



## African Union Commission

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**DANS CETTE PARUTION**



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## Foreword



“Fridays of the Commission” has been conceived to serve as a forum for discussion on current political and socio-economic problems of Africa, including the process and impacts of integration and globalization. It is worth mentioning that this activity has been in the pipeline since the ushering in of the AU Commission. This is a clear manifestation of the commitment at the highest level of the Commission, to see through the success of the continental integration agenda. I would, therefore, like to thank His Excellency Professor Alpha Oumar Konare, Chairperson of the Commission, for his support for this activity.

“Fridays of the Commission” was launched on October 5, 2007, and was on the theme *“Integration: top-down or bottom-up approach”*?

The importance of Africa’s economic and political integration cannot be over-emphasised. Decades of effort by the continent’s leadership to bring about sustained socio-economic development have failed to yield any sustainable benefits to the continent’s citizenry. As other regions of the world boast of high economic growth and sustained development, Africa continues to lag behind in all spheres. Integration appears to be the only option left to rid the continent of its woes. Most successful regions of the world are those that have gone through the process of integration and the benefits are abundantly clear. Africa is no exception to this rule if it is to break away from its difficult past.

The quest to integrate has become even more pressing in light of the new challenges facing Africa, globalization in particular. For Africa, integration has no credible alternative. Enhanced economic growth, expanded and competitive regional and continental markets, insulation against the vagaries of globalization while benefiting from the wide range of opportunities it offers, and the promotion of regional security are some of the potential benefits of African integration. In addition, global challenges such as climate change, fight against HIV/AIDS, organized crime, migration and development, as well as the fight against poverty are most effectively dealt with in an integrated space.

In the spirit of dialogue, I would like to call upon all of you to seriously address the integration challenges facing the African continent. Sons and daughters of Africa have their hopes in our leadership to steer the continent through the integration agenda. Given that integration is the only option for Africa, the future generation will not forgive the leadership for failing to cash in on the opportunity integration offers, including the attainment of real sustainable development.

Given the significance of the African integration agenda, it is necessary to create avenues where voices can be heard and ideas shared. “Fridays of the Commission” does just this. It creates the opportunity for All Africans, including those in the Diaspora, to share good ideas with policy makers. Such engagements will enrich policies designed by continent’s decision makers.

I would like to use this opportunity to acknowledge the invaluable contribution made by all members of the editorial board of this bulletin: Dr René N’Guettia Kouassi, for his



technical and intellectual support; Mme Habiba Mejri-Cheikh, for extending her useful contribution and that of her staff; Mr. Yeo Dossina, Mr Baboucarr Koma and Ms Hiwot Tifsihit, Mrs Hirout Yirgu, and Mrs Emma Kassamale for their diligent organization of the conference and preparation of this bulletin. I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to Ms Christiane Yanrou, Senior Website Administrator, Mr Asmerom Girma, Web Administrator and Mr Engida Wasse, Photographer, for their professional contribution on the bulletin. Last but not least I would like to recognize the dedicated and hard working team of the Department of Economic Affairs for the realization of this project.

The inaugural conference debate held in October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2007, will be followed by many more on topical issues related to the socio-economic and cultural development of the African continent, with integration at the heart of the process. I would, therefore, like to take this opportunity to invite all Africans, both at home and in the Diaspora, to actively participate as well as propose topics for discussion in future conference debates. This is a window of opportunity for all of you, whether you are intellectuals, economic operators, politicians, students or members of the Diaspora. So, speak out and let your voices be heard.

Dr. Maxwell Mkwezalamba  
Commissioner for Economic Affairs



## Introduction

### *Integration in Africa: A Constant Problem*

In Africa, the problem of Regional integration is not new. It has been expressed since the beginning of the independence of African countries, considering the will of the African leaders to contain the perverse effects of the balkanisation of the Continent. Political as well as economic reasons explain the establishment of a large number of Cooperation and Inter Governmental institutions whose common objective is to enable African countries speak with one and the same voice and to remove all constraints linked to the narrow national markets. The dynamics in favour of integration first reached its peak in the 80s with the Lagos Plan of Action and Final Act, then in the 90s and in 2000 with the adoption of the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community and the Constitutive Act, respectively.

Since the 60s, the initiatives multiplied to strengthen and speed up the regional and continental integration. But, paradoxical as it may sound, the results obtained were below expectations. The Regional Groupings, indeed the Regional Economic Communities have not taken off; the trade between African countries is still low; free movement of persons, goods, capital and services is still a remote notion from reality; the right of residence and settlement looks more like a dream; the production units have so far not reached the expected performance, making African economies more precarious; African economic operators are still unable to reasonably face external competition; banking or non-banking financial intermediaries

## Introduction

### *Intégration en Afrique : Une Constante Problématique*

En Afrique, la problématique de l'intégration régionale n'est pas une préoccupation nouvelle. Elle a été exprimée dès l'aube des indépendances, compte tenu de la volonté des dirigeants africains de contenir les effets pervers de la balkanisation du continent. Des raisons aussi bien politiques qu'économiques expliquent la création d'un grand nombre d'institutions intergouvernementales de coopération et d'intégration dont l'objectif commun est de permettre aux pays africains de parler d'une seule et même voix et de desserrer toutes les contraintes liées à l'exiguïté des marchés nationaux. La dynamique en faveur de l'intégration a atteint son point culminant d'abord dans les années 80, avec le Plan d'action et l'Acte final de Lagos, puis dans les années 90 et dans les années 2000, avec l'adoption du Traité d'Abuja instituant la Communauté économique africaine et de l'Acte constitutif de l'Union africaine, respectivement.

Depuis les années 60, les initiatives se sont donc succédé pour renforcer et accélérer le processus d'intégration régionale et continentale. Mais, aussi paradoxal que cela puisse paraître, les résultats obtenus sont restés en deçà des espérances. Les groupements régionaux, voire les communautés économiques régionales ont du plomb dans l'aile; les échanges entre pays africains sont encore faibles; la libre circulation des personnes, des biens, des capitaux et des services est encore une notion bien éloignée de la réalité; les droits de résidence et d'établissement s'apparentent de plus en plus à une chimère; les unités de production n'ont pu jusqu'ici atteindre les performances escomptées, précarisant davantage les économies africaines; les opérateurs économiques africains sont encore incapables de faire valablement face



face, in most cases, difficulties to move away from the yoke of the Metropolis and *de facto* do not play their role of internalising the mechanisms and levers of the development of our Continent.

What needs to be done in the face of such a seeming impasse? Is the approach adopted, so far, as regards to integration, the best adapted or the most appropriate? Have the African countries frankly played their role in the Regional and Continental integration process? In other words, have they favoured the national stakes to the detriment of the Community interests? Many questions come to mind when we try to identify the causes of the mitigated results obtained in the economic and political integration of Africa. And yet the advantages of Regional integration are well known. The solutions to achieve an effective and speedy Regional integration are also known. Furthermore, the conviction that there is no credible alternative to Regional and Continental integration for the African countries in the present context of the modern world is also broadly shared by the African public opinion.

Africa, as a whole, is indeed aware of the need and urgency for Regional and Continental integration, which it considers in the meantime a necessary path to meet the exigencies of the development of the world economy for the benefit of its peoples. Africans and their leaders have only to translate the commitments made for integration into deeds and to make the Community considerations prevail over national egoism. The Commission of the African Union has the historical duty to support them in this process by ensuring, among other things, the harmonisation and coordination of

à la concurrence extérieure; les intermédiaires financiers bancaires ou non bancaires éprouvent, dans la plupart des cas, des difficultés à se soustraire du joug de la métropole, et *de facto* à jouer le rôle qui leur échoit dans l'endogénéisation des mécanismes et leviers du développement de notre continent.

Que faire face à cette impasse apparente? L'approche adoptée jusqu'à présent en matière d'intégration est-elle la plus adaptée ou la plus appropriée? Les pays africains ont-ils franchement joué le rôle qui leur revient dans le processus d'intégration régionale et continentale? En d'autres termes, ont-ils privilégié les enjeux nationaux aux dépens des enjeux communautaires? Bon nombre d'interrogations traversent l'esprit quand on cherche à identifier les causes des résultats mitigés obtenus sur les fronts de l'intégration économique et de l'intégration politique en Afrique. Et pourtant, les avantages de l'intégration régionale sont connus. Les solutions pour réaliser une intégration rapide et efficace sont également connues. Par ailleurs, la conviction que l'intégration régionale et continentale n'a pas d'alternative crédible pour les pays africains, dans le contexte actuel de l'évolution du monde moderne, est aussi largement partagée par l'opinion africaine.

L'Afrique tout entière est en effet consciente de la nécessité et de l'urgence de l'intégration régionale et continentale qu'elle considère au demeurant comme un passage obligé pour répondre aux exigences de l'évolution de l'économie mondiale, au bénéfice de ses populations. Il reste simplement aux Africains et à leurs dirigeants à traduire dans les faits les engagements pris en matière d'intégration et à exprimer le primat des considérations communautaires sur les égoïsmes nationaux. La Commission de l'Union africaine a l'obligation historique de les accompagner dans ce processus en



policies and strategies prepared for this purpose. It is, therefore, extremely urgent for the African Union Commission to revisit the approach to Regional integration. A new approach associating the beneficiaries with the task of integration is to be promoted. Integration should be carried out in a bottom up and not a top down way as it has been the case until now. Consequently, this new approach must have, as basis, the promotion of activities aimed at making the Regional space sustainable, by consolidating the production units already in place; the establishment of new production units in the sectors and branches having great added value. All these activities must flourish on the basis of national comparative advantages, in order to avoid any unnecessary competition which suits all those who want to exploit our Continent.

Furthermore, the new approach for a successful Regional integration must ensure the emergence of a new generation of African businessmen or economic operators who become accustomed to the Regional space, while equipping themselves with the means to face international competition, without any complication. By encouraging the economic sustainability of the Regional space, this new approach to integration is likely to stimulate a strong and sustained economic growth, a *sine qua non* condition, for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals for development and to improve significantly the competitiveness of the Regional and Continental economies.

Today, the question of accelerating the pace of the implementation of the African integration programme is under

assurant, entre autres, l'harmonisation et la coordination des politiques et stratégies élaborées à cette fin. Pour la Commission de l'Union africaine, il est donc extrêmement urgent de revisiter l'approche de l'intégration régionale. Une nouvelle approche, associant les bénéficiaires à l'œuvre d'intégration est à promouvoir. L'intégration doit se faire par la base et non par le sommet, comme cela a été le cas jusqu'à présent. Aussi, cette nouvelle approche doit-elle avoir pour fondement la promotion des activités visant à viabiliser l'espace régional à partir de la consolidation des unités de production déjà en place; de la création de nouvelles unités de production dans les secteurs, branches ou filières à grande valeur ajoutée. Toutes ces activités doivent s'épanouir sur la base des avantages comparatifs nationaux, afin d'éviter toute concurrence inutile dont s'accroissent volontiers ceux qui veulent exploiter notre continent.

Par ailleurs, la nouvelle démarche pour une intégration régionale réussie doit assurer l'émergence d'une nouvelle génération d'hommes d'affaires ou d'opérateurs économiques africains qui s'aguerrissent dans l'espace régional, tout en se dotant des moyens de soutenir la compétition internationale, sans complexe. En privilégiant la viabilisation économique de l'espace régional, cette nouvelle approche de l'intégration est de nature à stimuler une croissance économique forte et durable, condition *sine qua non* de la réalisation des objectifs du Millénaire pour le développement, et à améliorer d'une manière significative la compétitivité des économies régionales et continentales.

Aujourd'hui, la question de l'accélération du rythme de la mise en œuvre de l'agenda de l'intégration africaine est en discussion dans toutes les instances politiques du continent. Le



discussion in all political fora of the Continent. This was the main theme of the session of the Assembly of the African Union, held in July 2007, in Accra, Ghana. It should be recalled that this discussion was at the heart of the concerns of the Founding Fathers of contemporary Africa at the inception of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in May 1963. More than forty years after, it surfaces again on the Continental political scene, thus reflecting the need for Africa, as a whole, to move irreversibly towards unity, without which all the efforts made to take up the major challenges of our times will be in vain.

It is, therefore, in line with the ongoing discussions on the future of the African Union that the Department of Economic Affairs, within the framework of the implementation of one of its programmes entitled *“Fridays of the Commission”*, organised the first Conference - Debate in the history of the Commission of the African Union, whose papers are published in this Newsletter.

By choosing the theme of Integration in Africa, we wanted to open a window for the African researchers and academics to enable them express their views on the matter which is of crucial importance for the future of the Continent. Of course, the views expressed only engage their authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Commission of the African Union.

Sommet des Chefs d'État et de Gouvernement de l'Union africaine, tenu en juillet 2007 à d'Accra (Ghana), en a fait son thème principal. Ce débat, faut-il le rappeler, a été au cœur des préoccupations des Pères fondateurs de l'Afrique contemporaine lors de la création de l'Organisation de l'Unité africaine (OUA) en mai 1963. Plus de quarante ans plus tard, il ressurgit sur la scène politique continentale, traduisant ainsi le besoin de l'Afrique tout entière d'aller irréversiblement à l'unité sans laquelle tous les efforts déployés pour relever les défis majeurs de notre temps seraient vains.

C'est donc dans la mouvance du débat en cours sur le devenir de l'Union africaine que le Département des Affaires économiques, dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre d'un des ses programmes baptisé « Les Vendredis de la Commission », a organisé la première conférence-débat de l'histoire de la Commission de l'Union africaine, dont les communications sont publiées dans le présent bulletin.

En choisissant le thème de l'intégration en Afrique, nous avons voulu ouvrir une fenêtre aux chercheurs et universitaires africains pour leur permettre d'exprimer leurs vues sur ce sujet qui revêt une importance cruciale pour l'avenir du continent. Bien entendu, les avis émis n'engagent que leurs auteurs et ne reflètent pas nécessairement la position officielle de la Commission de l'Union africaine.





Finally, to enrich the conclusions of the debate, we deemed it useful to gather other views, which are also published in this issue, which we request you to read so as to promote the mutually enriching sharing of views on this matter.

Enfin, pour enrichir les conclusions du débat, nous avons jugé utile de recueillir d'autres opinions qui sont également publiées dans le présent numéro que nous vous invitons instamment à lire pour promouvoir le partage mutuellement enrichissant des vues sur la question.

**Dr René N'Guettia KOUASSI**  
**Director, Economic Affairs**  
**Directeur des Affaires économiques**

**Debate: “The Quest for a United States of Africa:  
Top-Down or Bottom-Up Approach”**



## The Quest for a United States of Africa: Top-Down or Bottom-Up Approach

By Adams Oloo\*

### 1.0 Introduction

Four-and-a-half decades ago Africa's founding fathers of independence were grappling with the question of how to unite the African continent and bridge the compartmentalization that had arisen out of colonial rule. Two schools of thoughts emerged in this quest. One was championed by the by the founding father of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, who is famous for his pan-Africanist dictum: "Seek ye first the political kingdom and everything else shall be delivered onto you," which was top-down in approach.<sup>1</sup> The underlying thinking behind this school of thought was that paramount political institutions would be used as vehicles for bringing about integration in other spheres. Nkrumah as well as Ahmed Sekou Tourè and Modibo Keita of Ghana, Guinea and Mali respectively among others saw a loose confederation of economic co-operation as deceptively time-delaying. This school of thought was loosely called the "radical school," whose defining feature was its advocacy for immediate political union among the newly independent African states, to form the United States of Africa.<sup>2</sup> At the other extreme were advocates of an incremental functionalist approach where



regional integration and continental unity would be promoted piecemeal through gradual steps to painstakingly building a web of functional relations in trade, investment, infrastructure, culture, etc. In this building-block approach the political superstructure, such as a political federation, would be considered the logical culmination of the integration process from below.<sup>3</sup> This bottom-up approach was pioneered by the founding father of Tanzania, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, who posited that "the major problems that we now face as a continent, whether united or balkanized, is one of development. It is the problem of realizing the standards of living of our people, to a level that is considered reasonable in terms of the possibilities of this scientific age." For Nyerere as well as Tafawa Balewa of Nigeria, William Tubman of Liberia, Léopold Senghor of Senegal, Houphouët-Boigny of Ivory Coast among others, a United States of Africa could only be incrementally through regional and sub-regional bodies that would later be integrated continentally. Nyerere argued for first building regional bodies and then using these as building blocks to later create the United States of Africa.

Four-and-a-half decades later, and exactly fifty years since the first African country—Ghana—got independence, the ambition to build a United States of Africa has re-emerged and the debates are a repeat of those that took place 50 years ago. Once more there is unanimity on the need for a United States of Africa but as before there are disagreements over the approach to be utilized. The differences in approach

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<sup>1</sup> Nkrumah, K., 1963, *Africa Must Unite*, London: Heinemann.

<sup>2</sup> Sesay, A., 2005, "The African Union: Forward March or About Face-Turn?" A Public Lecture Delivered for the Claude Ake Visiting Professor, Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University

<sup>3</sup> Kibua, T., and Tostensen, A., 2005, *Fast-tracking East African Integration: Assessing the Feasibility of a Political Federation by 2010*, Norway: CMI



revolves around whether the United States of Africa federation should occur now or in the future, and more importantly is whether it should be top-down or bottom-up. The new crop of African leaders has once more taken sides akin to those that obtained at independence. One group led by Muammar Gaddafi of Libya and which includes Abdoulaye Wade (Senegal) and Alpha Konare (Mali), is pushing for a top-down model that was advocated by Kwame Nkrumah and his peers in their quest for a United States of Africa. As their predecessors, they share an ideology and policy point of globalized politics that emphasizes supranational goals over national interest. On the other extreme is the group which includes Thabo Mbeki (South Africa) and Umaru Yar'Adua (Nigeria), which advocates for a bottom-up

approach and therefore share Julius Nyerere's

### **Traditional Approaches to Integration: functionalism, neo-functionalism, intergovernmentalism, federalism and confederalism**

vision of achieving African integration via regional blocs in an incremental manner. According to this group immediate political union is not feasible in the short run and, therefore, they call for cooperation in functional areas such as day-to-day economic interchange, various forms of communication, cultural and scientific cooperation etc. The latter group hopes that functional interdependence will lead to regional political union and ultimately to continental political union. They argue that it is difficult to conceive a united Africa without strong economic links among countries of the continent.

There is no doubt that both groups seek a common end which is a federation of African states but that's where their agreement ends and their differences begin. This paper seeks to explore the creation and viability of a United States of Africa. I

explore the advantage and disadvantages of both schools of thought. I argue that based on the circumstances prevailing a top-down approach is not immediately feasible and likewise a bottom-up approach postpones the hard questions and deals with the softer economic options. Part of the problem with both schools of thought is that they do not have a clear roadmap with benchmarks on how the ultimate goal of political federation shall be realized. I suggest that a median between the two extremes should be considered—in this case a confederation. It might end up serving as the missing link towards the elusive quest for a United States of Africa.

## **2.0 Traditional Approaches to Integration**

A common definition of regional integration states that it is a shifting of certain national activities toward a new center.<sup>1</sup> Integration therefore is a form of collective action among countries in order to obtain a certain goal. This goal can be as grand as political unification (in the case of the EU) or a free trade area, as found in the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA). Lindberg refines the definition by opining that it is an “evolution over time of a collective decision making system among nations. If the collective arena becomes the focus of certain kinds of decision making activity, national actors will in that measure be constrained from independent action.”<sup>2</sup> Integration has also

<sup>1</sup> Haas, E.B., 1958, *The Uniting of Europe*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

<sup>2</sup> Lindberg, L.N., 1970, “Political Integration as a Multidimensional Phenomenon Requiring Multivariate Measurement,” in *Regional Integration: Theory and Research*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, p. 46



been defined as “a series of voluntary decisions by previously sovereign states to remove barriers to the mutual exchange of goods, services, capital, or persons.”<sup>1</sup> The common thread in all these definitions is that a new common center is created out of prevailing autonomous units. There are several approaches to integration and they include: functionalism, neo-functionalism, intergovernmentalism, federalism and confederalism.

### **2.1 Functionalism**

According to David Mitrany, who is the founding proponent of functionalism, the world of the twentieth century was characterized by growing numbers of technical issues that could be resolved only by cooperative actions across state boundaries. Such issues, whether within or among states, could best be addressed by highly trained specialists or technicians, rather than by politicians. Mitrany believed that the emergence of technical issues would lead first to the felt or perceived need for collaborative action, devoid of a political or conflictual content, and therefore assignable to technical experts whose approaches were essentially based on apolitical considerations.<sup>2</sup>

By emphasizing cooperation in order to find solutions according to a specific need or function, Mitrany suggested, the basis would be created for a thickening web of structures and procedures in the form of institutions. Successful cooperation in one functional setting would enhance the incentive for collaboration in other fields. To the extent that tasks in specific

functional areas could be successfully completed, attitudes favorable to cooperation in other sectors developed. In his view, it was essential, through a cooperative learning process, to replace mutual suspicion with growing trust.<sup>3</sup>

To this end, functionalism prescribed integration that was “pragmatic, technocratic and flexible” and above all apolitical. The goal of functionalism was not to create a new “super state” above the member states, but instead to blur the lines dividing public and private, national and international, political and non-political.

This was to be achieved through the creation of a “web of international activities” that would overlay national and political divisions. Links were to be developed along pragmatic lines, at the logical level for each functional goal, regardless of national or political boundaries. These interlocking institutions would in turn create mutual dependencies and make war unfeasible regardless of ideological differences that divide states. Citizens, it was argued, would approve this framework because of the general improvement of services that would accrue to them without the need to adopt a new political order.

In the long run, functionalism assumed the “inevitability of socio-economic gradualism and the supremacy of welfare and technology over power politics.”<sup>4</sup> Functional needs are presumed to have self-evident consequences for the scope, level, and character of regional organization. As integration bears fruit, so experts and beneficiaries learn that integration can effectively be extended to other practical, non-controversial needs.

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<sup>1</sup> Bobrow, D., *et al.*, 2003, *Regional Integration and Domestic Institutional Homogeneity: A Comparative Analysis of Regional Integration in the Americas, Pacific Asia, and Western Europe* Smith 1993: 4

<sup>2</sup> Mitrany, D., 1966, *A Working Peace System*, Chicago: Quadrangle Books.

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<sup>3</sup> Mitrany 1966.

<sup>4</sup> Pentland, C., 1973, *International Theory and European Integration*, New York: the Free Press.



