


Common Market for  
Eastern and Southern Africa

The background of the entire page is a dark blue gradient with vertical light blue stripes. In the foreground, there are white silhouettes of five business professionals in suits sitting around a table, engaged in a meeting. The silhouettes are positioned in the lower half of the page, with their heads and shoulders visible. The table is represented by a white horizontal bar.

# COMESA Mediation Strategy 2023 - 2030



May 2024



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## Preface by the Secretary General



The Fourth Summit of the COMESA Authority, which was held in Nairobi, Kenya in May 1999 marked an important milestone for COMESA. It directed COMESA to set up a formal structure and modalities for engagement on matters of peace and security. This was done in recognition that peace, security and stability are prerequisite for investment, development, trade and regional integration. Although Article 3(d) of the COMESA Treaty identifies peace and security among the objectives of COMESA, the issues were previously addressed through ad-hoc arrangements.

To fully operationalize Article 3(d), the COMESA Authority established a three-tier structure for peace and security comprising the Authority, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Peace and Security. It directed the COMESA Ministers of Foreign Affairs to meet at least once a year to deliberate on matters of peace and security in the region. The Ministers were charged with the responsibility of discussing the modalities for addressing issues of peace and security as well as monitoring and advising the Authority on initiatives for the promotion of peace, security, and stability in the region. The Authority also directed the Secretariat to ensure to work within the framework of the African Union and in close collaboration with other Regional Economic Communities as reflected in Article 16 of the PSC Protocol. The Fifth and Sixth Summits of the COMESA Authority, held in 2000 in Port Louis, Mauritius and 2001 in Cairo, Egypt developed and adopted an institutional structure and modalities for the promotion of peace and security while subsequent meetings of the COMESA Authority provided guidance towards defining an architecture for COMESA peace and security.

COMESA has since established programmes on conflict prevention, conflict management and post conflict reconstruction to address the full spectrum of the conflict cycle as well as two overarching programmes that cut across the conflict cycle. These are programmes on elections and democracy as well as the programme on maritime security and other transnational organized crimes.

COMESA's prioritization of preventive diplomacy as one of its key instruments in conflict prevention is guided by directives of the COMESA Authority. This has been applied in low intensity conflicts to allow parties to reach amicable solutions, as well as in situations of escalations to prevent the breakout of violence. COMESA recognizes the importance of ensuring that the methods employed to address conflicts lead to the comprehensive resolution of conflicts and disputes as well as support efforts to address their root and structural factors. The words of Boutros Boutros Ghali, in his famous "Agenda for Peace" articulate that "the most desirable and effective employment of diplomacy is to ease tensions before they result in conflict; or if conflict breaks out, to act swiftly to contain it and resolve its underlying issues". This is as relevant today as it was in 2000.

COMESA encourages consensus-oriented approaches to conflict prevention, management and resolution because these lead to greater ownership of the process and the outcome by the parties. This approach recognizes that parties to the disputes are best suited to provide solutions and they only require facilitation to reach an agreement in the spirit of "African Solutions for African Problems".

One of COMESA's tools in preventive diplomacy and mediation efforts has been the nine-member COMESA Committee of Elders, which was established

by the Eleventh Summit of the COMESA Authority that was held in Djibouti in November 2006. The Committee provides a pool from which the Office of the Secretary General draws mediators. Immediately after the appointment of the first members, COMESA mobilized resources to, among others, develop the Rules of Procedure and mediation guidelines as well as providing training and opportunities for sharing experiences to sharpen their skills in mediation.

To further support the work of Elders and promote mediation efforts by other stakeholders, the Seventeenth Meeting of the COMESA Ministers of Foreign Affairs that was held on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2021 directed the Secretariat to mobilise resources and finalise the adoption of the Mediation Strategy for COMESA through consultations with government experts. Therefore, this strategy responds to the Ministers' directive, and it will enhance COMESA's role in promoting peace and security in the region. I therefore call upon Member States as well as partners to support the implementation of this Mediation Strategy.

*Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe*  
*Secretary General*

## Introduction to COMESA Mediation Strategy

1. The Mediation Strategy is a general document that situates mediation initiatives of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) within its objectives, and mandate and its mission, vision and operating environment. It considers the Decisions of the Policy Organs that relate to mediation and provides a framework towards the implementation of the Decisions.
2. Policy decisions and directives on Peace and Security are made by the COMESA Ministers of Foreign Affairs with the overall aim of ensuring a peaceful and secure environment in the COMESA region. This in turn is intended to enable the broader aims of the organization to be realized. The policy directives and the establishment of the COMESA programmes on peace and security reflect the institutional growth of COMESA in addressing peace and security issues continuing to evolve in the ever-changing and dynamic environment in the COMESA region.
3. This document highlights strategies within the broader framework of the implementation of conflict prevention, management and resolution. It specifically addresses the COMESA Mediation approach and builds on the other tools developed to strengthen COMESA's mediation efforts. To implement the strategy, three guiding documents and the rules governing the conduct of COMESA Committee of Elders have been developed. The three documents are:
  - a. The Rules of Procedure (Operating Procedures) and Mediation Guidelines for the COMESA Committee of Elders;
  - b. Handbook on management of electoral conflicts; and

- c. Handbook on management of natural resource-based conflicts.

