Chapter 3

The African Union and the Pan-African Agenda

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Introduction

A comprehensive discussion and analysis of the African Union (AU) and its Pan-African Agenda requires a consideration of Africa's history, as well as how Africans have and continue to respond to slavery and colonialism. Among the most notable of these responses is the growth of Pan-Africanism globally, as well as struggles for the independence of African countries from colonial domination. Slavery and colonialism carved a master-servant relationship between the colonial powers and the colonised African countries. This asymmetric relation still characterises Africa's engagement with the rest of the world today, and it has continued to entrench the continent's political, economic, social, and cultural marginalisation.

The AU, with its Pan-African Agenda, represents a global movement that seeks to inspire and consolidate unity between all natives and diasporas of African origin. It also aims to counter the effects of both slavery and colonialism. The growth of the agenda was not an organic unleashing of a people's aspirations but rather a reaction to how the rest of the world treated the continent and perceived Africa and its people to be.

This chapter aims to analyse the genesis of the AU and its Pan-African agenda, as well as the extent to which the agenda has been implemented, considering the global context of the Cold War and neocolonialism. Two of the main developments that helped

shape the AU and the Pan-African Agenda are the growth of Pan-Africanism as an idea and a philosophy in Africa and the global stage. The global context is important in these analyses because the rest of the world continues to have political, economic, social, and cultural interests in Africa. While Africa is charting its own agenda, derived from its historical and current material conditions, stronger external powers have a material interest and explicit agendas in Africa. The complexity of this intra-African relationship and the extra-African interest in Africa has a strong bearing on how the AU and Pan-Africa Agenda are defined and executed.

It is also important to highlight the distinctions between the OAU/AU institutions and their programmes, and to measure potential gaps between what is contained in pronouncements and what is implemented. It is the gap between these two that determines whether the AU and the Pan-African Agenda are reacting to stated objectives and the post-independence aspirations of the African people.

The first part of this chapter tracks and analyses the origins of the AU and the Pan-African Agenda, noting that the agenda preceded the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU)/AU and its institutions. It briefly analyses the extent to which the ideals of Pan-Africanism influenced the development of the continental institution and the Pan-African ideas of today. It also analyses the key drivers of the formation of the OAU and its key objectives and programme of work. The second section of the chapter highlights and analyses relevant global developments and programmes that were established for Africa, mostly by the United Nations (UN), the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). It engages the extent to which these programmes accelerated or derailed the implementation of the AU and its ideas.

The third part of the chapter identifies and analyses the implementation of the AU since the establishment of the OAU (the AU's predecessor) and the transformation of the OAU to the AU in 2002. This includes an examination of the Lagos Plan of Action, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as a comprehensive, sustainable development plan of the AU,

the Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) as a governance programme of the AU, the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and Agenda 2063 as the long-term development plan for Africa. The fourth section of the chapter explores how the AU and the Pan-Africa Agenda are being undermined by both African and external players, and offers some recommendations for building a stronger base for Africa's economic, social, and cultural development. The conclusion underscores the core argument of the chapter, which holds that although the AU and the Pan-African Agenda have been well articulated in various political declarations, frameworks, and development plans and programmes, unless the AU, its African institutions, and its citizens embark on an economic and social revolution, the AU's vision will remain an illusion.

Genesis of the African Union and its Pan-African Agenda

The genesis of the AU and its Pan-African programmes can be traced back to Pan-Africanists' thoughts and philosophy. Pan-Africanism was born out of Black people's response to oppression arising from slavery first and colonialism later. The desire for a Pan-African front arose from the massive and systematic dispersal of Africans for close to 500 years through slavery and imperialism.

The Pan-Africanist platform broadly called on all people of African origin to maintain political, economic, and cultural unity, in a bid to achieve freedom from political, economic, and cultural bondage. The Pan-African vision is based on the conviction that all people of African descent globally are a collective cultural and political community based on their shared racial, social, and economic marginalisation derived from their African origins. However, the concept of Pan-Africanism is contested – there is no single agreed definition or approach because, over time, several Pan-Africanist approaches emerged. Pan-Africanism presents a related but slightly different understanding to other African philosophies, as key political figures in the historical Pan-Africanist movements developed and popularised approaches

aligned to their specific contexts. Key figures involved in developing and defining Pan-Africanist thought include Frantz Fanon, WE Dubois, Marcus Garvey, and Kwame Nkrumah.

