

# Master Thesis

**An Exploratory Study of Harmonization of Conflict Early Warning in  
Africa**

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## **Abstract (English)**

The African Union is currently operationalizing the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) with the ultimate objective of anticipating and preventing violent conflicts in a timely manner using robust early warning information capable of initiating timely preventive action. A key part of the process of operationalizing the CEWS is synchronizing conflict early warning practice in the continent. Reflecting on this process, this thesis explores Africa Union's efforts to harmonize the various conflict early warning mechanisms in Africa. Using multiple case studies showcasing conflict early warning practice both at sub-regional and continental levels, the study empirically reconstructs the historical development of conflict early warning in Africa; explores its application in the case of African conflicts; and subsequently indicates the areas, modalities and challenges of harmonization.

## **Abstract (Deutsch)**

Die Afrikanische Union operationalisiert derzeit das Kontinentale Konfliktfrühwarnsystem (CEWS) mit dem Ziel, gewalttätige Konflikte durch gesicherte Frühwarnungen rechtzeitig vorherzusagen und zu verhindern und dadurch rechtzeitig Präventivmaßnahmen ergreifen zu können. Eine Schlüsselrolle in diesem Operationalisierungsprozess der CEWS spielt die kontinentweite Harmonisierung der Frühwarnungspraxis. Um diesen Prozess zu reflektieren, untersucht die vorliegende Arbeit die Bemühungen der Afrikanischen Union, die verschiedenen Frühwarnmechanismen in Afrika zu harmonisieren. Anhand mehrerer Fallstudien, die für die Frühwarnmethoden bei Konflikten auf subregionalem und kontinentalem Niveau exemplarisch sind, versucht die Studie die historische Entwicklung der Frühwarnsysteme bei Konflikten in Afrika empirisch zu rekonstruieren und untersucht Anwendungen bei afrikanischen Konflikten; schließlich verweist sie auf die

Anwendungsgebiete, die Modalitäten und die Herausforderungen der Harmonisierung hin.

## **List of Abbreviation**

AMU: Arab Maghreb Union

APSA: African Peace and Security Architecture

AU: African Union

CEWARN: Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism

CEWS: Continental Early Warning System

CMD: Conflict Management Division

CEN-SAD: Community of Sahel-Saharan States

COMESA: Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa

ECCAS: Economic Community of Central African States

ECOWARN: ECOWAS Warning and Response Network

ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States

FAST: Fruhanalyse von Spannungen und Tatsachenermittlung

FEWER: Forum on Early Warning and Early Response

IGAD: Intergovernmental Authority on Development

MARAC: Central African Early Warning Mechanism

OAU: Organization of African Unity

OECD: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

OMC: Observation and Monitoring Centre

OSCE: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

PSC: Peace and Security Council

REC: Regional Economic Community

SADC: Southern Africa Development Community

WANEP: West Africa Network for Peace Building (WANEP)

## List of Tables and Figures

| <b>List of Figures</b>                                         | <b>Page</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Figure 1.1: Pictorial Representation of the APSA               | 2           |
| Figure 1.2: Early Warning Systems in the African Region        | 5           |
| Figure 3.1: African Political Entities before the Scramble     | 26          |
| Figure 3.2: Stages of Conflicts                                | 37          |
| Figure 4.1: Pictorial Representation of the CEWS               | 44          |
| Figure 5.1: Areas of Conflict Monitoring in the Horn of Africa | 53          |
| Figure 5.2: ECOWARN's Offices and Monitoring Areas             | 54          |
| Figure 5.3: FAST Conflict Analysis Methodology                 | 56          |
| Figure 5.4: CEWARN Institutional Structure                     | 59          |
| Figure 5.5: ECOWARN Structure                                  | 61          |
| Figure 6.1: The CEWS Methodology                               | 75          |
| <br><b>List of Tables</b>                                      |             |
| Table 2.1: Early Warning and Traditional Intelligence          | 18          |
| Table 4.1: Conflict Prevention: Phases, Action, and Goals      | 38          |
| Table 5.1: List of Early Warning Products in CEWARN            | 58          |

## Table of Contents

|                                                                                                                                     |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Chapter One: Introduction.....                                                                                                      | 1  |
| 1.1 Background Information .....                                                                                                    | 1  |
| 1.2 Statement of the Problem.....                                                                                                   | 4  |
| 1.3 Research Objective and Questions.....                                                                                           | 5  |
| 1.4 Conceptual Clarification of Harmonization.....                                                                                  | 7  |
| 1.5 Research Methodology.....                                                                                                       | 8  |
| 1.5.1 Selection of Case Study as a Research Methodology .....                                                                       | 8  |
| 1.5.2 Data Collection Strategies .....                                                                                              | 9  |
| 1.6 Structure of the Study.....                                                                                                     | 11 |
| Chapter Two: Conflict Early Warning: Basic Discussion .....                                                                         | 13 |
| 2.1 Introduction.....                                                                                                               | 13 |
| 2.2 Defining Conflict Early Warning.....                                                                                            | 13 |
| 2.3 Objectives of Conflict Early Warning .....                                                                                      | 15 |
| 2.4 Conflict Early Warning and Traditional Intelligence.....                                                                        | 16 |
| 2.5 Historical Development of Conflict Early Warning.....                                                                           | 18 |
| 2.6. Classification of Early Warning Systems .....                                                                                  | 20 |
| 2.7 Conclusion .....                                                                                                                | 23 |
| Chapter Three: Overview of Historical Root Causes of African Conflicts.....                                                         | 24 |
| 3.1 Introduction.....                                                                                                               | 24 |
| 3.2. Colonial Boundaries and African Conflicts.....                                                                                 | 25 |
| 3.3 Colonialism, State Formation and Conflicts in Africa.....                                                                       | 28 |
| 3.4 Colonialism, Ethnic Diversification and Conflicts .....                                                                         | 29 |
| 3.5 Conflicts in the Horn: A Case Study.....                                                                                        | 31 |
| 3.5.1 Territorial Disputes .....                                                                                                    | 32 |
| 3.5.2. Civil Wars and Ethnic Conflicts.....                                                                                         | 32 |
| 3.5.3 Secessionist Wars.....                                                                                                        | 34 |
| 3.5.4 Irredentist Conflicts .....                                                                                                   | 34 |
| 3.6 Early Warning and African Conflicts.....                                                                                        | 35 |
| Chapter Four: The Practice of Conflict Early Warning in Africa: an Overview .....                                                   | 41 |
| 4.1. Introduction.....                                                                                                              | 40 |
| 4.2. OAU and Conflict Early Warning.....                                                                                            | 40 |
| 4.3. From OAU to the AU: Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) in the new African<br>Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) ..... | 42 |
| 4.4. Conflict Early Warning at Sub-Regional level in Africa.....                                                                    | 45 |
| 4.4.1. CEWARN/IGAD .....                                                                                                            | 46 |
| 4.4.2. Early Warning in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) .....                                                | 47 |
| 4.5. Conclusion .....                                                                                                               | 48 |
| Chapter Five: Comparative Analysis of CEWARN and ECOWARN as Operational Early<br>Warning Mechanisms in Africa. . . . .              | 49 |
| 5.1 Introduction.....                                                                                                               | 49 |
| 5.2 Nature and Type of the Early Warning Systems.....                                                                               | 50 |
| 5.3 Operational Objective and Geographic Focus.....                                                                                 | 51 |
| 5.4. Main Early Warning Activities and Methodology.....                                                                             | 54 |
| 5.4.1. Data Collection.....                                                                                                         | 54 |

|                                                                                                          |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 5.4.2. Conflict Analysis Methodology .....                                                               | 56 |
| 5.4.3. Early Warning Products .....                                                                      | 57 |
| 5.5. Institutional Set-Up .....                                                                          | 58 |
| 5.6. Linkage with Response.....                                                                          | 61 |
| 5.7. Conclusion .....                                                                                    | 63 |
| Chapter Six: Areas, Modalities and Challenges of Harmonization of Conflict Early Warning in Africa ..... | 65 |
| 6.1. Introduction.....                                                                                   | 65 |
| 6.2. The Rationale for an Epistemic Approach to Harmonization.....                                       | 65 |
| 6.3. Legal Provisions for Harmonization.....                                                             | 68 |
| 6.4. Modalities of Harmonization: How and What to Harmonize .....                                        | 69 |
| 6.4.1. Information Sharing and Data Exchange .....                                                       | 70 |
| 6.4.2. Early Warning Data Collection and Indicators.....                                                 | 71 |
| 6.4.3. Conflict and Cooperation Analysis.....                                                            | 74 |
| 6.5. Challenges and Constraints of Harmonization .....                                                   | 77 |
| Chapter 7: Conclusion.....                                                                               | 83 |
| Bibliography.....                                                                                        | 87 |
| Appendices.....                                                                                          | 94 |
| Appendix A: Interview Guide .....                                                                        | 94 |
| Appendix B: Description of CEWARN’s Indicators: Situation.....                                           | 95 |
| Appendix C: Description of CEWARN Indicators: Violent Incident Reports .....                             | 96 |

# Chapter One: Introduction

## 1.1 Background Information

The idea of preventing wars is not new to Africa. Nonetheless, attempt to prevent conflicts through the use of early warning is inarguably a very recent phenomenon. Being an important component of conflict prevention, conflict early warning is basically conceived<sup>1</sup> as a means of “avoiding or minimizing violence, deprivation or humanitarian crises that threaten the sustainability of human development and livelihood.”<sup>2</sup>

The application of early warning in the realm of conflict prevention in the continent was started in the 1990s in line with a global trend in conflict management and resolution which espoused a preventive approach towards violent conflicts.<sup>3</sup> Africa’s very first attempt at establishing a conflict early warning unit was initiated in June 1992, “when the Organization of African Unity (OAU) decided to establish the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.”<sup>4</sup> Whereas the OAU did not manage to establish a fully-operational early warning system for a number of reasons to be explained at a later stage of this research, it has acquired due credit at least for starting the process of implementing conflict early warning at a continental level which was later pursued by its successor, the

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<sup>1</sup> In fact, there are several definitions and objectives of a conflict early warning system which will be dealt in greater depth in the second chapter of this study.

<sup>2</sup> John Davies, “Conflict Early Warning and Early Response for Sub-Saharan Africa: Crisis and Transition Tool Kit”, Summary of Working Draft Submitted to Center for International Development and Conflict Management (CIDCM), University of Maryland, Maryland, 2000, 2.

<sup>3</sup> The 1990s are crucial datelines in the discussion of conflict early warning systems both globally and in Africa. Globally, since the late 1990s, early warning and conflict prevention have become high-priority areas for multilateral organizations and, at the highest levels, there is growing political will for more effective institutional approaches. Sharath Srinivasan, “Minority Rights, Early Warning and Conflict Prevention: Lessons from Darfur”, Minority Rights Group International Micro Paper, 2006. Available on, <http://www.minorityrights.org/965/micro-studies/minority-rights-early-warning-and-conflict-prevention-lessons-from-darfur.html>, (accessed July 30, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> Jackie Cillers, “Towards a Continental Early Warning System for Africa: What Role for the Civil Society?”, in Alfred Nhema and Paul Tiyambe Zeleza (eds.), *Resolution of African Conflicts: The Management of Conflict Resolution and Post Reconstruction* (Oxford: James Curry Publishers 2008), 39.

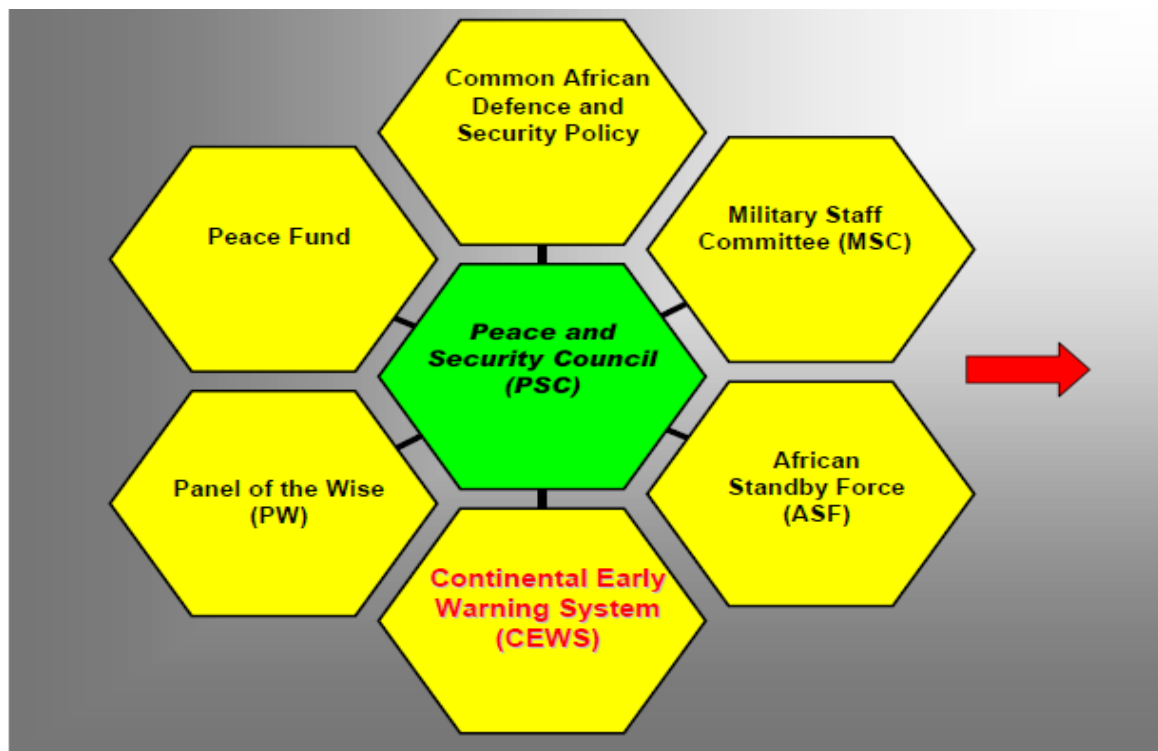


Figure 1.1. Pictorial Representation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)<sup>6</sup>

Currently, the African Union (AU) is undertaking the process of operationalizing a continental wide early warning system as part of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) which is designed to address the continent's peace and security needs.<sup>7</sup> Within the APSA shown in Figure 1.1, the Continental Early Warning System (hereafter referred to as CEWS)

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> João Gomes Porto, "The African Union Continental Early Warning System: Methodological Design, Implementation and Operationalization", Presentation for Postdam Spring Dialogues 2009: The Key to Success in Peace and Development? Regional Governance in Africa. 27-28 March 2009, Postdam.

<sup>7</sup> According to the Peace and Security Council Protocol of the African Union that came into force following the transformation of the OAU into the AU, the new African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) will be composed of the Peace and Security Council (PSC); the Panel of the Wise; the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS); the African Standby Force (ASF) and the Peace Fund. Ulf Engle and João Gomes Porto, "The African Union's New Peace and Security Architecture: Towards an Evolving Security Regime?", *African Security Reviews* (Forthcoming), 2009.

plays a crucial role in facilitating “the anticipation and prevention of violent conflicts”<sup>8</sup> by gathering and analyzing information that enable decision-makers in the African Union to prevent violent conflicts in a timely manner.<sup>9</sup>

An important feature of the CEWS is its relation vis-à-vis other conflict early warning mechanisms which exist at sub-regional levels in Africa. In addition to the Situation Room which facilitates the collection and analysis of data at the Union’s Headquarter in Addis Ababa, these sub-regional mechanisms<sup>10</sup> are to form integral parts of the CEWS and are envisaged to serve as the main source of early warning data.<sup>11</sup> Reflecting the centrality of the sub-regional mechanisms, the AU stipulates that the harmonization between the African Union and RECs (Regional Economic Communities) is essential for the effective functioning of the CEWS.<sup>12</sup> As a result, the AU has made harmonizing the various early warning mechanisms within the CEWS framework one of the major tasks of the implementation of the continent’s peace and security architecture. According to the Conflict Management Division of the AU, the CEWS<sup>13</sup> which is tasked with the role of harmonizing conflict early warning in the continent, serves as “an overarching framework in which the purpose, method and terminology of early warning will be a shared one”<sup>14</sup> among the various early warning mechanisms in the continent.

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<sup>8</sup> African Union (AU), *The Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union* (Durban: African Union, 2002), Article 12(1).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> The terms sub-regional early warning mechanisms and sub-regional early warning systems will be used interchangeably in this study.

<sup>11</sup> African Union, *The Peace and Security Protocol*, Article 12(1).

<sup>12</sup> AU [African Union] CMD [Conflict Management Division] (Eds.), “Framework for Operationalization of the Continental Early Warning System”, in *Meeting the Challenges of Conflict Prevention in Africa: Towards the Operationalization of the Continental Early Warning System* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2008a), 51.

<sup>13</sup> African Union [African Union] CMD [Conflict Management Division] (eds.), *The CEWS Handbook*, (Addis Ababa: African Union, 2008b), 11.

<sup>14</sup> AU-CMD, *The CEWS Handbook*, 9.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

The success of the APSA as Africa's security regime depends on the effective collaboration between the AU and other Regional Economic Communities (RECs)<sup>15</sup> which undertake various activities with regard to the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in the continent.<sup>16</sup> As hinted earlier, the CEWS, which is a constituent part of the APSA, similarly relies on its effective partnership with other conflict early warning systems or mechanisms currently in operation in the various sub-regional organizations or RECs (See Figure 1.2 for the distribution of early warning systems in Africa). Nonetheless, the various early warning mechanisms in the RECs are currently at different levels of institutional development and they employ different early warning methodologies to monitor a wide range of conflicts in their respective sub-regions.<sup>17</sup> Notwithstanding, based on its "harmonizing and coordination roles"<sup>18</sup>, the AU seeks to create an effective harmonized partnership among the early warning mechanisms of the different sub-regions as part of the CEWS framework in the face of different approaches to the practice of early warning and disparity in institutional set-up and development. How this is to be achieved is worth an investigation.

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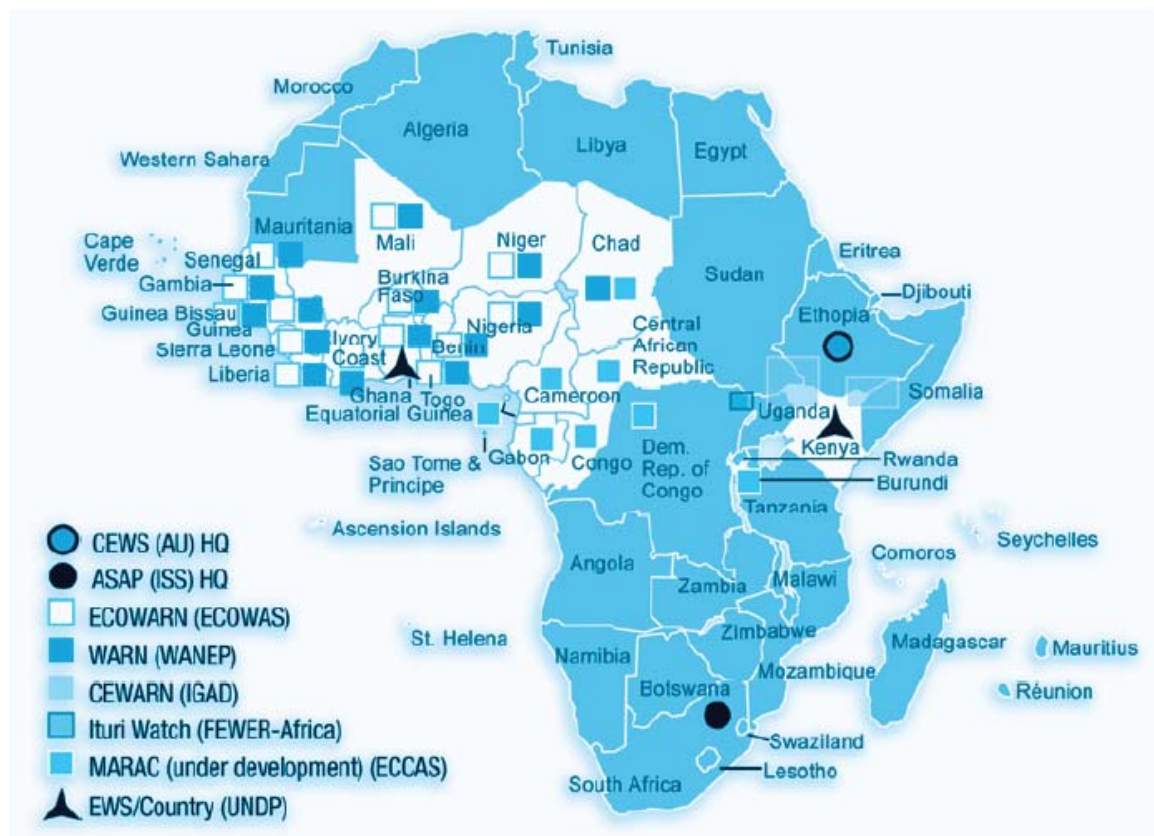
<sup>15</sup> Sub-regional organizations or Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are intergovernmental organizations or regional groupings in Africa established with the objective of facilitating cooperation and economic integration among their member states. RECs also serve as the building blocks for the step by step formation of the African Economic Community. In addition to their involvement in the economic sphere, the RECs also participate in political cooperation including the enforcement of peace and security in their respective sub-regions. The most notable RECs in the continent are the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU). African Union, "Declaration", First Conference of Africa Ministers of Integration (COMAI), 30-31 March 2006, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. Available on, <http://www.africa-union.org/Economic%20Affairs/RECS%20Rationalization/AU%20site5/Reports/Ouagadougou%20DECLARATION%2031%20March%202006.doc>, (accessed on 31 August, 2009).

<sup>16</sup> Engle and Gomes Porto, "The African Union's", (without page numbers).

<sup>17</sup> Emmanuel Fanta, "The Capacity of African Regional Organizations in Peace and Security", Paper presented to the European Report on Development Workshop: Transforming Political Structures: Security, Institutions, and Regional Integration Mechanisms, Florence, April 16-17, 2009. Available on, <http://erd.eui.eu/media/fanta.pdf>, (accessed July 31, 2009).

<sup>18</sup> Engle and Gomes Porto, "The African Union's", (without page numbers).

