THE ‘LIVINGSTONE FORMULA’

Boosting CSOs engagement with the AU PSC

Article 20 of the Protocol Establishing the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC) of 2004 recommends collaboration between the PSC and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in conflict prevention, management and resolution. In an effort to operationalize this protocol provision, the Peace and Security Council retreat of July 2007 of Dakar, Senegal, decided that an appropriate formula should be established—allowing for the interaction between the PSC and CSOs. In December 2008, the African Union Peace and Security Council (AU PSC) organised a retreat in Livingstone, Zambia, to formulate a mechanism for the operationalization of Article 20 of the African Union Protocol Establishing the Peace and Security Council (2004). Prior to the Livingstone retreat, the Citizens and Diaspora Directorate of the AUC (CIDO) convened a forum in Lusaka, Zambia to allow CSOs to brainstorm and contribute to the Livingstone retreat.

Participants at the Livingstone retreat included members of the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC), staff of the AUC Peace and Security Department (PSD) and the Citizens and Diaspora Directorate of the AUC. OI-AU and the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) were also invited to make submissions.

Editorial

We are proud to launch the first edition of ‘Active Citizens,’ a quarterly bulletin of Oxfam International Liaison Office with the African Union (OI-AU). Launching this in the year and spirit of the 50th Anniversary of the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), we hope that this publication will contribute toward the “realization of an African Union driven by its own citizens”.

About 10 years ago, as the OAU was transforming into the African Union, Oxfam launched a Pan-Africa Program aimed at supporting African coalitions, civil society organizations and citizens to participate in the building of a premier continental body for the realization of their collective dreams. Following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the African Union in 2007 and a Bilateral Agreement with the Ethiopian Government in 2009, Oxfam established a Liaison Office with the Africa Union (OI-AU).

OI-AU has supported over 200 African civil society organizations to engage with various organs of the Union. It has worked closely with the AUC to design and conduct trainings for Civil Society actors and media practitioners on “Understanding the AU” and developed materials to build knowledge and understanding of the AU. We participated in the setting up of the ‘State of the Union Coalition – SOTU’ a network of various CSOs working to track and support the implementation of the AU decisions at national level.

This inaugural issue of ‘Active Citizens’ contains articles on the Livingstone Formula, a Peace and Security Council and CSO framework for engagement. It also contains articles on OI-AU work on other peace and security issues, capacity building and OAU/AU 50th Anniversary. The Bulletin also introduces our dynamic and committed OI-AU Team.

Enjoy the read!
The outcome of this retreat is what is known as the Livingstone Formula (2008 PSC/PR/Comm (CLX)).

Provisions of the Formula

The Livingstone formula begins by setting out conditions of interaction between PSC and CSOs, categorically stating that the PSC remains master of its procedures and decisions. It also provides that the Economic Social & Cultural Commission (ECOSOCC), as the consultative organ responsible for coordinating the participation of civil society in the work of the African Union, particularly the Peace and Security Cluster, will play the focal and coordinative role in the interaction between the PSC and CSOs (para. 4).

Criteria for engagement

In order for CSOs to engage with the PSC, the Livingstone Formula provides that they must conform to the relevant provisions in the AU Constitutive Act and the provisions in the PSC Protocol, especially article 8 (10c), as well as to the Rules of Procedure of the PSC (rules 21 and 22). The formula further provides that CSOs intending to interact with the PSC should meet the PSC membership criteria provided in that CSOs intending to interact with the PSC should meet the ECOSOCC membership criteria provided in article 6 of the Statutes of ECOSOCC. In particular:

- It shall be registered in an AU member State in accordance with national legislation of the country;
- It shall uphold the objectives and principles of the African Union, as stated in articles 3 and 4 of the Constitutive Act of the AU;
- It shall be a member of a national, regional and continental organization or the African Diaspora, in pursuit of activities at the national, regional or continental level;
- It shall be accredited, with the African Union or an African Regional Economic Community/Regional Mechanism;
- It shall solemnly declare to uphold the objectives and principles of the AU, as well as the provisions governing the CSOs in an observer status with the AU Commission, or working with it, including the principle of impartiality;
- It shall belong to a recognized regional or continental umbrella/network of CSOs.

