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***THE AFRICAN UNION  
AND THE CHALLENGES FOR AFRICA  
IN THE 21ST CENTURY***

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***Bayo Adeogun***

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The African Union was inaugurated on July 9, 2002, in Durban, South Africa. This event marked not only the demise of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) but also ushered in a new formidable Organization well suited to face the 21st century challenges confronting the African continent. That the OAU was no longer unprogressive and inefficient to adequately solve African numerous problems was a known fact, the salient point is that the AU had been structured in a way to tackle all the inadequacies and flaws of the defunct OAU. The AU is therefore expected to chart a new and more dynamic course for the continent and its numerous peoples.

The OAU no doubt served the continent assiduously for thirty-nine years through thick and thin and it was able to fulfill most of its objectives and aims during the period. OAU was perhaps limited in its operations by its charter which prevented the organization from interfering in the internal affairs of Member States, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each state and for the inalienable rights to independent existence. OAU was therefore prevented from interfering in the numerous wars that engulfed the African continent. The new Organization, AU, is however empowered by its Constituent Act to interfere in the internal affairs of member states, in respect of grave circumstances, namely, war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity and the right of Member States to request intervention from the Union in order to restore peace and security.'

The AU, unlike the OAU, has new concepts, principles and objectives to propel the continent to enviable heights and face the problems confronting the continent in the 21st century.

## RATIONALE FOR A NEW AFRICAN ORGANIZATION

By the year 2002, the OAU had more or less been operating under a new name. This was sequel to the ratification of the African Economic Community (AEC) Treaty and the OAU thereafter operated on the basis of the OAU Charter and the AEC Treaty. With effect from May 1994, the OAU began to be referred to as the OAU/AEC. This was an indication that the old OAU Charter was no longer adequate to sustain effective operation of the Organization.

Another attempt for change began in 1979 when efforts were made towards amending the OAU Charter to reflect the globalization and the new dynamics of international politics. The OAU Charter as it was could not cope with the present global realities and therefore could not advance the cause of the people. The structure of the OAU Charter was too narrow to accommodate the dynamics of contemporary international politics, globalization and the New International Economic World Order. For African continent to benefit from the current trends, her organization must be dynamic.

The declaration of African leaders at Sirte in Libya reflected this fact. Article A of the Sirte declaration states *inter alia*

To find ways and means of strengthening the Continental Organization to make it more effective so as to keep pace with the political, economic and social developments taking place within *and outside the continent*.

Similarly, the sociopolitical climate that characterized the signing of the OAU Charter in 1963, had been overcome by the African leaders. The spirit and thinking of African leaders have changed from what it was in 1963. The idea of states not ready to lose part of their sovereignty in any form is no longer fashionable (the EU is a typical example). Jealousy and intrigues that created division among the African leaders have also disappeared.

So when Libyan leader Muammar Ghaddafi championed the cause for the establishment of the African Union in conformity with the objectives of the OAU Charter, and the Provisions of the AEC Treaty, he was not seen in the light that African leaders in 1963 saw and regarded the role of the Ghanaian leader Kwame Nkrumah. Ghaddafi was not seen as trying to establish an Organization. He intended to head as Nkrumah was so

regarded. He therefore enjoyed the applause and cooperation of his brother Africans unlike Nkrumah who was shouted at and condemned by his fellow African brothers. This political climate was no doubt responsible for setting up of an ineffective Charter for the OAU in 1963.

The Cold War was another circumstantial and important factor that was present in 1963 but which had thawed by now. By 1963, the idea of belonging to either the Eastern or Western bloc was so pronounced that European powers took active interest in the activities of African States. Some African states were empowered to antagonize the noble ideas of others by all means. The merits and demerits of such ideas were of no concern to them, and any attempt on the part of an African leader to antagonize the European powers could lead to his forceful removal from office through sponsored military coup d'etat. Since many of the leaders did not want to lose their political positions, they, therefore, danced to the tune of the European powers.

