can do it. However, pursuing those goals requires strong and focused leadership, being resourceful, harnessing innovative methods, opening spaces for young people, and engaging with the rest of the world based on what is good for Africa. Being able to reflect, consult and record the Tana process for future generations has been both a privilege and a necessity.



ANNEXURES



ANNEXURE 1: PROGRAMME FOR THE 1ST TANA FORUM, BAHIR DAR, 14-15 APRIL 2012

DAY 1: SATURDAY 14TH

Session 1

Opening

- Dr Hesphina Rukato
- Prof. Andreas Eshete
- H.E. Prime Minister Meles Zenawi
- Mrs Graça Machel (her statement was read out to the audience)
- H.E. Mr Olusegun Obasanjo

Session 2

Panel 1: Managing Diversity

- Prof. Andreas Eshete (Chair)

Panellists

- Dr Francis Deng
- Ms Bineta Diop
- Prof. Mahmood Mamdani
- H.E. Mr Olusegun Obasanjo

DAY 2: SUNDAY 15TH

Session 3

Panel 2: State Fragility

- Dr Funmi Olonisakin (Chair)

Panellists

- H.E. Dr Luísa Diogo
- Dr Abdalla A Hamdock
- H.E. Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra
- H.E. Mr Thabo Mbeki

Session 4

- H.E. Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo (Chair)

ANNEXURE 2: FUNDERS/PARTNERS IN APRIL 2012

- The Ethiopian Government
- Addis Ababa Traffic Police
- City Government of Addis Ababa Fire and Emergency Prevention and Risk Agency
- Civil Aviation Authority
- Ethiopian Airlines
- Ethiopian Airport Enterprise
- Government Communications Affairs Office
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Transport and Communication
- National Intelligence and Security Services
- The Amhara Regional Government
- The Federal Police
- The German Government
- Avanti Blue Nile Hotel, Bahir Dar
- Sheraton Addis, Addis Ababa
- Bahir Dar City

ANNEXURE 2: FUNDERS/PARTNERS IN OCTOBER 2022

FUNDERS/PARTNERS IN OCTOBER 2022	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) 2. Amhara Regional State, FDRE 3. African Union Commission 4. Ethiopian Airlines 5. Bahir Dar University 6. Avanti Blue Nile Resort 7. Midroc Investment Group 8. Berghof Foundation 9. Institute of Economics and Peace 10. Chatham House 11. European Centre for Development Policy Management 12. European Council on Foreign Relations 13. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit 14. Open Society Foundations 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. Embassy of Switzerland to Ethiopia 16. Embassy of Ireland to Ethiopia 17. Embassy of Canada to Ethiopia 18. United States Institute of Peace 19. Humanity United 20. Mission of Japan to the African Union 21. Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie 22. United Nations Development Programme 23. International Committee of the Red Cross 24. Embassy of the People's Republic of China to Ethiopia 25. Embassy of New Zealand to Ethiopia 26. Embassy of Portugal to Ethiopia and the African Union

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- x. Institute for Peace and Security Studies, Tana Forum Secretariat, 2011: The 2011 Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa.
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- xv. Tinga Tina Art, 2023: The significance of the Baobab tree in African paintings, 15 March 2023.
- xvi. Shortlist for Chairpersons of the Forum: Kofi Annan, West Africa, Ghana; Mo Ibrahim, East Africa, Sudanese-British; Joaquim Chissano, Southern Africa, Mozambique; John Kufuor, West Africa, Ghana; Wangari Maathai (F), East Africa, Kenya; Graca Machel (F), Southern South Africa, Mozambique; Alpha Oumar Konaré, West Africa, Mali; Salim Ahmed Salim, East Africa, Tanzania; Thabo Mbeki, Southern Africa, South Africa; Olusegun Obasanjo, West Africa, Nigeria; Desmond Tutu, Southern Africa, South Africa; and Lakhdar Brahimi, North Africa, Algeria.
- xvii. Zenawi, M, letter to former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo introducing the Tana Forum team.
- xviii. Institute for Peace and Security Studies, Tana Forum Secretariat, 2011: Report on the meeting with Chairperson of the Forum, Hilton Hotel, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 15 August 2011.
- xix. Below is the list of the members of the first Advisory Board and their affiliations at the time of their appointment in 2013.
H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Forum Chairperson)
H.E. Thabo Mbeki, former President of the Republic of South Africa
H.E. Pierre Buyoya, former President of the Republic of Burundi
H.E. Betty Bigombe, State Minister of Water Resources, Uganda

- Professor Ndioro Ndiaye, former Minister of Social Development and former Minister for Women's and Children's and Family Affairs, Senegal
- Professor Mahmood Mamdani, Executive Director, Makerere Institute of Social Research, Uganda
- Dr Funmi Olonisakin, Director, African Leadership Centre/Conflict Security and Development Group Ambassador
- Mohamed Sahnoun, Initiatives et Changement International
- Professor Andreas Eshete, Special Adviser to the Prime Minister with the Rank of a Minister in Ethiopia (Forum CEO, ex, officio member of the Board).
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 - xxxvi. Institute for Peace and Security Studies, Tana Forum Secretariat, 2022: 10th Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa, Addis Ababa University.
 - xxxvii. Interview with former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, Abeokuta, Nigeria, 10 October 2023.
 - xxxviii. Ibid
 - xxxix. Ibid
 - xl. Virtual Interview with the Hon. Betty Bigombe, former Minister of Water and Sanitation, Uganda, and former Tana Forum Advisory Board member, 28 August 2023.
 - xli. Virtual interview with Dr Cedric de Coning: Research Professor, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), 10 October 2023.
 - xlii. Interview with H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn, former Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 11 July 2023.
 - xliii. Interview with Dr Tabani Moyo, Zimbabwean journalist, Harare, Zimbabwe, 15 April 2023.
 - xliv. Zenawi, M, 2011: letter to former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo introducing the Tana High-Level Forum team.
 - xlv. Virtual interview with Ms Cynthia Chigwenya, peace and security expert, and African Union Youth Ambassador for Southern Africa (2022-2024), 14 October 2023.



END NOTES

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- liii. Virtual interview with Aichatou Tamba, peace and security expert and former Tana Secretariat team member, 31 July 2023.
- liv. Ibid
- lv. Interview with former President Olusegun Obasanjo, Abeokuta, Nigeria, 10 October 2023.
- lvi. Interview with H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn, former Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 11 July 2023.
- lvii. Ibid
- lviii. Interview with H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn, former Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 28 July 2023.
- lix. Interview with H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn, former Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 11 July 2023.
- lx. Interview with Prof. Tim Murithi: Head of Peace Building Interventions & Extraordinary Professor of African Studies, University of the Free State, South Africa, former Tana Forum Technical Committee member, and peace and security expert, 12 September 2023.
- lxi. Virtual interview with Mme Bineta Diop, African Union Women, Peace and Security Special Envoy, 9 November 2023.
- lxii. Interview with H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn, former Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 28 July 2023.
- lxiii. Interview with former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, 10 October 2023, Abeokuta, Nigeria, 10 October 2023.
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Author: Dr Hespina Rukato

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