



Activity brief (December 2014)

Australian Support to the African Union Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations

1 December 2012 – 31 December 2014



Background: The African Union launched its Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations (POMUN) in November 2009, with a mandate to develop and maintain productive relationships between the African Union and United Nations institutions, and to effectively represent African views and interests in international negotiations. The POMUN's capacity to fulfil this mandate is constrained by severely inadequate resourcing. During the Australian Government's discussions with the African Union Commission (AUC) in November 2011, AUC Deputy Chairperson Erastus Mwencha requested Australian support to finance a peacebuilding and development expert position for the POMUN, to advance AUC development and peacebuilding priorities. Following provision by AUC of a draft budget and position description for the United Nations P5-equivalent post, the Australian Government agreed to fund the position.

Objective: The activity aimed to support AUC's goal of establishing a full diplomatic mission in New York; expanding POMUN capacity sends a clear message of commitment to long-term presence and engagement.

Activity description: The peacebuilding and development expert supported the African Union Permanent Observer to the United Nations. The period of the deployment was two years. Specific responsibilities were: building the POMUN office's capacity; facilitating African Union-United Nations relations by advising and supporting the Permanent Observer to promote the African Union agenda; representing the African Union to engage with the United Nations and related stakeholders; and providing technical advice on social and economic development and peace building.

Sector: Public policy

Outcomes: Deployment of the peacebuilding and development expert demonstrably strengthened AUC's engagement with the United Nations.

Key achievements of this activity included:

- developing a successful intern mentoring program that has given professional opportunities to young Africans completing their studies in the United States and has

given the AUC a ready-made pool of young professionals from which to recruit personnel;

- maintaining close contact and communications with personnel from the Australian Consulate-General in New York to brief them on the diversity of views among African states and on the position of the AU; and
- providing technical advice on social and economic development and peace building (such as representing the AU in matters pertaining to African conflicts, including Mali, Sudan and South Sudan, Somalia, Central African Republic and elsewhere, and helping to explore steps to mend the troubled African relationship with the International Criminal Court).

By providing a high-level peacebuilding and development specialist, Australia engaged with the African Union in a meaningful way in the area of capacity building, which is a priority area for both the African Union and the Australian aid program.

Australia has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the AUC. The relationship established and enhanced with the AUC through this activity strengthened Australia's visibility in Africa and also enabled the Australian Government to identify options for future support to the African Union.

Date approved:	16/05/2012
Implementation partner:	African Union
Total cost:	AUD 600 000