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World Peace Foundation

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PEACE IN AFRICA: DARFUR,
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Introduction¹

In a few months' time, July this year to be exact, the African Union will be ten years old. In twelve months' time, we will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of its predecessor, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which took place in May 1963, at the dawn of African independence. In this lecture, I shall address some of the challenges, and some of the achievements, of the African Union, and will argue that it is making modest but important progress towards meeting the aspirations of its founders, and may be able to position itself to lead the continent towards greater unity, democracy, and peace.

For much of the last twelve years, I have been engaged with the OAU and AU, contributing ideas towards the design of its architecture for peace and security, and more recently working on several specific challenges, notably helping to address the challenges of peace in Sudan. I am an advocate for the AU, but I hope I can also be a detached observer and that I can provide some of the critical scrutiny that is needed as Africa charts its path forward. I believe as a point of principle that it is better for Africa to resolve its own problems. It will strengthen and empower Africa to do so. Also, the solutions that are found locally are more likely to be robust than those that are designed elsewhere.

At the same time, precisely because Africa is weak vis-à-vis other global players, and its governing institutions are fragile, the continent has the most to gain from international law, international norms and international institutions. The United Nations Security Council has, over the last decade, spent more than half its time deliberating on African issues. Africa hosts more than half of the world's peacekeepers, including the largest peacekeeping operations in the world. It is only in Africa that the United Nations specialized agencies exercise their full mandates. For example if we take UNICEF, we see that it is active on issues ranging from vaccination against childhood diseases and mother-and-child health, to demobilizing child soldiers and protecting children in situations of armed conflict. Similarly, the UN Development Programme has a wider range of activities in Africa, including on issues such as governance and post-conflict reconstruction, than anywhere else in the world. Africa is a multi-lateralized continent.

International laws, norms and institutions aim to protect the weak, and therefore ought to be in the interests of Africans. Even the harshest critics of international policies towards Africa have recognized the value of international institutions. In 1935, the Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie spoke at the League of Nations to protest against the invasion of his country, a member of the League, by Fascist Italy. He warned of the consequences for the world if his weak nation were to be sacrificed for political expediency, emphasizing that scrupulous respect for international law was to the benefit of all. His calls were ignored. Haile Selassie's experience of Fascist conquest was one reason why he was an enthusiast for the United Nations and, among other things, one of the earliest signatories of the

¹ This is the text of a Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Agenda Setting Lecture originally delivered at the University of Limerick, on Wednesday 2nd May, 2012.

United Nations Genocide Convention. He was also a prime mover in the OAU in 1963, hosting it in Addis Ababa, and placing his own diplomats at its service.

The situation confronting the world today is a lot more reassuring than in the 1930s, or indeed the 1960s. But powerful nations still face the temptation of interpreting international law and norms in such a way that it suits their interests, and setting them aside when they don't. I will argue that this is not only bad for international law and international security, but it is a particularly bad practice in Africa, because of the particularities of African history and contemporary African conflicts. These particularities include both the specific local details of African conflicts, which are best addressed by those in the neighbourhood who understand them best, and also the historically-grounded African distrust of outside interventions, which militates against the success of non-African initiatives.

Globally, wars are generally becoming less common and less lethal, but there is a continuing problem of intractable conflicts in many parts of Africa. Unlike the classic Clausewitzian wars that are fought between two easily recognizable sides, many of these conflicts are internal wars, mostly irregular, often with multiple parties with shifting or overlapping loyalties, in which the parties often have common interests in disorder, or use violence as part of political bargaining. African states are artificial entities, with arbitrary borders, and internal conflicts readily become regional affairs. African state institutions are often weak and poorly adapted to the challenges of governing diverse societies in which people have multiple identities and loyalties. Africa must of necessity develop its own sets of principles and practices for governance and conflict resolution; the rest of the world is well-advised to pay attention to these, and to avoid undermining Africa's ownership of them.

The African Union is developing its own approaches to conflict resolution and is struggling, with just enough success to give us hope, to apply these in some of the world's most difficult places. This is a venture marked by more frustration than success, and it is more evident in the aspirations of leaders and peoples, than in concrete achievements. Nonetheless, over the long durée, the AU is emerging as a champion of some important norms, including respect for constitutional government and inclusive peace processes.