### Legal and Institutional Framework

4. The legal and institutional framework for COMESA's engagement in peace and security is derived from Article 3 of the Treaty which highlights the objectives of COMESA:

#### ARTICLE 3

##### Aims and Objectives of the Common Market

- a) To attain sustainable growth and development of the Member States by promoting a balanced and harmonious development of its production and marketing structures.
- b) Promote joint development in all fields of economic activity and the joint adoption of macro-economic policies and programmes to raise the standard of living of its people and foster closer relations among its Member States;
- c) Cooperate in the creation of an enabling environment for foreign, cross-border and domestic investment including the joint promotion of research and adaptation of science and technology for development;
- d) Cooperate in the promotion of peace, security and stability among its Member States in order to enhance economic development in the region
- e) Cooperate in strengthening of relations between the Common Market and the rest of the world and the adoption of common positions in international fora;
- f) Contribute to the establishment, progress, and realization of the objectives of the African Economic Community.

5. The fourth objective on promotion of peace, security and stability among Member States of COMESA supports the overarching objectives of enhancing economic development and regional integration. The operationalization of Article 3(d) was premised on the realization that conflicts in the sub-region affect the full attainment of COMESA's regional integration agenda. On this basis, the COMESA Peace and Security Programme was established. The Programme complements the initiatives of other Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as espoused in Article 16 of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU PSC) Protocol and AU Framework on Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.
6. The COMESA Ministers of Foreign Affairs under whose direction the COMESA Programme on Peace and Security falls, have, over the years, made several policy directives to guide the programmes including a directive in 2007 for COMESA to carve its niche around the economic dimensions of conflict. This directive builds on the earlier Policy Decisions that were made in 2000. This included:
- Development of a structure for carrying out preventive diplomacy
  - Involvement of non-state actors in the COMESA Peace and Security programmes
  - Coordination and collaboration with the AU/ RECs/ Regional Mechanisms (RMs)
  - Gradual implementation of these decisions taking account of resource constraints
  - Utilization of existing national institutions for capacity building
  - Development of an early warning system
  - Adoption of a three-tier structure that includes the COMESA Authority, the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Peace and Security.
7. The COMESA programme on Peace and Security undertakes various functions based on three pillars - Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. These three (3) core and interconnected pillars address intervention at specific stages of the conflict cycle and form the basis of the operational framework of COMESA Governance, Peace and Security (GPS) programme. These three pillars intersect with two ancillary programme areas that address security and democratic governance. The impact of the two ancillary areas highlights the necessary linkages between peace, security and democratic governance.
8. In the development and implementation of its programmes, COMESA GPS considers several factors and dynamics which in turn inform key considerations for its strategy, namely:
- The importance of peace and security as a fundamental pre-requisite for economic development and growth
  - Issues of peace and security are addressed in order to reinforce COMESA primary objective of strengthening economic integration and development
  - The establishment of an institutional framework with specific mandate in conflict prevention, conflict management and post conflict reconstruction.
  - The involvement of various stakeholders including the COMESA Parliamentarians, civil society and private sector organizations in line with the Decision of the Second Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs held in 2001 in Lusaka, Zambia.

- Collaboration and coordination with Member States and the efforts of other sub-regional groupings in order to avoid duplication of efforts and institutional rivalry
- Recognition of the financial and human resource constraints of Member States;
- Utilization of existing national institutions for capacity building in the implementation of programmes.
- Flexibility to align programmes to respond to emerging threats.

### The Vision and Mission

9. The Strategy is informed by the wider COMESA vision of becoming a fully integrated and economically prosperous regional economic community and is anchored on Article 3 and 6 of the COMESA Treaty. In addition, the strategy is informed by the AU vision of Silencing the Guns by 2030.
10. The Mission of COMESA Peace and Security draws down from the objectives of COMESA as articulated in Article 3 of the COMESA Treaty and is further guided by the fundamental principles contained in Articles 6 of the COMESA Treaty. The policy organ decisions and directives made over the years were also considered in the development of its mission as articulated below:



**To promote peace, security, stability, and enhanced democratic governance in COMESA through effective national and regional institutional mechanisms and structures.”**