Spaces and Mechanism for interaction

Furthermore the formula specifies the spaces and mechanisms for interaction, providing that an annual meeting will be held between the PSC and ECOSOCC. This meeting should be held on a specific theme and should be timed in a manner that it coincides with the preparatory stages of the Report of the Peace and Security Council on its Activities and the Chairperson’s report on the state of peace and security in Africa, presented to the Assembly at every Summit (para. 5). By evoking the Formula, CSOs can address the PSC at the invitation of Chairperson of the PSC in consultation with ‘all’ the members of the PSC (para. 6). CSOs can also submit reports to the AU Commission for consideration during the process of preparation of reports to the meetings of the PSC (para. 7). They are also allowed to make submissions or provide information to PSC field missions and other AU fact-finding missions. This opportunity is only available upon invitation as long as the engaging CSO is able to meet its own costs (para. 8).

The Formula further provides that the PSC Chairperson may invite, in consultation with all PSC members and the Commission, on a case by case basis, when she/he deems it necessary or at the request of the CSO. Likewise, the Chairperson of the Commission is allowed to consider an application for accreditation of a CS representative to participate in a PSC meeting to which she/he is invited in accordance with the PSC rules of procedure.

The CSOs contributing towards the work of the PSC in promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa may under the Livingstone Formula organise and undertake their activities in areas including conflict prevention; Peace-making and mediation; Peacekeeping; Humanitarian, Peace-building and Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) efforts; Training; and advocacy/publicity for PSC Decisions (para. 9 – 18).

Operationalizing the Formula

The African Union (AU) defines CSOs as a range of social groups, NGOs, professional groups and cultural organisations. It provides that CSOs may include, but are not limited to, associations of artists, engineers, health practitioners, social workers, media, teachers, sport associations, legal professionals, social scientists, academy, business organisations, national chambers of commerce, workers and employers. This could also include women, children, and elderly people’s social groups (ECOSOCC Statute, Art. 3). Similarly Article 20 of PSC Protocol, states that CSOs include non-governmental organisations, community based and other CSOs, particularly women’s organisations.

The broad definition of CSOs in the AU instruments entails that CSOs could mean a range of non-state actors. However, going by the foregoing discussions, one should hasten to say that when it comes to CSOs engagement with the PSC as provided for under the Livingstone Formula, additional qualifications have to be met.

Over the last five years, some CSOs have taken advantage of both article 20 of the PSC Protocol and the Livingstone Formula to engage with the PSC. For example, in 2010 and 2011 women survivors of sexual violence during conflict from Cote d’Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe had the opportunity to address the AU Peace and Security Council on the issue of women and children in armed conflict in Africa in an open session. Similarly at the 333rd Session of the PSC, the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) was invited to deliver briefings on capacity for responding to humanitarian crises in Africa (ISS Annual Review of the Peace and Security Council 2012).

Similarly, on 21st November 2012, at the invitation of the PSC November Chair, The Gambia, Dfam International, UN Women and CSO actors, discussed with the PSC the link between development, peace and security. Subsequently the PSC issued a Press Statement emphasizing that the primary responsibility for ensuring development, peace and security in the African continent lies with the African states and its peoples.

Recently and under the Chair of Nigeria, Dfam, UN agencies, African Ambassadors and donor countries participated in the PSC Open Session on Preventive Diplomacy and on the theme: “Women and Children in situations of violent conflict in Africa: Contribution and Role of Women”, held on the 22nd and 26th March 2013.

Increased, the Peace and Security Department (PSD)has in recent years invited CSOs to participate in various meetings and consultations. In as far as these meetings contribute to the PSC’s work, the inclusion of CSO’s voice is done in the spirit of the Livingstone Formula. Surface to say, this development could also be attributed to the proactiveness, progressiveness as well as openness of leadership in the Department.

Challenges

While there has been visible interaction between CSOs and PSC, there are a number of claw back clauses in place to discourage and work to disqualify many CSOs from engaging with the PSC. Equally, there are many assumptions and conditionalities enshrined within the Formula that defeat the spirit, purpose and underlying principle of Article 20 of the PSC Protocol.

Many of the outlined qualification criteria in the Livingstone Formula are impossible to meet by several CSOs, especially grassroots, working in Africa. The prerequisite of registration for CSOs is highly problematic in many African countries where public authority is often clamping down on the public sphere for a variety of reasons. Another reality is that in new states or conflict afflicted states, governments are at times unable to provide CSOs with registration.

