

AFRICAN UNION AND THE PROSPECT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY

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Abstract: The AU succeeded the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which was set up in 1963 to secure the decolonization of Africa and the sovereignty of individual nation states, while simultaneously promoting unity and prosperity on the continent. With one of the main goals achieved, a new organization was needed to take Africa forward into the 21st century: a stronger, more efficient and practical body working to create “an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena”, the world’s perception of Africa was at low ebb. The African renaissance that was promised at the end of decolonisation instead gave birth to a sustained period of ‘afro-pessimism’, following a series of devastating conflicts, endemic corruption and chronic underdevelopment (The Economist Magazine, 2000). Which not only slowed the African development process, but produced new sets of elites who received instructions for development externally? As a result, Africa was brought on her knees to a total state of dependence and as a dependent economy the performance of the African economy is often conditioned by the expansion or decline of external economies. This paper therefore, appraises AU and the prospect of development in Africa within the framework of NEPAD. It further argues the neoliberal orthodoxy that has informed the initiative, providing a critical perspective of its overarching order whilst emphasizing the need for African ownership of the process and product of NEPAD, especially in the context of a newly established African union.

Keywords: NEPAD, AU, OAU, Development and Challenges

Introduction

The worry today is that why real socio-economic and political developments have remained evasive in Africa? When, infact, Africa has been struggling to break out of the shackles of imperialism and neo imperialism (Okolo, 1988:7). Although Rodney (1971:19), Nnoli (1981:6) and Ake (1981:12) have all agreed by saying that the very contact of Africa with the Europeans has, in no small measure, necessitated some unwholesome characteristics such as economic backwardness, political instability, cultural degradation, social discrimination and educational incongruity.

Today, 50 years after the decolonization of Africa, some African leaders seem not to understand what development is all about, and therefore wallow in ignorance with some attendant lethargy, thinking that the wilderness miracle of Manna and Quail birds of development will shower upon them. Not mindful of the fact that it takes a people who are determined to change their destiny to force development upon themselves just like the success story of the ancient tigers.

In a very serious attempt to achieve development in Africa, and perhaps to meet up to the European development, a continental body known as the Organisation for Africa unity(OAU) was formed in 1963, with more than thirty two independent countries signing the draft charter in Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia. The basic aim and objective of the OAU, among other ones, was to attack completely all forms of neocolonialism and imperialism. Which will go a long way to eradicate poverty, hunger, and mangrove anarchy that have eaten deep into African continent (Nweke, 1998:25)? Unfortunately, the organization failed in that regard, and the need for a new platform or Organisation became necessary. The AU came to replace the OAU, though not as the continuation of the OAU under a different name, but

it will have the capacities built into it to improve the economic, political, and social development of the African peoples. It will also help to ensure that the continent is more prepared to deal with the challenges of the 21st century, and to achieve the ultimate goal of African unity.

Developments on the Continent: 1963 - 2002

The road leading to the establishment of a significant development capability under the auspices of the AU has followed an exceptionally long and torturous path – a path littered with good intentions, failed endeavors, and far too many opportunities lost while African leaders dithered when they should have taken action. Considering the rather short history of the state as a political model in Africa, the first major step towards regional cooperation and addressing the issues of development on the continent, the formation of the Organization of African Unity, was taken exceptionally quickly.

As Naldi (1999:1) notes, there were only four independent states in Africa in 1945 – Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia and South Africa – yet, Pan-African demands for political, economic and cultural self-determination in the wake of the Second World War became a flood that the colonial powers could not dam. Within less than twenty years a total of thirty-two states put pen to paper and brought the new continental organization into being.

Unfortunately, this was as much as African leaders appeared willing to commit to, as the unprecedented wave of optimism and cooperation which made such a remarkable feat possible seemed to dissipate shortly thereafter. According to van Walraven (1999:148), the OAU was a weak regime that merely “represented a consolidation of Africa’s political status quo”. Indeed, up until the establishment of the AU in 2002 very little had been achieved that promised to address the challenges of development, peace and security on the continent directly and that could potentially bring an end to conflict in Africa. Indicative of this point is the fact in the three decades 1963 – 1993, the African continent was ravaged by close on ninety military coups and other violent conflicts; whilst at least 10 million people lost their lives, five times as many were wounded and more than 20 million became refugees or were displaced from their homes (Legum, 1999:31-32). These phenomenon have placed the continent in a precarious position of another development of underdevelopment.