A look into the highlights of the Sirte declarations provides remarkable insight into the thinking of African leaders and the way forward. It also provides the distinctive character of the proposed African Union as against the OAU.

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SIRTE DECLARATION**

- (a) To find ways and means of strengthening the Continental Organization to make it more effective so as to keep pace with the political, economic and social developments taking place within and outside the continent;
- (b) To forge unity, solidarity and cohesion, as well as cooperation between African peoples and among African states.
- (c) To promote and consolidate African Unity;
- (d) As Africa enters the twenty—first century, there was the imperative need and a high sense of urgency to rekindle the aspirations of African Peoples transcending cultural, ideological, ethnic and national differences;
- (e) To revitalized the Continental Organization in order to make it play a more active role and continue to be relevant to the needs of the African peoples and responsible to the demands of the prevailing

circumstance;

- (f) To eliminate the scourge of conflicts which constitutes a major impediment to the implementation of African's development and integration;
- (g) To proceed with the strengthening of the Unity of the African continent and its peoples. In the light of those proposals and bearing in mind the current situation on the continent DECIDED TO;
- (h) Establish an African Union, in conformity with the ultimate objectives of the Charter of the African continental Organization and the provisions of the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community;
- (i) Accelerate the process of implementing the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community in particular;
- (j) Shorten the implementation periods of the Abuja Treaty;
- (k) Ensure the speedy establishment of all the institutions provided for in the Abuja Treaty, such as the African Monetary Union, The African Court of Justice and in particular, the Pan [African Parliament.
- (l) Strengthening and consolidating the Regional Economic Communities as the pillars for achieving the objectives of the African Economic Community and realizing the envisaged Union.
- (m) Mandate the Council of Ministers to take the necessary measures to ensure the implementation of the above decisions and in particular, to prepare the constituting legal text of the Union, taking into account the Charter of the OAU and the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community. The Council should submit its report to the thirty:sixth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government for appropriate action.
- (n) Request the Secretary General of the Africa Continental Organization as a matter of priority to take all appropriate measures to follow up the implementation of these decisions.'

## FORMATION OF THE AFRICAN UNION

Three Summit meetings of the Assembly of African Heads of State and Government were very significant in the formation of the African Union, and they were viz;

- a. The Algiers Summit; 12th – 14th July 1999.
- b. The Sirte Summit; 8th – 9th September 1999
- c. The Lome Summit; 11th July 2000.

The Algiers Summit was the Thirty [Fifth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). It provided the venue where African leaders for the first time discussed extensively their desire to form a new Organization. This desire was ex Chausically moved by the Libyan leader, Moummar Ghaddafi, who was subsequently mandated by the meeting to summon the Forth Extra Mordinary Session.

The Sirte Summit was held in the Great Socialist Peoples Libyan Arab Jamariya. It was inspired by the important proposal submitted by the Libyan leader, Moummar Ghaddafi, and particularly by his vision for a strong and United African Organization capable of meeting global challenges and shouldering its responsibilities to harness the human and natural resources of the continent in order to improve the living conditions of its peoples. The SIRTE DECLARATION was formulated and signed by the fifty Ihree African Heads of State and Government that attended the meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September, 1999.

The Lome Summit on the other hand, was significant for two reasons. First, it marked the last Summit of the Organization of African Union and secondly, the Constitutive Act of the Union was ractified by the fifty—three African Heads of State and Government that were in attendance. The Summit therefore performed dual roles, the role of dissolving the OAU and that of ushering in the African Union. The fifty—three African Leaders that signed the Constitutive Act of the Union therefore performed the noble task of putting in place a more dynamic, purposeful and peoples oriented Organization, with which they hoped to propel Africa into the new millennium. Commenting on the African Union, President Obasanjo said "OAU transformed into the African Union (AU) in order to put an end to poverty in the region". According to him, the AU is the new ship with

which the continent hope to sail away from poverty, disease and other predicaments and to pursue economic development.<sup>3</sup>

## THE CONSTITUTIVE ACT OF THE AFRICAN UNION

The Constitutive Act of the African Union was signed by Fifty: three Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), at the Thirty—Six Ordinary Session which met in Lome Togo on the 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2000.