Similarly, not many African CSOs, especially grassroots, have the knowledge or ability to seek accreditation with the AU or RECs. As a matter of fact, due to the mist surrounding the criteria for granting observer status and for system of accreditation within the AU, many CSOs working with the Union have opted to signing MOUs with specific AU departments. Unless the accreditation mentioned in the Livingstone Formula also recognises MOUs as sufficient accreditation, none of the CSOs actively working with the AU qualify to work with the PSC under this formula.

Since the adoption of the Formula in 2008, no Annual Meeting of the PSC and ECOSOCC has been organized. The annual meeting of PSC and ECOSOCC has in recent years invited CSOs to participate in various meetings and consultations. However, going by the foregoing discussions, one should hasten to say that when it comes to CSOs engagement with the PSC as provided for under the Livingstone Formula, additional qualifications have to be met.
ECOSOCC also did not convene a meeting or space to discuss peace and security with its CSO constituency despite the many PSC meetings and statements on various conflict situations. This reality is what essentially warrants the conclusion that leaving the task of convening the annual meeting to ECOSOCC is taking too much to chance and it is perhaps why five years after the adoption of the Livingstone Formula, no annual meeting has ever been held between PSC and ECOSOCC, other than the meetings held between PSO and CSOs.

There is little information available to indicate that CSOs have made contributions to the Chairperson’s or PSC report on the state of peace and security in Africa submitted to the Assembly at every Summit. It is also not clear whether CSOs have engaged with PSC peace missions in the various conflicts on the AU agenda.

While as it is encouraging that both the PSC and AUC Chairperson seem to have power to provide access for CSOs to engage the PSC, not much information is made available to the CSOs on the agenda of the PSC for them to indicate interest in the topic. In the past, the AU Commission, through the Directorate for Information and Communication (DIC) has sent out the PSC monthly agenda to the public. However, the flow of this information has not been consistent to enable CSOs, especially those working in conflicts on the AU agenda, to prepare their work to inform the PSC.

**Recommendations & Way Forward**

- In light of the outlined challenges in the interaction between CSOs and the PSC, there is need for a broader interpretation of article 20 of the PSC protocol to increase and ensure effective engagement between the PSC and CSOs.
- As it has been five years since the Livingstone Formula was drawn, it is necessary that an evaluation of the Formula be done to assess both the number and quality of engagement that has happened between CSOs and PSC. On the basis of this assessment, a second retreat should be held to respond to recommendations of the Evaluation.
- While commending current AU efforts in engaging CSOs in the work of the PSC, there is urgent need for the revision of the Livingstone Formula to ensure that CSOs working on peace and security are enabled to contribute to PSC’s work. The reform should among other issues, revisit the qualification criteria to allow a wide range of CSOs with demonstrated interest or work experience on peace and security issues to be invited or seek interact with the PSC with ease.
- An Annual Meeting between the PSC and CSOs is an important platform which should urgently be organised. In order to ensure that maximum benefit is yielded from such a platform, this meeting should be as inclusive as possible – thus open to all CSOs working on peace and security matters.
- The AU Commission should assist the PSC in establishing a database of CSOs working on different peace and security themes. Furthermore, the AUC should use all avenues at its disposal to ensure that information on the agenda of the PSC is timely and sufficiently transmitted to CSOs.
- CSOs should organise spaces to discuss and popularise AU instruments that promote their contribution to the Peace and Security Agenda. In this regard, there is need for pro-action among the CSOs on sourcing information on the work of the AU as well as providing the AU will information on their work and how it complements that of the Union.

**MEMBERS OF THE PSC**

(As of 1st April 2013)

**FOR A 3 YEAR TERM (2013 - 2015)**

- Equatorial Guinea (Central Africa)
- Uganda (Eastern Africa)
- Algeria (Northern Africa)
- Mozambique (Southern Africa)
- Nigeria (West Africa)

**FOR A 2 YEAR TERM (2012 – 2014)**

- Republic of Congo (Central Africa)
- Cameroon (Central Africa)
- Djibouti (East Africa)
- Tanzania (East Africa)
- Egypt (North Africa)
- Angola (Southern Africa)
- Lesotho (Southern Africa)
- Cote d’Ivoire (West Africa)
- Gambia (West Africa)
- Guinea (West Africa)

**OI-AU ACTIVITIES**

**I. Photo Exhibition on Mali and DRC Conflicts**

The African Union conference centre was a buzz of activity when Oxfam and the African Union held a joint photo exhibition to highlight the humanitarian situation in Mali and DRC on 23 January 2013. The exhibition, which showcased resilience in the face of conflict, was held as a major highlight on the sidelines of the AU Summit and formed part of AU’s “Make Peace Happen Campaign”. During the exhibition Oxfam also launched briefing papers on Mali.