The first Pan-African Congress, held in London in 1900, was among the most significant convenings of Pan-Africanist thinkers and figures. It gave great impetus to Black people across the world to fight a "protracted struggle against racism and economic exploitation of their countries by Europe and the United States" (Chrisman 1973:2). Pan-Africanism became the programme and platform, and with the task of creating an international political community of all peoples of African descent according to Moyo and Ramsamy (2014), from a philosophical perspective,

> Pan-Africanism represents the aggregation of the historical, cultural, spiritual, artistic, scientific, and philosophical legacies of Africans from past times to the present. Pan-Africanism as an ethical system traces its origins from ancient times and promotes values that are the product of the African civilisations and the struggles against slavery, racism, colonialism, and neo-colonialism.

Pan-Africanism is also seen as a "…worldwide movement that aims to encourage and strengthen bonds of solidarity between all indigenous and diasporas of African ancestry". Further, Pan-Africanism can be defined as "…a belief that African people, both on the continent and in the diaspora, share not merely a common history, but a common destiny" (Forever Africa n.d.).

From the foregoing, this chapter defines Pan-Africanism as a philosophy, a movement, and a belief that embodies the cultural, spiritual, artistic, value systems, scientific inheritance, and aspirations of Africans on the continent and in the diaspora.

It regards Pan-Africanism as inherently connected to the fight against slavery and its repercussions, including historical and contemporary racism in all forms, colonialism and its physical, emotional, and psychological impacts, as well as neocolonialism.

The Organisation of African Unity (OAU)

This section examines the origins of the OAU, which followed the emergence of the Pan-African Agenda. The evolution of the AU and pro-African agenda was accelerated when Ghana gained independence in 1957. African figures like Nkrumah believed that "independence [was] meaningless unless it [was] linked up with total liberation of the African continent" (Johnson 2022). In 1960, 17 African countries gained independence, and the OAU was formed in 1963. This was a huge boost to Pan-Africanism and its focus on ridding the continent of political colonialism. The independence of the rest of African countries under colonialism remained high both on the global Pan-Africanist agenda and the agenda of the newly formed OAU because a key tenet of the Pan-Africanist platform is its advocacy for African independence. The most important success of the OAU was its intolerance to colonial heritage and its support of liberation movements across Africa. This is evidenced by the content of the OAU Charter, which aligns with the continued advocacy work of the Pan-African Congress.

Commenting on the Pan-African congresses between 1900 and 1945, Adejumobi (2008) maintains that:

> While the Pan-African congresses lacked financial and political power, they helped to increase international awareness of racism and colonialism and laid the foundation for the political independence of African nations. African leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, and Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya were among several attendees of congresses who subsequently led their countries to political independence. In May 1963, the influence of these men helped galvanize the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), an association of independent African states and nationalist groups.

The Pan-Africanism platform, therefore, influenced both the pace of African countries' independence and the content of the OAU agenda.

The OAU Charter and its Agenda

The OAU Charter specifies two key objectives of the OAU. The first is to promote the unity and solidarity of African states and to co-ordinate and strengthen co-operation amongst states and their struggles for the improvement of the lives of all Africans. A critical part of the purpose of the OAU Charter was to defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence of all states, to eradicate all forms of colonialism on the continent, and to promote international co-operation within the framework of the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Independence.

The second main purpose of the OAU was focused at the national/member state level as part of its efforts to give effect to the first objective. Members states were expected to co-ordinate and harmonise their policies with a specific focus on political and diplomatic co-operation, as well as mutual support in the fields of economics, transport, communications, education, culture, health, sanitation, nutrition, scientific and technical fields, as well as defence and security. It is evident that the preamble of the OAU Charter – which sets the framework for the purpose of the organisation – is very much influenced by the values of Pan-Africanism. The preamble recognises the inalienable right of a people to take charge of their own destiny. It also notes the conviction, consciousness, inspiration, determination, and dedication of the signatories to the charter. It highlights the desire of African people for solidarity, their aspirations for freedom, justice, dignity, peace and security, independence, co-operation, and unity amongst themselves. It also calls for the need to create and strengthen common institutions amongst member states.

Even though one of the OAU's main achievements was the attainment of political independence across the continent, there was a recognition that this was just the start – it would need to be followed by the struggle for economic independence. In his speech at the launch of the OAU in 1963, Kwame Nkrumah clearly projected an African vision that went beyond political independence when he said:

> The struggle against colonialism does not end with the attainment of national independence. Independence is only the prelude to a new and more involved struggle for the right to conduct our own economic and social affairs; to construct our society according to our aspirations, unhampered by crushing and humiliating neo-colonialist controls and interference (AU 1963: 44).

