

ETHIOPIA

IN THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL 2017-2018

Policy Note #1:2017



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Cover photo: UN Headquarters, New York, 28 June 2016. The General Assembly has just elected Ethiopia as new non-permanent member of the Security Council for a two-year term starting on 1 January 2017. A delegate congratulates Tekeda Alemu (left), Permanent Representative of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the UN, as Ethiopia's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus (seated centre), looks on. UN Photo/Manuel Elias.

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Enforce the 'African solutions to African problems' principle in the UN and promote cooperation with the African Union and its regional communities. That is what Ethiopia should work for during its two-year term in the Security Council. To perform on this global stage, the Ethiopian government has to address its domestic democracy and governance issues.

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On 1 January 2017, Ethiopia became a member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Its bid for a non-permanent seat got overwhelming support from the African Group in the UN: it endorsed Ethiopia's candidacy back in January 2016 at the headquarters of the African Union (AU), after Kenya and the Seychelles withdrew their candidacies. Ethiopia has a long history of engagements with the UN. It enjoys good relations with the United States and other Western powers. It also has quite strong diplomatic links with G-20 and BRICS nations, particularly China and India. Thus it came as no surprise that, in June 2016, Ethiopia won a seat in the first round of voting in the UN General Assembly, with the support of 185 of the 193 member countries.

The UNSC offers a platform for its members to influence the courses and directions of inter-state relations as well as global agenda for peace and development. At the same time, the UNSC is also characterised by power politics. The rather unimpressive state of global governance and its grave consequence for Africa and other regions in the developing world that are in dire need of the support of the international community to address the challenges of development is a major source of concern. In light of Ethiopia's longstanding engagement with the UN system, as well as its close association with Africa and its development challenges, what are the issues that Ethiopia is likely to be advancing using the UNSC platform?

Home of African diplomacy

Ethiopia's profile as a rising economy and an important security-policy partner may also have contributed. It has

the continent's second-largest population and the region's fifth-largest economy, with an annual GDP growth rate estimated at 8.5 per cent. The country's standing in global political relations is due not only to its military and economic power: in the diplomatic sphere, Ethio-

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Workneh Gebeyehu Negewo, Ethiopia's Minister for Foreign Affairs, at UNSC ministerial-level open debate on conflict prevention and sustaining peace. 10 January 2017.

- Five permanent member states with veto right (China, France, Russia, UK and USA).
- Ten non-permanent member states elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms starting on 1 January, with five replaced each year.
- The non-permanent members elected in 2015 (1 January 2016 to 31 December 2017) were Egypt, Japan, Senegal, Ukraine and Uruguay.
- The non-permanent members elected in 2016 (1 January 2017 to 31 December 2018) were Bolivia, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan and Sweden. Italy and the Netherlands agreed to split a term, taking a year apiece.

UN Photo/Evan Schneider



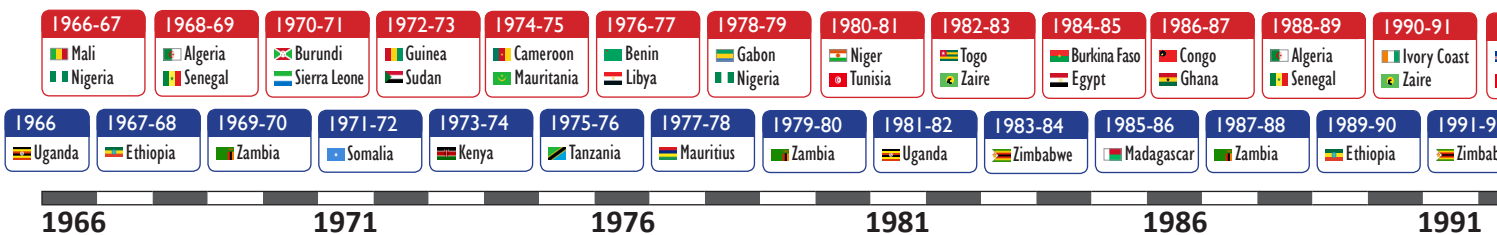
UN Headquarters in Paris, 1 December 1951. Ethiopia and South Africa were the only two African states among the 16 belligerents under UN command in the Korean War (1950-1953). Here a group of soldiers, including Sergeant Major Mamoushet Goshime of Ethiopia, representing the UN forces in Korea, as guests of honour.

