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*African Dynamics in a Multipolar World*

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## **THE AFRICAN UNION (AU), NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT (NEPAD) AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN AFRICA IN A MULTIPOLAR WORD**

**Asogwa, Felix Chinwe**  
Department Of Political Science,  
Enugu State University Of Science and Technology,  
Enugu, Nigeria

[asofex2008@yahoo.com](mailto:asofex2008@yahoo.com)

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## **Introduction**

It is trite to argue that regional integration or cooperation in Africa is deeply rooted in the historical evolution of the continent's socio-political forces. No doubt, the trans-Atlantic slave trade created a huge social, political, economic, and cultural distortion in Africa. It was a period when millions of productive Africans were forcefully uprooted from the continent and taken to Europe and the Americas.

However, the end of the slave trade opened a new vista in the efforts of people of the continent, scattered across Europe and America, to rediscover their identity and consciousness. A new wave of in-gathering by these Diasporic Africans suddenly awakened in them. This new awakening signposted the emergence of Pan-Africanism, which McCarthy (1995:14), describes as an expression of continental identity and coherence. Pan-Africanism would from this point drive the continent's nationalist agitations and decolonization processes and also the urge for closer cooperation and integration. This desire by the Africans for integration or cooperation has always had a strong political motive. This strong political motive is consequent upon the philosophy of Pan-Africanism.

According to Murithi (2005:7), Pan-Africanism is an invented notion with a purpose; and a recognition of the fragmented nature of the existence of Africans; their marginalization and alienation- whether in their own continent or in the Diaspora. Hence, it could be argued that Pan-Africanism was a direct response by Africans in the Diaspora to forge closer ties among Africans and which eventually became a way of thinking by autochthonous Africans. In a sense, Pan-African movement was envisioned to confront the deleterious effects of colonialism on the continent. Its vision was to reclaim the continent's historical and cultural identity; restore

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Africa's dignity and assert the idea of self-determination and unity within the African continent and beyond.

In Africa, according to Murithi (2005:7), this wave of Pan-Africanism manifested in three stages of institutionalization. The first institutional manifestation was the convocation of the Pan-African Conference in 1900 in London by H.S Williams of Trinidad and Tobago. Though this Conference met with a lot of challenges, it achieved some milestones basically because for the first time the expression "Pan-African" was engraved in global consciousness. The conference also got the approval of some eminent persons in Great Britain including a commitment by the Queen to be responsive to the plight of the blacks. By the end of WWII, Pan-Africanism was reawakened with renewed agitations for the rights of Negroes throughout the world particularly in Africa. The first Pan-African Congress was held in 1919 in New York. As a matter of fact, the New York Evening Globe of February 22nd 1919 described the Congress as the first black assembly of its kind in history which aim was to draft an appeal to give blacks a chance to develop their continent unhindered by other races. This first congress was followed by subsequent ones, which eventually created the platform for the mobilization of Africans for political action.

Indeed, it was the 5th Pan-African Congress in Manchester in 1945 that actually gave birth to the African liberation struggle. By 1945, Pan-Africanism had graduated from being simply a protest movement by people of African descent in the United States of America and Central America to become a potent weapon with which Africa could fight colonial rule.

It was this thinking that set the stage for the second institutional manifestation of Pan-Africanism with the formation of the defunct Organization of African Unity (OAU) on May 25th 1963 in Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia. The major objective of the OAU was to facilitate the

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decolonization process in Africa as well as ensure unity and cooperation among the states and peoples of Africa. It is worthy to note that the formation of the OAU was a long and tortuous journey involving compromises between the radical and moderate African nationalists. As Adejo (2001:130), pointed out, the Charter of the OAU, which was signed in 1963 reflected the compromise between the radicals and the moderates. The OAU Charter, for example, forbade the Organization from interfering in the internal affairs of other African states no matter the level of impunity in that state. The consequence of this constraint was that the OAU became a glorified continental institution that stood as a spectator watching the many atrocities committed by most African leaders at that time.

That the OAU failed to deliver on its promises is not in doubt. Realizing this failure, African leaders by the turn of the century sought to give the mental climate of their time the rank of universal validity by seeking to create a new platform for continental reaffirmation and awakening. This new thinking marked the third phase of the institutional manifestation of Pan-Africanism on the continent, which resulted in the creation of African Union (AU) as a successor to the OAU. Little wonder that on September 9th 1999 in Sirte, Libya, the African leaders in an extra-ordinary session voted to establish the AU as a paradigmatic shift in continental integration and cooperation.

There is no doubt that the major objective of the African Union (AU) is to achieve accelerated regional integration in Africa in relation to other parts of the world. This objective has received more urgency given the multi-polarity of our world system. With increasing tendency for regional integration in Europe, Asia, South America and other regions of the world, Africa cannot be left in the lurch. In driving regional integration in Africa, the AU has adopted the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) as a strategic framework for the

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integration of Africa. Thus, in a multi-polar world, which Africa is striving to become a key player, the desirability of regional integration cannot be over-emphasized.

