



APSACO

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Africa's Place and Influence in a Changing World

General Rapporteur

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SYNTHESIS REPORT

june, 18th-19th 2019 - Rabat, Morocco

African Peace and Security Annual Conference – APSACO

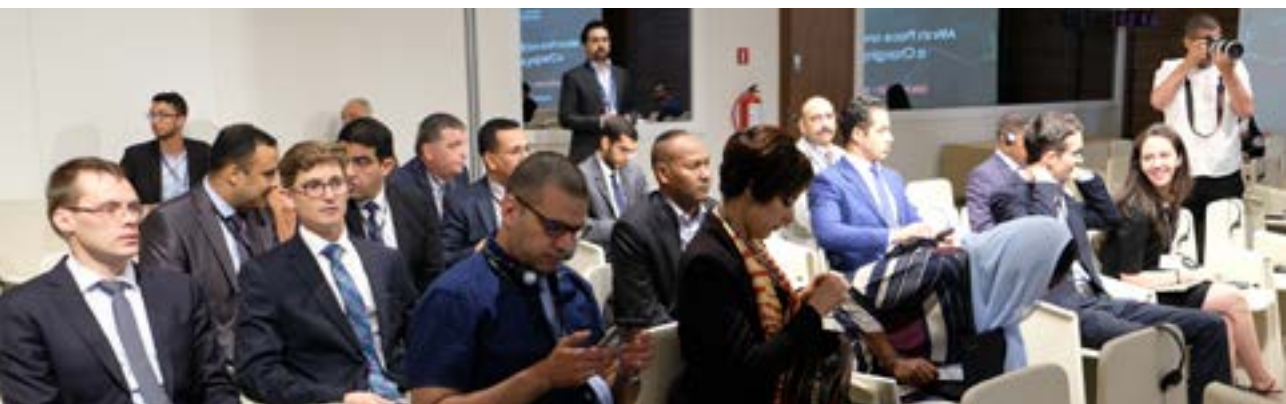
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Introduction

The third edition of the African Peace and Security Annual Conference (APSACO) was held on June 18-19th 2019 under the theme “Africa's Place and Influence in a Changing World”. The two-day event, organized by Policy Center for the New South (PCNS), was launched with the publication of the Annual Report on Africa's Geopolitics, followed by five panels :

- **Panel 1: Africa and the world or How to balance Mutual perceptions;**
- **Panel 2: Africa and the production of strategic and normative knowledge;**
- **Panel 3: Africa's resilience through mutual efforts;**
- **Panel 4: How is Africa dealing with conflict prevention and management?**
- **Panel 5: Is Africa moving towards a collective strategy aligned with the game of international powers?**

As it has become the trademark of PCNS conferences, APSACO gathered experts from different parts of the world, fields and professions – from the military and political world to academics and the civil society – to ensure a broad and fruitful conversation.

This report presents and summarizes the chairs' and speakers' interventions and the main issues tackled during the conference. More information on the participants, the agenda and other data is attached to this document.

Opening remarks

In his opening speech, Mr **Karim El Aynaoui**, President of the Policy Center for the New South, after welcoming the participants, briefly introduced the mindset of the Policy Center. The latter seeks to see the world from Morocco, an African middle income country facing many challenges. While still deeply rooted in factual pragmatism, the PCNS is trying to create its own perception of others with tolerance and open-mindedness.



Africa, generally, and Morocco, specifically, are aware of the current conjuncture affecting them and try to alter the balance by deciding what place they want to hold in the world. Despite the external powers' competition within the continent and the possible influence the Brexit may have in its affairs, Morocco remains hopeful. Indeed, its involvement with the European Union proves to be strategic for Africa. Moreover, its foreign policy is articulated around its African Union agenda, its relations in the Mediterranean area, the Middle East and the South-South cooperation within the wider Atlantic.