The Organization of African Unity And The Transition to African Union

On 26 May 1963, thirty-two heads of state and government assembled in the City of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia signed the *Charter of the Organization of African Unity*, otherwise known as the *OAU Charter*. As Articles 2.1.c and 2.1.d (OAU, 1963) of said charter indicate, the organization was primarily committed to defending the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of its member states, as well as eradicating all forms of colonialism from the African continent. Whilst a number of other social and economic aims were also highlighted, state interest and security were overwhelmingly emphasized. Indeed, the guiding principles of the organization as identified in Article 3 (OAU, 1963) refer exclusively to such matters.

These include: the sovereign equality of all member states; non-interference in the internal affairs of member states; as well as respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each state and for its inalienable right to independent existence. Yet, this is hardly surprising given the context in which the OAU was established. The decolonization of Africa literally multiplied the number of sovereign states tenfold; yet, this was by no means a straightforward process and the peoples of a number of African states including South Africa, the former Rhodesia, Angola and Mozambique were still caught-up in an often bloody fight for majority rule and self determination. Addressing the delegation in Addis Ababa, President Ben Bella of Algeria (cited in Červenka, 1977:7) declared “this Charter will remain a dead letter ... unless we lend unconditional support to ... these peoples still under the colonialist yoke”. As a collection of independent African states, the OAU saw itself as possessing a moral obligation towards its fellow Africans and therefore as the vanguard in the fight against colonialism. This so-called “spirit of Addis Ababa” (Červenka, 1977:8) was thus enshrined in the OAU Charter.

What is more, upon achieving independence, the vast majority of African states did not reflect natural divisions¹⁵ – an issue which was raised during the Addis Ababa conference (Naldi, 1999:1). After much heated debate, it was eventually agreed that the pre-existing borders should remain intact. As Malian President Modibo Keita (cited in Červenka, 1977:9) argued, “the colonial system divided Africa, but it permitted nations to be born. Present frontiers must be respected and the sovereignty of each state must be consecrated by a multilateral non-aggression pact”. The argument being, that without a commitment on the part of all member states to respect the equality, sovereignty, territorial integrity and right to independent existence of all, Africa was likely to degenerate into utter chaos as a plethora of border conflicts over disputed territory and populations engulfed the continent. The net effect of these factors was that the continental body prioritized state security over all other considerations and was therefore

significantly constrained in terms of its own conflict management capability – a reality highlighted by the terms of the *OAU Charter*. Article 2.2.f (OAU, 1963), for example, merely states in broad and ambiguous terms that members shall coordinate and harmonize their defense and security policies. Moreover, the *OAU Charter* (1963:Article 3.4) adopted the principle of the “peaceful settlement of disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation or arbitration”; whilst, as has already been mentioned, interference in the internal affairs of member states was also expressly prohibited by Articles 3.2 and 3.5 (OAU, 1963).

In terms of actual conflict resolution mechanisms, the *OAU Charter* proved equally disappointing. Provision was made for the establishment of a Commission of Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration (CMCA) (OAU, 1963:Article 7.4); yet, the basic underlying principle was that of consent and the entire process was restricted to third-party political assistance (Wiseman, 1984:125). Moreover, the protocol only allowed for involvement in inter-state conflicts and so became redundant very quickly (Francis, 2006:121). As Wiseman (1984:125) notes, “no provision was made or inferred about any imposition of political settlement by the use of military force, excepting Article 20”.