### **Preamble of the Constitutive Act has among other things the following**

Inspired by the noble ideals which guided the founding fathers of the continental Organization and generation of Pan africanists in their determination to promote Unity, Solidarity, Cohesion and Co 2peration among the peoples of Africa and African States;

Determined to take up the multi faceted challenges that confront the African continent and peoples in the light of the social, economic and political changes taking place in the world.

Acknowledge the principles and objectives of the Organization of African Unity, its role and the heroic struggle waged by Africans in the liberation of the continent and the affirmation of a common identity and the process of attainment of the Unity of Our continent which has provided a unique frame work by our collective action in Africa and in our relations with the rest of the world.

Convinced of the need to accelerate the process of implementing the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community in order to promote socioeconomic development of Africa and face more effectively the challenges posed by globalization.

Conscious of the fact that the scourge of conflict in Africa constitutes a major impediment to the socio Ceconomic development of the continent and the need to promote peace, security and stability as a prerequisite for the implementation of our development and integration agenda.

Determined to promote and protect human and peoples rights, consolidate democratic institutions and culture and to ensure good governance and the rule of law.

Further determined to take all necessary measures to strengthen our common institutions and provide them with necessary powers and resources to enable them discharge their respective mandate effectively.'

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE AFRICAN UNION**

- (a) Achieve greater unity and solidarity between the African countries and the peoples of Africa;
- (b) Defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of its Member States;
- (c) accelerate the political and socioeconomic integration of the continent;
- (d) promote and defend African common positions on issues of interest to the continents and its peoples;
- (e) encourage international cooperation taking into account the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human rights;
- (f) promote peace, security and stability on the continent;
- (g) promote democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance;
- (h) promote and protect human and peoples rights in accordance with the African Charter and Human and Peoples Rights and other relevant human rights instruments.
- (i) establish the necessary conditions which enable the continent to play its rightful role in the global economy and in international negotiations;
- (j) promote sustainable development of the economic, social and cultural levels and as well as the integration of African economies;
- (k) promote cooperation in all fields of human activity to raise the living standards of African peoples.
- (l) coordinate and harmonize the policies between the existing and future Regional Economic Communities for the gradual attainment of the objectives of the Union;
- (m) advance the development of the continent by promoting research in all fields, in particular in science and



technology;

- (n) work with relevant international partners in the eradication of preventable diseases and the promoting of good health on the continent.<sup>5</sup>

## **PRINCIPLES OF THE UNION**

Article 4 of the Constitutive Act states the principles of the Union which are the followings;

- (a) sovereign equally and interdependence among Member States of the Union;
- (b) respect of borders existing on achievement of independence;
- (c) participation of the African peoples in the activities of the Union;
- (d) establishment of a common defense policy for the African continent;
- (e) peaceful resolution of conflicts among Member States of the Union through such appropriate measures as may be decided upon by the Assembly;
- (f) prohibition of the use of force or threat to use force among Member States of the Union;
- (g) noninterference by any Member States in the internal affairs of another;
- (h) the right of the Union to intervene in a Member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely; war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity;
- (i) peaceful coexistence of Member States and their right to live in peace and humanity;
- (j) the right of Member States to request intervention from the Union in order to restore peace and security;
- (k) promotion of self —reliance within the frame work of the Union;
- (l) promotion of Gender equality;
- (m) Respect for democratic principles, human rights, the rule of law and good governance;

- (n) promotion of social justice to ensure balanced economic development;
- (o) respect to the sanctity of human life, condemnation and rejection of impurity and political assassination, act of terrorism and subversive activities;
- (p) Condemnation and rejection of unconstitutional change of governments.<sup>6</sup>

## ORGANS OF THE UNION

Article 5 of the Constitutive Act spelt out the Organs of the Union

1. The Union has nine principal organs which are the following
  - (a) The Assembly of the Union.
  - (b) The Executive Council.
  - (c) The Pan african Parliament.
  - (d) The Court of Justice.
  - (e) The Commission.
  - (f) The Permanent Representatives Committee.
  - (g) The Specialized Technical Committees.
  - (h) The Economic, Social and Cultural Council.
  - (i) The Financial Institutions.

