



Select Committee on International Relations and Defence

Corrected oral evidence: The UK and Sub-Saharan Africa—prosperity, peace and development co-operation

Wednesday 12 February 2020

11.40 am

Watch the meeting

Members present: Baroness Anelay of St Johns (The Chair); Lord Alton of Liverpool; Baroness Blackstone; Baroness Fall; Lord Grocott; Lord Hannay of Chiswick; Baroness Helic; Lord Mendelsohn; Lord Purvis of Tweed; Baroness Rawlings; Lord Reid of Cardowan; Baroness Smith of Newnham.

Evidence Session No. 6

Heard in Public

Questions 56 – 63

Witness

I. Professor Tim Murithi, Head, Peacebuilding Interventions and Extraordinary Professor of African Studies, University of Free State, South Africa.

USE OF THE TRANSCRIPT

1. This is a corrected transcript of evidence taken in public and webcast on www.parliamentlive.tv.

Examination of witness

Professor Tim Murithi.

Q56 **The Chair:** I formally open the second of the sessions this morning and welcome Professor Tim Murithi, Head of the peacebuilding Interventions Programme and Extraordinary Professor of African Studies at the University of the Free State, South Africa. Thank you for taking part and sharing your expertise with us via video link today. If at any time you find that the volume level slips, please remind us and my colleagues and I will ensure that we speak straight into the microphones. I remind everyone that the whole of this session is broadcast. There will be a transcript and everything is on the record.

Professor, as is usual, I will ask the first, rather general, question and invite you to answer. After that, I will turn to my colleagues and they will put more detailed questions to you. What is your assessment of what motivated African states to establish the African Union back in 1999? How effectively do you believe it has developed in the following two decades? For example, looking at today's circumstances, how strong a force is pan-Africanism in contemporary African politics?

Professor Tim Murithi: Thank you very much and thank you for inviting me to share some thoughts with you this morning. The African Union and its evolution must be placed in a much broader historical context. There have been movements to promote pan-Africanism dating back several centuries. We can go back as far as the 18th century and find written ideas and thoughts on the establishment of some kind of African union. A lot of the writing was done by Africans who were part of the diaspora and were not actually based in the African continent.

If we fast-forward to the 19th century, much more elaborate thinking was done on this in America and Britain, culminating in a conference in Manchester in 1945. The second Pan-African Congress was held in England. At that time, quite a number of African leaders were studying and working in the UK, so they were able to attend and articulate their views. If we fast-forward to 1963, we had the establishment of the Organisation of African Unity, and in 2000 the establishment of the African Union.

The key driving force was a desire to begin to address continental challenges, using Africa's own initiative, resources and personnel. However, I would say that a triggering event was the 1994 Rwandan genocide, for which African countries found themselves really unprepared. They were ill equipped to address that conflict and genocide. They issued a very honest report through the Organisation of African Unity, which was the predecessor of the African Union, stating that they needed to do something dramatic to make sure that this did not happen on the continent again.

That was one of the driving factors. In fact, if you read the 2000 Constitutive Act of the African Union, it has a very strong emphasis on addressing conflict on the African continent. It has a strong emphasis on

preventing conflicts and intervening in a timely manner. In fact, it empowers the African Union to intervene in situations of grave concern, when crimes have been committed—war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide. That is in the Constitutive Act of the African Union, showing that it was motivated to a large extent by this agenda.

In parallel, there were economic processes going back to 1980 that also led to a strong case for regional integration and economic collaboration across borders. These are the multiple forces or drivers that brought everything to a head with the establishment of the African Union in Libya in 1999.

Pan-Africanism as a force in contemporary African politics is not as strong as it should be. That is very clear. On the international stage, African leaders will always profess the need to work together with fellow African countries, but when it comes to domestic issues they retreat to their cocoons and prefer to be left to do what they will in their own countries. This is natural; we see it in many other countries around the world. The forces of nationalism and a state-centred approach in dealing with issues are still very strong.

However, over the last four or five years, we have increasingly begun to see some shifts and developments that will lay the foundations for a much deeper and more entrenched pan-Africanism. I am thinking about the African Continental Free Trade Area that was adopted in July last year in Niamey, Niger, and the protocol for the free movement of people.¹ That has not been fully ratified by the requisite number of countries, but it is a document on which countries appear to be pushing forward and which would open up the continent for travel, labour, trade, business, holidays and so on. That would alter the game.

