

Box 3.6.1 The African Standby Force: Progress 2007

It has been four years since the African Union adopted a policy framework and a roadmap for operationalization of the African Standby Force (ASF) as part of a broader continental security architecture. On completion, the ASF will be composed of five regional, multidisciplinary (military, police, and civilian) standby brigades. As defined in the policy framework, each brigade will be equipped to address six intervention scenarios, which among others include: providing military advice for a political mission, and intervening in situations involving war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. Under the roadmap, AU policy for the ASF will be developed in two phases. The first phase, initially planned to be completed by 30 June 2005 (since extended), focuses on developing the strategic-level management capacity of the AU and the regional economic communities to undertake peace operations under Chapter VI of the UN Charter, and/or preventive deployment. The second phase focuses on developing the strategic management capacity of the AU and the regional economic com-

munities to undertake complex peace operations, including robust military intervention.

While the somewhat ambitious target dates for operationalization of the ASF could not be met during 2007, policy formulation at the AU strategic level progressed remarkably during the year. This work, undertaken in close collaboration with the regional economic communities, has produced a uniquely African doctrine, established a set of standard operating procedures, and created logistical procedures, training and evaluation procedures, and command, control, communication, and information systems. Further policy development was pursued in formulating the ASF concept for rapid deployment, a continental ASF training plan to be completed in 2010. The year 2007 also saw the conclusion of a feasibility study on the development of ASF continental and regional logistical depots, which will support future ASF deployments. These policy instruments, which were developed with the technical and financial support of the AU's international partners, especially

members of the extended Group of Eight, are pending approval by the African chiefs of defense and security.

Plans are under way to commence verification of the operational readiness of pledged troops from the various subregions. In 2006, eastern, western, central, and southern Africa made troop pledges of 3,500–4,000, 6,500, 4,000–6,000, and 3,655 respectively. It is crucial that verification begins in earnest in 2008 if the 2010 deadline for complete operationalization of the ASF is to be met. At the end of 2007, a draft document spelling out the verification method and process had been formulated, but was yet to be discussed with the regional economic communities.

Meanwhile, efforts to establish an initial planning capacity for the ASF at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa registered modest progress, as several staff officers were recruited. However, the process of replacing the ASF's first chief of staff, General Ishaya Isah Hassan, who died in late 2006, has been very slow, leaving a gap in strategic military guidance for the ASF.