The exhibition was attended by various stakeholders including two partners from Mali and DRC and various ambassadors accredited to the African Union. The exhibition provided an opportunity to raise the voices of those affected by conflict and call for a push towards resolving the conflicts that have afflicted millions of people. The launch of the exhibition was officiated by the AUC Peace and Security Commissioner, H.E. Ramtane Lamamra, who made the keynote address.

Commissioner Lamamra highlighted the significance and the timeliness of this project, given the need to ensure humanitarian access and protection of civilians, especially in the current conflicts in Mali and the DRC. “The daily suffering and struggles of women and children, those who have been traumatized and displaced by armed conflict, should never be forgotten. We must ensure adequate humanitarian access to displaced people and Refugees, and guarantee them the full protection offered by various international instruments. This commitment is a central pillar of the Make Peace Happen Campaign launched by the African Union since 2010,” the Commissioner stated.

Also speaking during the opening of the exhibition, Mr. Irungu Hougthon, outgoing Pan African Director, Oxfam GB said “Mali and DRC are part of the worst places to live in at this moment. This photo exhibition focuses on those people who pay the highest cost in terms of conflict in our continent. It is important for us and for all the other players to hear their story.”

The exhibition was covered by various media houses, raising further awareness among policy makers as well as the general public on the need to resolve the conflicts. It also called for focussed discussions on the need to end humanitarian toll that the ongoing crises have had on the population. To see Commissioner Lamamra’s speech during the launch, visit:

II. Civil Society Organizations and Media Training on understanding and engaging the African Union

Oxfam international and the African Union Commission Directorate of Information and Communication (AUC DIC) held training for African CSOs’s and media personnel from 18 – 19 January, 2013 ahead of the 20th AU Summit. The training acquainted participants on the various organs of the AU and familiarised them with the realities of the policies making processes of the African Union.

The training also equipped participants with information on entry points and interaction mechanisms available to CSOs and media to engage the AU. It aimed at enhancing the knowledge on the AU of participating media practitioners in order for them to be sufficiently informed as disseminators of information to the African citizens. Various CSOs and Media participated in this training. Participating journalists from across Africa were also sponsored to cover the Summit for their media houses.

III. Making the African Union Accessible to African Citizens in the Year of Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance

One of the key objectives of the Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU) is to build a strong and united continent through a “partnership between governments and all segments of civil society, in particular, women, youth and the private sector to strengthen solidarity and cohesion among our peoples.” To achieve the objective of creating a people-centred institution, the African Union created several institutions and organs to facilitate the process of a non-state actor’s involvement in the processes of the AU. Examples of these institutions include the Pan African Parliament, the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) and the Peace and Security Council (PSC).

As the African Union celebrates 50 years of the existence of the OAU/AU this year, the AU holds an increased relevance as a premier continental policy-making institution. Unfortunately, many African CSOs do not have the basic understanding of the AU and knowledge on how to influence AU policy. This has highlighted the need to close the knowledge and information gap on the mandates, structures and functions of AU organs. This reality is what has compelled OI-AU to work primarily to raise citizens’ awareness of the African Union and engagement with its Commission. The OI-AU office is mandated to undertake capacity building and support for African CSOs as well as facilitate access to the AU organs and decision making forums. The OI-AU uses a multidimensional approach in the popularisation of the AU by encouraging capacity development at various levels.

In conjunction with the Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO) and the Directorate of Information and Communication (DIC) of the AU, OI-AU has been conducting the “Understanding the African Union” training workshop as its leading capacity building activity to popularise the AU. Aimed at CSOs and Media from all five geographical regions of the continent, the training has helped over 100 participants to understand the historic development of the AU, its current challenges, policy making processes, power dynamics within member states, key organs of the AU and its strategic plan as well as highlighting CSOs entry points.