So you still have this tension between the need to operate as a continent on the global stage and the desire to contain and control situations within the domestic realm. That is where we are. There are these trajectories, but on balance I would say that pan-Africanism will become much more of a force going forward. If we think of the next 10 years, once this continental free trade system is in place; or if we project to 2063, which I think we will discuss shortly, we are looking at a period of time in which the generation that leads the African continent will be very different and will think differently. I will stop there.

The Chair: Thank you, Professor. In your closing words, you led us to the next question very fluidly.

Q57 Lord Grocott: Thank you very much for that introduction, Professor. Let us look forward now to Agenda 2063. In many ways, it is potentially such an optimistic document or agenda, full of possibility, but the tough bit, as always, is likely to be realisation. Could you illuminate a little the capacity of the African Union to achieve some of these objectives? What role can it

¹ The Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment

play in achieving some of the very exciting objectives included within that agenda?

Professor Tim Murithi: The AU's performance over the last 20 years has been a mixed bag. There have been some areas in which it has performed quite strongly and tried to be quite proactive. We will talk about peace and security. There have been a lot of challenges as well, in terms of inefficiencies, capacity, professionalism, and all that—and funding, obviously.

However, the AU has begun to change the nature of the game on the African continent, even with unconstitutional changes of government. Across the continent, you will find that this phenomenon is quite strongly frowned upon and that is a significant shift. There has also been a degree of proactive intervention in countries that are facing crisis, so you will find some form of AU intervention in quite a number of countries.

Agenda 2063 exists because it was part of the celebration of 50 years of the Organisation of African Unity, which lasted for 39 years, and the African Union, which was its successor. As part of this celebration, the African leaders decided to project forward. In typical African fashion, they did not want to do things in small measures, so these are quite flamboyant and very ambitious projections for 2063. It is necessary from an African perspective, because the pace at which change is coming has been very slow, so it is important to have a vision of where we need to get to as a continent.

So, yes, Agenda 2063 is quite ambitious. It has seven aspirations relating to prosperity, peace, infrastructure, development, increased collaboration on trade, socioeconomic development, education—that kind of thing.

That is a necessary vision, as I say, for a continent with so many challenges. The question, as you state, is about implementation and accountability for implementing. At the moment, the biggest challenge is that African governments are still conducting this African Union project, if I can call it that, and their regional integration processes, as if they are a concern only for the governments. So there is an interesting issue there of the absence of fully engaged citizens in the process.

If we think of sub-Saharan Africa, with 700 million or 800 million people, that is not a small ask for governments, but unfortunately the culture within the governmental structures has been to pay lip service to civil society and civic engagement, not to fully utilise the potential of people. We have a lot of expertise, we have know-how, technology and ideas of how to make things happen. But governmental systems—I think you are familiar with this in your context—are quite slow to turn things around.

The biggest challenge would be to transform the African Union, which is the vehicle for achieving Agenda 2063, into a much more efficient machine, a much more effective operator to deliver the desired outcomes. In fact, there has been a strong critique from the member states themselves of the limitations of the AU and we are now in a phase

of significant African Union reform. A document has just been considered at the recent summit in Addis Ababa, which has done a root and branch culling, a tree surgery, of the African Union Commission and its departments: some mergers, some cullings and designation of powers to certain actors to be more efficient and appropriate to get things done.

There, we already see a shift towards coming out with more technocratic solutions to ensure that the organisation is more efficiently delivering on what is required. That is the challenge. Without that being done, the danger is that we might get to 2063 without fulfilling a lot of the aspirations that lie within the document. It is a cultural shift that needs to happen within the African Union and within the mindsets of our African leaders, particularly in the way that they engage with their societies and how they bring them on board with this project and encourage them to be key players and actors in driving this agenda forward. Citizens have been willing, there is no question about that. I have been a part of a lot of these networking civil society initiatives to try to open up the African Union. Regrettably, one of our biggest challenges has been getting the space for civil society to come and engage, share ideas and put forward solutions for how we can become more effective at solving problems.

The Chair: Thank you. I invite Baroness Fall to ask the next question.

Q58 **Baroness Fall:** Thank you. I would like to focus more on the conflict resolution goal of the African Union, which, as you said, is an ambitious and important one. You have written very persuasively about the importance of Africa taking ownership of that role itself.

