

# Policy and Management Report 18

## Building the African Union

An assessment of past progress and future prospects for the African Union's institutional architecture

Edited by Geert Laporte and James Mackie



Nordiska  Afrikainstitutet  
The Nordic Africa Institute

European Centre for Development  
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October 2010

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#### Disclaimer

This report is based on discussions that took place during a seminar on 'Building the African Institutional Architecture' (Uppsala, Sweden - October 2009), supplemented with recent reflections on the AU's institutional development and current and future EU-AU relations. The views expressed are those of the authors.



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## List of acronyms

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| ACP      | African, Caribbean and Pacific (group of countries)                             |
| AGA      | African Governance Architecture   |
| AMIS     | African Union Mission in Sudan  |
| APRM     | African Peer Review Mechanism   |
| APSA     | Africa Peace and Security Architecture  |
| AUA      | African Union Authority   |
| AUC      | African Union Commission  |
| COMESA   | Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa                                   |
| CSO      | Civil-society organisation  |
| EAC      | East African Community  |
| ECDPM    | European Centre for Development Policy Management                               |
| ECOSOCC  | Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union                      |
| ECOWAS   | Economic Community of West African States                                       |
| EDF      | European Development Fund   |
| EPA      | Economic Partnership Agreement  |
| IDEP     | African Institute for Economic Development and Planning                         |
| IRCC     | Interregional Coordination Committee  |
| ITP      | Institutional Transformation Programme  |
| JAES     | Joint Africa-EU Strategy  |
| JEG      | Joint Expert Group  |
| NAI      | Nordic Africa Institute   |
| NEPAD    | New Partnership for Africa's Development  |
| OAU      | Organisation of African Unity   |
| ODA      | Official Development Assistance   |
| PAP      | Pan-African Parliament  |
| REC      | Regional Economic Community   |
| SADC     | Southern African Development Community  |
| UNU/CRIS | United Nations University Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies |
| UN-ECA   | United Nations Economic Commission for Africa                                   |

# Acknowledgements

The ECDPM and the NAI wish to thank the team involved in collectively producing this report, notably the principal authors, Geert Laporte and James Mackie, for their work in coordinating the publication and writing the first part, and Adebayo Olukoshi, Fredrik Soderbaum, Jean Bossuyt and again James Mackie for preparing the background papers for the seminar as presented in the second part of this publication.

We also wish to express our gratitude to the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs who is financing this publication, for its continuous support and confidence placed in ECDPM. This report has also benefited from comments made by Mats Harsmar and Fantu Cheru from the NAI, and Faten Agad, Henrike Hohmeister, Melissa Julian, Eleonora Koeb, Andrew Sherriff and Veronika Tywuschik from the ECDPM.

## Foreword

The Nordic Africa Institute (NAI) and the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) are very pleased to present this publication. It is the fruit of a joint initiative supported by the 2009 Swedish EU Presidency and has been produced in close cooperation with the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa.

It comprises a collection of papers presented by African and European policy-makers and researchers at an informal, high-level seminar held in Uppsala on 21 October 2009. The seminar was attended by around 50 people from the following institutions: the African Union Commission, the African Regional Economic Communities, the Economic, Cultural and Social Council of the African Union, the European Commission, the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, as well as a number of EU member states. The delegates also included African government officials and ambassadors, eminent individuals, representatives of policy research institutes, networks of African scholars and civil-society organisations, and staff of the ECDPM and NAI. The seminar was opened by the Swedish State Secretary for International Development Cooperation, Mr Joakim Stymne, with a response from the Deputy Chairperson of the AUC, Mr Erastus Mwencha.

The Uppsala meeting was organised against the background of the ongoing reform of the AU. It was held shortly after the 2009 African Heads of State decision to establish the African Union Authority (AUA), amid a heated debate on the implementation of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES). The seminar sought to provide an informal platform for African and European official and non-official stakeholders to reflect on, and discuss, the ongoing AU reforms and to explore the ways and means by which the EU can best support the institutional development of the AU.

The seminar was held under the Chatham House rule. This meant that participants contributed on a personal, non-attributable basis and that no formal record was kept of the meeting. This is why two of the organisers, Geert Laporte and James Mackie (who are also the editors of this report), decided to write up their personal summaries of the discussions, supplemented by reflections on the current state of AU and Africa-EU relations and their assessment of the future prospects. This forms the first part of this report. The second part comprises the background papers that were presented in the three sessions of the seminar.

The issues covered in the Uppsala seminar remain highly topical in the light of the forthcoming 3<sup>rd</sup> EU-Africa Summit of Heads of State and Government (on 29-30 November 2010) and the current debate on the relevance, focus and impact of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy.

We would like to thank all the contributors. We sincerely hope that this report will stimulate an open and constructive debate on the institutional development of the AU and the future of Africa-EU relations.



Dr Carin Norberg  
Director of the NAI



Dr Paul Engel  
Director of the ECDPM

## Executive summary

**Part I** of this report by **Geert Laporte and James Mackie** takes stock of the key challenges facing the AU and analyses its track record since 2002.<sup>1</sup>

As a pan-African institution, the AU has made substantial progress in taking a stronger lead in the integration of the African continent and in global fora. However, it still has a long way to go before it can claim to be both effective and influential. The authors present a list of concrete action points for strengthening the AU and its institutions. The final part of the paper contains an analysis of the role the EU could play in supporting the AU's institutional development.

A great deal of progress has been made in recent years in terms of broadening and deepening AU-EU relations, for example with the formulation of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES). However, there is an urgent need to strengthen the political foundations of the partnership between the EU and Africa by addressing delicate issues of common concern and interest. The upcoming EU-Africa Summit (November 2010) and the new EU external action framework created by the Lisbon Treaty provide unique opportunities for moving forward in this respect.

**Part II** of this report consists of the four background papers that were presented during the Uppsala seminar.

The first session of the seminar concentrated on the AU's role in promoting African integration and the progress made in the last few years. In his paper, **Adebayo Olukoshi** of the IDEP<sup>2</sup> critically reviewed the current campaign to promote African integration, based on an assessment of past efforts.

The end of the Cold War, the accelerating pace of globalisation and the end of apartheid have combined to give momentum to the revival of regional and pan-African initiatives. The AU was created at the start of the new millennium, and equipped with a new Constitutive Act and institutions, giving fresh impetus to African integration and unity. However, many big challenges remain, including the lack of

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1 Towards a strong AU: what are the next steps and what role can the EU play? The authors, Geert Laporte and James Mackie, would like to thank Andrew Sherriff, Jean Bossuyt, Faten Aggad and Mats Harsmar for their comments on earlier drafts.

2 The African Union and African Integration: Retrospect and Prospect, by Adebayo Olukoshi.

consistent African political support for integration and heavy dependence on donor support. Adebayo Olukoshi's paper concluded with a number of recommendations for enhancing the AU's institutional architecture. A strong AU Commission or Authority, endowed with the necessary political clout, capacities and resources, should be able to assume a driving role in the continental integration process. This is not simply a technical question, but an important political issue that will require strong leadership and strategic vision. Like-minded African countries need to be prepared to pool their sovereignty and entrust their collective sovereignty to common institutions that are given appropriate powers of action.

The second session focused on the ongoing reforms that are designed to strengthen the AU institutions. In his background paper, **Fredrik Söderbaum** of Göteborg University/ UNU CRIS<sup>3</sup> gave an overview of competing perspectives in the debate on the AU and African integration. He identified two dominating and partially overlapping schools of thought on African integration: the EC/EU institutional model, suggesting the universal potential of regionalism, on the one hand, and the pan-African vision of integration on the other, in which Africa 'must unite' in order to overcome marginalisation and underdevelopment, and benefit from globalisation. The author juxtaposed these two models with the more sceptical and critical perspectives of 'regime-boosting regionalism' and 'shadow regionalism', inspired by different logics from the two other models. High-profile conferences on regionalism, culminating in the adoption of forceful formal declarations ('summitry'), and a large number of competing and overlapping regional organisations may be part of a deliberate strategy to boost the opportunities for verbal regionalism and regime-boosting. Shadow regionalism is an informal mode of regional interaction, built upon rent-seeking or the stimulation of patron-client relationships.

In his background paper on the ongoing institutional reform of the AU, **Jean Bossuyt** of the ECDPM<sup>4</sup> looked at possible ways of implementing the decision taken by the African Heads of State in 2009 to replace the African Union Commission with an African Union Authority (AUA), this being an important political step on the road to a United States of Africa. The AUA is supposed to reform the AU's current governance structure in order to speed up the political and economic integration of the continent. With hindsight, one could say that the debate on the creation of the AUA is stalled. Whatever name the present AU Commission is given, a number of critical institutional issues need

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3 Competing Perspectives on the AU and African integration by Fredrik Söderbaum.

4 The ongoing institutional reform of the AU: exploring avenues for operationalising the African Union Authority, by Jean Bossuyt.

to be addressed up front if the integration of Africa is to move forward. In his paper, Jean Bossuyt described a number of strategic and operational challenges, including the sharing of competences between the different levels of African governance. He went on to present a number of proposals for improving the overall governance of the Union and highlighted the EU's experiences with road maps and timetables as accelerators of integration processes. These have worked for the EU provided that certain conditions are met. The latter include clear choices of policy areas in which progress is feasible, the identification of demonstrable benefits, political support, and the European Commission's ability to act as a catalyst in the integration process.

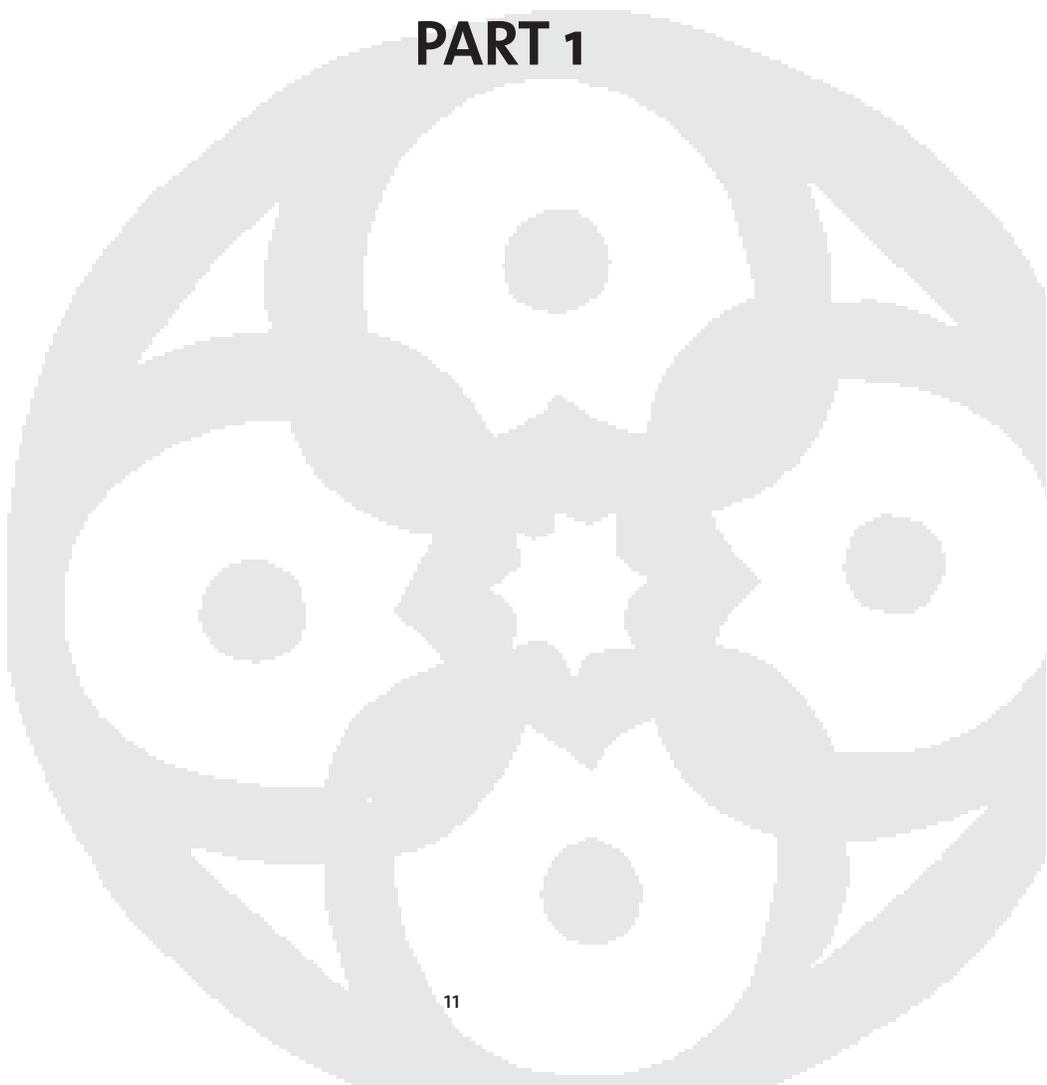
The final session of the seminar turned to the subject of the role the EU could best play in supporting the AU's institutional architecture. **James Mackie** and **Jean Bossuyt** of the ECDPM<sup>5</sup> first looked at the progress made in the AU's institutional development under its first chairperson, Alpha Oumar Konaré. They then addressed the EU's role as the AU's political and development partner. The European Commission and the EU member states have done a great deal in almost a decade of the AU's institutional and organisational development, intensifying dialogue (by introducing commission-level meetings), stepping up financial support, promoting staff exchanges and formulating a Joint Africa-EU Strategy.

At the same time, the nature of the role played by the EU – and, to an increasing extent, also the roles played by other international partners – also poses certain challenges for the AU. There is a risk of a heavy preponderance of donor funding, raising questions of ownership and legitimacy. The authors argued that carefully harmonised donor actions spread over a relatively long period of time will be needed to build effective and fully operational AU institutions.

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5 The role of the EC/EU in supporting the AU's institutional architecture, by James Mackie & Jean Bossuyt.

# PART 1



# 1 Towards a strong African Union: what are the next steps and what role can the EU play?

By Geert Laporte and James Mackie  
*ECDPM, Maastricht (Netherlands)*

This paper is based in part on discussions that took place during the ECDPM/NAI Uppsala seminar (October 2009), supplemented with personal reflections on the AU's institutional development and current and future EU-AU relations. The paper:

- (i) focuses on key challenges facing the AU in a rapidly changing African and global context;
- (ii) takes stock of the AU's record in promoting African integration, the progress made and the lessons learnt;
- (iii) assesses current reforms as well as the future prospects for the institutional development of the AU;
- (iv) presents concrete ways of strengthening the African Union's institutional architecture and finally
- (v) analyses the role played by the EU and other partners in supporting the AU's institutional development and architecture, drawing lessons from the experience gained with the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) and other EU support programmes in the run-up to the third EU-Africa Summit, which is due to be held in Libya on 29-30 November 2010.

## ***The African Union at a turning point: key challenges in a rapidly changing context***

### Ambitious internal reforms

Since the start of the new millennium, the African Union (AU) has sought, as a pan-African institution, to unite Africa so as to better confront multiple global and continental challenges. Given the complexity of this task, the AU has a heavy and ambitious agenda that includes, amongst others, peace and security, trade liberalisation, food security, the sustainable use of natural resources and energy, climate change and migration.

In a rapidly changing global and African policy environment, there is obviously a need for more powerful and effective AU institutions with the capacity to assume strong leadership on continental and global matters. This is partly an internal African issue, but equally it is about ensuring a unified African representation with a strong voice in international fora.

In an attempt to accelerate the integration process and face up to these multiple challenges with streamlined institutions, the February and July 2009 Summits of African Heads of State and Government endorsed proposals to move towards an African Union Authority (AUA). The plan was for the AUA to become the principal pan-African institution driving the African integration process. To date, it remains unclear what the AUA's precise mandate, powers and functions are to be, and national ratification of the proposal has not moved fast. Further progress depends on the model of integration and continental governance that the AU and its member states decide to adopt. Opinions differ among the member states on this issue. It therefore remains an open question whether African leaders will ultimately make a clear choice for a supra-national or an inter-governmental type of institution.

The pace and sequencing of African integration also remain unresolved. These are issues requiring an enhanced dialogue with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in Africa as building blocks of pan-African integration.

There are also other challenges, including the extent to which the AU institutions will be able to enhance participatory governance and ownership of the pan-African project by African citizens. In order to respond to these various challenges, the AU may well need to undertake profound and rapid reforms of its institutional architecture.

## Broadening external partnerships

In addition to engaging in major internal reforms, the AU governance institutions are seeking to broaden and deepen their relations with the international community. In recent years, traditional AU partners such as the European Union (EU) have placed a great deal of emphasis on renewing and strengthening the partnership and on supporting AU capacities and institutions. The Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) expressed a desire on the part of both Unions to construct a new and different type of partnership. As a framework for long-term continent-to-continent partnership, the JAES, in concert with other EU and European Commission support programmes, should also be a vehicle for strengthening the AU's institutional architecture. However, almost three years after its

inception, doubts have been expressed as to whether the JAES is moving fast enough in radically altering the nature of EU-Africa relations.

Moreover, in its quest to become a more influential institution, the AU is no longer putting all its eggs into one European basket. The election of President Obama in the USA and the emergence of new global players such as Brazil, Russia, India, and China are affecting the traditionally privileged African relationship with the EU. In only a short period of time, China has become Africa's third biggest commercial partner and investor. Obviously, the EU is afraid of losing influence and seems to be growing nervous about entering into a new type of competition with the emerging economic powers. The increasing degree of choice has revived the self-confidence of African leaders and the AU institutions. Both traditional and new partners seem to be willing to play key roles in Africa and to support AU institutions and capacities. Yet it is the AU that needs to assess the costs and benefits that each of its partners can bring to Africa. One of the main future challenges for the AU will be to ensure that old and new partners alike work together pragmatically in promoting peace and stability, food security, better governance and the effective management of natural resources and infrastructure so as to generate greater prosperity for Africa.

### ***The AU's record in promoting African integration: what progress has been made and what lessons have been learnt?***

#### From independence to pan-Africanism

Any reflection on the current state of the African Union requires a certain degree of historical awareness. The impact of colonialism in the past continues to affect African integration today. Colonialism connected Africa with the European colonial powers and undermined the integration of the African regions. African thinking on pan-African integration did not emerge until around the time of decolonisation and independence. A new generation of African leaders were keen proponents of pan-Africanism. In Ghana, the first African country to achieve independence, Kwame Nkrumah was a powerful advocate of African unity. The idea was that newly-obtained independence should be turned quickly into a political project: pan-Africanism.

Other African leaders such as Julius Nyerere took a more pragmatic, gradualist approach. They supported functional integration projects with smaller entities (e.g. the East African Community), with a view to cooperating mainly in economic fields.

Several meetings were convened in the early 1960s to discuss pan-Africanism, culminating in the creation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963.

Progress in the post-independence period was slow, however. The OAU was little more than a secretariat whose main task was to support regular meetings of Heads of State. This role did not fundamentally change until the beginning of the 1990s. The end of the Cold War produced significant progress. As ideological debates and Cold War rivalries lost momentum, so political perspectives on African regional integration gradually began to converge. More and more African leaders supported African integration as a necessary vehicle for improving the living conditions of their populations, for the integration of the continent into the global economy and for the creation of a stronger African voice in international affairs. The end of apartheid in South Africa also helped to mould a shared vision for the integration of the continent among African leaders, as did a desire to develop African solutions to African problems.

## New hopes with the creation of the AU

Ambitions were running high at the start of the new millennium. When the African Union was established in 2002 as the successor to the OAU, the general hope was that it would overcome the long-standing problems and speed up the pace of African integration. Unlike the integration of the EU, which from the outset was built on strong economic foundations, the process of African integration is primarily a political process. However, political intentions have not always been translated into action. It very soon became clear that many African leaders did not want to give up any of their national sovereignty. The Constitutive Act of 2002 that underpins the creation of the AU, was therefore a compromise between partisans of a federal union (endowed with supranational competences) and those who resisted this ambitious vision and did not want to give up their national sovereignty.

In other words, although the AU did not fundamentally alter the intergovernmental nature of the pan-African project, it created legal and political openings for moving forward the process of African integration. One of these openings was the creation of the African Union Commission (AUC), that was intended to encourage gradual continental integration and strengthen the architecture of the Union. Thanks to the AUC's heightened profile in Addis Ababa, the AU is now more widely recognised as an actor and partner in political matters on the global scene. This is reflected by the growing number of regions (such as Latin America and EU) and states (such as the BRIC countries, but also Turkey and Iran) that are keen to build stronger partnerships with the AU.

Most African RECs have also become more important and evolved into respected economic and political players in both Africa and beyond.

However, the Constitutive Act of the African Union has remained rather vague on the AUC's autonomous role, its powers and the distribution of responsibilities among the various AU organs. This has prevented African integration from proceeding as rapidly as might have been expected at the time when the AU was established in 2002. Making the AU work is by definition a long-term and sometimes painful process. Clearly, there are still huge contradictions that need to be managed carefully. This needs real leadership and strong and effective institutions at all levels.

### The interests and role of the EU in African integration

Formal African integration has been inspired by different models and logics. The European Union (EU) undoubtedly served as an important source of inspiration.

The EU was initially sceptical when the AU was first established. This attitude quickly changed because the EU regarded the pan-Africanist movement as creating an excellent opportunity for the emergence of an interlocutor at a continental level. In the EU's eyes, the AU had tremendous potential to tackle continental and global challenges that could only be dealt with at a continental level (e.g. peace and security, migration, and climate change). This explains not just why the European Commission's expectations were high, but also why Europe wanted to play a strong and influential role in supporting the AU.

Based on its own role model, the EU understands that the AU needs strong independent institutions to organise a strong integration process. Support for the AU has therefore been targeted mainly at strengthening the AUC in Addis Ababa, with a view to creating a coherent and effective mechanism that would be appropriately equipped to carry other reforms forward.

## ***Ongoing reforms and the future prospects for the AU's institutional development***

### **Substantial progress**

During 2002-2008, great efforts were made by the then chairperson, Alpha Oumar Konaré, and the first college of AU Commissioners in defining a vision for the AU, constructing an African governance architecture and putting the AU on the map as the main interlocutor on African affairs. The mandates and relationships between the various AU institutions were spelled out in policy documents and strategic and management plans, including the Institutional Transformation Programme (ITP). However, these mandates and role divisions have yet to be fully translated into practical action.