2. Section 2 of the Article gives the Assembly, the right to establish other organs if the Assembly so desire.

## FUNCTIONS OF THE ORGANS OF THE UNION

Articles 6 [22 of the Act of the Union, clearly spelt out the organs, their powers and functions.

## THE ASSEMBLY

The Assembly is the Supreme organ of the Union and its composed of Heads of State and Government or their duly accredited representatives. It meets once a year in ordinary session or it may meet in extra LOrdinary

session at the request of any Member State and on the approval by the two thirds majority of the Member States. The Assembly is headed for a year by a Head of State or Government elected after contributions among the Member States. The Assembly shall take its decision by consensus or by the two thirds of majority of the Member States of the Union. Procedural or non \_T procedural matters shall be determined by simple majority. A two thirds of the total membership of the Union forms a quorum at any meeting of the Assembly.

**The functions of the Assembly shall include the following;**

- (a) determine the common policies of the Union;
- (b) receive, consider and take decisions on the reports and recommendations from the other organs of the Union;
- (c) consider request for membership of the Union;
- (d) establish any organ of the Union;
- (e) monitor the implementation of policies and decisions of the Union as well as ensure compliance by all Member States.
- (f) adopt the budget of the Union;
- (g) give directives to the Executive Council on the management of conflicts, wars and other emergency situations and the restoration of peace;
- (h) appoint and terminate the appointment of the judges of the Court of Justice;
- (i) appoint the Chairman of the Commission his or her deputies and Commissioners of the Commission and determine their functions and terms of office.

(2) The Assembly at any time, may delegate any of its powers and functions to any organ of the Union.

**THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

The Executive Council which is responsible to the Assembly considers issues referred to it by the Assembly. It also monitor the

implementation of policies formulated by the Assembly. It is composed of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs or such other Ministers or Authorities as are designated by the Governments of Member States. The Council meets at least twice in a year in ordinary session, it can also meet in an extraordinary session at the request of any Member State and upon approval by two thirds of all Member States. Decisions of the Council shall be by consensus and if that fails, but a two third majority. But on procedural matters and others, decision shall be by simple majority. Two thirds of the total membership of the Union shall form a quorum at any meeting of the Executive Council.

**Among the Functions of the Executive Council are the following:**

Coordination and determination of policies in areas of common interest to the Member's of the Union including the following;

- (a) foreign trade;
- (b) energy, industry and mineral resources;
- (c) food, agricultural and animal resources, livestock production and forestry;
- (d) water resources and irrigation;
- (e) environmental protection, humanitarian action and disaster response and relief;
- (f) transport and communication;
- (g) insurance;
- (h) education, culture, health and human resources development;
- (i) science and technology;
- (j) nationality, residency and immigration matters;
- (k) social security , including the formulation of mother and child care policies as well as policies relating to the disabled and the handicapped;
- (1) establishment of a system of African awards, medals and prizes.

## **THE SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL COMMITTEES**

The Specialized Technical Committees of the Union is directly responsible to the Executive Council, which can restructure the existing Committees or establish new ones. It is composed of Ministers or Senior Officials responsible for sectors falling within their respective area of competence.

