

Africa Center for Strategic Studies

Africa Logistics Forum



Program Summary

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
CASE STUDIES	6
Ebola Virus Disease Response.....	6
Force Intervention Brigade, MONUSCO	7
African Union Mission in Somalia and the UN Support Office for AMISOM.....	8
TOPICAL ISSUES	10
Strategic Lift Capabilities and Capacity	10
Prepositioning of Stocks and Logistics Bases	11
Contingent Owned Equipment.....	12
Contracting and Procurement Processes	13
Leveraging Donors and External Partners	14
CONCLUSION.....	15
SPEAKERS.....	16

- - - Executive Summary - - -

There are currently ten internationally mandated peace support operations occurring on the African continent. Each of these missions include African uniformed personnel within the multinational force contingent. For several of these missions, African Troop Contributing Countries (TCC) were the first responders from the international community. The African Union and the AU member states have repeatedly demonstrated the political will and resolve to respond to emerging threats, crisis and insecurity on the continent. However, converting political will and resolve into responsive and effective interventions requires a sound logistics foundation.

Reestablishing peace and protecting civilians is critically dependent on the ability of Africa's security sector to respond in a timely manner, get troops and supplies to areas of greatest need, establish reliable communications infrastructure, relocate vulnerable and affected groups, and sustain those efforts. This is the realm of logistics. Whether preventing the outbreak of violence, responding to humanitarian crises or carrying out peace support operations, African countries and regional organizations need to have effective logistics arrangements in place to support these activities. Immature logistics institutions, at both the national and multinational level, cause delays and inefficiencies in both response and execution that can undermine regional security.

Within this context, the Africa Logistics Forum (ALF) 2015 was held from 23-25 June, 2015 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The forum was hosted by the African Union Peace Support Operations Division (PSOD) and co-sponsored by the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS) and United States Africa Command (AFRICOM). There were a total of 80 participants representing 38 African nations, five European countries, Canada, United States and representatives from the African Union, European Union and United Nations. The purpose of the forum was to examine continuing logistics challenges confronting African crisis response operations and identify strategic recommendations to strengthen systems, procedures, policies and practices at the national, regional and international level.

The ALF 2015 format consisted of case study analysis, debate on select topical issues, and small group discussion to formulate feasible and achievable solutions. The forum examined three case studies: Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) response, Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) MONUSCO operations in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the relationship with the United Nations Support Office for AMISOM (UNSOA). Specific topical logistics issues paneled for discussion were: Strategic Lift and Movement, Prepositioning of Stocks and Equipment, Contracting and Procurement, Contingent Owned Equipment (COE), and Working with Donors and Partners.

During case study presentations at ALF 2015 a number of trends and issues were identified that shaped and informed the recommendation process. These included:

- Need for improved coordination between the African Union and the United Nations during the deployment planning process
- Need to improve the bureaucratic contracting processes within the African Union to facilitate more rapid response to an emerging crises

- Utility of private sector partnerships to improve asset management and logistics infrastructure in contingency operations
- Leveraging local sources of supply
- Utilization of commercial contractors for strategic lift requirements
- Disconnect between Mission command and control and Logistics command and control during multinational operations
- Mismatch between TCC COE availability and COE needed for the mission and the threat environment
- Need to update UN and AU doctrine and protocols to match reality of current operating conditions and threat

Likewise, the topical panels identified a number of relevant issues and trends that also informed the recommendation process. Some of these included:

