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The African Union and Its Initiatives for Unity, Development and Peace in Africa

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Resume

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Acronyms

AEC	African Economic Community
AMIB	African Union Mission in Burundi
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
ASF	African Standby Force
AU	African Union
CEACO	West African Economic Community
CEMAC	Central African Economic and Monetary Community
CFN-SAD	Community of Sahelian-Saharan States
COMESA	Common Market for East and Southern Africa
DFA	Darfur Peace Agreement
EAC	East African Community
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
FLN	Front of National Liberation
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PSC	Peace and Security Council
PTA	Preferential Trade Area
REC	Regional Economic Communities
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SADCC	Southern African Development Coordinating Conference
UDEAC	Customs and Economic Union of Central Africa
UEMOA	West African Economic and Monetary Union
UMA	Union of Maghreb Arab States

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Summary

The African continent that has a glorious ancient history is, today, the region of conflicts and underdevelopment. The countries of Africa have suffered under the exploitative rule of imperialist and colonial forces. In the post-Second World War period, African states started gaining independence. Most of them won independence in the decade of the 1960s and a new phase of unity of African countries gained momentum as result of which Organisation of African Unity (OAU) came into existence in 1963 aiming at integration of African states, restoration of peace, harmony and taking developmental efforts. This organisation proved ineffective in achieving its objectives of resolving multi-fold problems of the continent, especially inter and intra-state conflicts, thus necessitating the formation of another organisation with new and revised provisions. The African Union (AU) was formed in July 2002, and provisions were made to effectively meet the new emerging challenges, such as the marginalisation of the African continent in the post- 1990 period because of the collapse of Soviet Union, affects of globalisation and neo-liberal economic policies at global level.

This paper is an attempt to understand and critically assess the role and functioning of the AU, its problems and prospects with a view to make suggestions for its success by tackling the causes related to its constraints. The recommendations would aim at restoration of peace on the continent and promotion of economical development in African countries. The main argument of the paper is that the AU's success in achieving its aims and objectives depends on the development of the high degree of pan-African consciousness as well as cooperative attitude of international organisations like, the United Nations and powerful nations. The core issues are discussed by focusing on the historical development of the AU, its provisions and programme, and its role in conflict resolution while taking up developmental agenda.

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Introduction

Despite the glorious ancient civilisation the African continent is considered today the most underdeveloped region of world. Africa has been victim of imperialistic exploitation and remained deprived of the opportunity to develop due to the exploitative colonial regimes. In the post- Second World War period, the concept of the right of self-determination of various nationalities, reeling under subjugation of alien rules, became more pronounced accelerating the pace of independence struggle in various parts of world, including the African continent. The process of decolonisation of African region was almost complete during the decade of 1960. The pan African movement had become active since the early twentieth century on the initiatives taken by prominent African leaders¹ in which Africans residing in other countries played an important role. When the nations of African continent started becoming independent, these newly independent countries faced many difficulties, most being socio-political and economic in nature. One of the reasons of manifold problems was the exploitation by colonial rulers and dependence of independent nations of Africa on erstwhile colonial masters.

The independent countries of Africa began seriously thinking on the issue of forming an organisation that would act a catalyst to unite and integrate the African countries and develop among them the peace, harmony and much-needed cooperation. This led to the formation of the organisation of African unity (OAU) in 1963. This organisation in its nearly forty years of duration could not deliver on expected lines, thus preparing a ground for creation of another organisation more

effective and efficient in resolving multifold problems, including resolution of the intra-state as well as inter-state conflicts and tackling the economic difficulties. The African Union (AU) was established in July 2002, and plans and provisions were made to effectively tackle the new emerging challenges that emerged because of collapse of Soviet Union resulting into marginalisation of the continent and also the affects of globalisation and neo- liberal economic global scenario².

Did the AU achieve its objective it determined for itself? How far has it been successful in its role in resolving the issues of conflicts and promoting economic development of African countries? What are the major constraints and problems that the Union is facing and what is the possibility and prospect of its success? These are some of the important questions this paper attempts to look into. The present study becomes very important on account of this realisation that the critical evaluation of the Union will bring out its causes of limitations due to which it is not gaining the expected success. The awareness of these factors will help to put forward some remedial suggestions to remove the obstacles encountered by the AU and thereby paving the way for successful implementation of its programmes leading ultimately to restoring peace and the process of all around development of the African continent. The peace and development of Africa will have positive impact at the global scale due to the reality of interdependent nature of the interests of various nations and society. This would help make world a better place to live in.

The hypothesis this research study attempts to test is this that the African Union can succeed in effective implementation of its programme of restoring peace and promoting progress while maintaining security in the African continent subject to the development of high degree of pan African consciousness among various nations of Africa so as to undertake united action for common cause, besides, cooperative attitude of external forces such as, international organisations like United Nations and powerful nations. This paper tries to test the hypothesis in the light of discussing, mainly, the historical evolution of the African Union, its programme and strategy, its role in peacekeeping and developmental efforts while identifying the major challenges the Union is confronted with. The core issues of

the study are discussed within the framework of broad theory of balance of power and concept of regional cooperation. The nature of this study is descriptive and analytical. For collection of data, the organisational documents and secondary sources like articles published in journals, books and materials available on internet websites were heavily relied upon.

