Fifty years after the founding of the OAU:
Africa must unite or perish
Concept Note and Call for Papers – 2013

The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was established on 25 May 1963 in Addis Ababa, on signature of the OAU Charter by representatives of 32 governments. A further 22 states have joined over the years – South Africa becoming the 53rd member on 23 May 1994 and the latest member South Sudan on 27 July 2011. The aims of the OAU were *inter alia* to promote the unity and solidarity of African States; co-ordinate and intensify their co-operation and efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa; defend their sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence; eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa; promote international co-operation; and co-ordinate and harmonise members’ political, diplomatic, economic, educational, cultural, health, welfare, scientific, technical and defence policies.

Dr Kwame Nkrumah in his address at the OAU’s founding stated that:

“We must unite now or perish. I am confident that by our concerned effort and determination, we shall lay here the foundations for a continental Union of African States. The struggle against colonialism does not end with the attainment of national independence. We have emerged into independence in a different age, with imperialism grown stronger, more ruthless and experienced, and more dangerous in its international associations. We must recognise that our economic independence resides in our African union and requires the same concentration upon the political achievement. Is it not unity alone that can weld us into an effective force, capable of creating our own progress and making our valuable contribution to world peace?

Yet all stock exchanges in the world are pre-occupied with Africa’s gold, diamonds, uranium, platinum, copper and iron ore. We have been too busy nursing our separate states to understand fully the basic need of our union, rooted in common purpose, common planning and common endeavour. We shall link the various states of our continent with communications by land, sea and air. We cannot afford to pace our needs, our development, our security, to the gait of camels and donkeys. For us, it is a simple matter of grasping with certainty our heritage by using the political might of unity. All we need to do is develop with our united strength the enormous resources of our continent. Not one of us working singly and individually can successfully attain the fullest development. Only a united Africa functioning under a union government can forcefully mobilise the material and moral resources of our separate countries and apply them efficiently and energetically to bring a rapid change in the conditions of our people. Unite we must. Without necessarily sacrificing our sovereignties, we can forge a political union based on defence, foreign affairs and diplomacy, and a common citizenship, an African currency, a monetary zone and a central bank. We must unite in order to achieve the full liberation of our continent.”

Having largely achieved the goal of decolonisation by the mid-1990s, the OAU sought greater focus on socioeconomic development. African countries, in their quest for unity, economic and social development under the banner of the OAU, took various initiatives and made substantial progress. However, the circumstances of the 1990s were very different and the OAU had not transformed accordingly. In July 1999, the Assembly convened an extraordinary session to expedite the process of economic and political integration of the continent leading to the 9 September, 1999 Sirte Declaration calling for the establishment of the AU, with a view to accelerating the process of integration across the continent. The AU’s focus was to shift into an organization spear-heading Africa’s development and integration.
To achieve this vision, several organs of the AU were established and mandated to develop and implement priority strategies and programmes. The AU Commission developed a plan that served as a basis for the formulation and implementation of programmes and projects. The plan spells out the human and financial resources required to achieve the desired objectives, and responds effectively to the challenges encountered in Africa such as extreme poverty and inequality. The year 2013 marks 50 years since the founding of the OAU and the prophetic observations of Osagafeo Nkrumah. Times have changed, but has Africa? What really changed in transforming the OAU into AU and was this fundamental or just the removal of a letter of the alphabet? These are just some of the major questions that the Third Scramble for Africa conference seeks to have answered.

Call for Papers – Third Annual Scramble for Africa Conference, May 2013
In May 2013, the Third Annual Scramble for Africa Conference will take place in Tshwane, South Africa. Institutional partners\(^1\) hosting the conference are issuing a call for papers that will explore the various mechanisms employed by the OAU/AU in Africa’s integration and sustainable development over the past 50 years. It will examine current practices, and propose realistic alternatives for ensuring that the AU attains the vision of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa in the next 50 years and beyond.

Paper writers must indicate which theme their paper falls under; and their institutional affiliation. The organisers seek a gender balance and encourage papers from female scholars. Author guidelines are attached and must be adhered to ensure a smooth peer review and publication process.

The sub-themes that lend themselves to investigation include:

1) African Union-African Diaspora Engagement
In May 2012, the AU Commission organized the Global Africa Diaspora Summit with a view to facilitating further engagement of the African continent with its Diaspora. This Summit built on earlier programmes which were focused on developing a realizable programme of action in order to create sustainable dialogue, partnerships and Pan-Africanist solidarity to advance Africa and its Diaspora. This thematic area poses questions about the programmes established to promote this South-South cooperation for development and also invites assessment of the slow ratification of the protocol on the amendment of the Constitutive Act, Declarations on Africa and the African Diaspora, with particular focus on implementation.