One significant success is signaled today, 2 May. Earlier today the UN Security Council passed a resolution on the conflict between Sudan and South Sudan. This resolution was introduced by the U.S., which was until Monday the Chair and is intended to stop the fighting between the two countries and to expedite negotiations to resolve the outstanding issues between them, including the border, the disputed area of Abyei, oil and financial issues, and an overhang of unresolved questions regarding citizenship and nationality. It is striking that the operative paragraphs of the resolution follow, word for word, the Roadmap adopted by the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) last week. If this succeeds, it will be an exemplar of AU leadership in addressing a pressing and complex conflict.

Let me formulate my key proposition. The OAU was derided by the late Julius Nyerere, President of Tanzania, as a “trade union of tyrants.” It was notorious for expediency, admitting to its ranks any putchist as long as he headed a supposedly independent African nation.

My proposition: it is no longer so. The AU has adopted several important norms, and these have taken on a life of their own. Two of these principles were incorporated into the AU’s Constitutive Act.

One of these is prohibition on recognizing military coups, and more generally on rejecting unconstitutional means of transferring power. In practice this means insisting that coup-makers return their country to democratic rule as quickly as possible. Notably, this norm was adapted so as to support the democratic uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt last year. Its most recent applications include insisting that, following the death of Malawi’s President Mutharika, his successor is the Vice President Joyce Banda, and not the late President’s brother, who was his personally favoured candidate. The AU has also taken rapid action to demand that the recent military coups in Mali and Guinea Bissau be reversed and those countries return to democratic rule.

Another principle is that the AU is permitted to engage in the internal affairs of a member state, including in extremis undertaking military intervention, in the event of grave human rights violations or humanitarian crisis.

These two norms have been the focus of considerable attention by legal scholars, who observe that they mark a sea change in the philosophy of the continental organization, and a major contrast between the OAU and the AU. They also note that the principles remain shaky in their implementation, and open to diverse and evolving interpretations.

Let me draw attention to some other emergent norms, that have not been formally incorporated into the statutes of the organization, that are also significant. One of these is the principle that a settlement to a civil war should be inclusive, with power shared among all parties. This is the norm of reconciliation, something that is falling out of fashion internationally, as the UN and western member states place a greater emphasis on justice and especially prosecution of those responsible for serious crimes. I do not need to tell an Irish audience about the importance of the principle and practice of reconciliation. The principle of inclusivity has also been expanded so that non-belligerent stakeholders, including civil society and women, should also be represented in peace processes.

Another norm is a principle of Pan-Africanism, applied to the rights of people in a pragmatic way. Citizens of one country should be granted rights in others. This is particularly so for rights of movement, residence, employment and property ownership, but also extends to adoption of nationality and the rights of voting and standing for office. When the Ivorian politician Alassane Ouattara was denied the right to stand for the presidency because of his supposed non-Ivorian ancestry, there was widespread outrage across Africa.

A related principle is that of soft borders: the exact demarcation of borders is less important than allowing people to move across them, and indeed people to belong to political communities on both sides. Africa's borders are mostly artificial, but opening them up for redrawing would cause chaos. Africa can live with its inviolable borders on a map if the borders don't matter much on the ground, so that people can cross borders easily, and belong to communities on both sides of the border. There is de facto tolerance for multiple citizenship.

Africa's leaders, acting collectively, do more to uphold these norms than we might expect. They do so because they recognize that Africa is stronger if it acts together to support these principles. There is a set of practices informed by a collective awareness of the fragility of state institutions, the precariousness of development achievements, and the efficacy of peer pressure given these common weaknesses.

I will address three cases in the recent past: Darfur, Côte d'Ivoire and Libya.

Darfur

The war in Darfur erupted in 2003, just at the moment when the AU's Peace and Security Council was becoming established. Sending AU troops to Darfur was the very first operational agenda item of the PSC, and it was followed immediately by AU leadership in seeking a negotiated settlement to the conflict.

I will not go into details on the war in Darfur, its repercussions, and the search for peace. For our purposes today it is fascinating because we can see multiple different concepts of peace. This illustrates the flexibility, the range of options, open to peacemakers, and the extent to which it is possible, and necessary, to innovate. Let me outline seven such concepts, as they translated into practice:

First is the concept of a peace agreement as a text, signed by the warring parties, witnessed by the mediator and observers, that contains set of compromises that cover all the key issues. At the AU-mediated peace talks in Abuja between the Government of Sudan and the Darfur rebels, the mediators had precisely such a conventional view of what a successful peace agreement would look like.