However, functionalism has some defects. There is an assumption of a certain automaticity to the process. Hard political choices, political mobilization, and above all, conflict, are not anticipated. But in the end, functionalists argue that successful integration requires consensus about practical goals and abstinence from power politics.<sup>1</sup>

## **2.2 Neo-Functionalism**

Neo-functionalism, posits that integration results from the need to shift specific functions away from exclusively nation-state control toward supranational institutions.<sup>2</sup> These new units, it is assumed, would hold the decision-making power once enjoyed by the nation-state.<sup>3</sup> Neo-functionalism also posits that the causal mechanism for this transfer is in the increasing complexity of governmental systems requiring a demand for highly trained specialists at the national level who would tend to solve problems at the international level.<sup>4</sup>

Neo-Functionalism places major emphasis on the role of non-state actors – especially, the “secretariat” of the regional organization involved and those interest associations and social movements that form at the level of the region – in providing the dynamic for further integration. Member states remain important actors in the process. They set the terms of the initial agreement, but they

do not exclusively determine the direction and extent of subsequent change. Rather, regional bureaucrats in league with a shifting set of self-organized interests and passions seek to exploit the inevitable “spillovers” and “unintended consequences” that occur when states agree to assign some degree of supra-national responsibility for accomplishing a limited task and then discover that satisfying that function has external effects upon other of their interdependent activities. According to this approach, regional integration is an intrinsically sporadic and conflictual process, but one in which, under conditions of democracy and pluralistic representation, national governments will find themselves increasingly entangled in regional pressures and end up resolving their conflicts by conceding a wider scope and devolving more authority to the regional organizations they have created. Eventually, their citizens will begin shifting more and more of their expectations to the region and satisfying them will increase the likelihood that economic-social integration will “spill-over” into political integration.<sup>5</sup>

However, this approach lacks clear empirical support. It is overly ambitious and it is difficult to find hard evidence to support it. Pentland has observed that “the relation between functional need and structural adaptation, central to the theory, is ‘necessary’ only in the sense of being an ideal or norm, not in the sense of predetermining the direction of change.”<sup>6</sup>

## **2.3 Intergovernmentalism**

Intergovernmentalism is a theory of decision-making in international

<sup>1</sup> Hooghe, L., and Marks, G., 2004, The Neo-functionalists Were (almost) Right: Politicization and European Integration, Draft chapter for *The Diversity of Democracy: A Tribute to Philippe C. Schmitter*. Presented at the European University Institute, Florence, September 17 and 18, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Mitrany, D., 1975, *The Functional Theory of Politics*, London: Martin Robertson.

<sup>3</sup> O'Brien, R., 1995, “North American Integration and International Relations Theory”, *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 28: 693-7xx.

<sup>4</sup> Haas 1958

<sup>5</sup> Schmitter, P.C., 1969, “Three Neofunctional Hypotheses About International Integration,” *International Organization*, 23:161-166

<sup>6</sup> Pentland, C., 1973, *Theory and European Integration*, London: Faber and Faber, p. 98.



organisations, where power is possessed by the member states and decisions are made by unanimity. Independent appointees of the governments or elected representatives have solely advisory or implementational functions. Intergovernmentalism is used by most international organizations today. An alternative method of decision-making in international organizations is supranationalism. Intergovernmentalism is also a theory on European integration which rejects the idea of neofunctionalism. The theory, initially proposed by Stanley Hoffmann suggests that national governments control the level and speed of European integration. Any increase in power at supranational level, he argues, results from a direct decision by governments. He believed that integration, driven by national governments, was often based on the domestic political and economic issues of the day. The theory rejects the concept of the spill-over effect that neofunctionalism proposes. He also rejects the idea that supranational organisations are on an equal level (in terms of political influence) as national governments.<sup>1</sup>

Intergovernmentalism is based on the fundamental premise that “since its inception the EC has been based on interstate bargains between its leading member states. Heads of government backed by small groups of ministers and advisors initiate and negotiate major initiatives in the council of Ministers or in the European Council. Each Government views the EC through the lens of its own policy preferences. EC politics is the continuation of national politics and national policies by other means.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sandholtz, W., and Stone S.A., 1998, *European Integration and Supranational Governance*, New York: Oxford University Press; Moravcsik 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Moravcsik, A., 1995, “Liberal Intergovernmentalism and Integration: A Rejoinder,” *Journal of Common Market Studies* 33: 611-628;

Nye, arguing along the same lines, observes that the success of integration depends upon the ability of member countries to adapt and respond to the cooperative agreements that define integration. His argument provides the foundation for the perspective that regards integration as a function of negotiations between governments to produce cooperative agreements that evolve into further integration.<sup>3</sup> Moravcsik on his part argues that integration is due to the bargaining among the more powerful members of a regional group.<sup>4</sup> This argument buttresses the traditional view that integration is a means for member countries to obtain domestic policy preferences through regional negotiation.<sup>5</sup> Through negotiation, EU member countries have converged their economic policies in order to alleviate negative externalities due to economic interdependence while retaining national sovereignty.<sup>6</sup>

The Intergovernmental approach includes three central tenets: first, member states care and are pre-occupied with the protection of national sovereignty; second; the supranational institutions created are considered to be the “instruments” of the member states and as a result they serve only the interests of the member states; and

<sup>3</sup> Nye, J., 1971, *Peace in Parts: Integration and Conflict in Regional Organization*, Boston: Little and Brown.

<sup>4</sup> Moravcsik 1995; Moravcsik, A., 1991, “Negotiating the Single European Act: National Interests and Conventional Statecraft in the European Community,” *International Organization* 45: 19-56.

<sup>5</sup> Keohane, R., 1984, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; Taylor, P., 1983, *The Limits of European Integration*, Beckenham, UK: Croom Helm; Wallace et al., 1977, *Policy-Making in the European Communities*, London: Wiley

<sup>6</sup> Bobrow et al., 2003.



third, the focus is on the “grand bargains” between member states. In other words increases in integration happen through treaty reform (not functional spillover or anything else).

Intergovernmentalism is in many ways the antithesis to neo-functionalism. All of the focus is on the political leaders and national interests of the member states. Self-interest still remains the motivating factors, but the focus is on completely different actors. Treaty revisions and IGCs are the arena of further integration, not the daily implementation of the policies decided through these grand bargains.

The focus, therefore, is on understanding the self-interested motivations behind the adoption of each of the successive treaties by the member states (since each involved to one extent or another, the loss of some amount of national sovereignty).

One of the problems of this approach is the assumption that the institutions created by the integration process will always loyally serve the interests of those that originally created them. This is a classical “principal-agent” dilemma. The intergovernmentalists assume no independent identity or interests on the part of the various institutions (or the people who serve in them).

## **2.4 Federalism**

Political federalism is a political philosophy in which a group or body of members are bound together with a governing representative head. The term federalism is also used to describe a system of government in which sovereignty is constitutionally divided between a central governing authority and constituent political units (like states or provinces). Federalism is thus the system in which the power to govern is shared between the

national & state governments, creating what is often called a federation. Proponents are often called federalists.

According to federalists, integration must be political and based on new institutional structures and the creation of a new higher level of political organization to unite disparate states. Institutional creation is through “constitutive assembly” with representatives from all partisan groups and all nationalities. The goal is to move beyond all these “superficial” differences to arrive at a shared common vision for the future.

Afterwards, the public should be brought into the process through extensive public discourse and debate. Through this public dialogue a general consensus about the path forward can be achieved creating broad legitimacy and acceptance of the new political order. The United States of America is the clearest example of such an endeavor.

## **2.5 Confederation**

A confederation is an association of sovereign states or communities, usually created by treaty but often later adopting a common constitution. Confederations tend to be established for dealing with critical issues, such as defense, foreign affairs, foreign trade, and a common currency, with the central government being required to provide support for all members. A confederation, in modern political terms, is usually limited to a permanent union of sovereign states for common action in relation to other states.<sup>1</sup>

The nature of the relationship between the entities constituting a confederation varies considerably. Likewise, the relationship between the member states and the central

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<sup>1</sup> Oxford University dictionary.





government, and the distribution of powers among them, is highly variable. Some looser confederations are similar to international organizations, while tighter confederations may resemble federations.

In a non-political context, confederation is used to describe a type of organization which consolidates authority from other semi-autonomous bodies. Examples include sports confederations or confederations of Pan-European trades unions.

The difference in meaning between a *confederation* and a *federation* has evolved in usage over time. Prior to the US Civil War, the terms were largely synonymous, but differing political views with regard to the nature of political unions, especially as applied to the US Constitution (which up to that time was considered both a Federal and a Confederated Union), caused each of the terms to subsequently embody one of the two rival and opposing theories of state's rights. Currently, a confederation is considered a state or entity similar in pyramidal structure to a federation but with a weaker central government. A confederation may also consist of member states which, while temporarily pooling sovereignty in certain areas, are considered entirely sovereign and retain the right of unilateral secession. A confederation is sometimes a loose alliance but in other cases the distinction between a federation and a confederation may be ambiguous. In contrast to a federation, a member state may participate in more than one confederation.

As Africa grapples with the way forward in its integration debate, the foregoing five approaches provide a choice to choose from either unilaterally or a mixture of two or three.

### 3.0 The Rationale for Integration

Baregu has posited that the above traditional approaches to integration are largely descriptive focusing much more on the aims, structures, institutions and mechanism of integration rather than the imperatives or driving forces that lie behind these schemes. He argues that the more compelling reasons for forming and sustaining regional integration lies in its imperatives or interests rather than in the institutional forms that are the outcome of the operationlization of the rationale. He further argues that it is through these imperatives that we should turn to if we are to identify the reasons for implementation or non-implementation of integration agreements, as well as to explain the successes and failures in existing schemes.<sup>1</sup>

Baregu argues that there are four types of rationales or imperatives that lie behind the formation and sustenance of regional integration schemes; these are affection, gain, threat, and power. According to Baregu, imperatives are the kind of factors that create the impetus, and give rise to the drive and yearning, for integration among the members. Imperatives, in this regard, may belong to the domain of choice or they may belong to the domain of necessity. It is the extent to which the imperative exerts itself upon one's very existence that determines whether it is a choice imperative or a necessity imperative. The more the imperative impinge upon one's vision, the more it is likely to belong to necessity rather than choice. This is according to the perceptions of those involved in envisioning their future. These visions are usually expressed in the preambles of the

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<sup>1</sup> Baregu, M., 2005, "The African Economic Community and the EAC: Any Lesson from the EU?" in Ajulu, A., (ed.), *The Making of a Region: The Revival of the East African Community*, Midrand, South Africa: Institute for Global Dialogue.



treaties establishing the integration schemes.<sup>1</sup>

The affection imperative is essentially emotive. It refers to a situation where countries come into an integration arrangement because they have a lot in common and feel some bonds of affection. Fifty years after the first African country got its independence continental unity has continued to elude African states. While they share the common identity of the “African”

this does not appear to be raising enormous effective emotions and affection to jumpstart and cement the unity quest; however, it is the basis upon which the quest of the search for the elusive grand integration is anchored on. It is thus clear that the affection imperative though central in defining the contours of the quest for continental unity lacks sufficient drive to propel the integration process in Africa.

According to Bageru, gain is by far the most celebrated imperative held responsible, not only for the initiation, but also the sustenance of regional integration schemes. Gain and loss are to this end the central tenets of rational choice theory, which contends that individuals and states tend to behave in a manner, which maximizes their gains while minimizing their losses. Regional integration theories have largely been preoccupied with the economic welfare gains from trade within the different blocs or from without. The unequal distribution of gain among members of a bloc is also held to be a vital

source of potential discontent, except perhaps, if the cost of non-integration is perceived to be too high. This is true of the trading regional blocs in Africa ranging from EAC, SADC, ECOWAS, IGAD and COMESA.

The preoccupation with material gain is itself the source of the major weaknesses of this approach. The weakness emanates from the fact that it reduces the dynamic of integration to economic motives alone and purely to trade as such leaving the more

**The more compelling reasons for forming and sustaining regional integration lies in its imperatives or interests rather than in the institutional forms that are the outcome of the operationlization of the rationale (Bageru, 2005)**

distractive and divisive political motives unattended to. The other weakness is that it fails to distinguish between gain as cause and gain as consequence of integration. To suggest, for example, that European cooperation was motivated by considerations of gain alone is to lose sight of the peace and security imperative that gave rise to the formation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in the first place. Indeed, in this case it may be said that economic gain is a consequence of cooperation, and not vice versa. African countries must thus not think of only economic gains as they grapple with the integration debate but they must find a way of encompassing the broader political goal of such ventures.

The shared perception of threat and the quest for collective security and protection is, perhaps, the strongest incentive toward integration. This may arise from two distinct situations. One is where two or more countries find themselves locked in mutually threatening relationships and have to reach some compromise leading to peaceful co-existence. This is what lay

<sup>1</sup> Bageru 2005.



behind the formation of the ECSC by France and Germany in 1951. The other is when there exists a perception of a common external threat, in which case countries come closer to enhance their capacity to defend themselves. This is what lay behind the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty organization (NATO) against the perceived threat from the Soviet Union and its allies. According to Baregu it is this imperative that should inform regional integration in the Third World once the countries concerned realize that globalization threaten their very continued existence.<sup>1</sup> It is worthy to note that the regional integration bodies in Africa have been driven, as already observed, by economic necessities with security only being filtered in the latter stages. Experience has however shown that integration that is security or threat driven is more lasting and durable than those that are purely economic-driven. The current AU establishment of regional brigades is a step in this direction

Power as an imperative refers to the situation where a regional hegemon forces the neighborhood into an integration arrangement. The most extreme case would be military intervention, or regime change to install a compliant leadership. Hegemonic integration involves not only the existence of a relatively more powerful country in the region, but also the capacity and inclination on the part of that country to meet the costs of hegemony by offering incentives for member to stay, and imposing sanction on those that may want to break away. To a very large extent, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) countries were brought and held together by Soviet hegemony. Likewise, NAFTA bloc is essentially maintained by the US.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Baregu 2005

<sup>2</sup> Baregu 2005

The hegemonic model has not gained ground in Africa. This is because Africa do not have a clear undisputed hegemon that can take a lead in this process. Although South Africa and Nigeria have the potential to be Africa's hegemons, at the moment both do not have the ability to shoulder the costs of smaller nations that usually a hegemon has to offset. The fact that it is Libya that is championing the course for what would be synonymous with a hegemonic model is also a misnomer; it does not have the necessary economic or military power to carry such a quest to its logical conclusion. In any case it is South Africa—a potential hegemon—that is taking the lead in opposing Libya. The hegemonic model in any case is hampered by the sovereignty principle which many African countries passionately guard hence frustrating any grand integration vision.<sup>3</sup>

In summary, the second and third imperatives will be critical if Africa is to make gainful steps in the search for a United State of Africa.

#### **4.0 The Top-Down Approach: The United States of America Experience**

The United States of America (USA) is a successful example of a top-down approach towards integration. USA is a federal constitutional republic comprising fifty states, one federal district, and fourteen territories. USA is a union comprising a number of partially self-governing states or regions united by a central (federal) government. In a federation, the self-governing status of the component states is typically constitutionally entrenched and may not be altered by a unilateral decision of the central government.

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<sup>3</sup> See also Baregu 2005



A federal system is one in which at least two levels of government – national and local – coexist with separate or shared powers, each having independent functions, but neither having supreme authority over the other. Unlike a confederal system, where the higher authority does not exercise

### **The United States of America (USA) is a successful example of a top-down approach towards integration**

power directly over individuals, a federal government exercises power over both its constituent units and its citizens, and there is a direct relationship between citizens and each level of government. USA exhibits a single, two-tier structure of government across an entire jurisdiction. The USA emerged from an initial agreement between a number of separate states to solve mutual problems and provide for mutual defense.<sup>1</sup>

The American federal system consists of an elected national government with sole power over foreign and security policy, and separately elected local governments with powers over such issues as education and policing. There is a single national currency and a common defense force, a written constitution that spells out the relative powers of the different levels of government, a court that can arbitrate disputes between them, and at least two major sets of law, government, bureaucracy, and taxation. The cumulative interests of the local units tend to define the interests of the national government, which tends to deal with those matters better dealt with at the national rather than the local level.

When the 13 North American colonies declared their independence from Great Britain on July 4, 1776, they recognized the

need to coordinate their efforts in the war and to cooperate with each other generally. To these ends, they adopted the Articles of Confederation, a constitution that created a league of sovereign states, which

committed the states to cooperate with each other in military affairs, foreign policy and other important areas. The Articles were barely sufficient to hold the states together through the war against England and, at the successful conclusion of that war, fell apart completely as the states pursued their own interests rather than the national interest of the new United States.<sup>2</sup>

The USA has been a federal republic since 1788, when nine of the original 13 states agreed to move from a confederal relationship to a federal union, voluntarily giving up power over such areas as common security, but retaining their own sets of laws and a large measure of control over local government. American states can raise their own taxes, and they have independent powers over such policy areas as education, land use, the police, and roads, but they are not allowed to make treaties with other states or foreign nations, or to have their own currencies, to levy taxes on imports and exports, or to maintain their own armies. Meanwhile, the federal government cannot unilaterally redraw the borders of a state, impose different levels of tax by state, give states different levels of representation in the US Senate (where each state has two representatives), or amend the US constitution without the support of two-thirds of the states. Meanwhile – an important point – the US constitution (in the Tenth Amendment) reserves to the

<sup>1</sup> Boyd, E., 1997, “American federalism, 1776-1997: Significant Events,”

<sup>2</sup> Boyd 1997



states or the people all the powers not delegated to the national government by the constitution or prohibited by it to the states.

The American federation, just like the Canadian and German federations, incorporates the major characteristics of a federation: the establishment of two or more orders of government acting directly, rather than through another level of government, on the citizens; a formal constitutional distribution of areas of exclusive and shared (concurrent) legislative and executive authority ensuring at least some areas of genuine autonomy for each government; a constitutional allocation of revenue resources for each order of government; provision for the designated representation of distinct regional units within the federal policy-making institutions, including a federal second legislative chamber designed specifically for this purpose; a supreme written constitution not unilaterally amendable by either order of government but requiring the consent of the federal legislature and of a significant proportion of the constituent units through their legislatures or representatives of their governments; an umpire in the ultimate form of a Supreme Court or a Constitutional Court to rule on constitutional disputes between governments; and processes and institutions to facilitate intergovernmental collaboration for those areas where governmental responsibilities are shared or inevitably overlap.<sup>1</sup>

In a federation, the division of power between federal and regional governments is usually outlined in the constitution. It is in this way that the right to self-

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<sup>1</sup> Broadway, R., and Watts, R., 2004, "Fiscal Federalism in Canada, USA and Germany," Working Paper 2004 (6) IIGR, Queen's University.

government of the component states is usually constitutionally entrenched. Component states often also possess their own constitutions which they may amend as they see fit, although in the event of conflict the federal constitution usually takes precedence.

In almost all federations the central government enjoys the powers of foreign policy and national defense. The US Constitution provides that all powers not specifically granted to the federal government are retained by the states. A federal upper house may be based on a special scheme of apportionment, as is the case in the senates of the United States and Australia, where each state is represented by an equal number of senators irrespective of the size of its population. An amendment to the constitution of the United States must be ratified by three-quarters of either the state legislatures, or of constitutional conventions specially elected in each of the states, before it can come into effect

The ability of a federal government to create national institutions that can mediate differences that arise because of linguistic, ethnic, religious, or other regional differences is an important challenge. The inability to meet this challenge may lead to the secession of parts of a federation or to civil war, as occurred in United States.

The process towards the formation of the US also had its ups and downs. First, the Articles of Confederation described a permanent confederation, but granted to the Congress—the only federal institution—little power to finance itself or to ensure that its resolutions were enforced. The Articles of Confederation were weak and did not give a strong political or economic base for the newly formed nation. It is as a result of this lack of financial power of the congress and



shortage of money that the confederation collapsed. However, the articles did serve as the lead up to the much stronger and more agreed upon Constitution that led to the formation of the federal government.<sup>1</sup>

Second, during the early years of the federal government, conflict over the proper functions and locus of governmental power dominated the new federal government and led to the formation of factions and then political parties that were deeply divided over the nature and purposes of the federal government, over foreign affairs, and over the very future of the new nation. However, the able leadership of the early presidents, especially George Washington and Thomas Jefferson as well as the instrumental Federalist papers by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay was able to contain this situation.

Third, there was opposition to the development of a federal union by those units that feared loss of sovereignty to the center. During the Confederate period there was a depression (1785), Shay's Rebellion (1787), and a balance of payments crisis (as specie returned to Europe for payment for imports). During the Confederate period the farmers of New Hampshire, one of the smallest states, did not want their own state to exist, much less a national government. Each state had its own flag, its currency, its system of taxation, laws of slavery and property rights, its legislature, its customs and its alliances and enmities. Georgia and Virginia were the largest Southern states, New York and Massachusetts the largest in the North. Each had their followers, but they were also feared for their power and influence.<sup>2</sup> However, these fears were quashed as they

were protected within the Constitution of the United State of America. The Massachusetts compromises that led to the development of the Bill of Rights is a case in point. The drafting of the Constitution of the United States, gave much more power to the central government but reserving the rights not granted in the Constitution to the individual states (subsidiarity).

### **5.0 The Bottom-up Approach: The European Union Experience**

The European Union (EU) is an important model for regional integration. From its modest beginnings as the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951, it has evolved to become the EU of today, achieving economic and monetary union across the greater part of the continent. This has been an immensely complicated political process.

The politics of the EU can be divided into three major impulses. First was Germany's search for respectability in the aftermath of World War II, which was made possible by its full participation in a wider, democratic and cooperative European project. Subsequently with German re-unification after 1989, fears of German domination could also be muted through continued participation in the EU. Second, for Germany's smaller neighbours, and in particular France, the EU was a means of containing the threat of German hegemony. (The EU and Germany is a case of 'contained hegemony.')

Lastly, as the EU has expanded and deepened, and its member states have achieved a degree of prosperity undreamed of, more and more smaller European countries have sought to join, in order to gain better access to markets, and access to the EU's social and

<sup>1</sup> Song 2004

<sup>2</sup> Worcester, R., 2001, "America and Europe: Divergence or Convergence," Council on Foreign Relations Dinner



agricultural funds. This may be called ‘economic bandwagoning.’<sup>1</sup>

Before the advent of World War II, as one writer has observed, Western Europe was a divided region in every sphere of human life.<sup>2</sup> It was a region with no acknowledged single historical past and with disputed boundaries. Western Europe remained a geographical concept up to the mid-1940s. As a political expression, Western Europe began to emerge from the late-1940s, and there were motivations that informed the integration from that period onwards. Three factors are principally important: the quest for economic recovery following the destruction of the socio-economic infrastructure of the region during World War II; the security concern and especially the need to contain Germany within a wider community as a way of ensuring that never again would Germany destabilise peace and security in the individual countries and the region at large. And

### **The European Union (EU) is an important model for regional integration**

concomitantly, there was the wish by Germany to be accepted as a member of the Western European community in the interest of her own socio-economic and political recovery; and the World War II had given rise to a new superpower—the Soviet Union—a power that was on the path, immediately after the war, to expand westwards both in the political and military sense as well as ideologically. The fear especially of the expansion of Communism westward was a major factor which motivated the Western nations to want to

come together, and in so doing constitute a credible force that would tackle the emerging problem.

The initiative came from the intellectuals and statesmen of Western Europe and not necessarily from the governments, although, once conceived, it could not succeed without their unrelenting support. The presence of the United States in Western Europe provided a new impetus because of the convergence of interests of the two parties in the pursuit of containment of the Soviet Union’s westward expansion. The so-called Marshall Plan, through which the US provided financial resources for the reconstruction of Western Europe, would provide the framework for economic cooperation in the region, while the military alliance Northern Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) would provide the defensive shield for the region.

What is important, though, is that the movement towards European integration was not state-led as is the case with the integration schemes in Africa. The first gathering at which serious resolutions relating to European integration were passed was a gathering of intellectuals and political elites from sixteen countries (The Congress of Europe, May 1947).<sup>3</sup> It was at this conference that the resolution to establish an Assembly of Representatives of European Parliaments, a European Union, a European Court, a European Charter of Human Rights and the inclusion of Germany into the European Community was made. These resolutions were never translated into reality immediately. However, the spirit of the congress had provided the momentum that would see

<sup>1</sup> Hass, E.B., 1966, “International Integration: The European and the Universal Process,” in Doubleday & Co., *International Political Communities: An Anthology*, Anchor Books, Garden City, New York

<sup>2</sup> Curtis, M., 1965, *Western European Integration*, New York: Harper and Row.