For all the empowerment, do you feel that there are not only the resources but the political will to enforce that difficult role and what do you think are the challenges on the ground? Do you think that sometimes these powerful regional forces tend to go in and do the work? Do you think that that will continue or whether the African Union will rise to the challenge and be able to do conflict resolution itself?

Professor Tim Murithi: This is the fundamental question that the AU is facing, ultimately. The African Union took a very bold step in 2016 to generate more resources by levying 0.2% tax on imports. That 0.2% tax on imports from all 55 countries would be transmitted directly to the African Union to be utilised as part of its peace fund to operationalise and see through a number of peace operations and peace-building interventions taking place across the continent.

That was a deliberate move by the leadership of the AU at the time. It has met resistance among some countries, but, to date, a number of countries have transferred resources to the AU, and we have in the kitty approximately \$100 million—which is a departure from the past for the African Union. It has traditionally relied heavily on donors, partners—largely from the global North—to finance not only its programmes and interventions but its professional staff.

That has not changed dramatically yet. When you do a surgical analysis of the AU, it still very much relies on external funding from donors to

achieve its goals and agendas. But this shift is happening: 2016 is only four years ago, the culture has now moved towards much more autonomy, self-determination and self-written agendas. Hopefully, we will begin to see a shift in the culture. That is the hope of the majority of African citizens.

The political will has been demonstrated by taxing Governments to finance the process. The challenges remain within the institution: general professionalism, necessary capacity, insight, knowledge and skills to undertake peacemaking, mediation interventions, peacebuilding interventions and peacekeeping operations. As you know, there is quite a number of AU liaison officers but also some AU peace missions, such as in Somalia, with the AMISOM force, which is based there.

On the issue of the so-called Regional Economic Communities, which are the groupings of states within the regions of Africa, it is very important to understand that the Regional Economic Communities are, in fact, building blocks of the African Union, in the way that the DNA of the AU is structured. These are not separate actors. Some of them operate like separate actors. The West Africans have been doing this for some time. ECOWAS² has been in the game much longer than much longer than the AU has been in existence—35 or 40 years. For that reason, ECOWAS, the West African grouping of 16 states, has moved quite far ahead. Sometimes, the way it relates to the African Union is tense, because it states, “We know how to do this. You need to stop catching up: we will show you”.

So the relationship between the AU and its regional groupings on the notion or basis of subsidiarity is still a work in progress. Also, cultural shifts need to happen on both sides. That requires strong leadership in the African Union to pull it off, because if the AU simply tries to impose its will in a conflict or crisis where in fact, the comparative advantage rests with the regional organisation, we will just have more chaos and challenges.

An example is the South Sudan crisis, where the regional grouping in the Horn of Africa, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development—IGAD—led the process leading to a peace agreement in South Sudan in 2011, which subsequently in 2013 and 2015 ended in the breakout of violence. Still, the African Union has struggled to relate to these regional groupings, but we have seen much better movement. A key decision made about a year ago by the summit was to convert the June-July Summit of the African Union into a co-ordination and implementation summit, working directly with the regional economic communities. This will not be a regular summit but a very businesslike one where all the actors come and decide, “What have we said we will do? Where are we at? What are the chief challenges? What are the blockages? Let us go forward on the basis”.

² The Economic Community of West African States

The issue has been to be much more proactive. The culture has been very reactive to crisis, almost waiting until it is too late to intervene. But this is something the African Union is trying to change and to shift the agenda going forward. Thank you.

- Q59 **Lord Hannay of Chiswick:** Professor, you recognised in your previous answer that there is a resource problem in peacekeeping in Africa that inhibits African peacekeeping under the African Union, or indeed under the sub-regional organisations, from being able to operate to the fullest effectiveness. Presumably, you would recognise that sometimes the increasing sophistication of the military equipment needed to conduct a peacekeeping operation also presents problems.

What do you think about the various hybrid operations that have been undertaken in recent years—in Somalia, for example, with AMISOM being very prominent but getting very strong support from the UN and the European Union; in South Sudan; in the Democratic Republic of Congo; and in the Central African Republic? All these variants on hybrid operations seem likely to be needed to continue for quite a period of time—not for ever, obviously, because the hope must be that Africa will be able to manage peacekeeping and conflict prevention on its own. However, could you comment on these hybrid operations? Do you think they are being managed reasonably effectively? Do you think that they should be built into all the non-African countries' future policies towards Africa?