Key Achievements of the OAU

The OAU had many challenges, but it also had many successes. The most notable success of the OAU was the fight for the liberation of countries under colonialism. Through advocacy and the work of the OAU's Africa Liberation Committee (ALC), the organisation strengthened liberation movements' capacity to fight colonialism. Indeed, the organisation managed to achieve this by assisting African countries such as Angola, Mozambique, and South Africa that were under colonialism to attain liberation. Under its priority for the economic integration of the continent, the OAU made inroads into the establishment of regional economic communities (RECs),[1] which are the current building blocks for regional integration on the continent.

The adoption of the African Economic Community in Abuja, Nigeria, in 1991 was a further step in the right direction as it laid the foundation for the now-established African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which is headquartered in Ghana. The adoption of the Lagos Plan of Action in 1980, also in Nigeria, was a notable success. Other milestone achievements were the adoption of the African Convention on Refugees in 1969, and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights in 1981.

1 The RECs are: the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) (1989); the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) (1994); the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) (1998); the East African Community (EAC) (1967); the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) (1983); the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (1975); the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)2 (1986/1996); and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) (1992).

The independence of South Africa in 1994 heralded a new era for the OAU and Africa, as the whole continent could be said to be free from colonial and foreign domination. As such, it was time to direct the efforts of the continent towards economic self-reliance and poverty eradication, as well as to promote peace and security. The 35th Summit of the OAU held in Libya initiated talks aimed at 'reconceptualising' the continental organisation. At the summit, calls were made for the OAU to hold an Extra-Ordinary Summit to further discuss a 'reformation' of the OAU into a more capable and less constrained AU.

The AU and its Agenda-setting Constitutive Act

The Pan-African posture of the AU is derived from its vision and Constitutive Act. The AU Vision is that of an "integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena" (AU n.d. a). This means that, unlike the OAU, the AU had to be more focused on integration, prosperity, peace and security, and citizen participation in the affairs of the union. The AU also had to bolster its capacity and strategies for engaging with the rest of the world in ways that would benefit the continent. The OAU had delivered on political liberation; the AU now had to utilise the dividends of political liberation and turn the continent into a land of prosperity.

An analysis of the performance of the AU since it was established is best done by looking at two levels: the institutional and structural, and the programmatic and developmental. Both levels are critical in determining the capability of the AU as an institution to deliver on the AU Agenda as specified in its Constitutive Act and Vision. The AU vision encapsulates the AU and Pan-African agenda, which denotes integration and prosperity, which speaks to economic development, peace and security, citizen participation, and being a strong global player. These priorities have been clear even before independence. That is why the OAU, and later the AU, have developed various programmes aimed at realising this vision. A summary and short analyses of each of these programmes follow below.

The AU's Objectives

Unlike the OAU, which only had two core purposes, the AU has 14 objectives (OAU 2000:5). While some of the detailed focus areas of the OAU are aligned with the AU objectives, the major difference between the two lies in the AU's prioritisation of economic development, peace and security, and promotion of democratic principles. Additionally, the structure of the AU Commission and the rest of the organs of the union demonstrate the greater importance of the AU as compared to the OAU.

Some of the major issues that have bedevilled both the OAU and AU are inadequate financial and human resources, as well as structures and work methods, particularly of the AU Commission. The objectives of the AU include the attainment of unity and solidarity between African countries and citizens; safeguarding the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence of the member states; accelerating the continent's political and socio-economic integration; promoting peace and security and the stability of the continent; promoting the principles of democracy and good governance; investing in research; enhancing international partnerships; and protecting human rights and the rule of law. The objectives of the AU Constitutive Act are aligned with the priorities that had already been set out in the Lagos Plan of Action in 1980 but were never implemented. In setting out its objectives, the AU further established organs and institutions that would facilitate the realisation of these objectives.

At the launch of the AU in 2002, the organs of the union were as follows: Assembly of the Union; Executive Council; Pan-African Parliament; Court of Justice; Permanent Representative Committee; Peace and Security Council; Specialised Technical Committees; Economic, Social and Cultural Council; and financial institutions. The financial institutions include the African Central Bank, the African Monetary Fund, and the African Investment Bank. The AU has been unable to establish the continental financial institutions, which would have replaced the roles of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund – but likely with fewer conditionalities. It is also likely that the Africa's current development trajectory would have been more positive.