Figure 1.2. Early Warning Systems in the African Region<sup>19</sup>



### 1.3 Research Objective and Questions

Research in the field of conflict early warning is increasingly growing enriched by the contribution of academic and research institutions, NGOs, and international organizations such as the UN, OSCE, OECD, etc. The field has undergone extensive scrutiny especially in terms of methodologies needed to carry out conflict early warning, linkages with response strategies and issues surrounding its efficacy. Most notable in this regard are the works of Alexander Austin, John L. Davies, Ted Robert Gurr, Anna Matveeva, Heinz Krummenacher, Susanne Schmeidl and Suzanne Versteegen.<sup>20</sup> Some of the studies in the field also dealt with

<sup>19</sup> Source: David Nyheim, *Preventing Violence, War and State Collapse: The Future of Conflict Early Warning and Response* (Paris: OECD/DAC, 2009), 53.

<sup>20</sup> Alexander Austin, "Early Warning and the Field. A Cargo Cult Science?", In Berghof Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management (ed.), *Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation* (Berlin: Berghof Research

exploring specific methods and tools for monitoring conflicts in Africa.<sup>21</sup>

On the contrary, due to the novelty of the very process, the level of scientific research on the ongoing operationalization of the CEWS is at its nascent stage. Likewise, studies on the nature and methods of cooperation between the various early warning mechanisms in the African context are almost non-existent implying the presence of a research gap that can be addressed with scientific enquiry aimed at conceptualizing and investigating the ongoing process of harmonization of conflict early warning in Africa.

Consequently, largely inspired by the need to fill the research gap indicated above, this study seeks to pioneer a research on the evolving process of operationalizing the CEWS by analyzing the hitherto unexplored efforts to harmonize the various conflict early warning systems in Africa. In more specific terms, the study seeks to provide an empirical reconstruction of the process of harmonization of conflict early warning and examine the legal provisions, areas, modalities, and challenges of harmonization.

In order to achieve the research objectives outlined above, this study poses the following

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Center for Constructive Conflict Management, 2004); John L. Davies and Ted Robert Gurr (eds.), *Preventive Measures: Building Risk Assessment and Crisis Early Warning Systems* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 1998); Anna Matveeva, "Early Warning and Early Response: Conceptual and Empirical Dilemmas", GPAC Issue Paper 1 (The Hague: European Center for Conflict Prevention/International Secretariat of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, 2006); Heinz Krummenacher and Susanne Schmeidl, "Practical Challenges in Predicting Violent Conflicts FAST: An Example of a Comprehensive Early-Warning Methodology", Swiss Peace Foundation Working Paper No. 34, 2001. Available on, [http://www.swisspeace.ch/typo3/fileadmin/user\\_upload/pdf/Working\\_Paper/working\\_paper\\_34.pdf](http://www.swisspeace.ch/typo3/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/Working_Paper/working_paper_34.pdf), (accessed July 21, 2008); Suzanne Verstegen, "Conflict Prognostication: Toward a Tentative Framework for Conflict Assessment", Clingendael Institute, Netherlands Institute of International Relations Occasional Paper, 1999. Available on, [http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/1999/19990900\\_cru\\_paper\\_verstegen.pdf](http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/1999/19990900_cru_paper_verstegen.pdf), (accessed on July 20, 2009).

<sup>21</sup> See for instance: John Davies, "Conflict Early Warning and Early Response for Sub-Saharan Africa: Crisis and Transition Tool Kit", Summary of Working Draft Submitted to Center for International Development and Conflict Management (CIDCM), University of Maryland, Maryland, 2000; Niels von Keyserlingk and Simone Kopfmüller, "Conflict Early Warning Systems: Lessons Learned from Establishing a Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) in the Horn of Africa", GTZ Working Paper, 2006. Available on, [www.gtz.de/de/de/dokumente/en-igad-conflict-Early-Warning-Systems-Lesson-Learned.pdf](http://www.gtz.de/de/de/dokumente/en-igad-conflict-Early-Warning-Systems-Lesson-Learned.pdf), (accessed July 20,

research questions:

1. What are the major differences and similarities among the existing conflict early warning mechanisms in Africa?
2. What measures are being undertaken by the African Union to harmonize conflict early warning in Africa?
3. What are the areas for harmonization? And what are the main challenges and constraints?

#### 1.4 Conceptual Clarification of Harmonization

The word harmonization is traditionally used in music “to describe the structure of music with respect to the composition and progression of chords.”<sup>22</sup> It refers to “bringing or coming into agreement.”<sup>23</sup> It is also alternatively defined as “the act or state of agreeing or conforming.”<sup>24</sup> In its application in international economics, finance and law, harmonization is associated with both specific and comprehensive conceptions. In the more specific or narrow sense of the term, harmonization is conceived as a process that creates uniformity by “making the regulatory requirements or government policies of different jurisdictions identical”<sup>25</sup> largely “through the elimination of national differences.”<sup>26</sup> On the contrary, according to its comprehensive conception, harmonization as a process does not result in the creation of uniformity but results in the elimination of incompatibilities among different legislations.<sup>27</sup>

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2009).

<sup>22</sup> African Union, “Harmonization of Higher Education Programmes in Africa: Opportunities and Challenges”, Paper Prepared for the Third Ordinary Session of the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union (COMEDAF III), 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> August 2007, Johannesburg, South Africa. Available on, <http://www.africa-union.org/root/ua/Conferences/2007/aout/HRST/06-10%20aout/Doc/AU-EXP-EDUC-2-III-Harmoni-Oppor-Challe.part%20one1.doc>, (accessed on 25 August, 2009), 13-11.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> David W. Leeborn, “Lying Down with Procrustes: An Analysis of Harmonization Claims”, In Jagdish Bhagwati and Robert Hudec (eds.), *Fair Trade and Harmonization: Prerequisites for Free Trade?* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1996), 43.

<sup>26</sup> Alan O. Sykes, “The (Limited) Role of Regulatory Harmonization in International Goods and Services Markets”, *Journal of International Economic Law* 2, no. 1 (1999): 50.

<sup>27</sup> Neil Butcher, Sarah Hoosen and Beatrice Khamati Njenga. “Harmonization of Higher Education Programmes:

Informed by the above two conceptions, this study explores the ongoing harmonization of conflict early warning systems to assess if the process creates absolute uniformity in terms of methodology, purpose and institutional set up among the existing early warning systems or if it results in selective compatibility in some of the areas mentioned earlier.

## **1.5 Research Methodology**

This research is a qualitative and an exploratory one which utilizes case study as the main research strategy. As an exploratory study, this research does not start with a hypothesis or an assumption to prove. Rather it seeks to explore, investigate and elucidate the process of harmonization of conflict early warning in Africa and generates hypotheses at the end based on the analysis of the data obtained through the various data collection techniques.

### **1.5.1 Selection of Case Study as a Research Methodology**

The selection of a case study as a principal research methodology in this study is largely inspired by the works of Catherine Marshal, Gretchen B. Rossman and Robert K. Yin. Whereas Marshal and Rossman recommended case study “to investigate little-understood phenomena and generate hypotheses for further research,”<sup>28</sup> Yin suggested its use for “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context.”<sup>29</sup> Drawing upon the above conceptions, this study investigates “harmonization of conflict early warning” both as a contemporary and little-understood process within its “real-life context”<sup>30</sup>

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A Strategy for the African Union.” *African Integration Review* 3, no. 1(2009): 3.

<sup>28</sup> Catherine Marshall and Gretchen B. Rossman, *Designing Qualitative Research* (London: Sage Publication, 1991, 9th Edition), 14.

<sup>29</sup> Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (London: Sage Publications, 1994), 1.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

by employing three of the existing conflict early warning systems in the continent<sup>31</sup> as case studies. Specifically, the evolving nature of the harmonization process which is considered as “work in progress”<sup>32</sup> and the unavailability of theories which might help in explaining the harmonization process<sup>33</sup> validated the use of case studies in this research.

More particularly, a specific form of case study, an “embedded case study”, will be used in analyzing the research questions indicated earlier. Robert Yin defined embedded case study as a form of case study “in which there are several sub-units that are to be analyzed within the case.”<sup>34</sup> In the case of this research, embedded case study is selected to allow the simultaneous analysis of three of the conflict early warning mechanisms which exist at different levels of analysis, i.e. CEWS at the continental level, the CEWARN and ECOWARN at sub-regional levels. It also helps to assess the impacts of the differences in terms of early warning objective, methodology and institutional set up on the harmonization process. Whereas Africa Union’s CEWS, as the main driver of the harmonization process, is the main unit of analysis; the CEWARN and ECOWARN will also form integral parts of the research project.

### **1.5.2 Data Collection Strategies**

In addition to what was obtained from the literature review, the body of data essential for addressing the research questions is collected through elite interviews and document analysis.

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<sup>31</sup> The three early warning mechanisms to be used as case studies are the African Union’s Continental Early Warning System(CEWS), IGAD’s Conflict early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) from the Horn of Africa and the ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN) for the Western Africa.

<sup>32</sup> Charles Mwaura, interview by author, Addis Ababa, June 3rd, 2009.

<sup>33</sup> As mentioned earlier in Section 1.3 of this study, currently there is no study conducted on the process of harmonizing Africa’s conflict early warning systems.

<sup>34</sup> Yin, *Case Study Research*, 13.

The elite interviews<sup>35</sup> were conducted during the two weeks field trip to the headquarters of the CEWS and CEWARN in Addis Ababa with officials and experts working in the two institutions. The main purpose of the interviews was to elicit information on the official or institutional position regarding the conception, rationale, area and modalities of harmonizing conflict early warning in Africa. In this regard, the elite interviews have proved to be valuable sources of information given the unavailability of scientific research on the specific issues mentioned earlier.<sup>36</sup>

The participants in the five interviews were personnel in CEWS and CEWARN and they hold different positions ranging from senior expert to Situation Room coordinators. The interviews were organized in a semi-structured<sup>37</sup> manner and were based on a pre-formulated interview guide<sup>38</sup> to allow “the possibility of including questions that may come up during the interview.”<sup>39</sup>

Whereas the interviews provided crucial information with substantial degree of relevance to the research, nevertheless, it was not possible to obtain a sufficiently large amount of data at least for the following two reasons. Owing largely to the “newness” of the process of operationalizing a harmonized continental-wide early warning framework, first of all, it was very difficult to find interviewees adequately conversant with the topic. Secondly, getting in

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<sup>35</sup> An elite interview is a specialized treatment of interviewing that focuses on a particular type of respondent. Elites are considered to be influential or prominent, and well-informed people in an organization or community. Elites are selected for interviews on the basis of their expertise in areas relevant to the research. Marshall and Gretchen, *Designing Qualitative*, 94.

<sup>36</sup> Likewise, acquiring an “outsider’s view” of the issue (of harmonization) from individuals and research organizations outside the three institutions used as case studies was not possible. The one exception, however, is the opportunity when one conflict analyst from the Institute of Security Studies in Addis Ababa provided his own personal opinions on the topic which are not employed in this research.

<sup>37</sup> As indicated by Russell Bernard, semi-structured interview is recommended when “dealing with managers, bureaucrats, and elite members of the community.” H. Russell Bernard, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (London: Sage Publication, 2000), 191.

<sup>38</sup> The set of questions used in the interview guide are to be found in Appendix one.

<sup>39</sup> Bernard, *Social Research Methods*, 191.

touch with those who were actively involved in the process was also challenging given their busy work schedules.<sup>40</sup>

Besides the elite interviews, document analysis<sup>41</sup> was used as another data collection strategy in this study. The researcher employed document analysis to compliment evidence obtained from the elite interviews with the overall purpose of creating an empirical database which helps in identifying the different approaches to conflict early warning in the various sub-regional mechanisms. The analysis primarily included a survey of official documents that were instrumental in the establishment and operationalization of the various conflict early warning mechanisms in the case studies. The most notable limitation of document analysis as a data collection strategy in this study was the problem of getting access to some of the most relevant official documents in the institutions featured as case studies.

### **1.6. Structure of the Study**

In terms of structure, this study is organized in the following manner. This chapter has provided the contextual background of the research, outlined its major objectives, introduced the main research questions and briefly highlighted the research methodology. Chapter two provides an overview of conceptual issues related with conflict early warning including its definitions, objectives, historical development, and classifications. Chapter three presents a concise survey of the historical root causes of African conflicts and highlights the application of conflict early warning in the anticipation and prevention of these conflicts. In chapter four, a brief presentation of the history of conflict early warning in Africa will be provided.

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<sup>40</sup> The author had to wait, for example, for about two weeks to meet with Mr. Charles Mwaura, AU's Expert on Conflict Early Warning System & Preventive Diplomacy, who was extremely busy with official travels and meetings.

<sup>41</sup> According to Catherine Marshall and G. B. Rossman, the importance of document analysis lies in its utility in making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages and in corroborating and augmenting evidence from other sources. Marshall and Rossman, *Designing Qualitative*, 98.

Furthermore, this chapter will briefly highlight current conflict early warning practices both at the continental and sub-regional levels. Chapter five provides a comparative analysis of the CEWARN and ECOWARN with the purpose of showing the different approaches to early warning practice in the continent. Subsequently, chapter six explores the areas, modalities, and challenges of harmonization of conflict early warning. Finally, this study winds up by providing its conclusions in chapter seven.

## **Chapter Two: Conflict Early Warning: Basic Discussion**

### **2.1 Introduction**

As indicated in chapter one, the African Union is in the process of implementing the various pillars of the African peace and security architecture (APSA) including the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) which is envisaged to be instrumental in the timely prevention of violent conflicts. An integral part of this process is that of harmonizing conflict early warning in the continent by integrating the early warning mechanisms of the different sub-regions within the overarching framework of the CEWS. Intent on situating this process of harmonization in the proper conceptual context, this chapter attempts to provide synthesized information on theoretical aspects of conflict early warning. To this end, the chapter first surveys the different definitions and objectives of conflict early warning; explores its historical development; and finally concludes by providing an overview of classifications of early warning systems.

### **2.2 Defining Conflict Early Warning**

There are several definitions of the generic term “conflict early warning” in the literature. Most of the existing definitions reflect attempts in various levels to respond to “the four important questions in early warning: who to warn, when, of what, and how.”<sup>42</sup> While some of the definitions emphasize on the “what and who to warn” aspects of the question, others underscore methodological considerations of how to carry out early warning.

For instance, OECD’s definition addresses the questions of “what and who to warn” by

defining conflict early warning as “a process that (a) alerts decision makers to the potential outbreak, escalation and resurgence of violent conflicts; and (b) promotes an understanding among decision makers of the nature and impacts of violent conflicts.”<sup>43</sup> On the other hand, Alex Austin’s definition stresses methodological considerations and conceptualizes the term as “any initiative that focuses on systematic data collection, analysis and/or formulation of recommendations, including risk assessment and information sharing, regardless of topic, whether they are quantitative, qualitative or a blend of both.”<sup>44</sup> The Forum on Early Warning and Early Response<sup>45</sup> or FEWER’s definition is more comprehensive in that it addresses the “what, who, how” elements of the conflict early warning questions by proposing the following definition:

Conflict early warning is the systematic collection and analysis of information coming from areas of crises for the purposes of (1) anticipating the escalation of violent conflicts, (2) development of strategic response to these crises, and (3) the presentation of options to critical actors( national, regional and international) for the purposes of decision-making and preventive action.<sup>46</sup>

Conflict early warning is not a self-contained or independent undertaking in and of itself. Rather, it is considered as “complimentary”<sup>47</sup> to conflict prevention<sup>48</sup> strategies of actors at various levels. In more particular sense, conflict early warning is considered as “a prerequisite for operational conflict prevention which seeks to contain or reverse the escalation of violent conflict by using the tools of preventive diplomacy, economic sanctions and/or incentives,

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<sup>42</sup> Krummenacher and Schmeidl, “Practical Challenges”, 3.

<sup>43</sup> Nyheim, *Preventing Violence*, 53.

<sup>44</sup> Austin, “Early Warning and the Field”, 2.

<sup>45</sup> FEWER (The Forum on Early Warning and Early Response) is a global coalition of non-governmental and governmental agencies and academic institutions working to promote coordinated responses to violent conflict. <http://www.fewer-international.org/pages/africa/>, (accessed July 1, 2009).

<sup>46</sup> FEWER [The Forum on Early Warning and Early Response] Secretariat, “Forum on Early Warning and Early Response: A New Collaborative Effort”, *Refuge* 16, no. 1 (1997): 24.

<sup>47</sup> Tobias Debiel and Herbert Wulf, “Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism: Tools for Enhancing the Effectiveness of Regional Organization? A Comparative Study of the AU, ECOWAS, IGAD, ASEAN/ARF and PIF. Regional and Global Axes of Conflict”, Crisis States Research Center Working Paper Series No. 2 (London: Crisis States Research Center, 2009), 4.

<sup>48</sup> There are two forms of conflict prevention. While Operational conflict prevention seeks to contain or reverse the escalation of violent conflict, structural prevention seeks to reduce the risk of violent conflict in countries or regions by transforming social, economic, cultural, or political sources of conflict. Carnegie Corporation,

and/or military force.”<sup>49</sup> As will be further explained later with the use of practical conflict scenarios in chapter three, conflict early warning is one of the various conflict prevention tools which can be applied at the initial or latent stages of a particular conflict.

The concept of conflict early warning is also closely related to that of early response, which is defined as “any initiative that occurs in the latent stages of a perceived potential armed conflict with the aim at reduction, resolution or transformation.”<sup>50</sup> Response can be undertaken by different actors such as international community, regional organizations, national governments, civil society organizations, etc. In fact, as indicated in OECD’s 2009 early warning publication, existing “common wisdom” in the field dictates that conflict early warnings should have “a strong link to responders or response mechanisms.”<sup>51</sup>

### **2.3 Objectives of Conflict Early Warning Systems**

There is little or no consensus on the objectives of conflict early warning systems. Rather “depending on the composition of factors such as the types of conflict (interstate, ethnic or pastoral), geographic coverage (regional, sub-regional, or national), institutional level (governmental or non-governmental) or, composition of stakeholders, there are different expectations on how early warning systems should perform and what they should achieve.”<sup>52</sup>

Nonetheless, at the most basic level, according to Alex Austin, the objective of conflict early warning is conceived as “obtaining knowledge to assist in the prevention and mitigation of

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“Preventing Deadly Conflict: Final Report”, Report for the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict (Washington: Carnegie Corporation, 1997), xxi.

<sup>49</sup> Susanna Campbell and Patrick Meier, “Deciding to Prevent Violent Conflict: Early Warning and Decision-making within the United Nations”, Paper presented at the International Studies Association Conference 49th Annual Convention, Chicago, February 28th, 2007(cited with Patrick Meier’s permission).

<sup>50</sup> Austin, “Early Warning and the Field”, 2.

<sup>51</sup> Nyheim, *Preventing Violence*, 34.

<sup>52</sup> Keyserlingk and Kopfmüller, “Conflict Early Warning”, 3.

conflict.”<sup>53</sup> On a more operational or functional level, the list of early warning objectives identified by FEWER include:

identification and assessment of the most salient conflict indicators; assessment of likely trends and scenarios; identification of strategies and opportunities for peace; contribution towards a balanced situational analysis based on the interaction of the different conflict and peace factors; and translation of these conclusions into response options and action strategies for local, regional and international actors.<sup>54</sup>

On the other hand, in light of the wide spectrum of security needs it seeks to achieve, the objective of early warning is also conceived in relation to human security.<sup>55</sup> As shown by Tobias Debiel and Herbert Wulf, most conflict early warning systems currently in operation claim that their objective is “tackling threats to human security such as wars, armed conflicts, state failure, genocide, and other gross human rights violations.”<sup>56</sup>

## 2.4 Conflict Early Warning and Traditional Intelligence

Though conflict early warning is born out of the need to anticipate and prevent the outbreak of violent conflicts, ironically its origin and historical development is to be traced to traditional military intelligence<sup>57</sup> which Bradley E. Perry considered as the “parent field”<sup>58</sup> for early warning. Besides this “parent-child” relationship, the similarities of their methods often cause confusion between the above two forms of intelligence.<sup>59</sup> As a consequence, most of the

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<sup>53</sup> Alexander Austin, “Early Warning and the Field”, 1.

<sup>54</sup> FEWER, *Conflict and Peace Analysis*, 3.

<sup>55</sup> Human security, in its broadest sense, embraces far more than the absence of violent conflict. It encompasses human rights, good governance, access to education and health care and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfil his or her potential. Every step in this direction is also a step towards reducing poverty, achieving economic growth and preventing conflict. Freedom from want, freedom from fear, and the freedom of future generations to inherit a healthy natural environment -- these are the interrelated building blocks of human -- and therefore national -- security.” United Nations, “Secretary-General Salutes International Workshop on Human Security in Mongolia”, UN Press Release SG/SM/7382, May 10, 2000. Available on, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2000/20000508.sgsm7382.doc.html>, (accessed August 17, 2009).

<sup>56</sup> Debiel and Wulf, “Conflict Early Warning”, 4.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Bradley E. Perry, “Fast and Frugal Early Warning in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Role of Intelligence Analysis” (Master’s Thesis, Faculty of Mercyhurst College, 2008), 6.

<sup>59</sup> The confusion between the two may arise as both early warning and intelligence depend on similar methods such collecting and analyzing information, scenario building, and recommending options to decision-makers for action and intervention. Susanne Schmeidl, “Conflict Early Warning and Prevention: Toward a Coherent

conflict early warning literature included a brief attempt to show major differences between early warning and traditional intelligence.

Based on functional considerations, Jackie Cillers, for instance, distinguished the two by asserting that “the purpose of early warning (as opposed to traditional intelligence) is the formulation of strategic options directed at taking preventive action in the common (regional or international) good as opposed to the national interest.”<sup>60</sup> Likewise, Susanne Schmeidl underscored their differences in the context of the type of security frameworks they serve. To this effect, Schmeidl indicated that “early warning differs from traditional intelligence in one fundamental point by stressing the welfare of others (human security) rather than state (national) security.”<sup>61</sup> Henri Boshoff, a military analyst in the African Security Analysis Program at the Pretoria (Tshwane) office of the Institute for Security Studies<sup>62</sup>, summarized the major differences and similarities between conflict early warning systems and traditional intelligences as follows in Table 2.1.

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Terminology”, In Cirû Mwaûra and Susanne Schmeidl (eds.), *Early Warning and Conflict Management in the Horn of Africa* (Asmara, Eritrea: The Red Sea Press, 2002), 73.

<sup>60</sup> Jackie Cillers, “Towards a Continental Early Warning System for Africa”, Institute of Security Studies Paper 102 (Pretoria: Institute of Security Studies, 2005), 1.

<sup>61</sup> Schmeidl, “Conflict Early Warning”, 73.

<sup>62</sup> Institute for Security Studies: <http://www.issafrica.org>, (accessed July 24, 2009).