But, among the Sudanese negotiators, there were three other contending visions of peace. One was the preference of the Sudanese government, namely individually buying the loyalty of rebels through material rewards. This is the patronage marketplace approach to peace, and many rebels bought it.

A second view, briefly held by some of the rebel leaders, was that a signed agreement would serve as the basis for a continued transformational change in Sudanese politics. Having signed up to a set of democratic processes, the rebel leaders and their allies would use the democratic process to pursue their wider agenda. Unfortunately, the Darfurian rebel leaders were too weak and unsure of themselves to hold to such an approach.

A third vision was to create a de facto international protectorate, by bringing in NATO or UN troops to protect the civilian population, remove the Sudanese army, and establish international administration and security, on behalf of the rebels.

The most influential of the Darfur rebel leaders, Abdel Wahid al Nur, veered between the four different visions of peace at different times. On the morning of 6 May 2006, when he refused to sign the Darfur Peace Agreement, he gave three wholly different explanations to different interlocutors. He told members of the AU mediation team that the text of the Agreement was unfair. He told some of his supporters that the amount of money on the table was insufficient. And when his political advisor, who was in north America, advised him not to sign because there was a better offer of international troops in the works, Abdel Wahid agreed.

In 2009, the African Union established a High Level Panel on Darfur, headed by the former South African President Thabo Mbeki. This came a fifth vision for peace, namely a round-table process of negotiation, involving all stakeholders including non-belligerents (traditional leaders, civil society, women, and political parties), leading to a global political consensus on all the issues facing Darfur and its position within Sudan. Possibly this is the most distinctively "African" solution: it conjures up the image of settling an issue by discussion under a tree.

In parallel, the Joint UN-AU Chief mediator led a process, hosted by the Government of Qatar, which had two additional visions of peace. The first of these was a deal among the fighting men: a classic elite political settlement including an amnesty for all. The assumption was that if the main belligerents reached a deal, then the rest would follow.

When this didn't work, the Joint Chief Mediator and his team of UN experts adopted a seventh vision of peace, in the form of an internationally-endorsed blueprint for how Darfur should be governed, developed and secured. This is not an agreement as such, rather the "Doha Document for Peace in Darfur," that provides benchmarks against which the Sudanese government's performance can be assessed, incentives for the rebels to join, funds for rehabilitation and development activities, and an implementation plan that rests heavily on the AU-UN peace support mission in Darfur.

This final vision of peace in Africa is perhaps the most interesting to scholars of politics and international relations. "Peace" in this sense is not an agreement among the belligerents but rather positioning of the conflicted society in an international order of governance, security and development. More broadly, the lack of overall consensus about what a peace process, a peace agreement, and peace itself, might look like, is instructive.

Côte d'Ivoire

While the dominant narratives of Darfur are marked by lack of consensus, the internationally accepted story of the Côte d'Ivoire crisis of 2010-2011 is one of the triumph of good over evil. The narrative is that there was a rigged election in which

the incumbent lost and refused to stand down, forcing the hand of the international community, which finally intervened to protect civilians and to implement the democratic will. The winner, Alassane Ouattara, is now acclaimed as President, and the loser, Laurent Gbagbo, is in a cell in The Hague awaiting trial on four charges of crimes against humanity.

The victory of Ouattara, backed by the UN, France and the African neighbours, may indeed turn out to be the best outcome for Côte d'Ivoire. But there are several important, if neglected controversies that we should not overlook, which suggest it may not be so straightforward.

The crisis in Côte d'Ivoire had deep roots, included an on-off civil war over a decade, and erupted again in the wake of the October 2010 elections. These elections were supposed to be the capstone on a peace agreement signed in 2007. They were repeatedly delayed, primarily because especially of the failure to establish a single integrated national army.

The organization of the election had two controversial elements. The first was that the process of disarming the former rebels and integrating them into the national army was incomplete. The country was divided into the south, controlled by the government under President Gbagbo, and the north, controlled by the Forces Nouvelles under the challenger, Ouattara. Each controlled about half of the country. In the context of such a military division, a winner-takes-all election was sure to be contentious: the crisis was foreseeable and indeed was foreseen.