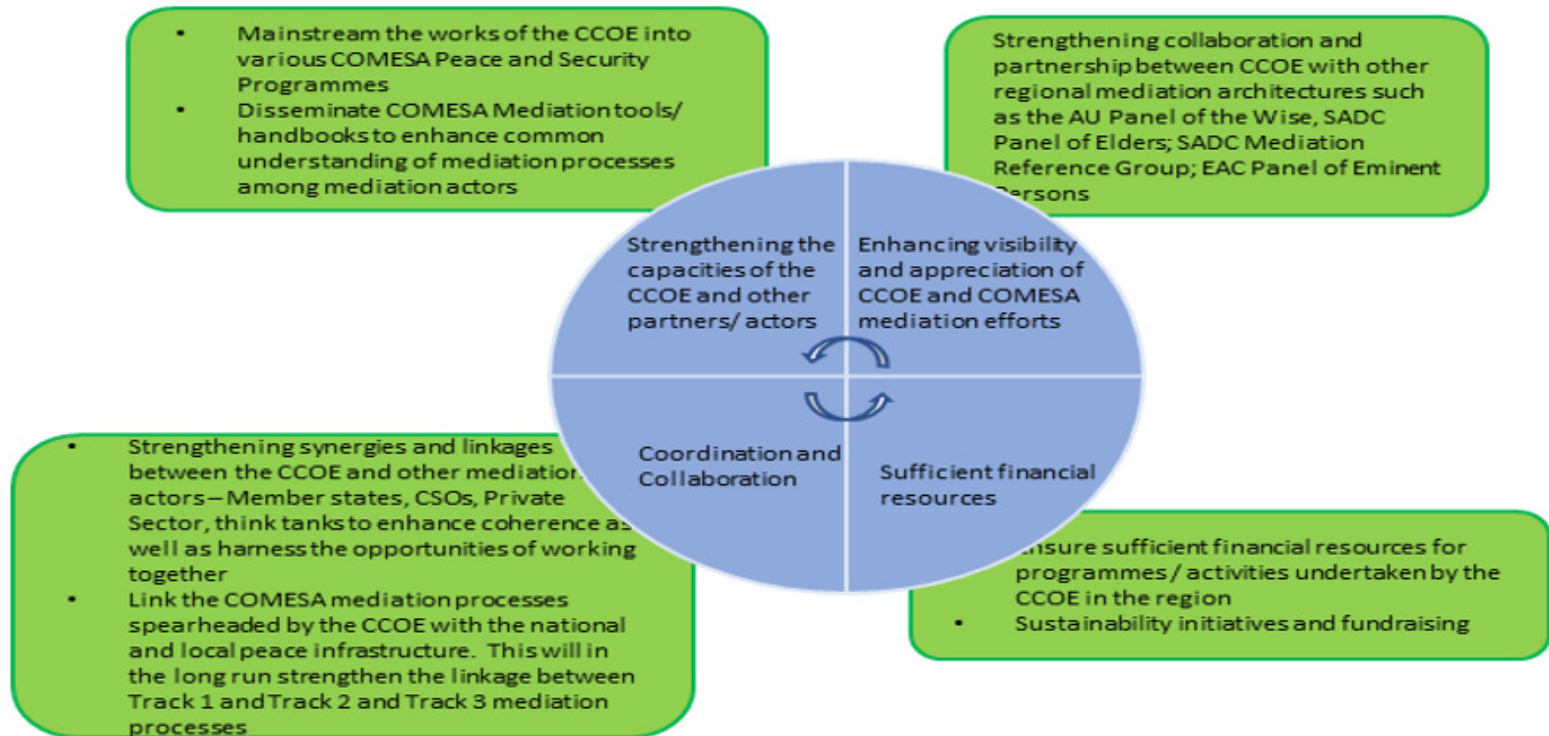
## Strategic Goal

11. Strengthening COMESA's conflict management, resolution and transformation tools and capacities along with enhancing preventive diplomacy approaches.

## Strategic Objectives of COMESA Mediation

12. The mediation strategy highlights seven (7) inter-related strategic areas that will be operationalized through programming to ensure that the objectives of COMESA mediation are achieved.
- a) Guide the work of the COMESA Committee of Elders (CCOEs) and enhance its profile and visibility in mediation efforts in the region.
  - b) Strengthen synergies and linkages between the CCOEs and the AU mediation architectures and recognised/accredited mediation actors and networks.
  - c) Link the COMESA mediation processes spearheaded by the CCOEs with national and local peace infrastructures. This, will, in the long run, strengthen the linkage between Track 1, Track 1½, Track 2 and Track 3 mediation processes.
  - d) Strengthen collaboration and partnership between CCOEs with other regional mediation architectures such as the AU Pan-Wise; SADC Panel of Elders; SADC Mediation Reference Group; and EAC Panel of Eminent Persons.
  - e) Disseminate COMESA mediation tools/handbooks to enhance common understanding of mediation processes among mediation actors.
  - f) Enhance visibility and appreciation of the CCOEs and COMESA mediation efforts in the region.
  - g) Ensure sufficient financial resources for programmes/activities undertaken by the CCOEs in the region.

