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## **PAN-AFRICANISM Revisited: Vision and Reality of African Unity and Development**

Paul G. Adogamhe\*

**Abstract:** *This paper revisits the ideology of Pan-Africanism and examines how it has been institutionalized into a pan-continental Organization of African Unity (OAU) and now transformed into the African Union (AU). The author reviews some of the problems and challenges that have been encountered by the Pan-African movement. In particular, the role of Western countries in promoting their interests in Africa and the renewed interest in the movement especially the part played by the Libyan leader in helping to engineer the OAU into AU are analyzed. The paper concludes that what started as a movement for African unity and political independence has now evolved in an age of globalization into a struggle for African unity and sustainable development. To achieve these stated goals will require attitudinal change on the part of African leaders especially a new orientation towards the consolidation of democracy, rule of law and good governance in the continent.*

## **PAN-AFRICANISME revisité : Vision et réalité de l'Unité africaine et du Développement**

**Résumé :** *Ce document revisite l'idéologie de Pan-Africanisme et examine comment il a été institutionnalisé dans les Organisation de l'Unité Africaine (OUA), à présent transformé en l'Union Africaine (UA). L'auteur passe en revue certains des problèmes et des défis qui ont été produits par le mouvement panafricain. En particulier, le rôle des pays occidentaux favorisant leurs intérêts en Afrique et l'intérêt renouvelé, particulièrement le rôle joué par le chef libyen, pour le mouvement de transformer l'OUA vers l'UA sont analysés. Le papier conclut que ce qui a commencé comme mouvement pour l'unité africaine et l'indépendance politique s'est maintenant transformé dans un âge de globalisation en une lutte pour l'unité et le développement durable africain. Pour atteindre ces buts indiqués, exigera le changement attitudinal de la part des chefs africains particulièrement une nouvelle orientation vers la consolidation de la démocratie, l'état de droit et la bonne gouvernement dans le continent.*

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## **Introduction**

\* (PhD), Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, 800 Main Street, Whitewater, WI 53190, USA; E-mail: adogamhp@uww.edu

The search for African political and economic integration, which began outside Africa, finally led to the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963 and was transformed into the African Union (AU) in 2002. Despite the pursuit of divergent and competing national interests by member states, both the OAU and AU represent Africa's collective efforts in search of formal integration and development. However, the fifty-three nation-states of the AU have come to realize over time the difficulties involved in building continental unity and development in an increasingly globalized world. Africa still contains some of the poorest countries in the world, with an average per capita income of just \$600 per year. It is also politically fractured and socially stratified into rich and poor, literate and illiterate groups. It is further divided along religious lines—traditional religions, Christianity and Islam. These divisive political and social forces continue to chip away at Africa's fragile unity and development. However, some proponents of African unity, including the Libyan leader, Col. Muammar al-Qadhafi, have called for the immediate creation of a formal federation dubbed a "United States of Africa" as the only way to fight poverty, ignorance and a myriad of other global challenges confronting the continent.

### I. Pan-Africanism Revisited

Since late 1950s, African states have experimented with various forms of formal integration arrangements to promote unity and economic development. In fact, just as the early pan-Africanists confronted the American and European racial, social and economic oppression of the African peoples with pan-Africanism, so have some of the African leaders advocated pan-African unity as the catalysts for Africa's development. At a two-day Summit Conference in Abuja, Nigeria, November 11-12, 2005, African leaders weighed in on the topic, "Africa and the Challenges of the Changing Global Order: Desirability of an African Union Government." A call was made for the immediate implementation of a Union Government for Africa. This Union Government was to "create an economic and monetary union, establish a common foreign and defense policy, among other strategic decisions based on a set of clearly identified values" (Onuorah & Oghogho, *The Guardian*, November 14, 2005). The African leaders set up a special committee to look into the possible constitutive, operative and institutional challenges that such a Union Government would engender and to work out the appropriate strategies for tackling them. It also mandated to deliberate on how to harmonize the Union Government

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with existing African sovereign state governments. The following broad principles of integration were laid down for a prospective African Union Government:

- A union government must be motivated by a clearly identifiable set of goals. Part of the goals must be that of a union of the people as opposed to merely a union of the various structures and government;
- The pursuit of these goals must be based on a set of clearly identifiable shared values and common interests which are non-negotiable;
- These values determine the constitutive and regulative rules of the union; and
- Such rules are expected to be based on the principle of strict adherence.

The former President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, said that the major goal of the union “must be the unity of all Africans and peoples of African descent in the Diaspora. Such unity is merely a means to the ultimate goal which is the development and transformation of our people and continent....The ultimate goals of such a political structure must be those of sustainable development, peace, security, growth, democracy and transformation of the continent” (Obasanjo’s Address, Abuja, *The Guardian*, November 13, 2005). The chairman of the opening session, President John Agyekum Kuffuor of Ghana, said that Africans must understand that “when nations join with others in a trade or political bloc, they give up a portion of their national sovereignty. What people need to understand is that the solutions to the problems that affects them as individuals or as groups today can no longer be found just at the national level. We should also endeavor to have common democratic values so that our citizens would know what to expect wherever in Africa they find themselves.” Finally, he maintained that “regional peace and security are essential for integration. Without them, our energies are wasted” (Lohor, *ThisDay News Online*, November 13, 2005:1-2).

At a recent retreat and executive council meeting in Durban, South Africa, the AU Foreign Ministers stressed the need for a common understanding of African Union Government ahead of the Grand Debate, set for the AU Summit Meeting in Accra, Ghana, on June 25 to July 3, 2007. “The ultimate goal of the AU is full political and economic

integration leading to the United States of Africa," the communiqué said (*Agence France Presse (AFP)*, May 6, 2007).<sup>1</sup> While affirming the need to accelerate economic and political integration, African leaders at the AU summit, held in Accra, Ghana, again set up a committee of AU ministers to study how a continental union government would affect both the national sovereignties and existing regional economic blocs, and to recommend a roadmap and timeframe for the construction of a United States of Africa (*Guardian*, July 4, 2007).

## II. Theories of Integration and Definition of Pan-Africanism

The renewed debate on African integration is whether the objective of building the United States of Africa should support the processes of socioeconomic and political transformation of African states and societies either through a process of immediate creation of a central government or through 'gradual incrementalism' or functional evolution of African state-system.<sup>2</sup> If the former is achieved, it will automatically transform the way African societies are integrated into the world economic system. In addition, it must determine the degree of power and authority that should be transferred to a supranational authority and whether such power and authority are revocable or irrevocable. However, such a shift in sovereignty to a supranational authority would probably entail some versions of federalism, in which states or other political units

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<sup>1</sup> A recent comment by the Chairperson of AU Commission, Prof. Alpha O. Konare, also underscores this point. "The African Union is at a turning point in its history, leading towards the United States of Africa. What remains now is decide what strategy to take and at what pace", in *Press release, Division of Communication and Information, African Union Commission, 14 May, 2007*. Other publications dealing on this theme include: AU Report. 2006. "All AU member states accept the United States of Africa as common and desirable goal (but) differences exist over modalities and timeframe for achieving this goal and the appropriate pace of integration," In *AU Report EX/EX.CL/RPT(IX)*, 18 November; Maloka, E. (ed.) 2001. *A United States of Africa?*. Pretoria: African Institute of South Africa.