Professor Tim Murithi: Thank you for that question. The different issues that you have mentioned have been beset by major operational challenges and administrative inefficiencies in addition to the resource question and the question of technical capacity. There was a plan to ensure that we have a robust African Standby Force, as it is called, made up of five continental brigades. That was originally due to be launched in 2010. Subsequently, it was put back to 2015 and now it has pretty much fizzled out.

Here, you see the politics of nationalism at play against the desire to have a pan-African force that can intervene when required. This is all linked to nation states wanting to assert their authority and not being forced to accept intervention. I mentioned the Constitutive Act of the African Union, which empowers the AU to intervene when it perceives a crisis. This is the African Union intervening of its own volition.

The common practice of peacekeeping or peace operations has always been to seek the permission of the Government of the day before intervening. That has become the practice. The creation of the African Standby Force was perceived by some countries as a potential threat that would undermine national sovereignty, but it was designed precisely as an entity that would be able to intervene in crises. When there is a crisis and Governments target their own people, as is happening as we speak in Cameroon, the African Union becomes almost impotent or is neutralised by this attitude, culture or mindset. So there is bit of work to be done to shift that thinking.

The operations have been beset by challenges because there is not the commitment to set up a force that can intervene and has the planning elements, logistics base and airlift capability in all the five regions, as was originally planned. Then you have these hybrid-type interventions, as we saw with the African Union and the United Nations in Darfur, the Central African Republic and Mali. These are not provided for in the AU's construct, so it is a difficult one to address and resolve, because it really requires a mindset shift.

The AU's partners can play a role in placing an emphasis on increased internal capacity that is homegrown and located on the continent. That would be a win for everyone. Then you would not have to require NATO to airlift on the hoof, or the Russians to come in with their Antonovs and lift troops all round the continent where required. This is part of the ongoing shift that needs to happen. It needs to happen urgently and should have happened already.

AMISOM in Somalia was mentioned. It has not been effective in consolidating peace, securing a platform for stability or peacebuilding or national reconciliation. As a consequence, we see al-Shabaab—violent extremists—still operating in Somalia and also being able to project force in the region. Kenya was hit last year in the centre of Nairobi, and it has happened before—in 2015.

Unfortunately, the countries of the continent also need to shift their ways of operating, realising that a conflict crisis in one country has a spillover effect in neighbouring countries. The unit of analysis is no longer the nation state. These are regionalised conflicts and conflict systems, so we need to shift away from the focus on trying to fix a particular nation state towards a regional approach that also ensures that the different spoilers who hide out in neighbouring countries sit around the table and are engaged and involved in trying to come up with solutions. Again, there is a lot of work to be done there to bring about these changes.

Q60 Lord Alton of Liverpool: Professor Murithi, thank you for your introduction to this session today. Perhaps I can explore something further on the back of what Lord Hannay has just asked you about. It is not so much about the intervention role of UNAMID³ or one of the forces on the ground but about the role of the African Union in transitional justice. By way of illustration, you mentioned that the African Union itself was born on the back of the horrific Rwandan genocide, when 1 million people died. Immediately after that, Darfur happened and 2 million people were displaced. Only this week, new figures have come out showing that a further 48,000 people have been displaced since December, 14,000 of whom have gone to Chad. That, of course, has a devastating effect on whole regions and countries, with mass migration.

There is also the question of bringing to justice those responsible. We have heard this week that the authorities in Khartoum will send Omar al-Bashir for trial at the International Criminal Court in The Hague. For

³ The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

many of us, that is a very welcome decision. What is the relationship between the AU and African countries, particularly South Africa, and the International Criminal Court? How do you see people in countries such as Eritrea or Somalia, or militias such as the Lord's Resistance Army and others, including Joseph Kony, who was indicted by the ICC? How do you see justice working so that others will not feel that they can commit similar crimes with impunity in the future, not least as you now look at the potential for genocide in parts of Nigeria, Cameroon, as you mentioned, Burkina Faso and Burundi?

Professor Tim Murithi: Thank you. I heard your question on transitional justice but the sound was breaking up a bit during the last question, although I think I got the gist of it.

The African Union has adopted its Transitional Justice Policy. I would recommend that you read it; it is only 26 pages long. You will see the broad range of interventions that it has put on the table: access to justice, redress, accountability and the restoration of human dignity. It emerged through a lot of hard work by a number of civil society organisations, dating back to 2010 when we began to engage the African Union on adopting this policy.