**Figure 1: Strategic Focus Areas**



13. Based on the strategic areas highlighted above, the mediation strategy seeks to establish a coherent, coordinated approach and all-encompassing framework for COMESA, Member States and other partners in the field of mediation support, coordinate, share information and experiences and effectively implement mediation activities and processes in the region. Leveraging on the COMESA's comparative advantage and experience in the area of conflict prevention, management and resolution, the strategy seeks to promote integrated programming and implementation of COMESA mediation initiatives.

## Principles of COMESA Mediation

The implementation of the COMESA mediation will be based on the following principles:

- a) **Consent:** Mediation is a voluntary process, which means that parties must consent to the mediation process, and to the choice of the mediator.
- b) **Consensus:** Mediation is based on integrative solutions to conflict, whereby parties agree on processes and approaches towards finding solutions to the conflict. Mediation ensures that there are mutually satisfying outcomes for the parties involved.
- c) **Credibility:** Parties must have confidence in the credibility of the mediator or the institution which the mediator is representing.
- d) **Impartiality:** During the mediation process the mediator must conduct his or her duties independently without fear or favour and must avoid situations of perceived bias. The Mediation should be guided by a single objective of achieving a resolution.
- e) **Preparedness:** The mediator should be sufficiently prepared for the mediation processes through undertaking research, conflict analysis, knowledge and confidence-building of the actors and stakeholders.
- f) **Ownership:** The mediator's role is to facilitate the dialogue between parties, which means that parties own the process and the substantive aspects of the mediation. The mediator does not decide the outcome of the mediation process, but merely acts as an agent who assists parties to dialogue and to focus on the important issues that are needed to reach a resolution. Ownership of the agenda in mediation and negotiation processes notably belongs to the conflict parties, and by extension to the communities and the people who are

affected by the conflict.

## Context Analysis for COMESA Mediation

14. The context analysis considers the prominent types of conflicts in the COMESA region and covers internal and external environment.

## Conflicts in COMESA

15. This strategy considers the broad challenges and opportunities facing regional mediators in addressing conflicts in the region. Among these, as at the development of this strategy in 2022, include:
  - a) The predominance of internal conflicts and civil wars over inter-state conflicts is complicated by issues of sovereignty and denialism thus delaying onset of mediation processes. This in effect results in escalation and the resulting complexities due to the increase of actors and factors to the conflict. The region has experienced different types of conflicts including conflicts rooted in the competition over natural resources, conflicts around democratic governance, ethnic-based conflicts, among others. Besides other mediation efforts, the strategy will focus on electoral conflicts and natural-resource related conflicts.
    - i. Over the last two decades, democratic governance has become a big factor of conflicts in the region. This has included unconstitutional changes of government including uprisings that have sometimes resulted in violence and crisis. Also, efforts to enhance the democratization of the region that started in the 1990s have borne much fruit and many countries have seen the consolidation of democracy with regular multi-party

Source: Adobe stock



elections taking place. This opening up of the democratic space has also made most elections very competitive resulting in the increase of electoral related disputes. Some of these disputes have escalated into conflicts and crises that have required third-party intervention.

- II. Some of the longest conflicts in the COMESA region have been propagated and elongated by competition over natural resources. Conflicts in the DRC and Sudan are a case in point where the conflicts have gone on for decades. This has added to the complexity as well as actors to the conflicts and in the case of Sudan, it resulted in the separation of South Sudan.

- b) Conflicts in the COMESA region are diverse and variously classified as internal conflicts, inter-state conflicts which are also internationalized. This has further complicated the process, duration, and success of mediation processes.
- c) A recent focus of the AU has been a resurgence of unconstitutional changes of Governments in Africa as well as an expansion on the threat of Terrorism as highlighted during an Extra-Ordinary Summit that was held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea in May 2022. The summit identified six countries affected by the Unconstitutional Changes of Government (UCG). With regard to terrorism, the 2022 Global Terrorism Report estimates that 50 percent of all deaths that occurred due to terrorism globally are from Africa. The same report lists out the countries most affected by terrorism globally and out of the twenty-seven (27) countries with indices that exceed 5.0, twelve (12) are from Africa with five being COMESA Member States.