The 2009 decision by African Heads of State and Government to establish an African Union Authority (AUA) – intended to be the main pan-African body driving African integration – was seen as a new step on the road to a more pan-African-driven form of integration. The ultimate aim is to create a United States of Africa, the idea being that the reform and refinement of the AU's current governance structure should enable this ambitious objective to be achieved.

### **But still a long way to go**

Despite the renewed efforts made during the past decade to promote further African integration, major problems still need to be overcome. These include:

- **Ownership.** Questions are regularly asked as to whether the new AU integration process is really owned by most Africans. Clearly, opinions differ in Africa on the deepening of African integration. The current drive towards African integration has divided the continent between 'maximalists' and 'minimalists' rather than uniting it.
- **Leadership vacuum.** There is currently no credible leadership guiding Africa's integration. There seems to be a dearth of driving forces for regional integration, i.e. people who combine visionary leadership with the sense of pragmatism that is needed to move things forward, manage reforms and deliver results. For different reasons, both Nigeria and South Africa have not played this role either

adequately or consistently in recent years, in spite of being among the initiators of key continental projects such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). So far, progress on African integration has always resulted from a small number of individuals taking the initiative to push through the next step, rather than from a sustained long-term process.

- **Institutional rivalries.** These have been caused by a lack of clarity on mandates and roles. No serious debate has been set in motion on who is best placed to do what in African integration (i.e. the AUC, or the RECs, or the member states), based on the principle of subsidiarity. While a common vision has been formulated on the ultimate aim of African integration (i.e. the proposed creation of a United States of Africa), there are still wide differences of opinion on the path that should be followed and the speed at which unity should be achieved. A number of African states are clearly unwilling to transfer coherent mandates, competences and powers to a supranational pan-African body. Others want to move faster. For far too long, the relationship between the AU and the RECs has been one dominated by competition rather than by cooperation. The RECs now have liaison officers at the AUC in Addis. Although, initially, their remit did not extend beyond peace and security issues, they are now being called on more and more to perform other general liaison tasks.
- **Sequencing and planning.** Crucial issues, such as sequencing and the speed at which the continent should move towards integration in different fields, remain unresolved. Careful attention is not always given to identifying how these areas interlink and how progress in one area may depend on the results obtained in another. This was also one of the problems with the African Union Commission's Institutional Transformation Programme (ITP) and helps to explain why it did not deliver the expected results. The planning and sequencing of such complex change processes is a difficult undertaking in itself, requiring careful monitoring and regular updates and adjustments.

## ***The way forward: ten concrete ways of strengthening the African Union's institutional architecture***

The AU has made substantial progress in the period of less than 10 years since its inception. However, much still needs to be done if a strong AU is to be built that is capable of giving fresh impetus to African integration, so that the continent can gain the maximum benefits from an increasingly globalised world.

African leaders have reiterated their commitment to a 'United States of Africa', with a view to accelerating the integration and development of Africa. Obviously, this ambition requires a clear and strong mandate and much stronger AU institutions.

The AU's institutional architecture has been compared with a building site: certain elements are starting to take shape, but it is not yet clear what the building will look like in its final form. Although the current context has created some promising openings for improving the continent's governance architecture, a lot of building work still needs to be done. What follows are the authors' suggestions for components that could provide the foundations for a stronger institutional architecture for the AU in the years to come.

### **1 Adopt a political approach to integration**

African integration is first and foremost a political project. Whenever it has taken big steps forward, this has been at the behest of individual African leaders who have spelt out their vision and convinced others of its merits. As with any other such project, it needs strong political foundations and drivers. The African member states have a crucial role to play in this, but only a small number of countries have the clout, influence and credibility to take the lead with ease.

Since the mid-1990s, under the leadership first of President Nelson Mandela and subsequently of President Thabo Mbeki, South Africa has been a forerunner in promoting African integration. However, it now seems more preoccupied with the Southern African region, primarily in the context of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Equally, Nigeria, under President Obasanjo, played an important role for a time, but no longer seems keen to assume a leadership role given the grave internal problems it now has to tackle. Libya has also sought to assume a leadership role, but lacks credibility both in Africa and in the rest of the world. Yet the lack of a solid and credible political leadership and powerful drivers makes for slower progress

and at times creates confusion. This may explain why African Heads of State regularly fall back on what is sometimes called ‘regime-boosting regionalism’,<sup>6</sup> adopting strong formal declarations that sound impressive but are not followed up. Agreeing decisive steps forward is fine, but they need to be accompanied by strong, clear and consistent leadership in order to achieve any tangible follow-through.

## 2 Promote a citizen-based political integration by enhancing the role of national parliaments, the PAP, ECOSOCC and civil society

Greater potential for change can be generated if the AUC and civil-society organisations work to strengthen each other. This is illustrated by the experience of the African Human Rights Commission, in which there was scope for cooperation with civil society, resulting in an improvement in the quality of the Commission’s work. There is a need to expand and deepen civil-society representation in Africa. The Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union (ECOSOCC) has promoted the federation of civil-society organisations (CSOs), adding solidity to the work of civil society. Although good progress has been made, ECOSOCC still needs to find a way to progressively incorporate a broader range of African civil-society organisations. Regional and national parliaments also need to be strengthened and to hold proper elections in settings in which it is known that changes can and will be made so that candidates and parties can lobby for change.

There needs to be much more debate on the AU in African member states, in the media, and among CSOs and citizens. The AU’s vision and political agendas do not reach national governments or the people in individual countries. The conditions for a robust, open debate have yet to be put in place. Yet there is tremendous capacity developing from below and people may well take their destiny in their own hands. There is a need to set up a process and to decide on the distribution of tasks, mandates and competences among key actors. There is in fact strong popular support for the pan-African vision. In many ways, African people have gone further in implementing continental integration on the ground than have the pan-African institutions themselves.

At the same time, few African states can claim to be people-driven. As a result, one must be sceptical about the people-driven nature of the AU’s current African integration project. The very concept of a people-driven integration process is perhaps more of an

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6 See *Competing Perspectives on the AU and African integration* by Fredrik Söderbaum.

EU notion, given that the EU has existed for longer and the fact that a new identity takes time to nourish. Things regularly go wrong in Africa when it comes to handing over power and embarking on leadership transitions, hence the importance of building strong institutions. The vital factors here are to empower citizens to hold governments accountable, create a favourable environment and develop a comparative advantage in a global context.

To create a people-centred Union, national governments have a crucial role to play in driving the process. In institutional terms, the focus should not lie solely on the AUC. Rather, it is important to recognise the added value of other organs and involve the RECs and member states. The ECOSOCC and the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) can promote popular representation in internal decisions.

### 3 Empower the AU Commission

Any successful integration project needs autonomous and credible central institutions that can act as motors. A strong AUC would gain credibility if it had the right of initiative, and was given powers to implement decisions and to enforce treaties. In the absence of supranational powers, the AUC cannot effectively take on this role as the motor or coordinator of African integration. The Commission's Chairperson has no special right of enforcement, given that all the AU's organs have the same status.

At the same time, the AUC also needs to do its own homework in order to 'earn' such competences, as well as the necessary authority and credibility. This implies institutional innovation and internal reforms:

- building sectoral and thematic competences (on trade, for example);
- strengthening horizontal communication ('one college, one voice') so as to counter perceptions that there is no real collegiate spirit, even though these may be poorly founded;
- solid planning and budgeting;
- efficient recruitment and competency-based human resource policies;
- communication and information policies to reach out to member states and the broader public.

The first AU Commission began this process by launching the Institutional Transformation Programme (ITP). However, these internal reforms slowed down towards the end of its first term and had to be picked up again by the current

leadership. Future institutional reform requires a good dose of realism, based on the lessons learnt from past successes. Institutional reform also needs to be accompanied by a clear political vision of what is being sought in terms of African integration.

#### 4 Secure the close involvement of the member states

The member states are the backbone of the integration process. Yet many African states are fragile and not all are in favour of regional integration. Many see their first priority as strengthening their own ability to govern. In such circumstances, it is not easy to ensure their active participation in regional integration. It is therefore important to create incentives for the AU member states to engage more closely in regional integration. The transaction costs are often high and, while there may well be incentives for individuals, this does not apply to states. The payment of membership fees is a key element of any effective incentive structure. However, assuming that membership fees are indeed paid, there are other ways of fostering a bottom-up integration process and sidelining spoilers:

- *Address revenue loss due to regional integration and compensation mechanisms.*
- *Go for low-hanging fruit to create momentum and an appetite for more: nothing succeeds like success, especially in publicly visible areas like migration and air transport, which can quickly reduce the cost of doing business.*
- *Use variable geometry to increase member state involvement. Those who are ready should be allowed to move ahead and act as locomotives and should be supported as much as possible.*
- *Design instruments that respond to local needs (EU examples may be of value here: EU structural funds, the internal poverty reduction programme and the EU rural development programme).*

The lessons learnt from the African Union's activities on peace and security suggest that the active engagement of member states in the Peace and Security Council and the African Peace and Security Architecture has played a major part in the success of continental integration in this field. Taking a sectoral approach to integration thus also has merits in terms of the examples it sets and the momentum it creates. This should encourage African member states to engage more in other fields of continental and regional integration.

There is also a need to strengthen and make more effective use of the specialised technical committees of sectoral ministers. Currently, the AU's work is very much under

the control of foreign ministers alone. This hampers progress in certain technical areas. At the same time, it is important to avoid the converse danger of a 'silo mentality' developing as each sector moves forward on its own and no attention is paid to overall coherence.

## 5 Build on the role played by the RECs in both economic and political terms

The example of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) also illustrates the useful role that RECs can play in implementing and managing continental projects for the AU. The AU recognizes eight RECs as the 'pillars' of continental integration. Given their growing importance as the building blocks of African integration, their roles and experience should be further exploited. The RECs should not only be an economic driving force, but also gradually play a more prominent political role as ECOWAS has successfully done in the fields of peace and security, governance and freedom of movement in recent years. Other RECs are also performing a more political role. The relationship between the AUC and the RECs needs to be improved, and roles more clearly defined, in the coming years. African integration should allow scope for a differentiated architecture building on the RECs' specific strengths (see the role played by ECOWAS on governance, including the suspension of Niger as an ECOWAS member). Coordination could also be reinforced among the RECs. A good recent example of this is the creation of the Interregional Coordination Committee (IRCC) in Southern and Eastern Africa, resulting in vastly improved consultation and coordination among the various RECs. The Heads of State of the members of the SADC, COMESA and EAC are also setting up a tripartite cooperation structure, their ultimate aim being to bring about the further integration of the three RECs.

Although the long-term objective is gradually to give the AU more powers in relation to continental issues, integration at a regional or sub-regional level is really the starting point. Europeans would refer to this as 'transferring power'. The idea behind this is that national governments can achieve more together than they can on their own. A good example of this is the way in which the APSA has enhanced the capabilities and strengths of African states in the field of peace and security.

So how can the various actors, i.e. the AUC, RECs, member states and UN-ECA, improve their collective capacity for regional integration? First of all, they need to decide which of them is best placed to:

- design a diagnostic framework for what does and does not work, based on the experiences of the RECs;
- organise and facilitate practical and forward-looking discussions with major players in Africa on how to boost the effectiveness of African regional organisations;
- create scope for innovation and differentiation, so as to avoid a crude blueprint integration agenda;
- adopt an approach that allows for variable geometry while maintaining a basic set of commonalities;
- build up and contribute to a wider pool of knowledge on how African integration processes can be translated into enforceable and result-oriented policies.

It is very important to recognise the comparative advantages of the RECs, and to maintain their niche competencies and added value, both as a group and individually. A single standard approach is not the solution, and while the AUC's Minimum Integration Programme may be useful in setting a basic threshold, it is not adequate in itself.

It is clear, however, that the AUC itself has a comparative advantage in certain areas, such as in playing a coordinating role, for instance to overcome the problems created by Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) at a regional level, or in creating a framework to constructively identify and discuss the tensions and institutional rivalries between regional groupings in Africa and the overlaps in their functions.

## 6 Strengthen the role of the newly established African Governance Architecture

The establishment of the AU was accompanied by the launch of a number of governance organs and initiatives, including the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). The purpose was to advance a common African agenda on governance.

In the course of the past two years, a number of attempts have been made to strengthen linkages and coordination between the various governance organs and programmes. The aim was to consolidate a pan-African framework on governance, otherwise known as the African Governance Architecture (AGA). Under the leadership of the AUC, discussions on the AGA were launched, culminating in an agreement on the basic elements of the AGA that was signed in March 2010. The AGA is the overall political and institutional framework for the promotion of governance at a pan-African

level. It consists of three pillars:

- (i) a vision (reflected in norms and values);
- (ii) a set of institutions (with a formal mandate to promote governance on the continent) and actors (including civil society in all its diversity);
- (iii) a number of processes (i.e. interactions between the various institutions and actors) aimed at creating synergies and dividing tasks in relation to shared governance priorities.

The parties involved in the establishment of the AGA also agreed to set-up an 'African Governance Platform'. This informal mechanism is designed to act as the AGA's engine. Coordinated by the AUC and numbering the various governance institutions and actors among its members, it will seek to improve information flows, strengthen linkages between governance initiatives and formulate joint African governance agendas. The Platform could also be instrumental in organising a more effective dialogue on governance with external partners such as the EU.

## 7 Clarify the division of roles and establish a dynamic interaction among the various AU institutions and players

Effective integration requires clear mandates, a clear role division and a sharing of powers between the players, i.e. the AUC, PAP, the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Assembly of Heads of State, ministerial meetings, ECOSOCC, etc. It would be a mistake to focus solely on the mandate, role and capacities of the AUC instead of looking at the full picture. Equally, it is important to address this question in terms of the different levels of African governance, i.e. national, regional and continental, and to try and observe the principle of subsidiarity. It is particularly important to avoid an imbalance in which excessive power is concentrated at a regional level, as this may hamper the allocation of power to a continental level. The example of the EPAs may be instructive in this respect.

All this may involve changes in the distribution of mandates, roles and powers. For instance, it may well be useful to invest more in common policies even though powers have not been fully transferred to a central coordinating body, so that responsibilities are clearly shared. The AUC should be in a position to police and monitor progress. Equally, the African Court could play a greater role in adjudicating between actors when there are differences of opinion on implementation. In Europe, for instance, the European Court of Justice has played a significant role as one of the checks and

balances in the system, in helping to clarify roles and agreements between institutions so that integration can move forward. Democratic control is also important. Currently, this has been left largely to the AUC and member states themselves, but the situation should change once the PAP and ECOSOCC have built up their roles and capacities.

At present, the mechanisms for interinstitutional coordination in the AU are perceived not to be operating properly. Observers wonder why these relationships are so difficult. Adopting a sector-by-sector approach to working out the best distribution of roles and responsibilities may well be a good way forward, as has already been achieved with peace and security. There are similar opportunities in other fields, as illustrated, for instance, by the role played by the APRM in relation to governance and the efforts to establish a Climate Change Unit within the AUC.

## 8 Ensure institutional structures have the requisite capacities and resources

The AU suffers from a lack of sustained African resources, both human and financial. Its growing dependence on external funding is an issue that needs to be watched closely. Funding by the member states creates ownership. Membership fees are a key element in the operation of any regional or continental organisation. Resource mobilisation in Africa and taxation (in the form of value added tax, community tax, etc.) to create a politically independent Commission will help to raise its accountability. Of course, domestic resource mobilisation depends on the resource base and this is still weak but, while increasing ODA may help, this is not the fundamental issue. Rather, what is needed is more trade and foreign direct investment. In this sense, competitiveness is vitally important. A 1% increase in Africa's trade would be worth more than all the ODA the continent currently receives. In addition, the use of innovative financial instruments, such as continental or regional pools and facilities (e.g. structural funds) offering funding and investment opportunities may also be a means of funding regional integration.

## 9 Actively manage process issues: sequencing, timing and variable geometry

Giving the time and proper development support to African governance institutions is crucial if they are to develop in a healthy way and play a more influential role. It is therefore important for both Africans and external partners not to expect too much too fast from young institutions. Overloading institutions with roles they are not yet

equipped for or capable of fulfilling poses serious risks, not least of undermining their credibility if they do not deliver.

Variable geometry is another useful concept. Although the AU already allows member states who are ready to move ahead on a particular issue and act as locomotives, this could perhaps be formalised as a more widely recognised and respected principle. Lack of readiness – not being ready to move forward on certain aspects of integration when others are – should not have a stigma attached to it.

Building continental integration through regional integration may also be a principle that needs to be given greater emphasis as a process element, because it is often easier for member states to identify with the regional rather than with the continental level. This is the original concept behind the Abuja Treaty of 1991, under which the regional economic communities were to provide the foundations for continental integration. However, the interlinked, two-step nature of the integration process envisaged in the Treaty, i.e. both regional and continental, is often forgotten and perhaps needs to be re-emphasised.

Although the AU started out with the advantage of full membership of all African nations (with the exception of Morocco), this may also be seen as a disadvantage, because there is now no longer any application process during which potential members can look at what is on offer before deciding whether or not they wish to sign up. However, this can still be done with specific aspects of the AU construct as it is built up. Membership criteria for new elements of the African integration project can be formulated and applied. A good example is the APRM, membership of which is voluntary, which means that African states have to actively decide whether or not to join. The act of joining thus actively promotes and increases ownership. Such a process is more akin to the EU model, with its successive waves of enlargement, in which candidate countries enter into negotiations with the European Commission and existing members, and have to agree to the conditions on offer. Thus it might be more practical, where new elements of the African integration project are involved, to start small, with just a few countries. Others could then join at a later stage, when they feel the project works and can be justified in terms of their own needs and capacities.

## 10 Create instruments for monitoring and enforcement

Effective systems of monitoring and enforcement are crucial, not only for ensuring real progress and efficient management, but also for building legitimacy and credibility.

Such systems need to be put in place both within and between individual institutions. Each institution needs to have its own internal monitoring and reporting system. The AUC needs to report to the Assembly of Member States, whilst the PAP and ECOSOCC need to be able to hold both the Commission and the Assembly to account. The Court needs to have the capacity to adjudicate on differences of opinion between the institutions. The rules of engagement on how the organs relate to each other will become increasingly important in the future as continental integration advances.

Some system of enforcement is also required. At present, the Assembly and Executive Council have limited powers to impose sanctions on members for such matters as the non-payment of membership dues. The AUC is also expected to act as the 'Guardian of the Treaties', but is not in a position to enforce them and therefore depends on the willingness of other actors to play their roles constructively and adequately. There is thus no effective way of challenging any member states, or indeed other actors, who do not carry out their obligations under the treaties. In due course, the Court could well have an important role to play here in interpreting areas lacking in clarity and imposing legal sanctions, but in the first instance the rules should be clear.

The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) is another important tool for monitoring progress in the fields of administration and good governance, but it still has a life somewhat outside the AU. The African Governance Architecture would benefit from its institutionalisation and from being more closely linked with other governance instruments and institutions on the continent.

### ***The role played by the EU in supporting the AU institutional architecture***

#### **From the OAU to the AU**

The transformation of the OAU into the AU in 2002 aroused considerable interest in the EU, particularly at the European Commission. The latter had found dialogue with the OAU Secretariat difficult and the two bodies had never really developed a close relationship. Despite an initial wariness in some quarters, the European Commission was very keen to develop a partnership with the new AUC. Peace and security was the focus of collaboration from the start, with the European Commission already providing a small initial grant in 2003. This was very soon followed by the much more ambitious €250 million Africa Peace Facility agreed later the same year in response to a request from the AU Summit. At the same time, the European Commission recognised the AU's

institutional development needs arising from the changeover from OAU to AU. Again, a small grant was provided for this purpose, after which a more ambitious €55 million facility from the 9th European Development Fund was arranged.

In parallel with these tangible signs of support, the two Commissions also entered into a close dialogue, initially focusing on peace and security issues, but soon extending to development and increasingly to political issues affecting both Africa and the world as a whole. The EU had previously held a somewhat difficult first Africa-EU Summit with the OAU in Cairo in 2000. This was followed by slow-moving and awkward consultations that were intended to lead to a second summit in Lisbon, scheduled for as early as 2002. Progress was slow, however, and it was not until the OAU was transformed into the AU that the dialogue started to accelerate and gather pace, with negotiations opening on an ambitious and wide-ranging Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES). This eventually culminated in the adoption of the Joint Strategy at the Lisbon Summit in December 2007.

The EU's interest in and enthusiasm for the AU was tempered by scepticism in some quarters, with many Europeans pointing to the difficulties facing Africa in any attempt to gain rapid progress in the implementation of the AU's ambitious plans. Equally, while it was accepted that good intentions had to be backed up by practical action and in particular financial support, the provision of large amounts of funding also meant that European Commission officials began to pay close attention to the AU's governance processes and its ability to administer the funds correctly.

The EU has shown considerable appreciation for the progress made in transforming the OAU into the AU, establishing continental mechanisms for peace and security and getting the AU recognised as a political force within the space of just a few years. At the same time, Europeans have also turned the spotlight on various as yet unresolved challenges, including variable levels of ownership by African member states, the limited progress achieved with the internal Institutional Transformation Programme, the consolidation of the AU's institutional architecture, unpredictable funding and the limited powers granted to the AUC to monitor implementation by the member states.

As the AUC continues to consolidate and reform in order to operate more efficiently and transparently, it will face further challenges for some time ahead. These include the need to strengthen its rules and systems and in particular to improve its financial management, as its capacity for managing financial resources has been low. This also applies beyond the walls of the AUC itself and implies the closer integration of the

various AU organs and the RECs as the AUC seeks to find its own space as a catalyst for African integration. While these are clearly African processes that need to be worked out internally in the AU, the close engagement with the EU through the Joint Africa-EU Strategy and the presence of EU funding mean that the EU follows these issues closely, thus placing additional pressure on the AU.

## The dilemmas of using external funding

Without EU funds, the AUC would not have made the progress it has made to date. This applies particularly to the field of peace and security, where extensive European support has made the AMIS operation in Darfur possible (although it should be stressed that other donors have also contributed). However, a solution needs to be found in order to ensure not only that the AUC's funding is more sustainable, long-term and predictable, but also that it is ideally based largely on African resources. European and other external funding can be justified, not least because some of the problems the AU is grappling with, such as peace and security, are issues of global importance and the international community may be expected to contribute to their cost. But it is clear that a system of own resources within Africa will give the organisation both greater latitude and international standing.