Second, the UN (in the form of the Special Representative of the Secretary General and head of the peacekeeping mission) was given the authority to certify the outcome of the elections, thereby creating a situation in which the UN might contradict the constitutionally-recognised authorities.

According to the Independent Election Commission (IEC) and the UN, Ouattara won with about 54.1% of the vote. The IEC was headed by a supporter of Ouattara. France, which was the key member state of the UN engaged in Côte d'Ivoire, and also the former colonial power, supported Ouattara. According to the Constitutional Court, Gbagbo won with 51.45%. The Constitutional Court was headed by a supporter of Gbagbo. Both sides alleged fraud by the other, and each had evidence in support of its claim.

The AU's first initiative was by former South African president Thabo Mbeki. He was not convinced that anyone could truly determine who had won the election. With such a close outcome, the precise vote count was close to immaterial. Mbeki's basic insight was that neither could rule effectively without the support of the other, and for either to try to enforce victory would lead to civil war. He proposed power sharing and a mechanism for resolving the electoral dispute.

The African Union came under serious pressure from France and certain West African states to align itself with the UN position. The power-sharing option was also undermined because Gbagbo was politically passive, failing to take the

political options that were open to him and instead retreating to a bunker and challenging the international community. In January 2011 the AU set up a High Level Panel to deal with the crisis, which reported in early March that Gbagbo should go and Ouattara should take over.

Gbagbo still did not move, and armed conflict erupted. This paved the way for enforcement action by the UN and France, whereby they forcibly removed Gbagbo, detained him and later rendered him to the ICC. Ouattara appeared to have won a decisive victory.

The story of Côte d'Ivoire looks somewhat like a triumph of legality: force of arms being used as a last resort to implement the will of the people and accountability for human rights violations. But it also resembles an exercise in might being right, in which the UN and the former colonial power arrogated the right to decide a national political process. The (still uncertain) legitimacy of Ouattara's electoral victory does not detract from the fact that Gbagbo won as much as half of the popular vote.

Human rights violations were committed by both sides in the war, and in fact the staunchest ally of Ouattara and Sarkozy was the President of Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaoré, whose troops played a pivotal role in Ouattara's military campaigns. This is the same Compaoré who was named in the trial of the Liberian warlord Charles Taylor as his fellow conspirator in the Liberian and Sierra Leonean rebellions and arms supplier. In fact, most of the nasty insurgencies in West Africa over the last 20 years seem have Compaoré's hand visible in them. Covert military cooperation between the UN, France and Burkina Faso made possible Ouattara's victory.

Libya

The triumph in Côte d'Ivoire perhaps emboldened the French president to believe that African problems could be resolved by short, sharp displays of military technology and prowess. The conclusion of the French-led operation in Abidjan certainly coincided with the launch of the air operations over Libya. This too was heralded as a magnificent success for the principle of intervention and of the "responsibility to protect." I disagree.

In this final section of this lecture I want to speak about the African Union's initiative to find a peaceful resolution to the crisis in Libya. This was much derided at the time by western leaders and journalists, and the AU did not do a good job of explaining what it was trying to do and why. I don't believe that the AU plan has received a fair press. It was better-informed, more serious and more balanced than it was portrayed by its detractors. Let me explain Africa's concerns, its principles, why it tried to take a different approach to that of NATO, why it failed, and some of the consequences.

The President of Chad, Idriss Déby isn't normally considered a paragon of wisdom. But in March 2011 he warned that NATO's intervention in Libya "could have grave

consequences for the stability of the region and the spread of terrorism in Europe, the Mediterranean and the rest of Africa." "History will prove me right," he said. Like Muammar Gaddafi, Déby is a Saharan Bedouin, who practices a style of politics based on personal loyalties, intrigue and force. Déby was no friend of Gaddafi: he fought and defeated the Libyan army in the 1970s and '80s. After taking power in Chad in 1991, like other African leaders, he found Gaddafi intensely frustrating: vain, petulant, erratic and arrogant. And Déby is being proven right. The current war in Mali, including the declaration of secession by Tuareg rebels and the military coup, are a direct outcome of the mismanagement of the Libyan crisis. About 3,000 Malian Tuareg served in Gaddafi's army, and during the war they helped themselves to enormous supplies of weapons, and as soon as the dictator fell, returned home in force. The growth of Al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb is another outcome, as Déby foresaw, they also armed themselves during the chaos of the Libyan conflict. A third is the escalation of the war in northern Sudan: the Darfur rebel group, the Justice and Equality Movement, returned from its Libyan rear base to Sudan, rearmed with Libyan weapons.