- Utility of collective arrangements to coordinate and share airlift requirements and resources
- Standing contractual arrangements with commercial carriers to support emergent lift requirements
- Assessments of port, rail and road networks to complement airlift in designing strategic movement plans to support contingency and crisis response operations
- Determining the correct scale and scope to ensure a cost effective AU continental logistics base (CLB)
- Identifying the linkages between regional logistics bases and a CLB with respect to roles, responsibilities and requirements
- Improved interoperability and commonality critical to effective use of prepositioned stocks
- Need to reduce supply chain dependency during contingency operations through the use of commercial contracts and local sourcing
- Accessing private sector inventories versus military logistics bases for just-in-time supply
- Disconnect between AU and national priorities with respect to acquisition strategy and COE. Different force requirements for national mission versus AU missions
- UN COE policy not designed for kinetic or asymmetric nature of current threat and operating environment (e.g. 10% allowable overage insufficient)
- COE tables need to be better aligned with reality of mission environment/conditions
- AU and African TCC need to provide input to UN COE working group as a collective, pushing a consensus product/model

Based upon the discourse and group dialogue that occurred in plenary, the breakout group discussions yielded a number of recommendations. These included:

- Build a database of strategic lift capabilities and capacities (not just assets) residing with AU member nations that can be factored into the framework of an AU Continental Movement Coordination Center (CMCC).
- Regional Economic Communities (REC) develop an agreed upon list of common equipment (prioritize communications), stocks and supplies that are either generic, interoperable or interchangeable for use and consumption by member nation security forces. Use this list for prepositioning of supplies and establishment of regional log bases and/or work with private sector to establish contingency contracts.

- AU should develop a partnership and cross-servicing agreement with the UN to access prepositioned stocks and supplies from the UNLB in Entebbe, Uganda.
- AU should conduct a revision of the Africa Standby Force Logistics Manual to more accurately represent the realities of crisis operations and trends on the continent.

Upon conclusion of the ALF 2015, there was general consensus on an agreed upon way ahead. Specifically, the AU PSOD, in partnership and with support from the U.S. Africa Command, will continue to convene a bi-monthly Africa Logistics Council (ALC). The council, comprised of stakeholders from the AU, Regional Communities and International partners, will coordinate the efforts of several working groups to develop action plans for the attainment of identified objectives. The following existing or planned working groups identified are:

- AFRICOM-AU Logistics Working Group
- Strategic Lift Working Group
- CLB Working Group
- COE Working Group
- Somalia Logistics Working Group
- Sahel Multinational Planning Group

The ALF 2015 was conducted under a strict non-attribution policy. This allowed participants to contribute and exchange views without reservation, thereby creating an effective and productive learning environment. Correspondingly, the content outlined in this program summary represents a distillation of the information, issues and recommendations put forward during guest speaker and panel presentations, plenary group question and answer sessions, and breakout group discussion and debate.

The next Africa Logistics Forum tentatively scheduled for 12 – 16 April 2016 at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) will review the progress made over the course of the next 12 months by the Council and the respective working groups.

- - - Case Studies - - -

Trends over the past two decades indicate the emergence of a new model of peace mission formulation in Africa whereupon the AU and African TCCs serve as a *de facto* advance UN intervention and stabilization force. The examples of Sierra Leone, Liberia, Darfur, Central Africa Republic, and to some extent Mali and Somalia, have all involved early intervention by African militaries followed later by a transition to a UN mandate and subsequent increased international participation. Although national, sub-regional and regional security interests are primary drivers of this trend, the result is that the African Union and its member states face daunting logistical challenges in this model of peace mission development. As first responders, they deploy into an environment with no established mission support infrastructure. Lacking the UN's resources and developed institutions (such as UNDPKO and DFS), the AU must rely upon a combination of TCC self-reliance and international/donor support. The three case studies discussed and analyzed at the ALF15 focused on logistical challenges facing African led intervention and offered recommendations to address the identified challenges.

Ebola Virus Disease Response

As evidenced by the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) humanitarian crisis in West Africa, this AU as first responder paradigm is not limited to just peace operations. The African Union recognized quickly that a health crisis can rapidly transform into a security and economic crisis. At the African Union Peace and Security Council meeting on 19 August 2014, the African Union Support to the Ebola Outbreak in West Africa (ASEOWA) was established as an AU-led military and civilian humanitarian mission to support affected member states to fight EVD. It was not until 30 days later that the United Nations Security Council established UNMEER (UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response).