pia is regarded as the ‘home of African diplomacy’. Its capital Addis Ababa hosts the AU Commission and several other international and regional institutions, including the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

Ethiopia has already served two terms on the UNSC (1967–68 and 1989–90) and thus has prior experience of the Council’s work. However, this brings great expectations, especially from the African countries. In this context, there are certain legitimate concerns as to

whether Ethiopia can contribute significantly to the UNSC’s work, in view of the changing global political landscape, declining public trust in political systems and the spread of populist agendas across the world. How Ethiopia addresses its domestic challenges will be a test for the country on the global stage. A look at Ethiopia’s past performance in the UN and at the challenges it faces in the region may offer some pointers as to the issues that the country is likely to focus on in the UNSC.

Since 1966, when the number of non-permanent seats in the Security Council was increased from 6 to 10, the African group in the UN has always been represented with three seats. Two of them are replaced every even year and one every uneven year, as shown in the timeline below.



In the UN since 1945

Ethiopia became a member of the UN in 1945. Along with three other African states – Egypt, Liberia and South Africa – it was already part of the global system before the 1960s, when other African states gained sovereignty and joined the UN.

Ethiopia is by no means new to international diplomacy and international institutions. One of the oldest independent states in the world, it has historically relied on diplomacy to exert influence at the regional, continental and global level. In the UN it has promoted Pan-Africanism and independence for the colonized territories of Africa.

Ethiopia has a historical commitment to collective security that pre-dates the UN. As Abyssinia, it joined the League of Nations in 1923 and remained a member until the League was replaced by the UN in 1945. During the discussions preceding the formation of the UN, there was question on whether the new security system should be oriented toward regionalism as advocated by Moscow and London, or toward universalism as Washington favoured. A proposal was made by the Great Powers for the San Francisco Conference in June 1945 to create an international collective security organization. However, changes were made to allow regional organizations manage conflicts between their members which Ethiopia actively supported.

Long experience of peacekeeping

Ethiopia's commitment to regionalism and its support for regional and continental bodies is reflected in its influence within the AU (and its precursor, the Organisation of African Unity). Ethiopia was also one of the founding members of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), a regional body and AU partner in which Ethiopia and seven other East African nations strive to ensure development cooperation, economic integration, peace and stability.

Along with other countries of the global South, Ethiopia has shown concern over the unequal power arrangement in key UN institutions. It has advocated democratization of the UNSC, for example by proposing a permanent seat for Africa.

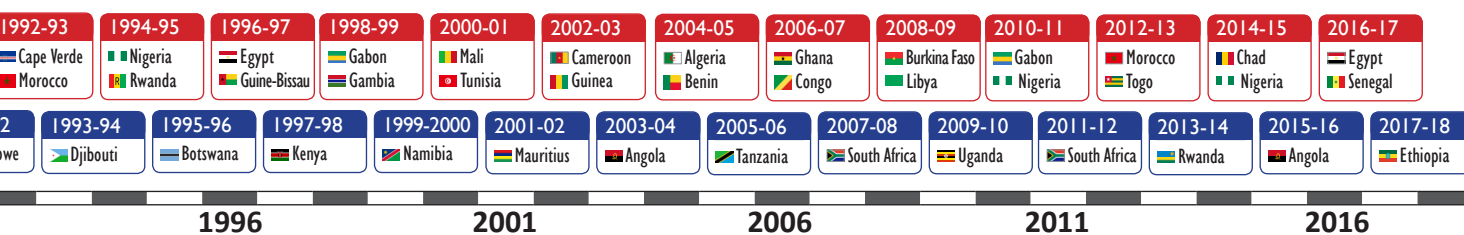
Ethiopia's commitment to international peace and security has a long history: in the early 1950s, its troops joined a multinational UN peacekeeping force in the Korean War. Similar interventions were also made in the 1960s in the Congo conflict. Since the birth of the UN, Ethiopia has participated in around a dozen peacekeeping missions worldwide. It is currently the second-largest contributor to UN peacekeeping operations (8,326 personnel) where all of the personnel are dispatched within Africa.