Table 2.1. Major Differences and Similarities between Early Warning and Traditional Intelligence Systems<sup>63</sup>

| <b>Early Warning</b>                                                                                                                | <b>Traditional Intelligence Systems</b>                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Depends on the collection and analysis of information, scenario-building and the presentation of recommendations to decision makers | Depends also on the collection and analysis of information, scenario building and the presentation of recommendations to decision makers |
| Focuses on human security                                                                                                           | Focuses on state security                                                                                                                |
| Seeks to serve larger objectives than those of the state “stricto sensu”                                                            | Seeks to serve state interest                                                                                                            |
| Depends on transparent methods and sharing of information                                                                           | Rely on secrecy, situation rooms and encrypted communications of classified information                                                  |
| Transparency in information and analysis                                                                                            | Closed system                                                                                                                            |
| Decentralized and dependent upon other sources of information and analysis                                                          | Centralized and dependent on in-house information and analysis                                                                           |

## 2.5 Historical Development of Conflict Early Warning

As opposed to traditional intelligence which has existed for several hundred years, the genesis of conflict early warning systems was a recent phenomenon dating back to the 1950s and is rooted in intelligence and military reconnaissance.<sup>64</sup> Before reaching their current application in conflict prevention, conflict early warning systems have gone through three different but overlapping phases.

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<sup>63</sup> AU [African Union] CMD [Conflict Management Division] (eds.), “Report of the Workshop on the Establishment of the AU CEWS: Background paper No. 1”, In *Meeting the Challenges of Conflict Prevention in Africa: Towards the Operationalization of the Continental Early Warning System*. (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2008a), 106.

During the first phase of their evolution in the last decades of the 1950s century, early warning systems were mainly developed “to predict impending dangers emanating from natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, and stock market crashes in the economic sphere as well as to predict the effects of these disasters on people.”<sup>65</sup> In the second phase of their development in the 1980s, early warning systems were further expanded into humanitarian affairs to predict famine and refugee migration with the purpose of alerting relief agencies about looming humanitarian crises.<sup>66</sup> With the exception of their application for the anticipation of “surprise nuclear attacks and other military incidents during the Cold War”<sup>67</sup>, early warning systems were not employed in preventive purposes in the context of violent conflicts in both the first and second phases. Subsequently in the third and final phase of their development, early warning systems attained their application in the maintenance of global and regional peace and security in the early 1990s which also witnessed a surge in their utilization as important intervention tools for the anticipation and prevention of violent conflicts.

The rationale behind this surge was to be found in the advocacy for “preventive culture” that became the hallmark of the post-cold war international politics which reiterated the importance of preventive action “based on timely and accurate knowledge of the facts, understanding of developments and global trends, and on sound analysis.”<sup>68</sup> More importantly, the UN’s Secretary General’s Agenda for Peace which called for more systematic efforts directed at the timely prevention of conflicts gave the initial impetus to the development and

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<sup>64</sup> Debiel and Wulf, “Conflict Early Warning,” 3.

<sup>65</sup> Ruddy Doom and Koen Vlassenroot, “Early Warning and Conflict Prevention: Minerva's Wisdom?”, *Journal of Humanitarian Assistance* (1997). Available on , <http://www.jha.ac/articles/a022.htm>, (accessed August 20, 2009).

<sup>66</sup> Schmeidl, “Conflict Early Warning”, 72-73.

<sup>67</sup> AU-CMD, *The CEWS Handbook*, 35.

<sup>68</sup> United Nations, “An Agenda for Peace Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping”, Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to the statement adopted by the Summit Meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992. A/47/277 - S/24111. New York, 17 June 1992.

adoption of conflict early warning systems by an increasingly large number of international organizations (governmental and non-governmental), academic and research institutes and national governments.<sup>69</sup>

## 2.6. Classification of Early Warning Systems

There are a large number of systems in the field of conflict early warning often exhibiting differences in terms of specific models and tools in use; location of the early warning apparatus, and the nature of ownership of the early warning process.<sup>70</sup> Reflecting this profusion, there are also different ways of classifying early warning systems based on the above parameters. In order to show the wide variety of early warning systems in the field and also help in categorizing Africa's existing early warning mechanisms at a latter stage of this study in chapter five, a brief survey of the major classifications is provided as follows.

**Generational classification:** In this classification, based on their location and organization, the systems are categorized as First, Second, and Third Generation early warning systems.<sup>71</sup> In the First Generation early warning systems such as the International Crisis Group, the entire early warning mechanism is based outside the conflict region.<sup>72</sup> The Second Generation early warning systems (such as FAST) employ a mixed approach by maintaining monitoring mechanisms on the ground (e.g. field monitors) while conducting the analysis outside the conflict region.<sup>73</sup> On the other hand, Third Generation early warning systems (such as CEWARN, CEWS) are located in the conflict region and integrate both early warning and early response activities.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> AU-CMD, *The CEWS Handbook*, 35.

<sup>70</sup> Debiel and Wulf, "Conflict Early Warning", 4.

<sup>71</sup> Nyheim, *Preventing Violence*, 34; Matveeva, "Early Warning", 8.

<sup>72</sup> Matveeva, "Early Warning", 8.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

**Suzanne Verstegen’s methodological classification:** Suzanne Verstegen identified four ideal forms of early warning systems namely correlational, sequential, conjunctural, and response models.<sup>75</sup> Correlational approach focuses on structural indicators (independent variables) and tries to relate causal models from empirical research to future outbreaks of violence (dependent variables).<sup>76</sup> The sequential approach is working with a sequence of triggers and accelerators, i.e. events, and it describes how changes in an environment bring about a specific event or a change in some specified variable.<sup>77</sup> Conjunctural approach works with a combination of conditions and events with the basic assumption that different combinations of a given political and geographical entity’s circumstances lead to different outcomes.<sup>78</sup> This approach is trying to identify particular configurations or conditions that consistently precede the outbreak of violent conflicts and that do not occur in places that do not experience violent conflicts.<sup>79</sup> Finally, response models try to identify windows of opportunities for early and effective intervention in crisis situations.<sup>80</sup>

**Classification based on the origin of the systems:** In this form of classification, early warning systems are broadly categorized “according to the sectors from which they stem”<sup>81</sup> as governmental, inter-governmental, and non-governmental. The objective of governmental early warning systems is often “to identify and assess threats to national interests and/or to inform crisis prevention and peace-building programs.”<sup>82</sup> Examples of governmental early warning systems include the Crisis Early Warning System of the German Federal Ministry for

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Verstegen, “Conflict Prognostication”, 4-6.

<sup>76</sup> Debiel and Wulf, “Conflict Early Warning”, 4.

<sup>77</sup> AU [African Union] CMD [Conflict Management Division] (Eds.), “Proposal for an Indicators Module towards the Operationalization of the Continental Early Warning System for the African Union, Issue Paper No. 2”, In *Meeting the Challenges of Conflict Prevention in Africa: Towards the Operationalization of the AU CEWS* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2008a), 84.

<sup>78</sup> AU-CMD, “Proposal for an Indicators Module”, 84.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Debiel and Wulf, “Conflict Early Warning”, 5.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and France's Système d'Alerte Précoce (SAP).<sup>83</sup> On the other hand, inter-governmental early warning systems are established by regional and sub-regional inter-governmental organizations such as the United Nations and the African Union with the purpose of bolstering "the organizations' ability to anticipate crises and initiate preventive measures."<sup>84</sup> Notable examples of these types of systems include the Early Warning Unit of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the CEWS of the African Union, and IGAD's CEWARN. Finally, non-governmental systems include those in the NGO sector, in academic institutions, and research organizations.<sup>85</sup>

**Classification based on early warning models<sup>86</sup> in use:** In this form of classification, Monty G. Marshall categorized early warning systems as those using conditional and causal models; predictive models; and general risk and capacity models.<sup>87</sup> Conditional and causal models deal with empirical evidence for causal interference between independent variables (of structural indicators) and violent conflict/political instability.<sup>88</sup> These types of early warning models do not predict the actual onset or risk of violence in specific countries; rather they lend support to predictive models by identifying the validity of early warning indicators.<sup>89</sup> On the other hand, predictive early warning models try to forecast the outbreak of violence in a

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<sup>82</sup> Nyheim, *Preventing Violence*, 51.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>85</sup> Debiel and Wulf, "Conflict Early Warning", 5.

<sup>86</sup> An early warning model (EWM) is an analytical forecasting tool that has been honed by systematic evidence and can be used to identify the likelihood of specified events or conditions occurring in the future. To be useful in filtering forecasting information, EWM needs to be guided by a theoretical model of the phenomena being forecasted (e.g. civil wars, genocide) and disciplined by exposure to systematic evidence. Craig J. Jenkins and Susanne Schmeidl, "The Early Warning of Humanitarian Disasters: Problems in Building an Early Warning System", *International Migration Review* 32, no. 2 (1998): 472.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Monty G. Marshall, Monty G. "Fragility, Instability, and the Failure of States. Assessing Sources of Systemic Risk." Center for Preventive Action Working Paper (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2008), 9.

<sup>89</sup> AU [African Union] CMD [Conflict Management Division] (eds.), "Development of Indicators for Early Warning Systems: Some Conceptual and Methodological Issues: Background Paper No. 3", In *Meeting the Challenges of Conflict Prevention in Africa: Towards the Operationalization of the Continental Early Warning System* (Leipzig:

time span of one to five years by focusing on selected variables of both structural and event-based nature.<sup>90</sup> Finally, general risk and capacity models are used ‘to rank countries from weak to strong, building on the general association between weakness, social problems, political conflict, and poor state performance.’<sup>91</sup>

**Alexander Austin’s Methodological classification:** Based on their respective methodological approaches, Alex Austin divided early warning systems into four categories: as quantitative, qualitative, a dual process of quantitative and qualitative, and finally networks.<sup>92</sup>

## 2.7 Conclusion

With the purpose of contextualizing the process of harmonizing conflict early warning in Africa in the proper theoretical framework, this chapter attempted to concisely summarize some of the major conceptual issues related to conflict early warning. To this end, the chapter provided a brief overview of the various definitions and objectives of conflict early warning; indicated its historical development; and showed its distinctive characters in comparison with traditional intelligence. In the latter part of the chapter, a brief attempt was also made to provide an overview of the classifications of early warning systems.

In a nutshell, the attempt thus far has been a theoretical one and the potential of conflict early warning in anticipating and preventing African conflicts has yet to be shown. To this end, in the coming chapter, the study provides a brief historical overview of the causes of African conflicts and indicates conflict early warning’s possible roles and limitations in the context of the prevention of conflicts in Africa.

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Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2008a), 140.

<sup>90</sup> Marshall, “Fragility, Instability”, 10.

## Chapter Three: Overview of Historical Root Causes of African Conflicts

### 3.1 Introduction

There is a rich body of literature<sup>93</sup> on African conflicts which are generally considered to “have complex histories and exhibit multiple and multidimensional causes, courses and consequences.”<sup>94</sup> Whereas it is true that “Africa’s wars are the result of a myriad of structural, economic, political, cultural, and historical factors”<sup>95</sup>, nonetheless, there is also an overriding recognition in the literature that “the root causes of current conflicts in Africa are often to be traced back to the colonial era when Europeans scrambled for territories with scant regard for ethnic boundaries.”<sup>96</sup> As shown by Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, “there is hardly any zone of conflict in contemporary Africa that cannot trace its sordid violence to colonial history and even the late nineteenth century.”<sup>97</sup>

Intent on depicting the historical root causes of conflicts in Africa and highlighting the possible role of conflict early warning in forecasting the outbreak of these conflicts; this chapter explores how European colonialism, along with its attendant historical legacies, played a key role “in causing, sustaining, or aggravating all types of conflicts”<sup>98</sup> through the creation of artificial colonial boundaries; impacting state formation; and dividing ethnic and cultural communities. In order to achieve the above broad objective, the following tasks will be

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>92</sup> A full description of this classification is to be found in: Austin, *Early Warning and the Field*, 4-10.

<sup>93</sup> See for example: Adebayo Adedeji, *Comprehending and Mastering African Conflicts: The Search for Sustainable Peace and Good Governance* (London: Zed Books, 1999); David J. Francis, *Peace and Conflict in Africa* (London: Zed Books, 2008); Alfred Nhema and Paul Tiyambe Zeleza (eds.), *The Roots of African Conflicts: The Causes and Costs* (Oxford: James Curry Publishers, 2008); William Z. Zartman, *Ripe for Resolution: Conflict and Intervention in Africa* (Oxford and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1989).

<sup>94</sup> Tiyambe Zeleza, “Introduction: The Causes and Costs of war in Africa,” In Alfred Nhema and Paul Tiyambe Zeleza (eds.), *The Roots of African Conflicts: The Causes and Costs* (Oxford: James Curry Publishers 2008), 2.

<sup>95</sup> Richard Jackson, “Africa’s Wars: Overview, Causes and the Challenges of Conflict Transformation”, In Oliver Furley and Roy May (eds.), *Ending Africa’s Wars* (Ashgate: Aldershot and Burlington VT., 2006), 22.

<sup>96</sup> Alfred Nhema, “Introduction: The Resolution of African Conflicts,” In Alfred Nhema and Paul Tiyambe Zeleza (eds.), *Resolution of African Conflicts: The Management of Conflict Resolution and Post Reconstruction* (Oxford: James Curry Publishers 2008), 1.

<sup>97</sup> Zeleza, “Introduction: The Causes and Costs of war in Africa”, 2.

undertaken in this chapter. Firstly, the nature of both the pre and post-colonial borders as well as the impact of colonial intervention on African territoriality will be briefly discussed. Subsequently, the link among colonialism, African state formation, ethnic fragmentation and the prevalence of conflicts will be explored. Thirdly, some of the major forms of conflicts in Africa and their historical root causes will be highlighted by using the Horn of Africa as a case study. Finally, this chapter concludes by indicating the possible roles and limitations of conflict early warning in monitoring conflicts with historical roots causes associated with the era of colonialism.

### **3.2. Colonial Boundaries and African Conflicts**

Pre-colonial Africa was characterized with the presence of a wide range of political communities or entities which had some “aspects of statehood”<sup>99</sup> and “approximate, in a rudimentary form, to the Westphalian conception of statehood.”<sup>100</sup> According to David Francis, these pre-colonial political communities were described with variety of terms such as “city states, kingdoms, autocracies, vice royalties, confederations, peoples, theocracies, empires, sultanates, dynasties, nomadic confederations, pastoral communities, clans, tribes, warlords, semi-autonomous vassal states, tributary states, sub-dynasties, sub-kingdoms and state-less societies.”<sup>101</sup> Some of the most notable political entities in pre-colonial Africa include the Mali, Shonghai and Sokoto Empires, the Ashanti Kingdom, the Benin City-State and the Oyo Caliphates in West Africa; the Bakongo Kingdom in Central Africa; the Ethiopian empire, the Islamic Sultanate of Sudan and the Buganda Kingdom in Eastern Africa<sup>102</sup>(See Figure 3.1 for African pre-colonial political entities).

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<sup>98</sup> Francis, *Uniting Africa*, 39.

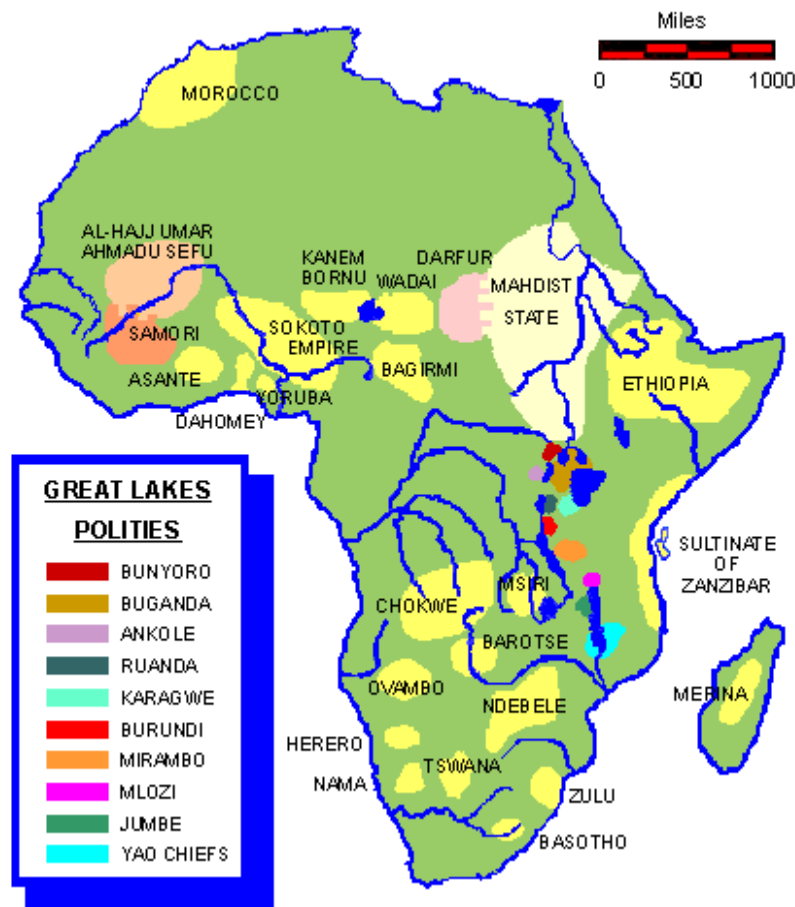
<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ambe J. Njoh, *Tradition, Culture and Development in Africa: Historical Lessons for Modern Development Planning*

Figure 3.1: African Political Entities before the Scramble<sup>103</sup>



With regard to territoriality, the “notion of frontiers as defined lines was virtually non-existent”<sup>104</sup> in these pre-colonial political entities and “few of the present boundaries of Africa existed”<sup>105</sup> prior to the arrival of European colonialists. Most of the pre-colonial boundaries were generally considered to have been “fluid”<sup>106</sup> in the sense that their demarcation and location depended on the relative strength and power of the local African kingdoms,

(Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2006), 110.

<sup>103</sup> Source: James Burns, Robert O. Collins and Erik Christopher Ching (eds.), *Historical Problems of Imperial Africa* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1994), 7.

<sup>104</sup> Steven R. Ratner, “Drawing a Better Line: Uti Possidetis and Borders of New States”, *American Journal of International Law* 90, no. 4 (1996): 595.

<sup>105</sup> Ieuan Griffiths, “The Scramble for Africa: Inherited Political Boundaries”, *The Geographical Journal* 152, No. 2 (1986), 204.

<sup>106</sup> Herbst, “The Creation and Maintenance”, 680.

chiefdoms and other forms of state structures identified earlier. According to Yoon, this started to gradually change with the advent of European colonialists who “drew boundaries in the African territories, which they acquired by conquest, occupation, treaties with African rulers (kings, chiefs, and sultans), or purchase.”<sup>107</sup>

Informed by the decision of the Berlin Conference of 1884-85 that “laid down the rules for the European partition of the continent,”<sup>108</sup> European colonial powers such as Britain, Germany and France created the existing African boundaries by entering border treaties among themselves often without any form of consultation with the existing political entities in the continent. Almost in all cases of demarcation, European colonizers did not take into account the “ethno-cultural, geographical, and ecological realities of Africa”<sup>109</sup> and they “necessarily ignored factors which are generally considered relevant to the partitioning of land.”<sup>110</sup> In describing such flawed process of demarcation that resulted in the creation of existing African boundaries, Herbst maintained that:

In many cases, mistakes in partitioning were made because the colonialists were misinformed about the geography of the area. In other cases, they adopted the simplest rules to divide the territory without taking time to consider demographic, ethnographic, or topographic factors.<sup>111</sup>

The artificial boundaries created by European colonialists in the above manner later became applicable on the newly-formed independent African states following the establishment of the Organization for African Unity in 1963 which decided to preserve the colonial borders upholding the principle of *Uti Possidetis*.<sup>112</sup> Though OAU’s original

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 675.

<sup>108</sup> Ieuan Griffiths, “The Scramble for Africa: Inherited Political Boundaries”, *The Geographical Journal* 152, No. 2 (1986), 204.

<sup>109</sup> Herbst, “The Creation and Maintenance”, 675.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> *Uti Possidetis* is a “principle in internal law which establishes the frontiers of newly independent states following decolonization, by ensuring that the frontiers followed the original boundaries of the old colonial territories from which they emerged.” Encyclopedia Britannica: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/620667/uti-possidetis>, (accessed August 31, 2009).

intention was to avoid possible conflicts among neighboring African states over the location of their boundaries, the decision to uphold the colonial borders had the reverse effect since the borders became a major cause of conflict as will be discussed afterwards.

### **3.3 Colonialism, State Formation and Conflicts in Africa**

Besides the creation of artificial boundaries, another enduring legacy of European colonialism was the imposition of state formation on the African continent. Albeit the existence of earlier forms of political organization highlighted earlier, state formation in Africa in its current form is undeniably “the creation of European colonialism.”<sup>113</sup>

As opposed to their European counterparts which were born out of “the natural and organic”<sup>114</sup> process of nation and state formation, African nations and states are “geographical units created by European imperialists who divvied up Africa beginning at the Congress of Berlin in 1885, partitioning Africa into entirely artificial territorial units.”<sup>115</sup> “Whereas these units served the geo-economic and geo-political interests of imperial Europe, they had the effect within Africa of arbitrarily dividing already established communities on the one hand or uniting essentially dissonant communities on the other hand.”<sup>116</sup> Consequently such form of artificial, forced, and unnatural creation of the states led to the formation of very unstable nation-states in the continent<sup>117</sup> in which “nation and states have not cohered.”<sup>118</sup>

On more practical terms, colonial state formation is said to have various ramifications for the

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<sup>113</sup> Francis, *Uniting Africa*, 40.

<sup>114</sup> This refers to long evolutionary process of state formation which was mediated by bloody wars, conflicts and constitutional processes.

<sup>115</sup> Ricardo R. Laremont, “The Causes of Warfare and the Implications of Peacekeeping in Africa,” In Ricardo L. Laremont (ed.), *The Causes of War and the Consequences of Peacekeeping in Africa* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2002), 5.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

prevalence of violent conflicts in the continent by creating a potentially conflictual environment in the continent at least in two forms. Firstly, as indicated earlier, colonial state formation separated similar ethno-linguistic groups which later entered into conflicts with other groups in their respective sub-regions vying for unity with their “ethnic brethren.” Secondly, colonial state formation also “lumped together peoples of diverse cultures and traditions”<sup>119</sup> resulting in a highly diversified and unstable assortment of group identities within a single state. According to Francis M. Deng, the diversities thus created by the state formation process in turn proved to be one of the major sources of conflicts “due to gross inequalities in the sharing of power, natural resources, and development opportunities”<sup>120</sup> as well as the absence of a cohesive social fabric which commits the loyalty of ethnic and other forms of group identities to the central state.<sup>121</sup> As will be discussed later, state formation in Africa which had a flawed start from the beginning contributed directly and indirectly to the genesis of most of the conflicts in the continent ranging from territorial disputes to ethnic and secessionist conflicts.