<sup>3</sup> Hass, E.B 1966



the formation of different forms of cooperation ventures in Western Europe.<sup>1</sup>

Although, the aims were lofty, Europe embarked on a practical, step-by-step journey, mainly because European leaders were divided on the ultimate goal—whether their Community should be a family of nations, a confederation of states, or a unified European government. For that reason, the member states have had great difficulty relinquishing their veto powers and accepting a decision-making process that would permit more rapid consolidation of the unit. Nonetheless, at critical moments in the European Union's evolution, when paralysis bred crises, the governments did overcome their parochial interests, unlike African leaders and made the difficult decisions that permitted the experiment to advance.<sup>2</sup> The leaders narrowed the scope of 'unanimity rule' by which all decisions required a consensus.

Initially there was an attempt to use a more inclusive approach to integration as exemplified by the formation of a loose body—the Organization of European Economic Cooperation set up in April 1948 by sixteen nations. Later on, however, it would dawn on Western European leaders that if meaningful integration were to be realized, the approach would have to be incremental. In the formative years economic and military concerns, and not political ones, claimed the attention of integrationists. The beginning was modest and the size of the membership was similarly modest unlike the case of the OAU and later on the AU.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Oyugi 2004

<sup>2</sup> Institute for International Economics, The European Union and its 'Cohesive' Policies: An Evaluation; Moravcsik, A., 1998, *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

<sup>3</sup> Oyugi 2004

The Europeans moved incrementally and carefully and in so doing avoided a holistic approach, which would have brought everyone on board into whatever organizations emerged. The strategy was to start with those countries that were the most committed ones in the hope that demonstrated success would subsequently attract others to want to come in.

A truly functional regional organization was put in place on March 17, 1948 with the formation of the Brussels Treaty Organization (BTO), made up of Belgium, France, Britain, The Netherlands, and Luxembourg. It was an organization for collective defense as provided for under the UN Charter. It operated as an intergovernmental organization at which the members consulted over matters pertaining to security and socio-economic and cultural matters. It was the realization of the pay-offs associated with membership in the Brussels Treaty that led some of the countries that would join it later to come in. The enlargement of BTO saw the inclusion of the defeated enemies Germany and Italy into the organization. The architects had succeeded in bringing their wartime adversaries into a common organization in the hope of making sure they were prevented from re-armament. The coming of the two countries into the BTO gave birth to Western Europe Union, which at this stage was mainly a military/security organization.

There were also movements for integration in the economic front, and here too the approach was incremental. It started with the formation of European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) that brought together six countries (France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, The Netherlands, and Luxembourg) on signing the 1951 Treaty of Paris, which became operational in 1952. Three years of experience encouraged the





six to explore the possibility of creating a common market, customs union, and a European atomic energy agency. The result was the drafting of the Treaty of the European Economic Community (EEC) in March 1957 in Rome which greatly expanded the scope of the ECSC treaty by calling for the dissolution of barriers dividing Europe, the improvement and equalization of living and working standards, the abolition of restrictions on international trade, the removal of obstacles to concerted action among governments, and the enhancement of peace and liberty through closer relations among states. It is this Treaty that created the EEC and Euro-Atom, which came into existence from January 1, 1958; the membership remained the same. Thereafter the membership of the Community would increase progressively and by 1986 the original 'six' had become 'twelve'. In between Britain, Denmark, Ireland, Greece, Portugal, and Spain had joined at different periods on the basis of the realisation of the benefits associated with membership of the Community. By the time the EU was born in 1992 through the Maastricht Treaty, the terms of cooperation among the European Community countries had been reviewed and extended into new areas. The Community had by the time of the establishment of the EU gone through the five general levels of economic integration, namely, the most-favoured nation arrangement, free trade area, custom unions, common market, and finally the economic union. This institutional structure is increasingly state-like with legislative, executive, and judicial branches (Parliament, Commission, Council of Ministers, and Court of Justice); economic institutions (Investment Bank, Central Bank, and Court of Auditors); and a variety of institutions that provide representation for the interests of various groups (Economic and Social Committee, Environmental Agency, Committee on

Regions, Ombudsman, and many others). Therefore, the EU is both in word and deeds an economic union but, as a result of steady economic integration, it has concomitantly emerged as a political entity in that there are areas in which the states have completely surrendered their sovereignty to the Union.<sup>1</sup>

The EU by the time of the Treaty of Maastricht (1992) was in a position to identify what today is referred to as the pillars of operation, according to which some decisions can be made by the Union bodies in the understanding that Member States will abide by them provided the decision is a majority one. Realizing that matters of national security and foreign policy are at the heart of territorial integrity these two areas have so far been relegated to what the EU refers to as the 2nd and 3rd pillars which then leaves the 1st pillar as the one under which supranational decision-making takes place. This pillar basically consists of traditional cooperation within the European Community and covers matters pertaining to: the single market; the four freedoms (i.e. free movement of persons, goods, services and capital across borders); matters related to agriculture, environment, competitiveness and trade policy; and cooperation in fiscal and monetary issues (i.e. development of economic and monetary union). It is primarily under the community pillar, i.e. 1st pillar, that the institutions of the EU have regulatory powers (i.e. the right to draw up legal instruments and introduce legislation). Under the pillar dealing with internal and external security and foreign policy the European Council can take a framework decision on the harmonization of rules.

The EU is a unique case of 'north-north' integration of developed capitalist

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<sup>1</sup> Hass 1966, Curtis 1965; Oyugi 2004



economies. It is hard to draw wider lessons from this experience for ‘north-south’ or ‘south-south’ integration. However, the political institutions engaged in the EU process, including the Commission, Council of Ministers and Parliament, are worthy of study. For example, the functions of the integrative political institutions can be identified as providing (a) strategic direction, (b) coordination of tactical processes that is organizing specific steps, and (c) a forum for the continuous negotiation of the first two. A high level of institutional capacity and investment of human resources in research, negotiation and monitoring has been important to the success of the EU. The Commission has been very instrument in addressing the challenge that the EU has faced over the years. For example, to address concerns of a ‘democratic deficit’ (the lack of accountability by international civil servants), EU adopted the principle of ‘subsidiarity,’ where decisions would be made as close to the people as possible. This was achieved through the compilation of data and analyses on all European sectors and issues. This data enabled the national leaders to tackle problems from a continental rather than a national perspective.

EU member states can still do almost everything that the states in the US model cannot do: they can make treaties, operate their own tax systems, maintain an independent military, and – with 13 of the 27 member states – use their own national currencies. The EU institutions, meanwhile, have few of the powers of the federal government in the US model: they cannot levy taxes, do not operate a common military, do not yet enjoy the undivided loyalty of most Europeans, and do not have sole power to negotiate all agreements on behalf of the member states with the rest of the world. The EU is far from being a full-

blown federation, it does have some of the features of a federal system:

- It has a complex system of treaties and laws that are uniformly applicable throughout the European Union, to which all the member states and their citizens are subject, and that are interpreted and protected by the European Court of Justice.
- In those policy areas where the member states have agreed to surrender authority to the EU – including intra-European trade, the environment, agriculture, and social policy – EU law supersedes national law.
- It has a directly elected representative legislature in the form of the European Parliament, which has growing powers over the process by which European laws are made. As those powers grow, so the powers of national legislatures are declining.
- Although still small by comparison to most national budgets (just 100 billion, or \$120 billion, in 2004), the EU budget gives the EU institutions an element of financial independence.
- The European Commission has the authority to oversee negotiations with third parties on behalf of all the member states, in those areas where it has been given authority by the member states.
- Twelve of the EU member states have their own currency, the euro. With its launch in 2002, they transferred monetary policy from their own national central banks to the European Central Bank in Frankfurt.

Since the Treaty of Maastricht, went into force in 1993, the European Union was in a



position to identify what today is referred to as the pillars of operation, according to which some decisions can be made by the Union bodies in the understanding that Member States will abide by them provided the decision is a majority one. Realizing that matters of national security and foreign policy are at the heart of territorial integrity these two areas have so far been relegated to what the EU refers to as the 2nd (foreign policy) and 3rd pillars (Justice and Home Affairs) which then leaves the 1st pillar as the one under which supranational decision-making takes place. This pillar basically consists of traditional cooperation within the European Community and covers matters pertaining to: the single market; the four freedoms (i.e. free movement of persons, goods, services and capital across borders); matters related to agriculture, environment, competitiveness and trade policy; cooperation in fiscal and monetary issues (i.e. development of economic and monetary union). It is primarily under the community pillar, i.e. 1<sup>st</sup> pillar, that the institutions of the EU have regulatory powers (i.e. the right to draw up legal instruments and introduce legislation).<sup>1</sup>

## **6.0 The United States of Africa Case: Top-Down or Bottom-Up**

The dominant approach to continental unity in Africa has been the bottom-up incremental approach. Fifty years since the Organization of African Unity (OAU) set

<sup>1</sup> Hix, S., 2005, *The Political System of the European Union*, Houndsmill, Basingstoke: Palgrave; Oyugi 2004; Zank 2007

## **The Lagos Plan of Action (LPA), the African Economic Community (AEC), and the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) have informed the metamorphosis of OAU into AU**

out to achieve socio-economic and political integration of the African continent it has managed to metamorphosis into the African Union (AU). In this process it has gone through various stages, which have informed its metamorphosis—The Lagos Plan of Action (LPA), the African Economic Community (AEC), and the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD).

The Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) of April 1980 and the Final Act of Lagos (FAL) were translated into institutional form at Abuja, Nigeria in June 1991 when the OAU Heads of State and Government signed the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community (AEC) during the 27th ordinary session of the OAU. The AEC Treaty became operative from May 1994. The designers of the AEC envisaged an evolution of the AEC through six main stages over a period of 34 years to the year 2025 from modest socio-cultural and economic concerns to comprehensive political and economic union. The first three stages would see the strengthening of existing RECs and creating new ones where they did not exist, with the end view of transforming each REC into a Free Trade Area and Customs Union. The last three stages would see the economic integration of the different RECs into a Continental Customs Union and African Common Market through the creation of continental economic and financial institutions; political integration through a Pan-African Parliament would also be realized. In an important sense the AEC is perceived not merely as the economic department of the OAU or its successor; indeed one can say



the AEC is the OAU/AU and the OAU and later AU is the AEC.<sup>1</sup>

However, with the metamorphosis of OAU into AU and the development of the New Partnership for Economic Development (NEPAD) as its economic wing, AEC died a natural death. The Constitutive Act of the AU makes provisions for a defined transitional period, which would ensure a smooth and gradual transition of the OAU and AEC into the AU. The transition of the OAU into the AU is clearly spelt out in the Constitutive Act. The AEC, on the other hand, was supposed to gradually merge with the African Union, with the AU taking its key organs. In addition, the Union was to take over from the AEC the crucial responsibility of co-ordination and harmonizing the policies between the existing and future RECs for the gradual attainment of the objectives of the Union. In theory, this has been achieved as a result of the incorporation of AEC into AU.<sup>2</sup>

NEPAD emerged from three parallel initiatives launched in 2000-01: the Millennium Partnership for the African Recovery Programme (MAP) led by president Thabo Mbeki of South Africa. This began with a mandate given by the OAU to president Mbeki, along with president Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and president Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria to investigate how Africa would overcome its debt crisis. Mbeki was meanwhile promoting his vision of 'African Renaissance,' which encompassed not just economic development, but cultural, social and political regeneration too. A presentation on MAP was made to the

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<sup>1</sup> Oyugi, W., 2004, "African Union and European Union: A Comparative Analysis," Paper Presented at the CODESRIA/DPMF Conference on the theme: African Union and New Strategies for Development in Africa, 26-28 January 2004, UNECA Conference Centre Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

<sup>2</sup> Waal 2002; Oyugi 2004.

World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland in January 2001; the second component was the OMEGA Plan of Senegalese president Abdoulaye Wade and other Francophone African leaders in which they were developing, essentially an infrastructural development plan. The OMEGA Plan was first presented at the Franco-Africa Summit in Yaounde, Cameroon in January 2001; the third contributor was the Compact for African Recovery initiated by the executive secretary of UNECA K.Y. Amoako, in response to a mandate provided by African ministers of finance in late 2000.<sup>3</sup>

However, concerned about a possible clash between Francophone and Anglophone states that would reinforce a false political divide, the MAP leaders mandated South African President Thabo Mbeki to interact with his Senegalese counterpart in order to bring about a merger between MAP and OMEGA. Just before the 2001 OAU summit Lusaka, Zambia, Wade visited South Africa, and the two leaders and their respective teams finalized plans and successfully merged MAP and OMEGA and named the integrated plan the New African Initiative (NAI). The Lusaka summit endorsed NAI and mandated the leaders to fine-tune the new plan into a partnership between Africa and the industrialized powers of the world. In October 2001, African leaders met in Abuja, Nigeria and launched NEPAD.<sup>4</sup> At the date when the AU replaced the OAU, the AEC had been operational for eight years not actually as a separate if complementary institution of the OAU but as an organisation exercising its functions using the actual organs, e.g. the Secretariat,

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<sup>3</sup> Waal, A., 2002, "What's in the 'New Partnership for Africa's Development'?" *International Affairs*, 78, 3, 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Landsberg, C., 2002, "NEPAD: What is it? What is Missing?" paper prepared for NALEDI



of the OAU. It is against this background that the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) emerged in October 2001 (and was later declared a programme of the AU at the July 2002 Durban launch) enjoying the blessings of the G-8, and apparently assuming a higher profile than the longer established AEC. It appeared to be a separate, ‘stand-alone’ initiative.<sup>1</sup>

All in all, the quest for an integrated African continent incrementally has not been rosy. The building blocks of the Pan-Africanist agenda—the regional economic communities—are far from achieving political union four decades down the line: regional integration in the continent has been very slow, with low levels of intra-regional trade and investment as well as limited progress on economic cooperation.

Despite the trade liberation schemes of the RECs, intra-African trade is still very low, accounting for about 10 per cent of the value of total exports.<sup>2</sup> To date only the East African Community (EAC) boasts of a Customs union which still has challenges that bedevil its march towards a common market and eventually a political union. EAC, the South African development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Economic Community of Central African

State (ECCAS), Arab Maghreb Union, the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) face a host of obstacles that prevent the deepening of economic integration, such as missing complementarities in intra-regional trade, restrictive rules of origin, non-tariff barriers and supply-side constraints, local industry protection, the fear of uneven distribution of cost and benefits, dependence on import revenues and an overlap in membership of regional bodies.<sup>3</sup> Thus, although there is a lot of faith in the bottom-up incremental approach, it has been slow and with little success five decades on.

The quest for a top-down approach to continental unity was abandoned in the early 1960s after Nkrumah’s vision failed to attract enough adherents; but five decade later the creation of the AU has re-awakened the quest for a hastened political union of Africa. The AU was established in July 2002 by African leaders, evolving from the OAU. However, the idea of the AU can be traced to the Pan-Africanist movement and its institutionalization through the Pan-African Congress and the OAU. The AU represents the third phase of the institutionalization of Pan-Africanism. Nkrumah’s greatest bequest to Africa was the agenda of continental unification. No one else has made the case for continental integration more forcefully, or with a greater sense of drama than Nkrumah. Although most African leaders regard the whole idea of a United States of Africa as wholly

### **The quest for an integrated African continent incrementally has not been rosy**

<sup>1</sup> Oyugi 2004

<sup>2</sup> Meyn, M., 2005, “The Progress of Economic Regionalization in Southern Africa: Challenges for SADC and COMESA,” in Hansohm, D., Breytenbach, W., Hartzenberg, W., and McCarthy, C., (eds.), *Monitoring Regional Integration in Southern Africa Yearbook Volume 5*, Stellenbosch: Trade Law Centre for Southern Africa; ECA and AU 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Ng’eno, N., Nyangito, H., Ikiara, M., Ronge, E., and Nyamunga, J., 2003, *Regional Integration Study of East Africa: The Case of Kenya*, Nairobi: KIPPRA.



unattainable in the foreseeable future, Nkrumah even after death has kept the debate alive through his books and through the continuing influence of his ideas.

The United States of Africa was first coined more than 80 years ago by the activist and poet, Marcus Garvey. And Nkrumah who inherited the Pan-African mantle laid it foundation. After a long lull after Nkrumah's death, in 1999, Muammar Gaddafi proposed the political unification of Africa at the extraordinary summit of the OAU in Sirte, Libya, on 9 September 1999. He proposed the declaration of the United States of Africa, then and there. Consequently, a Committee of Experts was set up to design the AU, whose Constitutive Act was presented to the July 2000 OAU and adopted a year later.

Overall, there is convergence over the need for a United States of Africa but a unanimous roadmap on how to attain it is still missing. The question has thus remained which way United States of Africa. Top-down, bottom-up or an interplay of the two. Tentative answers have been provided to this crucial question. Some contributors propose a federal state derived from the present states *ala* the USA; others call for continuity in the current path of incrementation *ala* the EU. Third but not yet pursued is an interplay of both.

At the recent meeting of Heads of States in Accra, Ghana, the issue of which way for African integration again became the main focus of the gathering. Just like during the immediate post-independence period, the debate revolved around two schools of thought. Muammar Gaddafi, Abdoulaye Wade, Alpha Omar Konare, among others, following in the footsteps of Kwame Nkrumah, Ahmed Sekou Tourè and Modibo Keita of Ghana, Guinea and Mali respectively among others, argued for the

immediate creation of a continental government. They have a 'global view' of Africa according to which Africa should be governed by one supranational government (some kind of a federal state of Africa) in which state sovereignty would be subordinate to the supranational centre.

On the other extreme were the gradualist proponents, Thabo Mbeki, John Kufour, among others, following in the footsteps of Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Tafawa Balewa of Nigeria, William Tubman of Liberia, Léopold Senghor of Senegal, Houphouët-Boigny of Ivory Coast among others, who argued for a gradual and structural approach towards the creation of a continental government in Africa. In support of this approach, Mbeki posited that "before you put a roof on a house, you need to build the foundations." This group mostly consists of regionalists/functionalists who prefer an incremental and functional approach to continental unity. They are regionalists in the sense that they believe in the creation of smaller units of cooperation/integration based on regional geographic units which can then ultimately form the basis of cooperation at the continental level. This group also argues for a functionalist approach. Their basic argument is that immediate political union is not feasible in the short run and, therefore, call for cooperation in functional areas such as day-to-day economic interchange, various forms of communication, cultural and scientific cooperation etc. The group hopes that functional interdependence will lead to regional political union and ultimately to continental political union. Gradualist proponents have been quick to advise a need for the strengthening of regional bodies as a foundation for the continental unity. Most of the 53 AU members appear to favor this approach towards the creation of a United States of Africa, not because it



is the most effective but because it is the softer option.

The debate in Africa is however yet to consider the confederal approach, which is more or less an interplay of the two main approaches. Four confederations have existed that are considered prototypes. They are the old Swiss confederation, from the late medieval period to 1789; the renewed Swiss

confederation from 1815-1848; the United

Provinces of the Netherlands from 1579-1795; the German Bund from 1815-1866; the American confederation from 1781-1789; and the United State of America from 1789 to the civil war.

One of the reasons for the formation of these confederations, however different in time and space, has been primarily the concern of security and defense. In the case of the old Swiss confederation and the United Provinces of the Netherlands, the establishment of both confederations aimed at ending off the House of Habsburg. The construction of the German Bund aimed at allying powers against the influence of French Revolutionary ideologies while the formation of the confederation of the USA was to unify forces in the struggle against the imperial power, Britain. In the creation of all the confederations, a succession of treaties signed by the member states lay the constitutional basis for the confederations. All the constitutional pacts of the confederations stated clearly that the purpose of union is for common security and defensive purposes.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Song, A., 2000, "Confederalism: A Review of Recent Literature," in Coppeters, B., Darchiashvili, D., and Akaba, N., (ed.), *Federal Practice: Exploring Alternatives for Georgia and*

Second, the states remain sovereign and retain the right to withdraw from the confederate union. It is this feature that distinguishes confederalism from the other forms of governance and which received much criticism from the early federalists who considered it so weak and loose a form of governance that unity was difficult to obtain, and that union was permanently

in danger of break-up.

However, none of the confederations

collapsed as a result of secession of member states. The Old Swiss confederation and the United Provinces of the Netherlands were dissolved under pressure from French in 1789; the German Bund ended as a result of a civil war in 1866 to achieve a more united German State; and the confederation of USA failed as a result of lack of financial power of the Congress and shortage of money after the independence war.<sup>2</sup>

Third, an assembly of delegates (General Assembly) from the member states forms the confederal government (*Diet* in the Swiss confederation, *Generaliteit* in the United Provinces of the Netherlands, *Bundestag* in the German Bund, and the *Congress* in the confederation of USA) which has exclusive powers in foreign affairs and defence. The General Assembly has the right to dispatch and receive embassies, conclude treaties, declare war, regulate trade, unify coinage, etc, though the real scope of activities and division of power differs from one confederation to another.

*Abkhazia*, Brussels, Belgium: VUB University Press. Forsyth, M., 1981, *Union of States: The Theory and Practice of Confederation*, New York: Leister University Press.

<sup>2</sup> Forsyth 1981; Song 2000.



One example of confederalism in practice was the US in 1781–88. Following the end of the war of independence, the original 13 states cooperated under a loose agreement known as the Articles of Confederation, or a ‘league of friendship’. Central government could declare war, coin money, and conclude treaties, but could not levy taxes or regulate commerce, and founded its system of ‘national’ defence on a network of state militias. The Articles could not be amended without the approval of all 13 states, and treaties needed the consent of at least nine states. There was no national executive or judiciary, and the powers of the confederation lay in the hands of an elected Congress in which each state had one vote. Congress rarely met though, and had no permanent home, so its powers were exercised by committees with variable membership. The assumption was that the states might cooperate enough eventually to form a common system of government, but they did not. It was only in 1787 that work began on developing the federal system of government that we find in the US today.

Confederalism was also used in Germany in 1815–71, when a 39-member confederation was created under the domination of Austria and Prussia following the Congress of Vienna in 1815. Based on the old Holy Roman Empire, it was more an empire than a new state. Few restrictions were placed on the powers of the member kingdoms, duchies, and cities, whose representatives met sporadically (just 16 times in the history of the confederation) in a diet in Frankfurt. Amendments to the constitution needed near-unanimity, and most other measures required a two-thirds majority. Regular business was conducted by an inner committee in which the 11 largest states had one vote each, and the smallest had six between them. There were no common trade or communications

policies, and the development of a common army was frustrated by the refusal of smaller states to cooperate.<sup>1</sup>

Switzerland, too, was confederal from 1291-1798, and although it now calls itself a federation, it has given up fewer powers to the national government than has been the case with other federations, such as Germany, the United States, or Russia. The Confederation began when in 1291 three alpine communities (Schwyz, Uri and Unterwald) formed a military alliance that by the mid 14th century was extended to a loose military coalition of eight cantons, linked by six separate pacts. By the middle of the 16th century, it grew to 13 cantons and a number of associated and ‘dependent’ territories. What kept these different components together was a common military interest based on desire to control the borders of the Swiss Alps and exploit the dependent territories.<sup>2</sup> The problematical feature of the Confederation, however, was the dominance of two cantons, Bern and Zurich, and between the 16th and 18th centuries there were at least four internal wars in which Bern and Zurich fought against small Catholic cantons and in which Bern’s troops conducted punishing expeditions against individual cantons and cities. The Confederation, however, was effectively dissolved in 1798 when French troops marched into Bern, and, to reduce the dominance of Bern and Zurich.<sup>3</sup> Its 1874 constitution allocates specific powers to the

<sup>1</sup> Carr, 1987, pp. 4–5; Elazar, D., 1994, *Federal Systems of the World: A Handbook of Federal, Confederal and Autonomy Arrangements*, London: Longman.