Mr **Rachid El Houdaigui**, Senior Fellow of the PCNS, then proceeded to put in context the conference theme, namely "Africa's Place and Influence in a Changing World". He stressed how think tanks and the academic world upheld the burden of producing paradigms and alternative solutions through a geo-economic, strategic and security based approach.

Needless to say, current actors of the international civil society are largely from the Anglo-Saxon world, which is why it is important for the PCNS to implement itself within that international civil society and offer perspectives and perceptions of its own. These attempts are forming parts of a wider goal to create and promote an interactive fruitful community providing an "African" vision to global and regional issues at stake. In that regard, APSACO offers a great platform prone to debate, dialogue and critical reflection.

Introductory conversation

Conducted by Hugo Sada, Special Advisor of the Dakar International Forum on Peace and Security in Africa, and Diango Cissoko, former Prime Minister of the Republic of Mali, the discussion underlined the impact think tanks may have over more rigid structures like States or other institutional actors.



Africa seems to have started the century on a cleaner, healthier and more productive slate, Mr **Hugo Sada** affirms. However as new ambitions and hopes raise ahead, stronger challenges oppose the African evolution such as the leadership deficit and the significant dependence in the economic and strategic fields. In order to assert itself within the new multilateral international order, Africa must overcome five main obstacles:

- **Development:** Industrialization, promotion of a free-trade zone and intra-continental business and especially stopping corruption are all goals of utmost importance;
- **Governance:** States have to evolve and reinforce their legal, justice and security systems;
- **Crises and conflicts:** Africa has less and less transborder conflicts, but has yet to rise above new threats of terrorism, organized crime or climate change while lacking the proper tools to manage such problems;
- **Political division issues;**
- **Demography and migration.**



In the same perspective, Mr **Diango Cissoko**, reminding Africa's colonial past or rather congratulating its ability to surpass it, expressed the counterbalancing incapacity of African leaders to take charge and control of their respective countries and continent. He then expressed suspicions and distrust regarding the American, European and Chinese powers Africa partners with, highlighting the exploitative nature of their interests.

Both participants seem confident in Africa's potential for growth, through its important human and natural resources, provided they're well managed and not taken advantage of.

Book Presentation – Annual Report of Africa's geopolitics



Moderated by Mr **El Mostafa Rezrazi**, Senior Fellow of the PCNS, this session emphasized many interesting topics.



- **Papa Dialo Zator Mbaye**, Minister Counsellor of the Republic of Senegal, explained how insecurity and lack of cooperation prove to be detrimental to development prospects. He also stressed how the Western world should not be part of an African solution; Africans altogether need to resolve their problems on their own. On another hand, Africa has suffered a great deal of balkanization, which makes South-South cooperation a smart and intuitive response. But alongside the need for a cooperative continent on a security level, efforts should be equally made to tackle the common issues of corruption, lack of transparency, bad governance, bad managing of resources... As a matter of fact, any hope for an emancipated

and fertile continental cooperation relies on Africa's actions and capacity to get through those internal and regional crises.



- **Lassina Diarra**, Researcher and Consultant to the Centre for Strategic and Security for the Sahel Sahara (Centre 4S), discussed transnational criminality and terrorism. He suggested a shift in many attitudes, understanding that the military policy should not only protect and sanction, but also anticipate threats; addressing the countries' structural weaknesses; taking responsibility and exclusivity in the decision-making; distinguishing the major divergences between threats depending on their ideologies, ambition and modus operandi ; understanding the dangers of spreading ideologies that tend to merge, motivate and feed security threats; adapting armies and military bases to the hazards they face.



- **Eric Ntumba**, Corporate and Investment Banker from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), offered a common economic approach which indicated a recurring pattern between the African continent and the Latin American region, where many integration and cooperation efforts are vocally promoted without being followed by effective implementation and execution. He also pointed out the structural

and geographic incompatibilities faced between countries and provinces as to integration and the need to rethink the means to integration to be adopted. He described as a mistake the focus on economic cooperation rather than aiming for a broader political, economic and social integration.

