THE AFRICAN UNION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN COTE D'IVOIRE (2002 – 2011)

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Abstract
The study evaluated how African Union conflict resolution mechanisms were applied to resolving the Cote d'Ivoire crisis 2002-2011. The conflict originated with history; It is not a recent issue, yet it is a recurrent issue globally. The objective of this study examined the conflict resolution mechanism of A.U. in the Cote d'Ivoire crisis 2002-2011. This study made use of secondary data and had the following major findings: African Union made use of mediation and conciliation mechanisms in the conflict resolution in Cote d'Ivoire between 2002-2011. Divisions among African Union member states impeded the efforts of African union conflict resolution in Cote d' Ivoire. Insufficient Funding impeded the efforts of the African Union in resolving the conflict in Cote d'Ivoire. Recommendations were made, such as institutional improvement, reduction of divisions. African Union member states should intensify their commitment to good governance.

Keywords: Conflict resolution, African Union and mediation.

Introduction

The conflict originated with history; it is not a recent issue, yet it is a recurrent issue globally. The number of conflicts in Africa shows the need to resolve these conflicts before development can take place. Conflict resolution and peace building are issues that have become very topical in debates and discussions on Africa. This is not only because many conflicts characterize Africa but because, in most cases, the conflicts have a negative impact on Africa's socio-economic and political development. As opined by Okoye (2010:206), conflict resolution means satisfying the knotty issues that gave rise to a given conflict, including ignored wishes, demands, and denied aspirations of a given person, group or entity who, out of frustration, may take up arms. Ajayi and Buhari (2014) posit that conflict resolution provides an opportunity to interact with parties concerned, with the hope of reducing the scope, intensify and effects of conflicts.

The deployment of a peacekeeping force from South Africa, Ethiopia, and Mozambique to Burundi in May 2003 was the African Union's first military intervention in a member state to oversee the fulfilment of different accords. Before the operation was handed over to the U.N. on January 1, 2008, A.U. troops were stationed in Sudan to maintain peace in the Darfur conflict. According to Agu and Okeke (2013:281), The Peace and Security Council has been engaged in respect to the crises in Darfur, Comoros, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, and other countries since its inaugural meeting in 2004. The African Union has passed resolutions establishing African Union peacekeeping missions in Somalia and Darfur and sanctions against those who undermine peace and security and travel bans and asset freezes against the leaders of the Comoros revolt.

Thus, conflict resolution has become essential in solving the problem of conflicts in the continent. The Cote d'Ivoire crisis is a typical African crisis, which usually involves former colonial power, problems of citizenship, power struggle and intra-elite squabbles, the impact of neo-colonial linkages and the dynamics of globalization. It is a combination of all these factors, which led to the collapse of social and political harmony in Cote d'Ivoire. Cote d'Ivoire has been split into two-part since a failed coup in 2002, which developed into a full-scale rebellion against the government. Rebels held the North and west, while government forces control the rest of the country. The latest peace accords, the Ouagadougou Peace

Agreement (OPA) of March 2007, paved the way towards reunifying the war-torn country. The election was finally held in October 2010. Violence escalated again following the presidential run-off election held in November 2010 when President Laurent Gbagbo refused to cede power to Allassane Quattara, the internationally recognized winner of the presidential election.

The political stalemates degenerated into violence, leading to the decline of state security, threatened stability, and gross human rights violations. African Union responded to the situation with efforts to resolve the crisis. Given the above scenario, the study seeks to investigate the following research problems:

1. What are the causes of conflicts in Cote d' Ivoire 2002-2011?
2. What conflict resolution mechanism did African Union apply in resolving conflict in Cote d'Ivoire?
3. Which factors constituted impediments to the efforts of the African Union in resolving the conflicts in Cote d'Ivoire?

The Concept of Conflict
Conflict is endemic in human society. However, violent conflict is not inevitable, and so it is an anomaly. According to Nnadozie (2011), conflict is defined as pursuing incompatible goals or interests by different groups or individuals. This definition, by implication, asserts the intrinsic and inevitable nature of conflicts in human life. That is to say, all humans or groups of humans have goals and interest which may be different from the goals and interests of other groups. While, Bayoya (2006) stated that conflict is often seen as a threat to peace, by itself, it does not necessarily represent a threat to peace, but it is the violence linked to the conflict that makes it a threat to peace.