The stated mission of ASEOWA was to contribute to the ongoing efforts of the national and international community to stop Ebola transmission in the affected member states, prevent international spread and rebuild health systems. ASEOWA organized around four areas of support to accomplish this mission. The first, financial and logistical support, was critical to enable AU efforts and channel resources into the affected states. Reaching out to development partners, AU member states, the RECs and the private sector, the AU was able to rapidly raise \$55 million USD in funding for the ASEOWA mission. The second area of support was in the form of human and technical capacity strengthening. The AU deployed approximately 900 medical and non-medical personnel from eleven different AU member nations. Third, the AU provided political leverage to assist in coordinating/easing border restrictions and travel bans, and helped organize international assistance efforts. Finally, ASEOWA recognized the need for a Post-Ebola recovery plan and initiatives to strengthen health systems and institutions in the affected states.

The AU EVD response was laudable for its immediate recognition of the severity of the problem and quick response (The AU deployed its first contingent within 26 days of the AUPSC resolution); however, the effort was not without challenges.

- The AU struggled with internal bureaucratic processes and procedures to contract supplies and services in a swift manner for emergent requirements.
- Internal coordination and communication challenges within the AU compounded already weak supply chain management practices.

- The need to incentivize “volunteer” response resulted in 69% of ASEOWA funding spent on salaries for deployed personnel.
- Reactive national policies resulted in border closures and travel bans slowed the response of medical professionals.
- Coordination among international/external actors in the affected area was less than ideal resulting in a lack of complementary assistance and leveraging of resources.
- Weak and fragile health infrastructures in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea lacked capacity to absorb and prioritize the massive influx of external aid and assistance.

The United States Department of Defense authorized Operation United Assistance (OUA) to assist collective United States Government (USG) efforts to contain Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in Liberia and West Africa. OUA provided unique military capabilities and networks needed to assist in the humanitarian effort. The initial US DOD deployment focused on immediate response in the areas of: training medical personnel, establishing Ebola Treatment Units (ETU) and Ebola Testing Labs (ETL). In support of the international effort to combat EVD, the US military supported the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the designated lead U.S. federal agency for the EVD response. The military helped establish the theater by initiating actions to build the supply pipeline, conducting initial engineering efforts, leasing equipment and contracting for runway repairs at Roberts International Airport in Monrovia, and establishing the main aerial point of debarkation (APOD). In total during OUA, the US DOD let over 400 contracts totaling \$120M.

The US military deployment validated the positive role security forces can play in augmenting and supporting a civilian led international response to a humanitarian crisis. Whereas military deployment planning often focuses on armed intervention, OUA highlighted the need for improved planning, preparation and coordination during permissive environment operations. Specifically, procedures to expedite land use agreements with the host nation and local governments and policies within the host nation bureaucracy to waive customs and import requirements to allow for the rapid inflow and onward distribution of critical medical supplies and equipment during humanitarian crisis.

Force Intervention Brigade (FIB), United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO)

The creation of the FIB within MONUSCO adds an interesting wrinkle to this idea of African nations acting as first responders to crises on the continent. The FIB is composed of three African countries, Tanzania, Malawi and South Africa; each are also members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) regional grouping. So while MONUSCO is a true international force involving over 50 different nations, the emergent requirement to rapidly address the M23 threat fell upon a select group of African states from one of the African RECs.

The FIB is technically a sub-unit within MONUSCO, therefore operating within a mature logistics theater. In spite of this, the FIB still experienced many of the same logistics challenges that participants in ALF noted in other missions on the continent.

