FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE AFRICAN PEACE AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE (APSA) IN PROMOTING PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) is a policy and institutional framework that the African Union (AU) established in 2002. It was intended to be an operational structure for the effective implementation of the decisions taken by the African Peace and Security Council (PSC), in the areas of conflict prevention, conflict management and post conflict reconstruction in the African continent. However, over a decade since it came into existence, the continent is still mired in violent conflicts. In this regard, APSA performance has been subject of considerable research but the factors that impede its performance have not been adequately documented. This study sought to fill this research gap. The objectives of the study were to establish the extent to which the APSA framework as currently constituted has the institutional capacity to deliver on its mandate, establish challenges that it faces in responding to conflict threats in the continent and explore ways through which it can be enhanced. The research was guided by the The International Regime Theory, International Liberalism Theory and The Securitization Theory. The study employed a descriptive research design using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Due to the somewhat technical nature of the study, the sample was obtained from relevant population at the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa and Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms (REC/RMs) in the continent. The study used stratified and purposive sampling. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview methods and were analysed for descriptive statistics (frequencies, means and percentages) and inferential statistics (Pearson correlations) using SPSS software. The results are presented in the form of tables and charts for easier interpretation. The research findings contribute to the existing body of knowledge while also benefiting policy makers dealing with peace and security in Africa. The research established that APSA has largely successfully achieved its mandate and implemented the PSC decisions. This is despite the numerous challenges it continues to face. It was also established that there is need to invest more in APSA in order to enhance its performance. The results established that APSA does have the institutional capabilities to anticipate and respond to peace and security threats on Somalia. Inadequacies in the institution's structure and failure to address root causes of problem, were established as some of the key challenges facing APSA's operations in Somalia. Obsolescence of the current APSA framework was also established to affect its activities and needed review. Among other recommendations, the researcher reccommed that; governments of African states to provide adequate financial and material support to APSA, stakeholders entrusted with the responsibility of managing and overseeing the activities of APSA need to continuously work towards reducing the challenges facing APSA, Citizens and governements of African states need to embrace peace at all times.

Key words: *peace operations, post-conflict reconstruction, african peace and security architecture, regional operations.*