Panel 1: Africa and the world or how to balance mutual perceptions



The first panel explored the thoughts that shape representation of Africa's reconstruction in both African and foreign discourses. The discussion, moderated by **Khalid Chegraoui**, Senior Fellow of the PCNS, focused on the following topics:

- **The construction of Africa in the strategic and diplomatic discourse;**
- **Africa in the eyes of the world through comparative analyses;**
- **African perceptions of the world;**
- **African expectations from the international community.**



- **Koffi Kouakou**, Associate in the Institute of African Futures (AFI), emphasized during his intervention the importance of understanding “ourselves”, our needs and prospects. This knowledge is acquired through studying gradually our demography, geography, identity, language and then agency. These main components define a clear context for us to observe both our obstacles and opportunities and decide with whole and informed knowledge how to react appropriately and accordingly. “Updating” our perception of ourselves, as Africans, and how we will do so, will determine which direction our development will take. China is a great illustration to this idea, as it managed to create a new form of relationship with Africa after re-perceiving the latter and their shared relations.



- **Bakary Sambe**, Chairman and Executive Director at the Timbuktu Institute, in the context of perceptions, added that issues such as the Sahara conflict, although opposed countries’ political positions, never constituted an obstacle to the mutual support the different countries of the region showed to one another. In that regard, the Moroccan foreign policy, more specifically its African policy is a great example. That being said, there still remains a major perception issue which leads, more often than not, to the disruption of relations and thus, the deterioration of the social and economic situation. In parallel, with higher international powers commonly sharing

a problematic image of African countries, those suffer from the instrumentalization of institutions like the World Bank. Through this equally felt, or rather imposed, inferiority, African countries need to collectively work on their representation.



- **Daniel Sidiqui**, Former Deputy Force Commander, UN Peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), highlighted the recurring theme of the oppressor versus the oppressed narrative that Africa suffers from. On top of which we can add a detrimental individualism to the African exploitation. Indeed, not only do external powers perceive Africa as a reservoir of natural resources but also, each one of those powers seems to have a specific interest in the African continent, different from the others. Unfortunately, the corruption and yet again, individualism of some African leaders does not help with the situation. In the hope of a positive change, Africa must deal not only with the mutual intra-continental perception problem and the external perception problem, but also with individualism and having to think in a decolonial manner, free of the acquired paradigms higher powers have brought through colonialism.



- **Zhou Yuyuan**, Senior Fellow at the Shanghai Institute for International Studies, discussed the Chinese-African relations with a great deal of optimism. He shared

his experiences and personal research especially about the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The importance of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) in Africa for China is due to its competition and the blocking of trade, technology and civilization manifested by the US. Mr Zhou Yuyuan explained how China is learning to embrace multilateralism and accumulating experiences of international development through its relations with African countries. The efficiency of African and Chinese South-South cooperation has been attested by numerous indicators. China's FDI has increased over 40 % in Africa between 2010 and 2016, for instance. During the Beijing Summit, 28 countries have signed the Belt and Road initiative. A transition has been made in the Chinese-African cooperation from trade to infrastructure to construction, using BRI and the Forum on Africa-China Cooperation (FOCAC) to support African economies.

Panel 2: Africa and the production of strategic and normative knowledge



On the second day of the APSACO event, this panel discussed the capacity building of African knowledge communities and their ability to address global imbalances in the production of strategic knowledge and the establishment of legal norms. The debate, moderated by **Badreddine El Harti**, Principal Security Sector Reform Advisor to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), raised four salient points:

- **The new orientations of strategic thinking;**
- **Sociology of strategic production in Africa and in the world;**
- **Convergence of legal standards, a corollary of free trade agreements;**
- **African paradigms: South-South cooperation.**



- **Rumbidzai Chisenga**, Independent Consultant and former Program Manager of the Mandela Institute for Development Studies (MINDS), defined the strategic African knowledge in three key points:
 - Indigenous knowledge, through the valorization of local cultures and knowledge. The African identity along with the shared values among its people should be advertised. African relations shouldn't be diminished and undermined into geographic proximity.
 - Technical knowledge reflecting the African situation in terms of technology for example. Knowing and highlighting the state of being in Africa is the safest way to ensure development prospects.
 - Transfer and diffusion of that knowledge, having access to knowledge is a stepping stone towards productivity. Many people are unaware of the existing realities opposing their countries' development. Taking that poor diffusion into account and improving it is key to democratization.