First was the issue of doctrinal diversity between the FIB mission, mandate requirements, existing UN protocols and structures designed to support traditional peacekeeping operations. The

mandate calls upon the FIB to “operate unilaterally or jointly with the FARDC, in a robust, highly mobile and versatile manner and in strict compliance with international law to prevent, neutralize, and disarm negative forces in in eastern DRC.” Conducting mobile and kinetic operations in a hostile environment generates different equipment and logistics requirements than a standard PKO mission, and in the case of FIB most of this burden falls upon the TCCs. The FIB receives a logistics push from the UN, but frequently lack the ground assets to move resupply forward. Additionally, there were limited local procurement options for life support supplies; and for those options that did exist, the FIB lacked multinational contracting mechanisms to procure those supplies and services from the private sector.

Common in peace operations is a dual command and control (C2) structure; where operational command and control is multinational, but logistics C2 remains within the national/TCC structure. In static and less kinetic missions, separate C2 structures for operations and logistics is workable, in combat operations less so. While lack of commonality and interoperability between TCC contingent owned equipment (COE) is the primary reason why parallel C2 structures exist in multinational operations, it is not reason enough to accept its continuance.

The FIB Force Commander possessed limited control over TCC logistics operations. This lack of integrated logistics support planning and execution hindered effective operations. Without centralized C2 to provide logistical situational awareness (e.g. operational readiness rates for key end-items, availability of spares, medical support, classes of supply shortages, etc.), the result is lack of unity of effort and the commander’s inability to see resources available to conduct operations.

It was also noted that the greatest challenge associated with lack of interoperability was in the area of communications. TCCs can communicate within their contingent, but cross country/contingent communication is hindered by lack of common equipment thus contributing to decentralized C2 for the multinational force commander. Finally, within the FIB, as in many multinational operations, there was a reluctance to share intelligence between TCC, nor was there an effective mechanism for intelligence fusion at FIB HQ. This compounded the inability of the FIB commander to exercise centralized logistics C2; good intelligence helps in anticipating logistical requirements and ensuring the right prioritization of assets.

African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the United Nations Support Office for AMISOM (UNSOA)

The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) is a regional peace support mission established by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union on 19 January 2007. The principal aim of AMISOM is to assist the Federal Government of Somalia in its efforts to stabilize the country and foster political dialogue and reconciliation. AMISOM is also mandated to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid and create necessary conditions for the reconstruction and sustainable development of Somalia. The strength of AMISOM uniformed personnel stands at approximately 22,000. This includes both soldiers and police. The bulk of its troops come from six countries: Uganda, Burundi, Djibouti, Kenya, Ethiopia and Sierra Leone.

The United Nations Support Office for AMISOM (UNSOA) marks the first time a regional operation was financed from the UN's assessed peacekeeping budget. AMISOM benefits from a UN logistical support package, bilateral donations, and voluntary contributions to a UN managed trust fund in support of AMISOM. This support arrangement is designed to cover the gap between limited AU and TCC resources and the actual costs necessary to maintain and sustain the AMISOM contingent.

Currently, UNSOA provides combat service support for 22K AMISOM and 10.9K Somali National Army (SNA) personnel. While formed out of necessity, the hybrid nature of the arrangement creates some challenges and constraints. First, there are neither mechanisms nor dedicated resources to provide reimbursement to TCCs for costs associated with self-sustainment. There are MOU in place between the AU and the TCCs that address reimbursement, but the AU does not have the funding available to actually reimburse. As such, most TCC conduct minimal level 1 logistics on contingent owned equipment (COE). Furthermore, the UN is not an MOU signatory, nor involved in drafting the MOUs between TCCs and the AU. UNSOA is responsible for providing logistical support for TCC equipment, yet it does not have a say in shaping the equipment package a TCC deploys into theater.