### **Theoretical Perspective**

Integration theory is adopted for this work. As a concept, integration is a subject of definitional contest among scholars in international relations. Regional integration, according to Van Goikel and Van Langehove (2003), is a process in which States enter into regional arrangement or agreement, the aim of which is to facilitate and drive regional cooperation through commonly accepted regional framework or institutions and rules. De Lambaerde and Van Langehove (2007), contend that regional integration is a global phenomenon of territorial systems that increases the interactions between their components, creates new forms of organizations which coexist with other traditional forms of state-led organizations at the national level.

Asogwa (1999), on the other hand suggests that integration is a simple way of getting things done through coordinated group efforts. Integration is a process that is intimately linked with Igbo notion of “igwebuiké” or the German notion of “gemeinschaff”, which simply means the emphasizing of mutuality and a spirit of willingness to cooperate and share for the common good of members of the community.

Perhaps, this explains Lindberg’s (1963), idea that integration is a process in international relations whereby nations forgo the desire and ability to conduct foreign and domestic policies independent of each other, seeking, instead, to make joint decisions or to delegate the decision-making process to a new central organ. Lindberg’s view of integration is very critical in the understanding of the process essentially because he identifies four distinct variables that drive

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integration among nation-states. These variables include the development of central institutions and policies, saddling these institutions with specific assignments or tasks; empowering these institutions to exPand the scope of the assigned tasks and finally the continued commitment by member states to sustain such arrangement.

One significant factor that influenced Lindberg's conception of integration was the pioneering work of Karl Deutsch. For instance Deutsch (1957), had conceived integration as the attainment, within a territory, of a sense of community, and institutions and practices, strong and widespread enough, to assure dependable expectations of peaceful change among its population. The sense of community here implies a belief that common social problems among a group of people can be resolved by a process of peaceful change. E.B Haas (1958), has also defined integration as a process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities towards a new center, whose institutional processes demand jurisdiction over pre-existing national States. The interpretation of this definition is that integration involves the coming together of nation-states, with common interest to form a union so as to advance and secure those interests.

This underlies Kaplan's (1968), argument that integration occurs when nation-states cooperate under mutually agreed conditions to achieve that which their individual national systems cannot achieve alone. Thus, according to him, merging to form a lager unit may seem the only way open to maintain aspects of the old identity or to satisfy some aspects of the old needs or values.

Regional integration is, therefore, one of the most obvious manifestations of integration in our contemporary world. One form of regional integration is what is often called functional integration. David Mitrany (1966), is regarded as the major proponent of this concept of

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functional integration. Functional integration, according to Mitrany (1966), refers to the integration of technical or non-controversial activities of nations. He adopted the terms “technical” and non-controversial to separate non-political activities of states from the political issues.

Functional integration is premised on the assumption that effective integration can only be achieved when political and non-political issues are separated. These non-political issues, according to proponents of this concept, include social, economic, scientific and technological issues. This separation, according to the functionalists is necessary because political issues, almost always are controversial. However, this kind of separation between the political and non-political realms is always difficult.

This difficulty has given rise to the neo-functionalist theory of integration which was championed by Ernest B. Haas. The contention of neo-functionalism in integration is located on the notion that very often the motivation towards integration comes from national governments. The neo-functionalists believe that the separation between the political and non-political spheres is usually very tenuous and this is why they argue that nation-states are motivated to come together under regional groupings for both socio-economic, technical, security and political reasons and this is why they are always emphatic about the concept of “spill-over”.

This concept simply assumes that integration among states in one issue-area usually spills over into other areas- be it non-political or political. The implication of this assumption is that integration is a thorough-going process that admits no isolation or separation; hence the issue of separating the political from the non-political realm becomes an abstraction basically because it is through such inter-sectoral integration among states that an interdependent web is created in the form of regional groupings. According Haas (1958), as this inter-sectoral integration is



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established national governments get involved with a view to giving a sense of direction to the process of integration. Regional integration in African has, in recent years, taken on the character of neo-functional integration especially since the emergence of AU and the creation of the NEPAD framework.

The ultimate aim of integration project in every region appears to be the federalist integration as depicted in the European Union (EU). In the view of Hill and Smith (2005:20), the major factor that accounts for European integration is federalism. Their argument is that federalism is not just another ideology or political philosophy but an organizing theoretical concept that drives integration. As Wiener and Diez (2004:26), remarked, federalist integration is a way of bringing together previously separate, autonomous or territorial units to constitute a new form of union. It is this driving force to create a federation that has led to the establishment of what we can refer to as a federal Europe. The thinking behind federalist integration in Europe is that the political strategy of small, concrete economic steps would culminate in a federal Europe. The aim of the European Union, for example, is to integrate different entities without assimilating them. According to Weiner and Diez (2004:29), within the EU, although bodies are working in partnership, difference and diversity is acknowledged. In practice, 'previously discrete, distinct, or independent entities come together to form a new whole- a union- in which they merge part of their autonomous selves while retaining certain powers, functions and competences fundamental to the preservation and promotion of their particular cultures, interests, identities and sense of self-definition' (Wiener and Diez 2004:29).