### **3.4 Colonialism, Ethnic Diversification and Conflicts**

European colonialism also contributed to the ethnic fragmentation of the continent which in turn played a role in the proliferation of ethnic conflicts in most parts of Africa.<sup>122</sup> Colonialism fostered ethnic fragmentation and ethnic conflicts in various forms. Firstly, as shown earlier, the imposition of colonial boundaries on the continent “which was drawn with little or no

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<sup>119</sup> Herbst, “The Creation and Maintenance”, 675.

<sup>120</sup> Francis M. Deng, “Sudan: An African Dilemma,” In Ricardo L. Laremont (ed.), *The Causes of War and the Consequences of Peacekeeping in Africa* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2002), 61.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> The intention here is not to argue that ethnic fragmentation is solely the creation of European colonialism. Rather, the purpose is to show how European colonialism built upon existing ethnic consciousness to further its colonial agenda.

consideration to the actual distribution of indigenous ethno-cultural groups<sup>123</sup> divided similar cultural and ethno-linguistic groups into different colonial territories. Following their preservation in the wake of decolonization, such ethnically-divisive territories created “some of the most ethnically fragmented states in the world”<sup>124</sup> which are considered to have higher potential for ethnic conflicts.<sup>125</sup> In this regard, colonial state formation in Nigeria provides a classical example depicting the link between ethnic fragmentation and conflicts. As shown by Ali A. Mazrui, the British colonialism created the Nigerian state which was composed of “three major nations and many smaller ones”<sup>126</sup> including “the Yoruba in the West which were very different from the Muslim Hausa in the North, who in turn were quite distinct from the Ibo in the East.”<sup>127</sup> According to Mazrui, “this artificial mixture led to one of Africa’s greatest human tragedies, the Nigerian Civil War of 1967-70”<sup>128</sup>, that followed in the wake of an aborted secessionist attempt of the Ibo-dominated Biafra region.

Secondly, colonial policies also fostered ethnic fragmentation by promoting ethnic sentiment among Africans with the purpose of discouraging a feeling of unity among Africans.<sup>129</sup> According to Tangie Nsoh Fonchingong, the colonial state employed various strategies to this end including “classifying ethnic groups and insisting that official forms carry information about the ethnic origin of individuals, disaggregating ethnic groups into the various subgroups, and favoring some groups over others.”<sup>130</sup> In the wake of the departure of the colonialists, some African states consequently found themselves in a situation of immense ethnic

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<sup>123</sup> Herbst, “The Creation and Maintenance”, 675.

<sup>124</sup> Brian Athow, Robert Blanton and T. David Mason, “Colonial Style and Post-Colonial Ethnic Conflict in Africa”, *Journal of Peace Research* 38, no. 4 (2001): 473.

<sup>125</sup> Athow et al, “Colonial Style”, 488.

<sup>126</sup> Ali A. Mazrui, “Conflict in Africa: An Overview”, In Alfred Nhema and Paul Tiyambe Zeleza (eds.), *The Roots of African Conflicts: The Causes and Costs* (Oxford: James Curry Publishers 2008), 37.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Tangie Nsoh Fonchingong, “The State and Development in Africa”, *African Journal of International Relations* 8, no. 1-2: 1-21.

<sup>130</sup> Fonchingong, “The State and Development”, 6.

fragmentation and diversification which, coupled with other socio-political factors, ignited into violent ethnic conflicts as in the case of Rwanda and Burundi.

### **3.5 Conflicts in the Horn: A Case Study**

As shown above, European colonial rule had resulted in the “inevitable problems of state-making and nation-building among disparate peoples and in contested territory where there were cultural links with people across those borders.”<sup>131</sup> While its manifold consequences are observed almost in all parts of Africa, the Horn of Africa would serve as a classical illustration of the impacts of European colonialism particularly in relation to the prevalence of conflicts.

The causes of conflicts in the Horn of Africa are as diverse and complex as in the rest of the continent. Whereas historical legacies of colonialism are important factors in explaining the prevalence of conflicts in the Horn, the stability of the sub-region has also been constantly undermined also by other factors such as socio-economic underdevelopment, super power involvement during the Cold War, and mutual culture of interference in the affairs of neighboring states.<sup>132</sup> The sub-region has also witnessed a wide array of conflicts such as secessionist, irredentist, territorial disputes, and ethnic conflicts. Consequently a brief overview of the major types of conflicts as well as their causes will be provided in this section by focusing on those conflicts which have their roots in the historical legacies of colonialism.

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<sup>131</sup> Lionel Cliff, “Regional Dimensions of Conflict in the Horn of Africa”, *Third World Quarterly* 20, no. 1 (1999), 90.

<sup>132</sup> Günther Baechler, Bethuel Kiplagat and Cirû Mwaûra, “Background to the Conflicts in the IGAD Region”, In Cirû Mwaûra and Susanne Schmeidl (eds.), *Early Warning and Conflict Management in the Horn of Africa* (Asmara, Eritrea: The Red Sea Press Inc., 2002), 32-35.

### 3.5.1 Territorial Disputes

Owing largely to their arbitrary nature, some of the international boundaries drawn by Europeans later became major “bones of contention” among neighboring countries in the Horn of Africa. Most of these disputes were often regarding the location of the international boundaries and were considered to “have their roots in the European colonialism.”<sup>133</sup> Similar to other territorial disputes elsewhere in the world, these disputes were generally preceded by territorial claims which were usually based on “pre-colonial history, common ethnicity, incomplete delimitation of the boundary, multiple colonial documents defining the boundary, different interpretations of the delimitation treaty, or violation of the principle of uti possidetis by the former colonial power.”<sup>134</sup>

The most notable cases of territorial disputes in the sub-region are the Somalia-Ethiopia (1976-8) and the Ethiopia-Eritrea (1998-2000) border disputes. Though the former is also conceived as an irredentist conflict<sup>135</sup>, both exemplify major territorial disputes which resulted from a combination of factors such as incomplete delimitation of the boundaries and different interpretations of the colonial delimitation treaty.<sup>136</sup>

### 3.5.2. Civil Wars and Ethnic Conflicts

The civil wars<sup>137</sup> in the sub-region are multi-dimensional and are often motivated with factors

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<sup>133</sup> Mi Young Yoon, “European Colonialism and Territorial Disputes in Africa: The Gulf of Guinea and the Indian Ocean”, *Mediterranean Quarterly* 20, No. 2 (2009), 94.

<sup>134</sup> Yoon, “European Colonialism and Territorial Disputes”, 81.

<sup>135</sup> The Somali-Ethiopia conflict is considered as “irredentist” since Somali claimed territories in Ethiopia based on the ethnic similarity.

<sup>136</sup> Yoon, “European Colonialism and Territorial Disputes”, 81.

<sup>137</sup> Large-scale armed conflict within one country fought either between the regime in power and challengers or, in failing states with no recognised authority, between warlords or communal groups. Alex P. Schmid, “Thesaurus and glossary of early warning and conflict prevention terms”, Abridged version, edited for the Forum on Early Warning and Early Response, 1998. Available on: [http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/lib.nsf/db900sid/LGEL-5ERDQ8/\\$file/fewer-glossary-may98.pdf?openelement](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/lib.nsf/db900sid/LGEL-5ERDQ8/$file/fewer-glossary-may98.pdf?openelement), (accessed 25 August, 2009).

related to cultural, ethnic, and religious identities as well as economic deprivations and absence of political representations. Most of these underlying factors are in turn often rooted in the process of state formation and colonial boundaries discussed earlier as vividly illustrated with the cases of the civil wars in Sudan (between the North and South Sudan) and in Somalia.

In the case of the Sudan, the civil war is portrayed essentially as “a conflict of identities between the Arabized and Islamic North and the South which is more indigenously African in race, culture and religion with some element of Christianity.”<sup>138</sup> Even though, a number of internal and external forces are responsible for the creation of such conflicting forms of identities, European colonialism is noted to have contributed significantly to the fragmentation of the Sudan along the North-South divide resulting in Sudan’s “national identity crisis.”<sup>139</sup> In this regard, Francis M. Deng noted the role of British colonialism in creating an isolated sense of identity in the South by arguing that the “British did not develop the South, but kept it isolated from the North as ‘Closed District’ allowing it to evolve along indigenous lines.”<sup>140</sup>

In the case of the Somalia, the country has been a scene of bloody and contracted conflict among various groups which aligned themselves along ethnic and clan affiliations as well as religious beliefs. Similar to the case of Sudan, some of the historical legacies of colonialism also underlie the civil war in Somalia. Most notable in this regard is the impact of colonialism in creating the unnatural divide among the previously “ethnically and religiously homogeneous” Somalis which were artificially divided into French, Italian and British Somalis. Coupled with various forms of allegiance to clan and ethnic identities other than the central state, the division along those colonial lines weakened the national cohesion among Somalis

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<sup>138</sup> Deng, “Sudan: An African Dilemma”, 62.

which in turn fueled and sustained the civil war which followed in the wake of the fall of the Mohammed Siyad Barre regime in 1991.<sup>141</sup>

### **3.5.3 Secessionist Wars**

The Horn of Africa has been the scene of secessionist wars whose genesis can be traced once again to the era of European colonialism. The most notable example of secessionist war is the case of Eritrea which achieved its independence from Ethiopia in 1991 after more than thirty years of armed struggle. The genesis of this specific conflict can be squarely located at colonial policy of Italy which administered Eritrea beginning of the 1890s until its handover of its colonial territories including Eritrea to the Allied Powers following its defeat in the Second World War. During their occupation, the Italians fostered a separate political and national identity in Eritrea distinct from Ethiopia which claimed Eritrea and other colonial territories in the region as its “provinces on the grounds that prior to the European partition of the Horn of Africa in the nineteenth century most of this area was more or less under the Ethiopian Emperors’ effective sway.”<sup>142</sup> Though the Eritrean war of secession got its conclusion with the attainment of Eritrea’s separate statehood, the sub-region is still home to other small-scale secessionist conflicts as in the cases of the Oromo and Ogaden which are struggling for their respective independence from Ethiopia

### **3.5.4 Irredentist Conflicts**

Faced “with the same arbitrariness of borders inherited from European colonial rule”<sup>143</sup>, the Horn of Africa has also witnessed the separation of peoples of the same ethno-linguistic

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>141</sup> In spite of more than forty years of unity, the division among Somalis along the colonial divide became more discernible again especially in the case of Somaliland which is currently claiming its independence based on separate existence as a British colony before it abrogated its voluntary union with other parts of Somalia.

<sup>142</sup> Yoon, “European Colonialism and Territorial Disputes”, 81.

origin who “would otherwise have lived together.”<sup>144</sup> In the wake of the departure of the colonialist, the “desire for unification”<sup>145</sup> among those people with ethnic commonalities has eventually led to irredentist<sup>146</sup> conflicts in some parts of the sub-region. A very clear illustration of this fact is to be found in the case of Somalia which aspired to unite all Somali-speaking people who were separated into four distinct political entities of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia.

Following the independence of Somalia in 1960, the country’s leaders “rejected the legitimacy of their western borders”<sup>147</sup> and used ethnicity as a basis for its claim of territories in parts of Ethiopia and Kenya.<sup>148</sup> Somalia’s claim of territories later resulted in the Ethiopian-Somalia war of 1977 which ensued over contested ownership of the Ogaden region which is home to ethnic Somalis. Nevertheless, Somalia’s irredentist claims to territories within Ethiopia and Kenya failed to materialize in the face of stiff resistance especially from Ethiopia which managed to mobilize its population against the Somali invasion.

### **3.6 Early Warning and African Conflicts**

In the previous parts, an attempt was made to provide a highly concise and generalized discussion of African conflicts by specifically focusing on their historical origin which is often traced to the various facets of the colonial legacy. The discussion showed how Europe’s imperial past impacted the social and political stability of contemporary Africa and attributed the root causes of various forms of conflicts in the continent to the various relics of the

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<sup>143</sup> Cliff, “Regional Dimensions of Conflict”, 90.

<sup>144</sup> Mazrui, “Conflict in Africa”, 37.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Irredentism is defined here as “the desire of a nation-state to incorporate territory inhabited by people of the same nation but under the suzerainty of another government.” David E. Kromm, “Irredentism in Africa: The Somali-Kenya Boundary Dispute”, *Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science* 70, No. 3 (1967), 359.

<sup>147</sup> Kromm, “Irredentism in Africa”, 359.

colonial era. In fact, the attempt in the previous parts was not to establish a facile connection that puts the blame on European colonialism for each and every conflict in Africa. It was rather to highlight the historical and structural contexts of the conflicts which are essentially required in the anticipation and subsequent prevention of conflicts through the use of early warning systems. After all, an effective conflict early warning system is based on a well-informed cognition of the conflicts to be monitored including their historical context. Before moving to the next chapter, this part concludes by indicating the potential roles and limitations of conflict early warning in anticipating and preventing violent conflicts with historical roots and causes as indicated earlier.

According to studies<sup>149</sup> conducted on the prevention, management and resolution of violent conflicts, most conflicts undergo through various stages or phases of conflicts which can be broadly categorized as pre-conflict, in-conflict and post-conflict phases<sup>150</sup> (See Figure 3.2 for stages of conflict). As shown in these studies, there are also a wide range of intervention tools that should be applied at specific stages of conflicts<sup>151</sup> (See Table 3.1 for Conflict Prevention: Phases, Action, and Goals).

In the case of conflict early warning, the studies indicated that it is one major intervention tool

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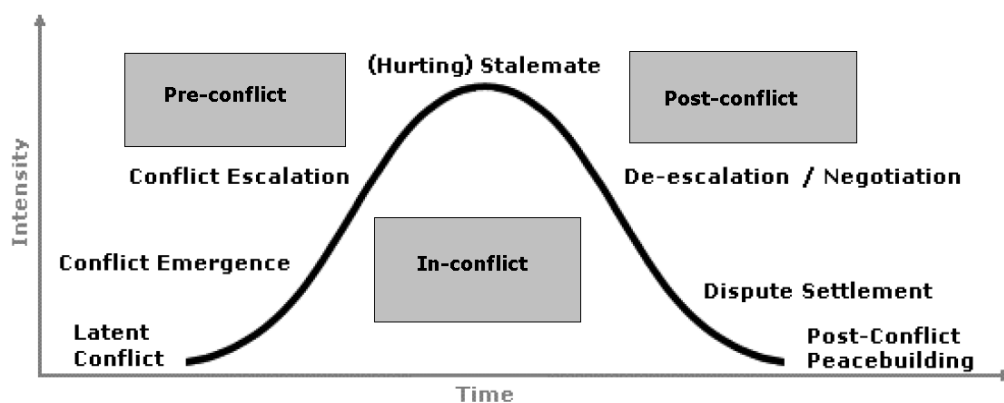
<sup>148</sup> Yoon, “European Colonialism and Territorial Disputes”, 82.

<sup>149</sup> See for example, Veronique Dudouet, “Transitions from Violence to Peace: Revisiting Analysis and Intervention in Conflict Transformation”, Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management Report No. 15, 2006. <http://www.berghof-center.org/uploads/download/br15e.pdf?LANG=e&id=301>, accessed on August 3, 2009; Michael Lund, *Preventing Violent Conflict* (Washington, DC: USIP Press, 1996); David Carment and Patrick James, “Ethnic Conflict and the International Level: Causation, Prevention and Peacekeeping”, in David Carment and Patrick James (eds.), *Peace in the Midst of Wars: Preventing and Managing International Ethnic Conflicts* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1998a).

<sup>150</sup> Other phases or stages of conflicts which fall into the three broad categories of pre-conflict, in-conflict and post-conflicts stages include latent conflict stages, conflict emergence stages, escalation and institutionalization stage, failed peace-making efforts stages, hurting stalemate stage, de-escalation stage, negotiation stage, settlement stage, and peace-building and reconciliation stages. Solomon Hussein, “The Role of External Intervention in Ethnic Conflicts”, Center for International Political Studies (CIPS) Issue Paper, 2007. Available at CIPS official website: [http://www.cips.up.ac.za/files/conference/papers/KTP\\_Prof\\_Hussein\\_Solomon\\_CiPS.pdf](http://www.cips.up.ac.za/files/conference/papers/KTP_Prof_Hussein_Solomon_CiPS.pdf), (accessed August 30, 2009); Beyond Intractability Knowledge Base Project, “Stages of Conflicts”, <http://www.beyondintractability.org/action/essays.jsp?nid=2075>, (accessed August 24, 2009).

that needs to be applied at the pre-conflict stage of conflict formation when the conflicts are still at their latent or initial stages<sup>152</sup> to identify potential crises through “tracking of background (structural) conditions that constitute root causes of tension and crises as well as dynamic factors or accelerators, which may exacerbate the underlying conditions, driving up tensions.”<sup>153</sup>

Figure 3.2. Stages of Conflicts<sup>154</sup>



As will be further highlighted in the coming chapters, structural causes of conflicts refer to “long-term factors underlying violent conflicts”<sup>155</sup> and include considerations such as ethnic politics, bad or illegitimate governance, lack of political participation, lack of equal economic and social opportunities, and inequitable access to resource wealth.<sup>156</sup> Most of these structural factors are largely related (but not limited) to the legacies of European colonialism such as colonial state formation, ethnic and cultural fragmentation as indicated earlier in this chapter. And the importance of conflict early warning systems in the context of African conflicts emanate from its capability to identify both structural and immediate causes of conflict as

<sup>151</sup> Hussein, “The Role of External Intervention”, 1.

<sup>152</sup> Hussein, “The Role of External Intervention”, 1.

<sup>153</sup> Davies, “Conflict Early Warning”, 2.

<sup>154</sup> Source: Veronique Dudouet, “Transitions from Violence”, 6.

<sup>155</sup> AU-CMD, *The CEWS Handbook*, 50.

indicated above.

Table 3.1. Conflict Prevention: Phases, Action, and Goals<sup>157</sup>

| Phases                  | Conditions                                 | Actions                                                          | Goals                                           |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Conflict Formation      | Latent Conflict/<br>Unstable<br>Conditions | Early warning, Preventive<br>Diplomacy, Preventive<br>Deployment | Mitigate and<br>Stabilize                       |
| Conflict Escalation     | Sporadic<br>Violence                       | Crisis Management, Crisis<br>Intervention                        | De-escalate/<br>Reduce<br>Violence              |
| Conflict Endurance      | Intense Armed<br>Conflict                  | Negotiation, Peace-Keeping,<br>Peace Enforcement                 | Control and<br>Contain<br>Violence              |
| Conflict Termination    | Ceasefire                                  | Negotiation/ Peace-Keeping                                       | Prevent<br>Recurrence                           |
| Conflict Transformation | Conflict<br>Resolution                     | New Institutions and<br>Projects/ Peace-building                 | Address<br>Underlying<br>Sources of<br>Conflict |

Consequently drawing both on the discussion on the application of early warning as an intervention tool as well as the discussion on historical root causes of conflicts, this chapter concludes by making the following caveats on the limitations of conflict early warning in serving its preventive purpose in the case of African conflicts. Firstly, conflict early warning is to be applied restrictedly to violent crises which are still in “pre-conflict stages” by virtue of the specificity of early warning as an intervention tools as well as the impracticality of instituting early warning monitoring mechanisms (both human and technical) in already escalated conflicts. In other words, higher levels of conflict intensification preclude the use of conflict early warning systems in full-blown conflicts such as the Darfur or in the ongoing

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

conflicts in Somalia. In such cases, precedence is to be given to other intervention tools such as negotiations and peace-keeping rather than conflict early warning systems.

Secondly, the applicability of conflict early warning systems is also significantly weakened in stateless situations or in the case of failed states such as Somalia given the crucial role of states in conflict early warning and prevention. After all, the effectiveness of early warning depends, among other things, on the active role played by the states both as members of an early warning system and as individual political entities which have the potential to participate in various preventive activities ranging from facilitating the collection of early warning information to the provision of timely response action.

Nevertheless, such seemingly restricted applicability of conflict early warning systems should by no means undermine their utility as important tools of operational conflict prevention in Africa since the continent is under a constant threat not only from existing conflicts but also from new ones which can be identified “when there is still time for investing in appropriate structural development and building conflict management capacity.”<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Source: Hussein, “The Role of External Intervention”, 1.

<sup>158</sup> Davies, “Conflict Early Warning”, 2.

## **Chapter Four: The Practice of Conflict Early Warning in Africa: an Overview**

### **4.1. Introduction**

The previous chapter provided a concise discussion of the historical root causes and types of African conflicts by emphasizing the impact of European colonialism in causing, sustaining and/or aggravating some of the major conflicts in the continent. Additionally, the chapter explored the applicability of conflict early warning in the anticipation and prevention of these conflicts.

Moving on, this chapter provides a brief survey of conflict early warning practice in Africa with the purpose of indicating its historical development and current level of practice in the continent. The chapter starts by briefly highlighting the earliest attempt of the OAU to implement conflict early warning at a continent level. Subsequently, other successive efforts both at the continental and sub-continental levels will be discussed by focusing on three of the major early warning systems currently in operation in Africa, namely the CEWS, CEWARN and ECOWARN.

### **4.2. OAU and Conflict Early Warning**

The first major effort towards implementing a conflict early warning system for Africa was initiated when the Organization of African Unity (OAU) decided to establish the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.<sup>159</sup> According to Chris J. Bakwveshegha, “the decision to establish such a mechanism within the OAU was reached against the

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<sup>159</sup> Cillers, “Towards a Continental Early Warning System”, 39.

backdrop conviction that African states could not improve their socio-economic performance in an ocean of wars, conflicts and domestic tension.”<sup>160</sup> As an overarching continental security arrangement, the Mechanism was meant to “provide the OAU with robust framework for anticipating conflicts and wars in Africa.”<sup>161</sup> It was also charged with undertaking peacemaking and peace-building efforts during conflicts and in post-conflicts situations.<sup>162</sup> In order to translate the above broad security objectives of the Mechanism, the OAU sought to establish a number of institutions including an early warning unit. To this end the OAU created a Division for Conflict Management and formalized an associated financial facility, the Peace Fund.<sup>163</sup>

Nevertheless, the OAU did not make substantial progress in operationalizing its conflict early warning unit as part of its revitalized security arrangement apart from its limited success in establishing the “Situation Room within the Conflict Management Center that was tasked in collecting information.”<sup>164</sup> In fact as Christian Nitschke Smith has indicated, the Organization never managed to establish a fully operational early warning system and this task was passed on to its successor, the AU, following an overall institutional reform in 2002.<sup>165</sup> Whereas the OAU had aspired to establish a full-fledged conflict early warning system or unit which was envisaged to enhance its capacity to prevent conflicts in Africa, a wide range of factors prevented the Organization from fulfilling its aspirations. Apart from capacity and financial constraints, three major factors were suggested to explain OAU’s “meager” performance in the case of conflict early warning in Africa.