Article 20 (OAU,1963:Article 20.3), however, merely relates to the establishment of a specialized Defense Commission should the organization deem it necessary. No further details as to how or to what end this commission shall function are offered. Although the notion of a supranational African High Command was mooted – most notably by Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah – the proposal fell short as the idea of an integrated continental army presupposed greater authority to be vested in the OAU than member states were willing to accede (Červenka, 1977:39).¹⁶ Ultimately, the Defense Commission was established in order to devise a formula for coordinating and harmonizing the defense policies of member states as called for by Article 2 of the *OAU Charter* (Imobighe, 1980:241).

Significantly, not one dispute was ever handled by the organ specifically created for this purpose, the CMCA (van Walraven, 1999:274), as the organization had rather evolved a traditional African concept of mediation by respected elders and fellow heads of state on an *ad hoc* basis in order to diffuse conflicts (Červenka, 1977:67). In practice, the organization’s conflict management strategy lacked substance as there was neither mention of nor scope for effective, coercive measures to ensure compliance on the part of member states, while the crucial role of peacekeeping seemed to have been entirely overlooked. As Wiseman (1984:126) reiterates, “the concept and practice of peacekeeping, dramatically employed by the United Nations in the Suez crisis of 1956, and ongoing in the Congo at the time the *OAU Charter* was formulated, were not at all entertained for adoption by the OAU”¹⁷.

That being said, the organization was not entirely inactive and was engaged in conflict resolution almost from its inception. Most notable amongst these efforts were: two failed attempts at resolving the 1963 Morocco-Algeria border dispute (Wiseman, 1984:128); Nigeria’s successful opposition to OAU intervention during its civil war 1967-76, on the grounds that such an act would represent an unacceptable violation of its sovereignty and territorial integrity (Červenka, 1977:97); and, the organization’s inability to resolve the conflict in Western Sahara, a dispute that deeply divided members and nearly precipitated the collapse of the continental body (Damis, 1984:273). Other noteworthy incidences include: the 1964 border dispute between Ethiopia and Somalia; as well as the OAU attempt to intervene in the Congo after UN peacekeeping forces had pulled out in 1964 (Wiseman, 1984:128-129). The organization’s most infamous endeavor, however, was undoubtedly during the 1977 Chad crisis. Although notable for the deployment of the first all-African peacekeeping force, the OAU operation was ultimately a disaster and failed to resolve the situation in that country (Pittman, 1984:297).

The Chad fiasco¹⁸ and prior failings significantly diluted the organization’s interest in collective security arrangements (van Walraven, 1999:343); yet, the importance of a regional capability in this regard simply could not be ignored. The upsurge of violent conflicts in Africa after the end of the Cold War led the OAU to reappraise its position, and this set in motion a process that ultimately culminated with the formation of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (MCPMR) at the 1993 OAU summit in Cairo, Egypt (Francis et al, 2005:100; Naldi, 1999:31). Up until this point OAU efforts at addressing disputes between member states had been “remedial and reactive rather than preventive and proactive” and relied heavily on *ad hoc* arrangements in the absence of effective established structures (Naldi, 1999:31). It was hoped that this new mechanism would pave the way toward a more systematic conflict resolution strategy.¹⁹ The principle functions of this mechanism were:

- (a) to anticipate and prevent situations of potential conflict from developing into full-blown wars; and
- (b) to undertake peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts should such conflicts arise. (OAU, 1993:Art. 15)

The MCPMR was nevertheless undermined by the organization's original mandate and the principles enshrined within the OAU Charter.²⁰ Furthermore, the concept of peacekeeping was once again notable in its absence. It was argued that "emphasis on anticipatory and preventive measures, and concerted action in peacemaking and peacebuilding will obviate the need to resort to the complex and resource-demanding peacekeeping operations, which our countries will find difficult to finance" (OAU, 1993:Art. 15). In the event of conflicts degenerating to the extent that collective international intervention was required, the UN would be called upon for financial, logistical and military assistance (OAU, 1993:Art. 16).