<sup>2</sup> Filippov, M., Ordeshook, P., and Shvetsova, O., 2004, *Designing Federalism: A Theory of Self-Sustainable Federal Institutions*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>3</sup> Hughes, C., 1962, *The Parliament of Switzerland*, London: The Hansard Society by Cassell.





federal government, the rest being reserved to the 20 cantons and six half-cantons. The Swiss encourage direct democracy by holding national referenda, have a Federal Assembly elected by proportional representation, and are governed by a seven-member Federal Council elected by the Assembly. More purely confederal systems in Europe today can be found in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in Serbia and Montenegro.

Confederation as a form of governance has acquired a negative reputation. The

general negative reaction against it is formulated in the criticism that this loose structure of government can no longer offer a feasible solution to contemporary political demands, that it should be washed aside and ignored by the tide of history. The bad reputation acquired by confederation may be traced back to the vast improvement in the central governance of the US when the 1787 constitution replaced the Articles of Confederation.<sup>1</sup>

This approach provides for the states remaining sovereign and retaining the right to withdraw from the confederate union. It also provides for an assembly of delegates which has exclusive powers in foreign affairs and defence. The General Assembly has the right to dispatch and receive embassies, conclude treaties, declare war, regulate trade, unify coinage, etc, though the real scope of activities and division of power differs from one confederation to another.

<sup>1</sup> Song, X., Federalism, Confederalism and Consociationalism,

## 7.0 The American and European Experience: Lessons for Africa

Whichever approach African states endorse for achieving the dream of a United States of Africa there are factors which have informed the successful integration of the USA and the EU that Africa should learn from. This should be complemented by taking stock of the historical trajectory of the OAU by building up on the successes and navigating through the pitfalls that

have undermined the quest for continental unity.

### The first and most critical factor for the African unity is political interests

The first and most critical factor is political interests. This has been the bane of African regional integration. Any regional organization needs the necessary political interest to eliminate barriers to trade, to create common policies and to establish common institutions. The age-old problem of sovereignty, that is, the fear of transferring authority to supranational bodies, based on entrenched narrow politico-economic interests, remains a major challenge which the AU Assembly has to grapple with. For regional cooperation to be achieved, there must be the political will and interest to support cooperation or integration.<sup>2</sup> The

### The African Union must agree on the areas in which the states have to surrender authority over to the Commission to act on behalf of the collectivity

history of regional efforts in Africa shows that political considerations by national leaderships have slowed the implementation of regional decisions; this

<sup>2</sup> Johnson, O.E.G. 1991, "Economic Integration in Africa: Enhancing Prospects for Success," in *Journal of Modern African Studies* 29 (1): 1-26



is one of the challenges that the AU has to overcome. The “challenge to strengthen and sustain progressive political leadership” is one of the major constraints in implementing NEPAD. Wiseman Nkuhlu, the former CEO of NEPAD, maintains, “What Africa has to get right in order to claim the 21st century is to improve leadership across the board.”<sup>1</sup> In contrast, the EU and USA example clearly shows that political will and interest was instrumental to the success of integration in these regions. In the EU, in the early days of integration, Germany was willing to defer to French leadership. This later became a joint leadership, the famous Franco-German axis, which operated continuously whatever the political constellations in Paris and Berlin.<sup>2</sup>

To date, all member countries of the AU have retained their full legal sovereignty. There is no field of politics where the African states have explicitly transferred national sovereignty to an AU level. The parliament of the AU is purely advisory and has no competences to make laws for the continent. Nor can the commission make any decisions which bind the member states. By the end of 2006, only 3 of the 26 participating

states had gone completely through the reviewing process (Ghana, Rwanda and Kenya)—far below the pace initially projected. But the peer reviews of two others (Mauritius and South Africa) are thought to be nearly done. Additionally,

Uganda, Nigeria, Algeria, Benin, and Tanzania had all begun the formal process by the middle of 2006, and Senegal, Mali, and Mozambique were reported to be at the head of the APRM queue for future reviewing.<sup>3</sup> In the future, the reviews of the African Peer Review Mechanism may well produce real political results, given the point that public criticism coming from Africans might have an impact on public opinion. But also they have no legally-binding character. Besides, although NEPAD and APRM were declared to be AU initiatives, participation is voluntary. A row of member states have abstained.<sup>4</sup>

It is the absence of agreed leadership that makes it difficult to envisage progress in Africa. The AU needs to borrow from the experience of the EU and the US. First, they must agree at the very minimum on the areas in which the states have to surrender authority over to the Commission to act on behalf of the collectivity on the understanding that action so taken will be binding on the Member States. In the US and Germany foreign and defense policy have been transferred

**Another vital element is agreement/consensus on basic constitutional principles and common institutions** to the common

supranational level while the EU acts on behalf of its members in all sectors except foreign policy and national security. However, the EU is currently in a process of “hardening” as a foreign political actor and also in fields where the member states

<sup>1</sup> Wyk, A., 2007, “Political Leaders in Africa: President, Patrons or Profiteers?” ACCORD Occasional Paper Series Vol. 2, No. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Cameron, F., 2005, “The EU Model of Integration: Relevance Elsewhere?” The Jean Monnet/Robert Schuman Paper Series, Vol. 5, No. 37, 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Stultz, N.M., 2007, “African States Experiment with Peer Reviewing: The APRM, 2002 to 2007,” *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Vol. XIII, Issue 2.

<sup>4</sup> Zank 2007



still are sovereign we can observe a growing coherence.

Second, another vital element is agreement/consensus on basic constitutional principles and common institutions. Do the member states have the political will and interest to create such institutions and invest them with powers? Such a consensus was in place in Western Europe after World War II (democratic rule by law) and in the US after the collapse of the confederation. This is not the case in Africa which has exhibited a broad array of incompatible constitutional models after independence.

The EU was fortunate in having the founding fathers (Robert Schuman, Aldo de Gasperi, Jean Monnet, etc) in the 1950s with the vision to create the supranational European institutions – Commission, Parliament and Court. The Council is the inter-governmental forum of the member states. These institutions have helped inculcate a shared political culture and have also helped deal with diversity among the member states.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the USA founding fathers also created institutions which they vested with powers. Both the U.S. Constitution and the early treaties on which the EC was based reflected a desire to create something not quite centralized, but more than confederated. The U.S. Supreme Court and the European Court of Justice (ECJ) did not direct the course of federation alone, for the executives, legislators, administrators and other judges at both state and central levels were also active in channeling or limiting the extent of centralization. The results are federal systems, with varying degrees of state autonomy versus centralized power in different eras.

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<sup>1</sup> Cameron 2005

### **What is the unifying factor for Africa?**

In contrast to the above experiences of the AU institutions, most of the veto powers rest with the executive wing of member states while the legislature and the court remain mere advisory organs. The lack of solid institutions to coordinate the implementation of any inter-state projects in Africa remains an impediment to effort at integration. If Africa is to succeed, there is need to establish supranational institutions with independence from its constituent parts, authority to make decisions that bind its member states and ability to act on both states and on individuals within states.

Third, both the EU and the USA had a critical unifying factor—security and economic recovery. For the EU it was economic recovery following the destruction of the socio-economic infrastructure of the region during World War II and the security concern and especially the need to contain Germany and contain the spread of communism. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the emergence of a single superpower—USA—became a unifying factor; it is not farfetched to suggest that the recent resurgence of pan-European nationalism has a lot to do with the need to establish a counter-force to the United States in the international arena. The Maastricht Treaty of 1992 could thus be seen partly in that context; so is the search for a European Monetary Union (EMU), which has so far resulted in the emergence of a common European currency—the Euro—as a counter-force to the U.S. dollar in the international trade. This sort of situation does not exist in Africa where many countries believe that their destiny is closely intertwined with destinies of their former colonial masters and their bilateral partners. In the case of the USA, they united forces in the struggle against the imperial power, Britain. While it lasted, the OAU was able



to use decolonization as a unifying factor but once that had been achieved there was no single unifying factor for Africans to work together. Therefore, one has to search seriously in order to locate an issue(s) around which Africans can be mobilized.<sup>1</sup>

Fourth, is lack of tangible benefits

### **What are the tangible benefits of continental integration?**

of continental integration. The intra-trade amongst regional blocks remains extremely low while elections in member states to date are marred by violence, rigging and intimidation. Moreover, OAU when it lasted was merely a political forum for member states while NEPAD—the implementing organ of AU—will have no impact if it is not empowered to synchronize and harmonize the basic values and notions enunciated in the AU Charter. Almost six years after the formation of NEPAD in 2001, there is little one can

### **Weak or unstable domestic institutions are not a good foundation upon which to build international institutions**

identify, on the African continent, as having benefited from the NEPAD concept. A person no lesser than one of its prime movers, President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal has also stated so. The African continent remains the poorest continent. Basic human rights continue to be flouted with reckless abandon by African dictators and rulers. Crises in Africa are continuing instead of dwindling. For instance, the humanitarian crisis in the Darfur region of Western Sudan continues unabated. The AU has also not taken any steps to assist the helpless victims of state terrorism in the

<sup>1</sup> Oyugi 2004

Darfur region. It has also not done anything about the worsening human rights crisis in Zimbabwe. This is despite the fact that both the AU Act and in the AEC Treaty and more recently in the NEPAD document, commitment has been made to democratic governance, openness in decision-making and popular participation in decision-making.

Fifth, compatible (not identical) socio-economic systems. The Western European countries have been mixed economies with a public sector, but where economic activities were mainly

### **Africa lacks identical socio-economic systems**

coordinated by market forces. This opened the possibilities to use these market forces, e.g. by removing trade barriers, to strengthen cooperation at ground level and create pressures for further integration. Adherence to such a socio-economic model has also become an explicit criterion for EU membership. By contrast, Africa has historically had all kinds of economic systems, centrally-planned socialist ones included. The multitude of systems created additional barriers for African integration. Today there is reason to be moderately optimistic as regards some progress at African integration. Democratic principles are much stronger rooted today than previously, and the time of sweeping social experiments seems to be over.<sup>2</sup> Africa should thus build on the similarity of

<sup>2</sup> Zank, W., 2007, "A Comparative European View on African Integration: Why it has been much more difficult in Africa than in Europe," CCIS RESEARCH SERIES WORKING PAPER NO. 4



their economies which are now by and large market-driven.

Fifth, the degree of success in the creation of supranational institutions cannot be dissociated from the effectiveness with which institutions work both in the member countries as well as at the regional level; in other words, weak or unstable domestic institutions are not a good foundation upon which to build international institutions.<sup>1</sup> It is unwise to have high expectations from the supranational institutions when they have not been very successful at their respective national and regional levels. This is the case for the African Parliament which is in place and yet the national parliaments do not function well in the respective Member States.<sup>2</sup> The argument here is that the existence of ineffective national and regional parliaments and weak parliamentary structures creates difficulties when they are required to operate at a continental level.

Sixth, little interaction between the AU and RECs and the consequent little translation of RECs goals into national plans and budgets as well as the implementation of AU goals continue to dog African unity. This has been made difficult by the fact that many states belong to more than one of the RECs as well as the competing and conflicting interests between the RECs and

the AU. Translating RECs goals into national plans and budgets is an important interface between individual countries, the RECs and the AU. But member countries have deficient national mechanisms for doing so. In most African countries regional cooperation does not go far beyond signing treaties and protocols. And the objectives of the treaties are integrated at the wrong time and without the requisite commitment in national development plans or in the sectoral programmes of appropriate substantive ministries. Furthermore, Heads of States, as well as their representatives and staff are not adequately prepared for the biannual AU Summits every January and July. The relevant documents for the issues debated at the Summits are not circulated in a timely manner to allow delegates to conduct adequate research and formulate an informed position prior to Summit meetings. Some member governments do not have staff dedicated to focusing on AU-related work and are therefore unprepared to make substantive

### **Little interaction between the AU and RECs and the consequent little translation of RECs goals into national plans and budgets as well as the implementation of AU goals continue to dog African unity**

contributions at the Summits. The larger size and increased mandate of the Union Government and eventually the United States of Africa will only worsen these existing challenges.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Malamud, A., and Souza, L., 2005, "Regional Parliaments in Europe and Latin America: Between Empowerment and Irrelevance," Prepared for delivery at the First Global International Studies Conference (World International Studies Committee – WISC), Istanbul, Bilgi University, August 24-27, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Aseye 2005

The main obstacles to progress are the vested interests that have profited from

<sup>3</sup> AFRODAD, AfriMAP and Oxfam, 2007, *Towards a People-Driven African Union: Current Obstacles and New Opportunities*, South Africa: AFRODAD, AfriMAP and Oxfam.



development failure. These mainly include Africa's leadership and state apparatus. Those key elements in Africa's policies are understandably reluctant to accelerate a paradigm shift that weakens their power and reduce opportunities for satisfying the private agenda of public officials. The creation of a Union Government and the United States of Africa will create a far larger bureaucracy with many other committees, departments, commissions and institutions yet the relationships between the existing bodies has not been resolved. If these relationships are not worked out, the Union Government runs the risk of creating duplicitous structures rather than ensuring efficient collaboration between bodies. In addition to the relationship between existing institutions, the procedures and membership criteria of many existing bodies have not yet been resolved. The provisions for the Union Government do not promise to make such criteria and procedures more transparent.<sup>1</sup> There is an urgent need for coordination and harmonization, of not only RECs but also NEPAD and APRM, if the dream of a United States of Africa is to become a reality.

Seventh, there has been almost no popular participation in the regional integration processes both at the regional as well as sub-regional levels. In the RECs governments and intergovernmental organizations have generally monopolized the dialogue on integration. But there is an emerging recognition of the need to involve people in the process. Various mechanisms have been put in place to involve civil society in regional integration but are rarely put into action.<sup>2</sup>

In the AU, civil society participation at AU Summits has been minimal and has been waning since 2002 according to many civil society organizations (CSOs) that have been consistently trying to gain access to Summit meetings and representatives. The United States of Africa should be designed to be representative of the peoples of Africa, not only the member governments; however, participation in the AU has been limited thus far. Although certain women's advocacy groups have been actively consulted by the Courts, there is little genuine civil society participation except for a few select groups (about 50) who are favored by various governments and funded to attend the Summits. The institutions designed to increase participation in AU affairs, such as the African Citizens Directorate (CIDO), lack capacity. Moreover, the role of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), designed to increase involvement of non-governmental bodies, is unclear and the provisions for membership are vague.<sup>3</sup>

Eighth, another teething issue in efforts at continental integration in Africa is the over-dependency on donors. Lack of funding for AU

**No popular participation in the regional integration processes both at the regional as well as sub-regional levels**

operations is a huge constraint to its efficient operation. Many of the problems cited above are a result of weak human resource capacity, limited staff and

<sup>1</sup> AFRODAD, AfriMAP and Oxfam, 2007

<sup>2</sup> ECA and AU, 2006, *Assessing Regional Integration in Africa II: Rationalizing Regional*

*Economic Communities*, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: ECA and AU.

<sup>3</sup> AFRODAD, AfriMAP and Oxfam, 2007



organizational resources and these limitations are often a result of limited funding. Many member governments have defaulted on their annual contributions and

### **Over-dependency on donors**

extraordinary summits called over the past few years to deal with specific issues have drained already limited financial resources. In a report by AU financial experts to a meeting of AU foreign ministers in June 2007, nearly all member states are behind in their payments to the AU while accounting methods in the organization are systematically flawed. A total of 106.8 million dollars (78 million euros) in payments was still outstanding. The report revealed that among the

53 AU member states, 21 were a year or more in arrears while a further 25 were behind with this year's payments. Only seven states were up to date with their payments. The report about the state of the AU's finances underlines how the organization is currently struggling to secure the funds it has been promised and how its scope for enlarging its responsibilities is limited. The findings of the international auditors Ernst&Young on the conference of intellectuals were particularly damning, finding that although the conference cost seven million dollars, only 4.1 million could be accounted for. The sources of funding for the United States of Africa need to be resolved. Suggestions have been made about import levies and airplane ticket taxes on flights to and from the continent, but nothing has been solidified. The financing of such a large body is no small concern. Its effective operation is entirely dependent on said funds and many member governments are faced with extreme domestic demands on their limited budgets and have already failed to meet their commitments to the AU's

operating costs.<sup>1</sup> Actually, in the USA, the initial confederation of USA collapsed and led to the civil war as a result of lack of financial power of the congress and shortage of money after the independence war.

Chances of African integration efforts succeeding lies in ensuring that the supra-national institutions created have a stable financial base.

Ninth, lack of measures to monitor implementation of policies. There is no effective mechanism to monitor and ensure

### **Lack of measures to monitor implementation of policies**

implementation of decisions made at summits. If there is no punishment for failure to comply with decisions agreed upon at the summits the mandate and legitimacy of the African Union itself will be undermined. The civil society report goes so far as to say that some member states commit to various projects with the full knowledge that they will not be implemented. A guarantee that decisions will be implemented is an essential and so far lacking component of the AU. The Union Government proposal does not have any additional provisions that guarantee that implementation will be monitored and enforced.<sup>2</sup>

All in all, what Africa grapples with at this point in time, in the words of Daniel Elazar, is how to craft/design a mode of political organization that unites separate polities within an overarching political system by distributing power among general and constituent governments in a manner designed to protect the existence

<sup>1</sup> AFRODAD, AfriMAP and Oxfam, 2007

<sup>2</sup> AFRODAD, AfriMAP and Oxfam, 2007



and authority of both.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, as Oyugi has observed, it is the failure by the architects of the AU to learn from the thirty-nine years of OAU experience that has resulted in the failure to craft a more realistic organization. And that is the most serious challenge currently facing the AU and its adjunct organization/programme, notably the NEPAD.<sup>2</sup> The EU and the USA have been successful in achieving this balance. In the US, the constitution is the supreme law of the land while in the EU the Constitution and law adopted by the Union's

Institutions in exercising competences conferred on it, shall have primacy over the law of the

member states. However, putting in place such a structure does not guarantee progress in integrations efforts. These provisions must be translated into actions. And for these provisions to be translated into actions, Africa needs to come up with more heavily "institutionalized" governance structures to enforce the initial agreements and to make choices in the future, when unforeseen contingencies arise. All of them imply a certain degree of delegation from the constituent states to an "agency" – or more specifically, to a governance structure –which we would call the union, confederal or federal government.

**The likely approach Africa might want to start with considering its five decades history of integration would be a confederation**

## 8.0 Conclusion

This paper has shown that there is currently lacking a basis/foundation within which a United States of Africa can be crafted. For the dream of a United States of Africa to become a reality, AU must, first and foremost, agree at the very minimum on the areas in which the states have to surrender authority over to the Commission to act on behalf of the collectivity on the understanding that action so taken will be binding on the

Member States. The EU by the time of the Treaty of Maastricht (1992) was in a position to identify what today is referred

to as the pillars of operation, according to which some decisions can be made by the Union bodies in the understanding that Member States will abide by them provided the decision is a majority one.

In the history of efforts towards the integration of Africa, there is a glut of efforts which are being replicated over and again but never being institutionalized: OAU; Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) of April 1980 and the Final Act of Lagos (FAL); the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community (AEC); The designers of the AEC envisaged an evolution of the AEC through six main stages over a period of 34 years to the year 2025 from modest socio-cultural and economic concerns to comprehensive political and economic union. The first three stages would see the strengthening of existing RECs and creating new ones where they did not exist, with the end view of transforming each REC into a Free Trade Area and Customs Union. The last three stages would see the economic integration of the different RECs into a Continental Customs Union and

<sup>1</sup> Elazar, D., 1984 *American Federalism: A View from the States*. New York: Harper and Row.

<sup>2</sup> Oyugi, W., 2004, "African Union and European Union: A Comparative Analysis," Paper Presented at the CODESRIA/DPMF Conference on the theme: African Union an New Strategies for Development in Africa, 26-28 January 2004, UNECA Conference Centre Addis Ababa, Ethiopia





African Common Market through the creation of continental economic and financial institutions; political integration through a Pan-African Parliament would also be realized. If these provisions of the AEC were never implemented close to a decade before the AU was born, what exists now that did not exist then that would compel African leaders to unite around the idea of a United States of Africa and see it progress at the expense of their self-interest of the individual African states.

Whether we take the bottom-up or the top-down approach towards the integration of the African continent, whatever structure is cobbled together will remain a farce unless individual African leaders have to make the requisite compromises to tackle the challenges that have impeded African integration five decades since the independence of most African countries.

The most critical resolution that should be given priority is introduction of membership conditions as had earlier been envisioned in the NEPAD. Membership of the United States of Africa should not be *de facto* membership of all African states. Ascension to the United States of Africa should be based on specific conditions and performance indicators rather than on a verbal commitment by Heads of State about African integration. As demonstrated by the EU and the USA case, membership was initially small and progressively expanded as new entrants met the stipulated requirements; the movement from one stage to another has always been influenced by the lessons learnt in the previous stages; and it is only their demonstrated effect of success that pressured the surrounding state to join. Similarly, any economic grouping of African countries should be seen by the members as an organization that they aspire to join, not one to which they belong by simply being members of a club of

independent African nations. As in the case of the EU, membership of the United States of Africa could be pegged on well-established economic and political criteria. Unless these difficult decisions are made the pan-African vision of Nkrumah will never move beyond its 50-year stagnation

The likely approach Africa might want to start with considering its five decades history of integration would be a confederation which would serve as a transitional bridge towards federal or union political association. Basically, confederation is a form of political association that stresses functional interactions between or among units than structural or institutional formalities. Compared to federalism, it is a more elastic and flexible system whose defining characteristics include decentralized system of collective state sovereignty. It is a more loose rather than a rigid form of political association. For example, confederalism was the transitional arrangement used in the United States from 1781 to 1789. It was necessary at the time it was in place; it had served its purpose and run its course when it was superseded by the Federal Union. And, strictly speaking, the United States is not just a federation and not just a union, but a federal union. As is well known, the attempt to revive the confederal system by the secessionist Southern Confederate states in the early 1860's spawned the American (1861-1865) Civil War. By its minimalist mandate, confederation has the capacity to make decisions that bind the member states only in the clearly defined functions (common security and defense [which would include foreign affairs, war and peace, military integration or coordination], or some economic sphere [which would include regulation of external trade and internal commerce, standardization of such things as weights and measures, and the establishment of common or single markets]). Control over

social, education, public health, and cultural activities, i.e., those that impinge most directly on the daily life of individuals would fall within the competence of member states. Furthermore, considering that the history of African integration has

been elite-driven, confederation foots the bill since it must reach the people predominantly through its member states. Its success depends much more on the governments of the member states than on the popular support of the people.

## The Quest for a United States of Africa: Top-Down or Bottom-Up Approach

-A rejoinder-

By Max Mmuya\*

- *Functionalism*
- *Neo-Functionalism*
- *Intergovernmentalism*
- *Federalism*
- *Confederation*

### 1.0 A Review of Dr. Oloo's Basic Premises

#### 1.1 Introduction

The paper by Dr. Oloo, entitled: "The Quest For A United States Of Africa Top-Down Or Bottom-Up Approach" purportedly seeks to explore the "creation and viability" of a United States of Africa. In the authors own formulation, this is to be accomplished by exploring the advantages and disadvantages of two schools of thought that have informed the debate on the approach to the realization of a United States of Africa, historically and in the present times.



- The Rationale for Integration
- The Top-Down Approach: The United States of America Experience
- The Bottom-up Approach: The European Union Experience
- The United States of Africa Case: Top-Down or Bottom-Up
- The American and European Experience: Lessons for Africa
- Conclusion

Dr. Oloo has sectionalized his presentation under eight main parts with part 2 split into five sub-sections thus:-

- Introduction
- Traditional Approaches to Integration

### 1.2 The Thrust of the Paper

The paper's basic argument is that both the Top-Down and Bottom up approaches are not feasible in the realization of a "United States of Africa". The author proposes for what he refers to as "The Missing Link" what he calls "a median" position "between the two extremes." He also refers it to as a "Confederation". The proposal is

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based on the writer's position that Africa has unique prevailing circumstances which make the application of the major contenting approaches least applicable.