Similarly, David (2007) argues that conflict emerges from the incompatibility of goals and a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power, and resources. The opponents aim to neutralize, injure, or eliminate their rivals. Mitcheal (2001) shared this view and stated that conflicts are likely to occur in so far as objectives are incompatible, groups are strong and determined, actions are feasible, success is possible, and inter-group comparison leads to competition, anxiety, and fear being dominated. Conflict is, therefore, about the concrete interests that adversaries pursue and, at the same time, about interpreting what is at stake.

Also, Abuddalahi (2002) conceived that conflict could be both beneficial and detrimental. Conflict is viewed as a result of the change, particularly in socio-political structures and institutions, human relationships, and the distribution of social resources. If not appropriately managed, conflicts can lead to slowed communication, a decline in group cohesiveness, and subordination of goals to the priority of fighting among members, perhaps bringing a system to a halt. However, when conflict turns dysfunctional, it becomes destructive and provokes war, resulting in depopulation, devastation, and defoliation. This consequently impedes the process of socio-economic growth and development. By implication, conflict can be competitive, destructive and creative.

Additionally, Ochogwu (2009) noted that conflict could bring about positive changes in society. Its violent form retards development and promotes poverty and anarchy. Also, Coser (1956) Conflict is defined as a struggle for ideas and demands for status, power and scarce resources in which opponents seek to neutralize, injure or eliminate their opponents.

The Concept of Conflict Resolution
Conflict resolution is often misinterpreted. According to Aja (2007:32), conflict resolution comprises agenda-setting to assist parties in conflict or dispute to establish a common ground, given certain guiding principles or conditionality for peaceful co-existence. It establishes a range of principles, rules and regulations, and aspirations that help dispute parties operate within international law and diplomacy tenets. As an agenda-setting process, conflict resolution should be seen as a set of peace and security guidelines and legal procedures for achieving relative order and stabilit*y*. More so, conflict resolution can be both formal and informal. According to Swanstrom and Weissman (2005:25), it can either aim at resolving or terminating conflicts in an open and predictable process following legal principles or focus on efforts to increase cooperation among the parties to a conflict and deepen their relationship by addressing the condition that led to the dispute, fostering a positive attitude and allaying distrust through reconciliation, initiatives and building or strengthening the institutions and process through which parties interact. Okon (2002) opined that conflict resolution is an intervention essentially aimed at facilitating or changing the course (i.e. the scope, intensity and effect) of conflict.

Background to/Causes of   Cote D'ivoire Conflicts

Cote d'Ivoire was formerly colonized by France. Houphouet – Biogny became the first prime minister of Cote d'Ivoire in 1959. The following year, he was elected its first president. Under his one-party rule, Cote d'Ivoire enjoyed relative prosperity, "the Ivorian miracle" (Cocodia,2008). Even though it coercively suppressed political opposition parties, his regime was marked by stability, but a transition to multiparty politics occurred late in his tenure in the mid-1980s. It calls for democratization, episodic social unrest, and political unrest and tensions emerged, spurred by long term cocoa price and production decline, growing national debt, austerity measures and decreasing access to new tree cropping. While resources scarcities underlay these tensions, social competition increasingly began to be expressed in ethnic, regional, and religious identities.

However, Houphouet-Boigny's death in 1993 generated rivalries over political power, leadership succession rights and citizenship. Henri Konan Bedie used these divisions to rally political support, using a xenophobic, nationalist ideology known as "Favourite". It defined southerners as authentic Ivoririans, in opposition to circumstantial ones, i.e. northerners and immigrants. The Favourite also excluded many others from national, straining inter-ethnic relations (Doyie 2002; Torulagha, 2003). It helped to increase volatile national politics encompassing electoral competition and labour unrest; conflict over land rights; and periodic mass protests, violence over economic issues (Nicolas 2011).