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<sup>160</sup> Chris J. Bakweshhegha, “OAU and Early Warning in Conflict Situations in Africa: Perceptions and Possibilities”, in S. Bassey Ibok and William G. Nhara (eds.), *OAU Early Warning System on Conflict Situations in Africa* (Addis Ababa: OAU, 1997), 26.

<sup>161</sup> AU-CMD, “Report on the Establishment”, 102.

<sup>162</sup> Cillers, “Towards a Continental Early Warning System”, 39.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> AU-CMD, “Report on the Establishment”, 102.

<sup>165</sup> Nitschke, “Anticipating African Conflicts”, 24.

Firstly, the inclination of many regimes in the region to restrict public access to an inordinately broad range of information substantially slowed down OAU's progress in establishing an early warning system for the continent.<sup>166</sup> Secondly, "OAU's commitment to non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries as maintained in its Charter"<sup>167</sup> also hampered the Organization's efforts to collect reliable data and information, as well as timely intervention.<sup>168</sup> Thirdly, the fear of loss of credibility if a prediction proved incorrect also became an operational impediment to the early efforts of the OAU with regards to conflict early warning.<sup>169</sup> Consequently, operationalizing an early warning system at a Pan African level got its realization only after the OAU was transformed into the African Union as will be discussed in the coming section.

#### **4.3. From OAU to the AU: Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) in the new African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)**

With the onset of the new millennium, there was a growing recognition that "the OAU was largely incapable of meeting the challenges facing the continent."<sup>170</sup> The Organization was deemed incapable of dealing with existing challenges of violent conflicts as well as new threats such as the growing forces of globalization, the dominance of neo-liberal doctrines, international terrorism, and other threats to general human security.<sup>171</sup> Consequently, intent on meeting these new and existing challenges, the OAU embarked on a series of transformative

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<sup>166</sup> Cirû Mwaûra, "Regional Early Warning and Conflict Management Mechanism", In Cirû Mwaûra and Susanne Schmeidl (eds.), *Early Warning and Conflict Management in the Horn of Africa* (Lawrenceville and Asmara: The Red Sea Press, Inc., 2002), 104.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> AU- CMD, "Report on the Establishment", 103.

<sup>169</sup> Mwaûra, "Regional Early Warning", 103.

<sup>170</sup> P. Godfrey Okoth, "Conflict Resolution in Africa: The Role of the OAU and the AU", in Alfred Nhema and Paul Tiyaambe Zeleza (eds.), *Resolution of African Conflicts: The Management of Conflict resolution & Post Reconstruction* (Oxford: James Curry Publishers 2008), 30.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

process which culminated in the realization of the African Union on July 9, 2002. Among other things, the transformation of the OAU into the African Union led to the “adoption of new norms<sup>172</sup> to govern member states interactions on matters of peace, security and development.”<sup>173</sup> The transformation also led to the establishment of new institutions to enforce these norms.<sup>174</sup>

With regards to peace and security, the Constitutive Act and the Peace and Security Protocol (PSC Protocol) of the newly transformed African Union provided for the establishment of new institutions that are entrusted with enforcing the Union’s basic norms and objectives.<sup>175</sup> Chief among the resultant institutions deemed vital for shouldering the peace and security challenges of the continent is the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) which, as indicated at the introduction of this study, incorporates other sub-regional peace and security mechanisms in the continent.<sup>176</sup> And the CEWS, which in turn builds upon other sub-regional early warning mechanisms, serves as the main early warning organ of the APSA and is intended to enhance AU’s capacity in conflict prevention by “providing the Chairperson of the AU Commission with information in a timely manner so that he/she can advise the Peace and Security Council on potential conflicts and threats to peace and security and recommend best courses of action.”<sup>177</sup>

In terms of its institutional composition, the CEWS comprises the Situation Room at the AU

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<sup>172</sup> Some of AU’s new norms, which emanate from the its Constitutive Act, include the right to intervene in a member state in grave circum-stances (Article 4h of the AU Constitutive Act) and condemnation of unconstitutional changes of government (Article 4p). Kwesi Aning, “The African Union’s Peace and Security Architecture: Defining an emerging response mechanism”, Lecture Series on African Security, The Nordic Africa Institute, 2008. Available on, [http://130.238.24.99/policy\\_activities/foi/calendar2009/aning.pdf](http://130.238.24.99/policy_activities/foi/calendar2009/aning.pdf), (accessed on July 28, 2009).

<sup>173</sup> Engle and Gomes Porto, “The African Union’s”, (without page numbers).

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

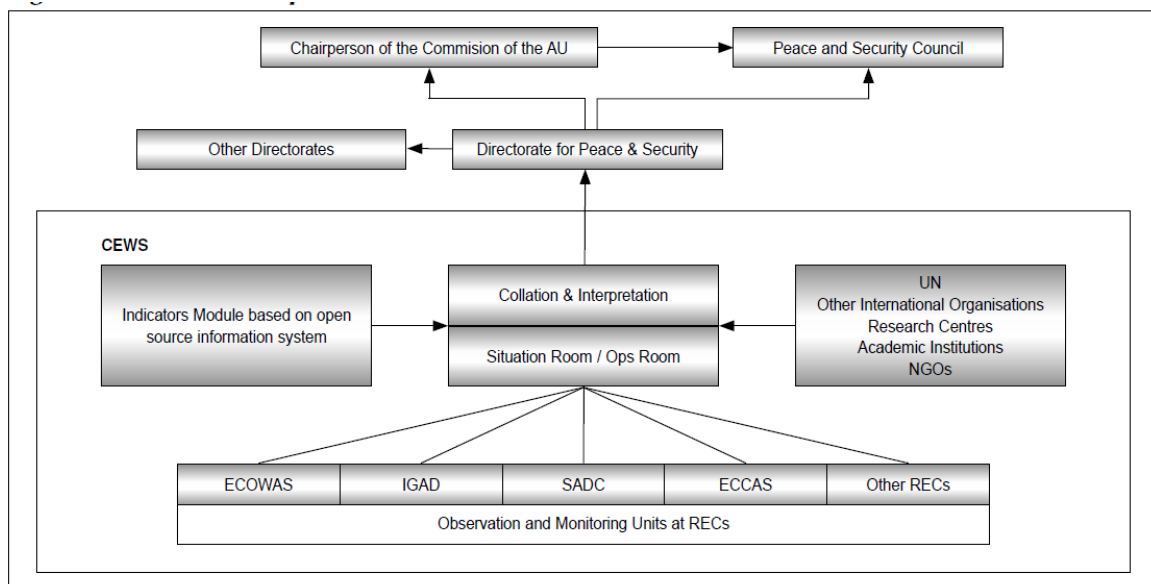
<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> African Union, *PSC Protocol*, Article 12(2, b).

Headquarters in Addis Ababa as well as the observation and monitoring units of the Regional Mechanisms (See Figure 4.1). According to the PSC Protocol, the latter are to be linked to the former through appropriate means of communication<sup>178</sup> and they are also envisaged to “continuously collect and process data at their level and transmit the same to the Situation Room.”<sup>179</sup> Ideally, the AU is expected to initiate response action to a threat of violence conflicts in the continent based on such multi-layered early warning data collection and analysis as highlighted earlier.

Figure 4.1. Pictorial Representation of the CEWS<sup>180</sup>



Operationalizing the CEWS as proposed in the Peace and Security Protocol was started in 2003 and went through various processes with close cooperation and consultation of a wide range of actors including member states, the regional mechanisms, academic and research institutes, the United Nations, and civil society organizations.<sup>181</sup> Currently the CEWS has

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Source: Cillers, “Towards a Continental Early Warning System”, 46.

<sup>181</sup> Engle and Gomes Porto, “The African Union’s”, (without page numbers).

reached a level of institutional development in which “it has already implemented an important part of the data and information gathering infrastructure and it has begun producing standardised early warning analysis and policy response options in the form of Early Warning Reports”<sup>182</sup> Additionally, based on its coordinating and facilitating role<sup>183</sup>, the CEWS is currently in the process of harmonizing the practice of conflict early warning undertaken at sub-regional levels which is subsequently discussed as follows.

#### **4.4. Conflict Early Warning at Sub-Regional level in Africa**

Operationalizing conflict early warning systems which was initiated at the continental level as indicated earlier was replicated at sub-regional levels with the various Regional Economic Communities (RECs) following suit in establishing their respective early warning mechanisms. Similar to the continental one, the main focus of the sub-regional early warning initiatives is generally conceptualized as “alerting a recognized authority<sup>184</sup> to the threat of a new (or renewed) armed conflict at a sufficiently early stage so that the authority can attempt to take preventive action.”<sup>185</sup>

Nevertheless, the various RECs are at different levels of progress in terms of implementing their early warning and conflict analysis mechanisms.<sup>186</sup> While some like the ECOWAS and IGAD are more advanced in terms of implementing major parts of their early warning data

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> African Union, *The CEWS Handbook*, 35.

<sup>184</sup> Recognized authority often refers to the respective regional or sub-regional formal decision-making formal bodies such as the OAU, AU, ECOWAS, IGAD, etc. which oversee the early warning mechanisms. Walter A. Dorn, “Early (and Late) Warning by the UN Secretary General: Article 99 Revisited”, In Albrecht Schnabel and David Carment (eds.), *Conflict Prevention from Rhetoric to Reality* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2004), 317.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> For the full discussion on the progress of implementation, refer to AU [African Union] CMD [Conflict Management Division] (eds.), “Status of Implementation of Early Warning Systems in the Regional Economic Communities: Background Paper No. 4”, In *Meeting the Challenges of Conflict Prevention in Africa: Towards the Operationalization of the Continental Early Warning System* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2008a).

collection and analysis structures<sup>187</sup>, others such as the CENSAD and COMESA are still at the preliminary stage of the process.<sup>188</sup> Subsequently, a brief introduction of the CEWARN and ECOWARN<sup>189</sup> as two of the most advanced early warning systems in the continent will be presented. A more in-depth treatment of operational aspects of the two systems aimed in depicting the different approaches to early warning in the continent, nonetheless, is to be included in the next chapter.

#### 4.4.1. CEWARN/IGAD

The Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) was established in 2002 as an early warning component of the IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development) which “superseded in 1996 the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development(IGADD), which was founded in 1986 primarily to react to the recurring and severe droughts and other natural disasters in the Horn of Africa.”<sup>190</sup>

Following a revitalization process which resulted in the above mentioned transformation, IGAD’s mandate was broadened to include the promotion of “peace and stability in the sub-region and creation of mechanisms within the sub-region for the prevention, management and resolution of interstate and intrastate conflicts through dialogue.”<sup>191</sup> Consequently at the 8<sup>th</sup> Summit of IGAD Heads of States and Government, IGAD decided to establish the CEWARN as a conflict early warning and early response mechanism as part of its revitalized mandate on development, peace and security.<sup>192</sup> In terms of its mandate, CEWARN is primarily tasked by the IGAD to “receive and share information concerning potentially

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<sup>187</sup> AU- CMD, *The CEWS Handbook*, 21; Fanta, “The Capacity of African”, 6.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> The CEWARN is the conflict early warning system of the IGAD for the Horn of Africa region. Likewise, the ECOWARN is the early warning mechanism of the ECOWAS for Western Africa.

<sup>190</sup> Debiel and Wulf, “Conflict Early Warning”, 18.

<sup>191</sup> IGAD, *Agreement Establishing the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development* (Nairobi: March 21, 1996), Article 7.

<sup>192</sup> CEWARN, Official Website at: [http://www.cewarn.org/index\\_files/Page355.htm](http://www.cewarn.org/index_files/Page355.htm), (accessed on 23rd August,

violent conflicts as well as their outbreak and escalation in the IGAD region.”<sup>193</sup>

#### **4.4.2. Early Warning in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)**

ECOWARN (ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network), is the conflict early warning mechanism of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) which was founded in 1975 as regional grouping of fifteen member states<sup>194</sup>, primarily tasked with the promotion of economic integration.<sup>195</sup> Following an organizational reform in 1993, the ECOWAS expanded its activities in the domain of peace and security management “against the backdrop of an altered international environment and regime change in numerous member states.”<sup>196</sup>

The rationale for the establishment of the ECOWARN as a sub-regional early warning mechanism is to be found in the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Peace-keeping and Resolutions adopted in 1999, which stipulated for “the strengthening of the cooperation between Member States in the fields of preventive diplomacy, early warning, prevention of cross-border crimes, peace-keeping, and equitable management of natural resources.”<sup>197</sup> According to the Chapter IV of the Protocol which called for the establishment of an Early Warning System, the ECOWARN is mandated “to detect, monitor and analyze signs of threats or breakdown in relations within or between member states.”<sup>198</sup>

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2009).

<sup>193</sup> CEWARN, *CEWARN Strategy: 2007-2011*(Addis Ababa: The CEWARN Unit, 2006), 14.

<sup>194</sup> Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo

<sup>195</sup> Debiel and Wulf, “Conflict Early Warning”, 16.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> AU- CMD, *The CEWS Handbook*, 30.

<sup>198</sup> ECOWAS, *The Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention and Management, Resolution, Peace-Keeping and*

#### **4.5. Conclusion**

Following the discussion on the nature and cause of conflicts in Africa, this chapter attempted to briefly highlight the history and practice of conflict early warning in Africa by indicating its application both at the continental and sub-regional levels. To this end, the chapter provided an introduction into some of the major early warning systems currently in operation in the continent and briefly highlighted the main legal provisions and processes that led to the establishment of the CEWS, CEWARN and the ECOWARN respectively. Whereas the discussion in this chapter is meant to create the appropriate historical context needed for conceptualizing the main topic of this study, divergences in the early warning practices in the continent as well as their implications on the process of harmonization will be shown in the coming chapter.

## **Chapter Five: Comparative Analysis of CEWARN and ECOWARN as Operational Early Warning Mechanisms in Africa**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Prior to addressing the main research questions that deal with the areas and modalities of achieving harmonization among the conflict early warning mechanisms, this chapter aims to show the different approaches to the practice of conflict early warning in Africa. To this end, this chapter will analyze the CEWARN and the ECOWARN in a comparative perspective. Whereas the main focus in this chapter is on these two systems given their relative institutional advancement, relevant elements from other systems in the continent will be included as appropriate for the discussion. The findings of this chapter will be employed as a basis for indicating the areas and modalities of harmonizing the systems in the final chapter of this study.

The comparative analysis of the CEWARN and the ECOWARN is based on some of the major parameters<sup>199</sup> essential in describing operational conflict early warning systems which are broadly grouped into the following categories:

- Types of early warning models in use and organization of the system;
- Operational and geographic focus;
- Main early warning activities and methodologies;
- Institutional set-up;
- Linkages with response strategies.

The comparative analysis is conducted through the interpretation of primary data such as

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<sup>199</sup> Nyheim, *Preventing Violence*, 48.

Protocols, Standard Operating Manuals and official declarations. Additionally, it is also significantly informed by data obtained from the literature review. In terms of organization, chapter five is structured in the following manner; first a point-by-point comparative analysis of the two systems based on the parameters identified earlier will be provided. Subsequently, the major findings of the comparative analysis will be summarized to indicate convergences and divergences in terms of conflict early warning practice in the continent.

## **5.2 Nature and Type of the Early Warning Systems**

CEWARN and ECOWARN are analyzed in this section based on the type of early warning models in use and the location and organization of the systems. In terms of early warning models in use, CEARN's model<sup>200</sup> is characterized as a combination of both predictive and risk assessment models with early response component.<sup>201</sup> Whereas CEARN's mandate and use of a number of social, political and economic indicators to anticipate the escalation of a situation are the main expressions of the predictive nature of its model<sup>202</sup>, the utilization of these indicators as well as data on events to respond in a timely manner rendered the CEARN early warning model to be characterized also as Risk and Capacity Assessments with Early Response Component.<sup>203</sup> In the case of ECOWARN, its early warning module is categorized under risk assessment and early warning and investigative research by civil society due to its strong linkage with civil societies such as WANEP (West Africa Network for Peace Building<sup>204</sup>).<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Refer to Section 2.6 for the discussion on early warning modules.

<sup>201</sup> Debiel and Wulf, "Conflict Early Warning", 28.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>204</sup> WANEP is an active participant in ECOWARN in activities such as facilitating data collection and analysis as well as coordinating response. Ibid., 17.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

When it comes to the sectors from which they stem, both CEWARN and ECOWARN are characterized as inter-governmental early warning arrangements designed to “to bolster the ability to anticipate crises and initiate preventive measures”<sup>206</sup> in the sub-regional organizations IGAD and ECOWAS respectively. Additionally, because of the “in-house location” of their systems, both CEWARN and ECOWARN are considered to belong<sup>207</sup> to the Third Generation of Early Warning Systems in which “the entire system of data collection and analysis is based in the conflict areas and have a stronger response links.”<sup>208</sup>

### 5.3 Operational Objective and Geographic Focus

On a more general term, the objective of both CEWARN and ECOWARN can be characterized to be a similar one in that both aspire to inform decision-makers at various levels about the threat of violent conflicts in their geographical regions.<sup>209</sup> Nevertheless, the two mechanisms differ when it comes to the kind of conflicts they monitor by their respective early warning mechanisms.

In spite of its broad mandate<sup>210</sup> and the prevalence of both inter- and intra-state conflicts in the region<sup>211</sup>, CEWARN currently focuses exclusively on “cross-border pastoral conflicts and cattle raiding”<sup>212</sup> only. As shown by Ulf Terlinden, this proved to be a major source of critic since “these specific conflicts [pastoral conflicts] only represent a small segment of the multi-

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<sup>206</sup> Nyheim, *Preventing Violence*, 34-35.

<sup>207</sup> In both CEWARN and ECOWARN, data collection and analysis is undertaken at the local, national and sub-regional levels of their mechanisms in their member states.

<sup>208</sup> Nyheim, *Preventing Violence*, 19.

<sup>209</sup> As shown in Section 4.5.1 of this study, CEWARN is mandated to receive and share information concerning potential violent conflicts as well as their outbreak and escalation in the IGAD sub-region. The ECOWAS has also a similar mandate to “detect, monitor and analyze signs of threats or breakdown in relations within or between member states.” ECOWAS, *The Protocol*, Chapter IV.

<sup>210</sup> Refer foot note above for CEWARN’s broad mandate.

<sup>211</sup> The Horn of Africa region is generally characterized with the prevalence of violent conflicts.

<sup>212</sup> Fanta, “The Capacity of African”, 8.

faceted, highly integrated conflict system in the Horn of Africa.”<sup>213</sup> CEWARN defends its decision to narrow down its mandate by claiming,

Monitoring pastoral conflicts was the easiest entry point into the field of conflict prevention in East Africa. As most countries in the region are in tension with one another, embracing hardcore interstate or intra-state armed conflicts was considered a premature and impudent step.<sup>214</sup>

On the contrary, the ECOWARN has a much broader and perhaps an ambitious focus on a wide range of issues and seeks to monitor “all aspects that affect peace and security”<sup>215</sup> in the West African sub-region. Reflecting this broader focus, the ECOWARN maintains that it seeks to “assess political (human rights, democracy), economic (food shortages), social (unemployment), security (arms flows, civil-military relations), and environment (drought, flooding) indicators on a daily basis.”<sup>216</sup>

In terms of coverage, CEWARN can be considered to have a narrow geographical scope since its reporting areas do not cover all areas<sup>217</sup> in the sub-region. CEWARN currently monitors pastoral and related conflicts in two selected reporting areas of the Karamoja and the Somali Clusters.<sup>218</sup> Whereas the Karamoja Cluster comprises the border areas of Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda, the Somali Cluster comprises the cross-border areas of Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia.<sup>219</sup> The two Clusters are indicated in big and small boxes in Figure 5.1 representing the Karamoja and Somali Clusters respectively.

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<sup>213</sup> Ulf Terlinden, “IGAD-Paper Tiger facing Gigantic Tasks”, Briefing Paper on International Development Cooperation for Africa Desk of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, available on: <http://www.ulf-terlinden.de/docs/Terlinden2004-IGAD-engl.pdf> (accessed on August 12, 2009).

<sup>214</sup> Daniel Yifru, Director of IGAD’s Peace and Security Division, quoted in Fanta, “The Capacity of African”, 8.

<sup>215</sup> Zam Zam Nagujja Kasujja, “Expectations and Reality in Conflict Prevention”, in Walter Feichtinger and Predraj Jureković(eds.), *Konfliktprävention zwischen Anspruch und Wirklichkeit* (Wien: Schriftenreihe der Landesverteidigungsakademie, 2007), 129.

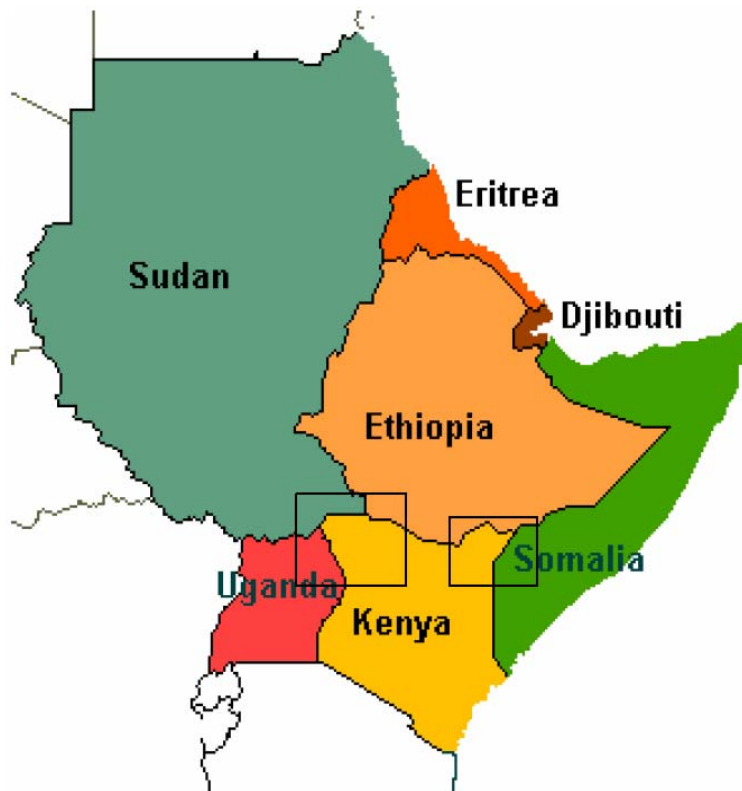
<sup>216</sup> United Nations University, *Capacity Survey*, 69.