“...I argue that based on the circumstances prevailing, a top-down approach is not immediately feasible and likewise a bottom-up approach postpones the hard questions and deals with the softer economic options. Part of the problem with both schools of thought is that they do not have a clear roadmap with benchmarks on how the ultimate goal of political federation shall be realized. I suggest that a median between the two extremes should be considered—in this case a confederation. It might end up serving as the missing link towards the elusive quest for a United States of Africa...”

Reviewing the paper carefully, Dr. Oloo arrives at this conclusion after a painstaking effort to summarize forms of federations that are in existence, their intellectual bases to them, institutional and organization structures, identifying the main actors and assessing their viability or otherwise of those federation forms. It is under this section that Dr. Oloo draws out, among other considerations issues, both theoretical and action like as a related to the two approaches he is challenging as much as he does pull out the peculiar circumstances that determine their viability or otherwise. This he does in Sections 1 and 2.

After the presentation of imperatives “Rationale” for integration, section 3, under the following sections 4 and 5, Dr. Oloo builds the basic thrust of his proposal for a median position by summarizing pertinent issues from two major case studies: The United States of America Experience and

that of the European Union” respectively before he debates the two major approaches around Africa's initiatives for a Union of States under section 6. Before making some conclusions from the earlier sections, under section 8, Dr. Oloo outlines nine (9) lessons that one can draw from the American and European experiences.

### **1.3 A Review of Dr. Oloo's Premises**

There are numerous pertinent issues in Dr. Oloo's paper which current efforts at building the United States of Africa need to make an appreciation for and apply creatively. In a mere rejoinder presentation like the current one I would like to highlight only four pertinent areas which Dr. Oloo discusses at length. These are:

- The specificity of Africa's circumstances which he refers to as Africa's Unique Prevailing Circumstances;
- The Approach appropriate for the Africa federation project, or the Missing link,
- The Justification for Africa's federation and
- Finally, the lessons for Africa that can be derived from the American and European Union experiences.

#### ***The Specificity of Africa's Prevailing Circumstances and the Federation Initiatives***

The subject of Africa's Unique Prevailing Circumstances is brought up here because of the implication that the application of either of the major contenting approaches is least feasible and even the realization of the envisaged federation very intricate due to those unique circumstances.

However, while in our estimate the issue of how unique circumstances shape or condition the application of models such



as approaches to integration, this aspect of the paper is just mentioned under the introduction section and not discussed. Still, critical aspects that may give image to Africa's unique conditions that must be taken into consideration in any efforts at integration can be gleaned in the various sections of the paper especially under section 7. Under section 7 Dr. Oloo makes a contrast between Africa on the one side and the United States of America and European Union on the other. That contrast enables one to unravel aspects peculiar to America and Europe, as opposed to Africa's that made one approach feasible and not the other. Since this part is going to form one of the areas of discussion at a later section 7 below, we shall reserve those experiences to that section. But elsewhere under other sections, Dr. Oloo's appreciation of Africa's unique circumstances is outlined. From the section 5 on Rationale for example, there are at least four aspects of the situation on the ground in Africa which according to Dr. Oloo have an important bearing on efforts towards federation. These are presented as:

- Africa shares the common identity of the "African"
- Africa does not appear to be raising enormous effective emotions and affection to jumpstart and cement the unity quest
- There has been an unequal distribution of gain among existing members of a bloc such as the EAC, SADC, ECOWAS, IGAD and COMESA raising the potential for resistance to federal initiatives based on these perceptions.
- While in very strict terms Africa lacks a hegemon with the ability to shoulder the costs of smaller nations under a federation, perceptions that some states pose as such exist among some other member countries thereby moderating the zeal for the

federation for fear of the "smaller" states being forcibly encapsulated in the federation.

We broadly concur with Dr. Oloo with his observations. However, like in many such positions, one would have to support the contention brought up. For example, it is not definitive that Africa shares the common identity of the "African" (*Rationale affection*). In fact it is doubtful if all Africa has a common identity. How is it structured and what are the expressions of sharing.

### 1.3.1 "The Missing Link" The Confederation

In contemporary discourses, formulations that attempt to merge, bridge, triangulate two or more contrasting positions are popular in part because of the virtues derived from exploiting the benefits of either variant. Along this line, Dr. Oloo adopts this process to merge the two and major contrasting approaches to integration to arrive at what he refers to as the median position. Dr. Oloo proceeds with a proposal for an attendant organizational form of the federation, the *Confederation*. Probably due to Africa's unique circumstances. Previously under section 2 Dr. Oloo outlined the elements of a Confederation to include the following:

- An association of sovereign states or communities, usually created by treaty but often later adopting a common constitution.
- Established for dealing with critical issues, such as defense, foreign affairs, foreign trade, and a common currency, with the central government being required to provide support for all members.
- Usually limited to a permanent union of sovereign states for common action in relation to other states



- The relationship between the entities constituting a confederation varies considerably. Likewise, the relationship between the member states and the central government, and the distribution of powers among them, is highly variable.
- In a confederation member states revolves around a weaker central government
- Member states temporarily pool resources in certain areas,
- Member states are considered entirely sovereign
- Member states retain the right of unilateral secession.

Difficult questions can be raised regarding this proposal as well. What is the justification for a Confederation structure for Africa? Obviously, and as he acknowledges in the definition, a confederation structure is loose and easily breakable. In any event however, Dr. Oloo can be seen to come from his concern for the median position. The median position implies developing an approach that merges collective initiative and those of the supra-state organizations in a combination that provides options for member states to remain or secede from the integration in response to the exigencies of time and space.

### **1.3.2 The Rationale for Integration**

An aspect that is very straight forward in Dr. Oloo's paper is the basis for justifying the integration of the African States. Reflecting on treatment by his senior in International Relations Studies, Prof. Mwesiga Baregu, on justification for integration, of the four imperatives outlined: *affection, gain, threat and power*, Dr. Oloo isolates *gain and threat* as critical factors that give impetus to the need for African integration.

*Gain* is most celebrated as an imperative ostensibly because of the assumption that "men" always seek to maximize gain and minimize loss. Integration is seen as an organizational form that has immense potential to maximize gain via comparative advantage opportunities afforded by availability and access to resources that members bring to the collective.

The choice of *threat* is justified by Dr. Oloo through the experience in integration initiatives that it is the strong motivator. States, concerned by security and need for protection seek for supra national arrangement to address threat.

This is a very interesting choice because who is threatened by whom in Africa to really need the integration as a deterrence?. Which are the hegemonic countries that have to be contained by an integration structure? Instead, what is visible today is a cluster of states with previous colonial regime countries armies stationed in those previous colonial countries at the ready to "rescue" foreign nationals when cases of crises occur. Thus, how does threat become an impetus?

### **1.3.3 Lessons for Africa (*The American and European Experience*)**

On lessons for Africa from the American and European integration experience Dr. Oloo outlines ten such experiences.

- *Political interests.*
- *Agreement/consensus on basic constitutional principles and common institutions.*
- *Security and Economic recovery.*
- *Lack of tangible benefits of continental integration.*
- *Compatible (not identical) socio-economic systems.*



- *The degree of success in the creation of supranational institutions*
- *Little interaction between the AU and RECs*
- *Lack of popular participation in the regional integration processes*
- *Over-dependency on donors.*
- *Lack of measures to monitor implementation of policies.*

- Arouse Political Institutions, e.g. Political Parties and other Civil Movements to make Integration part of their platforms

***2) Agreement/consensus on basic constitutional principles and common Institutions and Compatible (not identical) socio-economic systems***

We would like to rename the consensus on basic constitutional principles and common institutions as **Governance compatibility.**

We therefore accord to the significance in integration initiatives in terms of what has been experienced by both the American and European processes as being promoted by two compatibilities: the Governance and Economic. These two compatibilities are mutual and reinforcing. This situation should prevail within the individual states to serve as the basis and end of the integration agenda.

Integration initiatives for in Africa have a number of lessons to learn from the American and European experience as listed above. But as it was alluded to under the specificity of Africa's Prevailing circumstances these lessons also describe the peculiarity of Africa, which, hopefully, can be handled by the American and European experience. There is a tall list of this experiences and Dr. Oloo has been very meticulous in identifying all of them and discussing their relevance to the African initiative for integration.

***3) Security and Economic recovery***

While we would like to restate Dr. Oloo's identification of this aspect of the American and European experience, looking back at the discussion by the author on imperatives for integration, security and economic recovery could be separated. Security to mean the deterrence to threat while economic recovery addresses the concerted effort to create wealth which should improve human life conditions.

To echo what has been presented in the paper by Dr. Oloo, in our estimate we would like to isolate, as an example the following points:

***1) Political interests***

The point on political interests as a vehicle for integration is vital. It is not just a matter of states or individual statesman giving expressions that amount to show a liking and wish for integration, but in our own language, there must be political actions that translate the wish to purposive and committed deeds to for example:

- Promote the idea and virtues of integration within the individual state and around the Entities that aspire for integration.
- Commitment to surrendering of power to institutions and organs of integration.
- Make Integration part of the Agenda

***4) Popular participation in the regional integration Processes***

The participation of the variety of agencies movements and other segments of society is a lesson that provides a pitched note on its importance. We would like to identify at least two areas: the legitimating importance of the integration agenda, and secondly the synergetic intercourse between state action and resources on the one hand and



those resources from non-state agencies and their popular support on the other.

### **5) Over-dependency on donors**

Couched differently, the factor of over-dependency implies and the American and European experience has demonstrated that internal drive and not external, to innovate, to subject energies and put them to action for recovery have been key to the realization of the anticipated benefits of integration.

What Africa's current efforts at building a confederation can creatively take stock of these experiences. As Dr. Oloo seems to imply, they are valuable.

## **2.0 The Rejoinder: Posing Africa's Challenges to Integration**

As if to restate what was just presented above, it is on the basis of the very enlightening presentation in Dr. Oloo's paper that I now would like to raise issues around three broad subject worth looking at. These challenges, if anything are intended to facilitate a reconsideration of postulates advanced by Dr. Oloo above. These are structural constraints, governance deficit and a list of immediate demand factors.

### **2.1 Structural Limits to Integration**

In Dr. Oloo's paper, and as it has been characterized above, limits have been posed around the approach to integration, top down or bottom up. The solution has subsequently been formulated within the "approach" to integration discourse, that is the search and adoption of a "median" alternative.

In our estimate and the thrust of this rejoinder is to suggest that there are more enduring structural factors that make integration in Africa an "uphill" task.

These are structural in nature and form. We also suggest that the question of which approach, notably, in the dichotomized expression of "top-down" or "bottom up" or even the "median" position, blurs the basic issues that have to be addressed primary and in a concerted way. It is within the structural factors that lie the hope to the realization of the integration in Africa.

#### **2.1.1 Concept of Structural Factors**

By structural factors we are referring to those aspects of presently existing formations: economic, political, cultural and ideational that have resulted from long term conditioning processes to eventually emerge as enduring systems. These systems shape and determine the course of various initiatives including efforts at integration in Africa.

#### **2.1.2 The Structural factors**

The following are examples of some sectoral structural factors in Africa in individual and broader list of countries:

##### *a) Economic Regime*

- Primary production for Export
- The Primary Production truncated from the Manufacturing notably within and between Africa and other World Regions

##### *b) The Political Regime*

Like the Economic Regime, the centre of political authority and power lies elsewhere outside Africa and then cascades in different proportions towards regional and national Centers/Capitals

##### *c) The Intellectual and Cultural Regime:*

Knowledge building including modeling, conceiving and developing approaches to resolution of problems in Africa generally and within countries, if anything, must at least be endorsed by "credible" Cites and centers of knowledge elsewhere.

Given these types of regimes, integration cannot be realized unless there is a



program to address them first. One can argue that the whole purpose of integration is to address these challenges. What we are suggesting in this rejoinder, is the need for a proper sequencing of the integration process. The Top-Down, Bottom up and even the Median position presuppose that there is a reasonably well constituted integrated economic and political regime within individual states that acts as a vehicle for integration. Africa, unfortunately is not endowed with such regimes. Thus regime creation within individual countries has to start.

### 2.1.3 A Program for Handling Structural Factors for Africa's Integration

In present times, this view of structural factors that impinge on Africa's initiatives has been judged as "escapist" where it is suggested that it is intended to blame exogenous entities for Africa's own internal problems. I partially share the position only in so far that whichever challenges Africa is facing they must be handled by Africans themselves.

My reading of Dr. Oloos paper, suggests that we share this view, notably when he suggests that one of the lessons Africa should learn from the American and European experience is the adverse impact of Donor Dependency. This to me suggests that like myself, Dr. Oloo subscribes to the need by Africans to handle the challenges before them with their own efforts.

Where I take exception from Dr. Oloo is the formulation of the problem on challenges to integration in Africa as

**Challenge: 'Governance deficit'**

suggests that like myself, Dr. Oloo

subscribes to the need by Africans to handle the challenges before them with their own efforts.

Where I take exception from Dr. Oloo is the formulation of the problem on challenges to integration in Africa as

essentially being embodied in the approach. To me the "squabbles" surrounding the approach to Africa's integration, even if they were harmonized as Dr. Oloo proposes, little can be done if the economic, political and cultural structural impediments are not addressed to at the start.

### 2.1.4 Quest for Africa's Identity as an Imperative to Integration

Reflecting the discussion on imperatives presented above, it should be suggested here that one motivating factor which must be worked for is "identity". By this I am suggesting that Africa must reconstitute itself into a community with symbols, heroes, culture and above all an integrated economic and political system or else it will disappear. To use Dr. Oloo's concepts, the *threat of extinction* should lead to Africa's drive for integration.

The quest for identity has led other observers or the efforts for Africa's initiatives for integration to call for what has been referred to as the renaissance. Whichever that means, what Africa needs is constructing the "Grand Image for Integration" with an identity and place among Nations. But this project must be around strategies for nation building in individual states.

### 2.2 Governance Factors

Besides the structural factors, another important factor that needed to be posed under the rubric of challenges to initiatives towards Africa's integration efforts is the "Governance Deficit" other than the preferred subunit of "democracy deficit"





The Governance deficit expresses itself under at last the following attributes.

### ***Absence of a Functioning State System***

This essentially involves a process of state decay whose basic features include absence of a governmental structure that extends beyond the National and provincial levels to much smaller territorial levels in a country

### ***Quality of the state***

This means a well structured set of governmental organization organs with capacity to execute tasks and enforce compliance

### ***Lack of Recourse to the Local Constituencies***

This aspect deals with how Political Authority has been structured. There is the not unfounded suggestion that African states are characterized by dual constituencies they have to respond to: the domestic, made up of the “national citizens” and the foreign comprising of foreign governmental and multilateral agencies that include foreign companies, cultural systems, international NGOs, etc. The later, being the source of inspiration, legitimating of actions and of course sources of funds with which to run governments is the determinant.

This is a critical impediment for the simple reason that the dual structure of African States, with one and dominant one located elsewhere, will only thwart the efforts of integration in Africa.

### ***Shared Mind between officials and the citizenry over how governments should be run***

This critical aspect of governance is expressed by constitutional and legal provisions and a set of participatory structures and Value systems.

### ***The Democratic Deficit (Human Rights)***

Human Rights exponents and activists have argued that the OAU in particular did little to protect the rights and liberties of African citizens from their own political leaders. This deficit as are all previous challenges summarized above constitute a governance deficit that de-motivates the integration agenda.

## **2.3 Immediate Factors**

Added to the structural factors and Governance deficits, are residual but very mind-boggling immediate challenges above the supra-national integration agendas. Unlike elsewhere, in Africa in particular, all images of a gloomy world abound.

Famine, desertification and impacts of Climatic change, diminishing standards of living, increasing mortality rate from malaria and now the HIV/AIDS pandemic are daily concerns. These factors pose significant challenges to governments as to when and how they can reserve resources for grand schemes like Africa’s Integration initiatives.

## **3.0 Conclusion: What is it that needs to be integrated into a United States of Africa?**

The answer to this question is African States. Such a response can then lead into the search for a viable approach: Top Down, Bottom Up or a Median one. There are solid grounds to assume that states in Africa are dully constituted and all that is contemplated is how to bring them together.

In our Rejoinder, we decided to just prompt the peoples of Africa to make further, deeper and alternative reflections. Not the alternative to integration but rather respond to the question, where do we start in the very valid integration initiative.

For us, the inclination is to say, let's build the infrastructure within states to allow for

integration under whichever model that can be judged feasible after clearly identifying the imperatives for it: Top Down, Bottom up or even Dr. Oloo's Median approach. The structural factors, Governance Deficits and the immediate factors need attention, probably in the first instance.

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## **Processus de l'intégration en Afrique: Approche par le bas/approche par le haut?**

*-Réplique-*

*Par Mustafa Kassé\**

### **1.0 Introduction**

Je salue cette excellente initiative des « Vendredis de la Commission de l'Union Africaine » pour l'opportunité qu'elle nous offre de confronter nos idées afin que de nos discussions jaillissent la lumière. Je voudrai tout d'abord remercier et féliciter le Collègue pour la grande qualité et la clarté de son exposé qui a un triple mérite :

- En premier lieu, cette réflexion porte sur un thème à la fois très pertinent et actuel. La récente Conférence d'Accra de l'Union Africaine des Chefs d'Etat et de Gouvernements portant sur le « Grand débat pour un gouvernement continental » est sans nul doute un



moment historique dans la problématique de l'intégration. Pour la première fois les Dirigeants du Continent ont longuement échangé sur l'état du continent et le Comment de l'unité africaine, conscients que la question du pourquoi de l'intégration est claire pour tous. C'est maintenant un fait généralement reconnu par les élites comme les populations que si l'Afrique veut survivre et prospérer, elle n'a pas d'autre alternative que l'intégration économique sous-régionales et régionales et la coopération.

- En second lieu l'exposé est extrêmement riche et très bien documenté. Cela i ressort des nombreuses expériences et références des pratiques d'intégration à travers le monde : en Amérique, en Europe et en Asie. Les différents schémas sont visités mais également les théories qui leur servent de soubassement.
- En troisième lieu, l'approche est très contributive : face à la bipolarisation des

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visions et des points de vue sur les perspectives d'avenir de l'Union Africaine, l'auteur cherche une position médiane de conciliation et de compromis pour avancer. Entre le Groupe dit des « gazelles » qui proposent de courir vite et celui des « éléphants » qui recommande d'avancer lentement mais sûrement, le document se porte en médiateur en établissant le lien manquant.

- Sur bien des points de l'analyse, je suis en parfait accord avec l'auteur

## **Les réalisations restent encore extrêmement modestes : faibles résultats des organisations d'intégration, échecs de certaines politiques, succès mitigés de certains programmes**

lorsqu'il traite essentiellement des trois points qui suivent :

- o Les approches fonctionnalistes de l'intégration. Ces travaux sont d'une très grande importance et ont souvent été éclipsés par
  - L'évaluation des expériences américaines et européennes de construction dans le premier cas d'un Etat fédéral et dans le second d'une Union économique et monétaire.
  - Les leçons en tirer pour l'Afrique en relation avec le débat actuel sur le gouvernement continental en d'autres termes les avantages et les inconvénients des deux approches.
- Cependant, certains points nous avons des lectures différentes. Ils concernent au moins trois d'entre eux qui du reste éclairent mieux les options actuelles relativement au Gouvernement continental.

- Le constat des faibles progrès de l'intégration en Afrique et leur conséquence.
- Les leçons de notre propre histoire d'intégration africaine notamment les exemples de fédéralisme et de confédéralisme et les raisons de leurs insuccès
- Les aspects institutionnels et juridiques de la mise en œuvre du gouvernement continental et relation avec les structures existantes.

## **2.0 Les faibles progrès de la régionalisation en Afrique**

Depuis bientôt, cinq décennies des doutes commencent à s'emparent des esprits

naguère entièrement acquis à l'intégration. En dépit de l'abondance des recherches et réflexions et la multiplicité des expériences, les réalisations restent encore extrêmement modestes : faibles résultats des organisations d'intégration, échecs de certaines politiques, succès mitigés de certains programmes.

Un des enseignements majeurs à retenir de l'expérience accumulée, au cours des quarante dernières années, en matière de politique de développement, est qu'aucun des micro-Etat africains en isolement n'a pu amorcer un processus de croissance durable permettant d'éradiquer la pauvreté, la misère et la famine.

En dépit des multiples stratégies adoptées par les Etats-nations de croissance économique, industrialisation par substitution des importations, Révolution verte- etc. force est de constater qu'aucun Etat africain tout seul n'a pu échapper au cercle vicieux infernal de reproduction du sous-développement, face à un environnement économique dominé



par la mondialisation multipolaire composée de blocs régionaux de haute compétition.

Sans verser dans un quelconque pessimisme, l'Afrique est aujourd'hui la région du monde la plus pauvre. Son PNB dépasse à peine celui de la Belgique. A la fin des années 90, la production moyenne par habitant en prix constants, était inférieure à ce qu'elle était il y a 30 ans. La contribution au commerce mondial compte pour moins de 2% il en va de même pour la production industrielle. La fracture numérique comme alimentaire se creuse. A ce compte, le continent est à la marge de l'expansion industrielle mondiale et risque d'être exclu de la Nouvelle Révolution de la Technologie de l'Information de la Communication. Plus de 45% des 800 millions d'africains vivent dans la pauvreté absolue avec moins d'un dollar par jour. Les indicateurs du développement humain sont extrêmement faibles et montrent que la majorité des africains n'ont pas accès à la santé (200 millions), à l'éducation (150 millions d'analphabètes), au logement, à l'eau potable (250 millions). A cela s'ajoute la propagation des conflits d'origines ethniques et autres.

Les conflits africains sont de type nouveau : armées irrégulières avec des structures de commandement mal définies, des frontières de combats assez imprécises avec l'objectif principal de contrôler des civils et des ressources (or, pétrole, diamant, drogue). Aujourd'hui, au moins un africain sur cinq vit dans une économie profondément bouleversée par une guerre civile. A titre d'illustration, dans 11 pays affectés, le nombre de morts dans les conflits serait compris entre 4 et 7 millions, soit 5% de leur population totale. En prenant, le conflit angolais, il a coûté environ 2 milliards de dollars, fait plus d'un million de morts et 800.000 déplacés. La guerre est le pire ennemi du développement et inversement le développement est la

meilleure forme de prévention des conflits. Paix, sécurité, stabilité et bonne gouvernance deviennent des variables du développement économique et social.

