



PAMUN XII RESEARCH REPORT—MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN THE AFRICAN UNION (AU)

I. Introduction of Topic:

Upon first glance, the African Union's (AU) emblem is seemingly simple: a silhouette of the continent encircled by a set of loops (one green and one gold), all encased by a set of palms. Yet, this picture used to represent the AU is full of symbolism. The solid gold figure of the country is drawn without internal borders, to show unity. The green circle is for the aspirations and hopes that the continent holds for itself, the gold one a shining reminder of Africa's wealth and bright future. Blood shed and solidarity is shown through the interlinked red circles at the base of the gold loop. The palms leaves are for the common ideal of peace.

The most important symbol in this entire emblem is not one found in any of the piece-parts, but rather the composite image. Nothing in the picture clashes: the circles outline the continent, the palms mold around said circles. The colors do not scream at the viewer. In a place historically composed of individual tribes, then dominated by imperialistic powers, African states are those who religiously proclaim their sovereignty- or even, their superiority- over their neighbors. The symbol of the AU is actually a symbol of the revolutionary idea sweeping this continent: peaceful integration.

The AU itself has only existed for barely a decade. It's responsibilities are huge; it deals with 15% of the world's population, is still troubled with colonial vestiges, and rules over a land rich in natural resources and poor in resource utilization. These issues are not new, but have become a central part of African life. However, it has fallen upon the AU's shoulders to solve not only these problems, but also many others, of this great continent. In order to do that, the AU itself must be supremely strong; it must solve it's own issues before it tackles that of the entire continent. This means that the AU must find common ground on issues like that of monetary union, language, geography, institutionalization of the whole body, and stability of individual members (to be elaborated on in Section IV).

Only through this internal consolidation can the AU make it's dream—"An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena"- a reality.

II. Background:

On May 23rd, 1963, the precursor to the African Union, the OAU (Organization of African Unity) was established. About twenty years later (1981) the African Economic Community was founded, alongside the OAU. The OAU's main objectives were to eradicate inter alia of the remnants of apartheid and imperialist colonization that still plagued Africa, to strengthen cooperation between sovereign African states, and to allow Africa to bloom into a



global power respected in that arena. In reality, the OAU was quickly dubbed the “Dictator’s Club”, as many critics proclaimed that the organization did very little for the actual citizens of Africa, simply just strengthening the power of individual leaders.

However, on November 9th, 1999, the OAU issued the Sirte Declaration, which called for the institution of the AU. The AU was to differ from the OAU for it was no longer an easily disregarded inter-governmental organization, but a supranational one (where portions of individual states sovereignties were pooled to give the AU further power, similar to the European Union (EU)). To utilize this power to its best. Lomé and Lusaka summits (2000 and 2001, respectively) placed hard structure on the progressively more tangible body. The establishment of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) further strengthened this spirit of synergy.

On July 9th, 2002, the African Union was inaugurated, its first assembly held in Durban.

The AU itself is comprised of several esteemed organs. “The Assembly” is the central component, composed of heads of state/ government or similar representatives from each nation. The ministers or authorities of the member states governments are party to “The Executive Council”, which is responsible to the aforementioned Assembly. The Council’s work is prepared by “The Permanent Representatives’ Committee”, comprised of permanent residents of member states.

“The Commission” is a body composed of the chairperson, his/her deputy, eight commissioner and staff members. It plays the central role in day-to-day dealings of the AU, defending its interests, elaborating draft common positions of the Union, preparing work for the Executive Council along with The Permanent Representatives’ Committee, and ensuring the execution of programs and policies with Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

Furthermore, the AU has a Pan-African Parliament to allow full participation from all citizens. The exact protocol for the parliament is in the process of ratification. The AU also encompasses two councils: the Peace and Security Council (PSC) and ECOSOCC (Economic, Social, and Cultural Council). Finally, the AU has several specialized technical committees on the following:

Rural Economy and Agricultural Matters,
Monetary and Financial Affairs,
Trade, Customs and Immigration Matter,
Industry, Science and Technology, Energy, Natural Resources and Environment,
Transport, Communications and Tourism,
Health, Labor, and Social Affairs, and
Education, Culture, and Human Resources.

The bodies all act under fourteen main points that summarize the visions of the AU:

- To achieve greater unity and solidarity between the African countries and the peoples of Africa;
- To defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of its Member States;
- To accelerate the political and socio-economic integration of the continent;
- To promote and defend African common positions on issues of interest to the continent and its peoples;
- To encourage international cooperation, taking due account of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- To promote peace, security, and stability on the continent;
- To promote democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance;
- To promote and protect human and peoples' rights in accordance with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and other relevant human rights instruments;

- To establish the necessary conditions which enable the continent to play its rightful role in the global economy and in international negotiations;
- To promote sustainable development at the economic, social and cultural levels as well as the integration of African economies;
- To promote co-operation in all fields of human activity to raise the living standards of African peoples;
- To coordinate and harmonize the policies between the existing and future Regional Economic Communities for the gradual attainment of the objectives of the Union;
- To advance the development of the continent by promoting research in all fields, in particular in science and technology;
- To work with relevant international partners in the eradication of preventable diseases and the promotion of good health on the continent.