African Union is a regional organisation that seeks to develop amity and unity among its member nations while creating a suitable atmosphere for economic development in the larger interests of various regions of African continent. The regionalism is not a unique and novel feature of modern era as it existed even in ancient time but the distinction of the phenomena of regionalism, today, lies in the reality of co-existence of regional organisations and international organisations like the United Nations. This co-existence of both kinds of organisations creates another set of complication when their membership and jurisdiction overlap, purposes and methods vary posing serious questions of compatibility. The supporters of the concept of regionalism argue that a threat to security is most likely to originate between neighbouring countries and therefore, regional arrangements function to safeguard peace and security in the region. The other logical reason for emergence of the trend is homogeneity of various factors, such as, language, culture and economic interests³. The universalists hold the critical viewpoint on the issue of utility of regionalism as they consider that regionalism promotes antagonistic and sectarian interests endangering peace and harmony at global level. Notwithstanding, there has been resurgence in the revival of the phenomena of regionalism for the broad purpose of peace and progress.

The emergence of the trend of regional arrangements (or organisations) has been relatively a recent development in international relations and political economy, including the development studies and aid. This can be viewed as being an attempt to rationalise the process of restructuring of contemporary world through regionalisation. This sort of regionalisation that is based on regional cooperation and aspirations, has been considered as odd responses to globalising tendencies. So far as the process of regionalisation of African states is concerned, it is believed that these states, (already some of them are the most marginalised in

the world trading system) are compelled by the circumstances to be sincere in adopting this path as in absence of regional cooperation it will be further marginalised⁴. Since the regions of Africa are sufferers of ills of poverty and underdevelopment, most of the sub-regional organisations in Africa have shown interest in developmental regionalism while making efforts to create a union of federal African states. During 1990s, the phenomena of the emergence of the regional organisations gained momentum and the process of regional integration started with a new vigour (as that of the European Union) in the regions of Africa, Asia and America. The regional cooperation and integration in African continent has been an important component of the pan African movement that aimed at uniting the African forces while opposing the colonial domination and imperialism. The first effective organisation established on the soil of Africa as a result of the pan Africanism was the Organisation of African Unity which was transformed into the African Union in July 2002.

The Historical Evolution of the African Union

The territory of African continent has an ancient history. The countries of Africa have suffered worst kind of exploitative colonialism and imperialism. Besides British imperialism, other imperialist like France, Portuguese, Italy, Belgium, etc., established their colonies in different parts of the continent. In the beginning of the twentieth century, the prominent leaders belonging to various parts of this continent started realising the necessity of creating pan African consciousness and determination of self-rule by opposing and protesting against the alien rulers. The pan African movement was launched in US and West Indies in the early twentieth century. In the post Second World War period the movement grew stronger and focused on rejection of colonialism and white domination. In the early 1960s, the process of decolonisation became intense in Africa that led to emergence of many independent states in African continent⁵. The pan African ideals tried to create an environment to dissolve the newly acquired state sovereignties into a continental united identity transforming the states into federal units of United States of Africa.

The Africans residing out of Africa, especially American Africans⁶ had felt the need of developing the consciousness of 'Africa for Africans' and to unite all pan- African forces in the larger interests of various nationalities of this continent. The efforts in this direction were made by organising pan-African conferences at various places outside of African continent since the beginning of the twentieth century. The origin of the pan Africanism can be traced back to era of slave trade, colonialism, oppression and exploitation. The movement of the pan Africanism reflected a resistance against the oppression of black man and the racial discrimination. It represented a consciousness of self-assertion and self-determination that, after the Second World War, spread all over the continent and intensified the quest for continental unity. The first pan African conference was held in London in the 1900. A series of such conferences were held between 1919 and 1945. The fifth Congress held in England in 1945 earned the reputation of being a pacemaker for launching a campaign for process of decolonisation and demand for self-rule while putting an end to racial discrimination. It carried forward a vision for a United Africa and accelerated the pace of the national independence struggle. Ghana after winning independence in the 1957 championed the cause of African unity under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah⁷.

The formation of the Organisation of African Unity in May 1963 was a concrete step in this direction. The emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie, had provided it with active support and cooperation making Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, the main centre of the OAU as, later, it became the headquarters of the African Union⁸. The OAU was formed by the prominent African leaders despite the difference in socio-political situations of their countries. It became a unifying force for all the nations of the African continent. All the independent countries were invited to join the OAU.

The first Conference of newly independent countries was held at Accra in April 1958 in which eight countries (Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, and Sudan) of the continent had participated. Besides condemning the colonialism and racism, the Conference made announcement of its support to the Algerian Front of National Liberation (FLN) and adopted the

policy of non-alignment. It was decided to coordinate policies on international political issues. The second Conference was held at Addis Ababa in the 1960 in which thirteen nations of Africa took part. Despite differences of opinions among them on the ideological issues pertaining to the nature and form of African unity, the participant members expressed their determination to follow the principle of 'African solutions to African problems'. The Summit Conference of the independent African countries was held at Addis Ababa on 15-25 May, 1963 in which a committee consisting of Foreign Ministers chaired by the Foreign Minister of Senegal was formed to study various proposals to chalk out a plan for formation of an organisation of African countries so as to promote broad based unity and integration. Despite the difficulties faced by the Committee in effecting a compromise among these various draft proposals, a charter for the formation of the OAU was drafted which was signed by thirty countries, thus clearing the way for establishment of the Organisation of African Unity in May 1963. The issues of peaceful settlement of disputes, an African defense system based on joint military planning and cooperation with the United Nations and ultimately the union of African nations were made the main concern of the OAU. Unity among the African countries and coordinating their policies, sovereignty and integrity of the nations, channelising and mobilising anti-colonial forces, aid to African freedom fighters, and creation of volunteer corps to assist liberation movements constituted the core issues of this organisation. The support for freedom of Angolan was expressed by constituting an assistance fund, 'the Freedom Fighters Fund'.