Cette marginalisation et cette précarisation imposent de réinventer de nouvelles façons de penser et d'agir l'intégration. En effet que peut bien valoir une unité africaine qui, après quarante années d'existence, voit encore des milliers d'africains quotidiennement rapatriés dans leur pays d'origine, des marchandises et des camions bloqués par des barrières les plus diverses, ne présente aucun intérêt. Le discours liturgique sur la nécessité et l'opportunité de l'intégration africaine comme seule moyen de résoudre les contraintes liées aux micromarchés africains et de développer les échanges faisait de l'intégration la mère des vertus pour surmonter les handicaps structurels et amorcer un développement solidaire. Paradoxalement, les principales organisations d'intégrations ont échoué dans la réalisation de leurs missions essentielles

### **3.0 Quelles sont les leçons de la praxis d'intégration africaine ?**

Comme l'observe Aimé Césaire « *le plus court chemin qui mène vers l'avenir passe par le passé* ». L'Afrique a expérimenté toutes les approches que décrit notre Collègue et elle le faisait en référence aux expériences qui se sont déroulées ailleurs en Amérique et en Europe. Nous devons avoir un regard sans complaisance sur nos pratiques concrètes en matière de régionalisme pour savoir avec précision pourquoi nous réussissons si mal. En effet, historiquement, plusieurs tentatives de regroupements politiques et économiques ont été opérées au début des années 60 parfois sous la conduite même des pères fondateurs de l'unité africaine : K. NKKUMAH, Sékou TOURE, Modibo KEITA, L.SENGHOR, J. NYERERE. Sous ce rapport, 5 tentatives de



regroupement ont été conduits. Il s'agit principalement :

- De l'Organisation de l'Unité Africaine : 1963-2000 et du Traité d'Abuja 1991
- De la Fédération du Mali créée entre le Sénégal et le Mali : 1960
- De l'Union Ghana-Guinée-Mali : 1960-1962
- De l'East African Community, 1967-1977
- De la Confédération Sénégalienne : 1982-1987

### ***1°) Au niveau de l'OUA***

Pour ce qui concerne l'OUA, elle est le résultat d'un compromis initialement équivoque entre deux groupes d'Etats africains : les modérés et les radicaux. Pendant une trentaine d'années, ses objectifs de développement économique et social ont été systématiquement occultés et certaines commissions spécialisées et organes techniques n'ont pratiquement jamais fonctionné. Outre ces faiblesses organiques et fonctionnelles, la Charte contient une lacune majeure : l'absence de supranationalité. En prenant l'exemple de la Conférence des Chefs d'Etats et de gouvernement, elle ne dispose d'aucun pouvoir de décision qui laissé au Sommet c'est-à-dire à l'appréciation des Etats souverains qui ne peuvent prendre les décisions que par consensus.

Vers la fin des années 90, il était apparu que les conditions du monde avaient profondément changé. Ensuite, les organes de l'OUA avaient créé une série d'organismes subsidiaires et d'institutions spécialisées, adopté un ensemble de décisions et de règles et forgé une stratégie pour l'action : Plan d'Action et Acte Final de Lagos, le Traité d'Abuja instituant la Communauté Economique Africaine. La nécessité s'est imposée de revisiter la Charte en vue de la faire évoluer. Ce qui fut fait avec la création de l'UA autour de l'idée de la Renaissance africaine.

### ***2°) La Fédération du Mali***

Cette Fédération est née au moment de l'indépendance entre le Sénégal et le Mali avec une Constitution approuvée, un Exécutif Fédéral et une Assemblée, le tout était chapeauté par un Parti Fédéral Africain synthèse des deux partis dominants dans le jeu politique des deux pays. L'expérience a tété de très courte durée suite à une série de contradictions relatives à

- La différence de conception de l'expérience fédérale
- Le désaccord sur le type de relations à entretenir avec l'ex puissance coloniale
- Les vues controversées sur les attributions des organes fédéraux et leurs liens avec les administrations nationales
- Divergence sur la formation d'un marché commun

### ***3°) L'Union Ghana-Guinée-Mali***

Elle est proclamée en fin 1958 et fut dissoute en 1962. Ses dirigeants étaient tous membres de l'aide radicale du panafricanisme : NKRUMAH, S.TOURE et M. KEITA. Ces leaders politiques ont joué un rôle déterminant dans la formation de l'OUA. Annoncée à la fin de 1958, l'Union Ghana-Guinée, entre les deux premières colonies africaines ayant accédé à l'indépendance, se présentait comme « le noyau des États-Unis de l'Ouest africain ». Bien qu'étendue au Mali en avril 1961, elle est restée parfaitement virtuelle. Si bien qu'on n'y fait même pas référence lorsque, le 2 mars 1966, venant de Pékin où il a appris sa destitution, le président ghanéen Kwame Nkrumah est accueilli chaleureusement à Conakry par Sékou Touré, qui le nomme coprésident de la République de Guinée.

### ***4°) East African Community***

Elle a été initiée par la Tanzanie (J.NYERERE), le KENYA



(J.KENYETTA) et l'Ouganda (M.OBOTE) en 1967 et fut dissoute en 1977. Elle restera un Regroupement exemplaire dans le sens de la création d'une Union Douanière. En effet, cette organisation avait réussi à mettre en place des projets véritablement communautaires dans des domaines aussi stratégiques que les infrastructures de transport et dans le tourisme. Egalement au plan monétaire des arrangements compensatoires avaient été mis en place via la Banque d'Angleterre ce qui a considérablement accéléré les échanges intra-communautaires. ARUSHA a équidistance entre les Etats était destiné à être la première métropole de cet espace. Tous les facteurs d'une libre circulation des hommes, des biens et des capitaux étaient réunis ou en phase de l'être. La langue de communication en l'occurrence le SWAHILI était disponible.

Cette Communauté présentait tous les aspects d'une institution assez solide qui pouvait être exemplaire dans toutes l'Afrique. Elle n'a pas pu survivre suite aux dissensions politiques et aux multiples pressions extérieures dans une zone de turbulence de cette époque de guerre-froide

#### **5°) La confédération sénégalienne 1982-1987**

Elle est née après le coup d'Etat manqué en Gambie après bien des tractations entre les deux pays. La préoccupation principale était d'assurer la sécurité des deux Etats ce qui se traduit par une utilisation des ressources financières pour assurer la défense. Dans la stratégie de mise en œuvre, le schéma retenu était dans une première étape l'unification des forces de défense et dans une seconde étape la réalisation de l'union économique et monétaire. La Confédération se dote de certaines institutions : une Présidence assurée par le Président du Sénégal et la Gambie assume la Vice présidence, un Conseil de Ministres et une Assemblée Confédérale. En dépit de cette belle architecture institutionnelle, la

rupture est intervenue en 1989 suite à des questions politiques et d'interprétation des protocoles particulièrement la répartition des responsabilités administratives.

Ces expériences auraient pu être complétées par le Traité d'ABUJA signé en 1991 et qui entrevoyait la création d'un marché commun africain en 2025 par la Communauté Economique Africaine. Le traité est ratifié par tous les Etats mais reste toujours à l'état de non-exécution.

#### **4.0 Quelles sont alors les causes de l'inopérationnalité des modèles d'intégration?**

Eu égard à leurs missions, les institutions des organisations d'intégration africaine analysées sont inopératoires dans la mesure où elles sont trop empreintes d'*intéretatisme* qui s'exprime par l'absence totale de tout élément de supranationalité, la faiblesse du système décisionnel et la non application des actes et la piteuse implication des peuples à l'action des institutions.

#### **1°) L'absence de pouvoir supranational**

Lorsqu'on analyse le modèle institutionnel des organisations africaines, l'on est frappé par leur caractère hautement hiérarchisé. La charte de l'OUA débute par la formule « nous Chefs d'Etat et du Gouvernement », alors que le texte de l'article 8 dispose que la conférence des Chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement est l'organe suprême de l'organisation, que l'organe est formé des seuls Etats, que les décisions sont prises en dernier ressort par les seuls chefs d'Etat. La structure politique interne des Etats influence grandement l'Organisation internationale. Il en va de même pour toutes les autres organisations sous-régionales. Dans aucune d'entre elles, on ne trouve le moindre embryon de supranationalité. L'irréductible souveraineté nationale domine partout.



**2°) L'absence de volonté politique claire en faveur de l'intégration**

A l'évidence, aucune tentative d'intégration ne peut survivre sans la volonté politique de ces membres à la soutenir. Une volonté politique claire de réaliser un espace économique, politique et social intégré facilitera l'élimination des différentes barrières (au commerce par exemple), la mise en place de politiques communes et d'institution supranationales qui exercerait alors un leadership réel et effectif. Aussi, cela suppose au préalable que la barrière de la souveraineté et de prise de décisions soient levées au préalable.

**3°) L'absence d'un modèle opératoire de prise de décision**

Une faiblesse remarquable de toutes les institutions africaines d'intégration provient de la procédure de prise de décision qui est le consensus. En effet, l'ensemble des actes ou décisions sont pris à l'unanimité. De fait chaque Etat dispose d'une sorte de droit de veto et n'a pratiquement aucune obligation à charge pour l'exécution des décisions. Cette procédure de vote a souvent condamné les organisations africaines à toujours rechercher de laborieux compromis qui s'avèrent totalement inopérants. Militerait-on pour l'immobilisme qu'on ne s'y prendrait pas autrement. En revanche, si l'objectif est de progresser vers l'unité, la règle de la majorité qualifiée doit devenir la procédure de décision courante. L'exemple de l'Europe est de ce point de vue très édifiant. L'odyssée vers l'union européenne a été parsemée de remous, de rupture, de la politique de la chaise vide et de laborieux compromis qui ont cependant permis de faire chaque fois des progrès substantiels dans le sens de l'unité.

**4°) La non participation des peuples aux efforts d'intégration**

Les organisations régionales ou sous-régionales d'intégration négligent d'organiser et d'exploiter ses soutiens populaires. Au niveau institutionnel, il résulte des modèles africains d'intégration que même des organes consultatifs qui, ailleurs permettent aux représentants des Etats membres d'apporter la caution de leurs peuples à l'entreprise commune sont inexistantes.

**5.0 Quel schéma opératoire mettre en place pour les Etats-Unis d'Afrique ?**

Ce début du 3ème millénaire a vu les grands décideurs d'Afrique élaborer de nouvelles visions de l'unité africaine par deux initiatives majeures : la création de l'Union Africaine et l'élaboration d'une nouvelle initiative économique pour un partenariat avec le monde industrialisé et les institutions financières internationales. L'Acte Constitutif de l'Union Africaine s'inscrit ainsi dans une logique de réactualisation de la Charte de l'OUA visant à doter le continent d'une ambition éclairée et des objectifs réalisables pour un nouveau départ de l'unité africaine. Conscients des énormes potentialités de l'Afrique, ils prennent l'initiative d'élaborer des stratégies qui doivent placer le continent au cœur des enjeux du nouveau millénaire. Ce sont alors les nouvelles voies de la renaissance africaine. C'est dire que l'Afrique quant à elle devrait prendre en compte deux facteurs qui rendent impérieuse l'intégration : d'abord un facteur externe, la mondialisation qui rend les pays Africains vulnérables et insignifiants dans un monde plus que jamais concurrent et de plus en plus formé de blocs régionaux où à défaut



de pays continentaux; ensuite un facteur interne qui est la situation d'extrême pauvreté qui sévit dans le continent.

La configuration actuelle et future de la mondialisation multipolaire se caractérise par la formation de blocs régionaux de haute compétition avec la multiplication des Accords Régionaux de coopération. L'OMC en compte 130 actifs. Ces accords se multiplient car ils ne sont plus antinomiques au multilatéralisme. Dans une vingtaine d'années, les 5 grandes puissances du monde seront dans l'ordre : la Chine, les Etats-Unis, l'Inde, l'UE et le Brésil c'est-à-dire 2 fédérations et 3 pays continents. Quelles seront les perspectives d'avenir pour l'Afrique des micro Etats ? Déjà, on observe que les paramètres que pose la mondialisation ignorent le continent. Ni les investissements croisés, ni les échanges internationaux sur la base de la croissance de la production mondiale, ni la globalisation financière, ni les réseaux transnationaux, ni les firmes globales, nulle part on ne trouve une place à l'Afrique. A ces facteurs s'ajoutent d'autres qui sont endogènes et qui constituent de véritables freins au développement et à la croissance : l'absence d'infrastructures adéquates de communication ; l'étroitesse des marchés ; les incertitudes et risques nés des conflits et la mauvaise qualité des administrations publiques. En dernière analyse, « l'Afrique doit s'intégrer ou périr ». Il est indéniable que face aux nouveaux défis de la mondialisation et de la globalisation des échanges, la seule alternative semble être l'unification à l'échelle continentale des marchés nationaux. De tels marchés, de faible dimension et très cloisonnés, sont peu propices au développement d'une production de masse et à la réalisation d'économies d'échelle.

Depuis bientôt un demi-siècle maintenant, les schémas d'intégration sont inefficients. Les expériences de communautés économiques régionales

(CER) ne parviennent pas à renverser la tendance et à relever le défi en créant des nouveaux courants commerciaux aussi bien dans le cadre des échanges régionaux que multilatéraux. Les échanges intra-communautaires atteignent difficilement 10% de la totalité de leurs échanges. De plus certaines CER malgré des performances réalisées restent de dimension relativement modeste et sous-optimale. Cela reviendrait alors à s'écarter totalement des démarches adoptées jusqu'ici et qui ont conduit les Etats africains dans une impasse totale, pour s'approcher d'une solution de redressement de l'économie de l'Afrique. Cette dernière loin d'être une solution de second rang ("second best") ou un palliatif, à l'image de celles souvent apportées aux problèmes des mêmes systèmes économiques africains, est une reformulation profonde avec une définition précise de conditions nécessaires et préalables (mais non suffisantes) à la construction l'Union africaine.

Dans ce sens, le gouvernement continental est innovateur car c'est une première dans un schéma d'intégration qui peut véritablement créer la rupture avec toutes les praxis antérieures. La grande question est alors comment le faire ? En d'autres termes : Quelles sont les transitions à respecter pour arriver aux objectifs ultimes ?

Le travail des chercheurs africains devrait consister maintenant à réfléchir autour des axes suivants qui me semble être les plus déterminants :

- 1) Quels sont les Objectifs comment les hiérarchiser et comment les opérationnaliser ? Nous sommes renvoyés au NEPAD et à sa mise en œuvre
- 2) Quelle valeur ajoutée apporte ces objectifs aux Etats et Comment répartir les gains ou compenser les moins-values ?





- 3) Quelle est la taille du Gouvernement ? Quelles sont ses attributions et ses compétences ? Quels sont les liens organiques et institutionnels avec les pouvoirs locaux ?
  - 4) Comment passer des Structures actuelles à celles d'un Gouvernement continental ?
  - 5) Que vaut l'hypothèse de la transmutation de la COMMISSION en Gouvernemental par son érection en pouvoir supranational ?
  - 6) A quoi servent tous les organes actuels ?
  - 7) Quels mécanismes pertinents de financement de l'Union ?
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Opinions



African Leaders must respect the commitments made at Regional and Continental levels by translating these commitments into deeds



...there must be no iron curtain in the world behind which leaders can do as they like with human beings!



## Keys to African Union Success

By René N'Guetia Konassi\*

### 1.0 Introduction

On 25 May 1963, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was formed by those affectionately called the Founding Fathers of contemporary Africa. At its inception, it was entrusted with two major challenges under its Charter: total decolonization of the Continent and economic and social development. If it is universally acknowledged that from the political perspective the OAU has contributed to the effective liberalization of the Continent from the colonial yoke and the collapse of the apartheid system, the same cannot be said of its economic and social performance. Indeed, forty four years after the establishment of the OAU, Africa is still wallowing in poverty and misery. It is the Continent renowned for its negative economic and social indicators and which operates at the periphery of the world economic and political bodies. This economic and social under performance partly explains the creation of the African Union. The new Union was born not only to succeed where the OAU had failed but also to endow Africa with the necessary tools to rid itself of all its woes and thereby definitively form an integral part of the world economic order. Proclaimed in July 2001 in Lusaka, Zambia, the Union was launched a year later in Durban, South Africa. Will it be able to measure up to the challenges for which it was established? Can the African Union help Africa to overcome its structural under-development and become a credible partner in the management of world affairs? These questions are, generally speaking, the

leitmotiv in African circles or in for a where the capacity of the African Union to meet the aspirations and expectations of its founders is discussed. The answers often provided divide optimists and pessimists alike. On one side there are those who believe in the African Union and consider it a sine qua non for its growth and sustainable development. On the other side there are those who have no faith in the African Union which they regard as nothing but “OAU bis” which is already in bad shape given the contradictions, multifaceted impediments and numerous inter and intra State conflicts that are Africa’s lot.

The confrontation of these two views (the optimists’ views and the pessimists’ views) leads to the following question: Is the African Union a myth or a reality? The *Larousse* Dictionary defines “myth” and “reality” as follows: A myth is a state of mind based on something imaginary; a legend. Reality means the quality of being real, actual existence; that which is real and not imaginary or counterfeit. This conceptual clarification leads one to think that to consider the African Union as a myth is to characterize it as something imaginary which can never be translated into deeds. In other words, the African Union, seen as a united Africa devoid of all kinds of constraints and endowed with a single currency is a dream that will never see the light of day. However, to acknowledge the African Union as a reality is to believe that the objective sought by the Heads of State and Government in establishing it is achievable. Put differently, the realization of the African Union is possible, i.e. it is within Africa’s reach. Whether a myth or a reality, the African Union seems therefore an issue that can be debated at infinitum, with credible arguments. Without wanting to take part in such an exercise which may take the form of an endless debate, we would like (while

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recognizing the logic and credibility of the arguments underpinning the pessimist theory) to say that we share the views of those who believe that the African Union is a possibility.

Since we have espoused the optimists' views, i.e. the African Union is a reality and not a myth, we shall, in the following paragraphs, highlight the perquisites that should be fulfilled and which are predicated on our belief in the African Union. In an earlier article (Kouassi N.R, 2007), we pointed out the route for the integration process of Africa through initiatives worked out and implemented by the leaders of this Continent. We also pointed out that despite the plethora of those initiatives, the results achieved, so far, regarding integration remained relatively limited. The present article aims particularly at highlighting the conditions that could lead to the success of the African Union. In other words, the objective of this article is to show how the dream of the African Union can become a reality. To achieve this, it will first consider the role that Member States and the Regions should play; then it will highlight the necessary

conditions for the Commission of the African Union, considered as the main coordinator, for the implementation of the activities and programmes that contribute to the advent of the African Union. But before that, the article states the general principles to be observed for the success of the political and economic integration of Africa.

## **2.0 General principles to be respected**

One is at a loss when one tries to chart the course of the African Union. Each one

tries to do so with his conviction, ideology, faith and knowledge. There is therefore no single thought outlining the road to follow to build the African Union. Rather, there is a plethora of approaches which is a reflection of the subjectivities of all those who might try to find a solution to the problem.

We believe that the African Union can become a reality only when certain tracks are explored. In our opinion those tracks, from the point of view of principles, center around the following:

### **2.1 The Principles linked to the organs of the African Union**

Each organ must play its role in accordance with its terms of reference as defined in the basic texts of the Union. What is at stake here is the need for the Commission to enjoy autonomy of action vis-à-vis the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) and vice versa. However, this autonomy of action should not be construed to mean independence and should be based on complementarity leading to a common finality, namely the development of our Continent. The

Commission must not be taken hostage by the other organs in the exercise of its functions. It should be able to implement its programmes without any interference by the PRC which should assist it in a spirit of cooperation and not confrontation, much less competition. The contrary would paralyze and render it indifferent to the major challenges Africa has to grapple with.

Furthermore, the Commission must be endowed with a structure that is commensurate with the ambitions of the African Union. This structure must be a

**The Commission's independence should be based on complementarity leading to a common finality, namely the development of our Continent**



structure conceived for the future and not for the short term. Thus, as the new requirements are felt and the financial resources increase, the existing organs would be provided with the necessary tools in terms of human resources, projects and programmes. Should the structure of the Commission of the African Union, within the context of its possible growth, fail to take into account the objectives set out in the Constitutive Act and to allow the technical departments to increase their productivity, the Commission runs the risk of becoming like the defunct OAU. The structure of the Commission must therefore endow the latter with the necessary tools to make it efficient and dynamic. Its various departments must be provided with all requisite resources to avoid administrative dysfunction which could plunge the Commission into lethargy.

Consequently, the Commission of the African Union should have a qualified and competent human capital. As a result, it must propose conditions of service (in terms of salary and career development) that will attract the best brains on the Continent. For we believe that so long as the conditions of service fall short of those proposed by the United Nations system, and to a lesser degree, of those proposed by some African countries, the best African brains will not be vying for positions within the Commission. And those already in will not hesitate to leave for greener pastures. Such a situation is likely to perpetuate the problem of low human capacity, in other words low absorption capacity which has been the lot of the OAU and which the Commission of the African Union is currently suffering from. The Commission must therefore have the means to achieve its ambitions by improving significantly the conditions of service so as to be able to tap

the best African brains. This is one of the prices to pay if Africa is to be able to measure up to the major challenges facing it today.

## **2.2 The Principles related to the Programmes of activities and their funding**

The objectives set out in the Constitutive Act must be given concrete expression in the form of realistic and rallying projects and programmes. The technical departments of the Commission must be more enterprising by gearing their activities towards a new direction and being more imaginative in taking advantage of all the opportunities offered by the Constitutive Act. The Commission through the technical departments must be able to develop integration-oriented projects for the attention of the Regional Economic

### **The African Union must have Self-financing Mechanisms for the Implementation of its Projects**

Communities (RECs). These projects should aim at consolidating the progress already made in the area of regional integration and backstopping the implementation of REC programmes. Ultimately, the RECs must serve as the melting pot in which the Commission realizes its Continental projects.

The African Union must have Self-financing Mechanisms for the Implementation of its Projects. More than 90% of the programmes of the Commission must be financed by the Union's own resources or by other funding mechanisms based on a deduction arrangement mutually agreed upon at continental level. There should be less dependence on external contribution which should be regarded as such and should not therefore be substituted for the resources provided by Member States of the Union.



In this connection, we advocate a Keynesian interventionism. For, if Africa is to achieve its union in the short term, it must be prepared to pay the necessary price which the outside world cannot pay in its place. All initiatives aimed at extricating Africa out of its chronic under-development have so far not produced the expected results and there is a reason for that. Africa has relied on external financing for the realization of these initiatives. And if care is not taken, NEPAD runs the risk of suffering the same fate, more

**African Leaders must respect the commitments made at Regional and Continental levels by translating these commitments into deeds**

so as we rely essentially on the foreign private sector, particularly the private sector of the G8, for the financing of integration – oriented projects like physical infrastructural development, agricultural promotion, and the development of new information and communication technologies. We believe that all these major projects contained in the NEPAD programme should be entirely financed through national budgets. Generally, these projects fall under the Government monopoly and, as such, are of little interest to the private sector whose only concern is to maximize profit. This must be understood by African leaders. For instance, transport networks, railways, and other major infrastructures must be financed by Government. The same holds for the Commission which must rely less on the contribution of partners for the implementation of its projects. Africa's level of development requires that the State should be the major provider of resources of African countries. It is imperative that the Commission should be endowed with adequate financial resources, thereby making it less dependent on the outside world for the financing of its activities.

### 3.0 The duty of Member States

In the OAU era, the decision-makers were carried away when adopting recommendations and decisions, without ensuring their effective implementation. These recommendations and decisions were filed in the archives of the OAU and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Member States. The weight of domestic constraints compelled these countries to relegate to the background the implementation of the decisions they had deliberately adopted and ratified. There is

the need for a radical change in the behaviour and attitude of Member States and the Regional Economic Communities with regard to compliance with their collective commitments to the development of our Continent.

### 3.1 The role of the States and the Civil Society

#### 3.1.1 The role of States

First of all, African Leaders must respect the commitments made at Regional and Continental levels by translating these commitments into deeds. Unless Africa develops and practices the culture of honouring its commitments, including contracts willingly entered into, it cannot realize its economic integration. One aspect related to this question is the need to meet all obligations related to membership of international organizations. More often than not, African countries join regional and continental organizations without being able to fully honour their financial obligations vis-à-vis these organizations. The latter are seriously handicapped as a result and are unable to achieve the results for which they are created. There is



considerable cumulation of arrears of contribution to the budget of the Commission. Member States must therefore make it a point or duty to implement their decisions (regional and continental) irrespective of the cost and pay regularly their financial contributions to the regular budgets of the institutions of which they are members.