<sup>2</sup> Functionalism contends that as a result of increasing economic policy interactions, the integration process generates political dynamics that require more political coordination in order to operate effectively and eventually lead to further political integration (Haas, 1958; 1964; Mitrany, 1943). As Felipe Herrera succinctly stated, "...economic integration is a response to political challenge, a political response that is also a political process. In theory economics and politics ought not to be distinguished as separate disciplines...specifically, they cannot be kept separate in any economic integration movement on account of the complex ramifications of individual and state activities involved (Herrera, 1963: 95-96).

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recognize the sovereignty of a central government while retaining certain powers for themselves. Such federalism is best exemplified by the US Constitution. By federalism we mean a process that seeks simultaneously to meet the need for more effective governmental action in some domains (through centralization) and the democratic postulate of local control and local autonomy (through decentralization) (Haas,1970:624). The point of federalism as a process is succinctly stated in Friederich's work:

The review of selected issues in contemporary federal relations has shown that federalism is more fully understood if it is seen as process, an evolving pattern of changing relationships, rather than a static design regulated by firm and unalterable rules. This finding ought not be misunderstood as meaning that rules are insignificant; far from it. What it does mean is that any federal relationship requires effective and built-in arrangements through which these rules can be recurrently changed upon the initiative and with the consent of the federated entities. In a sense, what this means is that the development (historical) dimension of federal relationships has become a primary focal point, as contrasted with the distribution and fixation of jurisdictions (the legal aspect). In keeping with recent trends in political science, the main question is: What function does a federal relationship have?—rather than: What structure? (Friedrich, 1968:173).

The federalists have long assumed that the establishment of political organization and processes that can address political issues has the goal of promoting even greater unity and development. Proponents of this direct 'top-down approach' to integration argue that this will fast-track the timetable for addressing the most important political question of state sovereignty, which they view as an obstacle to intra-African cooperation (in contrast to functionalism-'bottom-up approach'). It is "only in the case of genuine federalism in which sovereignties are merged does this obstacle disappear; then the national interest becomes the federal interest, the responsibility is shifted to the supranational or federal government" (Wolfers,1965:28).

However, some realist analysts have expressed skepticism about Africa's ability to sustain one territorial jurisdiction because the institutional and physical infrastructure to support such vast jurisdiction did not exist in 1960 and still does not exist more than [five] decades later (Jackson, 1993; Mbeki, 2004). The other problem with this federalist approach to African integration is whether the ruling elites have the political will to surrender

their exclusive claim to sovereignty, which in the past has severely limited the autonomy of the central institutions to have direct control or make binding decisions on member states. Hence, others argue for a 'neofunctional approach' to integration which ascribes a dynamic role to individuals and interests groups in the process of integrating pluralist communities. By virtue of their participation in the policymaking process of an integrating community, these interest groups and other participants learn the rewards of involvement and undergo attitudinal changes inclining them towards the integrative system. According to Haas, "political integration is the process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations, and political activities toward a new center, and whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over preexisting national states" (Haas,1958:16).

Although neofunctionalists have assigned a major role to the establishment of new international organizations, it may not necessarily lead to a shift of loyalties from states as illustrated by the case of the defunct Eastern African Community. In addition, neofunctionalists are also not so much concerned with the attainment of terminal condition of integrative process but rather they are more preoccupied with understanding why and how actual integrative outcomes occur (Hansen, 1969). However, Jacob and Teune regard integration both as a process and as a terminal condition, a condition achieved when an unspecified threshold is passed and is defined in terms of institutional and attitudinal terms (Jacob & Teune, 1964). For example, the federalists see the end of integration process in the growth of a federal union among the constituent units. Karl Deutsch also used the construct of security communities as its terminal condition, while recognizing the possibility such a condition may be of 'amalgamated' or the 'pluralistic' variety (Deutsch,1964). The concept of political integration is also generally associated with the extent to which a group of people develop a sense of common identity and mutual obligation. Hence, Jacob and Teune state that "political integration generally implies a relationship of *community*...a feeling of identity and self-awareness," but they then state that "the essence of the integration relationship is seen as *collective action to promote mutual interests*" (Jacob & Teune, 1964:4-5).

The difficulties African leaders have had in promoting Pan-Africanism have been due to lack of clear ideological definition of the concept as well as their inability to discern it as a viable ideological blueprint for continental unity and development. The failure to discern the difference

between Pan-Africanists and neo-colonialists led to the formation of the OAU, which failed to form an African Union Government (M'buyinga, 1982). Is the establishment of AU, for example, to be viewed mainly as a more effective and efficient OAU--retaining the emphasis on individual state sovereignty--or is it a revival of a greater continental integration, even towards the vision of a full-fledged African federation, the United States of Africa as advocated by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah and as more recently promoted by Col al-Qadhaffi? According to Ofuately-Kodjoe, African unity project is a means to an end:

Like decolonialism, African unity is an interim strategy advocated by Pan-Africanists as a way of achieving the collective empowerment of African peoples. Therefore, only the kind of unity that promises to lead to increased capacity of Africans to take full control of their destinies will be consistent with Pan-Africanism. Any type of unity, like that of the OAU, which reinforces neo-colonialist relationships leading to the exploitation of African peoples, is antithetical to Pan-Africanism (Ofuately-Kodjoe 1986:17).

The traditional concept of Pan-Africanism has always entailed the call for political and cultural solidarity among African peoples, both in Africa and in the Diaspora. Ofuately-Kodjoe defines Pan-Africanism as "the acceptance of a oneness of all people of African descent and the commitment to the betterment of all people of African descent" (Ofuately-Kodjoe, 1986:388). As Robert Chrisman explains:

The Pan-African vision has as its basic premise that we the people of African descent throughout the globe constitute a common cultural and political community by virtue of our origin in Africa and common racial, social and economic oppression. It further maintains that political, economic and cultural unity is essential among all Africans, to bring about effective action for the liberation and progress of the African peoples and nations (1973: 2).

While the underlying current of Pan-Africanism was and still remains the struggle for unity and empowerment of African peoples against oppression and exploitation, the other major challenge it has encountered in the course of its history is how to institutionalize the pan-African idea (Walter, 1986:340). On the one hand, it seeks to promote the unity of peoples of African descent in the entire world by seeking to unite Africans in the African continent with the African diasporas in the other continents, while on the other hand it seeks to promote the unification of all African peoples within the continent of Africa--*Global Pan-Africanism*

vs. *Continental Pan-Africanism* (Mazrui, 1977:68-69). In order to better understand the contemporary attempts to incarnate the pan-African idea, it is necessary to briefly outline its historical evolution and the underlying ideas that have guided the different phases of the movement and its geographical locations (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:vii; Murithi, 2005:11).