- **Rachid El Houdaigui** spoke about the "New South" and helped shape its definition around three points:

- In a democratized international scene still influenced by western powers, the New South aims at producing new analysis and participating in international debates with another form of ethnocentrism before moving to a more egalitarian dialogue.
- It's an alternative conception of a number of global issues, wishing to deconstruct paradigms and project its own subjectivity on the international level.
- The South has significantly evolved throughout time. It was first created with colonialism and the bipolar world who perceived it as a "Third World". Then, it was given a new identity after the decolonization. Thus, the South expresses a desire to affirm itself within the global political dynamics and detach itself from its dependence on higher powers.



- **Obiageli Ezekwesili**, Senior Economic Advisor, Africa Economic Development Policy Initiative (AEDPI), spoke about the importance of knowledge in overcoming obstacles such as poverty. On a second note, this Nigerian leader in the civil society, known for her role in founding Transparency International, suggested a focus on three major aspects: Partnerships, Knowledge and Investments. Investments proved to be inefficient in addressing the poverty problem in Africa, which is why she believed countries should shift their focus more onto partnerships and knowledge. Mrs Obiageli Ezekwesili casted bright spotlight on worrying data about Africa that, besides having huge gaps in educational systems, only three countries spend 1 % of their GDP on research, against an average level of 0.2 % through the rest of Africa.

Panel 3: Africa's resilience through mutual efforts

How can Africa be resilient in adapting to continental and global challenges ? This question was discussed, as well as the efforts of the African Union (AU) and the regional levels, focusing on:

- **Emergence of a continental economic model and intra-African cooperation;**
- **Continental AU Integration Programs;**
- **Economic attractiveness of Africa;**
- **Common foreign and security policies for balanced international relations;**
- **Consistency of national priorities and the continent strategies in the Agenda 2063;**
- **Role of continental institutions such as the AfDB and the regional economic communities.**



This panel was moderated and chaired by **Ahmed Rhazaoui**, Former Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary General and Director of the UN Office for West Africa.



- **Maged Abdelaziz**, an Egyptian diplomat, Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States to the UN, stated that the AU understands there is a need of a more comprehensive plan, and that is the whole idea of the 2063 Agenda. The most important feature of this Agenda is that it came with 7 aspirations and 12 fast track flagship projects. The AU considers agenda 2063 as a priority, and the wider UN agenda 2030 as a compromise that resulted from negotiations. Africa has a lot of challenges that are still representing real obstacles in the implementation of Agenda 2063, with many ambitions and more detailed understanding of the challenges (poverty, demography, financing) and opportunities. However, the 12 flagship projects are already in the course of implementation. Importantly, the African unified passport, already implemented in West Africa with the ECOWAS passport, has still many challenges ahead in regions such as North Africa.



- **Jonas Jonsson**, Head of Division of the Pan-African Affairs, European External Action Service (EEAS), talked about the opportunities rather than the challenges Africa faces. The Swedish diplomat stated that a lot of progress has been made in the UE-AU partnership, thanks to actions taking place on the ground.

- The target is job creation and the vehicle is sustained investments, and particularly European investments.
- It's not just about peace and security in Africa, which the EU supports and encourage especially to re-draw the African security architecture, but also about the governance and how to best implement the development strategies.
- Regarding migration, a comprehensive holistic approach is needed, which is not the responsibility of Africa only or Europe only, but a mutual and collective effort.
- In terms of multilateral cooperation, the EU stands until now alone in defending the multilateral order and hopes to have a closer partnership with Africa in order to enforce a needed reform of the international order.