On the initiative of the OAU, the African Economic Community (AEC) was formed that was to create single domestic market and allow free movement of people, an economic and monetary union, a central bank, a single African currency, and a pan African parliament. The AEC relied on seven regional economic communities (REC) such as, the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Southern Africa Development Community

(SADC), the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the Community of Sahelian-Saharan States (CFN-SAD)¹⁰. However, none of these could succeed in terms of achieving their aims due to conflicts among member states and politico- bureaucratic hurdles.

The OAU failed in its aims and objectives of protecting human rights in African region, peaceful settlement of disputes by negotiations, mediation and conciliation. It proved itself helpless and handicapped in its objective of promoting and consolidating unity among various countries of Africa. The OAU failed in resolving the disputes of various nature prevailing among the states of Africa during the first decade (1963-73) of its birth. It could not settle the border disputes between many countries. The Congo crisis became international issue pulling Africa in the trap of cold war. The foreign intervention especially of USA and Belgium created rift within the OAU. The complexity of this problem forced the OAU to drop the Congo problem from its agenda and close the chapter on Congo problem. A big refugee problem emerged as a consequence of social conflicts and territorial disputes which could not be satisfactorily settled by the OAU¹¹. Besides these, many of its weaknesses created a situation that made it necessary to replace it with, probably, more effective organisation, the African Union.

The AEC proved instrumental in transformation of the OAU into the AU. In July 2002, the African Union was formed at the assembly of African states in South Africa while dissolving the OAU which was established on the active initiatives taken by the leaders of independence movement, such as, Kwame Nkrumah, G.A. Nasser, Milton Obote, Ben Bella, Julius Nyerere¹². The Union aimed at developing continental unity and integration of African countries into one nation by eliminating the tendencies of friction and factions prevalent among various countries of the continent. Before the formation of the African Union, the Organisation of the African Unity undertook a number of initiatives for regional integration and cooperation to effectively combat and contain the affect of the globalisation, imperialism and the challenges of marginalisation of African continent¹³. The earlier agenda of anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism

undertaken by the OAU was not found to be sufficient to effectively meet the challenges posed by the process of globalisation; thus necessitating a review of the programme and policies of the organisation without overtly antagonising the imperialistic powers. The debates began taking place in the late-1990s to, specifically, discuss this issue and prepare a definite programme. The formation of an organisation replacing the erstwhile OAU to focus more on conflict resolution, the process of peacekeeping and overall development of African countries was seriously debated. The need of the formation of a new organisation was felt due to growing inefficiency of the OAU and increasing nature and number of the challenges in constantly changing regional and international scenario.

On July 9, 2002, leaders of 43 African countries met in Durban, South Africa to replace the 39-year Organisation of African Unity (OAU). Leaders of the continent decided to transform OAU into an effective African Union(AU), with the intention of eventually creating an African parliament, an African court of justice and a common currency. A new constitution was made and the formation of the AU was formally announced. The constitutive act of the Union places the AU at the apex of all regional and sub-regional organisations. The emphasis was laid on the aspect of security, development and stability of the continent. Many new provisions were made which made it quite distinct from the OAU. The secretariat of the OAU was renamed as the 'Commission', the Council of Ministers as the 'Executive Council' and the Assembly of heads of state and government as the 'Assembly'. Two new important organs were created; the one was the African Court on Human and People's Rights in January 2004 and the second was the Pan African Parliament. The Bureau of OAU was transformed into a Peace and Security Council (PSC) signifying the emphasis on the restoration of peace and stability in Africa. Unlike the provisions of the OAU, the AU made effective mechanism of mediation to deal with the increasing large scale violent conflicts endangering the peace and developmental process, by inclusion of a provision that allowed the Union to intervene in member state subject to approval by Assembly in grave situations such as, crimes against

humanity, genocide and war crimes. The acts of terror, political assassinations and subversions, including unconstitutional changes of government were condemned. A provision was also included to suspend the membership of any government that had adopted illegal means to come to power¹⁴. In the 1960s, the pan African leaders discussed about the future of the continent with a view to explore the possibility of merger of African countries into a 'United States of Africa' while the AU, after nearly forty years, establishes an organisation along the lines of model of European Union (EU) and build 'Peace and Security Council' (PSC), which is similar to that of Security Council of the United Nations. The AU has plan to build its own African standby force by 2010.