2) Peace and Security
One of the biggest obstacles to development is the proliferation of armed conflicts. The AU champions various efforts made on conflict prevention, management, and resolution, it supports programmes for structural conflict prevention through initiatives such as the implementation of the AU Border Programme

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\(^1\) Africa Institute of South Africa; The South African Research Chair Initiative (SARChI), Institute of Economic Research on Innovation (TUT); Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute (UNISA); Department of International Relations and Cooperation; Department of Arts and Culture; National Research Foundation; Ditsong Museums of South Africa; Statistics South Africa; City of Tshwane and Centre for Black African Arts and Civilisation (Nigeria).
(AUBP), and it is also implementing the policy framework on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD). This theme on peace and security invites papers that will explore means to promote continental peace, security and stability; and mitigate and reduce conflict on the continent.

3) Development, Integration and Cooperation
The creation of regional bodies such as the AEC, EAC, ECCA, ECOWAS, COMESA, IGAD, and SADC have renewed interest in the viability of regional integration in Africa. These bodies hold the possibility for renewed economic development and political cooperation in large part through political and economic integration. However, it is argued that Africa’s integration efforts have failed to bear satisfactory fruit. Poor inter-connectivity across Africa in terms of telecommunications, air, road, and rail transport infrastructure adds to the difficulties in many industries and in the movement of people, goods, and services. This theme invites papers that will examine the AU practices on the promotion of sustainable social and economic development, enhance continental integration, streamlining and making RECs more effective and efficient.

4) Shared Values of Governance and Democratic Principles
There is visible progress in governance standards in Africa, ranging from initiatives to combat corruption and improve economic and financial management, to efforts to democratize the political system; and promote independence of the judiciary and relations with civil society organizations and the media. However the challenges of institutionalizing good governance and building resilient states remain enormous. Many African countries have ratified key human rights instruments but there populations are still unable to enjoy basic human rights and freedoms. This theme calls for papers that will provide an analysis of the AU’s past and present undertakings in its efforts to promote and implement sustainable social and human development, good governance, democracy, gender equity and human rights, and provide recommendations on how to improve, going forward.

5) Institutional and Capacity Building
There is a need to strengthen the AU Commission and other continental institutions to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of their structures, processes, values and competence. The AU and other continental bodies must make adequate investment in developing, maintaining and servicing themselves and mobilizing adequate resources. How can the AU Commission under its newly appointed Chair strengthen its capacity and enhance its operational efficiency and effectiveness? How can it promote the synergies, linkages, and good working relations with all organs of the AU? And how can cooperation and collaboration with Member States and RECs be encouraged within the union? How can other continental bodies like NEPAD, ADB, ECA coordinate their work better individually and collectively? How can member states be convinced to pay their assessed dues and other required resources regularly?

6) Significance of Pivotal States
The SADC region is determined to transform the AU into an efficient and effective continental body. South Africa envisions Africa as a prosperous, democratic, and united continent. As Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma assumes her position as the Chairperson of the AU Commission she acknowledged that unity is crucial within the AU and the continent, and has commenced to set the new visionary agenda for stability and growth. With Dr Dlamini-Zuma taking over as the new AU Chair, what does this mean for women and gender equity in Africa? What is the significance of this high position in the continental body being taken over for the first
time by such an influential member of SADC? How can pivotal states provide objective and unselfish leadership to regional integration, like France and Germany have done in the EU over more than sixty years?

7) Pan-African Education

The crisis in South African education that has been highlighted by a lack of textbooks, teachers and physical resource infrastructure in recent media reports is a microcosm of the situation across the continent. In conflict-affected countries, children and young adults have had their lives devastated by violence and death – usually of those close to them, destruction of institutions, infrastructure, knowledge banks and other social processes. Many of them have not seen the inside of a classroom. African countries, as well as Black learners in Diaspora countries, are plagued by a lack of funding; deficiency of infrastructure; too few qualified educators; and inefficient bureaucracies running the education systems. Yet, there are initiatives and organizations that have dedicated themselves to improving the situation for learners in Africa and in the African Diaspora. This thematic area focuses on practical solutions to addressing the education crisis.

Important Dates
September 15, 2012 – Deadline for abstracts
October 15, 2012 – Decision on acceptance or non-acceptance
December 15, 2012 – Deadline for Papers
February 15, 2013 – Authors provided with review feedback

Email: Please send abstracts to AfricaDay2013@gmail.com.

Related resources

Travel and Accommodation
Conference participants and participating institutions are encouraged to mobilize funding should there be a need to do so. Institutional partners will provide for accommodation for delegates presenting papers at the conference, however, travel costs² are the responsibility of the delegate(s).

Immigration
Letters will be provided to delegates requiring visas for entry to South Africa for presentation to the relevant diplomatic missions. When requested please send us passport details.

² A small scholarship fund is available to a limited number of delegates, after assessment of applications for travel assistance. Recipients of this fund must be nationals of, and domiciled in, a developing country.