Despite these constraints, the organization was undoubtedly more active following the establishment of the MCPMR. Although large-scale peace operations were out of the question, the mechanism did allow for the deployment of military observer missions and small operations of restricted scope and duration to stop or prevent hostilities as well as facilitate mediation efforts (OAU, 1993:Art. 15). The first mission of this kind was the Neutral Military Observer Group (NMOG) in Rwanda 1992-1993.²¹ A number of similar operations were deployed to a host of conflicts under the guise of this mechanism, most notably: the OAU Mission in Burundi (OMIB) 1994 and the organization's mediation efforts in the Comoros (OMIC) 1997 (Francis et al, 2005:103).

The creation of this new mechanism was expected to boost the organization's conflict resolution capability, but other than perhaps creating order where once there was chaos the MCPMR brought about very little change in practical terms. Reflecting on the OAU's record Wiseman (1984:128) notes, "ventures in the practice of conflict resolution by [peaceful means were] many, the successes [were] relatively few. The ventures in peacekeeping [were] minimal, but without success". Even more worrisome was the reality that conflict in Africa was becoming an ever increasing problem, as the 1990s were arguably the most devastating decade the continent had experienced since independence. Most notable were Somalia's complete disintegration into civil war in 1991; the continuation of Africa's so-called "first world war" in the Democratic Republic of Congo, involving six African states and myriad rebel groups; the outbreak of war in Sierra Leone; as well as the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 (Callaghy, Kassimir & Latham, 2001a:3; Juma, 2006:17).

Migration to the African Union

Van Walraven (1999:346) makes the important argument that, "while one cannot deny the OAU's realism in embarking on limited [operations], it also means that the organization [was] wholly unprepared for high intensity development. Thus, other institutions [were] still needed to handle such crises". He goes on to cite the example of the Somali Civil War in the early 1990s, where, in the face of ever increasing violence, the OAU kept a painfully low-profile while calls for Western and/or UN intervention grew ever louder. In light of the organization's shortcomings in ensuring peace, stability and security on the continent, African leaders were more determined than ever to tackle this issue head-on.²² As such, the heads of state and government assembled on 9 September 1999 in Sirte, Libya for the fourth Extraordinary Session of the OAU in order to discuss the way forward. As Juma (2006:17) notes, the lukewarm response of the international community to the calamities taking place on the continent created an impetus for action and emphasized the need to engage in a search for African solutions to African problems.

The eventual outcome of this process was the adoption the so-called *Sirte Declaration* (OAU, 1999), which paved the way toward the formation of the AU. The principal aim of these talks was to strengthen the OAU and make it more effective in dealing with the political, social and economic developments taking place within and outside. The process of reforming the OAU began in earnest in the early 1990s, but gathered momentum under the guidance of Olusegun Obasanjo and Thabo Mbeki, the former Presidents of Nigeria and South Africa respectively. Upon assuming office in 1999, and guided by his precept of an 'African Renaissance', Mbeki foreswore the unilateralism characteristic of South Africa's past and looked to adopt a new multilateral strategy to addressing peace and security in Africa. Likewise, Obasanjo identified four core principles or 'calabashes' – security, stability, development, and cooperation – as prerequisites for Africa's future prosperity. The process that eventually led to the formation of the AU has been attributed to a temporary convergence of interests and ideas between these two nations, arguably the most powerful in Africa, as a result of their similar yet competing ambitions for continental leadership. For more on this subject see Tiekou (2004) and Kagwanja (2006).

With this declaration, African leaders once again expressed their continued desire to establish a body capable of effectively addressing conflict on the continent; as Paragraph 6 (OAU, 1999) highlights, the delegates were "determined to eliminate the scourge of conflicts, which constitute a major impediment to the implementation of [Africa's] development and integration agenda". The challenge, however, was to move past the stale rhetoric which

had been repeated *ad nasuem* and implement real change. Indeed, the selfsame commitments had been made with the establishment of the OAU in 1963 and the MCPMR in 1993. In the words of the *Sirte Declaration* (1999:Para. 6), African leaders were convinced that the “continental organization [needed] to be revitalized in order to be able to play a more active role and continue to be relevant to the needs of [Africa’s] peoples and responsive to the demands of the prevailing circumstances”. Central to what Juma (2006:45) has described as this “New African Vision” was the eventual decision that the OAU would be succeeded by a new continental organization known as the African Union (OAU, 1999:Para. 8.i). Adopted at the 36th

