Peacekeeping Activities as a Means to Enhance 
ROK-AU Partnership, 10 November 2016, Seoul, 
South Korea 

Organized by the Korea International Peace Operations Center, Korea 
National Defense University and the Korea Academic Council on the United 
Nations System (KACUNS) 

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On 10th November 2016, the Korea International Peace Operations Center, 
Korea National Defense University organized, in Seoul, South Korea, in col-
laboration with the Korea Academic Council on the United Nations System 
(KACUNS), the 12th peacekeeping operations seminar entitled “Peacekeeping 
Activities as a Means to Enhance ROK-AU Partnership”. The event was spon-
sored by the ROK Ministry of National Defense. As outlined by Dr. Kyu-dok 
Hong, President of KACUNS, and Professor of Sookmyung Women’s Univer-
sity in his welcoming remarks, one of the main purposes of the seminar was 
to explore ways to strengthen the relationship between South Korea and re-
gional organizations such as the African Union, respectively: sending states 
as well as host countries. The conference focused on a timely issue. Various 
actors are involved in African peace operations including the African Union 
(AU), the Economic Communities of Central and West African States (ECOAS 
and ECOWAS), the European Union (EU), the United Nations (UN) and France. 
African countries are among the major contributors to UN peacekeeping op-
erations. Ethiopia has remained the largest contributor.1 There are currently 
nine UN peacekeeping operations in Africa. Moreover, some of the largest UN 
missions are located in Africa. 80 percent of all UN peacekeepers are deployed 
in Africa. Although the UN has remained the principal actor in the field of 

en/peacekeeping/contributors/2016/aug16_2.pdf.

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peacekeeping, the African Union has become the second largest contributor of personnel to multilateral peace operations. According Hervé Ladsous, UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, “the African Union, directly or not, is the most important partner of the UN in peacekeeping.”

The keynote speaker was Ambassador Young-Jin Choi who is Chair Professor of Yonsei University and former UN Secretary General’s Special Envoy to Cote d’Ivoire. In his fascinating speech, Ambassador Choi focused on African civil wars and the role of the United Nations. He pointed to the colonial history of Africa and remarked that the world is witnessing a historic paradigm shift from raid to trade. It was suggested that South Korea should turn more to and be involved more in UN peacekeeping operations.

The first panel analyzed the peacekeeping experiences of South Korea and Malaysia in Africa. The presenters were Colonel Park, Wondae, former commander of the Hanbit Union and Capt. Martin A. Sebastian of the Maritime Institute of Malaysia. The session was chaired by Dr. In-Taek Hyun, Professor of Korea University and a former Minister of Unification. Discussants included Major General (Ret.) Young-Bum Choi (Former Commander of the UN Military Observer Mission in India and Pakistan); Dr. Yea, Sanghan, Korea-Africa Future Strategy Center and LTC. Seo, Hae-lim, KIPOCENT. In his speech, Colonel Park focused on lessons learnt from UNMISS and the deployment of the Hanbit Unit in South Sudan. He described the many challenges and how the mandate changed to the protection of civilians and human rights monitoring. Capt. Martin A. Sebastian addressed lessons from UNOCI and described the difficulties to provide protection when UN peacekeepers are themselves under attack. He suggested to increase the contributions from the Asia-Pacific, otherwise the UN has to stick with traditional troop providers. Furthermore, he recommended to develop training scenarios. During the discussions, Major General (Ret.) Young-Bum Choi highlighted that almost all of the nine UN peacekeeping operations taking place in Africa are authorized to use force. These are very difficult and dangerous missions. Peacekeepers often operate in an environment where there is no peace to keep and in the midst of conflict. Language barriers are one of the many problems in UN missions. It was suggested that peacekeepers from different countries should have the same discipline and benefit from the same training, knowledge and information. Dr. Yea argued that the UN played an important role in the history of South Korea and it is now time to return the favor by providing more troops and

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