This year, OI-AU, continues with its “Pan-African in Residence” (Secondment) Program, which allows selected candidates to come to Addis Ababa and obtain first-hand experience in engaging the AU for a term of three months.

To further the knowledge of the AU decision-makers, OI-AU partners with the AU Directorate of Information and Communication to publish a yearly poster showing all the members of the Permanent Representatives Committee as well as a yearly booklet of the Membership of the Sub-Committees of the Permanent Representatives Committee. The new CRC poster and booklet for 2013-2014 will be launched in May 2013. In addition, OI-AU has produced a comprehensive and holistic resource guide called the African Union Compendium. The Compendium covers its structures, organs, decision making processes and civil society space. It is intended for, but not limited to, CSOs, AU and embassy staff, academics, staff of Regional Economic Communities (RECs), journalists etc. In commemoration of the golden jubilee of the OAU/AU, OI-AU will be publishing an edited and revised edition. The 2nd Edition of the AU Compendium will be launched in May, 2013 in both English and French.

The current AU Compendium can be found at: http://www.oxfam.org/en/policy/african-union-compendium

IV. The People and the 50th Anniversary

Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance Public Debate Series

“The 50 years since the OAU/AU was formed. Its 50 years since Africa’s founding fathers harnessed their sweat, tears, fears and aspirations to come together to form what has—ten decades later—come to be the continent’s anchor. Today, as we celebrate this Golden Jubilee, we are excited to engage with ordinary people in bringing the AU to them.” Manjuy Ngalia, Oxfam Pan-African Associate, 2013

The year marks the 50th Anniversary of the existence of the Organisation of African Unity/ African Union (OAU/AU). The African Union has subsequently declared it the year of ‘Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance.’ The theme is to facilitate and celebrate African narratives of the past, present and future.

Within the framework of the 50th Anniversary celebrations, Oxfam International Liaison Office with the African Union in close collaboration with the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ubutu Leadership Institute will run a series of public debates on Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The public debates, to run throughout 2013, are aimed at promoting citizens’ awareness for ‘an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.’

Participants will include diplomats, youth organizations, civil society groups as well as Ethiopian civil servants representing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Communications, Immigration, Security and Tourism, among others.

A compilation and analysis of papers presented during the debate series will be done in the form of reports, policy briefs as advocacy tools to influence decision making and policy implementation, create a reawakening and renewal of the African identity as well as reengagement and recommitment to the ideals of Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance. This debate series will contribute towards both the evaluation of the 50 years of OAU/AU and establish future agenda of Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance in the next 50 years.
V. OXFAM speaks out at the Peace and Security Council Session at the AU

Thanks to information from country teams in DRC, Sudan, Mali and Somalia, Oxfam International Rights in Crisis Campaign and Policy Manager, Muleya Mwananyanda, submitted concerns on insecurity and livelihoods affecting women and children to the African Union Peace and Security Council. This was during an open debate on “Women and Children in Situations of Violent Conflict in Africa” held on Tuesday 26th March at the AU in Addis Ababa.

The message from Oxfam, which was echoed by other participants, was that States must turn words into deeds by taking practical steps to implement protocols on women and children in conflict. Oxfam reiterated the need for full implementation of Article 20 of the Protocol Establishing the Peace and Security Council and the Livingstone Formula which calls for the engagement of civil society groups with the PSC on peace and security matters. Oxfam also requested the PSC Chair to circulate recommendations from the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Dispute’s (ACCORD) seminar on the role of African women mediators, which calls on strategies to meaningfully engage women in conflict mediation.

The meeting was attended by dignitaries from African states, donor community, the UN as well as inter-governmental organisations.

The Rights in Crisis Campaign of Oxfam tackles challenges faced by millions of people in conflict hot spots in Africa, focusing mainly on gender, peace and livelihood. The campaign works with local communities in countries affected by conflict to find solutions to problems through various platforms. The voices of women in conflict are important as they are affected differentially by conflict at many levels and this campaign seeks to raise those voices through work with partners working with women in these communities.