In some respects, the AUC is not short of funds. However, its ability to absorb them is hampered by outdated budgeting, financial control, differing donor requirements and procurement procedures. Thus, the take-up of the institutional development funds from the EU (i.e. the €55 million grant) has been considerably slower than expected. This is partly due to the need to reconcile two different systems with each other, i.e. the AU's procedures with EDF processes, which themselves can also be cumbersome. As the institutional development process advances and these problems are resolved, the AUC's ability to use the available funding is also improving bit by bit.

At the same time, the manner in which international partners have interacted with the AU has not always been appropriate. The AMIS mission in Darfur is a case in point. Here, there were 15 international partners, including the European Commission and a number of EU member states, each with its own earmarked programmes and reporting requirements. Even though the EU's Africa Peace Facility was highly flexible, even here, there were certain restrictions on what could and could not be paid from these funds. International partners should deliver on their promises to harmonise systems so as to relieve AU institutions from multiple reporting requirements, in line with the commitments made under the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

Fragmented donor reporting systems and other requirements have the effect of raising transaction costs for the AUC. Donors also bring a different dynamic that inevitably has an influence on how an institution develops (as opposed to a situation in which an institution develops organically, purely according to its own needs).

Despite a slow start under the former ITP, the AUC is making real progress in this area, with new systems for procurement and financial management being gradually put in place. These are being designed to international standards in close consultation with international partners and should therefore enable the partners to be more relaxed in enforcing their funding rules in future.

### Political relations between the EU and the AU

The EU has undoubtedly made major progress in recent years in developing a strong relationship with Africa. However, further progress still needs to be made and more patience is required. The EU could do better in terms of linking up with topical debates and processes on the continent, such as the debate on pan-Africanism and on the possible establishment of an AUA.

Pan-Africanism is an old debate that underpins the very roots of the AU. Europe needs to treat it seriously as otherwise it risks undermining the foundations of the emerging African institutional architecture. It is not a simple issue and there are many different positions in Africa, just as there are among Europeans on the best way forward for European integration. In the face of external globalisation pressures, Africa has little choice but to integrate. While the EU clearly understands this, its actions have not always been consistent with the way in which Africans see continental integration moving forward.

How the EU relates to sub-regional organisations on the continent is an important consideration in this context. EU support for different African governance institutions should help to strengthen the overall development of the AU's institutions and allow them all to play a more influential role in the African Union. The European Commission, for instance, engages individually with many of the RECs. If care is not taken, this engagement will not necessarily enhance continental integration. In the perceptions of some, before the debate on the EPAs, the African continent was still excited about the African Union, but then RECs moved much faster than had been anticipated. As a result, the RECs no longer consistently accept the AU's lead role in economic and trade areas. At the same time, the blame should not be apportioned entirely with Europe:

the African side also missed opportunities to deal with the challenges posed by the EPAs. There was no effective intra-African dialogue on the issue.

It is important for the EU to respect the principle of treating Africa as one. As recognised in the text of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES), this means that certain adjustments need to be made to the EU's instruments and partnership agreements, including the Cotonou Partnership Agreement. Despite the EU's commitments on this, serious questions have been raised about the extent to which this principle has been respected in the discussion on the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) or on the concept of the Mediterranean Union. As the President of Senegal has made clear, the Mediterranean Union is a problem for Africa as it is a form of regionalisation driven by Europe. It risks placing obstacles in the path of African attempts to strengthen the AU and obtain strong support from African states. There is a need for a change in thinking on both sides. Europe should change its fragmented approach to Africa, while Africa should cease to regard Europe merely as a money basket from which it can benefit in a variety of often uncoordinated ways.

Increasing concern has also been expressed in recent months about where the JAES is going. Now almost three years old, the JAES seems to be grappling with its identity and is in real danger of simply sliding back into a series of projects and adopting a bureaucratic instead of a political approach. It is therefore time to revisit the institutional arrangements for the implementation of the JAES, such as the role of the Joint Expert Groups (JEGs). Member states' participation in the JAES on both sides is highly dependent on them recognising the added value of the Joint Strategy. The JAES agenda probably also needs to be narrowed down to a smaller number of priorities on which both sides can agree and for which there is clear support from member states of both Unions.<sup>7</sup> The credibility of the JAES would also be enhanced if the EU and Africa were to produce more tangible results in terms of joint action and positioning in global or multilateral fora.

Greater clarity is also needed on the question of the relationship and complementarity between the Cotonou Partnership Agreement and the JAES. It is clearly for Africa to decide whether it wants the JAES to replace the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, or how complementarity and role divisions between the two instruments can be achieved. What we have seen so far is inconsistency in voices. There should be a shared responsibility for treating Africa as one. The recent five-yearly revision has shown that

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7 Bossuyt, J. and A. Sherriff. 2010. *What next for the Joint Africa-EU Strategy? Perspectives on revitalising an innovative framework A Scoping Paper (ECDPM Discussion Paper 94)*. Maastricht: ECDPM.

the EU is willing to discuss how to adapt the CPA to current African political realities. However, without clear guidance from African states on the relative value of the CPA and the JAES, only slow progress can be made. In effect, the EU needs help from the AU in order to achieve real progress in adapting its instruments to the principle of treating Africa as one. African states in the ACP Group need to be clear on the importance they attach to this, as do the North African states that benefit from the EU's Neighbourhood Policy Instrument. Ultimately, it is only if all African states can present a united front on these issues that the EU will be able to move forward decisively.

In terms of the political dialogue between the EU and the AU on specific issues, progress has been made, as is demonstrated by the joint approaches taken to the recent crises in Guinea and Niger.

These issues have created openings for Africa to engage the international community and put on a united front to thorny issues.

At the same time, the EU and the AU have been at odds with each other over other issues, such as Zimbabwe and Sudan, which have affected the EU-Africa dialogue for a long time. The challenge for both the EU and the AU is to gain a real mutual understanding of all these complex, ongoing processes and to engage in genuine dialogue.

### Where is there most political traction?

To a large extent, the EU's support for the AU is dependent on the political traction the latter can demonstrate amongst its own constituents. The more that it is evident that the AU project enjoys the firm support of African member states, the various AU organs working in harmony, the RECs and, where possible, of African people themselves, the more the EU, i.e. the member states and the European Commission, will feel it is important for them to engage, support and respect the AU. EU governments and institutions – and indeed European public opinion – are generally committed to supporting Africa and are keen to see its institutions working effectively with the support of African citizens.

The AU's track record on peace and security is a good example, but there are also other, lesser examples. The united African positions formed by the AU on policy areas such as migration and climate change has aroused real interest in Europe. If the AU can build such positions and obtain a clear mandate from its member states for negotiating

with the EU on them, the EU is more likely to take such approaches seriously. There are areas in which the AU and EU's interests are intertwined, though not identical, and which would benefit from a continent-to-continent dialogue: fisheries policy and trade are cases in point. On the European side, both of these are EU competences in which the European Commission takes has the lead. If the AU was able to obtain a mandate from its member states in these areas, a Union-to-Union dialogue would become possible and might lead to real advances for Africa.

### The next steps in the AU-EU relationship

The 3rd EU-Africa Summit is due to be held at the end of 2010. This is clearly an opportunity to reinvigorate cooperation between the two Unions. Both sides realise that fundamental improvements need to be made to the implementation of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy if it is going to prove a useful tool. As explained above, the two sides need to see how they can narrow down the JAES agenda and streamline its operational arrangements.

Alongside the joint dialogue that is needed on these issues, there are also important questions to which each side needs to attend. The Europeans need to clarify as quickly as possible how the new EU external action structures brought in by the Lisbon Treaty are going to affect its relations with Africa and the AU, and how these structures will tie in with the JAES, the Cotonou Partnership Agreement and the workings of the European Development Fund. It is important that these matters should be clarified before the November 2010 Summit, so as to build a solid set of foundations for future action. These can then serve as the basis for a renewed European political commitment to Africa, which can in turn provide a springboard to greater policy coherence, strengthened and simplified support processes and improved delivery. On the African side, a stronger unity of purpose on what the AU member states wish as a group to get out of their relations with Europe is probably the biggest single factor that could help ensure a successful outcome of the Summit.

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## Part 2



## 2 The African Union and African Integration: Retrospect and Prospect

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Background paper for session I for ECDPM/NAI seminar: Building the African Union institutional architecture: Progress achieved, new perspectives and possible support by the EU.

### ***Introduction***

Over the last decade and half at least, a new political and policy momentum has gathered across Africa, as, indeed, in other regions of the world, in support of regional and sub-regional cooperation and integration efforts.<sup>8</sup> In the specific African context, this new momentum has, in fact, become an integral part of the development agenda for the continent which the African Union (AU), successor to the defunct Organisation of African Unity (OAU), has spearheaded and under whose overall auspices it is being fashioned out and implemented. The immediate context for the renewed continental cooperation and integration drive is the common concern shared by African countries that contemporary processes of globalisation are recasting old challenges, posing new ones, and producing structural shifts in the international political economy for which joint, collective responses are required if their best interests are to be served. But African cooperation and integration efforts also have a deeper and longer historical pedigree, dating back to some of the earliest experiments in state-building undertaken in the region, and the accompanying socio-economic processes that underpinned them at different moments in time.

This essay offers a brief retrospective assessment of the contemporary efforts at promoting an agenda of integration on the African continent and a short reflection on future prospects. In doing so, it traces the roots of the quest for integration back to the earliest history of the agglomeration of political communities across Africa

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<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of the revival of interest in regional cooperation and integration schemes using the new regionalist approach, see Andrew J. Grant and Frederik Soderbaum (eds), *The New Regionalism in Africa* (London: Ashgate, 2004). See also, *United Nations, Economic Development in Africa in 2009: Strengthening Regional Economic Integration for Africa's Development* (United Nations: New York, 2009).

and the economic processes that either spurred or accompanied them. Against the backdrop of this historical anchorage, the essay examines the various high points and low points in the successive efforts at African integration with particular emphasis on the decades since the late colonial period into the years from 1956 when, one after the other, African countries began to accede to independence. In many ways, on-going continental integration efforts being undertaken under the aegis of the AU continue the long march that earlier processes entailed. The contemporary efforts at integration are, therefore, critically reviewed in the context of the experience of history. In particular, old, unresolved challenges to the integration project and new ones that have emerged into prominence are identified. The essay concludes with a reflection on prospects for the future.

For the purposes of the analyses undertaken in this article, integration is understood and employed not just or exclusively in terms of economic processes and the institutional mechanisms by which they find expression but also with reference to the associated political visions and actions with which they are closely inter-twined. Economic integration projects are almost always incubated and operationalised within the framework of a political vision – and an ideological mooring. They are also not indifferent to a variety of geo-strategic considerations that influence and even outrightly shape the processes and institutions of integration. As indicators of the relations of power and influence, and the visions and ambitions embedded in them, geo-strategic considerations are routinely played out in the politics of integration. From this point of view, and with cognisance to the history of Africa, the quest for continental integration must necessarily be seen and treated as part of a broader agenda that combines visions for deeper inter-state and cross-national economic cooperation with projects of political unification and the quest by the continent for a collective self-rediscovery. Continental unity and integration are, in the African discourse, part and parcel of the same movement, two inseparable sides of the same coin that feed into a global vision of an African rebirth.

### ***Historical roots of African integration***

#### **Pre-colonial agglomeration of political communities**

Arguably, the earliest significant experiments at African integration were directly connected to the history of state formation and the quest for the extension of political suzerainty on the continent, particularly with reference to the efforts that were made to bring various peoples and communities together under the same institutional-

administrative umbrella. Those experiments were driven as much by politico-security factors as by economic considerations, including the regulation of growing domestic markets, the mobilisation of labour, and the management of external/cross-border trade relations, including taxation. The experiments also produced economic consequences that encompassed the creation and expansion of markets, the opening of new trade frontiers and routes, and the fostering of inter-state commercial exchanges based on agreed rules and principles. The experiments manifested themselves in a succession of expansive multi-ethnic and multi-religious kingdoms and empires that were erected on a host of political projects and which were underpinned by the activities of various economic operators. They each required the development of institutional mechanisms, political norms, fiscal and monetary policies, and administrative skills in order to be governable over the long-term even if, in almost all cases, the process of agglomeration of political communities into unified or federated states was itself always marked by a high degree of contention, conflict and war.<sup>9</sup>

### Diaspora pan-African consciousness

The record of the integrative states that occupied the old African territorial landmass constitutes an issue of continuing enquiry and debate among historians which needs not detain us here.<sup>10</sup> What is really important to stress from the point of view of this essay is the fact that experiences of economic policy coordination and harmonisation designed to evolve integrated markets were built into the historical experiments in state-making that were known across Africa. Also worth underscoring is the fact that the experiments were subsequently to represent sources of inspiration for the Diaspora Africans who, seeking to overcome the impact and legacy of the slave trade on the African descendants who were forcibly uprooted from the continent and taken to the so-called New World as plantation labour, dug deep into the history of the motherland to source a collective political will for confronting and overcoming their difficult circumstances in the Americas and the Caribbean. These Diaspora Africans dreamt of ways in which the history and dignity of black peoples could be re-established even as they sought to consolidate the successes that began to flow from their prolonged struggle against slavery and the racism associated with it.

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<sup>9</sup> The UNESCO General History of Africa, accomplished over a period of 35 years and published in eight volumes, provides, among other things, a comprehensive treatment of the history of state formation and the agglomeration of political communities in Africa from the earliest times. The writings of scholars such as J.F. Ade-Ajayi, Adu Boahen, Basil Davidson, Kenneth Dike, and J.D. Omer-Cooper, to cite a few of the leading students of the history of old Africa, also offer very useful insights into the politics and economics of state-making and reconfiguration in the region.

<sup>10</sup> For a flavour of some of the historiographical debates, see A.J. Temu and B. Swai, *Historians and Africanist History: A Critique* (London: Zed Books, 1981).

It was out of these dreams that competing visions of pan-Africanism were first born.<sup>11</sup>

Whether they took the form of return-to-Africa projects such as the one championed by Marcus Garvey or the quest for a “renaissance” underpinned by Booker T. Washington’s call for an investment in education, the various competing visions of pan-Africanism that grew out of the African Diaspora in the Americas and the Caribbean shared a common notion of a united or politically integrated continent complete with its own economic institutions. It is a vision that has been an abiding, recurring decimal in all subsequent reflections on how Africa might be transformed economically and (re) united politically. Indeed successive pan-African congresses organised throughout the 20th century, beginning with the pioneer one convened by Henry Sylvester Williams in 1900 in London, embraced the basic vision and devoted themselves to an exploration of alternative paths for its achievement and the attainment of a rebirth in the African world. Where the pioneer pan-Africanists differed, it was mainly with regard to when and how the common vision they shared might be realised. These differences were to assume strategic-political overtones in time; they too, like the shared ideological premise of integration and unity, have remained integral to the African renewal and transformation project.<sup>12</sup>

### Pan-Africanism in the African national liberation project

Visions of African unity, integration and rebirth that came to be labelled pan-Africanist may have begun in the Diaspora; they were, however, soon to be refracted into the African nationalist project for self-determination and independence on the continent itself. Many of the nationalists who came to spearhead the struggle for African self-determination served as the vectors for the transmission of pan-African consciousness into the emerging and rapidly growing independence movement, having, in some cases, sojourned in North America – and Europe. The process of the infusion of a pan-Africanist unity and integration agenda into the national liberation project was eventually consolidated at the Manchester Conference of 1945 that brought together the leaders and representatives of various independence movements from the different colonial territories that European powers had carved out in their partition of the continent at the Berlin conference of 1884/1885.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> See P. Olanwuche Esedebe, *Pan-Africanism: The Idea and Movement, 1776 – 1991* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1994) and Colin Legum, *Pan-Africanism: A Short Political Guide* (London: Greenwood, 1976).

<sup>12</sup> Esedebe, *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Esedebe, 1994, *Ibid.*; Legum, 1976, *Ibid.*

Participants in the Manchester conference were united by a common opposition to continued colonial rule and a resolve to coordinate efforts for African self-determination and unity. They also decried the arbitrary balkanisation and fragmentation of the African continent through the European partition, doing so with a resolve to redress the situation through an alternative project of unity and integration that would be underpinned by a pan-Africanist vision. The Manchester Conference may have been a gathering of nationalists from colonial territories where the possibility of independence was still not completely given. However, its significance also laid in the fact that it infused pan-Africanism into the national liberation and self-determination agenda in a manner that, for the first time since Marcus Garvey's failed project, opened the potentiality of moving ideas and visions of unity and integration away from the abstract and into the realm of operational possibility within specific national-territorial spaces.

### ***The Quest for unity and integration in the early post-colonial years***

The resolutions of the Manchester Conference represented the first major effort at building pan-Africanism, understood as the political unity of partitioned and balkanised Africa and its economic integration, into the project of national self-determination that was gathering steam. It was carried forward at the first-ever Conference of Independent African States convened in Accra, Ghana, in April 1958 soon after the independence of Ghana in 1957. It was to be the first of at least six conferences of independent African countries convened in the period up to 1962 and it played a significant role in the process of building a common African front and united African voice on all global affairs, including, in particular, the continued colonisation of big swathes of Africa, the accompanying violation of the fundamental human rights of Africans by the forces of imperialism, and the segregationist policies of white settler minority regimes in Southern Africa. It was a role which the OAU was to assume more formally after it was established.

The April 1958 conference of independent African states was followed by the first All Africa Peoples Conference convened in December of the same year also in Accra, Ghana, and against the backdrop of the hope, proclaimed by Nkrumah, that Ghana's independence was but the first push towards a united and integrated Africa. The Conference, which brought over 300 delegates together, reiterated the broad imperative of African unity and integration, and committed delegates to its realisation. Interestingly, the Conference was convened shortly after the publication of Nkrumah's famous book, *Africa Must Unite*, a clarion call to Africans that their destiny laid in a united and integrated future that must be pursued with urgency. While the first Conference of Independent African States brought the leaders and officials of those

countries that were independent together, the first All Africa Peoples Conference was designed to involve a range of non-state political interests, including trade unionists and representatives of national liberation movements.

Clearly, the late 1950s and early 1960s were momentous years in the history of African integration with various possibilities opened up by the accession of a growing number of African countries to independence. It was also the period when, beyond general declarations of intent and amidst the justified euphoria about the prospects a re-emergent Africa, the practical details of achieving the goals of unity and integration on which, to that point, there had been general agreement needed to begin to be addressed both as a political and technical issue. As it turned out, it was on these points of detail that the advancement of pan-African unity and integration proved much more complex to work out and carry forward. Differences which had previously been disguised or papered over came into the open as political leaders grappled with the question of how to proceed with the agenda of unity and integration. Matters were not made easy by the fact that each country attained its independence as a separate national-territorial entity, doing so at different points in time and emerging from differing experiences of struggle that inevitably coloured perceptions and contributed to the shaping of priorities.

The brand of nationalism that had been built up and mobilised by the leaders of the movements for independence were, without doubt, committed, to one degree or another, to a pan-Africanist vision. No significant African movement of self-determination or party of national independence from colonial rule ever declared itself hostile to the idea or principle of African unity and integration. But the struggle they led was also deeply nationalist in the sense of being equally committed to concerns of the peoples in the national-territorial spaces which the leaders of the independence struggle inherited from the erstwhile colonial powers. A pan-Africanist tomorrow may have been abstract; national independence within a given territorial space was not. It was a contradictory state of affairs that defined the dilemma that confronted many nationalists. Most of the nationalists were, to one degree or another, pan-Africanists but they also had states and nations to build and develop; they were not about to surrender the sovereignty that they had won to a putative new centre. The situation was compounded by the differences in ideological outlook that became manifest among the leaders of African independence, differences that were stoked by departing/departed colonial powers intent on securing a neo-colonial advantage for

themselves in the affairs of the newly independent countries.<sup>14</sup>

## ***African integration under the auspices of the OAU***

### The making of an institutional compromise

Without doubt, the African countries that attained their independence in the period from the late 1950s into the early 1960s inherited a myriad of development challenges to which their leaders needed to address their attention speedily if they were to meet the expectations of the citizenry. But was the challenge of post-independence state and nation-building and development to be achieved on the basis of separate, individual efforts or through a combination of efforts in a jointly shared project of unity and integration? What would pan-Africanism mean in practice? What kinds of policies and institutions would a project of unity and integration call for? These were the questions posed before Africa in the early 1960s; they were questions that polarised the continent into two broad blocs, namely, the so-called Casablanca and Monrovia blocs. Whereas the former, most eloquently represented by Kwame Nkrumah, wanted a rapid movement by independent African countries towards a politically united and economically integrated framework, the latter, often times represented by Tafawa Balewa, Nigeria's independence Prime Minister, called for a much more gradualist approach by which unity and integration would be achieved through small and incremental steps.<sup>15</sup>

The OAU, which was born in 1963 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, amidst the competing visions of unity and integration that pervaded negotiations on the future of the independent Africa that was being born, reflected the compromise which was ironed out among

<sup>14</sup> Esedebe, 1994, *Ibid*; Legum, 1976, *Ibid*; Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Politics of Independence and Unity* (Lincoln and London: Nebraska University Press, 2005); Tajudeen Abdulraheem (ed), *Pan-Africanism: Politics, Economy and Social Change* (New York: New York University Press, 1997); Issa Shivji, *Pan-Africanism or Imperialism: Unity and Struggle Towards a New Democratic Africa*, Nigerian Political Science Association, Billy Dudley Memorial Lecture Series, 2005; Basil Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State* (London: Three Rivers Press, 1993).

<sup>15</sup> Some commentators have classified the differing perspectives that emerged in the early 1960s on how African unity and integration might be achieved into three: The radical Casablanca bloc, led by Nkrumah, wanted immediate or accelerated movement towards a united Africa. This approach was vehemently opposed by the Brazzaville bloc comprising mainly Francophone African countries of West and Central Africa that preferred to preserve the inherited boundaries and institutional frameworks on the basis of which they acceded to independence and which, to that extent, were seen as conservative. The Monrovia group sought to strike the middle path between the Casablanca and Brazzaville blocs by embracing the ideal of continental unity and integration but urging a gradual, step-by-step approach for its realisation. Countries in that group were seen as the gradualists. See K. Van Walvaren, *Dreams of Power: The Role of the Organisation of African Unity in the Politics of Africa 1963 – 1993* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999) for a detailed account.

the political leaders of the continent. This compromise allowed for the retention of the nation-states carved out at the Berlin Conference of 1884/1885, the recognition of the geographical boundaries inherited at independence, and the establishment of the OAU as a loose forum where issues of mutual interest to African countries would be discussed for possible common action but without prejudice to the principle of non-interference by countries in the internal affairs of one another. Underpinning this outcome was the stated assumption that the promotion of economic interactions among African countries, including the pursuit of formal regional cooperation and integration efforts, would be an indispensable and practical starting point not only for the building of mutual trust but also the binding of the countries together more closely. Enhanced economic ties through (functional) cooperation and integration initiatives would pave the way eventually for political unity.