The challenge has been that the notion of transitional justice is very misunderstood among African governments. In fact, there was a time in the last 10 years or so when there was a spate of confrontations between the African Union and the International Criminal Court. Many Governments associate transitional justice with the ICC and international criminal justice, but that is a misunderstanding or misformulation. By the way, the African Union still has a policy of non-co-operation with the ICC—so the Sudan referral was a very interesting break with the AU's current position. It will be interesting to see how that plays out going forward. It is also linked to local domestic politics and that needs a bit of unpacking.

Very briefly, this transitional justice policy has four dimensions: the recovery of the truth about what happened; the processes of justice, including punitive, criminal justice and restorative justice—the latter is designed more to restore human dignity on South African model, as with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission here; the processes of reparation and restitution; and the institutional reform of constitutional and judicial systems, the security sector, the military, intelligence and so forth. That is broadly what transitional justice tries to achieve, and I would say that it is vital for all 55 African countries, without exception.

In South Africa, we are in the middle of a project of transitional justice. Kenya had the 2007-08 electoral violence and had a process of transitional justice with the Kenyan Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission. Zimbabwe has faltered, going back and forth trying to have a process, but in the Zimbabwean constitution, there is a National Peace and Reconciliation Commission that is constitutionally mandated to address crimes such as the Gukurahundi of the 1980s.

Without transitional justice, many African countries will not be able to move forward. In fact, many countries around the world will not be able to move forward without addressing their unresolved grievances and trauma—that is the objective, essentially—and changing the structure of government and power and the distribution of resources to build more inclusive and much more democratic societies. This is where Africa will have quite a number of challenges going forward. Over the next five, 10 or 15 years, the core business of the African Union will be enabling all these countries that have emerged from crisis and conflict to put in place processes, mechanisms and institutions to address historical grievances and injustices.

Access to justice is absolutely crucial. The ICC is still in the so-called doghouse as far as the African Union is concerned, but the situation in Sudan opens up a very interesting avenue for dialogue and perhaps a coming together or consolidation of efforts between the African Union and the ICC. But there is no real sign of that yet, so the issue of access to justice for victims is still an open question. The African Union has experimented with ad-hoc tribunals, such as the Extraordinary African Chambers in Senegal, which tried the former dictator of Chad, Hissène Habré, for his crimes in the 1980s.

The African Union has also adopted its own protocol to combat war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. It is enshrined or embodied in what is called the Malabo Protocol which, once ratified, will empower the African Court of Justice and Human Rights, which is based in Arusha in Tanzania, with the ability to prosecute individuals for these crimes. That fits within the rubric of access to justice for victims—but, as I said, this is still very much a work in progress and the relationship with the ICC is still very tense, so there is much more work to be done.

A balance between the restorative processes within countries and the formal criminal justice processes is requisite for moving forward. We cannot have either one or the other, or have one process dominating the other, because every country's situation is different. If you impose a certain approach, you are bound to come across resistance and you might even make a pretty bad situation worse. We certainly do not want to achieve that. But this policy is a milestone, so I would encourage you and your colleagues to read it. It is available on the African Union's website and is easily downloadable. I can see you have smartphones on your desks, so you can easily download it quickly and read through it on your way home this evening.

The Chair: Thank you. Your observation skills are perfect. I am sure my colleagues will be very careful to follow your advice and use their phones to access the information that is so vital to the Committee. I now turn to Lord Purvis.

Q61 **Lord Purvis of Tweed:** Thank you, Professor. You may give us homework after this question, as well. I will ask it in two parts. The first part is about the AU's relationships outside Africa, primarily with what might be considered the key strategic blocs of the USA, China and the

EU. How would you characterise those relationships? Are they conducted in a similar way, or are there differences in how the AU approaches them?

The second part of the question is on the AU's relationship with the UK and the UK's Memorandum of Understanding with the African Union. We understand that there are a number of similar documents outlining the relationships between the AU and other countries, separate from large blocs. Would the UK's MoU be similar in scope and have the same kind of characteristics? Would it have the same kind of depth as some of the other MoUs or documents that outline relationships with other countries?

Professor Tim Murithi: Thank you. Quite a number of countries have been engaged with the African continent. It is always difficult to come up with a typology of interaction and engagement. As citizens, we are not necessarily privy to all the back-room negotiations between governments, but we get snippets about things that have been done.

The relationship with China is fairly robust and quite strong and it is one based on mutual interest. The Chinese built the headquarters of the African Union in Addis Ababa *gratis*, to the tune of \$120 million, and they are still maintaining it. That comes with its own challenges, because the computer technicians within the African Union recently found that a lot of the information that was being downloaded on to the servers in the building was being transmitted to China directly. That is nothing new; it has been happening and it does happen.

