

## UN PEACEKEEPING IN AFRICA AND GOOD GOVERNANCE: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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### Summary

While UN peacekeeping operations are in most cases confronted with a multitude of intertwined problems, this seems to be even worse in Africa. Operations on African soil have to react more than averagely to inter- as well as intrastate conflicts based upon ethnic tension, to conflicts starting from extreme poverty or the abuse of natural resources, and to situations in which governments are failing to do what governments should do. In the paper the mandates of the six ongoing UN peacekeeping operations in Africa – as of 1 May 2007, that is, in the Western Sahara, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Côte d'Ivoire and Sudan – are analysed from the perspective of their (desired) contribution to the establishment of *good governance* structures. That analysis is followed by some observations upon the changing nature of peacekeeping operations. This includes the need to react to the specificity of African conflicts – which are often characterised by the combination of poverty, weak public institutions, a small private sector, high illiteracy, a narrow skills base, and limited capabilities for guaranteeing security – and the more general move towards 'peace building', which is in so many ways similar to a 'good governance' approach. The paper concludes by formulating a few lessons. These relate to such things as the need for UN peace keepers to take care of the economic root causes of the conflicts they have to deal with, as well as the task to invest systematically in building up governmental structures and legal institutions, while at the same time training police, army and judiciary staff in respect for human rights and in notions such as trying to solve conflicts without the use of violent means. The paper ends by

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underlining the necessity of a good interplay between the UN peace keepers and all state and non-state actors involved, from land lords and associations of farmers to regional intergovernmental organisations, from NGO's to the International Financial Institutions and UN Specialised Organisations. If this is not going to happen, the focus is too much upon the military aspects only, and that is – needed as it may be in the short run – a guarantee that conflicts will reoccur as soon as the operations have ended.

**Key words:** Peace keeping, Africa, economic aspects of conflicts, good governance, human rights.