During the course of the 1960s into the early 1970s, various regional cooperation and integration schemes were launched in a bid to promote inter-state economic interaction on the continent. The accent of the initiatives was mainly, if not solely, economic; the political unity project was essentially left at the level of the loose coordinating role which the OAU was given. The institutional arrangement that was set up reflected this looseness. Experiments at political union through the Mali Federation that Modibbo Keita promoted and the Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union that involved Kwame Nkrumah, Keita, and Sekou Toure, were short-lived and, to all intents and purposes, essentially symbolic, lacking as they were in common and appropriately empowered institutional mechanisms for translating aspirations into reality.<sup>16</sup> In a minority of cases, the (functional) cooperation and integration schemes that were launched were built on initiatives that began in the period of late colonialism when institutions providing common services to a pool of countries under the same colonial umbrella were set up. Such joint institutional schemes covered the management of currencies, aviation, and educational development. In other cases, amidst a push for the establishment of own national institutions that would cement a newly acquired sense of independence and sovereignty, individual countries opted out of existing regional arrangements to establish their own central banks, national currencies, national universities and national airlines.

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<sup>16</sup> The Mali Federation united Mali and Senegal. It was established in April 1959 with Modibbo Keita as its head and Dakar as its capital. It collapsed in August 1960 soon after the independence of both countries from France and following political disagreements among the leadership. The Ghana-Guinea Union was established in November 1958. In May 1959, it was renamed the Union of African States. Mali joined the Union in 1961. In 1962, it collapsed for all intents and purposes.

## Structural limits to the post-independence integration agenda

Between the pressures for the establishment of national institutions as part of the effort at consolidating post-colonial nation-statism and a commitment to forging new sub-regional cooperation and integration, the new institutions that proliferated after independence registered a mixed report card at best. The reasons for the relatively limited performance of the various cooperation and integration schemes are multifaceted. At independence, most African economies shared many structural similarities, being almost all without exception producers of primary commodities for export and importers of a range of consumer, intermediate and capital goods for the domestic market. This economic structure did not allow for too much possibility of horizontal commercial exchanges among them. Even at that, each of the countries adopted standard tariff policies vis-à-vis one another that reflected more of a stand-alone strategy and less of a policy for deliberately promoting horizontal intra-African trade and investments.

Indeed, the possibilities for expanded horizontal linkages among African countries were further undermined by the Yaounde and Lome conventions which they concluded with the European Economic Community. These conventions offered African countries as primary commodity producers preferential access to European markets for the agricultural and mineral products which Europe need for its consumption and continued development. They reinforced an international division of labour that was established with regard to Africa's role in it in the colonial period. Effectively, the conventions reproduced and entrenched the competition among Africa's primary commodity producers, deepened their vertical ties with Europe, imposed constraints on their collaboration on trade and industrial policy, and contributed to the ineffectiveness of the economic cooperation and integration efforts that had been launched. Objectively then, irrespective of the ideological leaning of the governments in power and the post-independence economic alliances they sought to forge, most countries had vertical economic ties with their former colonial rulers, ties that had been forged over the years of colonial rule and which were central to the exercise of neo-colonial influence.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Claude Ake, *Political Economy of Africa* (London: Longman, 1982); S.K.B. Asante, *The Political Economy of Regionalism in Africa: A Decade of the Economic Community of West African States* (London and New York: Praeger Publishers, 1985); SKB Asante, *Regionalism and Africa's Development* (Great Britain: Macmillan, 1997); Real Lavergne (ed.), *Regional Integration and Cooperation in West Africa: A Multidimensional Perspective* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1995).

Furthermore, post-colonial inter-state politics was suffused with many rivalries among states, elites and leaders, rivalries that were grafted unto uneven processes of sub-regional development and which quickly translated into fear by some countries of domination by others and/or concerns that some countries were reaping greater benefits from collaboration than others as to weaken sub-regional cooperation and integration processes. The best example of the consequence of this pattern of post-independence politics was the East African Community (EAC) which dissolved in acrimony over the distribution of benefits. The institutions of regional cooperation and integration also did not enjoy any significant delegated powers as member-states jealously guarded their independence and sovereignty. In most cases, the cooperation and integration schemes served as secretariats that serviced the meetings of heads of states and governments and their ministers with little executive or delegated authority; the principle of subsidiarity so central to successful regional cooperation and integration remained highly underdeveloped. Even where agreements were reached on reducing tariff barriers or facilitating commercial exchanges, it was in reality left to each country to give effect to these in its own way, at its own pace and in its own time; no appropriately endowed mechanism existed within countries and/or on a regional scale to enforce compliance.<sup>18</sup>

The observation has also been made in the literature that most African countries belonged to multiple regional cooperation and integration schemes at the same time, a fact which also fed the proliferation of such schemes. Effectively then, Africa of the 1960s into the 1970s was awash with various projects and institutions of cooperation and integration but the progress registered with integrating the economies of the continent was very limited. Many were the countries which took on multiple memberships of cooperation and integration with overlapping mandates without bothering or being able even to pay their assessed contributions. While it was within the sovereign right of every country to determine which sub-regional groupings it felt comfortable to be associated with as founder and/or member, influences carried over from the colonial period were refracted into post-independence African cooperation and integration processes, especially with regard to the Anglophone and Francophone divide which France in particular – but Britain also - played to the full as part of its broader geo-political strategy for a significant global role and a determination to be economically competitive. Within Africa itself, rules and barriers of various kinds hampered the development of formal cross-border trade and investment relations,

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<sup>18</sup> Ake, 1982, *Ibid*; S.K.B. Asante, 1985, *Ibid*; Lavergne, 1995, *Ibid*; Margaret C. Lee, *The political Economy of Regionalism in Southern Africa* (Cape Town: Juta and Co., 2004); Said Adejumobi and Adebayo Olukoshi (eds.), *The African Union and New strategies for Development in Africa* (New York: Cambria Press, 2008).

and whatever cross-border activity that existed took mainly informal forms driven by small operatives who sometimes operated clandestinely or at the margins of the law.

The regional economic and integration efforts of the 1960s and 1970s were supposed to represent the economic component of the limited political cooperation efforts embodied by the OAU. And yet, for all intents and purposes, the two efforts and the institutions that were established to give expression to them hardly spoke to each. If anything, the two streams were pursued separately and in an uncoordinated manner that allowed plenty of room for neo-colonial manipulation by extra-continental powers with an objective interest in controlling the pace and content of the investments which Africans were making into the construction of unity and integration. On top of this, integration and cooperation schemes that proliferated with overlapping mandates hardly spoke to one another even if only to share responsibilities in a continent with a growing array of economic, social and political problems that called for coordinated attention.

The balance sheet that predominated by the end of the 1970s was, therefore, an all together poor one. Africa had cooperation and integration schemes that were mostly paper tigers, contributing little direct benefit to socio-economic transformation at the national level and greater cross-national economic transactions at the sub-regional and regional levels. In practice, many of the institutions of cooperation that had been set up existed only in name; in fact, in most cases, they had ceased to be functional. The OAU itself was increasingly reduced to a regular, annual assembly of heads of state and government which did not seem to be able to muster the will to push the agenda of continental unification further. It was in this context that African countries went into economic crises in the early 1980s, crises which were triggered for most of them by the massive increases in the price of oil that followed the Iranian Revolution of 1979 but which spoke to enduring structural weaknesses in national economies.

### Integration in the years of crises and structural adjustment

The origins, dimensions and consequences of the economic crises into which African countries were ushered one after the other in the period from the end of the 1970s into the 1980s have already been extensively discussed in the literature and need not detain us here. Suffice it to note that with regard to the project of economic cooperation and integration on the continent, the crises, ironically, resulted in further spirited attacks on the principle and practice of horizontal links among African countries. The attacks were ironic because they were unfolded by the World Bank and the International

Monetary Fund (IMF) at the same time as the continent's political leaders attempted for the first time to give serious attention to the ways in which cooperation and integration could be intensified and accelerated as a starting point in the collective response which they felt was necessary to overcome the economic crises that were overwhelming their countries. Combining the technical insights of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the political instrumentality of the OAU, African heads of states and governments met in summit in Lagos, Nigeria, in 1980 to issue the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos.<sup>19</sup>

Arguably, in the annals of post-independence decision-making on the future of Africa, the Lagos Plan and the Final Act represented the boldest and perhaps most visionary collective effort in the period after independence to evolve a strategic, Africa-led response to the multifaceted and expanding range of development challenges faced by the continent. The commitment to a path of united action, underpinned by a revamped agenda of economic integration, was unanimously agreed upon, complete with a phased time frame and agreed implementational milestones. Elements of the Plan of Action and the Final Act were later to be carried forward and written into the 1991 Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community that was envisaged to pave the way, through a six-stage process involving the RECs, for the emergence of an African common market. The Abuja Treaty came into force in 1994.<sup>20</sup>

But hardly had the ink dried on the Plan and Final Act than the Berg Report that had been commissioned by the World Bank was issued. Both in intent and implication, the Report was the diametric opposite of the Plan and the Final Act. It located the source of the economic crises faced by African countries exclusively in domestic policy and political sources, blaming state interventionism and the attendant distorted markets for the difficulties African countries were experiencing. It called for a policy objective of rolling back the state and getting prices right. Within this analytic frame, regional cooperation and integration had no place. If anything, the Report fed into arguments that were already gathering among neo-liberals that cooperation and integration arrangements among African countries were, almost by definition, undesirable and wasteful allegedly because they are trade-diverting and inefficient. The only "rational" path open to African countries was for them to embrace IMF/World Bank stabilisation and structural

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19 Adejumobi and Olukoshi, 2008, *Ibid*; Bade Onimode (ed.), *African Development and Governance Strategies in the 21st Century: Looking Back to move Forward, Essays in Honour of Adebayo Adedeji at Seventy* (London and Ijebu-Ode: Zed Books and ACDESS, 2004).

20 Adejumobi and Olukoshi, 2008, *Ibid*; Onimode, 2004, *Ibid*; *Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA), Africa's Development Thinking Since Independence: A Reader* (Pretoria: AISA, 2004).

adjustment measures that translated the recommendations of the Berg Report into an action plan for the retrenchment of the state and institution of free market regimes.

If before the 1980s, African regional cooperation and integration schemes were already poorly performing, the structural adjustment years witnessed an acceleration of their decline, including the collapse of a number of them. Under the weight of donor conditionality and cross-conditionality, African governments faced with desperate financial and other economic situations, including a growing burden of debt servicing, found themselves with little or no alternative than to embrace the prescriptions of the IMF and the World Bank for the reform of their economies. Regional economic cooperation and integration were, to say the least, not of any priority concern to the Bretton Woods institutions; they were, in fact, hostile to the sub-regional cooperation and integration projects that were in existence or which were proposed, concentrating their energies on getting national governments individually and separately to sign on to and implement the stabilisation and adjustment packages they had put together.

Yet, as African countries sought to adjust their economies under the supervision of the IMF and the World Bank, several developments were occurring on a regional and global scale that would, over time, bring the question of continental unity and integration back on the agenda of African countries. At the global level, the world from the second half of the 1980s began visibly to experience a new, accelerated phase of globalisation which, on the back of a revolution in information and communications technologies (ICTs) and a World Trade Organisation (WTO)-led agenda of trade and financial liberalisation, elicited measures by countries, collectively and individually, to minimise their potential losses whilst maximising their gains from the wholesale realignment that was taking place. One of the generalised responses that emerged around the world was the revival of regionalism.<sup>21</sup>

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21 See United Nations, *Africa Recovery*, Vol. 16, No. 2 – 3, September 2002, “*Special Feature Making African Integration a Reality*”; Fantu Cheru, *The Impact of Structural Adjustment Programmes on the Realisation of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, Report for the United Nations High Commission on Human Rights, January 1999.

## ***The birth of the AU in a changing world order***

### Globalisation, the end of the cold war and the demise of apartheid

Fortuitously for Africa, the world-wide revival of regionalism that accompanied the new phase of accelerated globalisation coincided broadly with the period of the completion of the process of the decolonisation of the continent with the collapse of the South African apartheid order, the release of Nelson Mandela and his subsequent election as the first democratic president of the country. The end of apartheid had itself been preceded by another significant global development, namely, the end of the East-West Cold War that had dominated international relations in the period after the Second World War and exacted a huge cost in the theatres where it was played out, including especially Africa. The end of the Cold War was symbolised by the collapse of the Berlin wall in 1989, the dissolution of the East bloc/COMECON, the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, and the dissolution of the USSR itself into various independent states. Both the collapse of the apartheid system and the end of the Cold War ushered Africa into a decisively new phase in its post-colonial history. It was a phase that opened a new, concerted interest in the quest for collective continental action for the transformation of the continent.<sup>22</sup>

The mood that prevailed in Africa during the second half of the 1990s reflected a determination to lift the continent out of the prolonged state of underdevelopment to which it had been exposed for too long and open a new, more forward-looking chapter in its history. In this connection, critical attention was paid both to the OAU and the various sub-regional cooperation and integration organisations that were in place with a view to overcoming some of the constraints that had hampered their capacity to play a more strategic and effective role in the transformation of the continent. The perspective was widely shared that the unfinished business of liberating Africa from the vestiges of colonial rule had consumed the energies of the OAU which, to its credit, also served as a credible mobiliser of African and international opinion and action for the completion of the national liberation project. The post-apartheid, post-Cold War context offered an opportunity for the continent to move into a new phase in its development, with particular emphasis on the advancement of the agenda of social and economic transformation.

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<sup>22</sup> United Nations Africa Recovery, 2002, op cit; Adejumobi and Olukoshi, 2008, op cit.

As to the sub-regional cooperation and integration organisations set up in the period leading up to and following the independence of the majority of African countries, there was general agreement that they had under-performed their mandates and were in need of rationalisation at several levels. The issue of overlapping memberships was one area that was thought to be in need of urgent attention. So also were the overlaps in the mandates of many of the organisations themselves. Furthermore, the question of how they might be coordinated in order to deepen their overall impact and extend their reach was also given attention.

### A new continental approach and institutional mechanism for changed times

Amidst the reflections and debates that took place, a resolution was reached to dissolve the OAU and replace it with the AU, complete with a new constitutive act and organs. The AU was formally established in 2000 in Lome, Togo, where its Constitutive Act was formally adopted; it was officially launched in Durban, South Africa, in 2002. The Union emerged as a conscious design to give a new impetus to African integration and unity. Its key organs, including the Assembly of Heads of States, the Executive Council, the Commission, and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) were granted clearly defined mandates that aimed to create a more coherent and coordinated institutional structure. Of particular interest was the integration, through ECOSOCC, of the mobilisation of the input of African civil society into the work of the AU and the project of African unity. Provision was also made for the launching of a host of other continental institutions, including the Pan-African parliament, the court of justice, and an assortment of economic institutions.<sup>23</sup>

Both in intent and expectation, the Commission of the AU was designed to serve as a, if not the crucial hub for the success of the Union in the realisation of its mandate. It was structured to be much more than a simple secretariat, endowed as it was from the outside with powers and competencies that gave it some margin for manoeuvre on key policy and political questions. Thus, through the Commission, attention was to begin to be paid to the formulation of Africa-wide policy frames covering a range of socio-economic and political themes and sectors. The offices of the commissioners occupying various portfolios within the Commission have been particularly central to this continental policy harmonisation and codification process. The harmonisation of African viewpoints on development questions of regional and global interest has

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23 Adejumobi and Olukoshi, 2008, op cit.

also become a routine feature of the work of the AU. In order to ensure that adequate and timely attention was given to the situations of conflict that have wracked post-independence Africa, a Peace and Security Council was established as part of the structure of the AU and with appropriate powers for action.

Attention was also given to the establishment of an institutionalised mechanism under the auspices of the AU to coordinate the work of the sub-regional cooperation and integration organisations active on the continent in order to strengthen synergies among them, deepen their impact, allow for regular coordination between and the AU Commission, and ensure that their interventions flow into the proposed African economic community to which the Assembly of Heads of States recommitted itself as the ultimate continental destination. To this end, a Protocol on Relations between the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities was adopted in 2007 providing for a Committee on Coordination and another Committee of Secretariat Officials drawn from the RECs. The 2007 Protocol formally and legally binds the RECs to the decisions of the Union even if this in itself begs the question of the AU's enforcement capacity. Also as part of the commitment to a better coordinated strategy of integration, a formal decision was made to rationalise the RECs active on the continent and, in so doing, reduce their number to the eight which are formally recognised by the AU as initial building blocs towards the envisaged African economic community.

To give impetus to the economic integration agenda that was central to the founding and structuring of the work of the AU, seven specialised technical committees were mandated while a commitment was made to the creation of three key financial institutions over time, namely, an African central bank, an African monetary fund, and an African investment bank. African leaders also adopted a New Initiative for the Development of Africa (NEPAD) in 2001 in Lusaka, Zambia, an amalgam of the Omega Plan sponsored by Senegal and the Millennium Action Plan sponsored by Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria and South Africa. Through the initiative, an effort was to be made to mobilise external investment and development assistance in supported of priority projects that would contribute to the acceleration of growth and development on the continent. In return for the expected internal support, the leaders of the continent committed themselves to the promotion of peace, stability and security on the continent, as well as the nurturing of democratic governance. To give content to this commitment, they launched the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) through which individual countries agreed voluntarily to submit themselves to an all-round evaluation of their record of governance.<sup>24</sup>

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24 Adejumobi and Olukoshi, 2008, op cit.

## The continuing conundrum of African unity

Side by side with the revival of the agenda of economic cooperation and integration, the birth of the AU also reignited discussions on the question of the political unity of the continent. Indeed, these discussions have dominated the continental political agenda over the period since the Sirte extraordinary summit of 1999 where the decision to establish the AU was made and has seen various calls for the establishment of a united states of Africa, a union government/union of African states, and a federation or confederation of African states. But, as with the discussions that took place at the dawn of independence, opinion has remained divided over the best way to proceed with the agenda for the unification of the continent. The contemporary debates came to a head in Accra, Ghana, in January 2007 when a summit-level grand debate on the next steps towards a united Africa polarised between those who wanted a speedy proclamation and launching of a United States of Africa and those who, while not necessarily opposing a project of unification, wanted more measured, deliberative steps that could prepare the ground, over the long-haul, for a united Africa.

Beyond Accra, the consultations and discussions on continental unity continued without much progress. Proposals for the nomination of Union ministers to act as spokespersons for the continent on key issues such as the economy, foreign policy, climate change, and defence were treated with scepticism and caution by an unconvinced group that felt it was another way of forcing the agenda for the speedy launching of a union government for the proposed United States of Africa. The July 2009 Summit held in Sirte, Libya, once again paid attention to the question of the future of African unity and the role and place of the AU in it. The compromise that was forged was for consideration to be given to the transformation of the AU commission into an authority. Modalities for such a transformation are presently under study.

## Enduring challenges with the continental integration agenda

Clearly, the AU and the various processes associated with it have generated a considerable amount of momentum around African development questions since the dawn of the new millennium. Yet, for all the progress that has been made in focusing minds on the twin project of unity and integration – and these should not be diminished- many substantive challenges still remain. Most of the challenges reflect the weaknesses built into the quest for unity and integration as it has proceeded since the 1960s. They also embody pressures emanating from outside the continent about the direction of African development and the strategy underpinning it at any one

point in time. Furthermore, they speak to concerns about institutional fit, including the excessive tailoring of institutions of integration after the EU model. It is a mark of the limited progress that has been registered in the domain of transformative integration that formal intra-African trade and investments remain miniscule even as Africa's share of global trade and investment is derisory.

A key element in the continuing difficulties confronting the African integration agenda remains the dissonant nature of the sub-regional cooperation and integration process. Although bold steps at rationalising the RECs were taken by African leaders and eight of them were formally recognised by the AU, the larger context of institutional mushrooming and fragmentation remains. But more than this, the compromise that produced the eight recognised RECs still embodies a significant element of the overlap of institutional mandate and membership that the rationalisation exercise was meant to overcome in the first place. Furthermore, no serious interface has been institutionalised among the RECs themselves to allow for the building and deepening of synergies, and to ensure that they work, individually and collectively, according to a grand continental plan towards an African economic community. As it is, most of the RECs function according to their own rhythm. It is a rhythm which is heavily driven by extra-African donor influences and interests. Indeed, depending as heavily as many of the institutions of African integration are on donor support, there are justifiable grounds for considering them as increasingly donorised entities whose policy processes are susceptible, as they have been, to hijack by external interests.

The coordination deficits in the existing institutional architecture of the African integration agenda have not only meant that the different RECs move at different paces and according to different strategies, it has also repeatedly raised the question of who exactly drives the integration process and to what end. This question became even more urgent in the course of 2007 and 2008 when the European Union made spirited efforts at pushing through its Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with African countries, including working through the RECs to achieve its objective of speedily concluding and locking as many (interim) accords as possible even in the face of concerns expressed by the AU Commission, a few RECs and governments such as those of South Africa and Nigeria. It was also underscored by the increasing pressures piled on the countries of the continent by leading EU powers for special arrangements of various kinds that divert attention away from and even undermine African integration efforts. The most notable among of such special arrangements is the proposed Mediterranean zone that would link EU countries to North Africa. Apart from the EU, other key global economic powers are also pursuing agendas of their

own that target key national governments and some of the RECs to the detriment of the integrity and coherence of the African development agenda in general and the integration project in particular.

The absence of a coherent and coordinated African response to the EPA proposals and other extra-African manoeuvres that have a direct impact on the processes and institution of integration on the continent also points to the lack of robust national-level mechanisms for interfacing in-country policies with the sub-regional and regional integration agenda. At one level, this problem may be reflective of limited policy capacity in many countries in spite of the existence of ministerial departments dedicated to integration issues. But at another level, there is the much more serious question of the fact that national development processes continue to be carried out without attention to agreed or emerging sub-regional and regional plans and objectives. The drivers of national policy, to the extent to which policies are planned, coherent, consistent, and determined within the countries, are not as interfaced with policy making at the sub-regional level and in the regional context as could have been expected.

