

Concept Note and Agenda
High-Level Panel of Experts on
Africa and the reform of the multilateral system: Making Africa's voice count in the
process towards the transformation of the multilateral system

14 – 15 December 2023

Nairobi, Kenya

Today's world is characterized by shifts in global power relations, deepening geopolitical tensions, increase in impunity in the face of widespread disregard for international norms, the loss of trust in responsible institutions as they are hobbled by politicization and double standards, the climate emergency, rising socio-economic deprivation and conflicts and the cost of living and debt crisis.

These conditions have brought the world and the multilateral system to a cross road. Even before the current plethora of factors making the reform of the multilateral system an imperative, for Africa, the way the multilateral system, as organized and operated over the years, has not provided the space for its representation and voice in decision-making affecting the interest of the peoples and states of the continent.

As the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of Namibia reminded us in her keynote address during the consultation with the Africa Group in New York on the side-lines of the 78 UNGA, the prevailing architecture of the multilateral system has become outdated. It no longer reflects the current realities and power dynamics of the world.

In other words, the multilateral system suffers from serious crisis of legitimacy due to both the lack of representation of Africa and its disconnect with current realities of the world, including in terms of power relations and dynamics. The only way to address this deepening legitimacy crisis is to reform the system. The multilateral system has therefore to be made fit for purpose both in terms of redressing historical injustices and meeting current African needs as well as Africa's role vis-à-vis the increasingly multipolar power relations of the contemporary world.

Amani Africa and Namibia, under the leadership of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of Namibia, initiated a high-level process on 'Africa and the reform of the Multilateral System' bringing together leading African experts, policy practitioners and diplomats for providing relevant data and analysis as solid foundation for enabling AU member states to achieve common positions in their negotiation in various forums with respect to the reform of the multilateral system.

The High-Level Process on Africa and the reform of the multilateral system in the changing global order is an initiative of the Government of the Republic of Namibia and Amani Africa, with the aim of bringing together experts from different fields to examine the challenges facing multilateralism and articulate robust proposals reflecting Africa's position for a more

representative and fairer multilateral system that also caters for the interests of the peoples of the continent.

Apart from the convening of various consultations for collecting inputs and views of various stakeholders, a key outcome of the high-level process is the elaboration of a report that outlines Africa's ambition for a more effective, inclusive and just multilateral system that is founded not just on power but also the principles of equity, justice, global public goods thereby giving voice to, and catering for the interests and wellbeing of, all members of the international community.

The convening of the high-level panel in Nairobi, Kenya on 14-15 December, apart from taking stock of the process and the work undertaken thus far, will provide an opportunity for exchanging views on the current state of the global debate on the reform of the multilateral system. Most of all, it will serve as a platform for considering the draft that was prepared to serve as base document for the report of the High-Level Panel.

To help guide the deliberations of this meeting are the following questions:

- Where does the state of the policy discussion on the reform of the multilateral system stand today and what are the possible trajectories of this discussion?
- What are Africa's opportunities for making its voice matter in the policy negotiation on the reform of the multilateral system?
- How should Africa go about in its pursuit of the reform or transformation of the multilateral system? What are the lessons from successful and unsuccessful attempts at reform or transformation in terms of the strategies that Africa should deploy?
- What are Africa's main asks from the proposed reform or transformation of multilateralism?
- What kind of transformation of the multilateral system that would ensure that Africa's interests for achieving the development aspirations of the peoples of the continent should be articulated particularly vis-à-vis the transformation of the financial, economic and trade architectures of the multilateral system?
- How to ensure the defense and strengthening as well as updating of existing African common position on the reform of the multilateral system, specifically as encapsulated in the Ezulwini Consensus in the face of new and emerging global developments? How best can the Africa Group become the catalyst for seizing the opportunity the ongoing debate has availed for the reform of the UN Security Council?
- What else apart from securing permanent and veto holding membership in the UNSC would facilitate Africa's meaningful role and agency in the maintenance of international peace and security, including in Africa?

Draft Program

Day 1

14 December 2023

- 08:45 Registration and arrival of guest of honour
- 09:00-9:10 Welcoming remark Dr Solomon Dersso, Founding Director of Amani Africa
- 09:10-9:25 Opening remark by Ambassador Shaanika Jerbeam, Deputy Executive Director and Head of the Multilateral Department of the Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation of Namibia
- 09:25-9:50 Keynote Address Dr Korir Sing'Oei, Principal Secretary, State Department for Foreign Affairs of Kenya
- 09:50-10:10 Discussion
- 10:10-10:30 **Group Picture and coffee break**
- 10:30-10:50 The current state of the policy discussion on the reform of the multilateral system and the pathways for reform
- 10:50-11:00 Reflection/response
- 11:00-11:30 Discussion
- 11:30-11:50 Recent developments around the reform of the Security Council: Insights on AU's C10 summit held in Equatorial Guinea
- 11:50-12:00 Reflection/response
- 12:00-12:30 Discussion
- 12:30-14:00 **Lunch**
- 14:00-14:45 Presentation of the draft text for the report of the High-level Panel
- 14:45-15:00 Reflection/response
- 15:00-15:30 Coffee break
- 15:30-16:45 Discussion
- 16:45-17:00 Recap of the day

Day 2

15 December 2023

- 09:00-9:45 How to make AU's membership in the G20 work for Africa
- 09:45-10:30 The New Agenda for Peace and Africa
- 10:30-11:00 Coffee Break
- 11:00-11:30 Discussion on revision and updating of the draft report
- 11:30-12:00 Discussion on next steps and plans for dissemination
- 12:00-12:15 Closing
- 12:30-14:00