### **The established Specialized Technical Committee are viz;**

- (a) The Committee on Rural Economy and Agricultural Matters;
- (b) The Committee on Monetary and Financial Affairs.
- (c) The Committee on Trade, Customs and Immigration Matters;
- (d) The Committee on Industry, Science and Technology; Energy, Natural Resources and Environment;
- (e) The Committee on Transport, Communications and Tourism.
- (f) The Committee on Health, Labour and Social Affairs; and
- (g) The Committee on Education, Culture and Human Resources.

Each Specialized Technical Committee carry out functions within its field of competence and among their functions are;

- (a) to prepare projects and programmes of the Union and submit it to the Executive Council;
- (b) to ensure the supervision, follow up and the evaluation of the implementation of decisions taken by the organs of the Union;
- (c) to ensure the coordination and harmonization of projects and programmes of the Union.
- (d) to submit to the Executive Council either on its own initiatives or at the request by the Executive Council, reports and recommendations on the implementation of the provision of this Act; and
- (e) to carry out any other functions assigned to it for the purpose of ensuring the implementation of the provisions of this Act.

## **THE PAN-AFRICAN PARLIAMENT**

The African Union established a Pan [African Parliament in order to ensure full participation of the African peoples in the development and economic integration of the continent.

The composition, powers, functions and organization of the Pan L African Parliament shall be defined in a protocol to be prepared later.

## **THE COURT OF JUSTICE**

The Union established a Court of Justice, but the statute, composition and functions of the Court of Justice shall be defined in a protocol relating thereto.

## **THE FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS**

The Union established the following Financial Institutions, but their rules, and regulations shall be defined in protocols relating thereto.

- (a) The African Central Bank;
- (b) The African Monetary Funds;
- (c) The African Investment Bank.

## **THE COMMISSION**

The Commission is also the Secretariat of the Union. The Commission is composed of the Chairman, his or her deputy or deputies, and the Commissioners.

They shall be assisted by the necessary staff for the smooth functioning of the Commission. The functions, structure and regulations of the Commission shall be determined by the Assembly.

## **THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE**

The Permanent Representatives Committees of the Union is composed of Permanent Representatives to the Union and other Plenipotentiaries of Member States. The Permanent Representatives Committee is charged with the responsibility of preparing the work of the Executive Council and acting on the Executive Council's instructions. It may setup Sub [Committees or working groups as it may deem necessary.

## **THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL COUNCIL .**

The Economic, Social and Cultural Council is an advisory organ composed of different social and professional groups of the member states of the Union. The functions, power composition and organization of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council shall be determined by the Assembly.'

## **CHALLENGES FACING AFRICAN UNION**

The AU has taken off on a sound footing just like the OAU did thirty Gnine years ago. For the AU not go to the OAU way , a lot must be done and all stumbling blocks must be cleared. A lot of challenges no doubt faces the AU. President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, identified the following bumps that must be removed for full meaningful Union:

- (a) lack of good governance and rule of law;
- (b) lack of political will;
- (c) inadequate mechanisms for equitable sharing;
- (d) pervasive weakness in regional integration structures;
- (e) lack of policy constituency and credibility ;
- (f) overlapping membership of several regional groupings;
- (g) lack of civil society and private sector involvement;

That the dream of the emerging Africa Union may not be short lived the President canvassed the following;

- (a) urgent restoration of peace and stability
- (b) protection of human rights;
- (c) coordination and harmonization of macroeconomic policies,
- (d) facilitation of free movement of persons, goods and services and
- (e) the full involvement of the private sector and civil society.