III. Relevant International Agreements, Conventions, Organizations and Resolutions:

- **1980:** Lagos Plan of Action (LPS) and the Final Act of Lagos: incorporated programs and strategies for self-reliant development and cooperation between African countries
- **1981:** The African Charter on Human and People's Rights and the Grand Bay Declaration and Plan of Action on Human Rights: promoted human rights throughout the continents and led to the establishment of an African Human Rights Commission in Banjul, Gambia
- **1985:** Africa's Priority Program for Economic recovery (APPER): an emergency program designed to address the development crisis of the 1980s during a lengthy drought and famine that had crippled Africa
- **1990:** OAU declaration on the Political and Socio-Economic Situation in Africa and the Fundamental Changes taking place in the world: underscored Africa's resolve to become a self-reliant continent built on pillars of democracy and peace
- **1990:** The Charter on Popular Participation: a testimony to the endeavor to put the African citizen at the center of development and decision making
- **1991:** The Abuja Treaty: proposes that the African Economic Community is created through six stages culminating in an African Common Market using the REC's as building blocks (put into action in 1994)
- **1995:** Cairo Agenda for Action: a program for revitalizing Africa's political economic and social development
- **1997:** African Common Position on Africa's External Debt Crisis: in which a strategy is established for addressing the Continent's External debt crisis
- **1999:** Sirte Extraordinary session: decided on the establishment of an African Union
- **2000:** Lome Summit: the constitutive act of the African Union is passed
- **2001:** Lusaka Summit: determined the plans of the AU's implementation (i.e. decided that The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) would be adopted as a program of the AU)
- **2002:** Durban Summit: launched the AU and convened the 1st assembly of the Heads of States

IV. Main Issues:

Monetary Union: A monetary union is a trait characteristic of many supranational organizations in today's world. Monetary unions, or common currency, bind together states in an irreversible way. One nation's economic activities closely impact the others (as

demonstrated recently in the Euro crisis). It is a gamble, but it would fuel further integration, bonding the usually secular African nations, together.

Low GDP: Africa hold about 15% of the world's population, but contributes to less than 2% of the world's GDP. This shocking statistic perfectly illustrates the economic hardship that the continent has fallen into. This low economic performance affects all areas of life for the average African citizen, significantly lowering the entire continents HDI (Human Development Index). Given that the AU's number one priority is the African citizen, this reflects extremely poorly on the AU. Thus, the economy must be stimulated in order to legitimize the AU as a successful organization, fit for supranational power.

Language: Africa is the most multilingual continent in the world. UNESCO has estimated that around 2,000 languages are spoken in the country! The working languages of the AU were originally Arabic, English, French and Portuguese, and regional African languages; in 2003, Spanish and Swahili were added to this list, bringing the AU's languages to six working languages. This practice slows the efficiency of the union due to translation and understanding errors. It causes significant delays and difficulties in the conduct of business, despite modern translation tools.

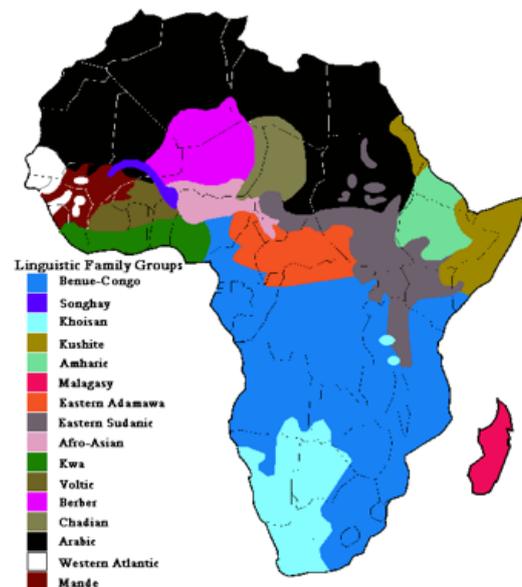
Institutionalization of the entire body: As stated above, the AU has just hit its decade-long anniversary. While it has met considerable success, it is not institutionalized into the country. However, as the head of a country full of economic ruin, the AU must institutionalize itself into the society, for only strong, market supportive institutions can yield significant income growth and poverty reduction. The AU has half of that guideline; it is a market supporting institution. This has been made clear with its strong relationship with its Regional Economic Communities (RECs). Now, it must institutionalize itself into the continent's individual parties in order to create sustained economic growth, which would strengthen the AU and all of Africa itself.

Stability of Individual Members: The African Union is a fifty-four state union, encompassing all African countries except for Morocco. Currently, however, four of these states have suspended membership (Madagascar, Guinea-Bissau, Central African Republic, and Egypt). Each of these states was suspended after violent political crisis in their country. This sort of action weakens the African Union because not only are it's supports (the states) handicapped, but then it has to devote resources towards cleaning up these conflicts (whether that be through civil negotiations or the deployment of peacekeeping troops). The instability of member states delegitimizes the union and costs the AU, for these sorts of conflicts greatly endanger African citizens.

V. Web Sites:

The official website for the AU:
www.au.int/en/

The official website for the African Union Summit, which published several relevant treaties and speeches, as well as providing a thorough history of the AU:



<http://www.au2002.gov.za/index.html>

AllAfrica is a news-source that focuses primarily on this specific continent. The link gives leads to the articles dealing with the African Union. However, on the home page, under the “Countries”, and then “All Countries” tab, each individual country of the AU is given it’s own section for news about that certain nation.

http://allafrica.com/search/?search_string=african+union

This is the United States official site to their role in the development of the AU, providing a western perspective on the issues at hand. This is especially important for countries that are strongly allied with the US.

<http://www.usau.usmission.gov/>