



**AUABC**  
African Union Advisory  
Board Against Corruption

# **International Experience in Asset Recovery – Perspective of the African Union**

**Panel 2 Contribution – AU Advisory Board against Corruption (AUABC)**

Asset Recovery and Compensation to Victims  
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# AUABC and its mandate – in brief

- Established under Article 22 of the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (AUCPCC), which mandates the creation of the AUABC as an institutional body to oversee the Convention's implementation.

Its mandates include:

- Facilitating dialogue between stakeholders at national and continental levels.
- Conducting **country review missions** to assess the level of implementation.
- Advocating for the domestication and harmonization of anti-corruption laws across AU Member States.
- Promoting **citizen engagement** in anti-corruption efforts.



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# AU and its Asset Recovery efforts

- Asset recovery is seen as an important and critical aspect of the African Union's broader anti-corruption and good governance agenda.
- While the AU's role in the scheme of asset recovery does not involve direct recovery of assets, it does play a significant role in policy making, advocacy and coordinating national efforts of its Member States.
- One of the biggest achievement of the AU in its asset recovery efforts is the adoption of the CAPAR as it shows continental willingness to understand that asset recovery and illicit financial flows are a major problem to Member States and the continent at large.

# Continental Policy Frameworks and Legal instruments

- The African Union (AU), in its commitment to addressing illicit financial flows, corruption, and the recovery of stolen assets across the continent, has put in place strong normative frameworks at the continental level.
- Chief among them is the **African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (AUCPCC)**.
- Adopted in 2003, the AUCPCC represents the African continent's comprehensive anti-corruption framework which includes provisions on asset recovery.

**Article 16** of the AUCPCC is particularly significant, as it:

- encourages Member States to adopt legislative measures as maybe necessary to enable competent authorities to search, identify, trace, administer and freeze or seize illicitly acquired assets.

# Continental Policy Frameworks and Legal instruments

- **Common African Position on Asset Recovery (CAPAR) (2020):** continentally, this is Africa's bedrock legal instrument and technical framework for negotiating the return of Africa's assets and funds taken illicitly from the continent and hosted in foreign jurisdictions.
- In January 2015, the 24th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, adopted the Special Declaration on Illicit Financial Flows (Assembly/AU/Decl.5(XXIV) and therefore endorsed the findings and recommendations of the African Union/United Nations Economic Commission for Africa's High Level Panel Report on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa (High Level Panel Report).
- The AU designated 2018 as the African Anti-Corruption Year, under the theme: "**Winning the Fight against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa's Transformation**". One of the key issues highlighted in the year was on "the corrosive role that secrecy jurisdictions play in concealing ill-gotten assets" which led to the adoption of the **Nouakchott Declaration** on the Anti-Corruption Year at 31st Summit of Heads of State and Governments in Nouakchott, Mauritania.
- This declaration facilitated the adoption of Common African Position of Asset Recovery

# Continental Policy Frameworks and Legal instruments

- The CAPAR aims to assist African Union (AU) Member States to identify, repatriate and effectively manage these assets in a manner that respects their sovereignty. As a policy instrument, CAPAR outlines Africa's priorities for asset recovery and groups them into four pillars:
  - ❖ The detection and identification of assets
  - ❖ The recovery and return of assets
  - ❖ The management of recovered assets
  - ❖ Cooperation and partnerships
- It also sets out sets out the recommended measures and actions which Member States are to implement in a way that respects their development priorities and sovereignty.

# African Asset Recovery Practitioners Forum (AARP-Forum)

- Through the joint effort of both the African Union Commission for Political Affairs, Peace, and Security (AUC-PAPS) and the African Union Advisory Board Against Corruption (AUABC) a platform to operationalize the CAPAR and bring to life various measures and recommendations of the CAPAR was created.
- **The African Asset Recovery Practitioners Forum (AARP-Forum).** Recently inaugurated in April 2025, one of the aim of this forum is to bring together asset recovery experts to facilitate the effective implementation of CAPAR and contribute to combating illicit financial flows across Africa.
- Through the efforts of both offices (AUABC and AUC-PAPS) practitioners have and are being engaged to embrace their leadership role in asset recovery efforts, utilizing the framework to address existing gaps and challenges while seizing new opportunities.
- Achievement so far:
  - April 2025 side meetings of some member states (Kenya, Mauritius, Nigeria) on how they can coordinate their asset recovery process to get necessary information/data, assistance needed.
  - Working groups were established around the various pillars with membership comprising representatives from AU Member States.