In addition, it should be noted that the process of continental integration should not leave out the African political parties. Indeed, it is known by all that the fundamental objective of every political party is to be accompanied by capacity, to consolidate and use it. To make a success of such an endeavor, the political parties, sensitize and mobilize the masses for the mediation of their projects. From this point of view, the political parties exert a considerable influence on the national public's, and even regional and continental opinions. As a result, it proves extremely important that the African political parties are closely associated with the process of continental integration. Consequently, they will understand the African agenda and the regional agendas of integration; which will de facto, lead them to assimilate and to incorporate them in their programmes of mobilization and sensitizing as well as influencing of opinion.

It should also be pointed out that vast opportunities of growth exist in Africa. The problem lies in the optional tapping of these opportunities for the development of the Continent. Below are some examples to enable our readers to have a better grip of what we are saying. For decades now, Côte d'Ivoire has been the first cocoa producing country in the world. Nigeria is the sixth oil exporter in the world. Gabon, the Republic of Congo, Angola, Equatorial Guinea ..... are teeming with enormous

energy resources. Indeed, each African country has at least a growth opportunity which it can exploit to promote the well-being of its people. All regions of Africa are rich in economic opportunities for their development in the wider sense of the word.

**The process of continental integration should not leave on the quay the African political parties**

According to renowned specialists, some African regions even constitute a

geological puzzle. That a continent should be so richly endowed and yet poor is a paradox that cannot be easily explained and accepted. If these same resources were to be found in other regions of the world, they would no doubt be used wisely and judiciously to consolidate development gains and promote the well-being of the people in those regions. This paradoxical situation should therefore compel African policy makers to revisit the the policies so far put in place and identify other potential areas to promote the Continent's growth and

**There is no doubt that any active policy in favour of the industrialization of the continent becomes the number one priority**

development. These new areas, in our humble opinion, reside in the industrialization of the Continent. It is imperative that the policy makers of the Continent understand the leading role of the informal sector in economic development. Refusing to acknowledge this imperative is to accept the perpetual marginalization of Africa in the management of contemporary world affairs. For, it is a universal truth that all the countries with the fastest overall growth rates are those that have experienced the highest industrial growth. This is based on the following assumptions;



of all activities, industry is the activity whose added value growth rate has the highest percentage in relation to the overall rate of the economy; it is within the industrial sector that the extent to which variation in productivity is an increasing function of the production variation rate can be best observed; industry is the activity that contributes the most to a country's overall performance, given the scope of it orders, its volume of sales, its payroll, as well as its influence on the society as a whole. Consequently, any attempt to mislead Africa on the need for its industrialization is cause for great concern. There is no doubt that any active policy in favour of the industrialization of the continent becomes the number one priority. Africa should once and for all abandon the logic of "an agriculture based and raw material exporting continent". The notion of "industrialization as synonymous with growth and development" should be forever entrenched in collective memory.

Furthermore, there is an extremely urgent need for Africa to initiate and implement development policies or strategies, which rely less on the Bretton-Woods Institutions. Experience gained from the implementation of structural adjustment programmes reveals that a new direction is needed. Initially, the aim of these programmes was to assist Africa to overcome its economic and social difficulties and truly take-off economically. However, a close analysis of the results of nearly four decades of implementation of economic policies dictated by the IMF and the World Bank, from all indications, the state of African economies has further deteriorated, to such an extent that Africa is now regarded as the continent with a persistent negative growth rate, and as the breeding ground of all the ills of the planet.

African leaders, forced by IMF and World Bank experts, abandoned the Keynesian approach to economic policy all too quickly. Without any exaggeration, it could be said that Africa, in some aspects of its economic management, has become more ultra-liberal than the strongholds of capitalism. Obviously, Africa cannot develop against the trends of the dominant economy, however, it should, in our opinion, adopt a homegrown African and not imported capitalism. This would enable it to practice market economy by integrating therein its own values and injecting a reasonable dose of interventionism based essentially on its daily realities. Indeed, even Europe and the United States of America practice neither "Entirely State" nor "Entirely Market" controlled economy. Although they act as the proponents or vehicles of market economy, the governments, in both cases, always play the role of watchdog or even accelerator of the national economy. The successive declines recorded by Wall Street in July 2002, and the tough intervention of George W. Bush backed by the adoption of coercive anti-corruption measures and the ensuing radical reform of the accounting methods of American companies, are an indication of the need for the State to play a part in regulating the economy.

### **Africa should adopt a homegrown African and not imported capitalism**

Africa should therefore refuse to fully adopt the economic stability and recovery policies recommended by international financial institutions. That is the price to pay for the success of its industrialization, as well as all other policies initiated to alleviate poverty.

Moreover, it is extremely important to call upon all the political and economic decision-makers to draw inspiration from Pan Africanism in the accomplishment of





their daily tasks. This political and cultural movement, which carried along the dream of a regenerated, unified and interdependent Africa, has its roots in the pioneering work of Pan Africanists such as E. Blyden, M. Garvey, S. William, G. Padmore, W. E. B. Dubois... That movement deeply inspired most of the Founding Fathers of modern Africa among whom are mainly Kwame N’Krummah, J. Nyerere, S. Touré, Modibo Keita... Those illustrious sons of Africa succeeded in galvanizing, around them, all the economically active forces and all the necessary energies to free our Continent from the colonial and neo-colonial domination. By establishing the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in May 1963, the Founding Fathers of contemporary Africa aimed, not only, at strengthening the unity of the Continent and enhance solidarity among the African peoples, but also promoting its socio-economic and cultural development and eradicating definitively apartheid which was prevailing in its southern part.

Today, the actions initiated by some African leaders are in direct line with the Pan Africanist movement which was the guiding principle of the political actions of the Founding Fathers of our Continent. Among them we can mention the leader of the Libyan Revolution, Colonel M. Khaddafi, whose role in the inception of the African Union will remain engraved in the golden pages of the annals of the history of Africa. In that list we can also mention Presidents Thabo Mbeki and Maitre A. Wade. The MAP Plan, inspired by his vision for the Renaissance of Africa for the former and OMEGA for the latter, whose merger led to the emergence of NEPAD, symbolise the Pan Africanism of their authors. Rightly so, as this historical programme, which the AU adopted in 2001, calls for African unity and solidarity without which Africa cannot take up the major challenges our times.

At another level, the actions of Pr. Alpha Oumar Konare, at the helm of the AU Commission, are also in the line with the Pan-Africanist movement. The Strategic Plan adopted by the AU Commission, to be used as a guide for the implementation of its Programme of Activities, is his brainchild. The contents of this historic document are, among others, a tangible illustration of the Pan Africanism of its author who, since being at the head of the Pan African Organisation, has relentlessly mobilized the international community for the African development programme embodied by NEPAD.

In brief, Pan Africanism, by calling for unity and solidarity, is a summoning call to all the sons and daughters of Africa. They must constantly draw inspiration from it in all their endeavours, if they want to contribute to the victories that Africa will win in the face of the major challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

### **3.1.2 The role of Civil Society**

Here, there is the need to democratize the building of the RECs and the African Union. In other words, it is imperative to involve the African populations, including the civil society, in the integration effort. The pyramid of an integrated Africa must be built from the bottom, i.e. by the beneficiary populations, and not the other way round.

They must be at the centre of a strong and autonomous African civil society, a sure guarantee for Africa’s drive towards economic and social progress. To this end, the African Union must not be an union of buddies or a trade union of African Heads of State, as the defunct OAU used to be labelled in certain circles. Rather, it should be a union for all Africans (irrespective of their status) within which all conflicts must be resolved in a spirit of tolerance,



brotherhood and reconciliation. The enthusiasm with which the African leaders have signed the Constitutive Act and caused its ratification by the national assemblies is a clear proof of their determination to succeed in the creation of the Union of African countries and peoples. If this assumption is true, it will mean that the borders separating countries today will no longer exist, thus rendering obsolete border conflicts and migration problems which divide Africa today. Similarly, the African Union as a symbol of future successes

on the economic and social fronts, should be perceived as the channel through which all ideas about the

Continent should flow. Within the new African Union, Africans must accept to boldly and resolutely tackle all the sensitive issues that are carefully laid aside in order to show a semblance of normality. Sovereignty of States, accession to power through unconstitutional means, use of tribalism and religion to conquer political power, practice of false diplomacy, power sharing, destabilization of neighbouring countries, free movement of goods and persons, right of residence and settlement etc. are all issues which should no longer be “taboos” at statutory meetings of the African Union.

Furthermore, it is necessary, at this juncture, to underscore the pivotal role that should devolve on the African intellectual community. The latter should organize itself to serve as a watchdog in all aspects of Africa’s development. For instance, the African Intellectual Community could, among other things, take steps to promote the development of young African democracies, thereby preventing totalitarian tendencies with tribalistic and religious undertones. Similarly, it would serve as

watchdog for politicians in their daily activities and prevent them from using unorthodox means to conquer political power, such as tribalism, religion, xenophobia, regionalism..... Indeed, transparent, free and fair elections must remain the only credible way of acceding to political power. Consequently, an independent and enterprising civil society with the youth serving as its life wire, an intellectual community which plays its watchdog role in the development of the society and politicians who respect the rules

**The RECs, which are the cornerstones of the future African Union, would be well inspired to learn from the European model**

of the game constitute the ingredients needed by African States. There is no doubt that the combination of all these virtues inexorably put each African country and Africa as a

whole on the road to peace, security and stability, a sine qua non for growth and development.

Further, the finality of integration, being less the integration of the States than that of the people, the political parties for the play of the mobilization of opinions to achieve the justifying goal of their foundation, could substantially contribute to it. So we invite the political parties in power, principal actors of the process of regional and continental integration, to involve the political parties of the opposition or the minority in this process. With this intention, the latter, must be represented to take part in the workshops, seminars, conferences and summits where questions of integration are treated. Consequently, they must take an active part in the great debate in progress on the government of the Union, to make their position on these important problems known.



### 3.2 Actions to be undertaken at Regional level

Firstly, there is a need to give substance to African economies through Regional Economic Communities' programmes. Such was the main objective of the first stage of the Abuja Treaty. However, since July 1999, the African Economic Community (AEC) entered its second stage without achieving the expected results in the first phase. Indeed, although some Regional Economic Communities (RECs), namely ECOWAS, SADC, and COMESA have made inroads, it must be acknowledged that the economies of these groupings as a whole remain precarious. These economies are not only dualistic and uncoordinated, but also rely heavily on foreign intervention in terms of financing, technology, certain inputs, managerial strategies, etc. At sectoral level, it should be noted that agriculture has always failed in its primary objective (which is to feed the population); industry, in most cases, is at the embryonic stage; and the tertiary sector has difficulties emerging from the informal bottleneck, developing unsteady employment, which is actually another form of disguised unemployment.

Secondly, we have grounds to believe that it is virtually impossible for all countries to simultaneously embark on the road to integration. This truism is obvious both at regional and continental levels, and the European Union example is eloquent proof of this. From the Rome Treaty (1957) to the Maastricht Treaty (1992), important steps were taken marked by various periods of accession. The respect of the criteria of convergence (unanimously defined) linked to a single currency is important in that some countries became the leading countries of

the Community. Countries that failed due to poor economic performance, are further motivated by these performance indicators to achieve the set objectives. This selective or even multi-speed approach is more suitable for an environment where economies are highly heterogeneous. The RECs, which are the cornerstones of the future African Union, would be well inspired to learn from the European model if they are to succeed in their endeavours. A contrary approach, in our view, can only lead to difficulties and inertia.

Furthermore, there is an urgent need to completely modify the contents of Summits of the African Union. To make the latter more effective, we suggest the alternate holding of Economic and Political Summits. At the dawn of this new millennium, the major challenge, which our continent must overcome, is that of its economic and social development. Consequently, particular attention should be accorded to the issues of structural and chronic under-development, which characterize Africa. Indeed, in the present structure of the organization of Summits of Heads of State and Government (from 1963 to date), more time, importance and attention is given to political issues. Economic issues remain marginalized. These issues are barely considered, although the high positive and significant correlation between poverty and the conflicts besetting our continent is unanimously acknowledged. Since a decision has been taken to organize two summits yearly, summit 1 should be devoted to political issues and summit 2 to exclusively economic and social issues of the continent. Thus, Summit 1 would be prepared and preceded by the Council of Foreign Ministers. Likewise,

**To make the African Union Summits more effective, we suggest the alternate holding of Economic and Political Summits**



summit 2 would be prepared and preceded by the Council of Finance and Economic Ministers. Such specialization has the advantage of making the Summits of the Union more operational. It would also “streamline” the number of agenda items and enable the Union and the host country to make substantial savings in organizational costs. Similarly, the Council of Finance and Economic Ministers, which precedes the Economic Summit, would reinforce the ordinary sessions of ECOSOC (to be held every two years) at which African Ministers are conspicuously absent for unknown reasons.

Moreover, it should be pointed out that the time has come to empower African experts whose training costs are behind the important budget deficits in the almost all African countries. To accelerate the building of economic Africa, we suggest that African economists should be closely involved in the formulation of policies and programmes, as well as their implementation and evaluation. To this end, we propose that at the level of each Regional Economic Community, a seminar of African experts on agriculture, industry, trade, currency, etc. should be organized. The underlying idea would be to collect data and analysis on the RECs, designed by African experts from the RECs.

The aim of the analysis would be to fully understand the results of the areas mentioned above, the difficulties encountered and the different related prospects. The conclusions of these

### **African economists should be closely involved in the formulation of policies and programmes**

### **The optimal allocation of available factors of production takes on capital importance in any modern strategy aimed at increasing productive efficiency**

different seminars would then be submitted by the Commission for consideration and adoption by the Heads of State and Government at the Economic Summit. This also has the advantage of associating academics, researchers and other African experts in the building of the African Economic Community. Such scientific meetings, organized every two years, would not only make it possible to have a better grasp of progress in the implementation of the Abuja Treaty, but also allow for necessary adjustments. The documents arising from these seminars and endorsed by the Heads of State and Government would constitute the “roadmap” for both policy makers and economic partners at regional and continental levels. All things considered, the organization of seminars in each REC could lead to that of a congress of African intellectuals with the aim of encapsulating the proceedings of the said seminars to produce a report on economic and social development in Africa. Such an initiative would have the benefit of providing Africans with a diagnosis of analysis and recommendations made by African experts on the continent’s economy.

#### **4.0 The necessary conditions for the Commission of the AU**

The Commission of the African Union has replaced the Secretariat of the OAU. From that viewpoint, it is at the very heart of the implementation of the Strategic Plan of the African Union. The fact that the new Organisation aims at translating into deed the dream of political and economic integration of the Continent demands that the Commission make thorough changes in



its working methods and the management of projects of the Union – the elaboration that follows is our contribution to this appeal for changes.

#### **4.1 Transparency must be enshrined as a sacrosanct principle**

Transparency must become an operational principle. Based on the fact that lack of transparency is one of the major sources of complexity of human relations in all modern enterprises, we recommend that each staff member, whatever be his hierarchical position, draw inspiration from the principle of transparency in the exercise of his duties. This principle demands that one should know what the other is doing and vice versa, being understood that we are all contributing to achieve a sole result: the attainment of the major objectives of our Continental Organisation. The compliance with this principle will enhance the harmonization of the programmes and afford each one the aptitude to defend, at all places and times, the relevance or the reliability of the numerous programmes initiated and implemented by the Commission.

All the activities carried out by the Commission should be nurtured by the principle of transparency. The recruitment of staff, the administration of budgets, the transfer or reclassification of staff and so on deserve to be carried out in full transparency in order to avoid any inclination of conflict or any conflicting relations with the PRC or other organs of the AU. To operate, therefore, in transparency, accepted by everyone, is a guarantee of trust likely to give credibility to the Commission and reassure de facto the partners in development of Africa of the sound use of their contributions.

Consequently, such a behaviour will allay the fears of the Member States as regards the rational use of funds placed at the disposal of the Commission and arouse the support of the African peoples for the major programmes it works out.

To illustrate our proposals related to transparency, let us mention the following cases. In budget administration, transparency means that the Commission has enough resources to submit a comprehensive, clear Financial balance sheet which is not subject to any dispute. In other words, the Commission should be able to produce every year a Financial Report which leaves no room for doubt. This has the advantage of

#### **Transparency must become an operational principle**

increasing the trust between it and the PRC and to motivate further the Member States to pay up their statutory contributions; for the contributions represent the transfer of public funds, including the funds from the African tax payers. Another example of transparency lies in the recruitment of staff. Here the Commission should avoid being the civil service of some countries or some regions. To do so, recruitment criteria should be clearly determined and acceptable to all. Here also friendship, nepotism, patronage, payments and so on should not be accepted. Only merits should be the guiding principle for the selection of candidates; for nowadays Africa has no dearth of competent cadres in the countries indeed in all its regions.

Another aspect of transparency is in the awarding of contracts of the Commission. In Africa, the award of state contracts is one of the channels for the spread, transmission and propagation of corruption in all its forms. This is why contracts are in the sight of all policies aiming at suppressing corruption in Africa. Now, if one of the tasks of the Commission is to support the Member States in the combat



against corruption, it has the duty and obligation to be a role model to combat this scourge which has become a gangrene for all the African economies. In other words, we suggest that contracts of the Commission be awarded in full transparency. If the AU Commission takes all the necessary measures to put an end to these practices in all their forms, it will, thereby, contribute to the reduction of its operational encumbrances and particularly win the trust of the Member States and the partners in development which contribute substantively to the financing of its activities. In matters of good governance the Commission must be seen as the showcase of Africa.

There should be perfect flow of information, both vertically and horizontally. It should be pointed out that in terms of organizational strategies, information is an essential commodity. Its acquisition constitutes one of the major assets in industrial competitiveness for the consolidation or acquisition of markets. Likewise, in the structural organization of an institution such as the AU, dissemination of information is indispensable for the work factor to attain a certain level of efficiency. The slightest attempt to withhold information could result in difficulties and apathy. The availability of information when needed allows everyone to have a vision of his/her daily operations, thereby becoming more efficient in carrying out ones duties. Perfect information, from the bottom to the top and from top to bottom should therefore be developed if the AU is to emerge from the archaism by which it has always been characterized.

#### **4.2 The optimum management of Human Resources is necessary**

There is an imperative need for the development of available human resources. Indeed, the optimal allocation of available

factors of production (including the work factor) takes on capital importance in any modern strategy aimed at increasing productive efficiency. If this allocation is carried out regardless of the real aptitude of the officials concerned, it could lead to an arresting and paralyzing structural inefficiency due to frustration and the attendant lack of transparency. Furthermore, constant quest for efficiency and merit should constitute the cardinal virtues of the staff as far as career development is concerned. In this connection, it is important that they root out from their daily comportment all vices such as gossip, defamation and favour seeking. Additionally, the superior officers' failing, where the staff concerned would be condemned to the quagmire of ignorance and mediocrity, will no doubt impact negatively on the efficiency and dynamism of the Commission.

Clarification of relations between the Commissioners and Directors, the Directors and Heads of Division, the Heads of Division and Officers in the respective Divisions, should be done in a cordial atmosphere, and in the spirit of collaboration for a common cause. In this case, the adage "to each his/her part for a common objective" should be the rule. This implies that the Commissioner in charge of supervising a Directorate should avoid assuming the role of the Director of the said Directorate; the Director should not assume the role of the Heads of Division; the Heads of Division should avoid carrying out the duties of the Officers in their respective Divisions, etc. In other words, each person at his/her level should carry out his/her duties in strict compliance with his/her original job description. Any attempt to play the part of another person on a non-objective basis, *i.e.* in the pure tradition of abuse of power, can only lead to apathy and obstruction. Attempting to prevent an officer from working or implementing his/her programme,



undoubtedly contributes to hindering the Organization in its march towards the realization of its objectives. Consequently, we humbly advise staff members to do their utmost to shed, once and for all, these anti-progressive attitudes, and bear the interests of the Organization in mind when taking their individual decisions. In other words, the basic interests of the AU should be the primary concern, which guides all our daily actions and contributory initiatives.

Inter and intra-departmental co-operation is likely to mitigate the effect of decreasing output laws in the combination of factors of production at the level of the Commission. This presupposes that the limits between the constitutive divisions of the different directorates and the Departments are well defined. This is all the more necessary since the low allocation in the work factor for each directorate and the Departments could extend the area of responsibility of few people within each of the said divisions. In this scenario, whatever the capacity and the will of the officers concerned may be, they will not be able to effectively carry out all the duties assigned to them; this therefore impacts negatively on the results of the Organization. Consequently, we suggest that, in a spirit of genuine cooperation, the Heads of Division accept that certain portfolios initially assigned to them and which have a common denominator with other divisions be jointly managed collectively. The management of portfolios should not be perceived in terms of gains in per diem, but rather in terms of actual accomplishment of the related objectives. The Organization would thereby gain in effectiveness.

The Staff members of the Commission must be Pan Africanists. The same applies to the elected officials. Here we wish to call upon them to “think Africa” before “thinking country or region”. The narrow clinking nationalism or regionalism has no place. It is unacceptable to work in an institution having the aim to integrate while to harbouring anti-integration feelings. The Pan Africanist philosophy must constitute a source for each staff member from which he has to continuously return. It should be permanently rooted, indeed an iron ball tied permanently to the foot of the staff member in the accomplishment of his daily duties.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

In sum, the African Union is a challenge within the grasp of Africa. But on condition that all the stakeholders or all the actors involved play sincerely their role. To succeed, Africa must, among others, endorse a fundamental virtue: the culture of respect for the given word. For this will impose a more realistic behaviour, indeed, more pragmatic in the adoption of decisions or initiatives, most of which, so far, have been put off indefinitely. This realism or pragmatism must in turn lead to the acceptance by one and all the principle of subsidiarity in the distribution of roles between the countries and regions and the Pan African Organisations. Similarly, this realism can help in the choice of integrating projects on the basis of the financial situation, indeed, the financing capacity of the countries and institutions requested to execute them. In addition, this pragmatism is likely to provide the Commission and the other organs of the Union with operational structures that are capable of transforming the dream of economic and political integration of Africa into a reality.



## What Union Government can do for you?

By Denis Atabong\*

### 1.0 Introduction

These thoughts are presented within the context of the Friday Discussions organized by the African Union Commission. They are an opinion column on the topic whether integration should be a top-down or bottom-up process. By bottom-up we suppose it is meant that integration begins with the integration of the RECs, the building blocks of the Union, and leads to the creation of a central government, and by top-down that integration begins with the creation of a central government which then unifies the continent. Right away, we can notice some difficulties with the way the problem is posed, because the creation of a central government does not *begin* the integration process, nor does the integration of the RECs have to stop while the central government is created.

In presenting the thoughts, I have left the historical issues to the historians, and the statistics to the statisticians. I have given myself the full latitude to think freely without those constraints and to see what I can come up with. The thoughts provide the framework within which anyone may fit and examine his own data and historical facts. Consider them to be the thoughts of an ordinary African thinking aloud.

### 2.0 The issues

The one thing that Africans have officially agreed about is that there should be integration and union, because the things

that undermine Africa can only be effectively resolved on a collective basis. Beyond this, what ultimate form the integration should take is a subject of disagreement. Should it lead to a loose confederation of states, a United States of Africa along American lines or what? But we publicly agree that we are heading towards the creation of one country. What then is the process to build Africa into one country? Should Union be formed by creating a central government now or by creating it after a certain degree of physical and economic integration is attained?

