

# Promoting high-level policy dialogue on Peace and Security in Africa

## Support to the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa

### The challenges

Nearly one-third of all violent conflicts worldwide took place in Africa in 2020. The reasons for this are manifold and include the proliferation of Jihadist groups, increasing social divides, organised crime and political crises. Additionally, insurgency activities, contentious elections, and unconstitutional changes of government, with 2020 alone registering eight coup attempts, are on the rise. These problems are causing local, national and regional destabilisation while endangering (human) security and the realisation of human rights across the continent.

At the same time, there is a huge increase in the number of regional and international stakeholders involved, many of which are not incorporated into established continental structures. The African Union (AU) and its member states have therefore reaffirmed in their strategy documents (Agenda 2063, Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa) their commitment to crisis prevention and the further development of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).

Founded in 2012 by the Institute for Peace and Security (IPSS) at the Addis Ababa University, the **annual Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa (Tana Forum)** provides an important high-level platform for political dialogue and policy exchange on challenges and possible solutions in the area of peace and security in Africa. Since then, the Tana Forum has increasingly established itself as a high-profile political and diplomatic exchange forum with great regional and international visibility. It offers a broad spectrum of high-level actors, particularly African but also international, a protected space for dialogue and action to develop effective African solutions to the continent's most pressing security challenges.

Each year, former and sitting African and international heads of state and government, high-level representatives of AU member states, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and ad hoc mechanisms

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as well as leading African and international representatives from academia, research, civil society, and the private sector participate in the well-regarded, pan-African security conference in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia. This will facilitate the emergence of an African voice in both the African and global security discourse and strengthen the proactive management of the APSA.

Despite a wide range of international partners supporting the Tana Forum, institutional, and financial challenges remain an obstacle for securing the Forum's long-term existence.

### The objective

APSA actors as well as the most important governmental, economic, and social decision-makers (of AU member states) make better use of the Tana Forum to provide impetus for the continent's current and future foreign and security policies.

Consequently, the scope for dialogue and action in the realm of international peace efforts by APSA actors and by prominent governmental, economic, and social actors of AU member states has been increased.





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## Our approach

The project supports the Tana Secretariat, based at the IPSS at Addis Ababa University, in planning and implementing the annual editions of the Tana Forum in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia.

Further, the project promotes the strategic coordination between the Tana Secretariat at IPSS, the Tana Board, the Ethiopian Government as well as the African Union Commission (AUC). Thereby, the project implements a multidimensional approach integrating human and organisational capacity building.

### Support for the implementation of the annual Tana Forum

- Assist the Tana Secretariat at IPSS with the implementation of the annual Tana Forum editions.
- Support the longstanding cooperation between the Tana Forum and the Munich Security Conference (MSC).
- Strengthen the institutional capacity of the Tana Secretariat.

### Strategic coordination

- Strengthen the strategic coordination between the stakeholders (Board, Technical Committee, Secretariat) and partners (esp. AUC and Ethiopian and German government) of the Tana Forum.
- Advise the Tana Secretariat on sustainability aspects.

## Impact and outlook

Since its inception in 2012, GIZ has continuously supported the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa in the realm of the German government's support to the African Union and its work on peace and security. Over the years, GIZ has thereby assisted with the creation of a well-recognised platform for high-level policy exchange on prevailing peace and security challenges in Africa and has supported the Tana Secretariat with planning and implementing all editions of the Forum to date.

With GIZ's support, the Tana Forum has positioned itself as the leading pan-African high-level conference on security in Africa achieving great visibility and recognition within the African and international political landscape, and has, thus, affirmed its role as an important policy dialogue facilitator within the APSA framework. While in recent years several more security conferences emerged across the African continent (cf. Dakar Forum on Peace and Security in Africa, Aswan Forum on Sustainable Peace and Development, Kofi Annan Peace and Security Forum), Tana Forum is still considered to have the most pan-African outreach and African ownership as well as to be more exclusive and informal compared to other more regional security fora in Africa. Yet, in the future Tana Forum might need to further bolster its position as pan-African, more exclusive, and more informal vis-à-vis other conferences.

Overall, the project has promoted and continues to promote peace and security through policy dialogue and outreach, and thereby also positively impacts on crisis and conflict prevention, conflict management and resolution as well as peacebuilding with an all-African outlook.

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