The result is a mismatch in equipment between what the TCC can provide and what is necessary to conduct operations in a difficult mission marked by extreme environmental conditions and a complex security situation. The AMISOM TCCs arrive in theater mostly "as is" rather than "as needed." For example, when comparing AMISOM to other UN missions, a standard UN TCC would be asked to provide 42 trucks (utility cargo, recovery, tractor, water tanker, etc.), yet in AMISOM some of the contingents arrive with no trucks. The same issues apply with respect to vehicle trailers, level 1 medical facilities, forklifts, generators and other critical logistical support equipment. It is clear that lack of reimbursement equates to lack of leverage (for both AU and UN) in shaping TCC force structure to mission requirements.

The UNSOA logistics support concept is a hub and spoke model where supplies are delivered to sector hubs and then the TCC is responsible for moving to battalion forward operating bases. However, the lack of trucks combined with poor road networks and high threat to ground movement hinders the "spoke" part of the concept. In theory, battalions in the same sector could share equipment as per a tasking from the Force HQ, but logistics enablers are not adequately addressed in TCC MOUs, nor is there a multilateral approach whereupon the AU cross-coordinates TCC MOUs in an effort to distribute enabler requirements across the MNF. A common thread that emerged from each case study is that greater centralization of C2 at the MNF HQ and improved coordination amongst all stakeholders (TCC, international organizations, and external partners) is critical to improving logistical capacity.

- - - Topical Issues - - -

The ALF addressed five priority issues for improving logistics capacity in Africa. The first was strategic lift and the movement of personnel, equipment and supplies. Second, was prepositioned supplies and forward logistics bases. Third, Contingent Owned Equipment (COE) and the challenges associated with COE suitability, availability, readiness and sustainment. Fourth, effective asset management strategies for crises response and the responsible stewardship of limited resources for procurement, acquisition and contracting of supplies and services. Fifth, international cooperation and effective strategies to prioritize, leverage and manage the range of security assistance offers from external partners.

Strategic Lift Capability and Capacity

Few AU member nations possess the aircraft and resources required to self-deploy into a peace operation. Nor do they have the requisite operational and tactical airlift capability to support forces once operating in a mission environment. The result is that the AU is forced to rely on external partners and donor support for both airlift and/or the resources to contract airlift. There is consensus on the need for a more predictable and systematic approach to address airlift requirements.

The Movement Coordination Centre Europe (MCCE) offers an example of a collective approach to meet strategic lift requirements. The MCCE is an independent organization comprised of 27 member nations. The MCCE facilitates the sharing of lift resources among members, providing visibility on availability, capacity and scheduling of worldwide movements. The MCCE monitors and manages reimbursement cost transfers between members and each member pays a minimal annual fee to cover personnel and operating costs of the MCCE. The MCCE coordinates the sharing of all aspects of strategic lift: air transport, sealift, inland transport and aerial refueling. As noted, the MCCE is an independent body with a steering board, but not a legal entity, and as such does not have the authority to enter into contracts. Contracted lift is let by member nations or international organizations (e.g. EU, NATO, and UN) and then managed by the MCCE as another sharable resource.

There are aspects of the MCCE concept that are applicable within the context of Africa; however, the model as whole does not lend itself to replication by the AU as a best practice to address strategic lift challenges. This is primarily due to the uneven distribution of lift assets and resources among AU member nations, but also a function of poor AU visibility on inventory, availability, capacity, scheduling and infrastructure beyond the national level. The AU is establishing a Continental Movement Coordination Center (CMCC) whose purpose is to control and coordinate mechanisms for the use of strategic lift capabilities pledged for AU missions. The AU's highest priority is the utilization of AU member states' organic strategic lift assets, with any shortfalls in capability supplemented by contracted commercial assets or partner assistance. The AU set a goal of 1 October, 2015 to have an initial operating capability (IOC), and will exercise the CMCC concept with a Strategic Airlift Pilot Project during Exercise Amani Africa II scheduled to occur in South Africa in October, 2015.