OAU Summit in Lomé, Togo on 11 July 2000, the *Constitutive Act of the African Union* was formally brought into force on 9 July 2002 in Durban, South Africa and launched a new era for African multilateralism in the process (Juma, 2006:45). According to Akopari (2008:371), the transformation of the OAU to the AU spawned considerable euphoria and optimism, informed by the hope that the new continental organization would mitigate Africa’s seemingly intractable challenges and thus succeed where its predecessor had failed. One should bear in mind, however, that this selfsame atmosphere surrounded the establishment of the OAU in 1963, only to be tempered by the harsh reality of the task which lay before it. For the AU to have any real expectation of development on the continent it would need be more than just a case of “old wine in new bottles” (Melber, cited in Akokpari, 2008:373) and represent a myriad of change in how the scourge of development is addressed.

Nepad And The Prospect Of Sustainable Development

New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) can trace its origins to the turn of the century – a time when African leaders were pushing for change, particularly on the pace and impact of economic development on the continent. One of the most important African initiatives of recent times, NEPAD was adopted by African heads of state in 2001 and ratified by the African Union (AU) in 2002. Charged with addressing Africa’s development problems within a new paradigm, NEPAD’s main objectives are to reduce poverty, put Africa on a sustainable development path, halt the marginalization of Africa, and empower women.

The new partnership for African development (NEPAD) is a comprehensive, integrated, strategic framework for the socio-economic development of Africa. The policy provides framework for public- private partnership between and among Africans, and then the rest of the world. According to the official Gazette of the Nigerian ministry of foreign affairs 2001, a new partnership for African development is an African programme for African development. The partnership is the result of joining together of the millennium partnership for African recovery programmes (MAP) and the Omega plan. At the request of the Organisation of African unity. The new African initiative (MAP) which is now officially referred to as NEPAD, was approved by the Lusaka Summit on 2nd July, 2001. The partnership is a commitment by African leaders to get rid of poverty, and to place the African continent on a path of lasting growth and development

To this effect, NEPAD’s priorities centre on agriculture and food security; climate change and national resource management; and regional integration – particularly infrastructure development. The AU/NEPAD Action Plan, 2010-15, recognizes that Africa suffers from a severe lack of infrastructure. But the AU is determined to deliver positive change, and within the AU/NEPAD framework, several initiatives have been established to address infrastructural needs.

Developing infrastructure

While NEPAD does not actually implement programs and Projects. The NEPAD Infrastructure Projects Preparation Fund (IPPF), supported by development partners, was created to support the preparation and implementation of NEPAD infrastructure projects. Notably, grants from this fund supported the project preparation for the AU-NEPAD Short Term Action Plan (STAP) 2002. STAP attracted investment amounting to \$5.6 billion and saw the completion of 16 projects, including: the West African Gas Pipeline Project – Nigeria, Ghana, Benin and Togo; the Regional African Satellite Communications Organisation (RASCOCOM) – intercontinental; the East Africa Road Network Programme – Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi and Rwanda; and the Chirundo One-Stop Border Post – Zambia and Zimbabwe.” NEPAD’s e-Africa program is another vital development, connecting Africans more effectively to each other and the rest of the world through submarine and terrestrial cable systems, known as Uhurunet and Umojanet, respectively.

Both are under construction, and Uhurunet is scheduled for completion this year. In February 2012, NEPAD signed a Grant Facility Agreement with the French Development Agency, in which the French organization pledged €1.35 million (\$1.77 million) to help construct the ICT broadband infrastructure network in West, Central and North Africa, as part of Umojanet.

Mayaki explains: “The NEPAD e-Africa program has several components that promote the development and application of technologies on the continent. We are facilitating countries’ accession to the Kigali Protocol, which is the policy and regulatory framework for the development of the continental AU-NEPAD broadband infrastructure network. The two main principles of the Protocol are open access to broadband capacity on terms that are transparent and affordable; and non-discrimination in relation to authorized service providers gaining access to the AU-NEPAD network.”