The critical element here has to do with finding the right balance between self rule and shared rule, about being a unified entity and maintaining diversity and difference. This is one of the greatest appeals of federalist integration. Federalist integration focuses essentially on what

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Hill and Smith (2005:21), refer to as ‘high politics’, i.e. major issues of violence and political order. This form of integration is interested in unification in a bid to tackle international anarchy and the conflicts which arise from them. Federalist integration, no doubt, has had a great impact on the growth of the European Union in terms of its values and purpose. In concrete terms, this form of integration would have been the best for Africa safe that fledgling political institutions, lack of good governance, corruption and electoral fraud represent formidable obstacles to its implementation.

### **Background To The African Union**

The African Union originated from the defunct Organization of African Unity (OAU), which was established on 25 May 1963 in Addis Ababa by 32 independent African states. By 1994, membership of the OAU had grown to 53 states. The formation of the Organization of African unity (OAU) in 1963 was the culmination of the search for African political and economic unity or integration, which began outside the shores of Africa. In the course of its formation, contending socio-political forces in Africa pursued divergent and very often conflicting national and regional strategic interests. In spite of these divergent pursuits, the OAU fundamentally represented Africa’s collective efforts in search of continental unity and development. Adogamhe (2008) remarks that Africa’s search for unity did not just start with the formation of OAU in 1963. According to him, “since the late 1950s, African states have experimented with various forms of formal integration arrangements to promote African unity and economic development”. Adogamhe further argues that the search for African unity was a consequence of Pan-Africanism.

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The historical illuminations on Pan-Africanism and its impact on the formation of the OAU in the introductory part of this paper clearly illustrates that there were motivating factors for regional integration in Africa from times past. The thinking behind the emergence of the OAU, in the first instance, was that it would sway global attention for the benefit of the continent and at the same time, protect Africa from external predators and manipulations and in the process promote unity, peace and drive integration among member states of the organization. However, its formation was fundamentally flawed basically because it lacked any real Africanness in it.

For instance, according to Schalk (2005:263), the OAU represented in theory, both in function and organizational structure, a combined blueprint of the Charter of the United Nations Organization as well as that of the Organization of the American States (OAS). The OAU, he remarks, concentrated so much on ridding Africa of all forms of colonialism to the detriment of other areas that would engender integration on the continent. This singular objective was consequent upon the fierce disagreement and later grudging compromise that gave birth to it. While it dwelt on this agenda, it also identified Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa as the remaining flash points of colonialism in Africa and moved to remedy the situation. With the gaining of political independence by the former Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and Namibia, former apartheid South Africa was identified as the last stronghold of colonialism on the African continent. This was severally used by the various factions in the OAU as a springboard for narrow gains instead of pursuing a holistic continental agenda.

Within this context, argues Cervanka (1977:307), it is understandable why the OAU followed the organizational pattern and regulations of the UNO in constructing its Charter as well as adopting the structures and institutions of the world body. Cervanka further argues that the example of OAS was followed by the OAU because of its experiences with colonial

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domination. The founders of the OAU realized that they had an important presence alongside the OAS as an African group in the UN and that the UN had particular relevance as an international platform for the championing of black interests. Thus, the so-called African group in the UN constantly promoted the idea of Pan-Africanism. Being the ideology that founded it, the OAU promoted this ideology vigorously to emphasize a sense of comradeship or we-feeling among people of African descent (Schalk, Auriacombe and Brynard, 2005:499).

Despite its lofty aspirations and the fire of Pan-Africanism, the OAU became a constant victim of various crises that threatened its very foundation and thus failed to deliver on its promises. It will be recalled that one of the major aims of the organization was to promote sustainable African development at the economic, social and cultural levels as well as the integration of African economies but it is a fact that up to the point of its demise, the economies of most independent African states were neither integrated nor developed. Rather the economies of many African states were dominated by a lot of crises arising from both internal and external factors. African economies were characterized by institutional decay, poorly articulated policies, corruption, deficit managerial and administrative capacities and crippling poverty.

The expectation that the OAU would protect Africa from external manipulation gradually petered away, giving room for frustration and despair. Africa became a victim of vicious international economic and political forces, which culminated in adverse terms of trade, rapid decline in financial flows, capital flight, decrease in commodity prices and high debt profiles. Even where the international community showed indication to come to the aid of the continent, internal crises and fractionalization within the OAU prevented it from providing enabling framework for such external intervention. The best the OAU could do in the circumstance was to

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establish the African Economic Community (AEC) as a platform for integration but even this effort was dimmed into insignificance by the internal contradictions within the organization.

Hence, by the 1970s and 1980s, most Africans had lost faith in the capacity of the OAU to do Africa any good and even the leaders of the organization agreed that Africa was rapidly drifting into serious catastrophe- what with endemic crises and violent conflicts with the accomPanying bloodshed that sign-posted Africa. Lamenting the fate of Africa at this time, Meredith (1984:377), noted that the picture that emerged was almost a nightmare. It became obvious that something constructive and drastic had to be done to redeem the continent from this impending doom. Even the West had lost confidence in the capacity of the organization to establish a new economic order and this was why when in 1991 the OAU created the AEC, the West viewed that attempt with contempt (African News, June 24th, 1991:10).