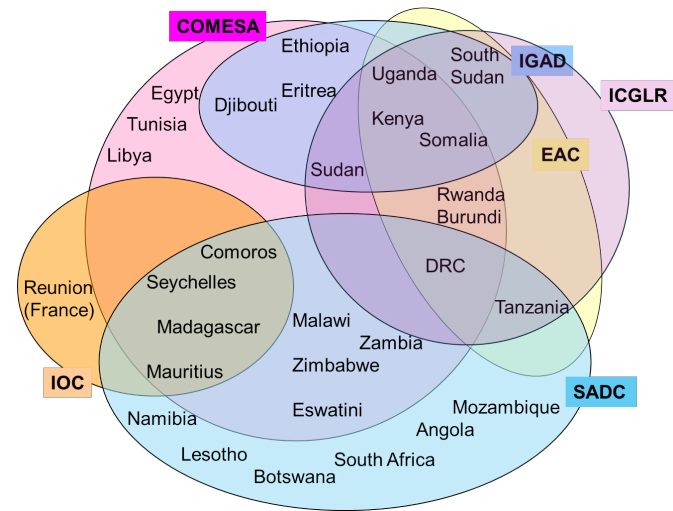
16. Despite the challenges faced in the region, some of the opportunities for COMESA include the increasing role, acceptance, and success of African mediation efforts which draw from the wide range of experiences from the past efforts. Secondly, there has been a general acceptance by the different actors to collaborate and form partnerships around mediation processes, which creates an opportunity for mediation processes to draw from different competences of different organizations and actors. Thirdly, there is goodwill from partners to collaborate in mediation efforts in the region.

### **The External Environment**

17. This Strategy considers the environment within which COMESA operates. It takes into account the multiplicity of actors that also have mandates for mediation and possess tools and varied capabilities. Where different actors exist in an environment, coherence is extremely important as well as efforts and opportunities for collaboration. This not only ensures effective and efficient mediation, but also the maximization of resources. The analysis of context and external actors is thus important in identifying an entry point in the process as well as identifying key and strategic partnerships. Some of the key external actors include the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU), Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Regional Mechanisms (RMs) as follows:
  - The United Nations (UN) has got the primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security. Its key organs include the Peace and Security Council charged with the role of determining the existence of a threat or an act of aggression. The UN normally employs diplomatic methods and failing

this, enforcement measures to ensure peace and security. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) is the deliberative policy making organ of the UN. With respect to preventive diplomacy the UN plays its role in conflict prevention using diplomacy, good offices and mediation.

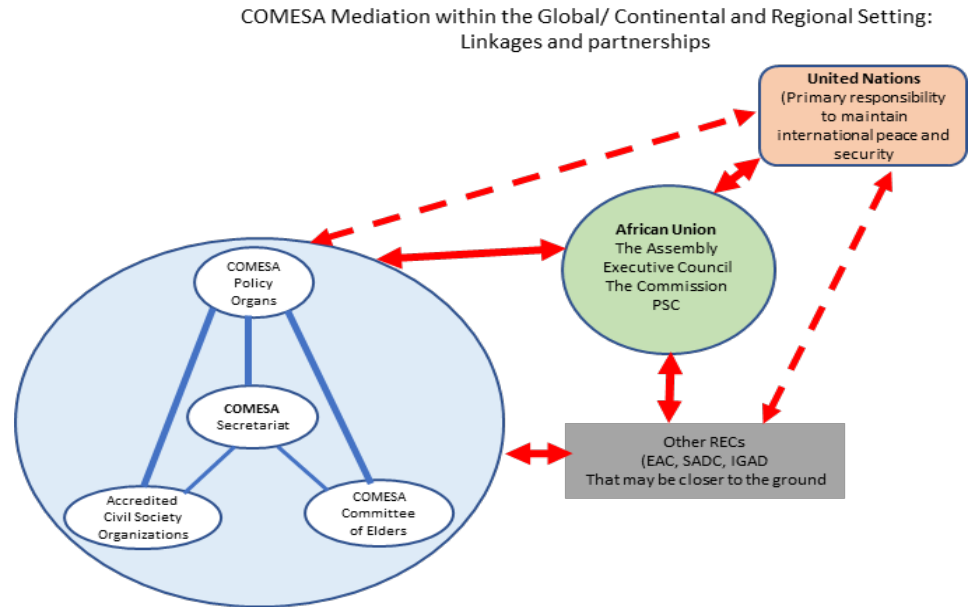
- The AU has the responsibility of maintaining peace and security in Africa. The AU Peace and Security Council was established pursuant of Article 5(2) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union. It is a standing decision-making organ for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts. The PSC is designed as a collective security and early warning arrangement to facilitate timely and efficient response to conflict and crisis situations in Africa. It is supported by the Continental Early Warning System, the Panel of the Wise and the African Standby Force.
- The 21 COMESA Member States also belong to other Regional Economic Communities (RECs). Eight COMESA Member States also belong to the Southern African Development Cooperation (SADC), four to the East African Community (EAC) and seven to the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). In line with Article 16 of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, these RECs also have a mandate on peace and security in many cases because they are closer to the ground. In addition, there are regional mechanisms for conflict prevention and management namely the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the Eastern African Standby Force (EASF).