According to Mr **Jonas Jonsson**, many actions are taking place, but the question remains whether these are the right actions. There is also a need for 3 actions to be taken into consideration, in order to support the common relationship between the EU and the AU: strengthening political partnership; revitalizing the institutional partnership; and revisiting the common agenda of 2063.

The need of collaboration between the EU and the AU is mainly because of the existence of real dependent issues and collective challenges. Further discussions must take place, in order to develop new ideas and mechanisms on how to strengthen this collective cooperation and establish a sort of "big family".



- **Boubacar Ndiaye**, Senegalese Professor at the College of Wooster (Ohio, USA), expressed his sorrow regarding Pan-Africanism becoming a kind of "dirty

word”, increasingly ignored in the African intellectual discussions. He explained how African problems are made by the divide caused by the negative role of neo-colonialism. Nkrumah, Modibo Keita and Mohamed 5th are all leaders who understood that Africa should unite, to meet the needs and challenges of the continent within the international system.

Pan-Africanism as an intellectual and political statement remains an effective framework to address the challenges of Africa and the needed tools to overcome its fundamental issues. Some progress was accomplished, as shown by the African security architecture and common policies, but unfortunately this has been in the context of the Berlin conference national sovereignty principle. We need a political will able to revive the Pan-Africanism principle, and we need to achieve unified governance in order to transform the principle to a political, economic, and military reality. He stated that “it’s unacceptable to see how other regions are increasingly facing their problems collectively, while in Africa we are still facing an unfortunate balkanization”.

Panel 4: How is Africa dealing with conflict prevention and management?

This panel discussed the African capacities for conflict prevention and management, in the light of challenges, ongoing reforms and the contribution of international partnerships. Current challenges lead to the following considerations:

- **Building the security agenda in Africa;**
- **The role of the African Union peace and security architecture and regional groupings;**
- **Conflict resolution mechanisms at the regional and continental levels;**
- **New forms of defense policies;**
- **Cooperation with the UN, NATO and the European Union.**



The panel is chaired and moderated by **Rida Lyammouri**, Senior Fellow of the PCNS.



According to **Mohammed Loulichki**, Senior Fellow of the PCNS, the concept of “conflict management” tends to contain the conflict and recognizes the impossibility to end the conflict. “Conflict prevention”, on the other hand, is about avoiding the conflict. Conflict management excludes military action and looks to build confidence building measures and building trust between parties. There has been a shift from the scope of conflict prevention that went from reducing violence and limiting confrontation to more inclusive measures such as governance, education, etc. The UN and AU are the only two organizations that invested on the peace and security in Africa, and the AU the only organization in the world that has a normative action, which moves from non-interference to non-indifference principle, illustrated by the recent example of Sudan.



Irvine Nii-Ayitey Aryeetey, Deputy Commandant, Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KA IPTC), underlined new threats in Africa, namely election violence, increasing separatism rebellion due to the failed governance in dealing with the socio-economic challenges, terrorism and intra-state violent extremism. The Ghanese General reminded the audience that when it comes to the conflict prevention of the AU, the latter has taken political leadership in preventing conflicts through considerable measures such as the Peace and Security Council, AMISOM, etc., which created a platform and a voice for several voiceless actors within the different African countries, and an important infrastructure for sustaining peace and consolidating stability. But in terms of conflict management, the AU provided interventions in conflict situations through peace keeping operations such as in Burundi and Somalia. Furthermore, it has provided technical support and expertise to the countries that suffered from terrorism and with weak logistical abilities to combat violent activities. The AU has also used sanctions in order to reestablish the security situation in countries witnessing violations. The AU is benefiting from the support of a number of international organizations in its objective of a peaceful and stable continent.