<sup>217</sup> Fanta, “The Capacity of African”, 8.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> CEWARN, *CEWARN Strategy*, 16.

Figure 5.1. Areas of Conflict Monitoring in the Horn of Africa<sup>220</sup>



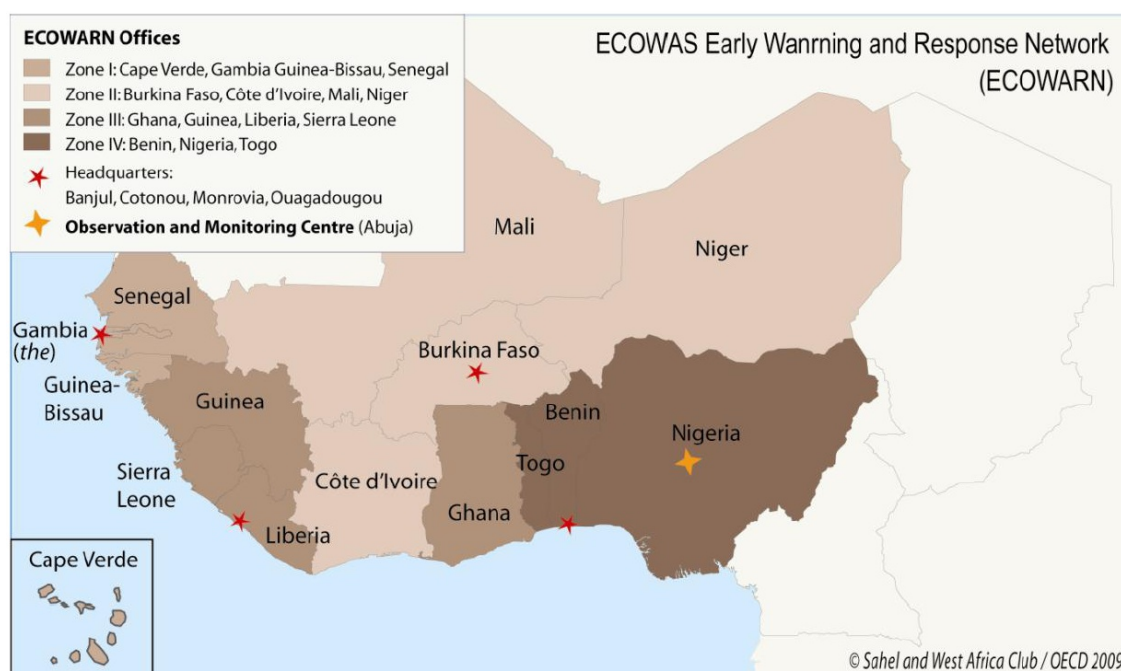
On the other hand, as shown in figure 5.2, the ECOWARN has a wider geographical coverage and aspires to monitor all areas in the 15 member states through the use of the Zonal Offices<sup>221</sup> which collect information from their respective focal areas in the sub-region.<sup>222</sup>

<sup>220</sup> Source: Kasujja, “Expectations and Reality”, 120.

<sup>221</sup> The zonal information and reporting bureaus are located in Cotonou (covering Benin, Nigeria, and Togo); Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso, Cote d’Ivoire, Mali, Niger), Monrovia (Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Ghana); and Banjul (The Gambia, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Senegal). AU-CMD, *The CEWS Handbook*, 30.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

Figure 5.2. ECOWARN's Offices and Monitoring Areas<sup>223</sup>



## 5.4. Main Early Warning Activities and Methodology

In terms of their overall early warning activities, both the CEWARN and ECOWARN are similar in that both seek to undertake monitoring and reporting of conflicts through the systematical specification, collection and analysis of data in their respective regions.<sup>224</sup> With regards to early warning methodologies, there are both similarities and differences between the two systems and these will be discussed as follows.

### 5.4.1. Data Collection

Unlike the early warning mechanism for SADC<sup>225</sup> which is “intelligence-based”<sup>226</sup> and relies on military and national intelligence, both CEWARN and ECOWARN are open source

<sup>223</sup> Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), “Interview with Mr. Augustine Sagna”, *The Sahel and West Africa Club (SWAC) News Letter* 4-5, no. 2, April - May 2009, available on: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/8/6/43014249.pdf>, (accessed on August 20, 2009).

<sup>224</sup> AU-CMD, *The CEWS Handbook*, 25.

<sup>225</sup> Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) is the regional organization for Southern Africa.

<sup>226</sup> United Nations University, *Capacity Survey*, 22-23.

monitoring mechanisms in which data collection is undertaken through the use of both structural and event indicators. Nonetheless, the two differ in the type of indicators they utilize for the collection of information in their respective sub-regions.<sup>227</sup>

In terms of data collection methodology, CEWARN largely relies on media reports and field data collected by a network of Field Monitors (FMs)<sup>228</sup> who collect<sup>229</sup> both qualitative (violent event data) and quantitative (constant behavioural) information through identified indicators uniquely tailored to “track, monitor and analyze cross-border pastoral and related conflicts in the Horn of Africa region.”<sup>230</sup> CEWARN’s indicators<sup>231</sup> are designed to measure the interaction between structural, proximate, and short-term or immediate causes of conflicts in the sub-region.<sup>232</sup> These indicators are analyzed and assessed in terms of their interplay with peace or cooperative developments in the areas of coverage.<sup>233</sup>

In the case of ECOWARN, data collection<sup>234</sup> is accomplished by a wide range of participants including “ECOWAS-trained civil liaison officers, members of civil society, and government representatives.”<sup>235</sup> More importantly, the West Africa Network for Peace Building (WANEP), a network of civil organizations, serves as the main implementing partner coordinating the

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<sup>227</sup> AU-CMD, *The CEWS Handbook*, 45.

<sup>228</sup> The Field Monitors are trained in collecting information, categorizing and placing that information into prescribed reporting formats. AU [African Union] CMD [Conflict Management Division] (Eds.), “Status of the Implementation of Early Warning Systems in the Regional Economic Communities, Background Paper No.4”, in *Meeting the Challenges of Conflict Prevention in Africa: Towards the Operationalization of the African Union Continental Early Warning System* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2008a), 153.

<sup>229</sup> Since mid 2003, a total of thirty FMs have been deployed in CEWARN’s two current areas of reporting of the Karamoja and Somali Clusters. Fanta, “The Capacity of African”, 8.

<sup>230</sup> Kasujja, “Expectations and Reality”, 123.

<sup>231</sup> The full description of CEWARN’s indicators is to be found in Appendices B and C of this study.

<sup>232</sup> Abdelrahim A. Khalil, “Africa’s Peace and Security Architecture(s): The African Union and the Regional Economic Communities; the Case of CEWARN/IGAD”, Paper Presented for the Conference “Beyond the Year of Africa: Partnerships for Peace and Development in Africa- the International Community and African Agencies”, March 28-29 2006, Bradford, West Yorkshire, England.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

<sup>234</sup> The ECOWARN also employs a total of 94 pre-defined indicators used as a grid to analyze risks and rapidly detect security trends in the sub-region. OECD, “Interview with Mr. Augustine Sagna”, 3.

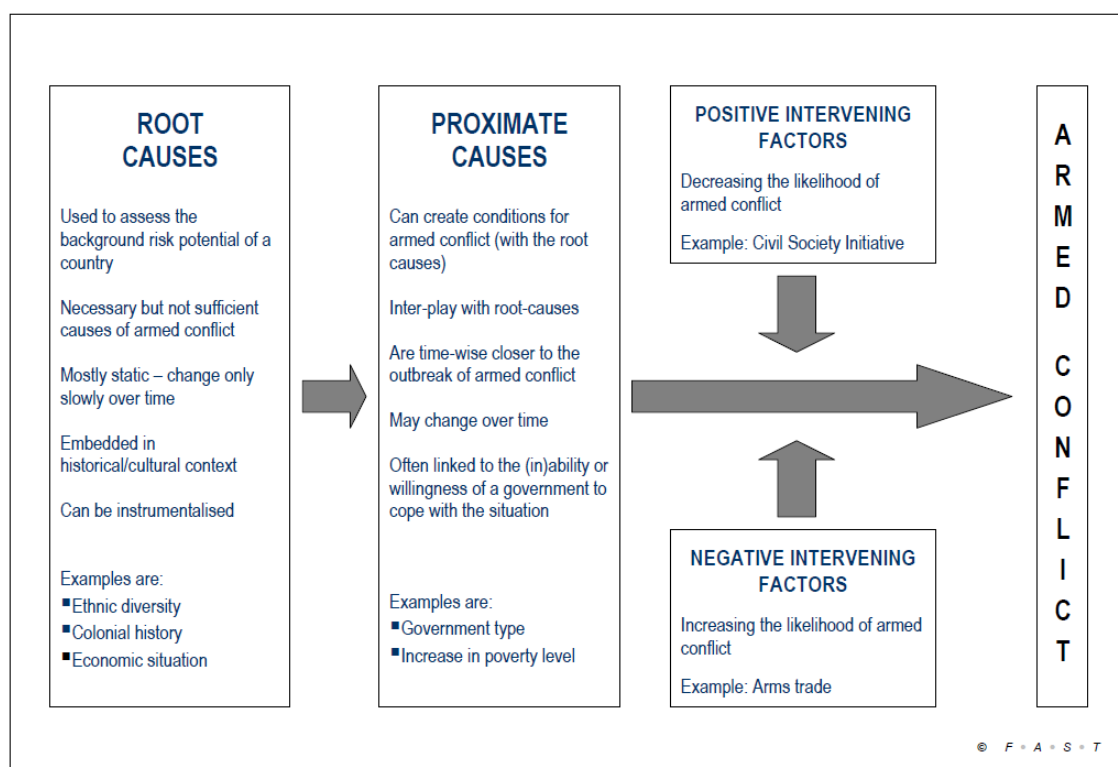
<sup>235</sup> OECD, “Interview with Mr. Augustine Sagna”, 3.

overall data collection in all the member states.<sup>236</sup>

#### 5.4.2. Conflict Analysis Methodology

In both early warning mechanisms, conflict analysis is undertaken “applying the same Swiss Peace Foundation FAST model of early warning analysis”<sup>237</sup> that is based on the “interaction of root causes, proximate, and intervening factors which may lead to armed conflict, hamper conflict mitigation, or provide a window of opportunity for de-escalation and peace-building efforts.”<sup>238</sup>

Figure 5.3. FAST Conflict Analysis Methodology<sup>239</sup>



In terms of specific tools of data analysis, both employ a similar qualitative data analysis tool

<sup>236</sup> AU-CMD, *The CEWS Handbook*, 45.

<sup>237</sup> Kasujja, “Expectations and Reality”, 133.

<sup>238</sup> Krummenacher and Schmeidl, “Practical Challenges”, 8.

<sup>239</sup> Source: Ibid., 9.

known as the Reporter<sup>240</sup>, which is “a network software program specifically designed for early warning purposes that allows data management and graphical display of event frequencies over time.”<sup>241</sup> The Reporter also allows for qualitative and quantitative analysis of field data to identify developing trends and assists in tracking how changes in behavior are likely to lead to more tension and conflict, or cooperation.<sup>242</sup> The use of such an automated electronic process of data analysis is justified by the claim “such statistic or graphic approach makes it easier to pass on messages to politicians who accept more easily a scientific analysis of the situation, rather than an analysis based on factual interpretations and/or theories.”<sup>243</sup>

#### 5.4.3. Early Warning Products

Early warning products refer to outputs of the data collection and analysis processes which are often delivered in the form of briefs or reports. Their essentiality to conflict prevention in general and to the process of early warning in particular emanate from the fact they link early warning with response instruments and mechanisms by providing synthesized and actionable information about a threat of violence to policy makers.<sup>244</sup>

From the perspective of early warning products, CEWARN can be considered to be more advanced than the ECOWARN since it is currently producing six types of early warning reports at various levels and frequencies<sup>245</sup> including Country Updates, Alerts, Situation Briefs, Regional Cluster Reports, Annual Risk Assessment and Country Baseline Studies.<sup>246</sup> (See Table 5.1 for the list of CEWARN’s early warning products).

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<sup>240</sup> Kasujja, “Expectations and Reality”, 133.

<sup>241</sup> CEWARN, *CEWARN Strategy*, 23.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid.

<sup>243</sup> OECD, “Interview with Mr. Augustine Sagna”, 3-4.

<sup>244</sup> Such conception of early warning products is inspired by the restrictive definition of early warning in Nyheim, *Preventing Violence*, 48.

<sup>245</sup> CEWARN, *CEWARN Strategy*, 23.

Table 5.1. List of Early Warning Products in CEWARN<sup>247</sup>

| Type of Report           | Frequency                                       | Level             |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Alerts                   | Immediately                                     | National/Regional |
| Situation Briefs         | As the need arises                              | National/Regional |
| Country Updates          | Every four months                               | National          |
| Cluster Reports          | Every four months                               | Regional          |
| Annual Risk Assessment   | Annually                                        | National/Regional |
| Country Baseline Studies | For all new areas: and evaluation every 5 years | National          |

On the other hand, ECOWARN is still in the process of implementing the modalities for producing such reports. According to the CEWS Handbook, ECOWARN's situation-reporting database and its incident report are both in trial or testing phase.<sup>248</sup> But upon full implementation, the ECOWAS is also expected to produce "incident and situation reports, daily highlights, country profiles, policy briefs, monthly and quarterly reports."<sup>249</sup>

## 5.5. Institutional Set-Up

Though both CEWARN/IGAD and ECOWARN/ECOWAS are claimed to have "an appropriate organic structure"<sup>250</sup>, there are variations in terms of the set-up and level of development of their institutional structures.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

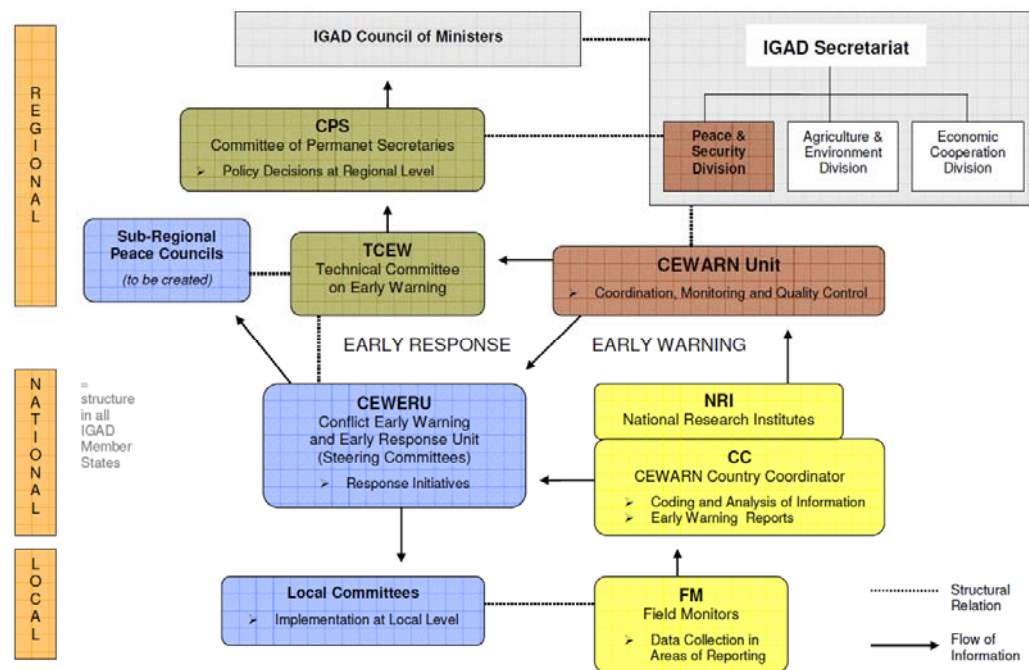
<sup>247</sup> Source: CEWARN, *CEWARN Strategy*, 23.

<sup>248</sup> AU-CMD, *The CEWS Handbook*, 44.

<sup>249</sup> OECD, "Interview with Mr. Augustine Sagna", 3-4.

When it comes to institutional set-up, CEWARN has a more elaborate structure that extends from the local to the sub-regional level (See Figure 5.4 for Organizational Structure of the CEWARN).

Figure 5.4. CEWARN Institutional Structure<sup>251</sup>



At the local level, the mechanism consists of Field Monitors (FM) and local committees which are tasked with implementation of response actions.<sup>252</sup> Nationally, the CEWARN comprises the Conflict Early Warning and Early Response Units (CEWERUs)<sup>253</sup>, National Research Institutes (NRI) and Country Coordinators (CC).<sup>254</sup> At the regional level, the CEWARN mechanism builds upon two regional coordinating structures namely the Technical Committee for Early Warning (TCEW) and the Committee of Permanent Secretaries, the policy-making

<sup>250</sup> Fanta, "The Capacity of African", 6.

<sup>251</sup> Source: CEWARN, *CEWARN Strategy*, 20.

<sup>252</sup> CEWARN, *CEWARN Strategy*, 20.

<sup>253</sup> CEWERUs serve as focal coordinating units operating within relevant Ministries of IGAD Member States and they are the responsible bodies for response initiatives to be implemented on a country level in close cooperation with local committees or sub-regional peace councils. Ibid., 19.

organ of the CEWARN which reports to the IGAD Council of Ministers.<sup>255</sup> Thus, in light of the fact that most of these units are now fully or partially operational almost seven years after its establishment, the CEWARN mechanism was considered to be institutionally “one of the most advanced early warning mechanisms”<sup>256</sup> in the continent.

In the case of ECOWARN, whereas it is generally stipulated that it will be composed of “an Observation and Monitoring Centre (OMC)<sup>257</sup> based in Abuja, Nigeria as well as four Zonal Offices”<sup>258</sup> as shown in Figure 5.5, the mechanism has not yet reached the level of institutional maturity comparable to CEWARN. According to the UN Capacity Assessment conducted in 2009, ECOWARN’s Zonal Bureaus “are not yet functional and there is still a lack of technical and qualified staff to convert raw data into useful and predictive information.”<sup>259</sup> ECOWARN expects to establish itself as a fully-integrated system by 2010.<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

<sup>256</sup> Fanta, “The Capacity of African”, 7.

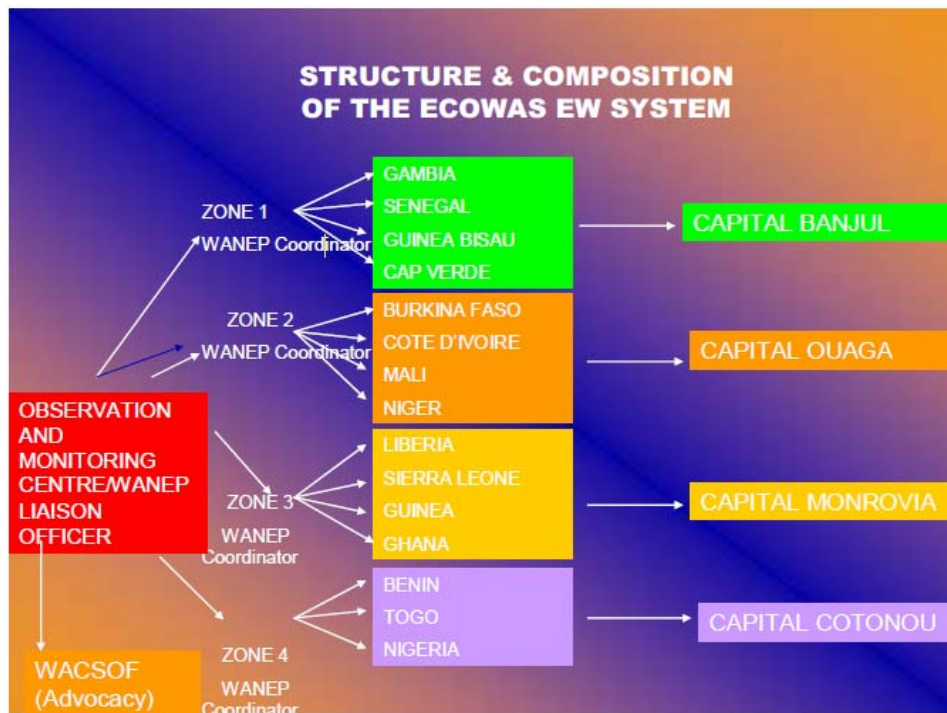
<sup>257</sup> The OMC serves as the headquarter body of the ECOWARN and is responsible for data collection and analysis; and the drafting of up-to-date reports for the Executive Secretary that identify/outline possible emerging crises, monitor ongoing crises and post-crisis transitions. As integral parts of the system, the four zonal information and reporting bureaus are responsible for gathering information from their focal areas on a daily basis to be reported to the OMC. The zonal bureaus are located in Cotonou (covering Benin, Nigeria, and Togo); Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso, Cote d’Ivoire, Mali, Niger), Monrovia (Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Ghana); and Banjul (The Gambia, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Senegal). United Nations University, *Capacity Survey*, 69.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid.

Figure 5.5. ECOWARN Structure<sup>261</sup>



## 5.6. Linkage with Response

As shown in Section 2.2 of this study, an effective early warning system is one which is linked to response mechanisms since “the ultimate goal of early warning is not to predict conflicts, but to prevent them.”<sup>262</sup> Nonetheless, according to David Nyheim, in most of the early warning systems in Africa “beyond the delivery of early warning reports to the decision-makers, established links between these early warning and response systems remains mostly unclear.”<sup>263</sup>

Ideally, response in the context of CEWARN is envisaged to be undertaken at various levels (See Figure 5.4 for CEWARN Structure). On the national level, upon receiving early warning

<sup>261</sup> Source: Kasujja, “Expectations and Reality”, 129.

<sup>262</sup> Matveeva, “Early Warning”, 30.