#### **COMESA Internal Environment and Tools for Mediation**

18. COMESA Mediation efforts are anchored on its mandate on Peace and Security and Decisions of the COMESA Policy Organs. Several internal mechanisms, structures and stakeholders have been identified for this purpose including:
  - The structure on Peace and Security, which comprises of a Committee on Peace and Security, the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the Authority. These are the key policy making bodies;
  - The COMESA Committee of Elders, comprising nine eminent persons appointed from COMESA Member States to augment the office of the Secretary General with preventive peacemaking assignments;
  - The Secretary General, who can select eminent persons from the region for specific peace-making assignments

- Key programmes in COMESA such as the Conflict Early Warning System (COMWARN) and the Mediation Support Unit providing technical support from which COMESA mediation can draw;
- Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) accredited to COMESA provide valuable resources to peace-making assignments. In addition, COMESA works with several CSOs and think-tanks in line with Rule 14 of the Rules of Procedure and has established memoranda of understanding with some of these institutions for technical cooperation around mediation and peacemaking processes.



19. An analysis of the internal and external environments provides opportunities for linkages reflecting the mandate or primary responsibility of the other international actors and the need to adhere to the principle of subsidiarity. Collaboration and coordination, a key emphasis for the broad COMESA Peace and Security programmes, are also emphasized in this strategy. For most mediation exercises, the AU and UN work in close collaboration and consultation. Similar relations exist between the AU and relevant RECs/RMs. The COMESA Mediation Strategy ephasises a high level of collaboration and communication with the AU and relevant RECs. The levels of collaboration will, however, be case-specific.

### SWOT Analysis

20. The SWOT analysis provides COMESA with an opportunity to harness and optimize its internal and external strengths at the same time identify and appreciate the weaknesses, obstacles and challenges that may impede the smooth and effective implementation of the mediation strategy. Internal operational analysis of COMESA indicates that the strengths far outweigh the weakness, therefore, COMESA has the necessary technical impetus to implement the strategy.

## SWOT Analysis of COMESA

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A functioning mediation support structure</li> <li>• Existence of experienced and qualified mediators within the CCOEs framework</li> <li>• Robust Early warning system that augments the work of the CCOE</li> <li>• Strong legal and policy frameworks</li> <li>• Strong linkages and collaboration with AU and RECs</li> <li>• Resource packs already developed to support COMESA mediation efforts</li> <li>• Strong collaboration with Member States</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited linkages between COMESA mediation structure and national and grassroots structures</li> <li>• Limited funding for mediation efforts</li> <li>• Limited capacity building and training of experts to participate in conflict resolution efforts</li> <li>• Limited Recognition of the COMESA Committee of Elders in conflict situations</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong collaboration with CSOs, think tanks and research institutes in peace and security</li> <li>• Growing recognition of COMESA's role in conflict management and resolution</li> <li>• Successes of COMESA Mediation and fact-finding missions in the region</li> <li>• Strong networks with AU/RECs mediation mechanisms</li> <li>• Strong collaboration with strategic training institutions such as Accord and Clingendael institute</li> <li>• Availability of literature on mediation that provides key lessons and strategies</li> <li>• Existence of goodwill from partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newly emerging security threats in the region (terrorism, climate change and its impacts on piracy, transnational organised crimes and illicit exploitation of natural resources)</li> <li>• Proliferation of negative forces in the region</li> <li>• Proliferation of structural factors that drive conflicts in the region such as inequalities, unemployment, inflation and poverty among others</li> <li>• Volatile global trends</li> <li>• Emergence of pandemics such as Covid-19 that continue to re-orient programme implementation</li> </ul>



## Implementation of the Strategy

21. This COMESA Mediation Strategy (2023 – 2030) will be implemented through the following strategic areas:

### Enhancing Synergies and Linkages

- a) In establishing and strengthening synergies and linkages with other key partners including the AU and others at the regional, national, and local levels for mediation efforts, COMESA will be leveraging the necessary human and financial resources to avoid duplication of efforts, and acting in isolation. In doing so, the principles of subsidiarity, complementarity, comparative advantage, division of labour, and coordination, and coherence will continue to define the synergies and harmonization of COMESA mediation efforts with its partners.
  
- b) In enhancing synergies and collaborative efforts with the AU and RECs/RMs, COMESA as a REC will be fulfilling its role as a building block of the African Economic Community and its formal relationship with the AU is governed by Articles 33 and 34 of the AU Constitutive Act, the AU-RECs Protocol of 1998, Article 16 (9) of the PSC Protocol and the subsequent MoUs signed between the AU and individual RECs in the attainment of economic growth, promotion of peace, security and development. COMESA will endeavour to leverage on lessons learnt and best practices from past joint initiatives.