### III. The Emergence of Pan-Africanism and the Search for African Unity

The transatlantic slave trade was a significant landmark in the annals of African history. It produced the forced migration of millions of Africans as slave-laborers to Europe, the Americas and the Caribbean. The 'carry over' of African cultures to the 'New World' has kept alive their African roots. Pan-Africanism was born in the Diaspora out of a longing for the African homeland. As Robert Chrisman correctly argued, "it was precisely the (capture) and uprooting of millions of Africans and conditions of slavery which laid the foundations for Pan-Africanism and Black nationalism in the United States and West Indies" (1973:3). However, the birth can be traced to the founding of the African Association in London in 1897 and the convening, in the same city, of the Pan-African Conference three years later by Trinidadian lawyer, H. Sylvester Williams (Geiss, 1974:177). Dr. W.E.B. Dubois, an African-American scholar and activist, either organized or played a leading role in a series of Pan-African congresses in United States and Europe between 1900 and 1945 which brought together peoples of African descent from the Americas, Africa and Europe. In the 1920s, Marcus Garvey also began to promote African nationalism and to advocate African self-government with the motto "Africa for Africans." Marcus Garvey occupies a special place in the Pantheon of pan-africanists by providing a dynamic leadership through the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and he clearly articulated the importance of Pan-Africanism in this way:

The masses of the Negroes in America, the West Indies, South and Central America are in sympathetic accord with the aspirations of the native Africans. We desire to help them build up Africa as a Negro empire, where every black man, whether he was born in Africa or the Western world, will have the opportunity to develop on his own lines under production of the most favorable democratic institutions... (Quoted from Marcus Garvey's Speech in Amy Jacques, 1969).



However, during the 1930s, the pan-Africanist movement was strongly influenced by the ideology of Marxism-Leninism and socialism as reflected in the life and works of scholars and activists such as W.E.B. Dubois, Hunton, C.L. R. James, George Padmore, and Paul Robeson. While Europe was the center of the Pan-African world before 1945, the focus of Pan-African activities shifted to the African continent following the Fifth Pan-African Congress held in Manchester, England. These periodic Pan-African congresses served as useful experiences for African nationalist leaders who then assumed the mantle and the historical responsibility of ensuring continental decolonization and integration of Africa (Walters, 1993). Langley described the emergence of a new breed of Pan-Africanists who were to play major roles in African liberation from colonialism:

It was...after the historic Manchester Congress that the new-style Pan-Africanists expressed in positive terms the determination of black people to organize and unite against the "oppressors" and to make radical Pan-Africanism the ideology of the new liberation movements throughout colonial Africa (Langley, 1973:13).

With a few exceptions (such as Egypt, Ethiopia and Liberia), the African continent was partitioned into spheres of influence by European imperial powers at the Berlin Conference of 1884/5 and Africans did not gain control of the foreign-created states until the 1960s. Stimulated by the nationalist struggles for political independence in the aftermath of World War II, the newly independent African states adopted a Pan-Africanism in their common struggle against colonialism and white-dominated territories on the continent. The idea of Continental Pan-Africanism can be traced to the time of African nationalists like Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, Ahmed Sekou Touré of Guinea, Modibo Keita of Mali, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, an Tom Mboya, and Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, among other African leaders of the early 1960s. For Nkrumah, the ideology of Pan-Africanism became a revolutionary movement for the unification and total liberation of the African continent:

The total liberation and unification of Africa under an All-African Socialist Government must be the primary objective of all Black revolutionaries throughout the world. It is an objective which, when achieved, will bring the fulfillment of aspirations of Africans and people of African descent everywhere. It will at the same time advance the triumph of international socialist revolution (Nkrumah, 1970:88).

Gold Coast (Ghana) in 1957 was the first sub-Saharan African nation to gain independence from colonial power. Nkrumah proclaimed at the time of Ghana's independence that "the independence of Ghana [was] meaningless unless it [was] linked up with the total liberation of the African continent" (Nkrumah, 1980:77). When Guinea in September of 1958 refused to join the French Community and broke away from France, Ghana was the first country to recognize Guinea's political independence. In 1959, the two states joined to form what was to constitute a nucleus of a 'United States of Africa'. Two years later, Mali briefly joined the 'Union'. In spite of their different colonial background, they all embraced Pan-Africanism.

In spite of these differences, African states, at independence, shared important commonalities that were to serve as the stimulus for unity. The newly independent states shared the common experience of having been subjected to slavery, colonialism and imperialism. On securing political independence as sovereign states, they were thrust into international economic and political system, in which the rules and regulations were not designed by and for them, and were called to participate on terms disadvantageous to their progressive development. Their collective historical experiences and memories of marginalization and socio-cultural and racial affinities developed a collective solidarity—a sense of oneness and the consciousness of belonging to Africa. This became a powerful mobilizing and unifying force for African peoples and societies rooted in Pan-Africanism (Francis, 2006:5-6).

Soon after, the Pan-African continental movement fractured into two major ideological blocs, namely, the Casablanca progressives led by Ghana and the Monrovia conservatives led by Nigeria.<sup>1</sup> The Monrovia group consisted of Nigeria, Liberia and most of the French-speaking African countries. The Casablanca group consisted of Ghana, Guinea, Morocco, Algeria, Congo, Mali, Tanzania, and Egypt. The Casablanca group favored political integration as a prerequisite to economic integration and a socialist path to economic development. In addition to Nkrumah, the political standard-bearers of this radical and militant brand

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<sup>1</sup> Some African scholars have divided these ideological groupings into four Groups: Brazzaville Group, Casablanca Group, Monrovia Group, and the Pan-African Freedom Movement of East, Central and South Africa (PAFMECSA). For further detailed information on these ideological divisions, see Wallerstein, I. 1967. *Africa: The Politics of Unity*. New York: Random House; Kloman, Erasmus H. 1962. "African Unification Movements" in *International Organization*. (Spring) Pp.387-404.

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of Pan-Africanism and African socialism were Ben Bella of Algeria, Patrice Lumumba of Congo, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Ahmed Sekou Toure of Guinea, Modibo Keita of Mali, and Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt. The Monrovia group favored functional approach to African cooperation, which was well encapsulated in a speech given at the inaugural African Summit Conference of the OAU in Addis Abba by the Prime Minister of Nigeria, the late Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa:

[T]here have been quite a lot of views on what we mean by African Unity. Some of us have suggested that African Unity should be actualized by the political fusion of the different states of Africa, some of us feel that African Unity could be achieved by taking practical steps in economic, educational, scientific and cultural cooperation and by trying first, to get the Africans to understand themselves before embarking on the more complicated and more difficult arrangement of political union... (Balewa, 1964:159).