The principal agenda of the Union was pushing forward the programme of development by assigning the member states the responsibility to safeguard and promote the interests of the continent and not to permit any external (non-African) country or force to influence and affect the process of development and integration in the nations of the African continent. Most of the countries of Africa won independence in 1960s and some of them afterwards, and almost all of them were suffering from financial ailments as a result of which the member nations could only relate to the aspects of socio-political dimensions while developing the unity among themselves. The colonial as well as independent countries of this continent had suffered exploitation and discrimination at the hands of Western nations. The prominent leaders of Africa made serious and sincere endeavour to put an end to such situations by channelising the aspirations of African nations for common cause along the principles of freedom, equality and justice. The efforts contained the spirit of oneness and competitiveness¹⁵. They strove for unification of Africa and the formation of the United States of Africa.

Abdoulaye Wade, the President of Senegal, emphasised and made efforts to integrate African Diaspora (African communities residing in other parts of world) into the African Union. President Wade expressed his sentiments and commitment for the continental unity at the Abuja Conference on the African Union, Abuja, Nigeria on 12 November 2005 by saying that if they (member states) could unite Africa in coming days; he would serve as Governor of

Senegal¹⁶. The most populous nation, Nigeria, during the tenure of its President, Obasanjo, played very important role in advancing the cause of African Union and its consolidation. Libya has been its staunch supporter and contributed to its development by investing substantial amount of its finance capital for the unity of the African continent. The cause of the continental unity and development seemed to be transferred from the hands of erstwhile leaders like Nkruma and Nasser to Wade and Gaddafi. The Union tried to galvanise the support of the African Diaspora.

The Regional Organisation for Cooperation and Development

The regional cooperation was sought and endeavours were made to maximise their relations with their former colonial masters to focus on trade promotion based on trade liberalisation scheme by creating free trade areas. The main constraints of the African economies necessitating regional alliance for cooperation included, relatively small scale economies, the lack of rational economic organisations as a consequence of tendency of dependence on colonial powers and import of capital goods. These factors created a propitious ground for formation of the regional cooperative organisations such as, the Customs and Economic Union of Central Africa (UDEAC) in the 1964, the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), the East African Community (EAC) in the 1966 (latter the East African Cooperation), the West African Economic Community (CEACO) in the 1972, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the 1975, the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) in the 1990, the Preferential Trade Area (PTA) in the 1980 (latter the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) in the 1999), the Southern African Development Coordinating Conference (SADCC) in the 1980 (latter the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) in the 1992, the Union of Maghreb Arab States (UMA) in the 1988¹⁷.

The traditional representation of pan African unity was state centric and inward driven which was radically changed after the formation of the NEPAD. On its inception, the President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki claimed to have

changed the old pan-African notion of 'African renaissance' into a strategic one. The NEPAD allows international trade liberalisation and investment friendly strategy. It hopes to gain a sustained seven percent rate of annual economic growth for Africa by adopting the market tactics of diversification of production and drawing new investments and aid. The signatories of the NEPAD have committed to promote good governance and shown their willingness to participate in an African Peer Review Mechanism according to which they have agreed to be subjected to the assessment of their standard of functioning of democratic system, human rights, governance and economic management. This remarkable change from the traditional pan African policies has made Genoa and Kananaskis G-8 summits to sponsor an 'Action Plan for Africa'. The unqualified endorsement of the NEPAD by bilateral and multilateral donors is one of the most comprehensive schemes ever launched for betterment of the continent¹⁸.

The NEPAD evolved and its strategy and programme were prepared by the leaders of Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal, and South Africa on behalf of the initiative taken by the OAU for an integrated socio-economic development of Africa. The OAU formally adopted the document of strategic framework of NEPAD at the Thirty Seventh Summit in July 2001. This document reflected the realisation of the leaders of Africa that the continent would not develop if it remained dependent on the aids and grants provided by the Western countries and therefore the NEPAD made strategy to develop on its own while discovering a new approach to the development of the industrial and information sectors of the continent¹⁹.

The main objectives of the NEPAD was to deal with the problems of the continent such as, increasing poverty levels due to poor distribution system and the lack of transportation facilities, shortage of capital, lack of educational and informational capabilities, including lack of clean water and industrial marginalisation of Africa. Thus, this organisation aimed at elimination of poverty, creation of conditions for sustainable growth and development, integrating Africa into global economy and empowerment of women²⁰. Some principles were considered essential to be adopted to bring about necessary changes and make

improvement in people's living conditions like, good governance to ensure peace, security, and sustainable political and socio-economic development, African ownership and leadership as well as participation by all sections of society, basing the development of Africa on its resources and the resourcefulness of its people, partnership between and among African people, acceleration of regional and continental integration²¹. These organisations with developmental agenda helped in expansion of the OAU and AU, rather acted as catalysts in achieving their aims and objectives. However, success of the AU depends on many factors and it is difficult to pass a judgment on its future achievements.

The Peacekeeping Role of the African Union

The AU in its constitutive act made provision to focus effectively on creating peace and security in African region and intervene in internal affairs of member state in case of grave circumstances unlike its predecessor, the OAU which had adopted the norm of non-intervention. As a result of this policy of the OAU, it remained a mute observer to the atrocities carried out by some of its member states. The African countries perpetrated human right violations and atrocities on their own people and in neighbouring countries. Many of the members of the OAU were not legitimately elected representative of their people but self appointed dictators. However, the OAU made use of preventive diplomacy and peacemaking strategies in pursuant to its policy of mediation, conciliation and negotiation. At the 1993 summit at Cairo, the member states of the OAU decided to adopt a mechanism and policy to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts in Africa. In 1994, a devastating tragedy of the genocide took place in Rwanda which was characterised by inhuman brutality despite the existence of preventive policy of the OAU. This incident made it essential to evolve new paradigm to maintain and promote peace and security in the country. The decade of 1990s has been the most violent period in the history of Africa involving the regions of Somalia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Congo, Angola and Sudan. The AU adopted (based on past experiences) policy to maintain peace and

security in the African continent by military interventions in the areas of conflict, if needed²².