Déby cautioned against "opening the Libyan Pandora's box" at the AU PSC meeting on Libya on 10 March 2011, in which the AU decided on a diplomatic approach to resolve the crisis.

When the crisis in Libya erupted in February 2011, Europe and America saw it as a somewhat rougher version of Tunisia: a democratic uprising to overthrow a tyrant. Africa saw it that way too. In January and February, the AU was busy adapting its prohibition on unconstitutional changes in government to allow it to embrace democratic uprisings, and its first statements were to condemn Gaddafi's repression of demonstrations and to call for democratic change.

But the AU also saw Libya as "Chad squared": they saw a country with no institutions, run on the basis of militarized tribalism and patronage, supercharged with petrodollars and with open borders to boot. The Libyan uprising had immediately morphed into a civil war, and Africa's leaders knew such wars all too well, and feared the implications, for Libya and for the region.

The AU's 10 March Roadmap, included a ceasefire and an end to repression of democratic activities, a transition to an inclusive and democratic government, humanitarian relief, protection of African migrant workers, and controlling the spread of arms, including mercenaries and terrorists. The AU set up an Ad Hoc Committee of five heads of state, who met in Nouakchott, Mauritania, on 19 March to begin their diplomatic effort. They were due to fly to Libya the next day, but this was the day when the no-fly zone came into effect and the UN did not give them permission to travel. In fact, the AU came under serious pressure from France to abandon its effort, join the Libya Contact Group and to endorse the military option. The AU resisted. It argued that African states had voted for UN Security Council resolution 1973 that authorized the no fly zone, that those votes were necessary for the resolution to pass, and that they cast those votes on the basis of a statement in the preamble welcoming the AU's diplomatic effort. The AU criticized what it called the selective interpretation of the resolution in favour of military action, and

questioned legality and legitimacy of extending that action beyond the protection of civilians under immediate risk to a goal of regime change.

The blocking of the AU initiative in March meant that crucial weeks were lost, and by the time the AU leaders travelled to Libya on 10 April, their chances of success were much more slender. Nonetheless, African leaders were perhaps the only group that could have persuaded Gaddafi to step down peacefully. They were exploring options of him going into exile in an African country, or even into internal exile in a Saharan town, guarded by African soldiers. They also had proposals to send African troops and observers to monitor a ceasefire. But their chances of success were growing more slender all the time, as the opposition became bolder, and the coterie around Gaddafi became more insistent that the “Brother Leader” should stay.

When the African leaders met with Gaddafi, he was angry with them for their condemnations of him, and demanded their solidarity in the face of an external threat. The AU leaders did not change their position: they insisted that he must enter into dialogue with the opposition, and begin a process of democratization. Gaddafi agreed in principle to the roadmap. However, the Transitional National Council in Benghazi rejected it, accusing the AU of siding with Gaddafi against them and their NATO allies.

At times when the Libyan conflict seemed to be in stalemate, France flirted with a diplomatic solution involving the AU. But when TNC forces entered Tripoli, it was too late. Ironically, the TNC’s Tripoli operation was made possible, not only by NATO’s air support, but also by the active military support of an African country – Sudan. For years, Sudan and Libya had been hostile neighbours, with Sudanese rebels hosted by Libya repeatedly threatening the government in Khartoum. The presence of JEM in Libya was the most recent of these dangers, and remained an urgent threat. Sudan was also a long-time sponsor of Libya’s Islamist opposition, including some of the leaders of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group who played a major role in the TNC’s rebellion.

When the Libyan crisis erupted, Sudan initially took steps to contain the threat of a spillover, then moved its own army to occupy the oasis town of Kufra in south-east Libya, to open an overland supply route to the TNC and prevent JEM from using it as a base. Then the Sudanese National Intelligence and Security Service gave full support, including weaponry and communications equipment, along with men to train and coordinate the battlefield, for the fighting in Tripoli and western Libya. Sudan’s President Bashir claimed that all the arms for the battle of Tripoli came from Sudan, and it may have been only a minor exaggeration. This covert operation was undertaken in coordination with NATO.