### ***Looking into the future***

Amidst the on-going reflections on how best to re-jig the institutional architecture of the African Union, it is clear that if the changes that are eventually made are to be effective and meaningful, they would have to address the absence of a strong and effective multi-level coordination and interfacing of the integration agenda. This, in effect, will require that the African Union, by whatever name the present Commission is eventually called, is given the requisite powers, backed with the necessary capacity and resources, to assume a driving role in the integration of the continent. It is a requirement which immediately takes us into the realm of the political. For, the institutional deficiencies that have prevented the speedy and comprehensive integration agenda from registering the transformative edge that is broadly desired by all Africans is not simply a technical question, or a matter for technocrats but a political one. It touches as much on the distribution of power as on the enhancement of policy planning capacities. It calls for the exercise of leadership within the continent rather than a forlorn search for foreign altruism.

It can be expected that not all countries will be at ease with a commonly shared integration agenda driven by an enhanced and revamped AU that is appropriately empowered and resourced. Negotiations and trade-offs might well be seriously

embarked upon in order to overcome concerns that, seen from the point of view of the countries involved, must be accepted as justified whatever the grounds. But it must also be increasingly accepted that integration is the product of a political decision by like-minded countries voluntarily to come together because they share a set of common interests and hopes for which they are prepared to pool their individual sovereignties and to embody this collective sovereignty in common institutions that they imbue with the necessary power of action. It is not a moral choice; it is a matter of how best to secure national interests in a world where the sovereignty of less powerful states is assailed on a daily basis. Africa may no longer be able to postpone the making of a strategic choice.

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### 3 Competing perspectives on the AU and African integration

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Background paper for session II for ECDPM/NAI seminar: Building the African Union institutional architecture: Progress achieved, new perspectives and possible support by the EU.

#### ***Introduction***

A rich debate exists on regionalism in Africa. This background paper seeks to provide an overview of three partly competing perspectives and schools of thought in the debate on the African Union (AU) and African integration. The paper starts out by outlining the two dominating perspectives on African integration: EC/EU-style liberal institutionalism and what can be referred to as the ‘the pan-African’ school of thought, which the AU and most regional economic communities (RECs) adhere to one way or the other. Given the dominance of the two first perspectives and the fact that these are represented by others in this workshop, emphasis will be placed on the third and more critical perspective. The ambition is not to assess which one of these perspectives is most applicable on the African continent. The point of departure is rather that all three perspectives are necessary for a nuanced understanding of the logics at play in African integration. A related assumption and motivation of the paper is that any fruitful policy discussion is necessarily connected to the scientific debate.

#### ***The two dominating perspectives: EU-style institutionalism and pan-Africanism***

Two different but nevertheless partly overlapping schools of thought dominate both the academic debate and the policy discussion concerning African integration. The first perspective is mainly associated with institutionalist and liberal lines of thought,

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concentrating on formal inter-state frameworks and/or official trade and investment flows, commonly with reference to the EC/EU as a comparative marker or model (Fourutan, 1993; Holden, 2001; Jenkins and Thomas, 2001). According to this line of thought, the European experience suggests a universal potential of regionalism, and regionalism in Africa can be an important instrument in the achievement of peace, security and development. The problem is that state-led regionalism in Africa is weak, and to a large extent even 'failed' (especially in comparison to the EC/EU model), which, according to this school of thought, mainly is a consequence of the weakness of the African state and the failure of African governments to transfer sovereignty, engage in meaningful collective action and build up the capacities and institutions of regional organizations. Future progress depends on building capacities on both the national level (national governance) and in regional organizations.

The general ideological foundation of the second, 'pan-African', perspective on African cooperation and integration is seen in the visions and series of treaties developed within the framework of the AU, formerly the OAU, most notably the Lagos Plan of Action, the Abuja Treaty, and more recently the Constitutive Act of the AU and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad) (Asante, 1997; Muchie, 2003; Muthiri, 2005).

In the past, the pan-African visions have stressed collective self-reliance and introverted strategies based on protectionism, state-led and planned distribution of resources and import-substitution industrialization. Even if there are still some scattered demands, particularly among a diminishing number of intellectuals, for a revitalization of such 'old' ideas of pan-African integration, there has clearly been a dramatic shift in regional visions and institutions in Africa during the two last decades. Most analysts and policy-makers continue to emphasize the problems of weak and small African economies (i.e. balkanization) and often they also favour as an ultimate goal the African Economic Community (AEC), whereby sub-continental RECs, such as AMU, COMESA, ECOWAS and SADC, are building-blocs for continental unity. However, rather than mobilizing efforts for regional collective self-reliance through the AEC, the introverted strategies have now been replaced by a vision and strategy whereby Africa 'must unite' in order to exploit the opportunities provided by economic globalization and liberalized markets. In such 'new' version of pan-africanism there is a much stronger emphasis on outward-oriented regional economic integration, compatible with the global trading agenda under the World Trade Organization (WTO), whereby Africa's marginalization and underdevelopment is to be overcome by closer *integration* into the world economy.

The change in thinking is very evident in the case of Nepad. This venture is quite similar to many previous (and failed) recovery plans in Africa in that it outlines a comprehensive list of development projects and programmes. Nepad is different however in that it stresses a closer engagement with the North and an improvement in Africa's political-economic leadership. This reflects hegemonic understandings of liberal capitalism and 'good governance', as espoused by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the G8, the EU and large parts of the donor community (Taylor, 2005).

This overall paradigm has secured a foothold in most of Africa's main regional cooperation and integration schemes, such as AU, COMESA, ECOWAS, SADC and UEMOA. The paradigmatic shift of SADC is significant, and quite similar to the change of thinking within OAU/AU. SADC's predecessor, the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) (1980-1992), was deliberately designed in order to *avoid* trade and market integration, and favoured a strategy of *dirigist* import substitution industrialization coupled with the equitable distribution of costs and benefits. Although there is still some rhetorical association to 'development integration' within SADC, the new venture (launched in 1992) has officially embraced a conventional market-orientation dominated by a commitment to market liberalization. This is in line with the liberal argument that any regional trading bloc in Africa is too small in itself to generate economic development, resulting in that the overall intention should be to ensure a closer integration of the region (and continent) into the global economy.

It is noteworthy that the pan-African line of thought, similarly to the first liberal institutionalist perspective, often takes the EC/EU experience as inspiration and as a justification for the development of pan-African regionalism. Indeed, despite their foundational differences (especially regarding the reasons for the lack of success and implementation hitherto), the two strands of thought come to similar conclusion, namely that successful regionalism in Africa is heavily dependent on strong and functional regional organizations and institutions. The EC/EU undoubtedly serves as an important source of inspiration, or a 'model', even if the liberals often emphasize the role of market and trade integration coupled with functional cooperation, whereas the pan-Africanists give more attention to development-enhancing measures and the need for political intervention in order to ensure economic restructuring.

### ***A critical perspective on African integration***

A third and smaller group of scholars is more sceptical about whether the restructured regional organizations will be able to attain their goals of highly developed institutional

frameworks — nearly always modelled on the EC/EU — with attendant economic and political integration. This group has generated a radically different interpretation of regionalism and regional integration in Africa, which is very much ignored in the official policy discussion on African integration.

The critical perspective transcends the narrow focus on inter-state regional frameworks, and obviates the artificial separation, in the African context, of state and non-state actors, that are associated with traditional regional approaches (Bach, 1999; Bøås et al, 2005; Grant and Söderbaum, 2003; Hentz and Bøås, 2003; Söderbaum, 2004). As pointed out by one authority on African politics, Christopher Clapham:

The model of inter-state integration through formal institutional frameworks, which has hitherto dominated the analysis of integration in Africa and elsewhere, has increasingly been challenged by the declining control of states over their own territories, the proliferation of informal networks, and the incorporation of Africa (on a highly subordinate basis) into the emerging global order (Clapham, 1999: 53).

The critical perspective draws attention to several distinct patterns in African integration. This paper emphasizes what has been referred to as ‘regime-boosting regionalism’ and ‘shadow regionalism’.

### Regime-boosting regionalism

Regime-boosting regionalism seeks to strengthen the status, legitimacy and the general interests of the political regime (rather than the nation-state *per se*), both on the international arena and domestically. It is claimed that many ruling regimes and political leaders in Africa engage in symbolic and discursive activities, whereby they praise the goals of regionalism and regional organizations, sign cooperation treaties and agreements, and take part in ‘summitry regionalism’, but without having a commitment to or bearing the costs of policy implementation.

In order to understand how/why certain African regimes use regionalism for regime-boosting purposes, one needs to consider the nature of statehood on the continent. It is widely agreed that most states in Africa are ‘weak’. There is also persuasive evidence that weak states tend to place heavy emphasis on formal and absolute sovereignty in their international relations — i.e. the maintenance of existing borders and the principle of non-intervention in domestic affairs — because it enhances the power of

the governing political elite and its ability to stay in power (Clapham, 1996). In spite of the fact that most states are 'weak', the states system and the old colonial boundaries have, with a few exceptions, remained intact and seemingly everlasting. The result is a somewhat paradoxical situation with 'weak' states and rather 'strong' or at least 'stable' regimes' (Bøås 2003).

At first glance, regime-boosting regionalism has similarities with more conventional types of regional cooperation, both in liberal and realist thinking. However, it is different since it neither promotes various types of public goods (liberalism) nor broader national and societal interest (realism/structuralism). Regionalism is instead used as an image-boosting instrument whereby leaders can show support and loyalty for each other, which enables them to raise the profile, status, formal sovereignty and image of their often authoritarian regimes, but without ensuring implementation of agreed policies. In contrast to much of the conventional readings on this topic, this does not represent a complete 'failure' or absence of collective action. Likewise, it is of less help to simply classify regionalism as an absence of political regional integration and sovereignty transfer, since discourses around sovereignty is part of its creation. More importantly, from the point of view of the political regimes that favour such discursive strategies, it is a rather 'successful' type of collective action, indicating a particular regionalization logic without formal 'regional integration' in the sense of sovereignty transfer.

There exists a variety of regime-boosting strategies. One is the importance of 'summitry' and high-profile meetings and conferences in regionalism. The summits of heads of states of the main intergovernmental regional organizations, such as AU, ECOWAS and SADC, are gigantic events where the political leaders can show to the world and their citizenry that they are promoting the cause of regional cooperation and that their political regime is 'important' (or at least 'visible') on the international arena. The summits and conferences are important components in discursive and even imaginary constructions of regional organizations, and this social practice is then repeated and institutionalized at a large number of ministerial and other meetings, which in reality involves no real debate and no wider consultation within or between member states (Simon, 2003: 71). Sidaway and Gibb explain the logic of such discursive strategies and practices within SADC:

formal participation in SADC is another way whereby the states [i.e. regimes] seek to confirm, fix and secure the appearance and power of 'sovereignty'. Rather like the boundaries and colour schemes of political maps, participation in fora such as SADC is a way in which the state is actively represented as a real, solid, omnipresent authority. In doing so, the fact that it is a contested, socially constructed (not simply natural) object is obscured, and states would have us take them for granted as the natural objects of governance and politics (Sidaway and Gibb, 1998: 179).

The overlapping membership of regional organizations on the African continent has been debated for several decades.<sup>26</sup> And the seemingly ineffective overlap is often taken as an indicator of the 'failure' of African regionalism or at least as a poor political commitment to ensure a more appropriate division of labour. Considering that the overlap is such a distinctive feature of regionalism in Africa, it is not only relevant to assess the negative impacts of the overlap in itself, but also ask why and in whose interests it prevails, and even why it has been institutionalized. The maintenance of a large number of competing and overlapping intergovernmental regional organization may (arguably) be a deliberate strategy in order to increase the possibilities for verbal regionalism and regime-boosting. To the extent that policy implementation is not the main concern such pluralism may actually be a way to construct 'disorder' and competing regional agendas (cf. Chabal and Daloz, 1999). Furthermore, Bach claims that regional organizations constitute a means for 'resource capture' and international patronage:

Concomitant membership of several groupings often appears of little practical consequence since policies are episodically implemented and financial contributions irregularly paid. Far from being an inextricable source of conflict, overlapping membership can be negotiated and translates into additional opportunities for the pursuit of conference diplomacy, participation in externally funded ventures or support from regional or extra-regional powers (Bach 2005: 182-83).

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<sup>26</sup> See Handbook of Regional Organizations in Africa (Söderbaum 1995) for an overview. For a more recent database on regional arrangements worldwide, consult the Regional Integration Knowledge System (by GARNET/UNU-CRIS), <http://www.garnet-eu.org/215.o.html>.

## Shadow regionalism

An increasing amount of studies in the research field draw attention to the vibrant informal economic processes of cross-border and regional interaction in large parts of Africa (Bach, 1999; Grant and Söderbaum, 2003). These processes arise for many reasons, one is subsistence, as seen by the multitude of small-scale cross-border traders and vendors buying and selling all types of goods, such as vegetables, fruits, staple products, clothes and small home appliances. Sometimes these small-scale informal traders are also ending up building viable business enterprises. There is a rich variety of actors of assorted kinds involved in these processes, but rather than depicting these practices only as a way for poor people to survive, the concept of shadow regionalism adds important elements to the logic at play. Shadow regionalism — or as or as Bach (1999, 2005) labels it: ‘trans-state regionalization’ — draws attention to the fact that public officials and various actors within the state bureaucracy may be entrenched in informal market activities with the purpose to promote either political goals or their private economic interests.<sup>27</sup>

Shadow regionalism grows from below and is built upon rent-seeking or the stimulation of patron-client relationships. As such it undermines the regulatory capacity of the state and formal regionalism/regional integration (i.e. it represents informal regional economic integration sheltered by discursive regionalism or political integration). The profits involved in shadow networks are considerable. These networks are also inequitable and extremely uneven since they accumulate power and resources at the top, to the rich and powerful, and those who have jobs, rather than to the unemployed, the urban poor, and rural producers. Indeed, small-scale cross-border traders have a disadvantage since the economies of scale are ‘only for those who can pay the necessary bribes’ (Bach, 1997: 162).

It is important to emphasize that these accumulation strategies do not occur just anywhere. Shadow networks arise, obviously, easier in the context of shadow states or in the presence of large border disparities. This shows that certain rentier-classes actively seek to preserve existing boundary disparities (e.g. customs, monetary, fiscal and normative) and as a consequence try to resist implementation or rationalization of formal regional economic integration schemes. But in contrast to conventional policy-centred notions about regionalism/regional integration in Africa, this does

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<sup>27</sup> Considering the frequent use of the concept of ‘shadow state’ in the debate on the political economy in Africa (Reno, 1995), it is rather surprising that it is not used more often in the debate on regionalism in Africa.

not imply an absence of *de facto* regionalization. Hence, the shadow (or ‘trans-state’) networks depend on the failure of both the formal economy and of formal/policy-led regionalism. Consequently, when political leaders and policy-makers resist formal regionalism (or formal regional integration), this may very well be a deliberate strategy to maintain the *status quo* in order to not disrupt shadow regionalization.

The attempts to restrict shadow and trans-state informal flows have often been unsuccessful. In the current (neoliberal and post-Cold War) context where the state apparatus itself offers less opportunities for private accumulation and where formal barriers between countries have been reduced, shadow regionalization stems no longer only from the exploitation of existing border disparities. Instead it has expanded to more criminal activities, such as new trades in illicit drugs, including heroin, mandrax and cocaine, arms, especially light weapons but also other merchandise of war. In certain respects shadow networks have entered a new phase, whereby they are better understood as ‘networks of plunder’, profiting from war and chaos or warlord politics (MacLean, 1999; Taylor and Williams, 2001). The networks of plunder can even be actively involved in the creation and promotion of war, conflict and destruction, as seen in the more turbulent parts of Africa, such as the West African war zone, Great Lakes region, the Horn of Africa, and parts of Southern Africa.

## **Conclusion**

The gap between rhetoric and implementation in many regional organizations in Africa is, according to EU-style institutionalism and the pan-African school, believed to result from the lack of resources, a weak commitment to regionalist projects, or collective action problems. Regime-boosting regionalism highlighted in the critical perspective suggests a different logic, whereby the discursive strategies of political elites in weak African states serve the primary purpose of strengthening the regimes’ official status, official sovereignty, image and legitimacy, with less impact on policy implementation. Regime-boosting can be a goal in itself, but it may also be closely related to shadow regionalism, which refers to an informal mode of regional interaction, whereby public office-holders utilize their position in order to engage in informal and illegal market activities. The two may be connected in that regime-boosting regionalism provides a façade behind which shadow activities are allowed to prosper.

In this context it must be stressed that regime-boosting regionalism is certainly not a uniquely African phenomenon (any particularity seems to be related to the character the nature of the African state-society complex and Africa’s insertion in the global order). In

fact, the EU's sometimes rhetorical commitment to the humanitarian and egalitarian reasons for supporting regionalism and the EU-Africa partnership may be interpreted as discursive and image-building strategies (with other underlying 'interests'). The role of procedures, symbols, 'summitry', and other discursive practices of regionalism in Asia, Europe, as well as North and Latin America suggest that it is possible to make intriguing comparisons with Africa. The same is true about shadow regionalism. The patron-client structures are universal phenomena and not restricted to Africa.

One criticism raised in this paper against both the institutionalist and surprisingly to some extent also the pan-African approaches to regional integration is that they are extrapolating from the European integration experience. Indeed, Breslin and Higgott (2000: 343) are correct in that: 'Ironically, the EU as an exercise in regional integration is one of the major obstacles to the development of analytical and theoretical comparative studies of regional integration'. The same thing can be said about the policy discussion. As one of the leading political scientists in the world, Peter Katzenstein, has stated with regard to Europe and Asia: 'There is no reason why Europe and Asia would be following the same pattern'. Likewise, any researcher or policy analyst needs to consider if Europe and Africa would follow similar integration routes.

Without any doubt, the EU is not only a 'model/anti-model', but at the same time also the most important external 'region-builder' in Africa. This relates to the discussion about the role of the EU in supporting African integration. Much can be said here, but recent research has highlighted the internal reasons for explaining EU's external behaviour (in this case support to regionalism worldwide, and in Africa in particular). From this perspective, the EU's self-image and identity as the 'natural' point of reference for regional initiatives is crucial for understanding the EU's role in the promotion of regionalism and interregional partnerships around the world. Indeed, the EU's 'interest' in supporting regionalism and engaging in interregionalism cannot be understood in isolation from its own identity and self-image (or certain constructions of this identity). The EU considers itself as the 'world champion' of regional integration and therefore seems to believe that it has a special mission as well as competence to promote regional integration and cooperation around the globe. Although in official rhetoric the EU does not claim to 'export' the European integration model, its identity as 'the most advanced regional integration project in the world' transpires from a closer analysis of its policies

and partnerships (European Commission, 1995).<sup>28</sup> It is crucial to point out that these images of the so-called EU model is based on a positioning of the EU according to the Community Method and hence in regard to certain definitions of 'regional integration'. Rosamond shows that 'policy actors both within and beyond the EU construct the EU in quite particular and arguably partial terms', which neglects the richness and complexity of what the EU actually is (Rosamond, 2005: 473).<sup>29</sup> The important research task, at least from a constructivist viewpoint, would then be to ask 'why these particular constructions?' (Rosamond, 2005: 473).

This paper has attempted to show that there are at least three useful explanations of African integration. Each perspective is partial so all three appear to be necessary for a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of African integration. The lack of dialogue between these analytical perspectives is not only an academic problem, but increasingly also having negative consequences for policy.

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<sup>28</sup> 'There are a number of lessons that can be drawn from the experience of regional integration in various parts of the world. Probably the most important lesson can be derived from the European experience, not only on account of its long history but also because, to a large extent, it can be considered as the only successful example of regional integration so far' (European Commission, 1995: 8).

<sup>29</sup> As Rosamond shows, the Prodi Commission (1999-2004) also praised the virtues of the EU model of governance: 'Our European model of integration is the most developed in the world. Imperfect though it still is, it nevertheless works on a continental scale. Given the necessary institutional reforms, it should continue to work well after enlargement, and I believe we can make a convincing case that it would also work globally' (Prodi quoted in Rosamond, 2005: 473).

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## 4 The ongoing institutional reform of the AU: exploring avenues to operationalise the African Union Authority

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Background paper for Session II in the seminar: Building the African Union institutional architecture: Progress achieved, new perspectives and possible support by the EU.

*Meeting in Addis Ababa in February 2009, African Heads of States and Governments agreed to replace the African Union Commission (AUC) by an African Union Authority (AUA) to be the central pan-African body in charge of driving the integration process. This paper explores some of the key challenges involved in the implementation of this ambitious reform agenda, partly based on lessons learnt in the European integration process.*

### ***The ongoing debate on how to build an effective Union***

1. The question on how to promote stronger political and economic integration in Africa has occupied the centre stage since the late 1990s. The Sirte Declaration (1999) cleared the ground for the establishment of the African Union (AU) in 2002 as the successor of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). The primary drive was to put in place a new pan African organisation in order to better confront the many challenges of the continent in a rapidly changing world.
2. The Constitutive Act underpinning the creation of the AU reflected a compromise between partisans of a federal Union (endowed with supranational competencies) and those who felt that this vision was precipitated. Reformers applauded the inclusion of many innovations.<sup>30</sup> Sceptics pointed to the weaknesses of the Constitutive Act. It remained vague on fundamental points like the autonomy and powers of the future African Union Commission (AUC). It did not provide much

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<sup>30</sup> Such as the inclusion of new values developed under the OUA (e.g. democracy, governance, rejection of unconstitutional changes, people's participation, gender equality) or the provision granting the Union right to intervene in Member States (principle of non-indifference). The Constitutive Act also includes bold provisions suggesting supranational entity (e.g. common policies; compliance mechanisms, including sanctions).

guidance either on the political and institutional foundations of the Union at national level; on the powers and functions of the other key organs and players (e.g. RECs) and on their relations with each other.