Having reached its wits end, the OAU and its leaders resorted to cheap blackmail and rheumy appeals for assistance from the international community particularly from institutions like the IMF and World Bank. This type of approach was ridiculous because African leaders had failed to tap into the enormous resources at their disposal and create value therefrom but rather chose to feebly blame others for their failure and contented themselves with lamenting the historical exploitation of African states by former colonial masters. Yes! This is a fact but it did not stop the African leaders from using what is available to create a comparative advantage and become relevant on the world stage. It was this mindset that made the leaders of the OAU at certain point to canvass for reparation, debt cancellation, etc. Little wonder the President of the World Bank at that time, Barber Conable, dismissed such appeals by the OAU and insisted that Africa is richly blessed and therefore had a morale duty to pay its debt. The OAU had no choice but to live with this reality. The reason for the refusal of the World Bank to grant the request by

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the African leaders could be gleaned from the inability of the OAU to prevail on its member states to apply internal economic and fiscal discipline to meet international obligations.

The failure of the OAU was further exacerbated by the end of apartheid in South Africa, which had for so long provided a common binding force for the organization. The end of apartheid effectively signalled the end of activities of the Liberation Committee of the OAU and consequently cast a dark pall on the future of the organization as the driver of regional integration in Africa.

The OAU also failed miserably in mediating conflicts on the continent basically because the OAU-Commission charged with mediation, conciliation and arbitration was not functional. The Commission could not do much because the Charter of the OAU expressly forbade any form of intervention in the internal affairs of other member states. Exploiting this principle of non-interference, most African leaders unleashed terror and carnage on their people; grossly abused human rights and supervised the pillaging of the commonwealth. The OAU looked on helplessly. Rather than strengthen the organization, the OAU Charter weakened it and created huge institutional gaps.

The failures of the OAU do not suggest that the organization recorded no successes. Perhaps its greatest achievement was the facilitation of the decolonization process of Africa. Other highpoints include making of bilateral treaties between member countries. This has helped in the development of international law in the continent.

Howbeit, the failures of the OAU by far outweigh its successes. The major failure was its inability to drive regional integration; maintain peace and ensure security and political stability on the continent. Regrettably, the OAU did nothing substantial to respond to the various tyrants, dictators and treasury looters that were ruining Africa at the time. This inability to respond to

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such barefaced misconducts by African leaders was a gross deficiency that undermined the credibility of the OAU. In addition to the foregoing, the powers of the organization were very limited and very often circumvented and thus constrained any effort it undertook to address issues of regional integration, conflicts, poor governance, corruption, poverty and underdevelopment.

Thus by September 1999, African leaders had come to the conclusion that the OAU as then structured was incapable of meeting the challenges of continental development and integration in a multipolar world and therefore resolved to create a new continental body that would meet its needs. Thus was born the African Union (AU), which Schalk (2005:263), suggests represents a blueprint of the European Union. The AU is envisioned to accelerate political and economic integration of Africa and is anchored on such values as respect for rule of law and human rights, democracy, good governance, probity and accountability. The AU, according to Salim (2001), seeks to address the many challenges confronting Africa through the broad framework of NEPAD.

### **Overview Of The African Union**

The common argument among critics of the AU is that it is not fundamentally different from its predecessor, the OAU. However, much as the AU may have inherited some of the features of the OAU, it is not entirely correct to conclude that it is not different from the OAU. The contention of this paper is that the AU represents a reasonable and pragmatic departure from the OAU.

The difference in vision and mission of both organizations is immediately evident in the instruments that created them. Whereas the Charter of the OAU concentrated on the

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consolidation and protection of the hard-won political independence and espoused such ideals as continental integration; promotion of unity and solidarity among African states as well as the eradication of all forms of colonialism from the continent, it failed to create a practical framework or strategy for the actualization of its objectives. This assertion is evident from the institutional structures of the OAU, which the establishing Charter proudly proclaims was predicated on the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. The Charter provided limited latitude for the operation of the organization by recognizing the establishment of only four structures namely:

- The Assembly of Heads of States and Government;
- The Council of Ministers;
- The General Secretariat;
- The Commission of Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration .

The OAU, by its Charter was also empowered to establish specialized agencies subject to the approval of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government. It was based on this that it created such specialized agencies as the Economic and Social Commission; Educational, Scientific, Cultural and Health Commission as well as the Defense Commission.

However, because of the constraining nature of the Charter, the structures and specialized agencies did very little to achieve the objectives of the organization. The guiding principle of the OAU is a typical example of the constraining nature of the Charter. The Member states of the OAU, in pursuit of the goals of the organization, affirmed and declared their adherence to the following principles:

- Sovereign equality of all member states;
- Non-interference in the internal affairs of member states;



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- Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each state and for its inalienable right to independent existence;
- Peaceful settlement of disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation or arbitration;
- Unreserved condemnation, in all its forms, of political assassination as well as well as of subversive activities on the part of neighbouring states or any other states;
- Absolute dedication to the total emancipation of the African territories, which are still dependent;
- Affirmation of a policy of non-alignment with regard to all power blocs.