Source: Adobe stock



### **Supporting the work of the COMESA Committee of Elders Framework and other Mediation Stakeholders**

The work of the CCOE and other mediation stakeholders will be guided through capacity building efforts including facilitation of exchanges on lessons learnt and sharing of best practices with other similar organs. Capacity building workshops on mediation on existing continental and regional tools; regular provision of early warning information and reports and other relevant technical support by the COMESA Secretariat.

### **Dissemination of COMESA Mediation Strategy and Handbooks**

Dissemination of COMESA Mediation Strategy and Handbooks will be a priority. Specifically, the focus will be on the dissemination of the handbook on management of electoral conflicts and the handbook of management of natural resource conflicts. The dissemination of the handbooks will enhance the knowledge of mediators. It will further offer guidance to mediation actors, entities and supporting institutions on practices/strategies that can be employed when mediating conflicts, more specifically natural resources and electoral conflicts. The dissemination will be conducted using various forums and mediums at both regional and national levels.

### **Communication and Visibility**

The visibility of the work of the COMESA Committee of Elders will be done with objectives of enhancing recognition, creating and raising awareness of COMESA activities and shape and enhance the perception of COMESA's role in mediation and to build and encourage strategic partnerships. The target groups of the communications and visibility will include the COMESA Member States, the African Union and RECs and other strategic partners. The messages and tools will be made to suit the targeted audiences and will include press statements, digital and electronic COMESA newsletter and social media among others.

### **Resource Mobilization for Mediation Activities**

22. Resource mobilization is a key component of all the activities COMESA will undertake. The exercise will involve securing new and additional financial and other resources and make better use of and maximize existing resources. In addition, resource mobilization is key as it will:
  - a) Ensure the continuation of the mediation work COMESA will undertake; and
  - b) Support and ensure sustainability.
  
23. In undertaking resource mobilization for earmarked activities, COMESA will raise its own resources from its traditional and new partners. It will also seek partnership at joint resource mobilisation at the continental level with the African Union Commission's Panel of the Wise, and other like-minded institutions of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Regional Mechanisms (RMs). Resource mobilization efforts will also be undertaken with other key strategic partners including civil society, academic research institutes and think tanks.
  
24. Addressing issues of resource mobilization particularly funding, COMESA and its partners will address a critical aspect of the mediation efforts to ensure that adequate resources are available to sustain ongoing and planned key activities including preventive diplomacy missions, capacity-building activities such as training workshops and conferences, amongst others.
  
25. The Mediation Strategy for COMESA will be used as a tool to support COMESA's resource mobilization efforts.

### **Research and Development**

26. The everchanging character and trends of conflicts make them increasingly complex. This makes it necessary to develop sufficient knowledge for their management. This will be critical in the development of continental, subregional and national policy frameworks. Research and development will also enhance the development of new tools to enhance conflict resolution. It will involve partnering with think tanks and accredited CSOs in conducting thematic research and joint research and reporting with the AU and other RECs/ RMs. Symposia on emerging peace and security threats in the region will also be organized.

### **Entry Point for COMESA Mediation**

27. COMESA Mediation Strategy enables COMESA to support the prevention of existing and potential conflicts from escalating or from spreading geographically.

