

Responding to Regional Conflicts: How Good are SADC's Reflexes for Peacekeeping?

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Outline of Presentation

- Context of Peacekeeping in SADC
- Potential for Peacekeeping in SADC
- Practice of Peacekeeping within SADC
- Conclusion

Background

- UN recognizes the role of sub-regional organizations in conflict resolution on the basis of their comparative advantage and also for burden sharing purposes.
- Since its establishment, SADC has experienced conflict situations which have put the organization's response mechanisms to the test.
- In most cases a collective approach to peacekeeping has been rare. (eg Lesotho and DRC)

Potential for Peacekeeping

- The formation of a SADC Brigade in 2007 – A contingent of the African Standby Force
- Designed to be a 6000 strong contingent equipped with inter alia, a brigade HQ, 4 infantry formations, reconnaissance & engineering capabilities.
- As of 2009 it had undergone two successful readiness exercises (MAPEX and CPX) and one field training (Golfinho) involving 8000 soldiers
- Brigade was expected to be ready for deployment by 2010.

AU's Assessment of SADC Brigade in 2009

Framework Documents	Done
Memorandum of understanding	Done
PLANELM	Done
Brigade HQ	Not Done
Pledged Units	Done
Civilian Component	On-going
Centre of Excellence	Done
Standby roster	On-going

Practice of Peacekeeping

- The Politics of Capacity – The slowness in operationalizing the SADC brigade which was expected to be ready by **2010**. (financial Constraints - Pro -donors vs Anti-donor camps)
- Absence of Joint training doctrines that can address the military, police and civilian aspects of the Brigade
- DRC remains the biggest flop of SADC peacekeeping ambitions (A thorn in the flesh).
- Dismal showing reflects a bigger problem - **the lack of consensus on the level of integration suitable for the region**. Lack of normative congruence.

What 'Burden Sharing' Implies for SADC's Response to Peacekeeping

- SADC must avail resources for purposes of peacekeeping (A huge challenge given SADC's perennial cry for financial resources. May impede on the operationalization of the SADC brigade).
- There must be demonstrable political commitment by SADC heads of states. (Calls for a proactive Summit that is able to decide on peacekeeping. Further calls for a common approach)

Conclusion

- The commitment of peacekeeping by SADC remains at the level of rhetoric as long as its 'standby' force cannot respond to manifest violent conflict in the region.
- Without political commitment at summit level to respond, the administrative aspects of peacekeeping will not translate into a meaningful outcome.