Bedie was ousted in a 1999 military coup which brought General Robert Guei in power. However, Gbagbo defeated him in the 2002 election, from which Qattara was excluded from that presidential election on ethnopolitical grounds. N'Diaye, Theron and Perdigao (2014) opined that following the failed coup of 2002 and the outbreak of civil war, a ceasefire agreement separated the government-controlled south from the rebel-held North. Dividing the country in two, the zone of confidence provided a concrete symbol for the discrepancy between northern and southern narratives of Ivoirian society. A series of internationally supported peace accords, the most recent signed in 2007, laid out a roadmap for disarmament, national reunification, election, leading to a return to democratic governance after years of political crisis. However, all have remained only partially implemented (Nicolas 2011:5). The recent election was the product of this agreement. The presidential election was scheduled for November 2008 and was postponed.

Finally, it was held in October 2010. It was against these historical events that the 2010 presidential election was held.

Cote d'Ivoire immediate political crisis is rooted in its November 28, 2010, presidential run-off election. The run-off election was held between the incumbent President, Laurent Gbagbo, and the former prime minister Alassane Darama Quattara. According to Zounmenou and Abdul (2011), the two candidates garnered the most votes, 38.5 % and 32%, respectively, in a generally peaceful but long-delayed first-round presidential poll held on October 31, 2010. Langer (2010) stated that the electoral commission declared Qattara, the winner of the November 28, 2010 run-off presidential election with 54% of the votes against Gbagbo's 46%. The African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, and the United Nations all endorsed the election results.

On the other hand, Gbagbo has challenged the results, alleging election fraud and vote manipulation in the northern opposition bastion. According to Bellamy and Williams (2011), the Ivorian Constitutional Council then annulled over 660 000 votes in seven areas favourable to Ouattara and declared Gbagbo, the election winner. The country's violent war erupted as a result of the political crisis, which resulted in, among other things, the loss of life.

Theoretical Framework

The theory of Alternative Dispute Resolution serves as the theoretical underpinning for this research (ADR). Brinham (1986), Fischer (2006), Forester (1999), and Walzer (2006) are all proponents of this idea. "A variety of approaches that allow the parties to meet face to face to reach a mutually acceptable resolution of the issues in a dispute or potentially controversial situation...all are voluntary processes that involve some form of consensus building, joint problem solving, or negotiation," according to the definition of alternative dispute resolution (Bingham, 1986,). Litigation, administrative proceedings, and arbitration are not included in this description. Negotiation and mediation are the two most often used alternative ways to dispute resolution. While distinguishing between democracy and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), Fischer (2006) stated that ADR is concerned with solving problems within current political regimes by resolving the tension between trading to meet competing interests versus the exploration and definition of general public good. According to Walzer (2006), ADR as a theory is generally concerned with solving problems within current

political regimes and complements democratic efforts to create a better regime, one that either emphasizes the public good and the triumph of the best argument or creates conditions in which disempowered groups can more productively and equally participate in defining problems. According to the preceding, ADR theory focuses on the tension between trading interests among contending parties to harmonize them and investigate and characterize a broader public good or interest to address power imbalances in any society. In essence, ADR uses the core concepts of conflict resolution, such as dialogue, negotiation, compromise, and agreement, to resolve conflicts.

Application of the Theory to the Study
This work is about African Union and Conflict resolution in the Cote d'Ivoire crisis 2002-2011. It is necessary to consider Alternative Dispute Resolution theory in explaining the African Union in conflict resolution in Cote d'Ivoire. The ultimate objectives of the African Union in conflict resolution in Cote d'Ivoire were to achieve political stability and unity, which has eluded Cote d'Ivoire. African Union deployed a series of mediation missions for discussions with the rival presidents to resolve the crisis in a non-violent way.

The essence of the existence of the theory is the use of peaceful methods in settling disputes and resolving conflicts situations using negotiation, compromise and agreement. Also, to find ways that satisfy the parties. Conflicts are an integral part of human interaction; one must learn how to manage them and deal with them to prevent escalation and destruction and develop innovation and creative ideas to resolve them. The ADR aims to reach an acceptable agreement to all parties, to which they remain committed and which they indeed implement.

It involves mediation; in mediation, a neutral third party helps the parties agree about resolving the case. Even in the Cote d'Ivoire crisis, the African Union sent representatives as the third party to help the parties agree about resolving the conflict.