Obasanjo said that the past pit falls must be avoided by implementing agreements , harmonizing regional integration, road communication energy and transport and private and group involvements

**The general challenges facing the Africa Union among others include the following:**

A major challenge facing the Union is the political situation in Madagascar . This is an issue the AU Peace and Security Council should discuss as a matter of urgency. The 2001 December Presidential elections between former President Didier Ratsivaka and President Marc Ravalomanana had turned out to months of skirmishes and political bickering between the two men and their supporters. This had cause grave political danger in the country . The country's constitutional courts verdict had been rejected by Ratsivaka. On the part of the OAU, a fresh election had been ordered by the Organization. The AU refused to allow the delegation of President Marc Ravalomanans at the Durban Conference. AU' s stand conform with its stand on non recognition of undemocratic rulers and in line with OAU' s stand on the election . But on the other hand, President Marc Ravalomanana had been recognized by a number of countries such as the United States of America and France. The last OAU summit held in Lome, Togo, where the Consultative Act of the African Union was ratified, also barred delegation from Comoros and Cote d' Ivorie from attending the meeting because their governments took power in military coup d'etat last year. This may appear to be a good attempt at preventing non democratic, unprogressive and tyrannical leaders from African summit .But in reality , these are not the only countries with military leaders although some have changed to civilians . Togo's Eyadema and Burkina Faso's Blaise Compaore all came to power through the barrel of guns many decades ago, and have since been accused of summary killings, torture and kidnappings. Africa has a large number of these military turned civilian presidents , giving a false impression that the whole of Africa is fully democratized . These military dictators turned civilian presidents have also turned to civilian dictators and life rulers , suppressing opposition , religious and ethnic agitations and introducing divide and rule system in their countries.

Another set of undemocratic rulers in Africa are civilians who operate one party system in their countries and those who after being elected perpetuate themselves in office, turning themselves to life presidents. The likes of Presidents Charles Taylor, Robert Mugabe, Hosni Mubarak, and Zaid Bin Ali among others, falls into this category .They myopically



believed that they symbolize "hope, peace and stability" in their countries and anything in contrary would spell doom for their countries.

Another political challenge facing the African Union relates to the membership of Morocco which was an inherited problem since 1984. Morocco had withdrawn her membership from the OAU because of the recognition and admission of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) by the Organization. Morocco was an active and founding member of the OAU. The earlier the issue is resolved the better it would be for the unity of the continent.

Another political challenge and problem facing the Union arises from the need to decentralize the organs and institutions of the union. The Pan African Parliaments, Court of Justice, the Economic, Social and Cultural Council and some of the financial institutions should be decentralized. The implementation of this will no longer be politicized as member states would definitely struggle among themselves to host the decentralized organs and institutions of the union. This may bring about procrastination or even delay on the part of the union. But eventually this must be done for efficiency.

The issue of sovereignty is also a fundamental problem and challenge facing the union. Unlike the OAU Charter, the Constitutive Act of the Union presupposes the sharing of sovereign powers in some cases between the Union and its Member States. Two key organs of the African Union, namely the Pan —African Parliaments and the Court of Justice presupposes the creation and establishment of the Supralational sovereign authorities, at least in the long run, with direct legislative and juristic power and competence in some areas over not only its constituent units, the Member States, but also over their citizens much like the central or federal government does in a federal system.

The establishment of the Pan :African Parliament is supposed to take a gradual process, nevertheless, it is important that it should be established without delay. It is therefore worrisome that Member States are yet to secure the simple majority which the ratification requires. The bane of the problem is that many African states are yet to shake off their inherited colonial apprehension as regarding sacrificing their sovereignty to African Supra national institutions.

The speedy establishment of the Court of Justice under Article 18

of the Constitutive Act and the financial institutions, namely the African Central Bank, the African Investment Bank under Article 19 of the Constitutive Act will also be key indicators of the willingness and readiness of Member States to give up some of their Sovereignty to the Union. For this reason, it will be instructive to see how quickly the protocols establishing these organs of the Union Effie Court of Justice and the financial institutions will be drawn up and ratified.

The political will of the governments and peoples of Africa also constitute a fundamental challenge to the survival of the African Union. Decisions reached and signed, declarations and agreements signed by African leaders must not only be abided with but must be fully implemented to the letter. Decisions are based on consensus of opinion and full implementation of these will not only promote the desired unity in Africa, but also promote the policy of collectivism in the continent.