If we break this into two camps and expand it a little, there is an extractive model, and a much more collaborative, solidarity model. The relationship with the European Union has been perhaps the most productive. It is based on trying to put less emphasis on the asymmetries between the organisations. If you compare the AU and the EU, it is chalk and cheese. They are two very different organisations, just in the sheer number of staff: the EU has 20,000 and the African Union has 1,500 to 2,000. It is not nearly as big.

The relationship with the EU has been based on trying to come up with joint strategies and joint frameworks of operation. On that basis, compared to the UK memorandum, the EU is much more elaborate, if you will, in its approach. I should mention a few individual countries, such as Germany and France, some of whose interests are motivated by different agendas. The French, for example, have historical links to the African continent. They have been anchoring the currency of 14 African francophone countries, and that is now being challenged and changed. The French also have military interests in the African continent. They have the ability to intervene based on a whole range of different bilateral relationships with countries, particularly in west Africa, so that is more of an extractive relationship, I would say.

With Germany, there is a very long-standing relationship. In fact, Germany was one of the few countries that was there at the inception of the African Union, pushing an agenda for strengthening peace and

security processes. The Chinese built the main headquarters of the African Union, and the Germans built the Peace and Security Department building, with all the latest technology. Germany has a very extensive programme on peace and security, democracy and governance, human rights and the Pan African University. The Germans are quite committed to the project and have put a lot of resources into it. They are quite well-known for their operations in relation to the African Union system.

The Nordic countries are also quite dominant, particularly Sweden, Finland, and Norway. Denmark is not so involved. Then there is another category, which perhaps includes the USA, the UK, Japan, Turkey and, more recently, Russia, which convened a summit of Heads of State in Sochi and Putin summoned African leaders to go and meet with him.

It is a mixed bag. Some relationships are more balanced; others are quite asymmetrical. Some perhaps have hidden agendas; others are quite open. Right now, I would say that the Nordic countries and Germany are quite open about what they are trying to achieve. They obviously also want to be able to access markets in the African continent, so there is an element of that. I think there is an element of wanting to be able to access the African Continental Free Trade Area in all the relationships. That is a game changer and will really open up the continent to trade, as will the protocol on the free movement of people and the Single African Air Transport Market initiative. These mean that countries are now looking to position themselves to take advantage of these potential openings.

All trade relations are asymmetrical at the moment; they are not in favour of the African continent, but against it. That is problematic, because the mind shift, or mental reframing, of these relationships that is required is urgent, in terms of no longer replicating the historical relations of colonialism, for example. There is a challenge within the African continent in that relationships are still perceived as top-down, and are asymmetrical in that sense. The incentives are being put on the table and countries are being told to take it or leave it. When you do not have a lot, you will probably take it more often than you leave it, but that has other ramifications, including for the wider well-being of society and the fact that people are not involved in some of these very intimate deliberations.

The UK-AU Memorandum of Understanding is quite brief; I have a two page document with me, but I have not seen anything longer. It speaks about reconfiguring the relationship with Africa, which is good. Colonialism is a fact of history; we cannot escape that. A lot of African countries are still grappling with that and trying to move on from it. Unfortunately, in major speeches, we hear references to the lingering effects of colonialism—just as we did at the Silencing the Guns summit in Addis Ababa—and I think we will continue to hear them.

With Britain moving into a post-Brexit era, there is scope to establish a relationship on a slightly different footing, one that is more engaging and responsive to the interests of both sides and not too top-heavy. A lot of

good things can be done. Some are quick and easy to do; there are low-hanging fruit relating to visa restrictions for business professionals, and so on, which could really alter the game. The migration challenge is linked to the crisis in the African continent, so there is a joint concern to try to address these issues.

The one thing that stood out very strongly in the UK-AU Memorandum was on page 2: "The two sides agreed to work together to promote ... an equitable and inclusive rules-based international system". That has been one of the biggest gripes of African countries, particularly those that have served in the United Nations system. They have felt that Africa is not on an equal footing as far as the international system is concerned. We are beginning to see pressures on the international liberal order, with quite a number of countries backsliding to much more repressive, authoritarian forms of government. There is a need to push forward as a collective group of actors and this could be a potential working area between the UK and the AU.