Most of these principles, in actual sense worked against the organization in the realization of its objectives. As we have earlier noted, the principle of non-interference prevented the OAU from responding to gross abuse of power and human rights by many of the African states. A possible explanation here could be that a contrary but innocuous statement by a neighbouring state would be interpreted as subversive and undue interference into the 'internal affairs of the state'. This was exactly the main reason why the Commission on Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration failed woefully in mediating any crisis or conflict in Africa throughout the life-span of the OAU. The interventions in Liberia and other troubled spots in the West African sub-region by Nigeria and Ghana were conducted under the auspices of the ECOWAS - a sub-regional multi-lateral agreement. The OAU's affirmation of a policy of non-alignment was very dubious because no African state was actually non-aligned, especially to the erstwhile colonial masters.

The establishing instrument of the AU is significantly different from the Charter of the OAU in that it laid strong emphasis on democracy, rule of law, good governance; promotion of social justice and gender equality as well as balanced economic development. The Constitutive

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Act of the AU retained some salient features of the OAU Charter such as the principle of non-interference but provided a caveat to encourage such intervention. For example, items (h) and (j) of Article 4 of the Constitutive Act upholds the right of the Union to intervene in a member state pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances namely: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity; and also the right of member states to request intervention from the Union in order to restore peace and security.

The Constitutive Act of the AU expanded the scope and mandate of the Union and consequently established the following organs:

- The Assembly of the Union
- The Executive Council
- The Pan-African Parliament
- The Court of Justice
- The AU Commission or Secretariat
- The Permanent Representatives Committee
- The Specialized Technical Committee
- The Economic, Social and Cultural Council
- The Financial Institutions

Under the Constitutive Act, the Assembly, which is composed of all Heads of state and Governments, is given sweeping powers as the supreme organ of the Union. The framers of the Constitutive Act paid due attention to the failings of the OAU and that is why Article 5(2) of the Act provides that the Assembly shall establish other organs that it may deem necessary in the realization of its mandate. Also Article 9(1) vests the power to establish any organ of the Union in the Assembly. This is a clear departure from the OAU and a loud testimony to the powers of

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the Assembly. It is this blank cheque to act in the best interest of the Union and Africa, based on shared vision and values that the Assembly created the Peace and Security Council of the AU, which was not part of the organs stipulated in the Constitutive Act, but the realities on the continent and the consensus by African leaders to maintain peace and security necessitated its creation. The same is true of the establishment of the African Peer Review Mechanism as a self-examining process by the African leaders. All these structures are aimed at ensuring more effective regional integration in Africa.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the emergence of AU is monumental in the trajectory of institutional evolution in Africa. The overwhelming declaration by African leaders to establish the AU is indicative of their intention and determination to plug into the horizontal and vertical benefits of regional integration in a rapidly changing global order. Thus among all the new institutional structures of the AU, the focus of this paper is on NEPAD.

### **The Emergence of NEPAD**

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) may be described as a vision and strategic framework adopted by the African leaders in 2001 as a roadmap for accelerated economic cooperation and integration among African states. Thabo Mbeki (2003), described NEPAD as Africa's response to the humanitarian and developmental challenges confronting Africa.

According to NEPAD (2001), it is a pledge by African leaders, based on a common vision and a firm and shared conviction, that they have a pressing duty to eradicate poverty and to place their countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development; and at the same time to participate actively in the world economy and body politic.

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The programme is premised on the determination of Africans to extricate themselves and the continent from the malaise of under-development and exclusion in a globalizing world. The NEPAD document further declares that the programme is envisaged as a long-term vision of an African-owned and African-led development agenda.

It is important to mention here that NEPAD was not suddenly created or adopted by the AU. It was actually initiated under the aegis of the former OAU but inherited and sharpened by the AU and its international partners. There were many factors that led to the articulation of NEPAD- some internal and some external.

One obvious internal factor that stimulated the articulation of NEPAD was the realization by African leaders that the continent was speedily drifting into economic and developmental catastrophe. They realized that the nationalism of early post-colonialism was unable to actually deal with the increasing economic and humanitarian crises confronting the continent (Kamidza, 2001). This realization naturally spurred the African leaders into proactive action. This shift in continental thinking was the catalyst that berthed the Lagos Plan of Action in 1980, which prepared the ground work for what would eventually come to be known as the NEPAD. One of the main concerns of the African leaders at the Lagos meeting was the increasing inequality between the continent and the developed economies of the West and North America. In this meeting the leaders resolved to pursue economic policies that would ensure self-reliance and self-sustaining growth.

