The African Union’s Continental Early Warning System:
Conflict Prevention in an African Context

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Continental Early Warning System (CEWS)

• Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union
  – “In order to facilitate the anticipation and prevention of conflicts”

• 2 stages:
  – Data collection and analysis (early warning)
  – Conflict prevention strategies (early action)
Early Warning Systems

Peace and Security Council
Panel of the Wise

Commission of the African Union
(Conflict Management Division of the Peace
and Security Department)

Framework of generic early warning indicators
based on *ex negativo* reading of relevant AU documents

Information gathering
Strategic Conflict Assessment

Information analysis
Monitoring

Production of outcomes
Reporting

Chairperson of the Commission
Early Political Action / Preventive
Stage 2: Conflict Prevention

• 2 forms of conflict prevention
  – Structural intervention (deep intervention)
    • Democratic Institutions
    • Development Initiatives
  – Direct intervention (light intervention)
    • Preventive Diplomacy
    • Military and Economic Interventions

• Warning-Response Gap
  – Political Will and Capacity
    • Regionalization
CEWARN
“Empowering stakeholders to prevent violent conflicts”

- Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)
- Focused on cross-border pastoralist and related conflicts
- Capacity for Structural Intervention
  - Rapid Response Fund-financially supports local peace committees
- Capacity for Direct Intervention
  - Mapping projects of clusters
  - CEWERU (Conflict Early Warning and Response Units)
- Limitations and Strengths
Warning-Response Gap & Traditional Methods

Are traditional and local methods a resource for the gap between early warning and early action?

• What is Traditional?
  – Focus on reconciliation, relationship-building
  – Use of mediators (elders, women, religious leaders)
Future Research

• What traditional methods are being used?

• How does CEWARN support traditional methods of conflict prevention?

• Are they efficient and institutionalized?

• How can the AU incorporate this into CEWS?