Conflict Resolution Mechanisms That African Union Applied In Cote D'ivoire Crisis.
Within the framework of the African Union, the Peace and Security Council was established with a mandate of conflict resolution, among other things. According

to Ali (2006), the Peace Security Council has embarked on conflict resolution in Cote D'Ivoire. Immediately after the 2002 crisis broke out in Cote d'Ivoire, A.U. sent a representative Thabo Mbeki, the President of South Africa, to promote dialogue between the rebels and the government. The efforts made by ECOWAS and A.U. leaders were not rewarded with durable success (Ali 2006:105).

Consequent to the escalation of the conflict, despite the A.U. mediation, France proposed a peace meeting at Linas-Marcossis in January 2003. The result of the negotiations among the warring parties was Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. However, according to Okereke (2007), in November 2004, a renewed outbreak of hostilities arose due to the failure of the power-sharing set up under the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. As the political stalemate in the country deepened, in its response, the A.U. dispatched President Thabo Mbeki to Abidjan to revive the Ivorian peace process (Okereke, 2007:90). During his first visit to Cote d'Ivoire in October 2004 after the A.U. mandate, President Mbeki discussed with President Gbagbo and other contending parties in the conflict how to resolve the crisis. Officials of the U.N., International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), European Union and ECOWAS were also in attendance. Martins (2005:26) noted that the parties in the conflict agreed that political reforms should be fast-forwarded, weapons should start being handed in, among other things.

Additionally, in December 2004, president Mbeki's mediation efforts were not successful. Even his visit to Cote d'Ivoire to attend a cabinet meeting was boycotted by the rebel and rejected calls to start handing in their weapons to United Nations peacekeepers. On April 6 2005, the African Union mediator effort resulted in the Pretoria Agreement. The rebels and pro-government should start laying down their weapons from May 14 2005, but this never happened (Ali 2006).

Also, in June 2005, a follow-up agreement provided a framework for disarmament, elections and adoption of legislation required under the Linas-Marcoussis Accord. President Gbagbo accepted a suggestion from President Thabo Mbeki to allow his rivals to take part in the election (Martins 2005:23). In line with the peace deal signed in June 2005, president Gbagbo used special constitutional powers to pass a series of laws dealing with nationality, citizenship rights and the composition of the independent electoral commission. Mbeki stated that the law adopted by president Gbagbo conforms to the provision of the peace plan. As a result, the

rebels rejected the mediatory role of President Thabo Mbeki, accusing him of lacking objectivity regarding the crisis.

However, the conflict in the late part of December 2010 led to A.U. mediation in the Cote d'Ivoire crisis again. Abatan and Spies (2016) and Ochai (2011) noted that on December 5, 2010, African Union had made efforts through the formal South Africa President Thabo Mbeki to restore peace in the country, but talks had ended in a deadlock. Mbeki submitted a preliminary report to the A.U. chairman, arguing that only a negotiated settlement would prevent civil war. Martins (2011:75) observed that from the beginning, it was clear that such a straightforward, simple solution would not be enough to disrupt the stalemate between Côte d'Ivoire's two sides, which had military forces and had a background of open ethnic conflict.

On December 9, 2010, the A.U. Commission (AUC) and Peace and Security Council (PSC) decision on Cote D'Ivoire recognized Qattara as the President elects and called on Gbagbo to abide by the result and surrender power without delay. A.U. also suspended the country's participation in all A.U. activities until such a time as the democratically elected President effectively assumes State power (AU PSC 2010).

Following the failure of Mbeki's mission, Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga was appointed by the African Union chairman to monitor and assist negotiate an end to the crisis Nicolas (, 2011). On December 17, 2010, Raila Odinga called for African states to remove Gbagbo from office by force. Odinga was among the first negotiators to suggest a military option. Similarly, a high-level committee undertook the meditative efforts of the African Union to end the crisis. In early March 2011, the A.U. high-level panels presented their report to PSC at the meeting and, among other things, recommended were that it reaffirmed that Qattara won the election and that Gbagbo should step down. (PSC; AHG, CCL XV, 2011). Efforts to implement the high-level committee report recommendation of the committee proved difficult. Nicolas (2011) noted that Gbagbo's camp had strongly rejected the panel's recommendation result. Also (Tim and Loucoumane 2011, as cited in Nicolas, 2011, p.5), on March 22, 2011, Brito, a former Cape Verde foreign affairs minister, was appointed to implement the panel's recommendation Qattara rejected him because he was not a former head of state. He had alleged personal and political ties to Gbagbo.