3. Setting-up a Union and making it work is by nature a long-term (learning) process. Furthermore, the integration agenda promoted by the AUC does not lend itself to short-term impact. Yet before the AUC completed its first term (2004-2007) high-level debates already took place on a new set of institutional reforms.
4. These debates culminated in the February 2009 with the Head of States giving the green light to establish an “African Union Authority” as a ***pragmatic, progressive and transitory political arrangement towards a United States of Africa***. This is clearly reflected in one of the key objectives of the Authority, i.e. to “reform and refine the existing governance structure of the African Union as a tool for accelerating political and economic integration of the continent”.<sup>31</sup> A roadmap in phases was spelled out, including a Constitutional Conference to set the basic framework for a United States of Africa (envisaged for 2017).
5. During the July 2009 Summit in Sirte, the Assembly requested the Commission to take all the necessary steps to prepare (i) the required legal revisions (including of the Constitutive Act); (ii) the structure of the new Authority (taken into account its mandate) and (iii) the financial implications of the transformation of the Commission into the AU Authority.<sup>32</sup>
6. All this indicates that there is ***more at stake than simply a change of names***. The Member States have expressed a clear commitment “to strengthen the AU Authority in terms of its content and resources so as to increase its capability and efficiency”.<sup>33</sup> It is foreseen to organise a “comprehensive structural review and re-orientation of the Authority on the basis of subsidiarity between the Authority, Member States and the RECs”. The Authority is expected “to focus only on areas where it has a comparative advantage”.<sup>34</sup> The AU thereby a preparedness to sort out more clearly “who is best placed to do what” in promoting integration; to test out new forms of partnerships between AUA, RECS and Member States

31 See point 4 of the ‘Report on the outcome of the Special Session on follow-up to the Sharm el Sheikh Assembly decision AU/Dec 206 (XI) on the Union Government’. Sp/Assembly/AU/Draft/Rpt (I), February 2009.

32 Decision on the transformation of the African Union Commission into the African Union Authority. Doc. Assembly/AU/4 (XIII), July 2009.

33 See point 2, par iv of the Report mentioned under footnote 31.

34 See point 18 of the Report mentioned under footnote 31.

and to explore, on the basis of these experiences and the confidence gained, how Member States could progressively transfer elements of sovereignty to the pan-African level in specific areas of work.

7. The ***effective implementation*** of this reform agenda is likely to be a ***long, uphill struggle***. The systemic weaknesses that affected the AUC in its first years of existence (including limited levels of ownership among Member States, RECs and African populations; limited powers, capacities and resources; unclear governance rules for the Union, etc.) will not disappear overnight.
8. The ***lessons of experience with the reforms attempted by the Konaré Commission*** are also worth remembering. Major advances were made in defining a vision on the role of the AU and putting the institution on the map as the primary interlocutor on African matters. Yet limited successes were achieved in convincing Member States to provide coherent mandates to the AUC as well as sufficient levels of power and resources for effective action. The capacity to change the AUC ‘from within’ also proved difficult. This is illustrated by the fate reserved to the Institutional Transformation Process (ITP), a major flagship reform of the Konaré Commission. It aimed at changing the nature and operational culture of the institution from a ‘secretariat’ into a ‘motor’ of the integration process, providing a clear added value at pan-African level. However, for a variety of reasons, the ITP could not maintain the political momentum to deliver on its high ambitions. It will therefore be important to be realistic about the reform readiness and capacity of the AU.

### ***Exploring the key challenges ahead***

9. This paper focuses on a set of strategic/operational challenges that are likely to be on the agenda in the first phase of the transition process:
  - How to share competences between different levels of governance?
  - How to improve the governance of the Union?
  - How useful are roadmaps and timetables for accelerating integration processes?
10. In making this analysis an attempt is made to look at the European integration process. The purpose is not to project this as a model. Yet an incursion into some of the accumulated European experiences may help to shed light on some of the critical reform challenges.

## ***How to share competences between different levels of governance?***

11. When Member States decide to engage in a process of integration and to set up supranational institutions (at regional or continental level), ***three fundamental questions*** need to be systematically considered and evaluated as the process moves on:
  - What is the key purpose of the integration process? Is there a shared vision among Member States on the path to follow and on the final destination?
  - What mandate is provided to the supranational body involved? What competences are transferred (either ‘shared’ or ‘exclusive’ competences)?
  - What powers are delegated at supranational level (in order to avoid that the body in question is a ‘lame duck’ with no real authority)
  
12. Let us briefly consider the type of answers that have been given to these fundamental questions in the European integration process. The following basic choices have shaped the ***European construction*** over time:
  - *With regard to the question on purpose and final destination*, the integration process first deliberately concentrated on specific sectors (coal and steel) and on economic cooperation. Yet from the outset, the vision of gradually moving towards a full-fledged political union was present.<sup>35</sup> Over time, the integration agenda expanded quite dramatically. However, the debate is still ongoing with regard to the ultimate destination (or limits) of the European integration process, amongst others between those in favour of an ever closer political union and those resisting such a move.
  - *With regard to the question on mandates and competences*, one of original features of the European construction is the effective transfer of competences (and related parts of sovereignty) to the supranational level. Recurrent waves of reforms over the last 50 years have progressively added new competences to the so-called Pillar One (i.e. the policies falling under the Community’s competences), thus allowing for a gradual deepening of the integration process. However, important streams of work remain outside the EC institutions and are organized on an inter-governmental basis in Pillar Two (i.e. the Common Foreign and Security Policies) and Pillar Three (i.e. Justice and Home Affairs).
  - *With regard to the question of powers*, the founding fathers recognized the need

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<sup>35</sup> In 1955 Jean Monnet, one of the founding fathers of the European construction, declined to accept a further term as president of the High Authority for Coal and Steel and became head of a high-powered pressure group, the ‘Action Committee for the United States of Europe’ (ACUSE) that was instrumental in creating the European Economic Community in 1957 (the predecessor of the European Union).

to bestow sufficient powers on the Authority (in the case of European Coal and Steel Community) and the European Commission (in the case of the European Economic Committee). The responsibilities and powers of the Commission are threefold: (i) to take initiatives (i.e. the specific right to put proposals before the Council of Ministers); (ii) to ensure implementation of the decisions taken by the Council (whereby the EC has substantial autonomous powers in certain key Community areas such as competition policies or the running of the common agricultural policy) and last but not least (iii) to supervise (i.e. to act as “the guardian of the treaties” and ensure a correct implementation of Community law).

13. The African integration process has, understandably, followed quite different a route, reflecting its own historic trajectory and continental specificities. The Organisation of African Unity (OAU), established in 1963, symbolized the search for pan African integration of the new independent States. The next major leap forward was the establishment of the African Union. Its Constitutive Act provided interesting legal and political openings to push forward the integration process, including an expanded mandate and the establishment of a Commission. Yet it ***did not fundamentally alter the intergovernmental nature of the pan-African organization***. Within this framework, the AUC sought, in its first years of existence, to develop a more elaborated vision for gradual continental integration and to strengthen the overall architecture of the Union.
14. The recent decision to establish African Union Authority is a new important stepping stone as Heads of State seem committed to use this new institutional set-up to explore and test out in practice how the move could gradually be made from an intergovernmental towards a more continental-driven governance system. This, in turn, confronts the various African stakeholders involved in the process, with the need to fundamentally reconsider the three key questions mentioned above and to find new response strategies to cope with the challenges involved.

With regard to the question of the purpose and final destination

15. It became clear during the debates that preceded the establishment of the AUA that there is ***not a ‘shared vision’ on how, how far and how quick to proceed with the integration process***. Though some form of compromise was reached that makes it possible to move a step forward in the years to come, it seems in the interest of the AUA to pro-actively promote a much wider, open-ended and

systematic dialogue between the various African stakeholders on the political and institutional foundations of the Union; on the ownership by Member States and citizens of the AU project; on the ways and means to organize a multi-level system of governance (at continental, regional, national and local level) and on the expected benefits from closer integration. ***This type of multi-actor consultations is key to the legitimacy and effectiveness of the future AUA as well as for the Union as a whole.***

### With regard to the question of mandates and competences

16. This issue is back on the table now that the Heads of State have decided to establish an AUA to be used as a “vehicle” to foster new forms of partnerships between the continental organization and the Member States through an effective sharing of competences. In the coming year, political debates will concentrate on how to implement this crucial part of the reform agenda. This brings along the ***need for a clear strategy*** to steer the process in a pragmatic and result-oriented way.
17. What could be the building blocks of such a strategy? In order to stimulate the debate, this paper examines a possible response strategy based on two building blocks.
18. The ***first building block*** is to determine what is politically feasible and what not. During the February 2009 Summit, the Heads of the State proceeded along this line. They delineated (and to some extent delimited) the scope of the upcoming reform of the Union. The need to strengthen the mandate and capacity of the AUA is recognized, but the option to transfer specific competences to the pan-African level has not been retained.<sup>36</sup> In respect of the sovereignty of Member States, the Union will be based on a ***system of “shared competences”*** across the board.

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<sup>36</sup> An initial report of the AUC on possible modalities for putting in place a Union Government proposed a more ambitious agenda. It foresaw three broad policy areas of competence: (i) residual areas of Member States policy/legislative competence; concurrent areas over which Member States shall share competence with the Union Government; and “a very limited number of pooled policy areas over which the Union will have competence and pre-eminence” (see point 24 of the Commission Report with regard to the Implementation of the Sharm el-Sheikh Assembly Decision on the Union Government, 2008)

19. Within this framework, the AUA is called upon to assume an initial set of **“continent-wide responsibilities”** in certain policy areas.<sup>37</sup> These responsibilities will be integrated in a reconfigured set of portfolios (the actual proposal envisages 12 “Union Secretaries” and related domains of intervention). As the AUA develops and obtains increasing confidence of Member States, the expectation is that it will grow in stature with enlarged responsibilities and influence.
20. The **second building block** of a possible response strategy is to put in place a multi-actor dialogue **process with a view to properly organize this system of “shared competences” for each of the 12 policy domains/portfolios** that are envisaged (and for possible additional portfolios). This process could be translated into a roadmap based on four inter-related steps :

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<sup>37</sup> Including responsibilities such as: continent-wide poverty; free movement of persons, goods and services; inter-regional and continental infrastructure; global warming, desertification and coastal erosion; epidemics and pandemics, such as HIV/AIDS; research/university centres of excellence; international trade negotiations; peace and security; trans-national crime.

| <b>Key steps for a system of shared competences</b>  | <b>Activities to undertake</b>   | <b>Expected benefits</b>  |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Step 1:</b> Define common integration agendas   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put in place a dialogue with the various stakeholders (RECs, MS) to elaborate a common integration agenda for the policy area</li> <li>• Agree on a limited and realistic set of strategic priorities to be achieved in set timetable</li> <li>• Involve democratic Organs of the AU</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved buy-in from RECs and MS</li> <li>• Shared mandate to underpin the exercise of shared competences</li> <li>• Specific mandate for the AUA (no longer condemned to “do everything with limited means”)</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Step 2:</b> Agree on a clear division of roles and responsibilities between AUA, RECS and MS for implementing common agendas (according to the principle of ‘subsidiarity’) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define criteria to organize the division of labour between various actors concerned (e.g. subsidiarity principle; comparative advantages; critical mass; track record; delivery capacity; etc.)</li> <li>• Design a roadmap for implementation clarifying “who should do what”</li> <li>• Define clear deliverables for each player</li> <li>• Harmonise the planning and programming processes of the AUA/ RECs/MS</li> <li>• Organise joint reviews of progress achieved</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roadmaps for delivering concrete outputs/ outcomes</li> <li>• Various levels of governance learn to work together</li> <li>• Improved processes of decision-making between AU institutions, RECS and MS</li> <li>• Improved follow-up at the level of RECs and MS</li> <li>• Joint responsibility for achieving results</li> </ul> |

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <p><b>Step 3:</b> Consolidate the institutional ‘architecture’ for each of the (12) key areas of competence of the Union</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the main challenges in building an adequate continental architecture for the policy area concerned</li> <li>• Articulate the agendas and structures of various levels of governance (continental, regional, national, local)</li> <li>• Put in place adequate dialogue mechanisms</li> <li>• Improve the capacity of the various actors to play their specific role in the overall architecture</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jointly agreed roadmaps to develop the institutional architecture of the Union in key areas</li> <li>• Improved articulation of actors, agendas and structures</li> <li>• Consolidation of the overall foundation of the Union</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Step 4:</b> Agree on a (multi-annual) financial framework for each of the (12) key areas of competence of the Union</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jointly define the funding required to implement the prioritized common integration agenda</li> <li>• Work out a multi-annual financial framework for policy area involved</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint responsibility for funding shared mandates</li> <li>• Improved predictability of funding</li> <li>• Improved long-term perspective on how to deliver outcomes in policy area concerned</li> </ul>                                   |

21. Three important observations need to be made with regard to this proposal for organizing shared competences at the level of the Union. **First**, by engaging in such a multi-actor dialogue process for each of the (12) areas of competence, one would not only clarify “who should do what” (under a system of shared competences) but also construct the overall Union (by linking up the various actors around joint agendas and implementation roadmaps). **Second**, the process can take different forms for each of the (12) areas of competences, reflecting the specificities of the domain involved. Also the roles and responsibilities to be allocated to the AUA can vary. In some areas it may be justified for the AUA to play a lead role (in application of the principle of subsidiarity) while its added-value may be less evident in other policy areas. **Third**, the AUA seems ideally placed to facilitate this type of multi-

actor dialogue processes in the various areas of competence, thus also proving its added value as ‘motor’ of the integration process.

### With regard to the question of powers

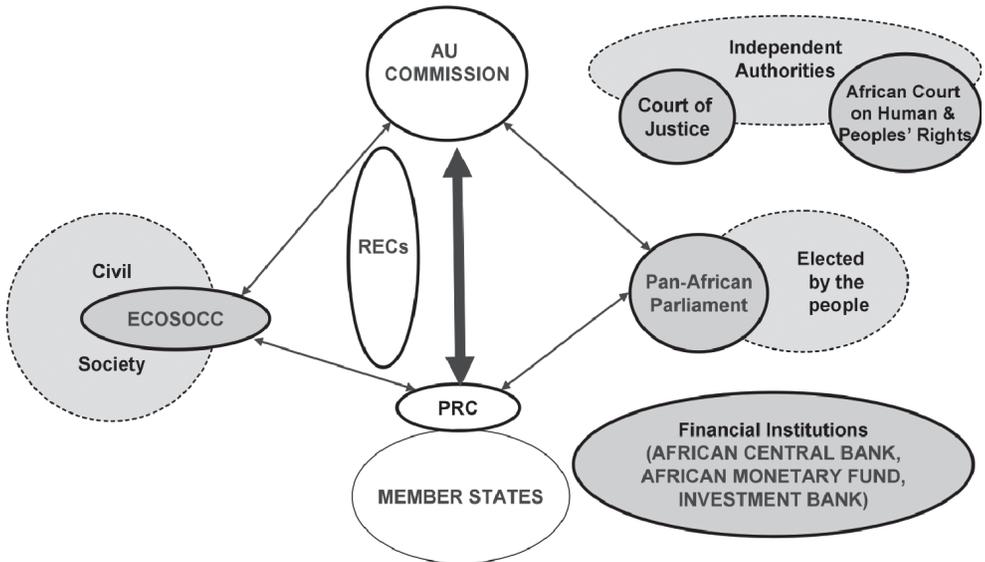
22. The establishment of an AUA may also provide a momentum to reconsider the *question of powers* to be conferred to supranational bodies. This is a key element of any successful integration scheme, as exemplified by the European project. The Constitutive Act of the AU remained silent on the powers of the AU Commission. When revising the Constitutive Act, creative ways will have to be found to combine autonomous action by the AUA (in the interest of the Union) with confidence-building measures (so as to not antagonize the Member States). In practical terms, two options seem promising.
23. A first option is to expand AUA capacity to take “initiatives” (consistent with its role as motor of the integration process). This tool will be particularly important when urgent integration agendas need to be attended in the absence of a strong political commitment of Member States. The European experience suggests that in these situations, the supranational body is well-positioned to play a catalyst role in putting issues on the agenda without creating direct threats for Member States. This approach does not lead to immediate results but it enables the Commission to invest in a follow up process; to foster dialogue on the issue; to provide opportunities for action to those Member States that are willing to move forward; and to create the conditions for others to follow suit over time.
24. A second option is to strengthen the AUA in its role to monitor compliance of Member States with treaties signed or strategies agreed upon. This is a critical, currently less than optimally performed function, which is due to become more important as the AU moves towards shared mandates and competences.

### ***How to improve the governance of the Union?***

25. The implementation of “shared mandates and competences” requires the strengthening of another fundamental foundation of the AU house, i.e. the ***overall governance rules and systems that have to ensure a smooth functioning of the Union*** and its different Organs. The AUC Strategic Plan 2004-2007 had already defined the main contours of the governance agenda (see Pillar 3 of the ITP), yet for a variety of reasons this ‘chantier’ had stayed relatively unattended till now.

Graph 1 below visualises the multi-polar governance framework of the current AU and the connections and articulations to be established between the different organs, including with the RECs. Ideally, the dynamics of this governance system allow each 'pole' to play a critical role in shaping the agenda and gradual evolution of the Union.

### ***Building the governance institutional framework***



26. The governance of the Union opens a huge reform agenda. Experiences gained in the first life cycle of the AU/AUC suggest that the following ***governance challenges*** would merit ***priority attention*** during the next phase:

- the internal governance of the AUA;
- the decision-making processes between AUA and Member States (including a clarification of the role of the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC));
- the institutional infrastructure required at national level to ensure a proper 'bottom-up' functioning of the AU (including the Specialised Technical Committees);
- the smooth integration of the democratic and judicial Organs of the (PAP, ECOSOCC and ACHPR) and their desirable evolution over time;
- clear accountability mechanisms within the Union and towards the African citizens;
- the gradual move towards a multi-annual financial framework reflecting the commitment to execute 'shared mandates';

## ***How useful are roadmaps and timetables in accelerating integration?***

27. The official documents that announced the venue of an AUA make clear references to the need for roadmaps and timetables to move the process forward. Experiences from integration attempts in other parts of the world suggest that roadmaps can, under certain conditions, provide a powerful strategic tool to accelerate reforms. The AUC is therefore well-advised to carefully consider its strategic use in the recommendations it will formulate to the higher decision-making bodies of the Union.
28. In this context, the ***experience of Europe*** may provide a source of inspiration. The key lesson learnt is that roadmaps and timetables do matter. A major success was the so-called 'Single European Act', adopted in 1985. It involved a seven-year timetable for removing 300 barriers to the internal market. Despite initial scepticism, the process moved forward swiftly, partly as a result of detailed planning and enthusiastic support from the European Commission (EC). It soon became clear that the programme would bring considerable benefits to the Member States. It also gave a new sense of purpose to the Community and helped to create an atmosphere in which further initiatives to broaden and deepen the EC appeared both practicable and desirable. Also the establishment of the 'European Monetary Union' (EMU) involved a clear roadmap, built on a three-stage process leading to full currency union and a European system of central banks, to be completed between 1990 and 1999.
29. The European integration process also provides examples whereby timetables proved inadequate or were simply not considered. Building on the positive climate of the early years, the founding fathers of Europe envisaged in 1952 to establish a 'European Defence Community. However, the French National Assembly declined to ratify the treaty in 1954. The idea of transferring responsibilities for defence to the supra-national level was clearly too much ahead of its time. Only in the late 1990s major breakthroughs were achieved in promoting greater coherence and capacity for effective action at European level in the field of defence. It is also interesting to consider the establishment of a directly elected European Parliament. In 1952, a parliamentary 'Assembly' was established around the initial European institutions. It consisted of members of national parliaments who were also expected to attend Assembly meetings as ancillary duty to their main functions. For a long time, no clear roadmap was elaborated to turn the Assembly into a more representative European parliamentary organ. The first direct elections to the Parliament were instituted only in 1979.

30. These European experiences suggest that *roadmaps and timetables can be an effective ‘accelerator’* of integration process if certain *conditions* prevail, including:
- a well-considered choice of policy areas where progress is politically feasible;
  - the identification of demonstrable benefits that could accrue to Member States;
  - a detailed implementation plan (with benchmarks and mechanisms to monitor progress);
  - the existence of sufficient leverage and capacity at Commission level to play a pro-active, stimulating role as catalyst/facilitator/coordinator of integration process (including roles such as political mediation);
  - ongoing political support from a selected group of key Member states.
31. Against this background, it seems advisable for the AUC not to limit its recommendations to ‘downstream’ issues such as structures or names/numbers of portfolios. These are undoubtedly important matters, but there is also scope to influence fundamental ‘upstream’ political choices related to the future Union.
32. All this points to the need to *carefully manage the reform process*. The AUC/AUA will have a most critical role to play in pushing forward the deepening of the integration process and in creating the conditions for Member States to accept the gradual move away from the currently prevailing “intergovernmental” mode of operation of the Union into a more “continental-driven” governance system.
33. In this difficult balancing act it may be helped by some lessons learnt with making qualitative jumps forward in the European integration process. The following pointers are worth mentioning:
- The European Commission and previous European authorities worked closely with a select number of likeminded Member States to drive the integration agenda. In practice, they did not seek to treat all stakeholders as equals despite the rhetoric to the contrary. In many ways the whole European project ‘protected’ the role of the nation-state and ensured that Member States had a key role in its governance structure.
  - The European integration process did rely on consultation and clear ‘rules of the game’ but it often took decisions to compromise at many times without complete ensuring first ownership of all stakeholders to move forward. It thus refused to be held hostage and adopted creative solutions to ensure that the integration process did not move at the pace of the most ‘conservative’ Member State. Pragmatic and result-oriented processes are often more important than long stakeholder consultations where the ‘spoilers’ can creatively stall any real progress.

- The European integration agenda concentrated significantly on ensuring that what was a highly 'political' process was skillfully managed to appear less political while also delivering concrete and specific gains in particular areas -that also drew in more Member States because they began to see it as something that was worth being a part of.

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## 5 The role of the EC/EU in supporting the AU institutional architecture

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Background paper for Session III in the seminar: Building the African Union institutional architecture: Progress achieved, new perspectives and possible support by the EU.