The twenty-four members of the Monrovia bloc considered their political independence to be still very fragile and therefore advocated a gradual approach to the question of African unity over those of the Casablanca bloc that advocated integration based on the institutional framework of a "federalist model." Subsequently, the idea of a continental unity based on the federal model was shelved and despite the serious split between the two groups over the speed and scope of African integration, the two blocs came together in Addis Abba, Ethiopia to form the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on May 25, 1963. The tension between the two groups persisted within the OAU but it was, however, subordinated to other more pressing issues of liberating the continent from the remaining vestiges of colonialism and apartheid. The OAU was an institutional experiment based on the African states system with functional approach to regional cooperation and integration.

#### **IV. The Organization of African Unity (OAU)**

The OAU provided a body for the African leaders to discuss common African problems and a forum for resolving contentious issues facing the continent. Although there was no apparent unanimity among African states, there was a shared common interest on a number of crucial questions as to constitute an African approach to international affairs. This African approach was reflected in the OAU's efforts to destroy the last vestiges of colonialism and apartheid on the continent. The African Liberation Committee was to channel military and financial supports to

liberation movements trying to defeat colonial rule and minority regimes in Southern Africa (OAU, 1963). The victory was slow in coming because African states did not have a unified approach to the problem. The frontline states were too close for economic comfort in enforcing economic and political sanctions on the minority rule in Rhodesia and the apartheid regime in South Africa. These states depended on Rhodesia and South Africa for their economic and political survival. The OAU, in pushing for economic and diplomatic sanctions on apartheid, was up against the West and the industrialized nations who invested heavily in South Africa's diamond and gold-mining industries. The African states themselves depended on these western and industrialized nations for loans to finance their economic development programs. Notwithstanding these obstacles, the OAU demonstrated before the rest of the world the strength which comes from unity by successfully combating the remaining vestiges of colonialism and apartheid in South Africa.

Although political independence was achieved for African states with the help of the OAU, economic independence and political stability proved far more difficult for it. One important step it took toward solving the economic crisis of the continent was adopting the *Lagos Plan of Action* (LPA) in 1980, which was aimed at restructuring the economic foundation of Africa based on the principle of "collective self-reliance." The LPA diagnosed that Africa's economic crisis was caused by the historical injustice suffered by Africa under colonialism and its continued dependence on external forces:

Despite all efforts made by its leaders, [Africa] remains the least developed continent...Indeed Africa was directly exploited during the colonial period and for the past two decades; this exploitation has been carried out through neo-colonialist external forces which seek to influence the economic policies and directions of African states...We view, with disquiet, the overdependence of the economy of our continent on the export of basic raw materials and minerals. This phenomenon had made African economies highly susceptible to external developments and with detrimental effects on the interests of the continent (OAU, 1981:7).

The policy response of African leaders was to pursue a self-reliant development by promoting regional and continental integration schemes and the industrialization of the continent. The rationale behind this developmental strategy was that the African states will be able to reduce foreign economic dependency and strengthen their collective ability to bargain with the world economic superpowers (Ojo, 1985:166-69;

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Asante, 1993). In order to compete effectively in a global economic environment, the OAU in 1991 launched the Abuja Treaty. This treaty provided a framework for promoting the gradual establishment of the African Economic Community (AEC), which was to culminate in the free movement of people and goods within the continent. During initial implementation of Abuja Treaty, emphasis was to be placed on a wide range of experiments in regional economic integration, which was to constitute the building blocks of the AEC (Martin, 1992). The apparent weakness of these regional economic communities (RECs) is that they have operated as independent entities rather than building-blocks of the same corporate body (AEC).<sup>1</sup> The continued dependence of African states on foreign trade taxes as a source of government revenue has made them reluctant to lower their trade barriers, which make the continent to reflect an early stage of economic community.

The Commission on Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration was responsible for the settlement of border and territorial disputes among member states. Where mediation between states was called for, the Commission performed marvelously well like the Ethiopia/Somalia border conflict of 1977-8, but where intervention was required in a military conflict, the Commission failed miserably. During the Chadian civil war between 1979 and 1982, the OAU raised an inter-African military force to enforce peace. It failed (Mays, 2002; Sesay, 1990). Thereafter, the OAU became reluctant to take similar actions. Since the 1960s, Africa has experienced civil wars in a number of countries including Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Angola, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, Chad, Somalia, and Guinea. Plagued by bloody civil wars, the African continent has witnessed the highest number of refugees in the world and is plagued by catastrophic humanitarian situations. These civil wars have not only traumatized Africans but also ravaged the embryonic economic infrastructures of an underdeveloped continent. In short, the scourge of conflict has been one of the most destabilizing factors in Africa and has severely undermined Africa's efforts at promoting socioeconomic and political development.

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<sup>1</sup> Among these notable regional economic communities (RECs) are the Economic Community of West African of States (ECOWAS, 1975), Southern African Development Community (SADC, 1980), Union of Arab Maghreb (UAM, 1989), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD, 1986) in Northeast Africa and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS, 1983).

The OAU's inability to prevent the genocide in Rwanda in April 1994, stop the collapse of Somalia state and the Eritrean/Ethiopian wars were all clear manifestations of its impotence to solve its own conflicts. After almost forty years of existence, it was apparent to African leaders that the OAU as an organization was no longer viable. The OAU charter could not adequately address the dire security and economic problems facing Africa. It was against this background that the African leaders decided to dissolve the OAU and reconstitute it as a new organization that will address the problems of the continent.

The failures of the OAU in terms of conflict resolution and its impotence in the face of the widespread violation of basic civil and political liberties, the corollary failure of the regional economic communities to deepen economic integration and ultimately the socio-economic crises that Africa encountered during the 1980s, led to the realization that the earlier approaches to develop cooperation and integration had failed. This led to the next stage, which saw the establishment of the African Economic Community Treaty in 1991 and ultimately the Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU) (Fantaye, 2005:1).

## **V. Transition to the African Union (AU) and NEPAD**

Some African observers have viewed the initiative to create the African Union (AU) and its economic offshoot, New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) as one of the most important strategic and historical decisions taken by African leaders in the new millennium. It took almost two years of debate and controversy to bring the idea of African Union to reality. The establishment of the AU first initiated by Col. al-Qadhaffi during the thirty-fifth OAU Algiers Summit in July 1999, was an historic event with far-reaching consequences for the struggle for unity and integration of the African continent. Although the Libyan proposal came as a surprise to African leaders, they soon accepted the idea in the Declaration of Sirte 1 and the draft constitution was later adopted at the 36<sup>th</sup> OAU summit in Lomé, Togo, in July 2000. The AU was formally launched by African Heads of State in Durban, South Africa, on July 9, 2002, as the new body to meet the collective aspirations of the African peoples. The formation of AU has also been attributed to the changing political, social and economic environment both in Africa and the world at large in the last decade of the twentieth century. For African leaders, the African Union (AU), as a new continental organization, provides the architecture for promoting a new approach to

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African security, political and economic integration (see Constitutive Act, 2000, arts. 3 & 4). According to the OAU Secretary-General, Dr. Salim Salim, the creation of the AU, has the ultimate objective of enhancing unity, strengthening cooperation and co-ordination as well as equipping the African continent with a legal and institutional framework, which would enable Africa to gain its rightful place in the community of nations. The cardinal motivation behind the establishment of the African Union was the desire to deepen and enhance the cohesion, solidarity and integration of the countries and peoples of Africa ( Salim, 2001:2).