At the regional level, the country is the largest contributor of troops to African peacekeeping missions. These efforts indicates the political commitment of the country for peace and security in Africa. In June 2016, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon expressed 'gratitude for the continued bravery of the Ethiopian troops' in the AU Mission in Somalia.

The AU's Constitutive Act provides for the creation of 'a common defence and security policy for the African Continent'. One of the lessons learned from the Rwandan genocide was the need for a standby force to make Africa less dependent on the international community to maintain peace on the continent. The African Standby Force (ASF) was set up in 2003 as a continental peacekeeping force under AU direction, and it is crucial to the AU's peacekeeping capacity. Though not a standing army, the ASF is designed to enable the AU to deploy troops swiftly on the continent in order to preserve peace. It has five multinational standby brigades, each hosted by an African region (North, South, East, West and Central). Ethiopia is a leading participant in, and host to, the East African Standby Force.

Major refugee host

The incessant conflicts, poverty and bad governance in many of Africa's countries are cause for serious global concern – and as such warrant urgent attention by the UNSC. The Horn of Africa is riven by conflict, and all the IGAD countries have had significant internal security problems: Sudan was mired in conflict for three decades; the internal conflicts in South Sudan and Somalia are critical issues, with Somalia under regular attack by al-Shabaab; and the tense stand-off between Ethiopia



and Eritrea has shown little improvement. The Horn of Africa is beset by the challenges of human displacement and migration. The continent's biggest refugee groups are from South Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea, and Ethiopia is a major host country for all these.

Other security concerns include border conflicts, pastoralist conflicts, piracy and terrorism.

Economic inequality and internal conflicts

Over the last decade and a half, Africa has seen positive economic growth. For most of this period, global commodity prices have been favourable. Major oil and mineral exporting economies like Nigeria, Angola and South Africa have seen good growth. Non-commodity dependent economies have also performed quite well. However, global commodity prices started to fall in 2015, since when prices have generally remained below their 2014 peak.

Despite the improved economic growth rates, there has been no corresponding reduction in poverty and inequality. These factors affect the ability of African populations to lead productive lives, and they exacerbate identity conflicts along communal, ethnic, religious and regional lines. Reversing these undesirable trends will require not just better economic performances, but also political commitments. For instance, the major natural resources-driven economies of the continent, need to seriously promoting policies that support long-term transitions from the extractive towards broad-based and

inclusive economic activities. Improving conditions for cross-border and regional trade systems can help to mobilize the potentials of the continent for the common good of its people.

Increased regional cooperation

The Ethiopian economy is reported to be getting stronger following a number of reform packages. The 2016 World Bank annual report ranks Ethiopia 146th out of 189 economies worldwide – two places higher than in the previous report. The country is experiencing an upsurge in foreign investment interest, and foreign direct investment is projected to exceed 1.5 billion US dollars (2015 estimate).

Ethiopia is regarded as a regional economic power. It is currently focusing on infrastructure development, in order to consolidate its position as the strategic heart of the IGAD region's economic integration. Investment in energy, water, roads and railways has been scaled up, and Ethiopia is already exporting hydropower to countries in the region.