NEPAD also founded the Information Society Partnership for Africa’s Development (ISPAD) to catalyze the adoption of ICT across the continent. ISPAD is a partnership between the public and private sectors, and members include Microsoft, Hewlett-Packard, Oracle, Cisco and Advanced Micro Devices, as well as the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)-Mereka Institute in South Africa, the Commonwealth of Learning, the World Bank and the International Telecommunications Union.

Another key project of the e-Africa program is the NEPAD e-Schools Initiative. Each school in the demonstration project was equipped with a computer laboratory containing at least 20 PCs, as well as a server and networking infrastructure and peripheral devices such as scanners, electronic whiteboards and printers. “The AU-NEPAD e-Schools Initiative was adopted as a high-priority project by heads of state and government, as a means to impart ICT skills to young Africans in primary and secondary schools and to harness ICT to improve, enrich and expand education. The pilot e-Schools Demonstration Project involves 103 schools in 17 African countries”.

Land economy

NEPAD has continuously pushed for change in Africa’s agricultural sector, too, through its Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). The framework promotes economic growth and poverty reduction, and aims to improve trade and other core issues related to agricultural development within Africa. To achieve this objective, it has set the following targets: the establishment of dynamic agricultural markets within and between countries and regions in Africa; developing farmers’ role in the market economy so that the continent becomes a net exporter of agricultural products; achieving a more equitable distribution of wealth for rural populations; ensuring Africa is a strategic player in agricultural science and technology; and promoting environmentally sound agricultural production and a culture of sustainable management of natural resources in Africa.

Fisheries and fertilizers

CAADP’s goal is to encourage African countries to invest 10 percent of their national budgets in agriculture. To date, 26 African countries have the ‘CAADP Compact’ integrated into their national agricultural programs. According to *African Renewal* magazine, “eight countries have exceeded the 10 percent budget, with others making significant progress. While nine countries have surpassed the CAADP’s goal of an average annual agricultural growth of at least six percent.” This is in addition to the organization’s work in the fisheries sector, its fertilizer support program and its TerrAfrica project – a regional initiative to improve land management. “Countries know that food security is essential for socio-economic growth. Agricultural spending has increased by approximately 75 percent,” says Mayaki. “CAADP supports aid, as it provides a framework for more structured and integrated support to countries. The agriculture sector provides numerous opportunities for employment in Africa. That is not to say that the other sectors of mining and tourism, for example, do not provide opportunities for employment.

However, by unlocking the potential of the agriculture sector, coupled with infrastructural development, we provide opportunities for enhanced livelihoods for millions of Africans. NEPAD has extensive plans for the future. But questions remain about the substantial and visible evidence of its work on the ground. Mayaki acknowledges these questions, especially regarding the early days of the organization. Then, he says, “NEPAD’s mandate was not clearly defined, which meant that impact and output were subject to strong interpretation, and interaction with the AU was not designed with clearly delineated roles. We needed integration into the AU and a reorientation into key priorities.” Now, however, these changes have been made, and progress should follow. Mayaki is determined to win over critics and forge a better Africa for all.

Peace and security

There was a big fall in conflict and related deaths between 1999 and 2006, particularly compared with 1996, when 14 wars were in progress. Since then, however, coups d’état, unconstitutional changes of government and post-election violence have increased. But the AU has set up an African Peace and Security Architecture (ASPA), one of the most advanced in the world. This architecture includes a continental early-warning system, work with the RECs, a ‘panel of the wise’ consisting of five eminent individuals that advise the AU, and an African standby force. Active peacekeeping operations in 2012 include the AU mission in Somalia, featuring mainly Ugandan and Burundian

troops and supported by separate initiatives of the Ethiopian and Kenyan armies, and the AU-United Nations (UN) mission in Darfur. Expected results include programs on conflict prevention, management and resolution; a common African defence and security policy; social and environmental management systems; and the promotion of a policy for combating transnational organized crime. The budget over four years is \$144 million for seven strategies, prospects and initiatives