The Lagos Action Plan was thus a watershed in the new thinking by African leaders and would create the springboard for more of such meetings. Soon after the Lagos meeting, the African leaders held another Summit on Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (APPER), the aim of which was to broaden the resolutions of the Lagos Action Plan. The

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roadmap to this economic recovery, in the opinion of the leaders would be to push for a change in the production and consumption patterns on the continent. This idea is not entirely wrong given the fact that Africans have developed a mentality of not patronizing their own products. They were more attuned to imported goods and Africa became a dumping ground for all manner of products from outside the continent- most of them sub-standard. Therefore, reasoned the African leaders, a drastic change in production and consumption pattern by Africans would enhance socio-economic development; create jobs and facilitate regional integration and cooperation.

Externally, the plight of Africa was becoming a serious concern to the developed economies and especially the Bretton Woods institutions. This is a continent that is awesomely endowed but its resources and destiny have been frittered away by ethnic pariahs and poor leadership. So the world was genuinely concerned. In a document published by the World Bank in 1981 on “Accelerated Development in Sub-Sahara Africa: An Agenda for Action”, the Bank noted that there were internal constraints to Africa’s development, which were self-inflicted. As a response to these internal constraints, the World Bank went ahead to prescribe Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) and austerity measures as remedies to African economies. Regrettably, these remedies failed woefully and the Bank even noted this failure in its 1997 Report. It was indeed because of this failure of SAPs and austerity measures in Africa that the World Bank had to apply serious caution in its intended application of the measures in other third world regions. The 1997 Report of the Bank, in acknowledging this failure, identified the state as a partner and facilitator of development rather than the sole stimulator of development. The state had to create enabling conditions to encourage individuals and organizations to fertilize their

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creative and productive potentials. It is basically in the context of this matrix that the concept of NEPAD can be explained.

NEPAD can also be seen as an ideology of African renaissance. Our earlier discussion on Pan-Africanism as a contributing factor in the emergence of the AU indicates that there has always been a continental desire in Africa and by Africans to make themselves relevant on the global stage. All these defined the momentous shift in continental thinking that gave rise to NEPAD.

Thus, by September 1999 when the extra-ordinary session of the OAU met in Sirte, Libya, this new continental vision moved them to set in motion the machinery for the formation of AU as a platform to anchor this new thinking. Top on the agenda of the Summit was the issue of Africa's external debt, which was crippling Africa's development efforts. The African leaders agreed that if Africa would get her creditors to cancel her debts, it would give a massive boost to the continent's development initiatives. The OAU consequently mandated former Presidents Thabo Mbeki of South Africa and Bouteflika of Algeria to develop a framework of engagement with Africa's creditors. This mandate marked the beginning of the crystallization of NEPAD to paper. The April 2000 Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in Havana, Cuba also dwelt extensively on the need for debt cancellation by the creditor nations and institutions and during its plenary mandated, yet again, former Presidents Thabo Mbeki of South Africa and Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria to negotiate the debt cancellation proposal with the creditors.

Based on these two mandates, the OAU in its Summit of 2000 in Togo agreed on the need to pursue this proposal and consequently empanelled Mbeki, Obasanjo and Bouteflika to discuss with Africa's creditors on how to develop a framework for the development of Africa. In its meeting in Okinawa, Japan in July 2000, the G8 gave a listening ear to Africa's presentation

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that debt servicing alone represents a massive obstacle to the development of the continent and the request to consider debt cancellation. The G8 was sympathetic and understanding and consequently gave a tacit approval to the African proposal.

Buoyed by this latest endorsement by the G8, the African leaders worked tirelessly to translate their vision into a policy framework. The outcome of that effort was the Millennium African Renaissance Plan (MAP), which was presented to the World Economic Forum in Davos on July 28, 2001. In presenting MAP to the World Economic Forum, Mbeki remarked that it was a declaration of a firm commitment by African leaders to take ownership and responsibility for the sustainable economic development of Africa.

MAP was further presented to other African leaders at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), which met in Algiers, Algeria in May 2001. It was at this meeting that Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal presented the “Omega Plan for Africa” while UNECA proposed “A Compact for Africa’s Recovery”. In other words, there were three overlapping initiatives on the table and the leaders agreed to harmonize them and present a common document to the world.

Hence, all three initiatives were merged into a single document and retained as MAP. A few months later the MAP initiative was presented to the former President of the United States, George W. Bush wherein he was informed that MAP is all about Africans taking their destiny in their own hands to end wars, famine, dictatorship, corruption, poverty and ensure sustainable development and regional cooperation. At the July 2001 Summit of the OAU in Lusaka, Zambia, the MAP was renamed “New African Initiative” (NAI). NAI was launched in Abuja, Nigeria with a promise to tackle foreign debts, HIV/AIDS scourge, conflicts and refugee crisis. In

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October 2001, the African Heads of State and Governments Implementation Committee on NAI finalized the policy framework and renamed it NEPAD.