In the end, the capture of Laurent Gbagbo in a bunker in the presidential palace in Abidjan on April 7, 2011, by force loyal to Alassane Qattara backed by United Nations peacekeepers and French Special Forces brought an end to the problem of having two presidents in one country (Obi, 2011: 16).

Problems That Militated Against African Union Conflict Resolution In Cote D'ivoire.
The crisis in Cote d'Ivoire showed the divisions that existed among African Union members. Consequently, the organization's failure to present a united front in resolving the issue in Cote d'Ivoire is a result. The A.U.'s efforts to find a peaceful solution to the Cote d'Ivoire issue were repeatedly impeded by disagreements among member states, undermining the A.U.'s credibility as the primary political mediator. According to Bekoe (2011), These divisions were reflected within the A.U. mediation team, notably when South Africa sided with Gbagbo and claimed that South Africa had stationed a naval warship off from the Qattara camp on the coast to prevent an ECOWAS intervention. It later emerged that South African Naval presence was part of a joint military exercise between   Cote d'Ivoire and South Africa. South African position regarding the Cote d'Ivoire crisis was ambiguous.

 Furthermore, other indications of discord among A.U. member states had included Gambia's recognition of the legality of Gbagbo's election and its opposition to a possible ECOWAS military intervention. Also, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni's called for an investigation of the poll process and rejected the validity of international recognition of Quattara and rejection of Gbagbo's claimed to win. Moreso, Martins (2011) noted that the Angolan government were supportive of Gbagbo at first when they sent an emissary to witness Gbagbo's swearing ceremony and later when it stated that a revision of the electoral process and new election were needed, with President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos arguing that Gbagbo was the constitutional President of Cote d'Ivoire. He should remain until the next election since the electoral results of November 28, 2010, were announced past the deadline by those who did not possess the competence to do so. However, Angolans' confusing stance on Cote d'Ivoire changed when its government rallied behind the A.U. but also defended that Cote d'Ivoire should create a national unity government based on dialogue Gbagbo was constitutionally elected. Also, (Apuuli 2012:35) supported that the division among

African Union members hampered the A.U. capacity to bring a peaceful resolution to the conflict. He opined that this immense political disorganization within A.U. provided Gbagbo with time and a straightforward solution: Remain in power without paying heed to the foreign charter.

Ghana supported Gbagbo's case that the 2010 elections were fundamentally flawed. This discord within the A.U. members states, according to Reosebell (2011), resulted in the A.U.s failure to achieve very much, even though Cote d'Ivoire has been the dominant issue in many deliberations that the African Union have held since after the disputed election of November 2010. From the above, we discovered that what was wrong with the African diplomacy in Cote d'Ivoire was that the A.U. has been more divided than ECOWAS, which explains why the Ivorian protagonists, especially Qattara, has treated the organization's envoy with ignominy.

However, from the above, we have seen that although both the ECOWAS and African Union presented a unified front in the Ivorian crisis, some individual African Union members took divergent positions. Thus, with these varied positions, A.U. could not realize an effective intervention in the crisis.

Another impediment that militated against the success of the African Union in conflict resolution was finance.

Table 1.1 Summary of A.U. Approved Budget of the African Union 2004-2007

Year	A.U. Approved Budget (in US$ '000s)					
	Approved Budget	Assessed Budget to the Member States	Budget requested from External Partners	Income receipt		Total Annual Income
				Income received from Member States	Income received from External Partners	
2004	43,000	40,422	2,578	25,632	10,560	36,192
2005	158,384	60,228	88,995	48,822	25,542	74,364
2006	136,004	69,389	66,615	73,890	15,003	88,893
2007	132,988	96,449	36,539	63,773	10,101	73,874
TOTAL 2004-7	**470,376**					**273,323**

Source: Audit of the Africa union high-level panel Report 2004-2007. Retrieved on October 20, 2012, from www.pambazuka.org/actionalarts/../Audit-REPORT.Doc

