

**2<sup>ND</sup> AFRICAN CONFERENCE  
OF COMMANDANTS  
ACCRA – GHANA**

**THE AFRICAN CONFERENCE OF COMMANDANTS BRIEF**

**Introduction**

1. The origin of African Conference of Commandants (ACoC) may be traced to a number of events and factors. With regard to the former, the first and possibly the most important is the long tradition amongst military colleges on the continent to visit one another through student visits and exchanges of instructors and directing staff. This has increased over time and become consolidated by the attachment of instructors and directing staff.
  
2. As regard to the latter, the lessons from visits to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's Conference of Commandants (NATO CoC), the NATO Defence College and the United States' Defence Department's African Centre for Strategic Studies (ACSS), have all played a role in the philosophy and conduct of the ACoC. These, as well as the accumulated lessons from the first ACoC, held in South Africa under the auspices of the South African National War College from 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> November 2007 under the theme "*Developing and Transforming Education in the Military, a Contribution to African Security*", continue to build the character of ACoC.

**The Aim of ACoC**

4. The aim of ACoC is to enhance harmonization, interoperability, commonality, standardisation and cooperation between African Staff Colleges as its contribution to the African Standby Force (ASF) and Peace Support Operations (PSOs), thereby to the following **objectives**:



- a. To contribute to African Security through the Development and Transformation of Education and Training in the Military Environment;
- b. To facilitate and improve understanding and general coordination amongst the African Staff Colleges in order to develop the African Standby Force (ASF) Concept within the context of African Chiefs of Defence Staff (ACDS);
- c. To evaluate the feasibility of transformation in the current operating environment;
- d. To explore the commonality of the curricula with the intention to facilitate Combined Joint African Exercise (CJAX); and
- e. To develop co-operation amongst African Staff Colleges by enhancing *benchmarking; college curriculum best practice; DS Exchange programmes; academic accreditation; exploration of the feasibility of an annual Combined Joint African Exercise (CJAX).*

### **Targets for ACoC**

5. The membership of ACoC, like its philosophy, is a matter that is still evolving. Arising from the thinking of the 1<sup>st</sup> ACoC, it is evident that it is targeting the senior military levels of education within the AU/ASF militaries such as Commandants and Chief Instructors/COS of staff colleges as well as ASF representatives from AU and regional levels such as those of the AU's ASF Harmonisation Workshop and AU Peace Support Operations Division (PSOD). Others include peace, security & defence related non-governmental organizations (NGOs); and educational institutions. National and international donors have been identified as valuable partners of ACoC.
6. The ACoC's broadness of mandate is further seen in its embarking on reinforcing the African Peace Support Training Association (APSTA); the International Association of Peacekeeping Training Association (IAPTA) as well as pan-defence education and the delivery of peace missions and military Operations Other than War (OOTW) education.

## **Forging Future Issues**

7. ACoC remains with the mammoth tasks identified at the end of its first conference as follows:
  - a. Harmonisation of curriculum and PSO doctrine;
  - b. Synchronisation of the flow of courses or programmes;
  - c. Establishment of an African Staff College;
  - d. Establishment of a portal to enhance communication between Staff Colleges; and
  - e. Need to investigate the use of media in enhancing the effectiveness of ACoC and Staff Colleges.
  
8. The 2<sup>nd</sup> ACoC from 27<sup>th</sup> October to 31 October 2008 is poised to enhance some of these issues as reflected in the programme:
  - a. The AU Constitutive Act, Peace and Security Protocols, Common African Defence and Security Policy (CADSP) Training and Doctrine of African Standby Force;
  - b. The role of civil society in PSO;
  - c. CJAX;
  - d. Funding of ACoC; and
  - e. ACoC Secretariat and Establishment of ACoC Website (Portal)