Similarly, rulers who are stooges or mere appendages of the West must be removed from office. They saw nothing good and practicable in Africa. They run from one western country to another either with cap in hand or trying to resolve their political crises. The position of such leaders would no doubt affect the industrialization and technological advancement of the continent.

For the AU to succeed, these leaders must be compelled to organise elections in their respective countries. The idea of life presidency must be discouraged in Africa. Leaders that are accused of tyranny, genocide and killings should be made to face the music. This will no doubt serve as deterrent to others like them. African leaders who are stooges should be made to believe in Africa and always refer African issues to the AU and not European countries. They should be encouraged to refer all issues first to the AU, and abide by AU'S decision rather than seeking western advice first before African advice.

The next challenge facing the AU is the Economy. Africa economy is nothing to write home about many years after political independence. Obviously many African states achieved only political independence and not economic independence as their economies are still tied to the apron string of the Western powers. They depend on foreign aid and loans to supplement their annual budget. Many African countries also face internal economic problems. Agriculture which is the backbone of Africa economy

is on the decline, leaving African countries to import food from Western countries, while African exports face constant fluctuations and occasional decline in international market. The phenomenon is that agriculture is still predominantly subsistence and needed to be modernized. At present Africans produce what they do not consume and consume what they do not produce. There is an urgent need to correct this.

The full implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) which incorporates four major initiatives namely

- (1) The Peace and Security Initiative
- (2) The Democracy and Political Governance Initiative.
- (3) The Economic Governance Initiative.
- (4) The Sub5egional and the Regional Integration Initiative, among African states will go a long way in solving Africa's economic and political problems. NEPAD has been presented as the wholly African initiative that would approach Africa's problems without ignoring the continent's peculiar circumstance.

NEPAD should as a matter of urgency improve the level of technological and scientific development of the continent. These are necessary in order to enhance high productivity and massive employment for the increasing population of Africa. Also the full integration of African economics, and the monetary system will go a long way in boosting intra L African trade (which had since been on the decline) and also improve the quality of Africans export products and enhance their competitiveness in the international market. African countries would not only experience a stable economy but also an increase in their foreign exchange earnings. If the African Union is to make a headway, African state's must abandon their numerous monetary systems for an African monetary system.

Lack of fund also constitute a great role in the survival of the Union. A situation where African States refuses to pay their annual subscription and other special levy will no doubt cripple the AU. The projected annual estimated of the AU totaled over 80 million dollars and Africa are in the habit of irregular and non payment of their dues and levies. (9) More than half of the OAU members States are owing the Organization huge sums of money. Before the demise of the AU, the Organization had a budget of 32

million dollars a year but arrears amounts to 36 million dollars. (10)

For the AU to survive, Member States should endeavour to pay all dues and levies. Another major obstacle is the known division among Africans as Franco and Anglo —Phone countries. This division had no doubt caused a lot of divisions among African peoples. Many issues have been decided not on their merits but on this line of divide. For example, appointing a Secretary—General for the continental organization has been politicized on this line of divide. A number of factors must be considered before a consensus candidate could emerge. This attitude should be stopped and replaced by AFRICA PHONE or AFRICANISM. People must see themselves as Africans not Africans from a particular region or sub region. Similarly, the era of African leaders depending on European countries most especially Britain, France and the USA should stop. Some African leaders would shuttle between European capitals before taken decisions and actions that affects their people. Africa must be the primary constituency of all African states. African countries must be encouraged to interfere in the internal affairs of others, this will mean localization of African problems.

The African Union can only justify its relevance if it moves immediately away from theory and programmes to the implementation of all its resolutions. Economic development programme initiated at regional levels should not be dissolved but further strengthened to support the overall continental objectives of the Union.