*This background paper briefly considers the institutional development trajectory of the African Union since its creation in 2002, with a particular focus on the progress achieved so far. It presents some lessons learnt with the institutional reform attempts undertaken by the first African Union Commission under Chairperson Konaré (section 2). It then examines the important role played by the EC/EU in supporting the consolidation of the AU institutional architecture (section 3). It concludes with some key challenges involved in the construction of a solid, effective and sustainable AU that can deliver an added value as pan African institution (section 4).*

### ***1. From the OUA to the AU***

1. The 1999 Sirte Summit of African Heads of State cleared the ground for the establishment of an African Union (AU). A group of African leaders came to the realisation that the Organisation of African Unity (OUA), established in 1963, had largely fulfilled its core mandate and was ill-equipped to address the new social, political and economic challenges of the continent in a rapidly changing world. A bolder response was needed in the form of new pan African governance institution with an expanded mandate and a new institutional set-up.
2. Reform-minded forces sought to exploit the political momentum generated by the Sirte Declaration to make the establishment of an African Union irreversible. In less than a year, the Constitutive Act for the new organisation was adopted in Lomé (July 2000).
3. However, this fast-track approach also had a reverse side. There was no time for a solid, profound and multi-actor debate on 'existential' questions related to the nature, mandate, powers, and modus operandi of the Union. There was also little

discussion on the implications of the AU transformation process for Member States (as 'owners' of the Union), including on sensitive issues such as national sovereignty; the delegation/pooling of competences; the changing roles of Member States in an institutional set-up with an elected Commission; the future funding obligations towards the Commission and the other new Organs (such as the envisaged Pan African Parliament or the ECOSOCC), etc.

4. The Constitutive Act provided interesting legal and political openings that could be used in a progressive and pro-active way to push forward the integration process. At the same time, there were also many 'grey areas' in the document. For instance, it remained vague on fundamental points like the autonomy and powers of the Commission or on ways and means to alter the predominant inter-governmental practices of Member States in managing the Union.<sup>38</sup>
5. From the outset, it became clear that the newly established organisation needed to embark on a profound transformation process in order to adapt the inherited structures of the OUA to its new missions. The first African Union Commission (AUC) under the leadership of Alpha Konaré committed itself to undertake a major 'Institutional Transformation Process' (ITP). This reform was a central piece of the AUC Strategic Plan 2004-2007. It consisted of three pillars: (i) strengthening the Commission; (ii) institutional rationalisation; and (iii) the governance of the Union.
6. It is a perilous exercise to make an overall assessment of the track record of the new institutional set-up of the AU. Seven years is a short period to draw major conclusions, considering the long-term nature of building a strong and effective Union.
7. Yet in order to stimulate debate the table below ventures into a summary of some main achievements of the AU/AUC so far as well as the implementation gaps between stated ambitions and actual realisations.

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<sup>38</sup> This is reflected, for instance, in the tendency to rein in the powers of the Commission as 'guardian of the treaties', in politically sensitive areas (e.g. effective monitoring of compliance) or in the 'micro-management approach' still adopted by the Member States (through their Permanent Representatives).

| <b><i>Achievements AU/AUC</i></b>   | <b><i>Implementation gaps</i></b>   |
|---|---|
| Developing a vision on role AU/AUC (Successive Strategic Plans)             | 'Ownership deficit' with regard to role AU among Member States, RECs and African citizens |
| Recognition AU/AUC as primary interlocutor in political dialogue            | Effectiveness political dialogue stands to be improved                                    |
| Design of a blueprint for the AU's Institutional Transformation Process     | Limited overall progress with ITP   |
| Constructing an African Peace and Security architecture                     | Limited progress in putting African architecture in place in other areas                  |
| Advocacy on behalf of Africa at various levels                              | Continental voice still weak on major issues  |
| Establishment of PAP, ECOSOCC and ACHPR                                     | Relations between various AU organs not clarified   |
| Mobilisation of resources   | Unpredictable funding and dependency from external partners                               |
| Elaboration of new charters and policy frameworks on a wide range of issues | Limited AUC power and capacity to monitor implementation and compliance of Member States  |

8. The table can undoubtedly be complemented, refined and further detailed. Yet it suggests that the AUC/AU, despite human and financial limitations, can show some remarkable achievements after seven years. Yet all these gains stand to be consolidated before their full potential is to be released. Moreover, some of the gains are not irreversible. For instance, the AUC/AU has been firmly put on the map. Yet an enhanced delivery capacity will be key to ensuring its ongoing credibility and legitimacy. It is therefore important to carefully consider the key bottlenecks encountered in the reform processes undertaken by the AU/AUC (as reflected in

the above mentioned implementation gaps). This, in turn, may help to inform the next stages of the AU/AUC reform process.

## **II. Lessons learnt with institutional reform processes**

9. Considering the focus of this paper, it is important to understand what happened with the 'Institutional Transformation Process', one of the stated priorities of the Konaré Commission.
10. At the birth of the AU there was a large consensus that thorough institutional reforms were needed. The old management systems of the OAU were simply not able to keep up with the rapid evolution of the role and tasks of the new organisation. New **financial and activity management systems** that can cope with the complexity of the task and comply with international standards have therefore been designed and are being put in place step by step, but such things take time and not all systems can be made fully operational immediately. But it is not just the financial systems that needed to be upgraded. Knowledge management systems for planning, monitoring, evaluation, reporting and indeed communicating have also had to be completely renewed.
11. At the same time the Commission has been dealing with a major and complex **staff change process**. So as to promote a fresh approach and a real change from the era of the OAU Secretariat, an early retirement package was introduced to encourage many long serving staff to leave and all senior managers had to reapply for their jobs when the Konaré Commission came in. As a result there has been a massive changeover of staff and many units are still in the process of re-establishing themselves. At the same time new recruitment and human resource management procedures have been introduced to replace outdated systems. New staff had to be introduced to the organisation and all staff also needed to be trained in the various new management systems as these are introduced. The scale and scope of the organisational change process has therefore been huge and has understandably proved difficult to manage in a concerted fashion. The main victim of this greater focus on the more technical and systems sides of the institutional change is the fact only very limited work has really been done on building up a new internal ethos and culture for the organisation. Of course new leadership at the top that has emphasised more professional and business like approaches has led to some change in this respect. No doubt the influx of new staff bringing in new ideas from other parts of Africa and a more international outlook has also

helped shift attitudes, but there is still considerable scope for more systematic work on changing and unifying the organisational culture.

12. Some progress has undoubtedly been achieved with this major institutional reform process. A wide range of activities have been developed, particularly with regard to pillar I of the ITP (i.e. strengthening the Commission). On many fronts, the AUC/AU went through a learning curve. Yet most actors (within and outside the AUC) would agree that there is **still a long way to go** before the AUC/AU is properly enabled, at all levels, to effectively play its role as engine of the integration process.
13. While **Member States share responsibility** to making the AUC/AU work -by creating a conducive environment for it deliver on its mandate- the Commission itself has a critical role to play. In this context, it seems recommendable to make a critical analysis of the ITP process so in order to see “what has worked” and “what didn’t work”.
14. One possible lesson that could be drawn from the ITP experience is that the process was probably not sufficiently ‘owned’ by the AUC. There was undoubtedly a general support from the leadership to the ITP as well as a generous involvement of many AUC staff at various levels. However, the ‘missing link’ may have been a strong **internal ‘commanding post’** at the level of the AUC, with the mandate, time and specialist staff to provide policy orientations; make critical choices; steer and surveying the work of consultants; mobilise the different departments; monitor effective implementation and ensure ongoing political support to push through the necessary reforms.
15. Another lesson relates to the existence of more profound, **systemic constraints** that have hampered the optimal functioning of the new institution, including:
  - **Ownership deficit?** The pan African ideals are widely shared across the continent. Heads of State have explicitly backed the ambitious vision of the AU and related mission of the AUC. Yet beyond these formal expressions of support, how much ‘ownership’ is there among the various Member States to build a strong and effective AU with an empowered executive Commission arm? Clearly, the AU can count on a number of strategic allies, i.e. countries that put their full political (and financial) weight behind the Union. Yet there are indications that an important number of countries display **rather low levels of commitment** to the AU. Indicators of this state of affairs are the (i) the unwillingness to regularly pay the agreed contributions to the budget of the AU; (ii) the reluctance to accept a Commission

with sufficient powers and autonomy to be the guardian of the treaties and to ensure compliance; and (iii) the lack of institutional structures and capacities at national level to engage in AU integration processes. Obviously, in all regional integration processes one may find “countries that are prepared to run while others prefer to walk”. Yet if the rift between progressive and conservative forces becomes too wide, there is major risk of paralysis of the Union. The issue of ‘ownership’ –and the related question on *how to get ‘reluctant’ Member States on board-* therefore merits careful attention in the process of thinking about the next phases in the evolution of the AU/AUC. An ‘ownership’ deficit, albeit from a different nature, can also be observed at the level of the RECs. In principle, they constitute the ‘pillars’ of the Union. In practice, their effective integration into the Union –as strategic allies and equal partners- remains limited and fragile. All this means the AU building rests on rather weak foundations. This structural weakness should be addressed upfront if the AU house is to be solidified.

- *Learning to act as a Commission.* The Constitutive created a ‘Commission’ with an extended mandate to act as ‘engine’ of the integration process. Yet it remained rather vague on its powers, levels of autonomy as well as roles and responsibilities. Contrary to its European counterpart, the AUC was not entrusted with supranational competences. All this obviously limits the ‘room for manoeuvre’ of the AUC. It obliges the AUC to find creative ways to combine autonomous action (in the interest of the Union) with confidence-building measures (so as not to antagonise Member States). It puts a premium on the effective application of the ‘subsidiarity principle’ (by building the AU from the ‘bottom-up’). Inevitably, time and experimentation will be required for enabling the AUC to *act as the ‘motor’* of the Union. Some departments have already demonstrated a capacity to assume a leadership role in the new AU setting and to deliver a concrete added-value. Yet for most of the AUC departments this battle is still ongoing.
- *A Union cannot function without shared governance rules.* For understandable reasons (including of absorption capacity), the AUC decided to concentrate its institutional reform efforts on Pillar 1 of the ITP, i.e. the strengthening of the AUC. With hindsight, a more *integrated approach* which would simultaneously cover the two other pillars of the ITP may have facilitated the Commission’s life. Over time, it became clear that the effective functioning of the AUC is also largely dependent on progress achieved with the institutional rationalisation (particularly the relationship between the AUC and the RECs) as well as with the broader governance of the Union (i.e. a shared set of rules regulating the relations between the different Organs and promoting an effective inter-institutional collaboration). An obvious example is the lack of a realistic and predictable

(multi-annual) budget for the AUC and the other AU organs to execute their assigned responsibilities. It is clear indicator of a serious governance problem if the AUC, as the main instrument of the Union, has to scramble each year to collect a (largely erratic) budget from its Member States to perform its duties. This undermines the credibility of the Union, drastically weakens its capacity to deliver and threatens its legitimacy.

16. Each of these 'systemic constraints' tend to reinforce each other. For instance, the natural resistance of many Member States towards a strong Commission is set to increase if the AUC is perceived to add little value for money through its programmes. In a similar vein, AUC requests for additional competences and resources are likely to fall on deaf ears if the Commission fails to put its own house in order.
17. In February 2009 the African Heads of State gave the green light to transform the AUC into an "***African Union Authority***" (AUA) as the central pan African body in charge of driving the integration process. The establishment of the AUA is seen as a pragmatic, progressive and transitory political States towards a United States of Africa (by 2017).
18. The implementation of this reform agenda is likely to be a long, uphill struggle. The above mentioned systemic constraints that affected the AUC in its first years of existence will not disappear overnight. It will therefore be important to fully integrate the lessons learnt with the institutional trajectory of the AUC/AU so far in the elaboration of implementation strategies of the new AUA plans.

### ***III. The EC/EU contribution as partner***

19. From the outset the change from the OAU to the AU was seen as a potentially valuable opportunity by the European Commission. Already in late 2002 just as the AU was formally established at the Durban Summit (July 2002) the EC commissioned a study to look into the potential of working with the new organisation. This opening was welcomed by the interim AU Commission and the study report finalised in June 2003 provided an input to the programming of a first EC grant to the fledgling AU.
20. Traditionally the OAU and the EC had had there differences and this manifested itself both in a somewhat inconclusive first Africa-EU Summit in Cairo in 2000 and then in the very slow pace of the ensuing dialogue that was intended to carry

forward the various issues identified for discussion between the two regional bodies. The establishment of the AU signalled a new beginning not just for Africa and its management of its own internal affairs but also a new opening to international partners.

### A political partnership backed by financial support

21. For the European side three concerns were probably paramount. First there was the hope that the AU would prove to be a strong political partner enabling the establishment of a credible dialogue on political issues between the two Unions that could tackle questions of governance in Africa as well as cooperation on the international scene. Poor governance was increasingly seen as a major obstacle to the success of development cooperation efforts on the continent and it was recognised that little or no progress would be achieved in this area without peer pressure from inside Africa. Second the EU was keen to support African initiatives on peace and security on the continent as it realised that European military intervention on the continent was unsustainable and the credibility of UN peace keeping on the continent had suffered serious setbacks with the debacles in Rwanda and Somalia. While the EC had already provided support to peace operations at the regional level (e.g. via ECOWAS) it was recognised that here again was an area where African leadership at the continental level was probably essential. The third consideration was the institutional capacity of African continental organisations to tackle these challenges and here the EC declared itself ready to provide support for institutional development.
22. The EC quickly backed up this *political interest* with some *financial support* authorising a first grant of Euro 12 million to the AUC in early 2003. This included Euro 10 million for peace and security work and the balance for institutional development. Then in July 2003 at the AU's Maputo Summit it took the much more ambitious step of proposing the establishment of a major Africa Peace Facility of Euro 250 million from EDF resources for funding African led peace keeping operations, notably the AMIS operation in Darfur. The AU, which was expected to co-manage these funds through its proposed new Peace & Security Council (established May 2004), was thus fast becoming a major political partner of the EU in a way that other global actors were at first reluctant to contemplate. This latter initiative was also ambitious internally inside the EU as it involved the large scale use of the EDF in an area that had never been seriously considered before, apart from the minor operations at the ECOWAS level. Consensus therefore had to be sought between EU member states

and with the Commission. The fact that this was forthcoming relatively rapidly, despite certain misgivings, indicates better than most things the need European governments felt for a serious continental level political interlocuteur in Africa. More recently the continuing political relevance of this partnership on peace and security gave rise to a joint meeting of the AU's Peace & Security Council (PSC) with the EU's Political & Security Committee (COPS) in late 2008, an experience that is to be repeated shortly in the last quarter of 2009.

### Practical cooperation on a day to day level

23. The AUC and EC were also seen by many, including internally by officials on both sides, as '*natural partners*'. EU member states, although also manifesting a strong interest in the new AU were generally happy to let the EC take the lead in establishing the new cooperation. The sought involvement in the peace and security work in particular but in most other areas they recognised the added value of commission to commission partnership. This grew relatively rapidly with various exchanges on practical matters ranging from conference interpreting to budgeting and human resources policy. Staff exchanges were also instituted with officials going in both directions for three months stays in the other commission. The cooperation was cemented by the establishment of regular College-to-College meetings that involved a range of commissioners, and not just the external affairs group on the European side, travelling alternately to each others headquarters.
24. This practical cooperation was aimed both at improving mutual knowledge of each others institutions but also essentially at sharing expertise so as to promote the institutional development of the new African Union Commission.

### Financial support

25. From the start of the relationship the focus of the financial support of the EU to the AUC was, as we have seen, peace and security on the one hand and institutional development on the other. With the establishment of the APF the former was well provided for with considerable funds. The next move was then to provide far more adequately for the funding of the AU's plans on institutional development. These were outlined as we have seen above (Section 2) in the first AU Strategic Plan 2004-2007. To support this work the European Commission thus proposed **a major grant of Euro 55 million from the intra-ACP envelope** of the 9th EDF which

the AUC could use over a five year timeframe. A number of EU Member States<sup>39</sup> also committed themselves to provide financial support though on a more modest scale. Given that the AU's own annual budget is about USD 50 million these European contributions represent an input of some scale and ensured there were considerable funds earmarked for this institutional development agenda.

26. Progress on the use of these funds has however been slow despite the initial establishment of the ambitious Institutional Transformation Programme (ITP) as outlined in the Strategic Plan. Reasons for this slow progress were analysed at some length in the Audit of the AU in 2007, but a major contributing factor was the weight it placed on the fragile and outdated management systems of the old OAU Secretariat that had not evolved as rapidly as the organisation had at a political level. Thus, for example, in the past the OAU had handled only small amounts of donor funds and now the AU Commission had to put in place systems to handle much larger amounts.

### Taking the Africa-EU partnership to new levels

27. While progress on upgrading the internal management systems may have been slow the political dialogue between the two Unions continued to evolve more rapidly. With the AU established and the AU-EU collaboration on cooperation on peace and security flourishing, the urge to move to a second Africa-EU Summit to follow up on Cairo was relatively quickly felt. The EU agreed internally on its own strategy for cooperation with Africa to reflect the new realities in 2005 and this was quickly followed by a wish to establish a joint strategy that could be agreed at the second joint summit. This was negotiated from late 2006 and adopted at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Africa-EU Summit that was finally held in Lisbon in December 2007.
28. The *Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES)* makes clear from the outset that the two continental bodies were seeking a new political relationship with a new partnership that went beyond the traditional cooperation for the development of Africa. The ambition was thus to create a partnership that not only yielded concrete results in terms of development cooperation but also pushed the two Unions to cooperate in international arenas on solving global challenges. The negotiation of the JAES thus demonstrated the broad scope for potential collaboration and political interest on both sides. As such the JAES is thus a new framework for a deepened partnership

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39 Chief amongst these were German, Denmark, Sweden, Netherlands and the UK

29. The AU does of course have a number of partnerships with other global actors than the EU. The growing partnership with China is probably the one that concerns European observers most but there is also the long standing TICAD process with Japan and, although at first sceptical of the switch from OAU to AU, the USA has also recently taken more interest particularly in the AU's role on peace and security issues. None of these processes so far seem to be as ambitious as the JAES however particularly on the political front. The association with China has focussed essentially on infrastructure and the AU has encouraged China to invest in industrial production capacity across the continent, something it feels its European partners are reluctant to do. Finally a recent Africa-Latin America conference does not seem to have produced much results although the South-South links with some Latin America countries such as Brazil or Argentina still hold the potential for further productive collaboration. As the G20 process starts to gain momentum it is obviously in the AU's interests to have closer links with developing countries such as Brazil, China and India in this group.

#### IV. *Key challenges for the future*

##### Promoting organisational change and improving management systems

30. The AU Commission has now seen nearly ***a decade of fairly constant organisational change***. Already in the last years of the OAU, member states were pressing for change and seeking to renew an organisation that many of them saw as outdated, inefficient and bureaucratic. At the same time the goal posts themselves have been shifting and the organisation has had to reinvent itself to adapt to the more political role assigned to it in the new African Union. The establishment of the AU and the image of change and renewal that it has succeeded in conveying have also created new expectations and increased the number and scope of new demands made on the organisation from many new quarters as well as from the membership.
31. To take just one indicator of change, in the space of some 7 years the AUC's access to ***donor funding has mushroomed***. From an organisation that relied essentially on its own members at times rather erratic membership fees, small amounts of donor project funding and some UN managed projects it has now turned into an organisation with a heavy preponderance of donor funding which it is managing directly. Donor funding for peace keeping operations has in particular pushed the amounts of non-African funds managed by the AUC up hugely in a very short

space of time. In 2007 membership fees accounted for only about 25% of the AU's USD 50 million budget and the rest came from international partners. Among these the EU, that is EC and EU member states combined, accounted for over half the income.<sup>40</sup> In financial terms at least, the EU is thus de-facto the AU's most important international partner by far.

32. Given the scale of donor funding now being made available, donors, while willing to give the AUC some leeway, are inevitably keen to see ***progress on accounting and reporting systems***. But the pressure for change is also internal. Sectoral departments also need the new systems to work efficiently and member states want to be reassured that their organisation is up to the tasks and responsibilities that they are setting at its door. Expectations on all sides are high. Getting the financial management systems up to standard has thus become one of the most pressing change management tasks of the new Ping Commission since it started work a year ago.
33. Over time progress is however visible, for instance the AU's 2<sup>nd</sup> Strategic Plan (2009-2012) that has just been approved in the past few weeks has been drafted entirely in-house with only minimal support from external consultants, whereas for the 1st Strategic Plan from 2004, the reverse was the case as the internal capacity simply did not exist. Departments are being pushed to wittle down their work plans to manageable proportions and into coherent programmes that are not just a question of servicing an endless stream of member state meetings on different topics across the continent. The Commissioners are now meeting on a weekly basis and trying to take a more collegial approach in their management of the organisation. Above all many of the information technology management systems are now in place and staff are starting to use them.
34. Financing the organisation remains a major issue. The current ***preponderance of international partner funding raises questions of legitimacy*** both on the continent and internationally. While member states were at first very wary of such a high level of external funding the money was needed and international partners have been persuasive. For a number of years now discussions have gone on about the scope for alternative means of finance such as an air travel tax have gone on but so far nothing concrete has emerged from this discussion. Some reassurance can be found in having a range of different international partners, but then the

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<sup>40</sup> Figures presented by the AUC at the JAES Financing Seminar, Addis Ababa, October 2009.

preponderance of the EU is perhaps worrying. EU actors thus need to be sensitive to this question and ensure they keep it under regular review with their African counterparts.

### Enabling the Commission to act the motor of the integration process

35. For more than three decades, the OUA acted as a Secretariat, executing a well-defined mandate. The AUC is a different type of structure, with a much broader mandate and above all a new set of roles geared at pro-actively promoting integration processes. Though progress has been achieved, on many fronts the Commission (as a college) and the various departments are still ***struggling to effectively cope with their role as “catalyst”*** of continental integration.
36. The task at hand in the next years is to further enable the Commission to deliver on its core mandate. To this end it seems useful for the AUC to:
- concentrate on its ‘core business’ and on roles that ‘add value’;
  - apply the subsidiarity principle in all its activities;
  - engage in a pro-active manner with RECs and Member States;
  - optimally use its ‘power of initiative’;
  - elaborate a ‘package’ of capacity building initiatives to enable the Commission (as a college) and the various departments to pro-actively promote integration processes
  - learn lessons from AUC success stories<sup>41</sup>
  - build on innovative practices being tested out in departments<sup>42</sup>
  - ensure a more effective monitoring of implementation progress;
  - enhance its capacity to act as the ‘guardian of the treaties’ and to ensure compliance of Member States with agreed declarations, strategies and action plans.

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41 Lessons could, for instance, be learnt from the experience of the AUC engagement in Peace and Security. In this area, the AUC has been able to effectively play the role of a ‘catalyst’ in putting in place a continental architecture to deal with peace and security issues; to redefine the division of roles between the various players (AUC, RECs, Member States) with due respect for the principle of subsidiarity; to produce a clear added-value (despite all the limitations also affecting this department).