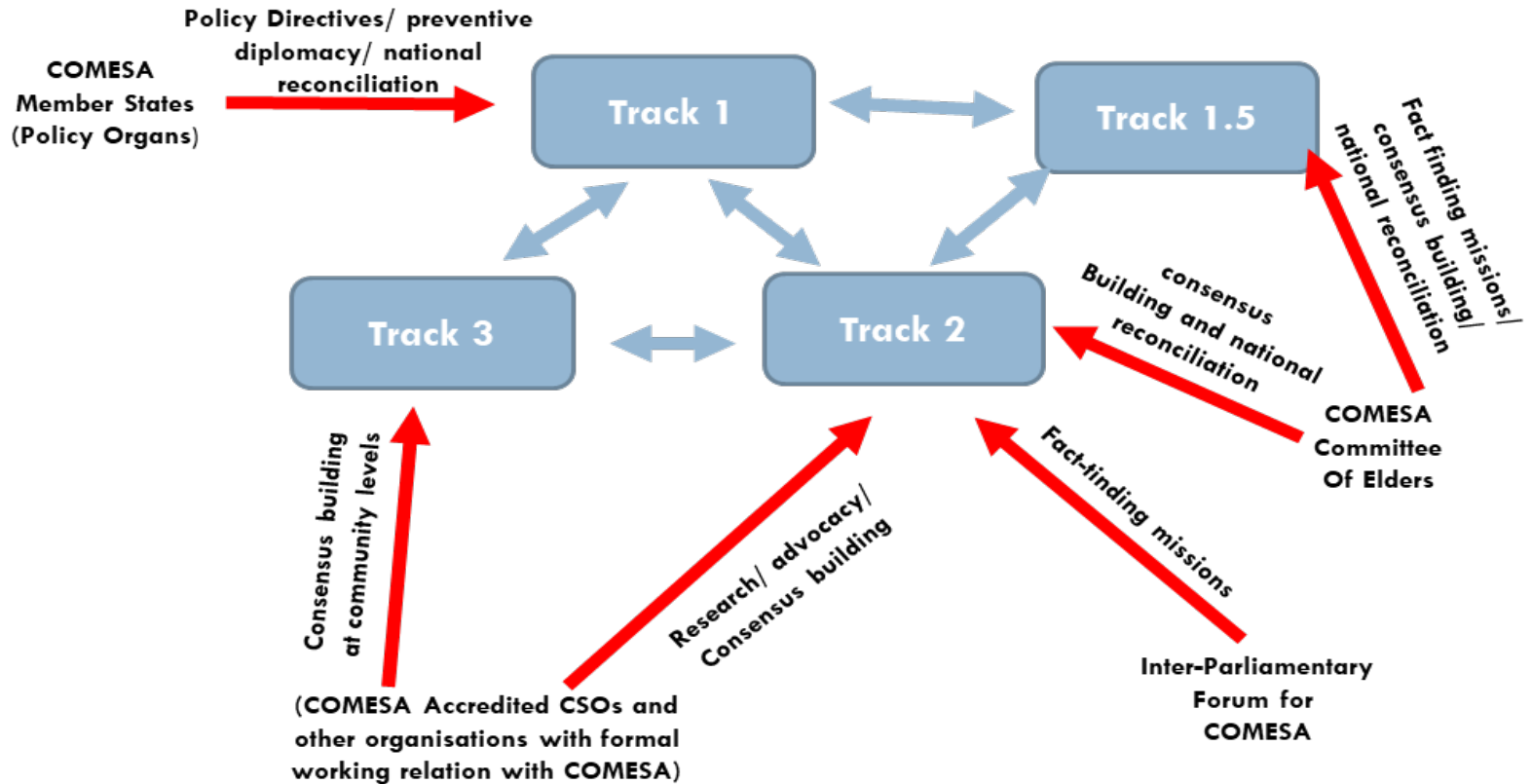
28. COMESA shares membership with SADC, IGAD, EAC and IOC, and is positioned to add value and support to the AU in preventive diplomacy and mediation. COMESA's comparative advantage is also informed by the types of conflicts and disputes dominating the region. Previous experiences have demonstrated the importance of good coordination between mediation actors and reducing differences in

messaging between different mediation processes which adversely affect outcomes.

29. Election- related conflicts and resource-based conflicts are dominant in COMESA region necessitating COMESA to develop handbooks for both types of conflicts. While taking the lead in some of the mediation efforts, COMESA will apply the principle of subsidiarity and comparative advantage to seek partnership with AU/ RECS/ RMs. During peace processes fact-finding missions and results from shuttle diplomacy of the COMESA Committee of Elders will feed into the peace processes. COMESA will support mediation efforts undertaken by other RECs, in line with the Summit Decision to avoid duplication of efforts. This will be done through sharing of information and mediation support. The existing close collaboration with the AU and any other REC will therefore need to be nurtured continuously.

30. The Inter-Parliamentary Forum, civil society organizations, researchers and think-tanks will be facilitated to play their supportive role as articulated in Rule 14 of the Rules of Procedure. Track 1 1/2 and Track 2 diplomacy through CSO networks or the Inter-Parliamentary Forum for COMESA will be used to build consensus around ongoing peace processes and ensure that these are owned by communities and thus prevent recurrences of conflicts.

## Actors and roles



## Action Plan Development

31. COMESA will develop an entry-point document for the identified areas of intervention. The Action Plan will seek to implement programmes and activities in these strategic areas. The outlined strategic areas include:
  - a. Enhancing Synergies and Linkages
  - b. Supporting the work of the COMESA Committee of Elders framework and other mediation stakeholders
  - c. Dissemination of COMESA tools and handbooks
  - d. Communication and visibility
  - e. Resource mobilization for **mediation activities**
  - f. Research and Development

## Monitoring, Evaluation and Documentation

32. Monitoring and Evaluation will be continuous throughout the implementation of the strategy. Lessons learnt will be documented to build on the progress and to strategically exploit the possible opportunities. The successful implementation of the strategy will depend on how the activities and outputs are effectively monitored and evaluated. Greater focus will be put on documentation and evaluation.
33. The entry-point document will include a comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework to monitor the planned processes for each intervention area on a continuous basis. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the action will be done against outcomes and outputs to assess the effectiveness of the programme. Evaluation will also be done at the end of each action to assess the effectiveness of the action and inform future actions. The Strategy will be implemented from 2023 – 2030 in line with the AU vision of “Silencing the Guns”. Periodic reviews of the Strategy will be undertaken.



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