A rules-based system has to be based on equality. It is 2020 and the United Nations was established in 1945. We are almost sitting back and waiting for someone to do something, but nothing is happening, so we need to put in a bit more effort to try to bring about a shift in thinking. We need some new policy ideas on the table, if the liberal order established in 1945, 75 years ago, is not succeeding in helping the planet. I am talking about environmental issues, such as climate change, global warming and the fires in Australia. Global migration is another crisis, with some 68 million refugees; that is more than during the Second World War.

There is also the issue of illicit trade, and so on. The global institutions we have at the moment are failing the whole planet. I would say that there is an enlightened self-interest from the UK's perspective to ensure that the collective—the planet, in fact—survives. The problem is that, as one of the P5 of the UN Security Council, there is very little incentive for the UK to try to alter the status quo.

I do not know if, as another piece of homework, you could try to convince your government ministers to start thinking outside the box about how we can change this system and still retain the benefits of being members of this body. If we continue along these lines, we are simply waiting to point fingers at each other and nothing will get done; the world will become a much more difficult place to be. In 2005, the African Union put forward a proposal saying that it needed consensus on having two permanent seats on the Security Council, but that was roundly dismissed, frozen and pushed aside. That still lingers in the mindset of African countries, particularly the dominant countries in the African continent.

So, what is your homework? It is to review again Article 109 of the United Nations Charter and to try to trigger it, from your perspective. As a Permanent 5 member, you have much more influence as a country than some of the individual African countries in the United Nations. Article 109 says that the UN Charter should be reviewed every 10 years.

There was an attempt to review it in 1955, but that did not happen. It was stopped—killed off. Now we are in the 21st century. It is 2020 and we have the fourth industrial revolution and artificial intelligence. Surely we must make an effort to alter the game. It might not be a priority for the UK, but African countries often hark back to this as an issue that is a manifestation of historical asymmetrical relationships.

There are different political ideologies, and different parties will have different perspectives, but for the sake of the planet and to prevent environmental chaos and destruction in the future, this is something that we should put our collective minds to. In terms of the UK-AU Memorandum of Understanding, I would like that section to be broken down a little.

The Chair: Thank you. Our last question is going to enable us to build on that. As I work towards a mind shift, I turn to Baroness Smith.

Q62 **Baroness Smith of Newnham:** Thank you, Professor Murithi. This has been absolutely fascinating. You have been responding to the British position, as we have asked you to do, and you have talked about the strengths of the African Union.

However, I would like you to think of the situation the other way round—about how influential Africa can be in the international order. In particular, you spoke about the UK-AU Memorandum of Understanding. To what extent does the rules-based liberal international order reflect what African countries want? You have talked very passionately about climate change and about how we should think of doing something there, but does the rules-based liberal international order resonate with the African states or is it something that is coming from the West? To what extent do you think African countries have agency within the UN? Does the AU enable African countries to have a voice?

You also talked earlier about China. It is one of the P5 countries, like the UK. It has also invested heavily in various parts of Africa. As you said, China might be listening in to what is going on in Africa. To what extent is there any attempt to persuade African states to vote in a particular way in the UN?

Professor Tim Murithi: Thank you. I will start with your first point. Africa undoubtedly has huge potential to be a very influential actor on the global stage. Part of what is going on now is that African countries are trying to find themselves. They are trying to have a unified voice on issues that are global in nature. As I mentioned, there is a tension there. But you simply need to think of the population of 1 billion, and add North Africa and the amount of natural resources that we have in minerals, as well as the landscapes, and the ingenuity of Africans. Many Africans are world thought leaders on a number of issues. The potential is absolutely massive.

Africa is not a poor continent—it has been impoverished by the extractive agendas that have been played out over a very long time. The reason they are still being played out is that our political and business needs

have become part of the equation of extracting resources from the African continent for their own benefit. Some people might say that that is just good business but, in the sheer damage that it causes in destroying communities and depriving societies of access to education, healthcare and infrastructure, it has been absolutely devastating.

Right now, South Africa is going through a process called Zondo—the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture by Zuma and his cronies. It has historical links to a time before Zuma and the apartheid regime. So it is not new and it is not one person's fault, but this culture of extraction for private accumulation is extremely powerful on the African continent. The biggest fear among civil society actors is that the countries that want to engage with Africa do so with a similar mindset. That is very problematic. You can access a number of quite critical articles and opinion editorials that speak of the so-called 'new scramble for Africa'. The current generation, particularly young Africans, do not want to see that type of relationship going forward.