The AU assumed the responsibility to conduct peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace building through its organ, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) that was established in 2004. The crisis situation is assessed by the PSC and sends fact-finding mission to affected area and authorises intervention by the AU. The PSC can recommend to the Assembly on behalf of the Union for intervention in member state in case of grave situation like genocide and crime against humanity. This represents a major qualitative difference between the AU and OAU. The Union is working towards forming its own African Standby Force (ASF) to implement effectively the provision of armed intervention. The ASF will comprise of five brigades, one each from five sub regions of the continent; East, West, Central, North and South. A continental warning system and a panel of Wise will also be established to assist in the process of peacemaking. The AU will maintain relationship with UN and other regional and sub regional organisations²³. Though, the AU has not been able to conduct peace building operations on the continent despite the need for it, it has intervened in some regions, such as Burundi, Darfur of Sudan and Somalia to restore peace and assist peace operations of UN. The AU does not have strong support to effectively monitor the humanitarian crisis in Darfur. The weak support makes it difficult for the AU to coordinate peace-building initiatives to advance the cause of peace. In addition to that, it suffers from financial crunch.

The African Union Mission in Burundi

The conflict affected regions in Burundi needed substantial peace building initiative. The AU, UN and other partners have made combined efforts to restore peace in Burundi by preventing the incidents of genocide that have been occurring in this country. It was for the first time in 2003 that the AU initiated and executed the peace operation plans in Burundi (also known as the African Union Mission in Burundi (AMIB)) by deploying more than 3,000 soldiers to restore peace and security that can be described as a milestone in the history of the AU

for operationalising peace efforts on its own. The AU had effective mandate to undertake peacebuilding initiative in Burundi. Mamadou Bah was appointed as the representative of the AU to assist in peacebuilding process in Burundi. The peacebuilding task of the AU included, opening secure mobilisation centres²⁴, protection of politician, and improving the ability of the AMIB to bring former militia back into mainstream of society. The AMIB also took initiative for creating a condition that would enable displaced persons and refugee to return to their homes. This effort was in line with the policy framework of the AU and the NEPAD²⁵.

The AMIB also worked to create a suitable condition for a UN peace operation in the country as the UN showed reluctance to enter the country in a situation that had the potential to relapse into conflict. The AMIB gained substantial success in preventing conflicts and advancing the cause of peacebuilding and also in creating conducive condition for the UN peacekeeping efforts to operate in the country. In June 2004, the UN Security Council passed a resolution to send a peacekeeping mission in Burundi under the leadership of Berhanu Dinka. The former AMIB troops were also integrated into the UN Peace Operation in the country. By October 2006, nearly 20,000 military personnel have been demobilised but due to the lack of economic opportunities, a potential security threat in Burundi is still imminent. Though the AU peace operation mission was replaced by that of the UN, it was felt that the continental body like AU could make useful peacebuilding intervention on the continent. The AU, UN and associated partners need to continue making their joint efforts to ensure peace in the country.

The African Peace Mission in Sudan

The conflict in Darfur of Sudan is posing a real challenge to the AU. The origin of the conflict dates back, at least, to the seventeenth century when Arab invaders established a sultanate amongst the indigenous Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa people of the region. The coexistence of various social groups was strained by a situation of drought. The Socio-economic marginalisation of

Darfurian people by the ruling regime in Khartoum led to the rebellion by the former in February 2003. The government launched its own military offensive in retaliation, with support of a proxy fighting force (known as Janjaweed). This violent conflict has resulted into displacement of more than two million people. In early 2008, the UN Security Council has passed a resolution calling for deployment of 20,000 military personnel to replace the 7000 troops of the African Union²⁶.

The Khartoum regime is opposing the presence of UN peace force in Darfur and argues that the Darfur situation is its internal affair and therefore, the deployment of UN peacekeeping force in its region would be tantamount to the recolonisation of Sudan. The AU is making efforts to find a political solution and undertaking peace operation initiative to restore peace and normalcy in the region. The AU needs stronger peacekeeping force to control the situation and prevent genocide that is taking place in Darfur. The AU's peacemaking efforts in Abuja and Nigeria under the guidance of Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, the former secretary general of the OAU led to the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) in May 2006 in which only one faction (Minni Minnawi) participated. The recent peace talks convened in Tripoli, Libya in October 2007 failed which indicated continuance of more violent conflicts. The situation has deteriorated as the armed militant groups have begun fighting against each other giving birth to new problems, political, diplomatic and military in nature. The Sudanese regime in Khartoum is not permitting UN/AU joint peace operations in Darfur making the peacekeeping process difficult²⁷.