42 In the framework of the EC 55 million Euro support programme (2007-2011) the AUC experiments with an innovative approach to planning and programming the work of the various departments involved in integration processes. The basic idea is to focus on the facilitation roles that AUC departments need to play, all along the policy cycle, to effectively promote regional integration (from policy initiation, to policy formulation, implementation and monitoring/evaluation).

## Strengthening the Union

37. Another fundamental foundation of the AU house which need to be further strengthened relates to the **overall governance rules and systems** that have to ensure a smooth functioning of the Union, This boils down to consolidate the multi-polar governance framework of the AU and the connections and articulations between the different organs, particularly with the RECs. Ideally, the dynamics of this governance system allow each organ to play a critical role in shaping the agenda and gradual evolution of the Union.
38. The following **governance challenges** at the level of the Union as a whole would merit priority attention during the next phase:
- (i) the internal governance of the Commission;
  - (ii) the gradual move towards a multi-annual financial framework reflecting the commitment to execute 'shared mandates';
  - (iii) the institutional infrastructure required at national level to ensure a proper 'bottom-up' functioning of the AU (including the Specialised Technical Committees).
  - (iv) the smooth integration of the democratic and judicial Organs of the Union (PAP, ECOSOCC and ACHPR) and their desirable evolution over time.
39. Constructing a strong and effective Union is a shared responsibility and a collective enterprise over a long-term period of time. A solid vision is a necessary but not sufficient condition to gradually forge a real Union out of disparate set of countries with varying trajectories, cultures, interests. The AUC may need to invest more in an **ongoing process of dialogue** with AU key stakeholders with a view to (i) developing a shared vision on the role and added-value of the Union; (ii) defining priority agendas to tackle at the pan African level; clarifying the governance rules; (iii) sorting out the most appropriate division of labour between the different players, etc. In order to ensure concrete outcomes, it will be critically important to agree on a set of innovative 'methods' for conducting this inter-institutional dialogue.

## Improving use of JAES potential to construct a continental partnership

40. The latest step in the relationship between the EU and the AU has been the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) signed at the Africa-EU Summit in Lisbon in December 2007. This agreement is ambitious both in its nature and its potentially very

extensive scope. In particular it is intended to take Africa-Europe relations to a new level that goes beyond cooperation for Africa's development but looks at the way the two continents relate to each as a whole and sets the framework for the two Unions to work together in international affairs. At its centre is the **concept of one-Africa**, deeply rooted in the history of the OAU and the pan-African movement from the 1950s on, but which now, since the major enlargement wave of 2004-2006, finds its echo in a Europe that is also more or less united in one political and economic project.

41. Different aspects of the Joint Strategy are important for its different stakeholders. While the new framework for political dialogue and cooperation is important particularly for those interested in the overall direction the continent is taking in terms of managing its own problems, it is clear that particularly for popular constituencies the Joint Strategy is primarily about development. So while diplomats and senior officials may be particularly interested by the political dialogue aspects of the Strategy, if it does not provide added value in development cooperation it will have little interest for ordinary citizens, civil society groups and their elected representatives. Thus both aspects are needed and simplistic characterisations of the prime interests of different stakeholders<sup>43</sup> that are sometimes heard are best avoided. Rather it would seem that most actors do appreciate the breadth of the scope of the JAES and understand the importance of both the political dialogue framework and the need for it to be supportive of development cooperation efforts particularly at the regional and continental levels. This, in turn, raises two questions that still need to be further clarified: what is the real **added value of the JAES** (compared to existing policy frameworks such as the Cotonou Agreement) and what type of **strategic funding** is needed from which source to ensure that the new continent-to-continent partnership delivers.
42. The JAES is **inclusive by nature** and seeks to involve all appropriate actors at its different levels. This has big advantages in terms of exploiting available expertise and enthusiasm but it also carries the danger of confusion and lack of direction. Discipline is thus required in making sure the right actors are involved in the appropriate activities. It is particularly important to apply the principle of subsidiarity whereby actions are carried out at the lowest possible

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43 In the run up to the JAES Financing Seminar (Oct 2009) some observers have suggested that the African side are primarily interested in the finances for development aspect of the JAES whereas the European side is only interested in the political dialogue. Both characterisations are simplistic and do not do justice to the variety of different interests on both sides.

level in the system and that actions are not centralised unnecessarily with the two Commissions on each side. Thus in Africa it can be assumed that the RECs have the prime role to play in carrying out JAES work at the regional level. NEPAD may also act as a useful agent for the organisation and execution of certain projects. Whereas the AUC clearly has value added in terms of coordination at the continental level and in terms of ensuring political dialogue with the European side is properly coordinated.

43. There is also a challenge for the European side to ***move away from its traditional piecemeal approach whereby EU member states had their individual programmes and relations with different African states that often paid little attention to what other European states were doing.*** In any case this need for harmonisation is at the heart of the Paris/Accra aid effectiveness agenda. The JAES in this respect provides an extra boost for the EU to organise itself in a harmonised way and integrate its various national and EU level programmes in support of Africa into a more coherent package that is jointly agreed with the African side. The joint nature of the JAES is also very much in support of the other vital Paris/Accra principle on ensuring ownership.
44. European support for AU institutional development at different levels thus has its place and African actors readily acknowledge this, but it needs to be pulling in as much as possible a single concerted direction and it needs to be based on African ownership. It is therefore critically important that ***JAES initiatives are based on and further consolidate the African institutional architecture.*** At its best the JAES provides an ideal framework for this, the best example being the JAES Partnership on Peace & Security which, it would seem from the most recent JEG meeting in Addis, has greatly improved the inclusiveness and common sense of purpose on building up the Africa Peace & Security Architecture. Compared with the early days of the APF when the dialogue was essentially a matter between the two Commissions with the Member States on both sides involved but somewhat at arms length in the AU-PSC and the EU-COPS, the JEG now provides a forum where all actors: member states on both sides, the EU Council Secretariat, the two Commissions, the RECs and even some civil society actors can discuss progress and brief each other on their contributions to the common task of building the APSA.
45. At the same time the JEG's all inclusive formula has its limitations and some assessment is probably required in the year ahead in the run up to the next Africa-EU Summit, to specify more clearly what the JEGs can and cannot do. Most of the

JEGs have also not achieved the level of maturity or common sense of endeavour that is apparent in the Peace & Security JEG, but this example does provide some indication of what is possible with the JAES and if studied carefully probably also what might not be possible.

## V. *Conclusion*

46. In conclusion it is clearly vital that the AUC completes its institutional development process. While getting the financial and other management systems fully operational may be the urgency of the moment there remains a need to ***also tackle the more cultural change side of the institutional transformation of the AUC***. Given that such a task does require considerable energy it is important to consider its timing carefully. It may for instance be best to phase different changes over time so as to ensure the organisation and its people can cope with each of them.
47. Sensitivity is required to ensure that by the ***scale*** of its ***funding*** and the intensity of the dialogue the EU does not become too dominant an influence that reduces ownership and undermines the legitimacy of the AU. European support for the AU and particularly for AU institutional development can be a core element of the JAES, though the latter is clearly much broader and should be implemented by a variety of actors and not just the AU.
48. ***Expectations on what progress is possible at the AUC in what timeframe need also to be measured***. It is vital that the different elements of the AU architecture continues to be systematically built up, as each of the different organs play an important part in the overall structure of the AU and in its governance. Certain Africa-EU processes such as some of the eight JAES partnerships may thus take more time than others as progress may depend on the degree of operationality of new AU organs.

October 2009



# Annexes



# Opening remarks

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**by H.E. Erastus Mwencha**

*Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would first like to thank the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM), the Nordic Africa Institute (NAI), and the Swedish EU Presidency for the organisation of this seminar.

In speaking of the African Union's Institutional Architecture, I would wish to start from the founding of the Organisation of African Unity in 1963. The main objectives of the Organisation of Africa Unity were to rid the continent of the remaining vestiges of colonisation and apartheid; to promote unity and solidarity among African States; to coordinate and intensify cooperation for development; and to promote internal cooperation. These initiatives having been achieved, paved the way for the birth of African union to expedite the process of economic and political integration in the continent. The African Union, therefore, was founded as premier institution and principal organisation for the promotion of accelerated socio-economic integration of the continent, whose objective is to lead to greater unity and solidarity between African countries and peoples. Since its inception in Durban in 2001 the African Union has focused on the promotion of peace, security and stability on the continent as prerequisite for the implementation of the development and integration agenda of the Union. The African Union is based on the common vision of a united and strong Africa and on the need to build a partnership between governments and all segments of civil society, in particular women, youth and the private sector, in order to strengthen solidarity and cohesion amongst the peoples of Africa.

The current institutional architecture of the African Union comprises the Assembly, the Executive Council, the Pan African Parliament, the African Court of Justice, the Commission, the permanent Representatives Committee, the Specialized Technical Committee, the Economic, Social and Cultural Council, the Peace and Security Council, the Financial Institutions. The Commission is the key organ playing a central role in the day-to-day management of the African Union. Among others, it represents the Union and defends its interests; elaborates draft common positions of the Union; prepares

strategic plans and studies for the consideration of the Executive Council; elaborates, promotes, coordinates and harmonizes the programmes and policies of the Union with those of the RECs; ensures the mainstreaming of gender in all programmes and activities of the Union.

It is important to outline at this point that the 12th summit of the African Union resolved to transform the African Union Commission of the African Union into the African Union Authority. There seems to be an agreement over the need to strengthen the AU's commission to make it more effective on the continent. The new entity would be given a bigger mandate and the definition of duties and responsibilities to guide the AU member states on the process of ultimately forming a Union Government. It would allow the African Union Commission to coordinate key policies and co-ordinate the positions of the AU on questions of common interest for the continent and its people. A compromise solution, which would basically accommodate the so-called gradualists and which aims to overcome what the African Union describes as the problems of sovereignty still needs to be reached. To this end there are two major conflicting conceptions of the institutional future of the African continent emerged, namely the maximalist approach and the gradualist approach. The 'maximalists' advocate the immediate creation of a Union Government and believe that sovereignty is better preserved through political integration, while the 'gradualists' opt for a stage-by-stage process, with the first stage being the integration, of RECs. The 'skeptics' group, positioned between the maximalist and gradualist camps, are made up for member states that have not yet taken a stance.

Currently, to strengthen its mandate, address weaknesses and threats as well as to take advantage of opportunities, for the years 2009 to 2012, the African Union Commission has designed a Strategic Plan which is currently being implemented through four strategic pillars. These pillars are intended to address the expectations and concerns of stakeholders; programs will therefore be implemented with the collaboration of stakeholders, including Member States, other organ of the Union, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), staff members continent and in the Diaspora and strategic and development partners. The four strategic pillars are: Peace and Security; Development, Integration and Cooperation; Shared Values; and Institution and Capacity Building.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Africa is determined to resolve its own challenges, to this end. The African Union has identified certain key priority development programs that relate to the Strategic Plan 2009-2012. Allow me to update you on progress.

### ***Under Peace and Security***

Africa has made great progress in establishing the institutional architecture for the promotion of peace and security on the continent through the establishment of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). APSA was established by the African Union, in collaboration with the Regional Economic Communities. Its role is to deal with prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in Africa. The operationalisation of the APSA will be achieved through the Panel of the Wise, the Continental Early Warning system (CEWs) to monitor the Regional Mechanisms with a view to anticipation of conflicts, the African Standby Force (ASF) and African Common Defence Policy. Furthermore, the African Union has deployed significant efforts towards addressing some of the roots of causes of conflict, and thus promoting the prevention of conflicts. These include the adoption of instruments such as the Declaration on Unconstitutional changes of Government; African Charter of Elections and Democracy, the Protocol to the African Charter of Human Rights on the rights of Women, and the Solemn Declaration on the Gender Equality in Africa.

Other autonomous organs of the African Union such as the Pan-African Parliament and the Economic Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOC) have shown early interest in working for the prevention of conflict. Their activities have included the fielding of mission to help in diffusing tension in troubled areas, and thus prevent their escalation into full-blown conflicts. Political will, which is one of the most crucial aspects of effective conflict prevention, is growing at all levels in Africa. Concrete examples include the active participation of African leaders in negotiations for peace and diffusing situations tension around the continent.

### ***African Union Commission's Institutional Capacities***

At the Commission level, management continues to work towards efficiency and effectiveness. To improve transparency and production of timely financial reports an SAP/ERP was launched last December 2008; A results Based Management and Performance Contract system will be launched at the end of 2009 as well as a review of the staff rules and regulations and the financial rules and regulations.

### ***In combating Poverty and Climate Change***

African agriculture and the rural economy suffer from low productivity, limited diversification and continuous degradation. Sustainable development of agriculture and the rural economy is critical for ensuring food security and poverty reduction in Africa. The African Union Commission considers the development of agriculture and the rural economy as a necessary condition for promoting accelerated economic, social

and political development, and for attaining its shared vision of building an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa.

### ***Improvement of agricultural methods to enhance food security through CAADP.***

CAADP's goal is to eliminate hunger and reduce poverty through agriculture. To do this, African governments have agreed to increase public investment in agriculture by a minimum of 10% of their national budgets and to raise agricultural productivity by at least 6%. The CAADP Pillars are CAADP's four key focus areas for agricultural improvement and investment. Each pillar oversees various programs working to achieve CAADP's goals.

Being aware of the impact and effects of global warming, Africa through her common position on climate change is preparing her future and envisaging answers to confront the changes in climate which will be increasingly frequent in the future. This is moreover the context in which Africa is seeking reparations from developed countries because it produces less than 4% green house gases while their effect on the climate could mortgage the future of the continent. The closed-door meeting did not however communicate the amount requested. From this meeting and in view of COP 15, Africa should establish alliances and partnerships which will enable her to better promote and defend her common position. A position which will not be fixed because it will adapt to the trends of climate change and positions adopted by the other parts of the world. Copenhagen should provide African countries with financial and technological assistance both to lower emissions and assist with adaptation.

### ***On Infrastructure Development***

Ladies and Gentlemen,

One of the urgent priorities for Africa's economic integration is the infrastructure's critical role. Africa's effective integration in the global market place is dependent on the information and communication infrastructure. One cannot talk about increased volume of trade when there are no roads, there are no rails, there are problems of transport. At the same time you cannot talk about increased investments unless you can show that you will be able to supply electricity to industries. So focusing on infrastructure is what we are building on. In this regard the African Union Commission seeks to steam-line infrastructure into Africa's economic development agenda. Special emphasis will be put on the operationalisation of the Programme for Infrastructure

Development in Africa (PIDA). The overall objective of PIDA is to make the best use of resources in order to enable African leaders have a common agenda and propose a common vision for infrastructure development.

### ***Integration of NEPAD into the AU structures and processes***

The integration of NEPAD into the structures and processes of the African Union is on track and we are committed to fulfilling the development mandate on the ground. Key strides have been made over the past few months in many of the key priority areas. This includes capacity building, empowerment of women, the Africa Action Plan, the country-level implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP).

### ***Entrenching Governance***

The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) is a mutually agreed instrument voluntarily acceded to by the Member States of the African Union (AU) as an African self-monitoring mechanism. The Mechanism aims to put in motion a strategic re-orientation towards the validation of universal as well as African values and accelerate the process of intra-African cooperation and integration. Without doubt, the APRM therefore is a key driver of African renaissance and rebirth, and is a centrepiece of the NEPAD process for the socio-economic development of Africa. Its mandate is to ensure that the policies and practices of participating countries conform to the agreed values in the following four focus areas: democracy and political governance; economic governance; corporate governance; and socio-economic development. To ensure fruitful involvement of the AUC in the process, there is need to explore means of enabling the enhancement of African countries' capacities to institute the appropriate governance practices.

### ***Education a cornerstone for sustainable development***

By recognising the centrality and importance of science, technology and engineering education for the development of Africa, the African Union has pledged to revitalise Africa's universities in order to provide qualifications with high skill requirements. The African Union Commission envisages the establishment of the Pan African University through identification of two regional campuses in two regions of the continent.

### ***Mapping of the African Civil Society Organisations (CSO's)***

With the emergence of the African organs through the African Union, a widespread consensus was reached providing civil society with an adequate place in these institutions. The challenge is therefore to understand the landscape of African

Civil Society and the likely linkages between actors at the national, regional, and continental level. The question of what strategies are necessary for building civil society, how to take advantage of new space for engagement in policy issues to live up to the growing responsibility also arise. 2010 will therefore be a key year for mapping a landscape of the African civil society to address these issues.

### ***Gender***

One of the priorities in 2010 will be the responsibility of the African Union Commission to work out the modalities for the operationalisation of the Women Trust Fund with focus on women in both the rural and urban areas. The feasibility has been carried out, the African Union Commission will work with Member States to ensure the launching of the fund in January 2010. In addition, proper and timely establishment of a 'Trust Fund Working Group' to begin the operationalisation process will remain a top priority throughout 2010 and 2011.

### ***Promotion of Intra-African Trade***

In the area of regional integration in Africa, we commit ourselves to providing full support to Africa's continental and sub-regional integration agenda as these serve as a strong basis for the promotion of inter and intra-African trade and investment, poverty reduction and promotion of sustainable development, attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the integration of Africa into the global economy. In this regard, we call upon the public sector to provide a conducive environment for business to play its role.

The low levels of intra-African trade can be attributed to structural weaknesses of the African economy, inadequate trade financing, poor transport and communication infrastructure, trade barriers and lack of continent-wide free trade area, lack of commitment to trade reforms and integration schemes introduced by the many regional trade agreements (RTAs) operating in the continent, and widespread trade policy bottlenecks arising from a multiplicity of conflicting customs policies and procedures of the various RTAs.

### ***Role of the EU***

What is therefore the role of the European Union? There are definitely common areas of dialogue where we all can engage systematically. The European Union as a central partner has a major role in the institutional architecture of the African Union in appropriately supporting the continent's efforts. Indeed the EU-Africa relations are organised around three existing agreements: The Cotonou Partnership Agreement,

the European Neighbourhood policy and the Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and South Africa.

The objective of our joint strategy is to enter into a continent-to-continent relationship and ‘treat Africa as one’ will need to be translated into institutional terms.

Some of the areas where Africa sees EU’s role as critical is in the establishment of (a) a multi-annual pan-African envelope in order to support the African Union in a strategic manner as is already done for the African Regional Economic Communities. It is our strong conviction that a dedicated pan-African envelope is now not only necessary but also a top priority that will go a long way in facilitating and ensuring effective implementation of our joint programs, ((b) to enhance political dialogue under the framework of the Cotonou Partnership Agreements, including trade dimensions of the partnership; stronger association not only of Member States but also of the European and Pan-African Parliaments as well as national Parliaments would for instance allow for broader and more political debate; (c) coherence and synergies among the various trade agreements between the EU and Africa; the involvement of the Regional Economic Communities in the implementation of the Joint EU-Africa Strategy (d) in order to unleash the power of African entrepreneurship both in start-up and existing enterprises, the EU could consider a framework under which it could work with national governments in the provision of advisory services and access to finance in order to allow young Africans to translate their good ideas into practical plans (e) support by the EU and other partners to have all African countries included in the World Economic Forum’s Global Competitiveness Report will improve the business climate and Africa’s competitive edge, (f) More than three-quarters of Africans lack access to electricity – a major constraint to economic development. Launching of new initiatives by both the EU and Africa in ensuring access to energy at the local level would improve doing business and standards of living.

### ***Challenges***

African Union appreciates the support and partnership from the European Union. For example funds to support infrastructure development in Africa have been provided under the infrastructure Fund, Energy Fund and ACP/EU. However, access to these funds still remains a challenge due to the stringent and cumbersome EDF procedures. Therefore, relevant technical capacity needs to be built at the African level while we prepare and work towards budget support.



# Building the African Union institutional architecture

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*Progress achieved, new perspectives and possible support by the EU.*

**Uppsala, 21 October 2009**

Venue: Scandic Uplandia Hotel

Hosted by The European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM)  
The Nordic Africa Institute (NAI)

With the support of the Swedish EU Presidency

## **Programme**

### **Tuesday 20 October**

17.30 Cocktail reception – The Carolina University Library

19.00 Dinner – Vasasalen of the Uppsala Castle

### **Wednesday 21 October**

09.00 Arrival and registration of participants

09.15-9.45 Welcome: Ms. Carin Norberg, Director NAI & Mr. Paul Engel, Director ECDPM

Opening: Mr. Joakim Stymne, State Secretary for International Development Cooperation, Sweden  
Mr. Erastus Mwencha, Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission

9.45-11.15 **Session I**  
*The record of the AU in promoting African integration: What lessons can be learnt for future institutional reform?*

Chair: Ms. Carin Norberg, Director NAI

Speaker: Dr. Adebayo Olukoshi, Director, African Institute for Economic Development and Planning, IDEP

- Discussants: Mr. Erastus Mwencha, Deputy Chairperson of the AU Commission  
Dr. Wolfram Vetter, Co-ordinator for inter-institutional relations,  
DG Dev, EC
- Open discussion
- 11.15-11.30** *Coffee Break*
- 11.30-13.00** **Session II**  
*Ongoing and future institutional reforms of the AU: What are the implications of the African Union Authority as motor of the African integration process?*
- Chair: Mr. Geert Laporte, Head of Institutional Relations & Partnerships, ECDPM
- Speaker: Dr. Jimni Adisa, Director CIDO, AU Commission
- Discussants: Dr. Fredrik Söderbaum, Professor, Göteborg University/ UN University, Bruges  
Mr. Jean Bossuyt, Head of Strategy, ECDPM
- Open discussion
- 13.00-14.00** *Lunch*
- 14.00-15.30** **Session II continued**  
*Working Groups on key institutional challenges*
- WG 1: What political and institutional requirements for moving from a Commission to an effective African Union Authority?
- WG 2: AU governance: How will the other AU institutions (PAP, ECOSOC, African Court of Justice, APRM) relate to the African Union Authority?
- WG 3: Implementation of AU programmes: How to strengthen the relationship between the African Union Authority and the African Regional Economic Communities (RECs)?
- 15.30-15.45** *Coffee break*
- 15.45-16.30** Reporting back from the WGs in plenary
- 16.30-17.30** **Session III**  
*The role of the EU in supporting the AU institutional architecture: lessons of experience with the Joint Africa-EU Strategy and other EU support programmes*
- Chair: Dr. Paul Engel, Director ECDPM
- Speaker: Dr. James Mackie, Programme Coordinator, ECDPM
- Discussants: African Union Representative  
Mr. Lars Ronnas, Ambassador Swedish EU Presidency
- Open discussion
- 17.30-17.45** Issues for follow-up
- 17.45** Closure

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