If Africa can get its house in order and its act together, it can become a powerful player on the global stage. In terms of the United Nations system, Africa has the largest group of countries, with 54 or 55 in the General Assembly. On the Security Council, African countries make up three of the non-permanent members, with the P5 able to pretty much manipulate things from behind the scenes. When you need certain votes, you are not always going to get them. When you want to put certain issues on the agenda of the Security Council, that is not always going to happen. That just builds up a lot of resentment. African countries want agency, but they often find themselves subject to much larger forces.

That is where China comes in. China has a tremendous amount of economic leverage because of the issues that we have discussed. It is building bridges, with ICBTs in banking, but not only in Africa: you have similar challenges in the UK, with Huawei and the 5G network, which Trump is not too happy about, so you know it is global.

That leverage manifests itself in some nefarious forms, particularly in global forums, where you find that African countries do not necessarily make decisions on the basis of their own interests. That is linked to the vulnerability of the continent. The continent is exploited and manipulated because it is exploitable and manipulatable. The trajectory to 2063 is to make sure that we can consolidate enough of our own internal abilities to prevent that happening in the future. It is an ongoing project. Once that project is fulfilled, you will see Africa as a dominant player on the global stage.

The liberal international order was established back when very few African countries were independent. That is why it is now so important to renegotiate the principles of the global system. There were only three countries at the table—Egypt, Liberia and South Africa. Back when the UN was established, in the 1940s and 1950s, it was apartheid South Africa. Without opening up the process of negotiating the principles that guide our global institutions, it will be very easy to continue with finger-

pointing. That is what is happening in the environmental debate right now. There is finger-pointing between the so-called developed parts of the world and the so-called developing parts. That is ultimately detrimental to uniting us as a whole. We just need to find a way to move beyond that. It will take a big mind shift and a lot of mind retraining going forward.

I know that some colleagues are really beholden to the United Nations and cannot imagine a world without it, but there are precedents. The League of Nations was dissolved and the United Nations was established. In 2020, we are at the point where we need to dissolve the United Nations and leave UN 2.0 to come through and become much more effective. There are certain ways in which it could be granted more autonomy, such as through taxation on global financial flows, for example. We are trying to solve 21st-century computing problems using computers that were invented during the Second World War to decode enemy transmissions, and that is just folly. You would not do that if you were a sensible person, so why are we letting humanity as a whole suffer with inefficient institutions? Yes, they benefit a small group of countries, but ultimately that is not going to create a new world that we can all live in peacefully.

The Chair: Thank you. You have been very generous with your time. Following on from that, we have a supplementary question from Lord Hannay.

Q63 **Lord Hannay of Chiswick:** Professor, do you think that Africa's influence in the UN Security Council might be more effective if, like Latin America and Asia, it gave more frequent representation to the larger, more influential African states—South Africa, Ethiopia and Nigeria, just to name a few—rather than having the rotatory system that exists now, under which some African countries are not very influential? Equatorial Guinea is on the Council at the moment. Would Africa not do better if, like Latin America, it gave the more influential countries more representation?

Professor Tim Murithi: I agree 100%. This has been one of the key challenges. African countries at the United Nations—the so-called A3—are often fragmented. They do not operate from a single hymn sheet and, as you say, they are not necessarily the countries with the greatest influence. The mindset at the African Union is shifting slightly. You might recall that last year South Africa was granted the ability to represent the continent on the Security Council without a significant challenge. This year, Kenya is at the forefront, pushing to be the representative of the continent, and it has majority support from the African Union. There are some challenges from Djibouti but I think that it will prevail. Kenya also has a history of peacekeeping experience. So I completely agree with you.

It is perhaps symptomatic of the nature of this project. We know what needs to be done and we know that we need to work together, but we are fragmented and often work in divergent ways, and therefore the

outcomes are not what we seek. However, the project of bringing about a mind shift is precisely what we are engaged in right now. We are working mainly with civil society but also with Governments and the AU itself to try to bring about the shifts that we require.

The Chair: Professor, thank you very much for sharing your expertise with us today. We will try to do our own mind shift as we work towards completing our inquiry, writing our report and holding our Government to account. Thank you so much. I hope the IT has worked reasonably well. The picture at this end froze occasionally, but I can assure you that every word you said has been heard and listened to.

Professor Tim Murithi: Thank you very much and all the best to you.