Table 1.2 Summary of the Peace Fund

Year	Off-Budget Peace Fund (in US$ '000s)					
	Contributions from the Member States	Donors' Contributions	Total income received	Member States' Contributions as a percentage of income received	Actual Expenditure	Expenditure as a Percentage of Income
2004	1,794	107,652	109,446	1.6	80,541	73.6
2005	2,737	122,892	125,629	2.2	104,796	83.4
2006	2,786	179,622	182,408	1.5	169,888	93.1
2007	2,940	142,350	145,290	2.0	109,082	75.1

Source: Audit of the Africa union high-level panel 2004-2007. . Retrieved on October 20, 2012, from www.pambazuka.org/actionalarts/../Audit-REPORT.Doc

Table 1.1 indicates the evolution of the African Union Budget from 2004 to 2007. The resources generated through internal sources, from assessed contributions, are hardly sufficient to cover the administrative cost, thus leaving little or no surplus for the financing of programmes and projects of the A.U. A.U. has managed to mobilize external resources to meet part of its budgetary requirements. Also, African Union, to play the role of conflict resolution and peacekeeping, must have adequate resources. We found that from table 1.2 African Union has had financial challenges since its inception. Also, Okumu (2009) supported that A.U. has operated with a budget deficit since its inception.

Also, from the high levelled audit of the African Union from table 1.2, we observed that an average of 1.9% of the total resources channelled through the peace and security fund came from African member states. External partners provided the rest. It implies that some African Union member states had not shown much commitment in paying their dues. Bakara (2011) noted that given the A.U. capacity weakness in finance and logistics, A.U. involvement in Cote d'Ivoire dogged on while the conflict intensified. Eventually, regional and sub-regional mediator's efforts failed, and the conflict had to be resolved through war. This shows how financial challenges undermined the A.U.'s ability to take effective action and ultimately led to United Nations (U.N.) intervention calls.

Additionally, Magliveras (2011:14) noted that at the end of June 2009, the sum of contributions in arrears had reached USD 127 million, of which USD 41 million concerned 2008 and the rest concerned 2009. Around 66.36% of the total Union budget comes from only five countries; 26 members were in arrears; 16 Members have no arrears but have not paid their assessment for the year 2011, and two members cleared their arrears and paid only part of the assessment for 2011. This has meant that, at the end of June 2011, the total budgetary contributions paid were USD 43.8 million, which amounted to 35.7% of the total contributions. At the end of June 2009, the sum of contributions in arrears had reached USD 127 million, of which USD 41 million concerned 2008 and the rest concerned 2009.
 Furthermore, according to the African Union High-level Panel report (2012), the Union depends heavily on partners to fund its programmes. Thus, the division among African Union member states and Funding impeded A.U. to resolve the conflict in Cote d'Ivoire.

Conclusion and Recommendation
The conflict in Cote d'Ivoire reflects the failure of governance from the perspective of conflict resolution theorists. African Union needs to note the importance of avoiding inter-sub regional rivalries to the extent that they impede collective goals and interests. The findings reveal that although African Union demonstrates a willingness to tackle the conflict in Cote d'Ivoire, A.U. faced severe challenges in seeking to mediate in the Ivorian crisis apart from the conflict's intractability, warranting national interest, institutional weakness and resource deficits. A.U. held several meetings, examinations, considerations throughout the entire crisis, but A.U. was unable to change the course of events in Cote d'Ivoire. Consequently, we recommend as follows.   Funding is an issue that A.U. needs to watch closely because Funding by the member states creates ownership. A.U. should mobilize additional resources through an innovative partnership with civil society and the private sector.

Political will, a spirit of trust and cooperation are needed on the part of regional political leaders to overcome the friction that led to mutual accusations and suspicion regarding the harbouring and provision of support to opposition groups. African Union should establish a mediation unit; The A.U.'s current approach to mediation has been ad hoc, ill-prepared, and based on top-down bargains. To ameliorate this problem, the A.U. should establish a mediation unit within the commission. Such a unit could coordinate mediation support to A.U. officials and envoys and mediation capacity-building activities of the Peace and Security Council.

In order to obtain respect, the AU Peace and Security Council need also have political and military power. While it is challenging to expect compromise in every other disagreement, the A.U. must use discretion and logic in its conflict resolution method. Above all, African Union member states must strengthen their commitment to good governance, human rights protection, political accountability, and openness across the continent.

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