<sup>263</sup> Nyheim, *Preventing Violence*, 48.

information, the national Conflict Early Warning and Early Response Unit (CEWERUs) initiate and coordinate responses in cooperation with the local structures, local committees, local leadership, civil organizations and community-based organizations in the area.<sup>264</sup> At the regional level, the Technical Committee for Early Warning (TCEW) and the Committee of Permanent Secretaries (CPS) are responsible for coordinating actions to prevent an imminent conflict or de-escalate violence.<sup>265</sup>

Nonetheless, whereas CEWARN is credited at least “formalizing a Protocol that integrates an early warning reporting within decision-making systems for response,”<sup>266</sup> it has not yet “closed the gap between analysis, options and actions.”<sup>267</sup> According to Tobias Debiel and Herbert Wulf, there still seems to be a glaring lack of adequate non-military capacities in CEWARN<sup>268</sup> to intervene in order to prevent or end conflict<sup>269</sup> and most of the response frameworks indicated earlier are partly only on paper.<sup>270</sup>

In the case of ECOWARN, the mechanism has not yet ratified any protocol linking early warning with response during the time of this study. Nevertheless, it is generally maintained that response is to be undertaken by a wide range of actors at various levels most notably by the sub-regional body of the ECOWAS itself and civil society organizations such as WANEP. According to Zam Zam Nagujja Kasujja, the ECOWAS can undertake response actions “including military intervention and peace keeping through the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), which has established itself as a force for peaceful security intervention in

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<sup>264</sup> CEWARN, *CEWARN Strategy*, 24.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid.

<sup>266</sup> Nyheim, *Preventing Violence*, 48.

<sup>267</sup> Cillers, “Continental Early Warning”, 14.

<sup>268</sup> CEWARN is not an exception in this regard and most early warning systems are also criticized for failing to result in effective response.

<sup>269</sup> Debiel and Wulf, “Conflict Early Warning”, 30.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid.

Liberia (twice), Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea Bissau.”<sup>271</sup> In the case of civil society organizations, it is also generally conceived that they have the potential to respond to a threat of conflict by “providing information and advice to regional organisations, playing a mediatory role in resolution of inter-communal disputes, and joint brainstorming with decision-makers on a course of action to take.”<sup>272</sup>

## 5.7. Conclusion

Beyond a mere comparison, the discussion thus far in this chapter was an attempt to indicate the different approaches to conflict early warning in the continent. Additionally, it was also a way of exploring the main practical issues surrounding harmonization of the various mechanisms within the overarching framework of the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) of the African Union.

As the comparative analysis of the CEWARN and ECOWARN has shown, there are both similarities and differences in the way early warning is being undertaken in the two mechanisms. Generally speaking, similarities were exhibited in terms of overarching early warning mandates<sup>273</sup>; in the use of open sources for data collection; and in the methodology employed for conflict analysis<sup>274</sup>. On the other hand, major differences were observed in terms of considerations such as: the kind of conflicts monitored by the mechanisms; institutional set-up and level of development; current level of development of early warning products; and clarity of linkages with response strategies in the respective mechanisms.<sup>275</sup>

Based on the above facts, it can be argued here that the differences and similarities shown

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<sup>271</sup> Kasujja, “Expectations and Reality”, 133.

<sup>272</sup> Matveeva, “Early Warning”, 33.

<sup>273</sup> The anticipation of prevention of conflicts through early warning in both cases.

<sup>274</sup> Both use the same Swiss Peace Foundation FAST model of conflict analysis.

<sup>275</sup> It is already shown in Sections 5.4.3, 5.5, and 5.6 that CEWARN has a relatively advanced institutional development; it has the capacity to deliver more early warning products; and ratified a Protocol outlining its

through the comparative analysis serve to illustrate divergences and convergences in conflict early warning practice in the continent with their own implications for harmonization of conflict early warning in Africa in as much as the various mechanisms are expected to operate in harmonized manner “with a shared and compatible early warning methodology, purpose and terminology”<sup>276</sup> within the CEWS framework. On analytical level, the major differences shown earlier can also be conceived as precursors indicating the need for the creation of some form of consensus in terms of “institutional norms”<sup>277</sup> and collective behaviour which are considered as prerequisites both for forming an integrated continental early warning arrangement via the CEWS and for the full-functionality of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) as a security regime.<sup>278</sup>

Against the background of the above assertions, the remaining major task of this study is to show how harmonization of conflict early warning is being undertaken by the AU in the face of anomalies in early warning practices as well as variations in terms of institutional norms and behaviors. To this end, the coming chapter will specifically deal with both the analytical and practical elements of overcoming these variations through the formation of knowledge-based consensus around the CEWS.

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response strategy.

<sup>276</sup> AU-CMD, *The CEWS Handbook*, 21.

<sup>277</sup> Institutional norms are broadly conceptualized as expectations of behavior acceptable within an institutional environment. Chee Yew Wong and Sakun Boon-itt, “The influence of institutional norms and environmental uncertainty on supply chain integration in the Thai automotive industry”, *International Journal of Production Economics* 115, no. 2 (2008), 400-410.

<sup>278</sup> This analytical observation is also informed by the work of Ulf Engel and João Gomes Porto who have shown, using the concept of regime theory in international relations, the effective and full functionality of APSA (which also includes the CEWS) as a security regime depends both on legally agreed upon rules, principles, norms on the one hand and institutional behaviours on the other hand. Engle and Gomes Porto, “The African Union’s”, (without page numbers).

## **Chapter Six: Areas, Modalities and Challenges of Harmonization of Conflict Early Warning in Africa**

### **6.1. Introduction**

As hinted in the previous part, the overarching objective of this part of the study is to explore how the African Union attempts to harmonize the various conflict early warning mechanisms as constituent parts of the continental early warning arrangement of the CEWS in the face of differences in terms of conflict early warning objectives; methods and tools; as well as institutional set-up and development shown in chapter five.

In order to achieve this principal objective, the following tasks will be undertaken. First, the rationale for an epistemic or knowledge-based approach to harmonization of the early warning systems within the continental early warning framework of the CEWS will be explored relying primarily on the work of Ulf Engel and João Porto Gomes who participated in the various stages of operationalization the CEWS. Secondly, the main legal provisions that laid the foundation for harmonization of conflict early warning systems will be discussed. Thirdly, the areas and modalities of harmonization will be explored. Afterwards, the chapter concludes by examining the various challenges to the harmonization process.

### **6.2. The Rationale for an Epistemic Approach to Harmonization**

As indicated earlier in this study, the CEWS, which also incorporates other early warning systems in the continent, is part of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) which is considered as a “security regime in-the-making.”<sup>279</sup> According to Ulf Engel and João Porto Gomes, security regimes such as the APSA are not simply born out of legally formed

agreements and institutions only.<sup>280</sup> In addition to legal norms, Engel and Gomes Porto have argued that the existence of security regimes also depends on “effectiveness and durability which come with the promotion of learning and transmission of knowledge.”<sup>281</sup> In the particular case of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), they further argued that its future effectiveness as a peace and security regime relies on the modification of collective behavior and the creation of new collective understanding through cognition and learning as political processes.<sup>282</sup>

According to these authors, one important approach of forming the collective behavior and understanding essential for the effectiveness and full-functionality of the Africa’s security regime is “through the gradual development of epistemic communities around the various pillars of African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)”<sup>283</sup> and they consider the operationalization of the CEWS as “a very promising point of entry”<sup>284</sup> in this regard.<sup>285</sup>

Conceived as “as networks of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue area,”<sup>286</sup> epistemic communities of the kind which Engel and Gomes Porto also suggested in the case of the CEWS, owe their existence to three underlying factors, namely;

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<sup>279</sup> Engel and Gomes Porto, “The African Union’s”, (without page numbers).

<sup>280</sup> Ibid.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid.

<sup>285</sup> Members of an epistemic communities may come from different disciplines but they all share the following set of characteristics: (1) shared values or principled beliefs (these provide a value-based rationale for social action of the members of the community); (2) shared causal beliefs or professional judgment: these provide analytic reasons and explanations of behavior, offering causal explanations for multiple linkages between policy actions and desired outcomes; (3) common notions of validity: inter-subjective, internally defined criteria for validating knowledge; (4) common policy enterprise: set of practices associated with a central set of problems which have to be tackled. Peter M. Haas, “Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination”, *International Organization* 46, no. 1(1992): 3.

<sup>286</sup> Haas, “Introduction: Epistemic Communities”, 3.

“uncertainty, interpretation and institutionalization.”<sup>287</sup> As shown by Peter M. Haas, who is one of proponents of the concept of epistemic communities, “the increasingly complex and technical nature of the ever-widening range of issues considered on the international agenda have forced decision-makers to turn to specialists to ameliorate uncertainties and help them understand the current issues and anticipate future trends.”<sup>288</sup>

According to Haas, the turn to epistemic communities under conditions of uncertainty have various “incentives and reasons.”<sup>289</sup> Firstly, the epistemic communities can elucidate the cause-and-effect relationships and provide advice about the likely results of the various courses of action.<sup>290</sup> Second epistemic communities can shed light on the nature of the complex inter-linkages between issues and on the chain of events that might proceed either from failure to take action or from instituting particular policy.<sup>291</sup> Additionally, they can also help in formulating policies.<sup>292</sup>

In the same token, an epistemic approach to CEWS is also justified here based on the above mentioned “incentives and reasons” of an epistemic communities which may prove to be beneficial to overcome uncertainties which may arise when dealing with complex undertakings such as early warning. In the specific case of the harmonization process, the differences in terms of early warning practices shown in the previous chapter can be conceived as major sources of technical uncertainties surrounding the nature of cooperation and partnership among the various conflict early warning mechanisms in the continent. And these uncertainties can be addressed through the formation of epistemic communities which have

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<sup>287</sup> Ibid.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid.,13.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid.,15.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid.,13.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid.,16.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid.

the capacity to “shed light on the nature of the complex inter-linkages between issues and on the chain of events”<sup>293</sup> as in the case of harmonization of conflict early warning systems in the context of the CEWS. In more specific terms, as hinted by Ulf Engel, these uncertainties can be tackled by creating a largely technical and knowledge-based consensus among the different early warning systems on major (early warning) activities such as data collection, conflict and cooperation analysis, early report writing, data exchange, etc.<sup>294</sup>

### **6.3. Legal Provisions for Harmonization**

The legal provisions for harmonization of conflict early warning systems are to be found in key African Union official documents of the Peace and Security Protocol (PSC Protocol); the Memorandum of Understanding between the African Union and the various Regional Economic Communities (MOU); and in the CEWS Handbook.

In the PSC Protocol, the issue of harmonization is addressed both explicitly and implicitly. Explicitly, the PSC highlights the need for “harmonization” within the larger framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) by stipulating “the Peace and Security Council and the Chairperson of the Commission, shall [harmonize] and coordinate the activities of Regional Mechanisms in the field of peace, security and stability to ensure that these activities are consistent with the objectives and principles of the Union.”<sup>295</sup> In regards to early warning, a harmonized approach is also noted in an implicit manner in Article 12(2) b of the PSC Protocol<sup>296</sup> which stipulated for the creation of an institutional arrangement in which the observation and monitoring units of the Regional Mechanisms form an integral part of the

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<sup>293</sup> Haas, “Introduction: Epistemic Communities”, 16.

<sup>294</sup> Ulf Engel, “Response to Questions about CEWS as Epistemic Communities,” e-mail message to Dawit Yohannes Wondemagegnehu, August 12, 2009.

<sup>295</sup> African Union, *Peace and Security Protocol*, Article 16 (Emphasis added by the author).

<sup>296</sup> African Union, *Peace and Security Protocol*, Article 12.

CEWS.<sup>297</sup> According to Ulf Engel and Joao Gomes Porto, such an arrangement symbolizes an important expression of “the harmonizing role of the African Union (CEWS).”<sup>298</sup>

The MOU<sup>299</sup> also highlighted the need for an effective partnership and harmonized relationship between the regional early warning mechanisms and CEWS based on the “Framework for the Operationalization of the Continental Early Warning System”, another AU document instrumental in operationalizing the CEWS. The latter document has also noted that “synchronization, coordination, collaboration and [harmonization] between the AU and the RECs are essential for effective functioning of the CEWS.”<sup>300</sup>

#### **6.4. Modalities of Harmonization: How and What to Harmonize**

Although all the specific strategies and modalities for achieving the required level of harmonization and coordination among the early warning systems in Africa are yet to be worked out<sup>301</sup>, the key AU official documents mentioned earlier, namely the PSC Protocol, the MOU, the CEWS Handbook as well as other relevant documents have all attempted to address the issue (of strategies of harmonization) to varying degrees of analysis. Owing to the technical nature of the specific issues of the modalities, the PSC Protocol and the MOU are less clear in specifying what elements of the early warning systems are to be harmonized and how. In contrast, the Framework for the Operationalization of the Continental Early Warning System, the Draft Roadmap for the Operationalization of the CEWS, and the CEWS

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<sup>297</sup> Article 12(b) of the PSC Protocol states that the “observation and monitoring units of the Regional Mechanisms are to be linked directly through appropriate means of communications to the Situation Room, and which shall collect and process data at their level and transmit the same to the Situation Room”. Ibid.

<sup>298</sup> Engel and Gomes Porto, “The African Union’s”, (without page numbers).

<sup>299</sup> African Union, *Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Area of Peace and Security between the African Union, the Regional Economic Communities and the Coordinating Mechanisms of the Regional Standby Brigades of Eastern and Northern Africa* (Addis Ababa: African Union, 2008), Article VI(3).

<sup>300</sup> AU-CMD, “Framework for the Operationalization”, 54.

<sup>301</sup> It is to be noted here that the process of harmonizing the early warning systems is still an ongoing process.

Handbook have better addressed some of the specific issues regarding the strategies for the creation of harmonized partnership between the sub-regional early warning mechanisms and CEWS.

According to the later three documents, the proposed areas for harmonization among the various systems include information sharing and data exchange; early warning data collection; conflict and cooperation analysis; formulation of policy options and reporting.<sup>302</sup> Subsequently, in the following sections, the progress on each of the first three areas as well as their “proposed workable implementation strategies”<sup>303</sup> will be discussed. Nevertheless, owing to the incomplete nature of the information on the last two, the discussion on harmonization of formulation of options and early warning reporting is left out in this study.

#### **6.4.1. Information Sharing and Data Exchange**

CEWS is envisaged as “an open-source system where data is gathered from a wide variety of sources including the AU itself and those generated by the other early warning mechanisms in the continent.”<sup>304</sup> Accordingly creating an efficient information exchange mechanism between the CEWS and the other early warning systems was taken into consideration and a variety of strategies were suggested in the Draft Roadmap, Framework for the Operationalization of the CEWS and the CEWS Handbook to this end. Especially, as shown in the Framework for the operationalization of the CEWS, the suggested strategies for a system of regular exchange of information include:

the establishment of secure website; the convening of periodic meetings on early warning; exchange of experiences; joint training and capacity building actions; the systematic participation of RECs and other relevant regional mechanisms in discussions on issues brought before the PSC

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<sup>302</sup> AU-CMD, *The CEWS Handbook*, 9; AU-CMD, “Framework for the Operationalization”, 54.

<sup>303</sup> AU-CMD, “Draft Roadmap for the Operationalization”, 72.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid., 67.

and of interest to them; the establishment of liaison offices.<sup>305</sup>

Whereas all of the above proposed measures have not yet been fully implemented during the time of this study, according to Charles Mwaura, Africa Union's expert on Conflict Early Warning System and Preventive Diplomacy, significant progress was made when it comes to harmonization of information exchange between the CEWS and the other early warning systems.<sup>306</sup> The most notable developments in this regard include the establishment of the AU CEWS Portal<sup>307</sup>, the launch of the VSAT (Very Small Aperture Terminal) connection<sup>308</sup> and periodic technical meetings between the CEWS and the other RECs.<sup>309</sup>

#### **6.4.2. Early Warning Data Collection and Indicators**

Another major operational area where harmonization is being undertaken in the evolving African continental early warning framework is data collection which is based on the identification and monitoring of relevant conflict early warning indicators. Prior to discussing its strategies for harmonization, it is worthwhile here to briefly outline the process of data collection in the CEWS' methodological framework which also depends on information obtained from other conflict early warning mechanisms such as the CEWARN and ECOWARN as shown earlier in Section 6.4.1 (See Figure 6.1 for CEWS Methodology).

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<sup>305</sup> AU-CMD, "Framework for the Operationalization", 54

<sup>306</sup> Charles Mwaura, interview by author, Addis Ababa, June 3rd, 2009.

<sup>307</sup> The AU CEWS Portal is an electronic interface of the CEWS for interaction with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as well as other CEWS stakeholders such as the UN. African Union, "Briefing Note on the Implementation of the Continental Early Warning System", Consultative Meeting between the AU and the International Organizations on the Operationalization of the CEWS, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 1-2 April, 2008, 4.

<sup>308</sup> VSAT is a satellite communication system which is intended to modernized communication between the AU Commission and outside stakeholders. It will allow data transmission services in real time; facilitate free telephone calls between the linked parties, and video conferencing which will in turn reduce travel-related costs. African Union Commission, "Launch of VSAT", *AUC News: The Newsletter of the African Commission*, Issue 19(2007): [http://www.africa-union.org/root/UA/Newsletter/aucnews\\_june07.pdf](http://www.africa-union.org/root/UA/Newsletter/aucnews_june07.pdf), (accessed July 23, 2009).

<sup>309</sup> Charles Mwaura, interview by author, Addis Ababa, June 3rd, 2009.

According to the CEWS Handbook, information collection and monitoring in the CEWS is to be carried out through the “process of data-driven analysis based on the development of an early warning module with clearly defined and accepted political, social, military and humanitarian indicators.”<sup>310</sup> Such form of data driven analysis begins with the specification of indicators and is followed by continuous monitoring for changes of the indicators over time.<sup>311</sup>

The CEWS indicators module employed for the collection of data needed for monitoring violent conflicts consists of two types of indicators namely structural indicators and dynamic or behavioral/event indicators.<sup>312</sup> Structural indicators are early warning indicators which the CEWS compile to reveal slowly changing, long term or structural factors<sup>313</sup> underlying violent conflicts.<sup>314</sup> Based on these indicators, the CEWS maintain a database of structural factors that may lead to the breakout or escalation of conflicts in all countries in the continent by developing Country<sup>315</sup> and Actor Profile<sup>316</sup> baselines. The Country and Actor Profile baselines compiled with the help of the structural indicators are subsequently used to conduct structural risk assessment essential in providing a reliable early warning report to decision-makers at various levels in the African Union.<sup>317</sup>

On the other hand, dynamic indicators are a set of rapidly changing indicators of human

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<sup>310</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid.

<sup>312</sup> African Union, “Briefing Note on the Implementation”, 4.

<sup>313</sup> Structural indicators are essential in revealing the root causes of conflicts and include factors such as inadequate governance, contested borders, ethnic politics, population growth, patterns of cultural discrimination, etc. AU-CMD, *The CEWS Handbook*, 48.

<sup>314</sup> Ibid.

<sup>315</sup> Country Profile is a web-based relational database where structural country data will be stored and regularly updated by the Situation Room. In addition to basic facts such as geography and population, the Country Profile includes a “Basket” of indicators on a wide range of issues such as political, economic, social, environmental, humanitarian, and military aspects. Ibid., 50.

<sup>316</sup> Actor Profile is the result of the analysis that aims to identify the main protagonists who influence or are affected by a situation (at a country, regional or international level). Like the country profile baselines, shifts in the actor profile baselines can reveal situations of potential conflict. Ibid., 52.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid., 50-51.

action and behaviors.<sup>318</sup> They also embody the “basic event parameters of who did what to/with whom, when, where, why and how.”<sup>319</sup> The development of behavior and event indicator baselines is also undertaken through data driven analysis by the continuous monitoring of a set of indicators<sup>320</sup> and tracking for inflections over time which indicate a possible escalation.<sup>321</sup>

The structural and event (behavioral) data which feed into the CEWS’ data collection framework are obtained from a variety of sources. Whereas sources for the data-sets of the indicators may include the AU Field Missions, NGOs, AU Member States, International Organizations such as the World Bank and the United Nations<sup>322</sup>, the bulk of the information is to be received from other early warning mechanisms in Africa such as the CEWARN and ECOWARN which have already developed their own structural and event data tracking mechanisms.<sup>323</sup>

According to the CEWS Handbook, the details of harmonizing data collection based on the structural and event (behavioral) indicators have yet to be resolved in terms of specific instruments such as software applications, data formats, templates etc.<sup>324</sup> Nevertheless, the Handbook generally indicated that the process of harmonization in this regard would be take the form of close partnership among the various early warning mechanisms based on “division of labor.”<sup>325</sup> Such form of partnership is expected to translate into the creation of a mechanism in which the sub-regional early warning mechanisms continue to collect data both

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<sup>318</sup> AU-CMD, “Proposal for the Indicators Module”, 90.

<sup>319</sup> AU-CMD, *The CEWS Handbook*, 49.

<sup>320</sup> Examples of dynamic indicators include hate speech, arms or resource acquisitions, new discriminatory and repressive policies, etc. Ibid., 62.

<sup>321</sup> Ibid.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid., 56.

on structural and event indicators and transmit the same to the CEWS.<sup>326</sup> Additionally, the sub-regional early warning systems are also expected to contribute to the enrichment of the CEWS indicators module to be used for the whole continent by adding their respective unique regional perspective and by sharing “their list of indicators with the African Union.”<sup>327</sup> In addition to utilization of the AU CEWS Portal mentioned earlier<sup>328</sup>, conducting periodic consultations<sup>329</sup> and using the “Bulletin Board”<sup>330</sup> for joint use by the CEWS and the other early warning systems are some of the measures being undertaken to enhance coordination and harmonization on data collection.<sup>331</sup>

#### 6.4.3. Conflict and Cooperation Analysis

It is already shown<sup>332</sup> that the CEWS, as a continental early warning framework, aspires to operate “in an integrated fashion, with a shared purpose, methodological compatibility and terminology”<sup>333</sup> taking into consideration the constituent role assigned to other early warning mechanisms in the continent.<sup>334</sup> Accordingly, another major area where the above form of methodological and terminological compatibility is to be realized is conflict and cooperation analysis.

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<sup>326</sup> AU-CMD, *The CEWS Handbook*, 56.

<sup>327</sup> African Union, African Union, “AU and EAC Host Technical Meeting on Progress of Continental Early Warning System”, *Quarterly Bulletin: Peace and Security* 1, no. 3(2009). Available on: <http://www.africa-union.org/root/UA/Newsletter/PSC/Q%20B-vol%201%20%20No%203.pdf>, (accessed on August 29, 2009).

<sup>328</sup> See Section 6.7.1 on Information Sharing and Data Exchange.