However, most of the African countries fail to provide financial support to the AU to support conflict prevention and operations. Many African countries still lack logistical and sufficient infrastructure tools to deal with the challenges. Nonetheless, the AU reform that African countries will finance through a contribution of 0.2 % of their GDP should help fix this problem.

Panel 5: Is Africa moving towards a collective strategy aligned with the game of international powers?



The panel, moderated by Mrs **Bouchra Rahmouni**, Director of Research, Partnerships and Events of the PCNS, invited to study, from an African perspective, the opportunities and constraints of the international powers positioning and the conditions of a tangible African collective strategy. The discussion tackled the following issues :

- **The strategies of classical and emerging international powers ;**
- **The AU contribution;**
- **The position of African powers;**
- **The role of African multinationals.**



Younes Abouyoub, Director of the Governance and State-Building Division for the MENA Region, United Nations, did address during his intervention the enormous challenges African countries face in the multilateral system. The Moroccan UN expert stated that for those countries, it is very difficult to be heard and have their interests

voiced when they have a chronic institutional weakness impacting not only the national situation, but also regional and sub-regional mechanisms. The issue that has yet to be dealt by African leaders is whether or not African countries should decide to continue within a system that hasn't served them well or claim more agencies and think of alternatives. The multilateral system today is in crisis all over the world and nobody knows what will be the outcome in the future, which is especially worrying for African countries whose current development is intimately linked to this system, despite its flaws.



Bronwyn Bruton, Deputy Director of the Africa Center, Atlantic Council (USA), stressed uncertainties about the African future and the Trump administration's policy, with the latter's displeasure about "endless" peacekeeping operations. This displeasure is due to the fact that conflicts freeze when many peacekeeping operations are conducted. The shift towards annual funding implies a tremendous change in security for Africa. Trump's policies for Africa reflect the broader commitment to putting American interests first. It identifies three core US interests:

- Prosperity for Africa through US trade and opportunities for US businesses on the continent rather than promoting African businesses.
- Security in Africa is perceived largely through the lens of countering the threat of Islamic terrorism.
- Stability in Africa according the Trump administration is only conceivable through foreign aid. Financial aids which are sent to undertake political, economic and social reforms aligned with American interests.

Trump's administration established an international ranking of countries by merit of US financial aid. Bilateral relationships, preferred by the Trump administration, are more and more rejected by African countries which opted for regional trade

agreements and recently for a continental integration. African countries' reactions to Trump's administration efforts to "divide and conquer" might be a turning point for their continental integration aspirations.



Cheng Cheng, Chief Economist of the Made in Africa Initiative, Senior Advisor for the UNDP Asia and Pacific, is optimistic about the future of Africa. His position is backed by trade between China and Africa continuously increasing since the last few decades. West Africa's exports to China increased by 43 % in one year, mostly agricultural products. Chinese FDI in Africa is around 3.6 to 3.8 billion US dollars, competing with US FDI, while the FOCAC has been held in Dakar, Senegal.

However, one of the biggest challenges for China-Africa economic cooperation lies in a domestic change : China is turning, from a global factory, into a global marketplace. Due to the rising costs of labor, land, environmental compliance, a lot of Chinese businesses are relocating to Africa. The trade war between US and China is also detrimental for Africa's prospects. On a secondary note, Mr Cheng Cheng suggests that Africa needs to invest in human capital and digital economy, because of its demographics.



Alioune Ndiaye, Senegalese lecturer in International Relations, University of Sherbrooke (Québec, Canada), stressed how India changed its perception of Africa.

With the advent of the globalization era and the rise of a multi-polar world, India seeks to play a major role in world affairs as an emerging power. New Delhi has intensified its partnership with Africa where it seeks to build, project and protect its power. Many investments are made in the pharmaceutical sector. The new Indian foreign policy is not just confined to diplomatic and cultural relations, but encompasses economic, energetic and geostrategic dimensions.















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