While the preponderance of discussion during the ALF centered on airlift, it was recognized that strategic lift encompasses air, sea and ground movement. Similar challenges of

uneven distribution and capacity of assets, resources and infrastructure constrain a collective approach to managing ground movement and sealift, same as with airlift. The AU recognizes the need to build and maintain an active and accurate database of strategic lift capabilities on the continent. This will require the political will and openness of member nations to readily share information on strategic lift resources and availability, and agreement upon a mechanism for reimbursement and/or cross-servicing arrangements for shared services. This is the #1 issue to keep working throughout the next year through the Africa Logistics Council and associated working group.

Prepositioning of Stocks and Logistics Bases

In 2010, the African Union approved a concept for the establishment of an AU Continental Logistics Base in Douala, Cameroon. However, logistics bases are a resource intensive endeavor that require rigorous effects-based planning and a cost-benefit analysis to justify their establishment. The AU Continental Logistics Base (CLB) has failed to materialize mainly due to cost and scale of concept. Estimates for implementation of the CLB concept were projected at \$19.5 million USD for the renovation and construction of facilities in Douala and \$10M in annual operating costs. A CLB on this scale is not feasible for the AU. Therefore, the AU reduced the scope of the CLB concept to focus on the prepositioning of equipment and supplies necessary to rapidly establish a Mission or Force Headquarters (MHQ/FHQ). The priority equipment and stores stocked are containerized or tented HQ structures, C3I equipment, water treatment units, generators, a Level II medical unit, and vehicles. Other required equipment will be acquired with a just-in-time procurement model utilizing commercial contracts. Equipment for TCCs will continue to be a national responsibility supported/supplemented using a Regional Logistics Depot (RLD) concept. The RLD will be the responsibility of the respective sub-regional organization (e.g. SADC, ECOWAS, CEMAC, etc.). There is a need to identify the linkages between regional logistics bases and a CLB with respect to roles, responsibilities and requirements.

There is gradual recognition of a disconnect between standards and expectations for deployment timelines and readiness levels specified in the Africa Standby Force mission support concept and the reality of what is feasible and achievable for the AU and its member nations. TCC self-sufficiency is not a viable approach, nor is the idea that a CLB can provide instant access to all necessary equipment and supplies. The AU way-forward calls for a review of the ASF mission support concept and better definition of expected roles and responsibilities for the CLB, RLDs and TCCs. Specifically, it was suggested to reduce the standard for TCC self-sufficiency from 30 days to 10 days and facilitate a quicker transition to contracted life support services.

Moreover, there is an identified requirement for organizational training on asset management and accountability of prepositioned stocks. One of the planning assumptions is that international partners will play a significant role in resourcing the implementation of CLB and RLD. There is also recognized potential in enhanced cooperation with the UN. The UN maintains the UN logistics base in Brindisi, Italy (UNLB) as well as the Regional Service Centre Entebbe (RSCE) in Entebbe, Uganda. This is the #2 priority issue to keep working throughout the next year through the Africa Logistics Council and associated working group.

Contingent Owned Equipment

The challenges associated with Contingent Owned Equipment (COE) are often perceived as the most pressing need to improve effectiveness of African participation in crisis interventions. There was near consensus that many TCCs do not arrive with adequate equipment, the right equipment for the mission, or have sufficient maintenance capability to maintain operational readiness. There is a perception among African military and defense officials that the lack of reimbursement, or delayed payment of reimbursement, is the root cause of many COE challenges. While there is a measure of truth in that; it is also an oversimplification. Reimbursement does not necessarily result in a direct monetary payment to the military, or show up as an addition to the defense budget. Therefore, reimbursement is not directly linked to a commander's ability to improve COE availability, readiness or maintenance capability.