The AU is experiencing its institutional and resource constraints in Darfur. Since the plan for deployment of UN force in Darfur is seen as the part of global war (it is also viewed as global imperialism by groups closer to Osama Bin Laden) in the aftermath of the incident of 9/11, thus making the issue complicated, the AU is making peacemaking efforts without any success worth the name. A new partnership of the AU with UN peacekeeping efforts to make concerted efforts to resolve the conflicts in African regions is a positive development in the field of collaborative peacekeeping operations. The AU-UN

partnership is likely to produce fruitful results provided both work jointly without falling in the trap of super ordination and paternalism. As a regional organisation, the AU has important role to play in orienting the peacekeeping process while respecting the local sensibilities.

The African Union Mission in Somalia

The collapse of the central government of Somalia in the 1991 resulted into civil war. Sixteen years of peacemaking efforts could not resolve conflicts in Somalia and restore peace. In May 2007, violent conflicts caused tremendous damage and loss of life and as a result of which the humanitarian relief operations were prevented. In December 2006, the UN Security Council authorised the AU to establish a protection and training mission in Somalia. Pursuant to that, the Peace and Security Council of the AU set up the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in January 2007. Based on the report prepared by the Chairperson of the AU Commission on the Situation in Somalia and the recommendations of the AU Military Staff Committee, the Peace and Security Council of the AU authorised the deployment of AMISOM. The major objectives of the AMISOM are; to provide support for the transitional federal institutions (TFIs) in their effort to normalise the situation and initiate reconciliation, to facilitate the humanitarian assistance, and to create conditions for long-term peace, reconstruction and development in Somalia²⁸.

The UN supports African Union mission in Somalia by providing military planners and an assistance cell to the AU in Addis Ababa. The UN Security Council met with the AU's PSC in June 2007 for a better collaboration for restoring peace in Somalia. The AU mission in Somalia deployed 1700 Ugandan troops in March 2007. Negeria, Ghana, Malavi and Burundi also declared their willingness to contribute by deploying their troops. The AMISOM is making efforts to stabilise the regions of Mogadishu and Baidoa while trying to create conditions for complete withdrawal of Ethiopian Troops from Somalia, besides initiating dialogue and reconciliation. The European Union and United Kingdom (UK) are supporting the AMISOM by providing financial assistance. UK is

providing planning assistance and logistic support for the AU military cell in Addis Ababa²⁹. The EU has shown keenness to support the AU in its long-term capacity building, military and civilian crisis management to strengthen its ability to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts.

The AU imposed sanction on Comoros Island of Anjouan, one of the three islands in the Indian Ocean archipelago, as its leader, Mohamed Bacar rebelled against the government by holding a local election in June 2007. The sanction has been extended by one month that includes a travel ban on 145 Anjouanais official and freezing of funds and other financial assets³⁰.

Compared to the OAU, the AU has proved more effective in its role of conflict management. But it is too early to predict its prospect of preventing, managing and resolving conflicts as the AU is facing a number of constraints. Though it has taken active interest in undertaking peacekeeping initiatives in conflict affected regions but could not effectively implement its own decisions and agenda. The experience of its role in Burundi, Sudan and Somalia shows that the AU has to grow stronger enough to maintain peace and security on the continent. The AU may prove to be a boon for peace and progress of the African continent provided its financial and other constraints are removed so as to make it more effective, decisive and capable of successfully meeting various security challenges and deliver results.

Constraints and Challenges Before the African Union

Initially, after attaining independence, the African nations were not in sound economic positions (some of them being in weaker conditions) as a result of which they depended on colonial metropolitan centres for support. Such dependence of newly independent countries of Africa did not allow creation of a conducive atmosphere for development of unity and integration among the African nations as the latter were often antagonistic towards each other due to clashes of their interests³¹. The Zambia and its neighbour Congo could not trade with each other without first going through their former colonial masters, which was one of the problems in the way of regional cooperation of the Continent. It

was more disappointing and disturbing that the nations of Africa seemed to be dictated by the foreign development agencies on the aspects of their development agenda.

A number of regional cooperation organisations emerged on the continent but the desired objectives could not be achieved. The term ‘internationalism’ was used by some leaders expecting to obtain resources from the west, but, that too remained elusive. The Lagos Plan of Action (which was a part of implementation of the Monrovia Strategy for the Economic Development of Africa adopted in July 1979) was one of the most systematic and comprehensive endeavours of the leaders of the continent aimed at creating integration and development. This plan of action emphasised on self-reliance blaming the conditions of dependence on foreign agencies for their failure to achieve the expected target. However, this attempt too could not succeed³².

Inconvertibility of currencies and divergent policies pose major challenges to the process and efforts of regional cooperation and integration. There are cases of civil war, terror acts of militia groups, ethnic conflicts, non-compliance of constitutional rules and norms, and the failure of state to assert its authority and acceptance of its legitimacy by the people. The newly independent African countries adopted different political ideologies to run their government and political system that create obstacles in the progress of regional cooperation. The strong bilateral relations with the former colonial rulers posed challenges to horizontal relations within African states while the vertical links with European nations grew stronger. The dream of the continental unity remained elusive and feeble, despite the common heritage of subjugation under the colonial rule. The linkages of the movement for political unity with that of a continental market were not paid serious attention. Even if other African states accepted Nkrumah’s analysis, they showed reluctance in accepting his long-term political solution. To them, the threat of neo-colonialism was not as grave and frightening as that of the subordination of their sovereign status to an overall political authority³³. The ideal of pan African political unity of Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere remained merely theoretical propositions. Their dream could not be reflected in the form of

creation of some pan African conscious institutions or even a union government, or an African common market (or an economic community)

It was a multilateral forum where the pan African ideals became subordinate to more immediate issues pertaining to sovereignty enhancement, non-interference in domestic affairs and mutual respect for colonial boundaries. During the annual summit of the OAU, head of state and government engaged in discussions on the issue of boundary dispute as it was not well demarcated as colonial rulers had created arbitrary boundaries³⁴. The OAU had strictly adhered to the principles of non-interference in the internal matters of member states as a consequence of which it could not address new sources of conflicts. It appeared to provide impunity to authoritarians and aggressive regimes.