Integration, development and cooperation

The development program covers intra-Africa trade and investments; developing infrastructure; industrialization; agricultural development; better productivity and enhanced competitiveness for African producers. Sustainable human and social development is much needed, including women's empowerment, youth development, policies and programs on migration, action against trafficking in people and drugs, and support for sport and social welfare. Its key successes include a campaign for the reduction of maternal mortality in Africa; international agreements to cooperate over migration; social protection frameworks and improvements to African health; and considerable work in support of trade, investment and closer economic links. A minimum integration program was drafted in 2009 and sets timetables for RECs to establish free trade areas and take other steps, rationalizing and harmonizing their communities and promoting free movement of people, goods, capital and services.

A cooperation program relates to both African cooperation and global strategic partnerships, including a bigger and united African voice in world governance institutions such as the World Trade Organization, and more development aid. Overall, the program covers 26 strategies, with a four-year budget of \$430 million. Progress continues, helped by billions of dollars of investment in roads, ports, power lines and other links across Africa.

Shared values

Signs of "visible progress in governance standards in Africa" include fighting corruption, democratizing politics, promoting independence of the judiciary, and better economic management. However, big challenges remain. The program encourages continental protection, strengthens the humanitarian response to crises and enhances disaster preparedness. It promotes human rights and a rights-based approach to development, and supports African cultural renaissance and heritage, including languages and diversity.

The program also stands behind improved gender equality and fights gender-based violence. In January 2012, HE Julia Joiner, Commissioner for Political Affairs, announced that the year would be dedicated to shared values and said that in August 2011 the African Development Bank (AfDB) and others had pledged \$350 million towards a humanitarian fund, of which \$8 million had been drawn to help victims of famine in the Horn of Africa. The \$82 million budget over four years backs 19 strategies.

Institution- and capacity-building

This program concentrates on improving the running of the AU Commission, increasing accountability and moving to results-based management, streamlined administration and more efficient support services, under the slogan "an efficient and effective AU for a new Africa". IT and other facilities at the AU headquarters have been improved, thanks to assistance from India and China, among other nations, and cooperation has been strengthened between the AU, AfDB and UN Economic Commission for Africa. There are 23 strategies and a total budget of \$128 million. Summing up achievements in January 2012, AU Commission Deputy Chairperson Erastus Mwencha highlighted progress in peace and security; programs under way in agriculture, infrastructure, social welfare and education; and cooperation to use resources more effectively. Electoral processes across Africa had improved, he said, and the AU is becoming more responsive to challenges such as governance, climate change and drought. The approved 2012 budget is \$274 million, comprising \$122 million for operations and \$152 million for development programs, while key strategic international partnerships continue to be built. The AU has developed monitoring and evaluation tools to check progress against its strategic plan, and these will be used over the coming years. The will for change is there, and the strategic plan will help to make that happen.

Conclusion

The AU succeeded the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which was set up in 1963 to secure the decolonization of Africa and the sovereignty of individual nation states, while simultaneously promoting unity and prosperity on the continent. With one of the main goals achieved, a new organization was needed to take Africa forward into the 21st century: a stronger, more efficient and practical body working to create "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena", the world's perception of Africa was at low ebb. The African renaissance that was promised at the end of decolonisation instead gave birth to a sustained period of 'afro-pessimism', following a series of devastating conflicts, endemic corruption and chronic

underdevelopment (The Economist Magazine, 2000). Which not only slowed the African development process, but produced new sets of elites who received instructions for development externally? As a result, Africa was brought on her knees to a total state of dependence and as a dependent economy the performance of the African economy is often conditioned by the expansion or decline of external economies.

therefore, as has already been mentioned, Africa faces significant threat of violent conflicts, out breaks of life threatening diseases, lack of institutions, and economic dependence on external economies. To be able to achieve sustainable development African leaders must demonstrate purposeful leadership, thus necessitating that the continent's leaders devise African solutions to African problems.

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