UDERSTANDING THE AU

AU elects 2013 Chairperson

As President Yayi Boni’s presidency of the Union came to an end, in January 2013, the AU elected Ethiopia’s Prime Minister, H.E. Haile-Mariam Dessalegn, as its Chairperson for the year 2013. In addition to guiding the Summit proceedings – ensuring order and decorum of the proceedings of the Assembly, the Chairperson represents the Union. He/she is elected on the basis of regional rotation for a period of one (1) year. Below is the list of chairpersons from inception to date:

AU Chairperson: 2002 – 2013

- Thabo Mbeki (July 2002 - July 2003, South Africa)
- Joaquim Chissano (July 2003 - July 2004, Mozambique)
- Olusgun Obasanjo (July 2004 – December 2005, Nigeria)
- John Agyekum Kufour (January – December 2007, Ghana)
- Jakaya Kikwete (January – December 2008, Tanzania)
- Muammar Al-Gaddafi (January – December 2009, Libya)
- Bingu wa Mutharika (January – December 2010, Malawi)
- Theodros Obiang Nguema (January – December 2011, Equatorial Guinea)
- Yayi Boni (January – December 2012, Benin)
- Halle-Mariam Dessalegn (January – December 2013, Ethiopia)
- Thabo Mbeki (July 2013 – December 2013, South Africa)
- Ban Ki-moon (January – December 2014, South Korea)
- Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma (January – December 2015, South Africa)

IO-AU STAFF

Desiré Assogbavi
(Togo), Resident Representative & Head of Office

Mr. Assogbavi holds a Master’s degree in International Law (University of Lomé, Togo), and has pursued further complementary studies on international human rights and international justice in Strasbourg (France), Montreal (Canada) and Salzburg (Austria). Before joining Oxfam, Mr. Assogbavi coordinated the Africa Team of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court in New York, USA (2001 to 2006). Prior to that he served as an elected Commissioner on the Togo National Human Rights Commission and worked for the National Radio of Togo (Radio-Togo) as the Head of Civic Education Department. He has also worked with Nobel Prize winner, the International Campaign to Ban Landmine (ICBL), as country researcher.

Brenda Mofya
(Zambia) Policy Advisor – Peace and Security/Governance

Ms. Brenda joined DI-AU on 1st November 2012, bringing along many years of experience in policy analysis, research and advocacy on regional integration, international law, peace and security and economic justice. She has worked with many national, regional and international organisations including Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), Centre for Peace Initiative in Africa (CPIA), Kirchliche Arbeitsstelle Südlicher Afrika (KASA), Jubilee Zambia and Zambia Civic Education Association (ZCEA). Brenda has a strong background in Integration & International Law, Peace and Security and Gender.

Chikwe Mofya
(Malawi) OI-AU Rights in Crisis Campaign & Policy Manager

Ms. Mofya joined OI-AU as Oxfam sub-Saharan Campaign Manager on Women Peace and Security in December 2012. Prior to joining Oxfam, she worked as Campaign Lead at the Global Campaign for Education. An experienced and creative campaigner who has led national campaigns on landmines, refugees and education in Zambia, Mofya has a strong background in law, research and journalism, with stints at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and in a law firm as legal officer. She was also previously an aid worker—including with Oxfam—working in Zambia with refugees from the conflict in neighbouring Angola.

Idriss Ali Nassah
(Malawi) OI-AU Media Lead

Mr. Nassah joined DI-AU in January 2013 from Malawi where he was editor at The Daily Times, and later editor of The Sunday Times. Recently, he was the New Media Manager for Blantyre Newspapers Limited. He lectured at the University of Malawi. He has also worked with Plan International in Malawi as Senior Communications Officer. Between 2008 and 2010, Nassah was a research fellow at the Institute of Media Research and Training at the University of Oklahoma, USA and worked extensively on numerous media research and monitoring projects with the World Journalism Education Council and the World Journalism Education Census. He is a Fulbright Fellow and holds a Master’s degree in Journalism and Mass Communication from the University of Oklahoma, USA.
Rinret Dabeng (Nigeria) - Policy and Capacity Development Coordinator.
Ms. Rinret joined OI-AU in January 2013. She comes to Oxfam with valuable experience working with civil society and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO) and as Program Associate and Liaison Officer between the West Africa Aids Foundation in Ontario, Canada and the West Africa Aids Foundation based in Ghana. She is the Co-founder and Executive Secretary for BEAM Inc, a not-for-profit organization whose activities focus on providing educational assistance and structural reconstruction to public schools in Nigeria. She has also worked on gender and trade issues with Oxfam Ontario’s University Chapter. Rinret is fluent in English, French, Portuguese and Hausa. She holds an Honours Bachelor’s degree in Psychology.