COE challenges are often exacerbated by poor policy decisions and practices. TCCs do not send their best equipment, not wanting to add wear and tear on organic equipment needed for national security requirements. Moreover, equipment provided by donors for use in contingency operations is usually not compatible with existing national supply chains and maintenance technician skills and training. Even in instances where donors provide equipment with a spares package and a contracted maintenance package, while this may increase capability in the short term, it does not ultimately improve institutional capacity unless donated equipment is interoperable with existing inventory or integrated into a life-cycle management strategy. It was noted that there can be a disconnect between the AU priority for types and quantities of equipment and supplies TCCs should have on-hand and available, and the national priorities for how their defense force should be equipped. The AU values expeditionary equipment appropriate for multinational peace and crisis operations. National priorities are more often focused on internal missions or homeland defense. This dynamic impacts matching a TCC COE package with the AU mission requirements.

There are a number of AU member states that have routinely over several decades provided troop contingents to UNDPKO missions. However, this experience is not as beneficial as it might seem with regard to providing troop contingents for an AU-led mission. The current AU COE policy and the UN COE policy is not similar or aligned. In fact, most participants at ALF agreed that the AU COE policy is mostly irrelevant since it does not provide reimbursement. The UN uses a penalty system to withhold reimbursement as a disincentive for poor maintenance or inadequate equipment availability/readiness. No such "stick" exists for the AU since the AU does not pay reimbursement (the carrot).

Regardless, it was noted that the UN COE policy in its current form might not be the best fit for adoption by the AU. The UN COE package is not optimized for the asymmetric nature of threats faced in African peace operations. For example, the UN allows for a 10% overage on equipment and stocks, this is inadequate for most missions on the continent. The one-size-fits-all approach is not an effective method of a COE equipment package. COE tables are too generic and must be better aligned with mission conditions. Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) are key to effectiveness. The MOU between the UN/AU and the TCC should negotiate the appropriate force size, structure and equipment based upon the threat and environment.

Finally, there was near consensus that there is a need to review the Africa Standby Force framework. Originally developed in 2003, the 6 scenarios for ASF deployment have not corresponded to the actual conditions and experiences facing the AU over the past several years. Likewise, the AU's Force Logistics Support Group concept exists only on paper and not in reality. The ASF framework review should focus on what is realistic and achievable given the current and expected future threats and challenges in order to improve COE availability, readiness and sustainment. This is the ALF #3 priority issue to keep working throughout the next year through the Africa Logistics Council and associated working group.

Contracting and Procurement Processes

Peace operations depend upon the procurement, acquisition and contracting of supplies and services. The AU, TCC and MNF Commander have a responsibility to ensure contracts are requirements based, cost effective, open and transparent, and flexible enough to meet the uncertainties of deploying and operating in austere and remote environments. Waste and lack of transparency compromise the efficacy of logistics planning and execution. Finding the optimum balance between organic capabilities and contracted services is important for crisis intervention planning and execution. Frequently the default practice for many TCC is to insource, or attempt to insource, with the result being shortages and less than ideal operational readiness levels.

The first step in identifying whether to insource or outsource is to prioritize requirements. Priority needs must be met to ensure mission success and life support (shelter, medical, food, water, etc.). In these areas, outsourcing and leveraging joint solutions make sense to reduce and eliminate shortfalls. Joint solutions can involve two or more TCC sharing services and support on a contract, negotiating with a vendor for inclusion on an existing contract in the mission area, or multilateral contracted support under a contract let by an international organization (UN, AU, EU) or an external partner/donor. Joint solutions are more cost efficient and also frequently more operationally efficient, but not without challenges and constraints. Principally, issues of interoperability and equipment commonality, but also perceptions of responsiveness and lack of national control prevent greater utilization of joint contracting solutions. A recurring theme throughout ALF was the recognition of the need to improve interoperability (particularly at the sub-regional level) and develop an agreed upon baseline for common user supply items. These are key steps for improving and creating efficiencies in the procurement process.

There is a relationship between strategic lift challenges and the contracting and procurement process. Recognizing the limitations on available lift assets, the AU and respective TCC must look at ways to reduce mass and volume during crisis interventions. A suggested approach is to establish the leanest possible supply chain between the home country and the mission area. In lieu of a national supply chain, the TCC or MNF relies more heavily upon forward procurement and integrated private sector arrangements.