Initially, it worked well but soon factionalism plagued the organisation. The President of Uganda, Milton Obote criticised United States of America for its role in supporting white rule in African continent and neglecting the interests of African Americans³⁵. This created difficulties for Uganda as USA tried to isolate its President.

The Pan African Parliament has constraints in terms of limitation of its power due to very nature of its composition, mode of recruitment and unclear agenda and virtually having no decisional powers. It lacks democratic base and supranational functions unlike that of the European Parliament. The role of the Pan-African Parliament is likely to be similar to that of the role of regional Assemblies in Latin America. Similarly, the power of the PSC is also limited as this council is empowered to take decision on peacekeeping operations only after these have been agreed upon by the states concerned. Therefore, it does not have the power to take decision unilaterally on military operations and interventions as the Security Council of the UN has. The PSC relies on the AU Assembly for the approval of its recommendations. Meeting the expenditure of enlarged institutional structure is posing a formidable challenge. The industrialised countries have shown little interest on important issues of agricultural subsidies. How far do the African states show their commitment and readiness in

implementation of the suggested reforms, is yet to be seen. The process of peer review is yet another scale to assess the credibility of the AU³⁶

There are a number of instances of failed initiatives and institutions in Africa. The democratic agenda adopted by the AU can be described as bold initiatives but as far its practical implementation is concerned, the challenges are formidable. The provisions and structures made in the constitutive act of the AU are encouraging and signify determination and commitment for strengthening the democratic system and promoting the prospect of good governance. However, it has many obstacles before itself. To name a few, it has too many institutions with conflicting functions, for example, the AU has many more institutions than the OAU had. Their roles and functions are not clearly demarcated. The relationship between the AU and NEPAD is not clearly defined. The emergence of regional organisations in large numbers with conflicting roles and functions too pose challenges for success of the initiatives of the AU. The financial problem is going to be another big challenge. One of the causes of the failure of the OAU was non-payment of contributions by many members. It may not be easy for the AU with many of its institutions and structures to receive contributions from its members facing their own financial difficulties. The assessment of the AU on the recent elections held in Cameroon, Malawi, Nigeria and Zimbabwe has not been encouraging as it has described those elections as 'free and fair' while most of the international observers have critical views on these elections. The role played by top leaders of the organisations does not seem to be impartial³⁷. However, any prediction at this stage will be premature. It remains to be seen how far the AU succeeds with such constraints and challenges.

Conclusion

The closer and strong regional cooperation and integration is an essential condition for the peace and development of Africa. The new regional initiatives undertaken by the AU have advantages that were not available to the previous organisation, the OAU. The first is the leaders and policy makers of AU, today, have the benefit of experiences of the OAU. The new initiatives are more

pragmatic than the previous one. The other factor for its potential success is that the national and international situations are more conducive to its success. At the national level, the accelerating process of democratisation has provided new possibilities to restructure and reshape the socio-political systems of the African countries, besides the advantages of the fresh and vigorous pursuits of economic reforms. The emerging representative forms of governments provide new impetus to the initiatives of regional cooperation and integration.

The African Union has not been gaining success as planned and expected due to the internal and external causative factors (conflicts and hostilities among member states on various issues form a part of internal factors while marginalisation of the African countries, in general, especially in the post-cold war period constitute as the external factor). The internal bickerings have been taking place within the organisation due to the antagonistic approach and attitude of the member states. Another reason of its being not so successful is multi-ethnic social composition of the African continent unlike that of the European Union. The implementation of provisions of the Union for the success of democracy and good governance is not going to be easy. However, there are valid reasons for optimism to find the AU equipped with various instruments to implement its agenda compared to that of the OAU. The number of democrats members in the Union is more than before and the western countries too seem to be willing to cooperate in making democratic efforts successful that was missing in the past. The essential condition for success of the Union could be created by willingness of the powerful countries on the continent to refrain from taking recourse to independent actions and better coordination among the member states with fairness.

African states are increasingly adopting the participatory forms of government but there is lot to do in this direction in terms of qualitative change. The people are to be educated and trained to abide by the constitutional law and make contribution to the developmental efforts of the government even if the ruling party is other than they voted for. The government should make endeavours to build consensus among people on the issue of policy formulation, especially in

troubled areas. This will improve the trade and economic relations at regional and sub-regional levels. The enhanced regional cohesion through better economic ties will reinforce and help sustain the political and economic reform measures undertaken by African countries. In addition to the regional efforts, national economic plans and their implementation, good governance, and utilisation of human resources are essential attributes to positive responses of regional cooperation and integration. The non-governmental social and economical agencies should also be encouraged to take active part in the developmental process. The efforts of democratisation process at bigger scale will lay the foundation of sustainable peace and development on the continent.