Strictly speaking, NEPAD is the brain child of the OAU, which was tinkered with at both continental and international levels and consequently adopted by the AU as Africa's flagship for development and regional integration and cooperation. NEPAD, fundamentally, is a remediation of the structural adjustment policies and austerity measures imposed by the IMF and World Bank, which emphasized open market economy and focused on institutions of government. In contrast, NEPAD's vision is a people-centered sustainable development and deepening of genuine democratic values. NEPAD recognizes the fact that Africa is richly endowed, both in human and natural resources and that is why its broad objective is to tap into this enormous potential to eradicate poverty and add value to its efforts. Nobody would do this for Africa except Africans themselves. That is actually what NEPAD is all about- tapping into your resources and taking your destiny in your own hands. This vision cannot be achieved in isolation and that is why NEPAD preaches cooperation and integration. The specific aims of NEPAD include the following:

- To eradicate poverty ;
- To place African countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development;
- To halt the marginalization of Africa in the globalization process and enhance its full and beneficial integration into the global economy, and
- To accelerate the empowerment of women.

The NEPAD document also outlined the core principles of the framework as follows:



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- Good governance as a basic requirement for peace, security and sustainable political and socio-economic development;
- African ownership and leadership as well as Broad and deep participation by all sectors of society;
- Anchoring the development of Africa on its resources and resourcefulness of its people;
- Partnership between and amongst African peoples;
- Acceleration of regional and continental integration;
- Building the competitiveness of African countries and the continent;
- Forging a new international partnership that changes the unequal relationship between Africa and the developed world;
- Ensuring that all partnerships with NEPAD are linked to the MDGs and other agreed development goals and targets.

These are laudable objectives but the authors of NEPAD understood that these aims cannot be achieved in a vacuum. They have consequently proposed projects to ensure that the goals are met. The first in the three-phased projects is the maintenance of peace and order, which will provide conducive atmosphere for sustainable development. The second phase of the project dwells on infrastructural and human development initiatives as well as agricultural and environmental initiatives. The last phase of the project relates to resource mobilization, which includes capital flows and market access initiatives.

All these projects are accountable to the AU through a three-layered administrative structure that oversees NEPAD. At the top of this administrative structure is the Heads of State and Governments Implementation Committee (HSGIC). Since 2002, the AU has increased the membership of this Committee from 15 to 20. Each of the five regions in Africa has four

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members in the Committee and their primary function is policy formulation and determination. The next administrative structure is the Steering Committee which is made up of 25 members. Each of the five initiating members of NEPAD has two personal representatives on the Committee while 15 non-initiating members from the five African regions have one personal representative each. The duty of the Steering Committee is to determine the terms of reference for any approved project or initiative. The Steering Committee also oversees the Secretariat, which is the third administrative structure. The Secretariat has permanent staff and is responsible for liaising, coordinating, administration and logistical functions of NEPAD. It is this three-layered administrative structure that links NEPAD firmly to the AU.

### **Nepad and Regional Integration in Africa: An Appraisal**

The major task of this section is to appraise the performance of NEPAD in driving regional integration in Africa in relation to its mandate. In assessing NEPAD, this paper would x-ray its achievements or failures in relation to its set targets.

It is important to note here that NEPAD signifies a conscious framework for the development of Africa and the major objective is to generate broad-based and equitable economic growth that would ensure the reduction of poverty on the continent and also allow it to become more integrated into the global economy. The NEPAD vision cannot be actualized by mere wishes. Its actualization requires a conscious and coordinated implementation of projects in key sectors of the economy. In other words, translating the vision into operational blueprints requires the commitment of each member state. It is the vision of NEPAD that each country should develop its own national blueprint in line with the NEPAD objectives and implement those blue prints at the national level. The regional economic communities (RECs) are primed to

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drive the NEPAD objectives at the sub-regional levels and be responsible for facilitating regional integration on the continent. The question is: Can NEPAD, in its 12 years of existence boast of appreciable deliverables in relations to its set objectives? This paper opines that NEPAD has done well essentially because it has been functional in virtually all sectors.

One of the aims of NEPAD is to improve infrastructural development on the continent. It is true to assert that since the adoption and implementation of NEPAD, member countries have devoted serious attention to infrastructural development especially in the provision of accessible and usable water, improving road network, ICT, and power generation. It will be recalled that the AU created the NEPAD Agency as an implementing agency and integrated it into its structures. This Agency has been pivotal in strengthening coherence and coordination of development projects in line with NEPAD vision. At the NEPAD administrative level, the HSGIC, through the approval of the Assembly has established the Department for Infrastructure and Energy development. This department has been able to develop a strategic framework for infrastructural development on the continent. In other words, it has been able to develop a template for this purpose, which member states should follow. The NEPAD Agency has done well to attract international partners to invest in infrastructural development in many parts of the continent. A ready example is the Africa-Republic of Korea infrastructure project, which was at the instance of the Korea Institute for Development Strategy. A team of experts from Republic of Korea has visited and accessed investment opportunities in Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia. In the area of regional integration and infrastructure, the NEPAD Agency has facilitated the implementation of several regional projects within the framework of the African Union-NEPAD Presidential Infrastructure Initiative as mandated by 16th session of the Assembly of the African Union.