An integrated private sector arrangement equates to a standing contract where the commercial sector agrees to make available specified quantities within specified timelines. This requires a high quality technical MOU/contract with the supplier. Availability norms and contractual levels of risk must be taken into consideration. Outsourcing along these lines requires technical expertise. It is recommended that the AU centralize such expertise.

Forward procurement and local procurement is often not utilized to maximum potential during interventions. This is a function of uncertainty of availability, quality concerns, and reluctance to include forward procurement assumptions into the mission planning process. However, experience indicates that there is usually more capacity for local procurement than initial planning factored; in particular in the areas of rations, fuel, oil, tires and some vehicle spares (for commercial type vehicles, i.e. 4x4 trucks). To take advantage of forward procurement, and ensure accountability with responsiveness, requires institutionalized process and procedures. Unit commanders must be empowered to make procurement decisions on short notice and without cumbersome approval chains, yet by the same measure, national authorities need confidence in a system that provides transparency and reduces opportunities for corruption. One recommendation to improve local procurement efficiency and accountability is the development of a mobile phone based application (app) for use by trained contracting officers and commanders.¹ This app would have standardized contracting language, databases on supplies and prices, and integrated checklist and approval processes.

Leveraging Donors and External Partners

Within the AU and among TCCs, there is an ongoing struggle between the desire for self-reliance and the reality of the need for external resource support. The advantages of self-reliance are autonomy, predictability, and less complexity; however, self-reliance does not need to be an all or nothing proposition. TCCs can and should prioritize the areas in which they would most benefit (both in terms of national and regional interests) from self-reliance. For example, battalion equipment sets that are tailored (make, model, type) to their defense force organizational structure and doctrine, and supported by national supply chain management systems. However, common user supplies and services that are either interoperable or expendable can be more readily provided by external partners or commercial contracts. As part of the strategic planning process, both the AU and the TCCs should consider the appropriate balance between capacity building versus capacity substitution.

External assistance and support must transform from a donor-recipient relationship to a true partnership. Effective partnerships are based upon an understanding of the interests of all involved, identifying key areas of shared and mutual interest, and prioritizing requirements to leverage the best-fit partner with the best capability/resource for the identified requirement.

¹ It was noted during ALF 15 that South Africa is currently working on such an app.

--- Conclusion ---

This iteration of the Africa Logistics Forum provided participants the opportunity to examine and explore continuing logistics challenges in Africa's security sector. Through case studies, topical panels and small group discussions, the forum achieved several important objectives:

- Identify and then connect strategic initiatives with operational outcomes using insights from current peace operations occurring on the African continent.
- Identify logistics needs and align those needs with achievable and realistic initiatives. Focus on collective approaches to strategic and operational movement of personnel and equipment and asset prepositioning and forward logistics bases.
- Address institutional resourcing and effective asset management strategies for crises response. Focus on responsible stewardship of limited resources and best practices, processes and procedures to meet logistics requirements in an accountable and transparent manner.
- Explore mechanisms to strengthen logistics management capacity, focusing on continental institutions (AU and RECs) and the strategic planning necessary to leverage external support.

The forum met its intended goal of strengthening strategic leadership and reestablishing the way-ahead for implementation of logistics systems required to support security interventions, peace operations and humanitarian assistance across Africa. Next steps include:

- Africa Command support to the AU leadership and ALF participants through the hosting of bi-monthly Africa Logistics Council meetings.
- Continued dialogue and discussion within existing and planned working groups aligned to the African Logistics Council. Identified working groups are:
 - Strategic lift working group
 - Continental Logistics Base working group
 - Contingent Owned Equipment working group
 - Somalia logistics working group
 - Sahel multinational planning group
- ALF 16 is planned for 12-14 April 2016 at the KAIPTC in Accra, Ghana.

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