The thirty-seventh OAU Lusaka Summit in 2001 also adopted the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), a new economic initiative that will serve as a blueprint for full-scale socio-economic development of the continent. This latest policy framework has been lauded by African leaders as the new blueprint for dealing with the challenges of development in the twenty-first century. For them, the decision to integrate AU/NEPAD in 2003 is also aimed both at intensifying existing regional and continental economic integration schemes (as envisaged in the Abuja Treaty) and creating new modalities of interaction with the developed world and multilateral institutions based on mutual respect, good governance, responsibility and accountability. The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) was put in place to ensure accountability on the part of the African leaders in terms of effective implementation of political and economic reforms. Rok Ajuku, the Kenyan political economist, described the launching of the AU as follows:

The launch of the African Union in July is not simply a continuation of the OAU by another name; rather... this is the beginning of a new paradigm of development in Africa. The African Union/New Partnership for Africa's Development (AU/NEPAD) is a thorough-going project aimed at ending poverty and underdevelopment, deepening democracy and economic governance and more critically, pioneering a completely new relationship and partnership with the developed world (Ajuku, 2002).

The African leaders have also come to realize that in order to compete in an age of globalization, they also need to respond to the wind of change blowing through the continent by building a new institutional framework for a neo-liberal economic development strategy and for democratic politics in Africa. According to the former Chairman of the Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee of NEPAD,

President Obasanjo, the program had “demonstrated the determination of Africans to provide those structures and institutions, which would regenerate the continent from a legacy of underdevelopment, bad governance, democracy deficit, corruption, lack of transparency and poor leadership” (*Guardian Newspapers*, March 23, 2007). For some of these African leaders, the AU/NEPAD does represent a new initiative to improve the quality of life for African people by effectively addressing the issues of peace-building, good governance and development. While its critics have questioned whether the AU will become an efficient and effective body or will become as moribund as the OAU (its predecessor), it is possible to briefly highlight the contrast between the two constitutional frameworks of the two organizations.

The OAU was incapacitated by a narrow interpretation of sovereignty and territorial integrity based on non-interference in the internal affairs of member states. Consequently, the OAU could not intervene in dictatorial regimes and in gross violations of human rights in Africa. The principle of “non-interference in the internal affairs” of member-states (Article 3, (1& 2) of the OAU Charter) posed a major obstacle to OAU’s intervention mission in the raging civil wars across the continent. Some observers have noted that the principle effectively paralyzed the decision-making capability of the organization and prevented it from responding to pressing problems on the continent (Akinyemi, 1972/73:393-400). The Nigerian civil war of 1967-70 was a classic case of the OAU’s attempt to bring peace to a war-torn country. The Nigerian Federal Government accepted OAU’s efforts, while condemning as wrongful intervention the recognition that Tanzania, Zambia, Cote d’Ivoire and Gabon gave the secessionist Biafra.

Despite its commitment to the territorial integrity of African states, the AU Constitutive Act explicitly acknowledged the right of the Union to intervene in a member state in order ‘to restore peace and stability,’ to prevent genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity (Art. 4 (h). Article 3, sub-sections 1(e) & (f) of the Constitutive Act emphasize the promotion of the guarantee and respect of basic human rights and the principles of liberal democratic governance. The AU incorporates a range of stronger sanctions into its Constitutive Act than the OAU (AU Charter art. 23 (2)). While it maintains similar OAU Charter provisions and practices in admitting African members, the AU has the power to exclude member government from its activities. The OAU Algiers Resolution that stated that no leader who comes to power in a military coup will be recognized by the OAU was extended to include leaders



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getting into power through any unconstitutional means (Art. 30). The AU's recent intervention in preventing Faure Gnassingbe Eyadema from assuming the presidency of Togo undemocratically after the death of his father is a good example of the AU's insistence on not doing "business as usual" in illegal regime change.

## **VI. Problems and Prospects of the AU/NEPAD for African Unity and Development.**

In spite of the euphoria and exaggerated optimism that marked the launching of the AU as a new phase in the struggle for African unity, there are still several obstacles and challenges to the process of unity and development in the continent. Some have openly questioned whether AU as an intermediary stage either as a union or political community—lying somewhere between national sovereignty and supranational sovereignty—can provide a stable basis for close intra-African cooperation. Such an arrangement, they argue might become a source of friction by impairing the freedom of action of national governments without substituting a reliable new source of authority and responsibility. The reality of contemporary Africa is that it is still marked by political, economic, social and linguistic diversity, which are formidable challenges to establishing a supranational union or a federal state. Some African observers have attributed these differences more to colonial legacy rather than a lack of a common African identity that have often impacted intra-African cooperation (Cheikh Anta Diop, 1984) while others view these as obstacles to integration:

The underlying point here is that the present-day African states and peoples do not share a common heritage in terms of culture, socio-political struggles and history. This would be a decisive weakness bearing in mind the already formidable obstacles to African integration in terms of socio-economic structures inherited from the colonial era and Africa's position in the present global capitalist economy. The AU as a higher stage or level, relative to the OAU, on the path to African integration is, to put it very mildly, just an aspiration. On more levels than one, the AU represents continuity. It symbolizes the continuing desires of African governments and political classes for African integration. (Fantaye, 2005:1).

### 6.1. Geographical and Historical Challenges

The African continent is made up of several countries which differ significantly in size, demographic trends, levels of economic development, language, culture, societal norms and natural resources endowment. Nigeria has the highest population density of about 140 million people, hundreds of times more than some small African countries. South Africa has the most developed economy with a capacity that is almost equal to that of forty other sub-Saharan countries combined, or one-third of the African continent. South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt and Algeria account for half of the continent's GDP and nearly a third of its total population. Gabon has a very small population but large oil deposits; Botswana has diamond mines and a multiparty democracy; Sierra Leone and Liberia, though impoverished because of years of civil war, have diamond mines. Therefore, any prospects for integration must not only take into account the magnitude of all these societal and ecological disparities but also the African leaders' perceptions of these difficulties and their willingness to overcome them.