<sup>329</sup> The periodic joint consultations are undertaken by representatives from the CEWS and the other early warning systems such as ECOWARN, CEWARN and SADC.

<sup>330</sup> The “Bulletin Board” is computer software that allows for the posting of field news narrative reports essential for even tracking which will be translated into their full context. AU-CMD, *The CEWS Handbook*, 55.

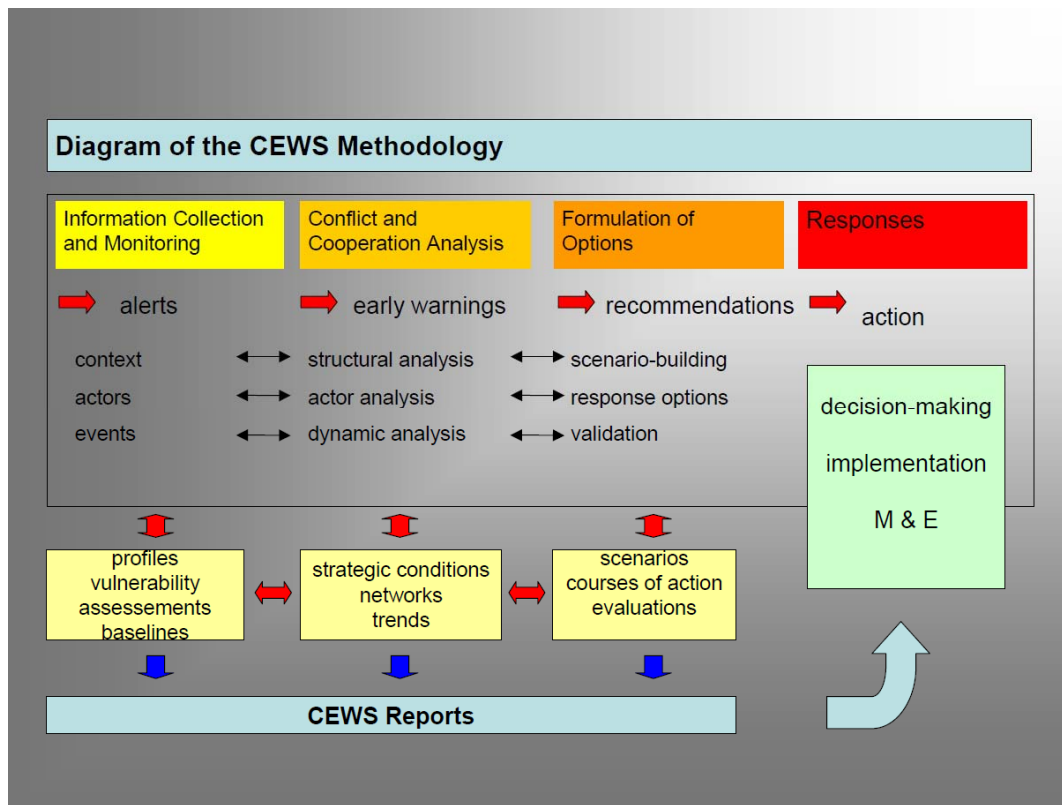
<sup>331</sup> AU-CMD, *CEWS Handbook*, 55.

<sup>332</sup> Refer Section 5.7 of this study.

<sup>333</sup> AU-CMD, *CEWS Handbook*, 9.

<sup>334</sup> Ibid.

Figure 6.1. CEWS Methodology<sup>335</sup>



As shown in the CEWS Handbook, conflict analysis in the CEWS is to be conducted based on the development of baseline data and information compiled from the data collection stage utilizing both structural and event(behavioral) indicators discussed earlier.<sup>336</sup> The main purpose of conflict and cooperation analysis is to get a deeper understanding of the causes of conflicts through the systematic monitoring of risk indicators, including the analysis of trends and dynamics and their significance in their specific, structural contexts.<sup>337</sup> There are different forms of analysis subsumed within the rubric of conflict and cooperation analysis namely; structural or root causes analysis, actor analysis, and dynamic analysis (See Figure 6.1 of CEWS methodology for the process of conflict and cooperation analysis).<sup>338</sup>

<sup>335</sup> AU-CMD, *The CEWS Handbook*, 10.

<sup>336</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>337</sup> African Union, "Briefing Note", 6.

<sup>338</sup> AU-CMD, *CEWS Handbook*, 57.

During the first stage of the analysis, the analyst attempts to identify structural or root causes as key sources of tension that have led or are likely to lead to conflict based on the structural indicator<sup>339</sup> data-sets discussed earlier.<sup>340</sup> As indicated in the CEWS Handbook, structural or root causes are to be found in political, economic, security, social, religious structures at local, regional, national and international levels.<sup>341</sup> Actor analysis is conducted simultaneously with structural analysis to identify the main protagonists (groups, institutions, individuals) who influence (positively or negatively) the situation under analysis.<sup>342</sup> Following the above two forms of analysis, dynamic analysis is undertaken to identify possible aggravating, inhibiting and triggering events.<sup>343</sup> The results of the above three forms of analysis are employed at a later stage for the development of possible scenarios and the formulation of policy and response options.<sup>344</sup>

Similar to the case of the data collection process discussed earlier in Section 6.4.2, the CEWS' conflict and cooperation analysis methodology significantly relies upon its cooperation with other early warning mechanisms in the continent since it builds upon the "country and actor profiles and the resulting baselines"<sup>345</sup> obtained from existing early warning systems such as CEWARN and ECOWARN which have already developed the capability to maintain their own datasets both on structural and event (behavioral) indicators.<sup>346</sup> As a result, cooperation between the other early warning systems and the CEWS in regards to conflict and cooperation analysis has become an important requirement for the full-functionality of the continental

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<sup>339</sup> Refer to Section 6.4.2 of this study.

<sup>340</sup> AU-CMD, *CEWS Handbook*, 57.

<sup>341</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>342</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid.

<sup>345</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>346</sup> Ibid., 49.

early warning framework.

Even though the details of harmonization and coordination in regards to specific issues of conflict and cooperation analysis have yet to be jointly resolved,<sup>347</sup> some measures were undertaken to the same end during the time of this study. Most notable in this regard was the “joint exercise of analyzing conflicts by using the Conflict Strategic Analysis system of the CEWS”<sup>348</sup> involving representatives from the CEWS and the sub-regional mechanisms with the purpose of acquainting conflict analysts with the CEWS’ conflict analysis methodology which is expected to be replicated in all the early warning systems in Africa.

## **6.5 Challenges and Constraints of Harmonization**

The discussion in the previous parts sought to highlight areas and modalities of harmonization between the regional early warning systems and the CEWS by focusing on specific early warning functions in which some level of progress was made to the same end. The discussion also showed that while harmonization progressed in some areas of early warning functions, it did not start in others largely due to the novelty of the operationalization of the CEWS which is still considered as “work-in-progress”<sup>349</sup>. Besides the identification of areas and modalities of harmonization as attempted thus far in this chapter, this study has also sought to identify the different challenges to the harmonizing efforts of the CEWS and these will be discussed as follows.

The first challenge to the creation of a methodologically compatible continental early warning

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<sup>347</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>348</sup> CEWARN, “African Union Commission, Regional Economic Communities discuss progress on Continental Early Warning System Initiative”, *CEWARN Monthly*, No. 17(2009). Available on: <http://www.cewarn.org/bulletin/09/April.pdf>, (accessed on August 20, 2009).

<sup>349</sup> Charles Mwaura, interview by author.

framework is the different level of development of the various early warning systems.<sup>350</sup> While some of the systems such as CEWARN and ECOWARN are more advanced and have partially or fully implemented most of the functional components of their early warning mechanisms, others are still in the preliminary stage of operationalizing their respective early warning systems.<sup>351</sup> According to Kwaku Asante-Darko, Senior Expert on Conflict Prevention in the AU, coupled with capacity problems which is inherent in almost all the mechanisms, such variance in terms of the institutional maturity of the systems is considered as an obstacle to the harmonizing role of the CEWS since it distorts the uniformity of the efforts geared towards the creation of an early warning methodology for the whole continent.<sup>352</sup>

Secondly, the absence of a suitable blueprint to emulate was raised as another challenge to the process of harmonization.<sup>353</sup> Operationalizing the CEWS is unique in the sense that no other attempt was made in other parts of the world to integrate several early warning systems into one continental framework. According to Charles Mwaura, as a result of such unique and “sui generis” nature of operationalizing the CEWS, those who are propelling the process do not have the option of importing best practices from similar endeavors elsewhere in the world.<sup>354</sup>

The third challenge is related to the participation of civil society in conflict early warning in the various systems and this challenge manifests in two forms.<sup>355</sup> Firstly, the level of civil society participation that feeds into the early warning systems varies in the different early warning mechanisms. Whereas it is advanced in some regions<sup>356</sup> such as Western Africa<sup>357</sup>, it is

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<sup>350</sup> Kwaku Asante-Darko, interview by author, Addis Ababa, June 1st, 2009.

<sup>351</sup> In some of the RECs, the early warning systems are still non-existent and one informant succinctly expressed the difficulty of harmonization in such cases by claiming “one can not talk of harmonizing when there is nothing to harmonize.” Raymond Kitevu, interview by author, Addis Ababa, June 1, 2009.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid.

<sup>353</sup> Charles Mwaura, interview by author.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid.

<sup>355</sup> Kwaku Asante-Darko, interview by author.

<sup>356</sup> The level of civil society participation is often linked to the nature of the political systems in the respective

still in its premature stage in others such as the Northern Africa. Consequently, the variance in civil society participation in turn impacts the level of development of the respective early warning systems since civil society organizations are, by and large, expected<sup>358</sup> to have a very crucial role in conflict early warning through their participation in different activities such as early warning data collection, analytical and conceptual research activities and coordinating response at various levels.<sup>359</sup> Secondly, in those cases where there is active civil society participation in early warning, most of the early warning reports received from the civil society organizations were not consistent and “systematic” in the sense that they do not fully conform to the reporting formats employed by the CEWS and the other early warning systems.<sup>360</sup>

The fourth challenge is associated with the role of donors which play a crucial role in the implementation and operationalization of most of the conflict early warning systems in Africa.<sup>361</sup> Currently most of the early warning systems rely on funds obtained from donors who cover most of their financial expenses including their overhead costs. Consequently, the systems are increasingly compelled to give precedence to donor priorities or demands over their own operational priorities in various early warning activities. In addition, largely due to their capacity problem which was hinted earlier, most of the early warning systems are also having difficulties in utilizing the available financial resources from the donors. As a result, the combined effect of trying to honor donor demands and failure to appropriately utilize funds is slowing the progress of implementation of early warning mechanisms in the various sub-regions and this in turn is impacting the process of harmonization and coordination.

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regions. Ideally fledgling civil society is expected in a democratic and participatory political environment.

<sup>357</sup> The most notable example indicating the enhanced role of civil society participation in West Africa is WANEP's role in the implementation of West Africa's early warning mechanism of ECOWARN.

<sup>358</sup> For the role of civil society in conflict early warning and prevention, refer: AU [African Union] CMD [Conflict Management Division] (Eds.), “Civil Society Participation in Conflict Prevention in Africa: An Agenda for Action.”, In *Meeting the Challenges of Conflict Prevention in Africa: Towards the Operationalization of the Continental Early Warning System* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2008a), 95-96.

<sup>359</sup> Kwaku Asante-Darko, interview by author.

<sup>360</sup> Charles Mwaura, interview by author.

Finally, the “lack of political will and sensitivities about state sovereignty”<sup>362</sup> are considered as additional challenges which are conceived to have negative impacts on the institutionalization of a harmonized and coordinated continental early warning framework.<sup>363</sup> Given the fact that the various systems that constitute the CEWS are intergovernmental in nature, the contribution of national governments is essential for the success of the continental early warning arrangement. Nonetheless, most member states have not yet fully committed themselves to the effective functioning of the conflict early warning systems that may have the potential to “unearth things that states would rather keep hidden.”<sup>364</sup> Additionally, member states are also found to be reluctant to use “official intelligence in an otherwise transparent forum”<sup>365</sup> adhering to the “the sanctity of the principle of sovereign equality.”<sup>366</sup> While such absence of political will and commitment to early warning are challenges which also apply to the effectiveness of conflict early warning in general,<sup>367</sup> they are also conceived as having their own implications on the harmonizing and coordinating role of the CEWS.<sup>368</sup>

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<sup>361</sup> Ibid.

<sup>362</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>363</sup> Raymond Kitevu, interview by author.

<sup>364</sup> Aning, “The African Union’s Peace”, 13.

<sup>365</sup> Fanta, “The Capacity of African”, 7.

<sup>366</sup> Ibid.

<sup>367</sup> Ibid.

<sup>368</sup> Raymond Kitevu, interview by author.

## **Chapter Seven: Conclusion**

As indicated earlier at the introduction of this thesis, the main objective of this study is to explore the ongoing process of harmonizing the different conflict early warning mechanisms in Africa which is envisaged to be undertaken within the overarching framework of the CEWS. In order to achieve this objective, the study raised three related research questions which in combination were meant to help in identifying the areas, modalities, and challenges of harmonization. Before dealing with these questions, the study explored conceptual issues related with the theory and practice of conflict early warning; summarized historical root causes of conflicts in Africa; and provided an overview of the history of early warning in Africa.

In addressing the first research question that sought to explore the different approaches to the practice of conflict early warning, the study presented a comparative analysis of the CEWARN and ECOWARN and featured both differences and similarities observed in terms of early warning objectives, methodology, institutional arrangement and level of development, and linkage with response strategies. When dealing with the remaining research questions which were intended to examine the areas, measures, strategies, and challenges of harmonization, the study first explored the CEWS' epistemic or knowledge-based approach of forming consensus in terms of early warning practice by identifying the areas of harmonization which included: information sharing and data exchange, data collection, conflict and cooperation analysis, early warning report writing, and formulation of policy options. Subsequently based on the analysis of the existing official documents and expert interviews which were accessible during the research process, the various modalities of harmonization employed by the CEWS were examined. In this regard, the study revealed that while relative progress was made in terms of harmonization in some areas such as information sharing and data exchange, a lot remains to

be done in streamlining the details of cooperation and coordination in other areas such as formulation of policy options and conflict and cooperation analysis.

As a form assessing the overall progress of the research so far, it can be asserted that the study has provided the basic empirics needed to conceptualize harmonization of conflict early warning as an ongoing and “little understood” process by showing its legal foundations, strategies, current progress as well as its challenges. Admittedly, all aspects raised in the research questions were not adequately covered due to limitations largely related to getting the relevant official and up-to-date information regarding the ongoing process of harmonization. Given proper access to relevant data, there is a potential for future studies to contribute to the successful operationalization of a harmonized continental early warning mechanism especially through the identification of further strategies and modalities of interfacing conflict early warning in the continent.

Finally, based on the overall findings and observations thus far, as an exploratory study, this thesis concludes by proposing the following hypotheses which can be further tested by similar enquiries in the future. Firstly, even though no established official definition of “harmonization of conflict early warning systems” was found during the study, from the way it is currently practiced, its conception tilts more in the direction of the comprehensive conception of the term<sup>369</sup> which asserts that harmonization does not create uniformity but results only in the elimination of methodological incompatibilities. This is practically evidenced by the fact that harmonization in most of areas builds up on the activities of the existing early warning mechanisms and seeks to create compatible strategies based on principles such as division of labour and preservation of the regional nature of the respective

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<sup>369</sup> As indicated at the beginning of this study in Section 1.4.

systems. Consequently, emphasising the need for appropriate definition of the process, this study echoes similar assertions made in other areas of harmonization<sup>370</sup> by recommending that the African Union should “establish an agreed, concise conceptualization of what harmonization is so that the term conjures up similar connotations and implications to all stakeholders.”<sup>371</sup>

Secondly, while most of the measures which are being undertaken to achieve harmonization are largely technical and perhaps procedural in their essence, harmonization as a process is delinked from the political and complex issues surrounding the coordination and cooperation of the early warning systems.<sup>372</sup> As shown in the study, the current approach to harmonization by the African Union (CEWS) builds upon the experience of existing mechanisms, some of which have a narrow and largely “apolitical” approach of monitoring conflicts.<sup>373</sup> In most of the cases, member states of the systems have not yet fully agreed to share early warning information obtained from their legislative domain. Additionally, they are also reluctant to sacrifice their sovereignty by allowing an inter-governmental body to collect information on the potential outbreak of violent conflicts within their jurisdiction especially in situations when governments themselves play a part in the conflicts. In this regard, in addition to its current drive in forming knowledge-based consensus around the CEWS as already shown in this study, the African Union can play a role in garnering the political will and commitment of its member states to the effective operation of the conflict early warning both at the sub-regional and continental levels.

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<sup>370</sup> For instance in the case of harmonization of Higher Education in Africa.

<sup>371</sup> African Union, “Harmonization of Higher Education”, 11.

<sup>372</sup> The importance of forming knowledge-based, technical and epistemic consensus is not questioned here. Nevertheless, the argument here is that by binding political decisions in major policy areas related to conflict early warning should also be considered in the process of harmonizing conflict early warning.

<sup>373</sup> Most notable in this regard is CEWARN’s focus on pastoral conflicts only which is considered as a way of

Thirdly, whereas it is an essential element of prevention of conflicts, the issue of response has not been adequately featured in the ongoing process of harmonizing the different early warning systems. Consequently, in conjunction with the efforts to create a compatible early warning methodology for the entire continent, the AU should also ensure that adequate response strategies are also integrated along with the capacity to collect and analyze conflict related data and information in the various early warning mechanisms in the continent.

Lastly, the process of harmonization has not yet fully engaged the participation of civil society organizations which can play a crucial role in conflict early warning in Africa. In this regard, harmonization still needs to address building the capacity of NGOs involved in early warning through various means such as conducting training geared towards increasing the quality and consistency of their reports and improving their of data collection techniques.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Interview Guide

1. How do you conceive harmonization?
2. What are the major differences that exist between the various conflict early warning systems or mechanisms in the continent?
3. And what is the impact of these differences on the process of harmonization and coordination of the early warning systems within the CEWS framework?
4. How do you assess the possibility harmonizing conflict early warning in the face of differences in terms of methodology, purpose and institutional arrangements?
5. What aspects of the early warning systems are expected to be harmonized? Is it harmonization of early warning purpose, methodology or terminology?
6. What is the role of CEWS/AU in harmonizing the various early warning systems?
7. What are the main challenges to the process of harmonization?

## Appendix B: Description of CEWARN's Indicators: Situation Reports<sup>374</sup>

|                               |                                    |                                |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Alliance Formation</b>     |                                    |                                |
| Inter-ethnic group alliance   | Ethnic group – government alliance |                                |
| <b>Armed Intervention</b>     |                                    |                                |
| Internal armed support        | External armed support             |                                |
| <b>Behavioral Aggravators</b> |                                    |                                |
| Interrupt other activities    | Pastoral migration                 | Bullets as commodities         |
| Development aid problems      | Harmful migration policy           | Protest                        |
| Media controls                | Harmful livestock policy           | Student attendance interrupted |
| Migrant laborers              | Influx of IDPs                     | Separation of groups           |
| New Markets                   | Security escorts                   | Livestock prices dropped       |
| Negative media coverage       | Small arms availability            | Post-raid blessing             |
|                               |                                    | Livestock sales increase       |
| <b>Environmental Pressure</b> |                                    |                                |
| Natural disaster              | Land competition                   | More livestock in secure areas |
| Grazing areas abandoned       | Livestock disease                  |                                |
| <b>Exchange Behavior</b>      |                                    |                                |
| Celebration                   | Inter-group marriage               | Gift offering                  |
| Inter-group sharing           | Cross-border trade                 |                                |
| <b>Mitigating Behavior</b>    |                                    |                                |
| Access to health care         | Relief distributions               | Law enforcement                |
| Small arms disclosure         | Markets remain open                | Bride price stable             |
| Access to education           | Positive media coverage            | Negotiations taking place      |
| <b>Peace Initiatives</b>      |                                    |                                |
| Women peace messengers        | Weapons reduction program          | Local peace initiatives        |
| Religious peace building      | NGO peace initiatives              |                                |
| <b>Triggering Behavior</b>    |                                    |                                |
| All-male migration            | Pre-raid blessing                  | Traditional forecasting        |

<sup>374</sup> CEWARN, *CEWARN Strategy*, 55.

## Appendix C: Description of CEWARN Indicators: Violent Incident Reports<sup>375</sup>

### **Armed Clashes**

- *Military Battle* (Armed hostilities or engagements between an official military unit of a government and an armed party. Includes both civil war and inter-state war battles.
- *Other Armed Clashes* (All other armed hostilities or engagements. Includes all communal and inter-communal battles.

### **Raids**

- *Raids with Abductions* (Raids focused around abductions of people or the taking of hostages. May include injuries or death to humans, and/or damage, destruction or theft of other property).
- *Organized Raids* (Other organized raids. May include injuries or deaths to humans, and/or damage, destruction or theft of other property).
- *Livestock Theft* (Raids focused around the theft of livestock. May include injuries or death to humans, and/or damage, destruction or theft of other property).

### **Protest Demonstrations**

- *Peaceful Protests* (peaceful protest demonstrations or assemblies. May include isolated or low-level violence).
- *Violent Turmoil or Riots* (Assemblies or crowds that get out of control. Marked by violence, disorder, damage and/or destruction).

### **Other Crimes**

- *Assaults* (Physical attacks and abuse involving the actual use of physical force against individuals, and/or groups. Does not include abductions).
- *Banditry* (Commandeering of vehicles, highway robbery, and other similar criminal activities).

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<sup>375</sup> CEWARN, *CEWARN Strategy*, 55.

# Curriculum Vitae

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## EDUCATION

2007-2009

- Masters of Arts in Global Studies (pending) from Universities of Leipzig and Vienna

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- Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and International Relations from Addis Ababa

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1989-1992

- Shimelis Habte Secondary School, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

## Work Experience

- April 26, 2008 to 6<sup>th</sup> July, 2008: Wissenschaftliche Hilfskraft (Research Assistance) in the Center for Higher Studies (Zentrum für Höhere Studien), University of Leipzig.

- August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008 to 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2008: Internship in the CEWARN/IGAD Unit, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

- January 1998 to October 2007: Sheraton Addis

**Languages:** Amharic (Native), English (Fluent), French (Intermediate), German (Intermediate)

**Publications:** Book Review “Maurice Mullard. The Politics of Globalization and Polarization. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2006” published on H-NET Reviews in the Humanities and Social Sciences (August, 2009).