- This platform has created an arena where practitioners across Member States can have direct contact and benefit from - knowledge sharing, contact information, technical assistance
- It has also been tasked with establishing contacts beyond the continent with countries and institutions which such as Interpol, countries such as the UAE, Switzerland etc. where several of Africa's illicitly obtained assets are hosted.

# AU and G-20 Engagement

- The AU has been engaging not only from a policy perspective but global perspective. It has been engaging on asset recovery by giving inputs on various documents and initiatives as to how the CAPAR could be strengthened on an international perspective and amplifying the African perspectives on various issues.
- The AU is currently working closely with the G-20 under South Africa's presidency to amplify Africa's perspective on anti-corruption. The theme of South Africa's G20 Presidency, "*Solidarity, Equality and Sustainability*".
- Established in 2010, the G-20 Anti-Corruption Working Group (ACWG) remains vital to global cooperation efforts, guided by the foundational St. Petersburg Strategic Framework (2013) and the new G-20 ACWG Action Plan (2025-2027).
- In line with the G20 Anti-Corruption Action Plan (2025–2027), South Africa has prioritised four priority areas of which asset recovery is one of them:
  - ❖ Priority 1: Strengthen the Public Sector by Promoting Transparency, Integrity and Accountability
  - ❖ **Priority 2: Increase Efficiency of Asset Recovery Measures**
  - ❖ Priority 3: Enhance and Mobilise the Inclusive Participation of the Public Sector, Private Sector, Civil Society and Academia to Prevent and Combat Corruption
  - ❖ Priority 4: Enhance Whistle-Blower Protection Mechanism

# Challenges faced by the AU in its asset recovery efforts

- CAPAR is still in its early stages of implementation. Initial steps are being taken to raise awareness and promote its adoption among both State and Non-State Actors
- AU resource constraint – budget cuts by Member States hinder the effective implementation of asset recovery programs.
- Sovereignty of Member State – the AU can only advice, advocate and make recommendations. It cannot enforce these policies and recommendations on Member States. Ultimately, the decision to act rests on each Member States.

# Overcoming these challenges

- The AU is engaging with various partners such as GIZ, working with various institutions such as Interpol and leveraging international platforms such as the G-20 to determine the best way the it can strengthen its asset recovery efforts.
- **Adoption of an IFF strategy for Africa** – with asset recovery is one of its pillars, this has enabled the engagement of financial institutions such as Afdb, Afrexim Bank in terms of supporting and assisting the AU Member States in their asset recovery efforts.
- **Sensitization of AU Member States** to ensure asset recovery is prioritized –The AARP-Forum through the various institutional and country focal points enables the ease of communication to Member States.
- **Capacity building and technical assistance** – through the AARP-Forum we are supporting Member States to establish their legal and institutional asset recovery frameworks.
- **Civil Society Engagements** - A key factor in pushing the CAPAR agenda has been the active participation of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). The Board has therefore been collaborating with the Civil Forum on Asset Recovery (CIFAR). In April 2024, the Board of the AUABC briefed members of CIFAR network on CAPAR and highlighted the role of CSOs. CIFAR, who has members from all over the continent, has contributed to creating a critical mass of stakeholders around asset recovery and CAPAR in particular.
- **CAPAR Communication Strategy Development** - For CAPAR to be implemented successfully, effective communication is essential. To increase awareness, garner support, and promote cooperation among important stakeholders, the AUC-PAPS and AUABC is developing a comprehensive communication plan and other communication products.

**Thank you. Connect with us**

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