We therefore need to consider the irony that NATO operations in Libya, heralded as a textbook case of an intervention on the basis of the “responsibility to protect”, were brought to a successful conclusion with the cooperation of Sudanese intelligence officers. As with Côte d’Ivoire, a covert operation by a regime with a

widely-deplored record for human rights violation and destabilization, was the partner for an international effort to establish democracy.

The strongly anti-Gaddafi position of Sudan points to a major weakness of the AU diplomatic effort: Africa was divided over Libya. Some countries (Sudan, Ethiopia, Nigeria) were very hostile to Gaddafi and wanted him gone as quickly as possible, while others (Zimbabwe, Uganda, Eritrea) were much more favourable. Those with more nuanced positions (Chad, Mali, Mauritania) could not prevail. Just as importantly, the failure of the AU initiative indicates its weakness vis-à-vis countries such as France and the U.S., which could not only ignore and override the African initiative, but also coopt some African states to their cause. The AU suffered from material weakness too. It did not have the troops, logistics and finance to support its proposals for a ceasefire, or even to support its diplomatic efforts. Lastly, the AU suffered from poor public relations: it never got its message across, and even people well-informed on the Libyan crisis often assumed the shallow criticisms of the AU effort, that it was an effort to save a dictator by his friends and cronies, was correct. As I have tried to show, the AU initiative was in fact both principled and strategic, and it was a tragic error for it to have been so casually brushed aside.

Conclusions

None of the three cases I have detailed today can be counted as a substantive success for African peacemaking. In Darfur, Côte d'Ivoire and Libya, African-owned and African-led initiatives did not prevail. A mixture of international action and African covert military involvement was more influential. Nonetheless, there are reasons for optimism that the African Union is finding its voice, and its norms and practices are being more widely recognized and adopted.

The African Union has yet to fasten on to a single distinctive African practice of peacemaking. This is unsurprising given the diversity of the conflicts on the continent, and is probably undesirable for that same reason. But the AU is emerging as a distinct and active player with its own norms and practices, which are developing in response to the problems it faces. I submit that the AU's role will become more significant, in part because of the growing disillusion with internationally-sponsored frameworks for conflict resolution.

The case of the conflict between Sudan and South Sudan may become a defining case of AU leadership. In part because the UN, Europe and America debarred themselves from dealing with the Sudanese President, because the ICC has an arrest warrant against him, the AU has taken the lead in negotiations on Sudan and South Sudan. The AU has invested unparalleled effort in the Sudanese negotiations, and has currently achieved an international consensus in support of its proposals for resolving the Sudan-South Sudan conflict. If this succeeds, it may be a model for how the AU and the UN may cooperate in the future. Broadly speaking, the division of labour would be one in which the AU leads the political negotiations, while the UN provides the finance, administration and logistics for peace support operations.

The AU has shown a capacity to develop and act upon norms, even when this goes against the immediate interests of countries. Those norms are important and are becoming more so. Interestingly, they are espoused and acted upon more actively at the regional level than the national level. There appears to be a peer group effect: when they act collectively, African leaders are more closely informed by those norms than when acting individually.

Another element that the three cases have in common is that peacemaking is not only about reaching agreement among belligerents, but also about positioning the country in a global governance order. African and international approaches to peace differ only marginally on the norms that inform them, and on the need for countries emerging from conflict to be supported by Africa and the international community. Where they differ is on where the centre of gravity of international integration should lie. Africa's preference is for power to remain in Africa, fearing that peace agreements may become mechanisms for creating countries dependent on foreign patronage. The UN, Europe and America prefer for such countries to be integrated directly into the global governance order.

Twelve years ago, as the idea of the AU was taking shape, I presented a short paper at a conference in Addis Ababa, addressing the question, what sort of union would the AU be? Africa did not have the shared economic interests that had driven the creation and deepening of the European Union. It did not have the shared enemies that had been instrumental in creating security communities in the Arabian Gulf and south-east Asia. The AU was, I argued, an "aspirational union," driven by sentiment and norms, and by a common perception of shared identity and interests. That is not a very substantial basis on which to build a continental union, but it is better than nothing. After almost ten years of the AU, I believe that some of those aspirations are being more clearly defined, and the organization is developing the means whereby it can realize its goals. The successes thus far can be seen more in the process than the outcome. These gains may be modest, but they are real.

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