The idea of an African Union has a historic precedence and also offers historic lessons. As was the rivalry of Nkrumah with his colleagues, so also were some African leaders initially wary of al-Qadhafi's diplomatic initiative to form a single union with a permanent headquarters located in Libya and with himself elected as the executive chairman/president. The African Union was, therefore, initially perceived by other African leaders as a reflection of his personal ambition to rule and dominate the continent. The Constitutive Act of the African Union like the OAU charter was a compromise document between those led by Libya that advocated for immediate and total unification of Africa, and the gradualist approach based on the European Union model favored by Nigeria and some other OAU member-states. The AU project was in fact carried forward by al-Qadhafi's willingness to fund it: Libya has provided more than one million dollars to facilitate the transition from OAU to AU (Derrick, 2001). While some viewed this as al-Qadhafi's diplomatic expansionist initiatives in sub-Saharan Africa, his colleagues—former President Obasanjo of Nigeria, Presidents Mbeki of South Africa, Mubarak of Egypt, Boutlefiqa of Algeria—have all expressed their reservations about his pariah status as a world leader and therefore have been unwilling to give in to Gaddafi's political options. But, however, they have learned how to accommodate his competing vision of African unity because they also clearly realized that 'he who plays the piper dictates the tune' (Tieku, 2004:228-249). One of the major constraints

that faced the OAU and still being faced by AU, has been the lack of adequate financial resources to execute their programs due to irregular payment of annual subscriptions by member-states of African Union.

## 6.2. Security Challenges

The enduring legacy of colonialism in Africa has been the national borders and economic exploitation, which have distorted the contemporary pattern of political and economic development in the continent. To what extent is Africa prepared for a borderless continent, in which the African peoples can move freely without hindrance, including the right to permanent residence in countries other than their own? How can the African Union guarantee the right to free movement of persons in an atmosphere of xenophobia, given the ethnically and racially motivated violence in many parts of Africa? The chronic internal conflicts in Africa have resulted in vast population movement in and out of different national boundaries. Africa has the largest number of refugees and of internally displaced persons in the world. The treatment and intolerance of refugees in many African countries or events such as the deportation of Nigerians from Libya as economic migrants are not consistent with the calls for African solidarity or free labor migration (see *The Human Rights Watch*, 2006; *Nigerian Tribune*, November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007). Although, the AEC was intended to culminate in the free movement of people and goods within the continent, the continued endurance of high tariffs, the lack of physical connectivity, and different trade policies of African states have not yet created a sense of common market or common identity among African peoples. While Africa as a region is gradually becoming integrated at least, at the levels of RECs, the other impediments toward common markets include structural deficiencies, limited product diversification, similarity of products and production structures, and limited market information on member-states.

The power vacuum created in the aftermath of the cold war accounts in part for the subsequent anarchy and escalation of ethnic and religion-inspired conflicts in many parts of the continent. Some have argued that the strong multiethnic and religious cleavages; the lack of legitimacy of state institutions; and economic underdevelopment and dependency in most African states make them poor partners in a regional integration process because of the reluctance of their leaders to further undermine their control at home. Some ethnic leaders and warlords of sub-national groups, who cannot become rulers of existing countries, have capitalized on ethnic divisions and persistent internal instability to organize

secessionist movements aimed at creating new states under their control in order to gain international recognition. These domestic squabbles and internal ethno-religious conflicts are not just confined within the state borders but have also spilled-over to the neighboring countries, thereby exacerbating the general security threats to the African states-system either as a whole as well as its constituent parts. It has, however, offered African regional powers the opportunity to experiment on regional security systems, especially within their sub-regions in order to intervene to contain, stabilize and manage these conflicts. The security vacuum in West Africa gave ECOMOG peace-keeping force, under the leadership of Nigeria, a role in the just-ended Liberian and Sierra Leonean civil wars.

But the ongoing crisis in the Darfur region of Sudan has underscored not only the urgent need for adequate funding and the logistic capabilities to handle peace-keeping operations in Africa but has also exposed the inability of the AU to provide for common security for the continent. The conflict has cost at least 200,000 lives and forced more than two and half million people from their homes, according to the United Nations, though Khartoum contests those estimates, saying 9,000 people have died. The present peace-keeping effort by the AU is too weak to handle the humanitarian disaster now escalating into genocide. Despite financial and logistic difficulties, the AU agreed to extend the mandate of the AU peace-keeping force in the Darfur region, at which time it was supposed to be replaced by a larger hybrid UN/AU force in Darfur. An agreement was reached with the Sudanese government in April, 2007, which was to allow a hybrid force of 20,000 AU/UN troops into the country to strengthen the 7,000 AU troops that are already on the ground in the Darfur region of Sudan. But the Sudanese government, which reluctantly accepted AU peace-keeping force, has until recently refused to completely endorse the deployment of the planned UN troops in order to end the tragedy of Darfur.

The Constitutive Act itself acknowledges the linkages between peace, security, stability, respect for human rights and cooperation as prerequisites for sustainable development in the continent. While African leaders must provide a new approach to continental peace and security in order to put an end to conflicts and wars in Africa, they must also realize that security is not simply the absence of war, but the provision of sound economic conditions as well as a non-violent political environment in Africa. Human security will guarantee peace in Africa, where a hungry man will no longer be an angry man. The importance of improvements in the education, health and safety of the ordinary people

would be emphasized. This clearly re-echoes the position of *African Leadership Forum Report (ALF)* on security concerns for Africa:

The issues of “security” thrown up by Africa’s current conditions are not military in the conventional sense, but basically politico-economic in their nature and determination as well as consequences. They are about helping people to regain their job security, income security, health security, community security, individual security and the security of life itself all of which has come to be greatly threatened by the effects of debt, environment *cum* demographic insecurity, combined with pressures of political liberalization and democratization (ALF, 1999:47)

### 6.3. Political Challenges

“One important lesson of regional integration theory, which draws on the success of the European Union, is that the existence of elites with a shared commitment to democracy as the foundation of long-term economic cooperation and development” (Schraeder, 2004:265). But unfortunately the African elites have fallen short of offering any such meaningful economic and political ideological consensus that is capable of transforming the continent into a modern democratic state (Ake, 1996). The experience of most African states is that they suffer from democracy deficit and weak allegiance from their citizens, which thereby create a crisis of legitimacy for most of existing state institutions. Are African peoples themselves sufficiently sensitized and mobilized to support the African Union? What difference has the AU made to the lives of the ordinary Africans? One of the mandates of the AU Charter has been to promote democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance. In launching the AU summit meeting, President Mbeki of South Africa challenged his colleagues: “through our actions, let us proclaim to the world that...Africa is a continent of democracy, a continent of democratic institutions and culture--indeed a continent of good governance, where the people participate and the rule of law is upheld” (*Johannesburg Sunday Times*, July 14, 2002). While the idea of establishment of a Pan-African Parliament by the AU may sound democratic and seems to be a positive step towards the institutionalization of democracy in the continent, African leaders recently have refused to adopt a democracy charter that would have made it more difficult for unpopular presidents to stay in office (*BBC NEWS*, 06/30/2006).