Regarding the establishment of the African Union Commission (AUC) in 2002, it has the following various sectoral commissions: Peace and Security; Political Affairs; Trade and Industry; Infrastructure and Energy; Social Affairs; Rural Economy and Agriculture; Human Resources, Science and Technology; and Economic Affairs.

Africa's Development Efforts

As Africa continues to grapple with the challenges of economic, social, political, and institutional development, the AU has spared no efforts to ensure that the continent rids itself of poverty and global marginalisation. While the development paradigms that have defined the continent's postcolonial period have been well articulated and inspired, they have been unimplementable largely because African states do not have the resources for implementation and key co-ordination issues have not been addressed. This is evidenced by the many development programmes it has developed since it was established. These include the Lagos Plan of Action, 1980; the African Economic Community, 1991; the New Partnership for Africa's Development, 2001; and Agenda 2063. All of these were meant to give effect to the AU and its Pan-African posture. An understanding of these programmes is important in contextualising the current state of the union and its challenges, as well as the prospects for the future.

The Lagos Plan of Action

The Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) was adopted by the OAU in 1980. It was the result of African leaders' frustration with the lack of progress in the implementation of international measures aimed at developing the continent. This was the first development programme to be initiated under the auspices of the OAU. In its principles, programmes, and implementation modalities, it indoctrinated the ethos of a Pan-African agenda and was very much linked to the ideals of Pan-Africanism.

The programmes outlined in the LPA focused on areas including food and agriculture, industry, and natural resources.

The plan recognised human resources development as key to unlocking the continent's development potential. Actions for implementing the plan were identified at the national, sub-regional, continental, and international levels. For example, science and technology was identified as a priority, and the international community was called upon to support this pillar. Transport and communication was another critical priority that was viewed as a key ingredient for the socio-economic integration of the continent and the promotion of intra-African and international trade. Trade and finance featured strongly in the LPA, with a focus on domestic trade and intra-African trade. Chapter 8 of the LPA focuses on measures to build and strengthen economic and technical co-operation, including the creation of new institutions and the strengthening of existing ones. Environment and development was also a priority.

The priority of the least-developed African countries was to influence member states to take ownership for the development of their economies and to undertake the necessary reforms to spur development. The role of energy for development received attention, and African countries were called upon to undertake collaborative energy projects. Short- and long-term energy plans were proposed for implementation. Regarding women and development, the LPA called on member states to take centre stage in driving the participation of women in development. The LPA had a significant impact as far as it raised the consciousness of Africans and African governments to take responsibility for their economic emancipation as much as they had for political emancipation. Through the LPA, the principles of self-reliance and utilisation of the continent's natural and human resources for the benefit of Africans gained prominence. Any meaningful implementation of the initiative was hampered by a lack of resources, as well as competing "global economic pulls and initiatives" (Ikome 2004:3). Contrary to the inspiration provided by the LPA and its objectives, the economic situation got worse by the late 1990s, prompting African leaders of the time to intervene through the development of new programmes such as NEPAD.

The African Economic Community

The African Economic Community (AEC) was established in 1991. It is, by far, the foremost programme of the OAU that focuses on integrating the continent through economic, social, and cultural ties. The four main objectives of the AEC are to:

1. promote economic, social, and cultural development and the integration of African economies to increase self-reliance and promote endogenous and self-sustained development;
2. establish, on a continental scale, a framework for the development, mobilisation, and utilisation of the human and material resources of Africa to achieve a self-reliant development;
3. promote co-operation in all fields of human endeavour to raise the standard of living of African peoples; maintain and enhance economic stability; foster close and peaceful relations among member states, and contribute to the progress, development, and economic integration of the continent; and
4. co-ordinate and harmonise policies among existing and future economic communities to foster the gradual establishment of the community (AU 1991: 19)

The implementation of the AEC faced many challenges from the onset. For example, the proliferation of RECs, currently totalling eight, presents co-ordination challenges. The co-ordination challenges are exacerbated by the fact that many member states have multiple memberships to some of the RECs.

The AEC does not have the legal provisions to prevent member states from belonging to more than one REC. There is also no formal or legal linkage between the AU and the eight RECs. The current working relationships between the RECs and the AU Commission – as well as amongst the RECs themselves – are based on mutual understanding rather than any legal obligation. Nevertheless, all of them exist to serve the AU member states. Another key challenge resulting from poor institutional co-ordination is the ineffectiveness of both financial and human resources.