African entrepreneurs must be encouraged to invest in African countries. A programme of ten years that would revolutionize intra LI African trade, de-emphasize the relevance of borders, advance communication, transportation and exchange of information within African countries will go along way towards African unification. A comprehensive and action-oriented strategy that will end Africans brain drain, educate its populace, solve or minimize conflict and most importantly discriminate the leadership in the continent is indispensable. Until African rulers wholeheartedly submit themselves to the rules of democracy and stop emasculating opposition, stop manipulating elections, stop stealing and robbery, stop supporting fellow tyrannical ruler in the name of African solidarity, stop being gods that the African vision could be achieved. (11)

African development is also a fundamental challenge to the AU.

For Africa to get out of the grip of underdevelopment and poverty and to achieve a reasonable level of growth and development, the AU must not delay in addressing a number of issues. African economy must take a new turn and achieve a high level of diversification and competitiveness. This is necessary for a rapid globalizing economy. For this to be a realizable objective, human capacity, infrastructure, science and technology scientific agriculture, health, education and human development must all be developed.

### **THE WAY FORWARD**

The establishment of the African Union has brought a new ray of hope and also offer some real challenges to Africa. Although the Union had taken off, a lot still has to be done for the Union to achieve its desired objectives.

First and foremost, Africans must finance the Organization. Member States must pay their dues and contributions as at when due to enable the Union to meet all its financial obligations. With a sound financial stand, the Union should without delay establish the Organs and Commission of the Union. The early take off of these will ensure the acceleration of attainment of the objectives of the Union. Also for the proper take off of the Union, the Union needs a visionary leader among the Member States. Some of the more developed Member States could provide the leadership by providing both moral and financial support to aid the activities of the Union. This is imperative in order to prevent the Union from stagnation.

For the AU to achieve African development, proper attention must be paid to the development of infrastructure most especially roads, railways, air transportation and telecommunications within the continent. These are necessary for proper mobilization of factors of production, especially labour and capital. This will also facilitate Intra African and investment leading eventually to full economic integration of the continent. A successful African economic integration will no doubt bring a lot of gain to member states while its non implementation may lead to loss of interest in the Union among member states.

The Union must also address the issue of sovereignty urgently to achieve full economic integration. Member States must be ready to surrender part of their sovereignty for the emergence of Supra national

authority to coordinate, manage and direct the affairs of the Union. Any attempts by member states to procrastinate or delay in surrendering part of their sovereignty may lead to the stagnation of the African Union.

The Commission of the Organization must be well equipped to face the challenges facing the continent, most essentially adherence to good governance by African Leaders. The Commission, if it is well funded, well staffed should be able to police the continent and enforce good governance by the leaders. Good political governance turn should be accompanied by good economic governance which is self-reliant in orientation. For decades, a number of programmes towards self-reliant Africa had been put in place such as the Monrovia Declarations, The Lagos Plan of Action, and the Final Act, and the NEPAD. These programmes and efforts to implement them have come to nought. A new scientific agricultural programme should be implemented by Africans to make Africans feed themselves and be self-reliant in food production. This will in turn create job opportunities, provide more foreign exchange and harness both the finance and human resources of the continent.

In conclusion, the challenges facing the African Union is no doubt huge and undaunting, but with good political will, good governance self-reliant economy and patriotism on the part of African peoples, the new Organization will propel the continent to the "Promised Land."

## ENDNOTES

1. See Article 4 (h & j) of the Constitutive Act of the Union.
2. See the Preamble of the Sirte Declaration
3. See Punch July 16, 2002, p. 3.
4. See the Constituent Act of the Union pp. 516.
5. Ibid.
6. see Article 4 of the AU Charter, pp. 6E24.
7. See the Constitutive Act of the Union.
8. a key note address delivered at the National Seminar on the Challenges of Cooperation and integration in Africa held in Abuja between May 23 and 25, 2001. Also see the Comet, May 16, 2001 p.2.
9. *The Vanguard*, July 11, 2001.
10. *The Sunday Punch*, August 26, 2001, p. 7.
11. Daily Times, May 16, 2001. p. 1.