The irony of integration process in Africa is that it is elite-driven rather than by democratic politics, rule of law and good governance. Politics as

it prevails in the African context today is inimical to political and economic development. With the state as a major source of patronage and rent-seeking, the contestation for public office has become a matter of life and death as the African elites struggle to take control of their state apparatus. What happened in Nigeria's recent elections was not only a terrible failure and set back for the country's democracy but also the outcomes do not augur well for the prospects of democratic consolidation and unity in Africa. The elections were marked by widespread rigging, fraud, and violent thuggery, and have been condemned by both foreign and local monitors as seriously flawed elections. Internationally and regionally, the elections were judged to be below the basic acceptable standards of free and fair elections. According to the latest assessment report on Nigeria, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) stated: " (...) of all forms of corruption, political corruption has remained a major obstacle to national progress in Nigeria. While there is improved awareness on the part of the citizens of the need to fight corruption, lesser concentration had been made on the need to ensure a sound electoral system. The EFCC has recorded significant landmarks in the fight against corruption by bring to book big men engaged in corruption waters. But not much progress has been made in dealing with political corruption in electoral fraud and vote buying as demonstrated by the 2003 and 2007 elections. In general, there is need to check the excessive use of money politics" ((NEPAD-APRM Report on Nigeria, 2007)

The failed elections in Nigeria have provoked widespread outrage, calls for electoral reforms and disturbing evidence of popular disengagement from the democratic process, with broader consequences across Africa. The real challenges to democratic rule and good governance in Africa also include the lack of transparency and accountability on the part of the African ruling elites, political repression of opposition, lack of respect for the rule of law, and other corrupt government practices in many African states. Is it possible to promote these democratic values in Africa without the AU interfering in the internal affairs of member states? To what extent are the African governments prepared to surrender their individual state sovereignties on matters that they believe fall solely under their domestic jurisdiction? Most African ruling elites tend to perceive state sovereignty as the sources of power, privilege and wealth within their individual state, which enables them to maintain their patronage and clientele network systems. It is generally accepted worldwide that elites do not advance policies that undermine their own positions and their

chances to remain in office. Therefore, some remain doubtful that the African ruling elites will voluntarily commit political class suicide by surrendering their quasi-sovereign states for continental union government project, which will also undermine their privileges and advantages: "Sovereignty makes a life of privilege possible by giving African rulers and their (collaborators) privileges and advantages unavailable to anyone else: management of foreign aids and receipts; income from movement of goods within jurisdictions and between them, for example through issuing of tariffs and licenses; borrowing and taxing powers...the opportunity to participate in international organizations; unrivalled opportunities for corruption and so forth (...).If the experience of the past three decades of independent statehood is an indication, any arrangement that would require the sacrifice of sovereignty by [African] leaders of existing countries almost certainly would be not entered into freely" (Jackson, 1993:146).

Chabal and Daloz also argue that prospects for democratization in Africa are limited because of the neopatrimonial practices that are deeply entrenched within the society. Nor is it likely that the recent democratic experiments in Africa will lead to the establishment of the constitutional, legal and bureaucratic political order which is required for fundamental reform, they asserted. "Such change would have to be driven by popular will. Only when ordinary African men and women have cause to reject the logic of personalized politics, seriously to question the legitimacy of the present political instrumentalization of disorder and to struggle for new forms of political accountability, will meaningful change occur" (Chabal and Daloz, 2005:162). "The outcome of the [present] elections has been to confer on those leaders an aura of 'democratic' legitimacy that, ironically from the perspective of Western donors, has strengthened their patrimonial claim to rule" (Chabal, 2002:462). While Chabal and Daloz simply cannot predict how Africa will evolve politically, they conclude that there is, however, little likelihood that political liberalization in Africa will facilitate the democratic change of Africa in the foreseeable future (2005:162). Taylor also alluded to the governance problem in Africa while commenting on NEPAD as another false start toward African development in this way: "In practical term, whatever NEPAD's intentions are, and a good number of these, particularly regarding democracy and good government, are praiseworthy, any short-term successes are likely to be hidebound--if not prevented—by Africa's well-established governance problems such as personal rule, clientelism, corruption, and unwillingness of the majority of state leaders to engage

with nongovernmental organizations or expend resources on broad-based development projects. The logic of neopatrimonialism underpins politics in Africa and rules out the very type of policies that NEPAD advocates, such as accountability and good governance “(Taylor, 2005:159).

#### **6.4. Economic Challenges**

While NEPAD highlights the importance of economic linkages within Africa and the needs of external trade and aids for economic development, it has also intensified the long-standing disagreement among African leaders and the donor countries with regards to the appropriate strategy for African economic development. The roles of the state, the private sector, international financial institutions and nonprofit organization are still highly contested issues in African development. Unlike ‘the Lagos Plan of Action,’ an African initiative that advocates ‘collective self-reliance,’ NEPAD is based on the neo-liberal economic development strategy foisted on Africa from abroad in the name of globalization. Some critics certainly think that the latter falls short of demands for structural transformation of African political economies and the creation of a new continental economic order. They also charge that adoption of the failed economic policies and programs of the World Bank/IMF in Africa makes NEPAD a doubtful strategy to end decades of underdevelopment and marginalization of the continent (Olukoshi 2002, Chabal 2002, Owusu 2003, Bond 2004, Murithi 2005). After almost six years of NEPAD’s existence, there is no visible evidence of appreciable change in the economic fortune of African people as a result of its implementation. As Cecil Blake has correctly alleged: “ What obtains in Africa presently appears to be a blind acceptance of an ideological definition provided only by the North and used as leverage for development assistance... Ironically, even with the fashioning of a vision and mission when the OAU was founded and lately the African Union as well as other sub regional groupings, institutions were indeed created to achieve the objectives stated above as far as intra-African trade and other relations are concerned. All one has to do, however, is to take a close look at the institutions and see how much they mimic the structures of the colonial powers, which may explain their ineffectiveness” (Blake, 2005:590-92).

The overriding challenge before the AU/NEPAD is to seek the policy framework to develop an alternative blueprint for macroeconomic development in view of the multifaceted crisis arising from implementing



externally-imposed macroeconomic policies. While what constitutes “development” still remains a contentious issue in the African context, a successful integrated union should generally boost intra-regional trade and investment, and bring unprecedented prosperity and stability as opposed to calamities caused by wars and poor economics (Ilorah, 2004:231). Despite the Commission for Africa’s recommendations that the growth of intra-regional trade should be facilitated and nurtured, Economic Partnerships Agreement (EPAs) look set to create more barriers to trade within Africa. The EPAs are new trade agreements being negotiated by the European Union to regulate trade between EU and the ACP (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific) group of developing countries to replace the Cotonou Agreement. While supporters have argued that they will foster regional integration between developing countries, critics of EPAs assert that they likely to have negative impacts on regional integration between African countries without achieving significant liberation of trade between EU and ACP countries. According to the recent research at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), EPAs are likely to harm regional integration in the developing countries (Stevens, C. and Kennan, J 2005).