In the area of agriculture, NEPAD has equally been very visible. Specifically, NEPAD appreciates the fact that agriculture accounts for the bulk of African economies and holds the forth in the continent's long-term vision of economic growth and sustainable development. NEPAD has made tremendous progress in this area by ensuring progressive but graduated implementation of the commitments under the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) at both country and regional levels. At the Maputo declaration, African countries resolved to commit ten percent of their national budgets to agricultural development. It is interesting to note that as at 2013 over fifteen countries in Africa has met this target and many more are on the road to meeting it. This incremental investment in all facets of agriculture is intended to shore up food production on the continent; ensure food security, create line employments and reduce poverty.

In the health sector, the NEPAD Agency has left lofty imprints basically because it has continued to pursue the key NEPAD objectives of improving health-care systems in Africa, increasing the number of trained health workers, and ensuring the availability of affordable, safe and effective medicine for all Africans. To achieve this goal, NEPAD is leading the African Medicines Regulatory Harmonization Initiative, which mobilizes financial and technical resources, advocates for policy and legislative reviews of the regulation of medicines, and coordinates existing capacity-building initiatives for regulation, with the aim of increasing harmonization of the regulation of medicines. NEPAD is also coordinating a consortium consisting of international health experts in implementing the Initiative and has so far received various encouraging project proposals from regional economic commissions for achieving harmonization at the regional level.

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The education and training sector has not been ignored by the NEPAD Agency as it has continued to promote human resource development for health workers and teachers on the continent with the active collaboration of international partners. NEPAD has also not overlooked the issues of environmental protection. It is interesting to note that since it was adopted, NEPAD has developed an action plan for sustainable environment which emphasizes the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol.

In Information and Communication Technology, the NEPAD Agency has also done well by implementing the NEPAD e-Africa Programme to drive the information and communications technology sector, in line with the new strategic orientation of the Agency. The e-Africa Programme is saddled with the responsibility of developing policies, strategies and projects at continental level for the development of information and communications technology throughout Africa and it has continued to implement the key initiatives of NEPAD in this area. Realizing the importance of science and technology to Africa's development, the NEPAD Agency has also established focal points to catalyze the production of science, technology and innovation indicators at the national level. NEPAD has also achieved reasonable milestones in gender mainstreaming, empowerment and civil society participation as well as mitigating conflicts and ensuring peace and security on the continent. It has also supported good governance through the African Peer Review Mechanism. The APRM has continued to strengthen its position as an instrument for advancing good governance and socio-economic development in Africa with over 30 countries willingly signing the memorandum of understanding.

There is no doubt that NEPAD has recorded enormous achievements. Through this framework Africa has shown great resilience and its economy is fast recovering despite the global financial meltdown. Experts are of the opinion that African economies are experiencing

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slow but steady growth. The multi-sectoral and practical focus of NEPAD has proved very effective for resource mobilization and private sector development at national regional levels. In summary, NEPAD has been able to align the continental framework to country realities and proved a reliable vehicle for regional integration in Africa.

These accomplishments notwithstanding, NEPAD still faces some challenges, which include the problems of demography, government capacity and accountability; looking beyond development aids and encouraging the full participation of the private sector and civil society organizations. Another major challenge to NEPAD is dissemination of information regarding its activities. Not many Africans know what NEPAD is or what it is doing to reposition the continent and this is why such people are quick in dismissing NEPAD as a failure.

### **Conclusion/Recommendations**

The work has attempted to discuss the African Union, NEPAD and Regional integration in Africa by noting that regional integration is a process through which governments enter into regional agreements for their mutual and common interest. This process, the paper notes is not a new phenomenon in Africa. The paper argues that the emergence of the AU by the turn of the millennium and the launching of NEPAD represented a significant paradigm shift in African thinking on how to galvanize the continent to take her destiny in her own hands. It was on this basis that the paper traced the circumstances and origin of the AU and NEPAD. The paper noted that NEPAD has done appreciably well in all sectors but more needs to be done. The framework, no doubt, represents a new threshold of African thinking; a positive response to the challenges of Africa. In its over ten years of existence, NEPAD can boast of so many of highs. However, these positive achievements by NEPAD appear to be hamstrung by a number of challenges.

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The paper is of the view that NEPAD has a lot of prospects and that Africans and her leaders should be more committed in addressing the identified challenges. One way of addressing these challenges is to incorporate the civil society in the framework of regional integration processes. One of the enduring criticisms of NEPAD is that it is elitist and adopts a top-to-bottom approach in pursuing its mandate. NEPAD is also criticized as a document drawn up by a few heads of states in Africa with the exclusion of the civil society (ADB, 2003).

There is no gainsaying the fact that the organized civil society groups in Africa have consistently advocated for democratic and governance reforms and that is why it is important that AU/NEPAD should incorporate the civil society in their evaluation processes and not just core government personnel. Hence, there is need to give strategic roles to the CSOs, both in policy and direction, especially with regards to NEPAD and such other NEPAD structures as APRM. If this is not done, we run the risk of governments assessing and applauding their performances even in areas they have failed. Such self exculpation will vitiate the essence of governance and ignore the fundamental constraints that have worked against regional integration in Africa. That would be counter-productive for the AU and NEPAD. Finally, NEPAD should adopt proactive information dissemination strategies so as to carry the ordinary people along and educate them on the activities initiated by it.

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