**...there must be no iron curtain in the world behind which leaders can do as they like with human beings!**

To some people, the answer to the above question is provided in the Abuja Treaty. But the debate on the question of determining the most suitable moment for creating a Union Government has never gone away, and was only revived in the last Assembly in Ghana by the Grand Debate on Union Government. There are those who believe in the United States of Africa NOW, and those who, like the gradualists, say it should proceed gradually from regional integration and ending up in the formation of a Union Government. Union Government is therefore seen as a kind of roof that will crown the Union we are building.

### 3.0 The pros and the cons

The idea of a central government NOW for the Union startles many people; it appears to be too sudden; the concept of the Union has not even penetrated to the grassroots; the OAU appeared too far and unconnected with the daily aspirations of economic, social, political and human development, so it did not even seriously evoke the idea of a central government; the idea of the African Union with its vision and mission has been accepted, but it is still too young in the day to talk about a Union

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Government, so they say. The question however lingers: **WHEN** shall we say it is ripe for a central government to be formed?

### 3.1 The cons

If we listen to the heart of one of those against Union Government, we might hear something like this:

1. We have not been able to manage our small national states, how do we intend to be able to govern a much bigger entity like the United States of Africa? Will the corruption and inefficiency that has wrecked our nation states not wreck the United States of Africa as well? What about those states that are doing relatively well; will they not lose all they have built to merge with the inefficient and corrupt states when they could do much better on their own? We need first to secure stability and progress in our national states before we can move on to the United States of Africa. Our way of life will be destroyed by flocks of people from other parts of Africa whose mentality is different from our own.
2. All things to be achieved require prerequisites; the laying of a foundation or the supports that will bear the structure; steps that must be taken, one at a time. It is like building a house; we lay one stone before we can lay the other, the first stone serving as support for the second and so on until the structure is completed. The gradualists conceive that Union will be achieved through this step-by-step journey, culminating in the creation of a Union Government when it can be said that Union has been achieved. Union in this latter sense means only *political* union because physical and economic Union are now envisaged as the first steps to
3. Union Government cannot be *imposed* from above by the Presidents or *declared* into existence. It is in the people of Africa that Union will find its anchor, not in any declaration! So it is in this people that the notion must first be anchored. Even if it will not be decided by referendum, there has to be prior public education, sensitization, an explanation of the meaning and nature of Union Government and full public disclosure on the matter before a decision is taken. People have to be thoroughly prepared for it. But the truth also remains that it can only come through a political decision, exactly as the African Union or the OAU came into being.
4. Besides getting the African public ready for it, Union Government requires the prior resolution of serious practical problems such as the mechanism for the integration of country armies into one unified military command, the turning over of current weapons to federal control, a single currency mechanism and the implication of a single currency on individual economies, dealing with the various monetary and other ties that currently bind some African countries to foreign powers, the establishment of a central bank with full powers over currency issuing and management, and so on. These are not impossible problems, but problems which must



be addressed before a Union Government is formed.

5. Politics is the most controversial and sensitive aspect of integration; if we start with controversial issues, the whole process may be stalled. Let's start with what everybody can agree about and then come to the difficult issues later. Integration should be a gentle and unconscious union starting with physical, then economic and finally political union.

### 3.2 The Pros

Is there anything wrong with the views expressed by the gradualists? Union-Government-Now proponents say they have a lot to say:

1. If everyone were well in their little corner, we would not be seeking union. But the truth is that every African country is in some way thoroughly sick and unable. African populations have benefited only marginally from the enormous natural resources of their countries, from the very existence of the African state, the central government's role, and have not known any significant degree of political or economic emancipation. Instead of being spaces of existence in which the citizen can fulfill himself, the African state became a kind of giant prison which smothered the fundamental dreams of the human being. Our own native genius has not been unlocked because of the political and economic circumstances under which we live. The African's only hope has been to risk limb and life to escape to other more hopeful shores. In many ways, the African has suffered even more under their own Governments than they did under colonial rule! The states themselves are completely exposed and subject to manipulation by powerful countries,

which are terrified about the prospects of one African government. This is the context we should bear in mind when seeking a solution to this intolerable situation. Once we agree that Union is inevitable, perfecting the Union should be our sole direction of focus. For the purpose of lifting our people out of their eternal misery, we must be willing to try every option that holds a promise, including that of Union Government.

2. Almost every ordinary African is yearning for some kind of higher authority that will free him of the electoral fraud of the politicians; that will give meaning to parliamentary representation, to the justice system, uphold human rights and in general, make the State what it is supposed to be: a space in which human hopes and dreams can be fulfilled. The pros say Union Government is the answer.
3. Without political integration in the form of a central authority, physical and economic integration would be frustrated and perhaps fail or take too long. Right now, it may be said that it is being driven more by partners than by our own commitment to it, if we were to judge commitment by what we are prepared to put down in terms of resources and sacrifices to achieve our goals. But this dependence is a dangerous and precarious thing because it falsifies the true picture of what we can achieve by ourselves and the true degree of our unity and commitment. There is an enormous risk that we may get into a merry-go-round if we come right to the threshold of what proves our ultimate faith in Union and yet do not take that final step. That final Act of Faith in Union is the creation of a central Government! When we take that step, we have crossed the rubicon.



4. Furthermore, no country in the world was established through a gradual process which made the formation of a central government dependent on the integration of its regions. On the contrary, the central authority first emerged (no matter how limited its initial authority) and then gave itself the goal of uniting the whole, sometimes by the wrong methods of war and force. Even to create a business, the intention is first formed and the management set up which will then carry out the project. Is the AUC that Central Government for African integration? A

government and a secretariat are two very different things. Integration of the regions is a practical step towards the daily integration of the whole, but should not be a condition for the formation of a central government. We can observe that within each African country, it is the political bond or integration that is trying to bring about economic and physical integration, not the reverse. All political unions (the idea is that Africa is not yet a political union, but an economic union) begin with the creation of a political authority which then drives the physical and economic integration.

5. It should also be remembered that matters of procedure are often tools in the hands of those who want to block a process. The more time procedural issues take, the happier are those who want the process to fail. The argument of not being ready can therefore very easily become a tool to stall the very process itself.

6. The assumption that all things will go according to the Abuja Treaty plan is

too uncertain and proving to be the contrary. There are no indications that we will meet any of our targets in any given domain; our actions are not living up to our words; the principal reason for this is the vacillating commitment or feet-dragging in some quarters. If we approach policies of the Union with same breath that has failed the policies at national level, we can certainly predict what will happen; we have to take the bull by the horn if we are to overcome the endless cobweb of fears holding us back from committing totally to our own liberation.

**We must therefore collectively test our ultimate belief in this Union by giving it a soul, which is the Central Government**

The one way to overcome those fears, once and for all, is by the bold step of forming a central

government with clear-cut areas of competence. However painful it is, we have to incise the abscess! That is our leap of faith in Union! If there is no directing force behind any structure, there will be nothing to drive its construction. This force in terms of countries is their governments, as it should be in our one country project. There must be a central unifying and coordinating force, which harnesses the available forces and gives them direction. When there is no unifying force, targets to be reached and goals to be achieved can be collectively decided upon, but nothing will guarantee that they will be achieved. We can take the statistics and judge for ourselves if we are meeting our targets in any given area or if the timetable of the Abuja Treaty is being adhered to.

7. The case for some kind of central authority over certain issues is strengthened by the special



circumstance of African States: individually, our states are subject to too much external manipulation and too much *negative* interference by outside powers, and this interference does not benefit the African citizen at all. Where intervention is positive, especially to protect human rights, it cannot even be called intervention, for there must be no iron curtain in the world behind which leaders can do as they like with human beings! In our new Africa, the human being rises far above all other considerations! No other region of the world has been such an intense object of external intrigues, manipulation and abuse. Every single African State is a prey to this situation, leading to the exploitation of its resources at little or no benefit to the citizen and to the maintenance in power of dictatorial regimes. And Union is seen by dictators as a curtailment of their powers.

8. African integration is not a process which cannot fail. There are powerful counter-integration forces at work which play on the weakness of individual leaders and of countries to slow, if not altogether forestall, the integration process. There are people who doubt that it can work, and those who come along merely for fear of being left in the cold, not out of conviction. If the mistakes that have ruined Africa at the individual country level repeat themselves in the Union, the skeptics will be strengthened and disillusionment may set in among the die-hards. Already some people are asking how we can succeed if since the 1960s we have not done better than we are doing now. We therefore do not have unlimited time within which to carry the process beyond the point where it becomes irreversible. In fact, too much delay in the process may actually deepen the cracks and

give the upper hand to counter-integration forces, fence sitters, skeptics and those who seek to prove that nothing can work in Africa. Yet, we have seen that in the globalised world of today, we stand no chance as individual countries.

9. In the present situation, the AU may only vaguely be compared to a company with Member States being the shareholders who meet and vote on what management, the AUC, should or should not do. In a company, the profit motive drives the shareholders to do all in their power to make the business succeed. In the case of the AU, not everyone sees the immediate benefit and so do not put as much effort in the success of the company as they would. The members can assign the Commission any goals, but at the same time, block their achievement without even being aware that they are doing so, or perhaps without even minding it. We must therefore collectively test our ultimate belief in this Union by giving it a soul, which is the Central Government. At the current stage, Union is more like a state in which individuals citizens pick and choose which collective policies to apply, even though the policies have not been imposed but collectively agreed upon!

10. Further, Union is an ongoing process; it is not a process that will end at any particular point or after a certain event, even if we arrive at the United States of Africa or the creation of a Union Government; it will continue to be perfected. We can notice that all countries in the world still continue to talk of national integration, although not everywhere to the same degree. The question whether Africans are ready for Union Government or not is therefore a misleading question, because there is



no way to ascertain the readiness, especially when it is the leaders who speak and not the African populations who stand to gain the most from a well-conceived Union Government. The ruling class cannot really be called the Africa which is yearning for freedom, economic development and liberation. They do not carry Africa's burden as its populations do! Readiness is a kind of psychological feeling, which need not be genuine but be due merely to our inability to conceive how something apparently so complicated will be achieved. The more each person wants to first of all see in himself how it will be achieved before he gives his consent, the more unready they will ever be. Experience has taught the world that however difficult a project might be, when there is unalloyed determination to achieve it, and the project is assigned to the right minds, it is always achieved. In 1963 we were not ready; in 2007 we are not ready. When shall we be ready? When shall we say the RECs are integrated enough before we move on? Will some people not always find something to point to which makes us not quite ready?

11. The question we should be asking ourselves therefore is not whether we are ready or not but what we can achieve with each new institution we decide to create. Without seeing what an institution can do for us, we cannot be ready for it. If this institution is the central government, we should create it only by identifying the things that can be achieved now with it and which cannot be achieved without it. Are there things that only the central government can enable us to do NOW more efficiently, and perhaps without which we cannot do them within the framework of our search for union? That is the issue.

#### 4.0 Concluding thoughts

No one seems to hold the answer to Africa's problems. If theory has failed, we must be daring enough to resort to some amount of conscious experimentation. It is possible that failures have been only in the execution of the proposed remedies, like a patient failing to take their medication according to the doctor's prescription, or that it is the right remedy that has not been found. Whichever is the case, the frustrations and impatience of true Africans in not being able to find the solution to Africa's problems should be understood.

However, we should bear in mind one thing. Whatever our frustrations, we must avoid creating any ideological white elephants. Union Government cannot be created merely for ideological purposes or to create an Africa that can be admired as big and powerful but whose citizens will be left unhappy and unfulfilled. Our watch word should be to ask how it will benefit the common man. If Union Government has any meaning at all, it is first and foremost for the ordinary African populations, who have been the primary victims of Africa's numerous problems, and used as mere pawns in the political games of foreign powers and the African ruling class. The debate must therefore keep in focus the benefits to be derived at all levels by whatever institution we choose to create. How can or will Union Government release Africa's potential for material development and human fulfillment without dissolving everyone in a big whole in which they cannot recognize themselves? That is the issue we want to touch on now.

We should conceive the United States of Africa or the formation of a Union Government only as a critical piece in the jig saw puzzle of how to cure Africa of its problems rather than as the roof that will cover the house of union. It is perhaps the most important element in the bonding of the states. The key however is the form



it will take and the issues it will be designed to deal with, for unless it is properly conceived to deal with the *institutional* issues that undermine the individual African state, it cannot produce the desired results. It should not impact negatively on the African populations or at country level, but be a lever by which to lift both the African masses and the federated states out of the current entanglements. How will it impact on governance at state level? That is the critical issue. This is why without first conceiving and presenting the concept of Union Government, there are bound to be many controversies. The central government should have a clear area of competence which strikes at the core of some of our critical weaknesses, such as elections, limiting the terms of office of African leaders, environmental issues, natural resource exploitation, human rights, justice, creating checks and balances at all levels, etc. When Africa is thus freed, its own human potential will take care of the rest.

The burden of proof is on advocates of Union-Government-Now to demonstrate how useful it will be NOW. Both the ordinary African, and the political class, have to be shown or have to see what political union will do for the African masses in the form of social and economic development, liberation, freedom of the African mind, political alternation, and so on. Advocates of Union Government have to prepare their case thoroughly; answer the questions of the doubters; sell the idea to the decision-makers and to the African public in general. Above all, the very concept of Union Government has to be properly explained so that people can first begin by understanding what it is and how it will work before they give their opinions about it. It cannot be taken for granted that everyone understands what it means and will see the need for Union Government now. That need and the concept of Union Government have to be made manifest by Union Government advocates.

This whole debate can be summarized into this: What is the remedy that will cure Africa of its problems? Are Africa's problems institutional or structural in nature, or essentially an issue of the human factor? If they are structural, who then will give Africa the structures it needs? If they are human, how do we explain that Africans who leave Africa and go elsewhere perform at par with any other people? Or is Africa's problem that of the ability to give itself a working environment? In that case, we can say in one word that our problem is that of *governance*. The African mind is not inherently handicapped in some way. If it does well in other environments, then perhaps our real problem is how to create an enabling environment for our own people. The current environment or institution called the modern African State was however *given* to Africa from abroad; it has proven, in African hands, to be an unmanageable animal. But we are faced with the reality that no matter how unwieldy the state may be, no other person will make Africa's bed for her; and as she makes her bed, so must she lie on it! If individually we cannot give ourselves an enabling environment, perhaps collectively we can. It is to answer these questions that Union was formed. But others say a Union without a Union Government is a Union without a soul. The others ask the question: But what makes a Union Government so different that it will not end up being just one more unmanageable institution like the African State? Are we not just shifting our failure from one level to the other: from the state level, to the Union and to Union Government, like a bad workman complaining of his tools? The answer seems to be that the Union Government, not being directly concerned with domestic power, will avoid the one thing that is at the core of our troubles: the lust for power and the consequent distortion of all structures of the state to maintain that power; it stands a much better chance to be more objective in helping to organise and



straighten out what is currently wrong with the institutions and structures of individual states, thus leading to freedom and the liberation of the African mind. From our experience of the last fifty years, the only way to ensure that all structures of the individual state can play their intended role is not to rely on our leaders to do so, but to rely on some external and higher power that can not only bring its own authority to bear but also empower ordinary African citizens to provide a better counterweight to their governments. In the African context, this higher authority would be a Union Government, for the Union without a central authority lacks what it takes for collective policies to have their full impact at state level.

There is an African proverb which says that "The best time to plant a tree is twenty years ago." If we are serious about Union Government, we ought already to have set up a study group to deal with the practical issues of how to bring it about, especially those of a unified military command and control of weapons, the single currency and so on. Just by beginning work on it, many positions can be reconciled.

We here below present some advantages of Union Government. What is listed is not exhaustive, but only the most obvious advantages that a Union Government can bring about in our attempt to solve our problems:

**1. *Collective disarmament:***

If Africa gives itself a central government, there will be no further need for individual countries to maintain separate armies, not only because the army will be under the control of the federal government, but especially because the threat that was posed by neighbouring armies would no longer exist. The boundaries of each former sovereign state, now become a federated state, would be guaranteed by the federal government. The meager resources that have so far been used for military purposes

would be rechannelled into economic and social development. The military that in Africa became the private army of the rulers to be used to maintain themselves in power or oppress the people will at last play its originally intended role.

What about domestic insurgents? Insurgency often arises only from the impossibility to obtain justice because those in power are using claims of sovereignty, the dogma of indivisibility of states and other unsound arguments to deny a fair hearing to people who have a genuine grievance. In a new federal Africa, no one's case can be denied a hearing, because no one on this our island continent can "threaten" its sovereignty or break a part of it away! Even the creation of new states would not threaten or weaken one Africa.

**2. *Impossibility for foreign powers to fuel African conflicts:***

Conflicts are fueled in Africa by the ability of foreign powers with conflicting interests to support and arm different parties to a domestic or inter-state conflict. That is only because they can deal directly in arms with these countries and parties. With the birth of a central government, no foreign power will be able to carry out military transactions with federated states. Everything to do with the military will be handled at the federal level, thus minimizing the possibilities for foreign powers to fuel conflicts between states or in former sovereign states now become the federated states of the African country. Foreign powers also manipulate regimes in Africa, either keeping them for their own purposes, or changing them when they no longer serve their interests. All these will be things of the past once Africa has one government.

**3. *Problems related to sovereignty:***

Sovereignty has always been a smoke screen behind which all kinds of intentions and even atrocities hide themselves. Tyrants invoke it as an iron curtain behind which they can do what they like with their



people and resources. It has rarely been invoked for the benefit of the ordinary African! Border conflicts; refusal to comply with collective policies and decisions of organs of the Union; crooked justice systems, incomprehensible policies, electoral fraud with impunity, maltreatment of political opponents and the opposition in general, which in turn lead to military coups, instability and the social unrest in our countries, are all issues directly linked to the claim to sovereignty, which can be resolved through the higher authority of the federal government. We can add to these, negative competition between states, sponsorship and support of rebel movements across borders; micro arms race and territorial encroachments. Even if border disagreements do occasionally arise under one government, they will never lead to war, because there will be authoritative avenues for a peaceful settlement and only the central government can make war. In the current situation of a multiplicity of sovereign states, every country claims the right to reject even a fair settlement by invoking its sovereignty and denying foreign intervention.

This is a very interesting example on sovereignty problems: Article 32 of the Draft Protocol to the Statute of the African Court of Justice and Human Rights lists the entities that may seize the Court, including individuals and African non-governmental organizations (Article 32(1)(d)). Article 32 (2) however goes on to say “Each state may, at the time of ratification or accession to the protocol declare that it does not consider itself bound by the provisions of paragraph 1 (d) of this Article”. This is shocking, considering that the primary violators of the human rights that the Court will be protecting are the States. Article 32(2) gives the would-be violators the power to exclude their victims from the judicial process of the Court, all because of claims to sovereignty! Many other such

contradictions can be quoted. Their solution is a Union Government.

#### ***4. The problem of power and transparency:***

The great advantage of a federal government is that the federal government is not directly contending for power within the federated states and therefore can play a more objective and neutral role in ensuring justice, transparency and accountability within the federated States, especially through a federal constitution that lays down the fundamentals which federated states have to comply with. Issues of the duration of the terms of office of African rulers; the nature of parliamentary representation; the conduct of presidential and other elections; the independence of electoral bodies, and many other issues which are a source of constant conflict and instability within our states can be effectively dealt with through a federal constitution which checks the current excesses in which local leaders indulge. The argument that individual states have their specificities and should make their own electoral laws is not totally valid. No country is specific enough to deviate from what is fair, just, rational, transparent and acceptable to both the ruling party and the opposition. The broad outlines, knowing our history, can be laid down at federal level to prevent the kinds of experiences we have been through.

#### ***5. Creation of more federated states in a process of decentralization:***

States often fight to death to prevent what they call cession because they see separation as threatening their own existence. Africa, as one country is an island. Neither its physical size nor its power as one country can be diminished by the creation of more federated states. The creation of more federated states will just be an issue of decentralization, no longer an issue of wars of cession or of life and death! We will create as many federated states as is necessary to satisfy our people





and bring peace and harmony. No dogma, theory, or ideology will impede our search for the self-fulfillment of our people. Expansionist and hegemonic tendencies of invading other states or forcing people to belong with war will no longer exist on our continent. The dogma of indivisibility of states was never based on human welfare but hegemony and foolish ideology.

#### ***6. Internal and external problems of migration:***

Internally, the well-to-do countries still fear that their countries will be flooded by migrants from other African countries. Externally, our citizens are still trying to escape our unhealthy environments to more conducive ones. The fundamental causes of these movements are political and economic. The resolution of domestic political tensions through the role of the federal government will usher in political transparency and social peace that has never existed before and thus produce a conducive social environment. What has so far prevented local political tensions from being efficiently addressed is the fact that all structures of the state are used as arms of the ruling party and therefore making that party both party and judge in all controversies. And sovereignty is always invoked to prevent external intervention that can bring any fairness. Once political stability, accountable governments and therefore a healthy environment for individual fulfillment and economic growth can be established through a central government that is not itself contending for power within the federated states, we would have removed the fundamental cause for mass migrations.

#### ***7. Justice that is denied at national level:***

The efficiency and objectivity of the justice system within individual states depends on many things, chief of among which is the degree of its independence from interference by political authorities. In most African countries, the system has long

collapsed under the weight of political interference and corruption. When justice fails, the state is almost sure to fail also, because the first people to become lawless are the rulers, politicians and party people. They can rig elections, commit all kinds of crimes, violate their constitutions and still get away with all that. It is to the common and powerless man that the so-called law is applied. All these things can quickly come to an end under a federal system which provides certain protections to local judicial systems and federal courts which can rise above the local intrigues that prevent justice from taking its course. The imaginary threat to national unity which is often invented by leaders to organize kangaroo trials of their opponents will not find any room to exist under federal Africa. Under a federal Africa, there is no grievance that cannot be fairly addressed, because federalism provides the opportunity for real independence of judgment.

#### ***8. The multiplier effects of size***

Countries that are big in population size attract a certain degree of attention and respect just by that fact alone. Africa as one country will be perhaps the third largest country in population after China and India. So far, Africa is not considered as one market or one country by foreign powers, because they deal only individually with different countries, which they can manipulate at will. If Africa became one country, the equation changes altogether. It will automatically have a voice in its relations with the rest of the world; it will attract investments as one big market and its ability to guarantee that its natural resources will be exploited on much more favorable terms will be highly strengthened. It can negotiate more powerfully at WTO and other international fora; its weight in the United Nations system will increase enormously. It will be much better placed to develop mega projects to supply electricity across federated states; develop infrastructural linkages, and so many other



such advantages. Add to this the fact that quality control of products, which now is almost inexistent, and blocking us out of the world market, can very easily be established. The economic benefits of a single government are too numerous to be exhaustively listed here.

Everyone can cast their vote on this issue in total freedom. But we need not only all the facts to make an informed judgment, but one more thing: concern for human welfare *above all else*. I had a discussion with a friend about one of the ongoing conflicts in Africa, and he was telling me how we should not allow foreign intervention and that all the foreign powers wanted was oil. I asked him these questions: how many people have died in this conflict?

He said hundreds of thousands. Have you lost your child, your mother, your brother, your house or your village? He said no. Will you like to be one of those who has been killed? He said No. How much oil is worth a human being? He did not answer. Then I said to him: "My good friend, you are saying all these things from the safe distance of someone who is suffering nothing and has nothing to lose". When we feed to our fill, have a good salary, live in decent housing, and cannot place ourselves in the shoes of those who are suffering the problem, we very quickly forget that the *sole* reason for the existence of countries, organizations, institutions, resources and so on, is for human fulfillment. All our ideologies, theories, and dogmas should now be subject to the single question how they lead to human fulfillment, then we can take the right decisions.



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