Since the beginning of the 1990s, African economies have recorded a low average growth rate of 4.5 percent per annum (*World Bank, 2006*) and a crushing debt burden, which ballooned from \$80 billion in 1982 to \$ 275 billion in 2004 (*World Bank, 2005*). The debt burden has had a significant negative impact on the African development. According to the World Bank, the amount annually repaid by African governments more than doubles their spending on health and primary education combined. The debt payments are often rescheduled, and by taking new loans from the IMF and Western industrial nations, African countries multiply their debts instead of clearing them. Western financial institutions are now playing the dual roles of consultant and executor of African economic development programs. Unable to pay their debts, most African states are compelled to seek various forms of debt relief and to implement structural adjustment programs (SAPs). But through various forms of conditionality, the IMF and World Bank dictate the economic and social policies of these African states. The widespread adoption of SAPs and their implementation have brought into sharp focus the contradictions in the African political economies, and have exacerbated social inequalities, with a concentration of wealth in the hands of a few while the majority lives in poverty. However, after years of wrangling, agreement was reached by the G8 at Gleneagles, Scotland, on writing off most of debts

of some 38 'highly indebted poor countries, including those owed to the IMF and World Bank. But so far, only around fifteen African states have qualified for full debt relief.

The available crucial indices on trade, poverty alleviation, and debt, indicate that while the other regions of the developing world are experiencing economic growth, Africa has now become synonymous with poverty, diseases, unemployment and ethnic conflicts. The irony of the African economic situation today is that a majority of the population now lives on less than one dollar per day in spite the fact many African countries devalued their currencies, engaged in the liberalization and deregulation of trade, and privatized many of the public utilities as recommended by international lending institutions. This is because a large part of the African investment surplus leaves the continent as debt repayment, expatriation of profit, capital flight, etc. The perhaps unintended and inevitable consequence has been widespread social dislocation, social insecurity, widespread criminality and renewed upsurge in ethnic skirmishes and religious violence in many parts of the continent. In fact, according to UN Deputy Secretary-General, Asha-Rose Migiros, Africa is failing to make much progress in meeting the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which are aimed at cutting poverty by half and improving living standards in developing countries by 2015 (*Guardian*, June 9, 2007).

### **Conclusion: Which Way Africa?**

In the face of these contemporary global socio-economic and political challenges, what are the policy options open to African leaders? Pan-Africanism as a socio-political and ideological force, not only provided a mobilizing and uniting force for the African peoples in their struggle for freedom from colonial rule but also as a socio-political discourse it has become a basis of legitimacy for African action and collective solidarity (Wallerstein, 1967; Francis, 2006). However, as a social movement, it ran out of steam as soon as political independence was achieved by African states. The political unity among African states was mainly realized on the paper of the OAU Charter. In the aftermath of the cold war, African states have disintegrated into civil wars, ethnic cleansing and border skirmishes. Meanwhile, African leaders have dissipated their economic wealth by waging wars of attrition and mortgaging their natural resources to unscrupulous western industrial nations for arms to fight themselves and destroy their ecology. However, they are beginning to acknowledge

that the bad governance of yesteryears and past failures to manage and resolve these conflicts have been counter-productive to goals of African common security and development.

Although endowed with natural resources, Africa has not been able to convert its strategic resource endowment into economic growth and sustainable development. It has thus remained one of the least developed continents in the world. In addition to African unity, Africa needs the technological transformation of its economy and the industrial infrastructure to exploit its natural resources for development. Science and technology are indispensable to a dynamic economic growth process, because technical knowledge is a driving force for rising productivity, efficiency and competitiveness. Therefore, inability to access and use technology prevents an economy from gaining the benefits of globalization. Despite the increasing importance of the role of science and technology for development, African leaders have failed to develop and implement appropriate policies for science and technology in order to address this deficiency in their drive for modernization. The acquisition and use of science and technology are critical for solving the immense food insecurity problems in Africa and for extending productive opportunities outside the traditional land resources and in ensuring food availability, affordability and stability of access (ECA, 2003). In order to reverse the acute environmental problems, poverty, hunger, health and unemployment that plague many African countries, it is necessary to have an integrated investment in the fields of education, science, technology, research and human capital development (African Union, 2006).

While Pan-Africanism as a possible framework for pan-continental unity and development continues to inspire several generations of Africans, the average African state has variously been referred to as: rogue state, prebendal state, predatory state, failed state, and more (Francis, 2006: chapter 3). Africa is not only characterized by fragile state but that fragility still remains the bane of African unity. The dilemma of African post-colonial states is that they have not really abandoned the colonial logic of oppression and domination as well as the exploitative and the predatory politics that are inimical to African unity and development. One major obstacle to African integration is the fear of losing state sovereignty. The historic lesson of the defunct OAU is that it was too slow to adequately address the challenges facing Africa in that it was constrained by the norms of African inter-state system enshrined in its charter and by a lack of financial resources. The new institutional and

organizational structures as presently constituted cannot even actualize the dream of a 'United States of Africa'.

Therefore, the prospects for the creation of a 'United States of Africa' will call for not only a redefinition of the role of African state-system within the 'grand design' of federalism but also the adoption of an 'incremental decision-making' process, based on confidence and capacity-building as a long-term strategy to intra-African cooperation and integration. Since both strands of thoughts are obviously far from being mutually exclusive, linking them will help to address the problems of intra-African cooperation and integration because "inadequate cooperation leads to a lack of effective policy implementation and undermines the political will to build peace and promote development" (Murithi, 2006:33). This process will call on African leaders to accept a vision of a federal union as the ultimate goal of African integration with a clear roadmap and timeframe for its realization, while strengthening all the existing sub-regional institutions as building blocks for continental integration. This will afford the African states the opportunity to develop an enabling environment for common security, good governance and basic infrastructures, which may be required to establish an effective continental union government.

In reconstituting the OAU into the AU, the African leaders have again clearly demonstrated the problems, challenges and opportunities inherent in inter-state cooperation and integration. However, a renewed spirit of Pan-Africanism calls for a new orientation toward political leadership and good governance in Africa in order to transcend the problems of authoritarian tendencies, underdevelopment and pseudo-democratic practices. In fact, the ideals of Pan-Africanism cannot be achieved without serious commitment to conflict resolution, peace-building, public accountability and the consolidation of democracy throughout the continent. The real challenge before the African leaders as they revisit Pan-Africanism as a blueprint for African unity and development is whether they have the political will and exceptional leadership skill to rekindle such a strategic vision that will unite and transform the continent into an integrated, stable, democratic and prosperous society. That task is more urgent today than at any time in Africa's post-colonial history, given the imperatives of socio-economic and political challenges confronting the continent.

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