In addition, the country plays a key role in the development and management of water in the region. Various water cooperation initiatives have been undertaken, such as the Nile Basin Initiative, an intergovernmental partnership involving Ethiopia and nine other Nile riparian countries to develop the river, share the socioeconomic benefits and promote peace and security. This investment makes it imperative for Ethiopia to commit to regional stability.



The Nile Basin Initiative is one of many regional cooperation projects that have accelerated Ethiopia's integration with its East African neighbours. Here Mohammed Badaza, coordinator of the Nile Basin Initiative, at the inauguration of an irrigation project in Lukhuna, Uganda. Photo Maria Vink, Sida.

» The logic of the 'African solutions to African problems' principle needs to be promoted «

Climate change

Climate change remains a pressing issue for many African countries. In 2016, Ethiopia experienced its worst drought in decades. The impact on food security, access to water and human health was critical. The government is seeking 948 million US dollars in humanitarian funding in 2017 to address the drought problems. The country has taken the initiative in global negotiations to address Africa's concerns over climate injustice. Along with Morocco, Ghana and South Africa, it is one of the few African countries to have integrated climate change issues into their national development strategies.

Ethiopia's climate and economy policy – Climate-Resilient Green Economy – promises to achieve accelerated economic growth while reducing emissions of greenhouse gases.

Ethiopia is a model for other African countries in promoting and investing in renewable energy. Under the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change, it made a commitment to cut carbon emissions by 64 per cent by 2030. To help with its green growth, it has set up a climate finance fund.

The drought in Eastern and Southern Africa has shown that the continent needs global solidarity and sound funding mechanisms, if it is to build more climate-resilient economies. Financial pledges have been made by the international community to support green growth through the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and other multilateral bodies. However, the funding mechanisms are cumbersome and Africa has been unable to utilize them properly.

Democratic reforms and restrictions lifted

The internal politics of Ethiopia is a cause for concern. The government has made it a priority to deepen democracy, for example by reforming the electoral system. The present system relies on a simple majority, which results in 'winner takes all' elections. In the most recent (2015) election, for instance, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front won 500 of the 547 seats (while its allies won the remainder).

Last year, the government declared a state of emergency after widespread protests by groups, which the

government claimed were getting financial and military support from neighbouring states. A number of tough measures ensued: curfews, suspension of due process and a ban on protests. Other steps undermined citizens' rights: detention without trial, the cutting of internet access and the blocking of social media sites. Some of these restrictions have been lifted, but still there are implications for how Ethiopia is perceived by the international community. Coupled with the strained relationship between Ethiopia and some of its neighbours in the Horn of Africa, this perception may dent the country's influence in the UNSC.

Key Policy Recommendations:

- Ethiopia should work with others in the UNSC, especially the friends of Africa, to prioritize issues of African development, peace and stability. Peace and development are linked more closely than ever before, and are regarded by many as inseparable.
- Africa needs a more effective UN system to ensure peace, security and development. In spite of the much-vaunted 'impressive growth', civil war is a constant threat in many poor and badly governed African countries, where there has been no significant improvement in poverty reduction, transparent and accountable governance, or citizens' satisfaction with the delivery of public goods and service.
- The logic of the 'African solutions to African problems' principle needs to be promoted and factored into UN–Africa partnerships, especially in the area of collective security and conflict management. This entails looking at Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, which spells out the roles of regional organizations.
- More cooperation between the UN and the AU is desirable, and should be based on mutual respect. Some arrangement that recognizes the mandate of the AU to act without seeking prior consent of the UN offers a better prospect for managing conflicts in Africa.
- Addressing Ethiopia's domestic challenges is imperative. The deepening of democracy, accountability and good governance are key issues that the government needs to address constantly.



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NAI POLICY NOTES is a series of short briefs on policy issues relevant to Africa today, intended for strategists, analysts and decision makers in foreign policy, aid and development. They aim to inform public debate and generate input into the sphere of policymaking. The opinions expressed in the policy notes are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Institute.

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