Notes and References

1. See Mathews, K., 'Moving Towards a United Africa', *Africa Quarterly: Indian Journal of African Affairs*, volume 47, number 3, August- October 2007, pp. 19-21 for details on historicity and evolution of pan Africanism
2. According to Timothy Murithi, the main objective of the formation of the OAU was to safeguard the sovereignty and integrity of newly independent countries of Africa while the AU focused on the democratisation, good governance and promoting peace and development on the continent. See Murithi, Timothy, *The African Union: Pan Africanism, Peacebuilding and Development*, n.p., Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005, p. 9, accessed on internet website: www./books.google.co.in/books?id dated 04/22/2008.
3. Mehrish, B.N., *International Organizations: Structures and Processes*, Jalandhar City, Vishal Publications, n.d., pp. 198-99.
4. Bods, Morten, 'Regions and Regionalism: A Heretic View', in *Discussion Paper II: Regionalism and Regional Integration in Africa: A Debate of Current Aspects and Issues*, Uppsala, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2001, p. 27.
5. Farrell, Mary, Hettne, Bjorn, Langenhove, Luk Van (eds.), *Global Politics of Regionalism: Theory and Practice*, London, Pluto Press, 2005, p. 174.
6. The Africans were captured, enslaved and transported out to America through sea route.
7. 'Towards a United Africa!!' <http://www.uneca.org/adfiii/riefforts/hist.htm>, dated 4/22/2008, pp. 1-2.
8. Asante, Molefi Kete, *The History of Africa: The Quest for Eternal Harmony*, New York, Routledge, 2007, p. 339.
9. Mehrish, B.N., *op.cit.*, pp. 210-11.
10. Farrell, Mary, Hettne, Bjorn, Langenhove, Luk Van (eds.), *op.cit.*, p. 175.
11. See Malakar, Subodh N., 'OAU- Failures, Achievements and Prospects', *World Focus*, volume 20, number 3, March 2000, pp. 11-14 for details. Also see Fombad, Charles Manga, 'The African Union, Democracy and Good Governance', in Melber, Henning (ed.), *AU, NEPAD and the APRM: Democratisation Efforts Explored*, Current African Issues No. 32, Uppsala, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2006, p. 9.
12. Asante, Molefi Kete, *op.cit.*, p. 339.
13. *Ibid*, p. 341.
14. See Melber, Henning, *The New African Initiative and the African Union: A Preliminary Assessment and Documentation*, Uppsala, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2001, pp.32-3 for details.
15. Asante, Molefi Kete, *op.cit.*, p. 340.
16. *Ibid*, p. 340. Originally reproduced from the documents of Ambuja Conference on the African Union, Ambuja, Nigeria, 12 November 2005.
17. *Ibid*, p. 342.
18. Farrell, Mary, Hettne, Bjorn, Langenhove, Luk Van (eds.), *op.cit.*, p. 175.
19. Asante, Molefi Kete, *op.cit.*, p. 343.

20. *Ibid*, p. 343.
21. *Ibid*.
22. Murithi, Tim, 'The African Union's Evolving Role in Peace Operations: the African Union Mission in Burundi, The African Union Mission in Sudan and The African Union Mission in Somalia', *African Security Review*, Institute for Security Studies, pp. 70-2.
www.iss.co.za/dynamic/administration/file_manager/file_links/17NO1MURITHI? Dated 04/22/2008.
23. *Ibid*, pp. 73-4.
24. The demobilising centres supervised the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration process (DDR) that constituted foundation of peacebuilding process.
25. Murithi, Tim, *op.cit*, pp. 75-6.
26. *Ibid*, p. 76.
27. *Ibid*, p. 77.
28. *Ibid*, p. 80.
29. *Ibid*, pp. 81-2.
30. 'Continental Developments', *Africa Research Bulletin*, volume 45, number 1, January 16th- February 15th 2008, pp. 17690-1.
31. Asante, Molefi Kete, *op.cit.*, pp. 341-2.
32. *Ibid*, pp. 342-3.
33. Asante, S.K.B., *Regionalism and Africa's Development: Expectations, Reality and Challenges*, Great Britain, Macmillan Press Limited, 1997, p. 34.
34. Farrell, Mary, Hettne, Bjorn, Langenhove, Luk Van (eds.), *op.cit.*, pp. 174-5.
35. In an open letter to the President of USA, the President Obote had written that the foreign ministers of Africa had passed resolution in which the Republic of South Africa and its apartheid policies, racist policies of Portuguese in Angola and Mozambique, white settlers in southern Rhodesia were condemned, and USA was accused of tacitly supporting those oppressive regimes, and practicing hypocrisy by projecting itself as a leader of democracy and freedom while blacks were murdered in Alabama. This created controversies and factions between the African nations during the period of cold war as the African nations began taking sides. See Asante, Molefi Kete, *op.cit.*, pp. 339-40.
36. Farrell, Mary, Hettne, Bjorn, Langenhove, Luk Van (eds.), *op.cit.*, pp. 177-8.
37. Melber, Henning (ed.), *AU, NEPAD and the APRM: Democratisation Efforts Explored*, *op.cit.*, pp. 35.