Mayah Ngala (Cameroon), Pan-African Associate
Mayah is an Intern with OI-AU, working on research and analysis, as well as on communication with various African Union organs, Addis Ababa-based embassies and OI partners on issues of peace and security, democratic governance, active citizenship and gender. She is also responsible for the widely-read African Union Weekly, a review on the activities of the African Union that OI-AU compiles each Friday. Mayah is a holder of a Master’s degree from the International Relations Institute of Cameroon (IRIC).

Roben Nedasa (Ethiopia)- Finance and Administration Officer
Mr. Roben joined OI-AU in January 2013 bringing along over 6-years of experience as Finance Officer, Project Accountant, and Accounting Instructor with a number of organizations including Action for Self Reliance Organization, Catholic Secretariat Social Development Coordination Office and Micro Business College. He holds a Bachelor of Business in Accounting from Addmas University in Addis Ababa.

Frewoini Gebremedhin (Ethiopia), Office Administrator/ PA to Head of Office
Ms. Frewoini is a temp Office Administrator/ PA to Head of Office. Prior to joining OI-AU she worked as Admin Assistant/Data Encoder. Frewoini holds a BSC Degree in Information Systems from Addis Ababa University (AAU). She is currently studing Accounting at AAU School of Commerce.

Abaynesh Tekle (Ethiopia) – Office Assistant
Abaynesh joined OI-AU in March 2012. She assists in office maintenance, events organising and office delivery. She holds a Diploma in English language and is pursuing a diploma in accounting.

Plan International - Liaison office with the AU
Plan International is an International NGO which works with children, families, communities, government and civil society directly in 24 African countries.

Plan International has a robust and long working relationship with the African Union and other African Regional inter-governmental institutions. This relationship was formalised in 2009 with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Plan International and the AU. It also has an enriching working relationship with the AU African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC), with an observer status with the ACERWC and the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights (ACHPR).

Plan International is strategically engaging the African Union and institutions on Child Rights, Child Protection, Education and Youth Empowerment. Plan International has just signed a hosting agreement with the Ethiopian government to set up its Pan Africa Program & AU Office which focuses on policy, advocacy and campaign on its strategic themes and drawing from its presence across Africa.

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"FAREWELL IRUNGU"

After completing ten years of service as Pan Africa Director to Oxfam, Irungu Houghton bid farewell on 31st March 2013.

Irungu will be remembered for his passionate contributions towards securing a just global trade regime (WTO), debt cancellation and better development financing (EB) and to hold Governments accountable for the ratification and implementation of progressive continental human rights and policy standards (African Union and African Member States).

Within Oxfam, Irungu played a huge role in the development of the Pan Africa program, including the establishment of the Oxfam Liaison Office with the African Union.

PARTNER PROFILE

Plan International - Liaison office with the AU
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ABOUT OXFAM INTERNATIONAL - LIAISON OFFICE WITH THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION

Oxfam International is a humanitarian and development organization working with partners around the world to find lasting solution to poverty and related injustice. We work in about 100 countries, including 35 in Africa.

Following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the African Union in 2007 and a bilateral Agreement with the Ethiopian Government (2009), Oxfam set up a Liaison Office with the African Union (OI-AU) in Addis Ababa.

OI-AU works closely with the African Union and CSO partners on various issues including Humanitarian Intervention, Peace and Security, Social Affairs, Gender Equality and Economic Affairs, Citizens Participation and Communication.

UPCOMING KEY EVENTS

8-9th April: 14th Extra Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

11th April: Seminar on the DRC Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework Agreement, Sheraton Hotel, Addis Ababa [organized by Oxfam]

26th April: Annual Meeting of African Union and European Commissions [college to college], Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

17–18 May: High Level continental conference on the APRM +10: Reviewing a Decade of Peer Learning and Projecting a Future of Governance in Africa [organised by Oxfam, AfriMap, SAIIA & EISA]

19 May: Launch of the 2nd Edition of the Oxfam AU Compendium

19–28 May: 21st AU Summit- OAU/AU 50th Anniversary Celebrations

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