AU Peace and Security Council

Peace and Security is a critical pillar of the AU agenda. The Peace and Security Council (PSC) was established in 2002 and became fully operational in early 2004 (AU n.d. b). The AU recognises that without peace, there can be no development; and without development, there can be no peace. As such, peace, security, and development are viewed as two sides of the same coin. The PSC is a decisionmaking organ of the AU. Its core purpose is to facilitate the "prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts". However, like all other organs and programmes of the AU, the PSC's work is hampered by a shortage of both financial and human resources. Commenting on this challenge, Kenyan president William Ruto maintained in early 2023:

> We need serious interrogation of the management of the African Union. Today, we cannot even support Somalia. We are waiting for the EU to give us US$85 million. 54 (55) countries, 50 years after independence, cannot raise this amount to support Somalia. The AU Chairman cannot do much because we, as Heads of State, have retained all the powers" (Garowe 2023).

The failure of the AU to fund its programmes, especially the Peace and Security agenda, is one of its most fundamental weaknesses. It diminishes the ability of member states to lead and own the AU agenda by leaving space for international players to fund the operations of the AU and embed their agendas and interests.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was launched in 2001 as a development programme of the AU. It was developed on the premise that African leaders:

> ... have a pressing duty to eradicate poverty and to place their countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable development, and at the same time, to participate actively in the world economy and body politic. The programme is anchored on the determination of

> Africans to extricate themselves and the continent from the malaise of underdevelopment and exclusion in a globalising world (AU 2001:5).

The NEPAD programme is comprehensive and covers the following sectoral priorities (adapted from NEPAD, 2001):

1. bridging the infrastructure gap, covering the digital divide, and investing in information and communication technologies, energy, transport, water, and sanitation;
2. a human resource development initiative, including reversing brain drain, poverty reduction, bridging the education gap, creating health, agriculture, environment initiatives, and building culture, science, and technology platforms;
3. mobilising resources: the capital flows initiative, increasing domestic resource mobilisation, debt relief, and private capital flows;
4. market access initiative: diversification of production-agriculture, mining, manufacturing, tourism, services, promoting the private sector, promoting African exports, and the removal of non-tariff barriers;
5. a new global partnership, establishing a new relationship with industrialised countries and multilateral organisations;
6. implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development: agriculture, promotion of the private sector, infrastructure, and regional integration;
7. needs assessment; and
8. management mechanisms of the New Partnership for Africa's Development's Heads of State Implementation Committee.

While the programme's content is flawless, its effective implementation remains elusive. Twenty years after its launch, the NEPAD programme faces the same challenges as similar and previous programmes. A key challenge among these is inadequate resources for implementing priority programmes. Like the rest of the AU programmes, NEPAD highly depends on donor funding. The issue highlighted above in relation to the challenges of institutional co-ordination with RECs and the AU Commission also persists.

The African Peer Review Mechanism

The Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) was adopted by the AU in 2003 as an upshot of the governance pillar of NEPAD. The APRM was established in 2003 by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC) as an instrument for AU member states to voluntarily self-monitor their governance performance. It covers four thematic areas that were deemed to be critical for governance in Africa, which are (AU n.d. c):

1. Democracy and Political Governance (DPG);
2. Economic Governance and Management (EGM);
3. Corporate Governance (CG); and
4. Broad-based Sustainable Socio-Economic Development (SED).

The adoption and implementation of the APRM demonstrated the importance of governance in Africa. It stemmed from a recognition by African leaders of the importance of sitting together, reflecting on one another's governance gaps, and assisting each other in closing those gaps. From the onset, it was clear that African countries were doing this for themselves to ensure transparency across all development fields. In its initial stages, the APRM was hailed as an innovative governance instrument, further fostering its democracy and governance agenda.

Unfortunately, the mechanism has been used to attract external financial support to countries that have acceded to the APRM. This thwarts the original intentions of the mechanism. As such, countries see the completion of reviews as an end, rather than part of an iterative process for improving governance. Implementation of the programme of action arising from the reviews is commonly neglected.

The Pan-African Parliament

The establishment of the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) in 2004 was a strong signal to Africans that the AU was serious about the Pan-African regional integration agenda. According to the AU (2023:n.d.), "The PAP is intended as a platform for people from all

African states to be involved in discussions and decisionmaking on the problems and challenges facing the continent". Even though the PAP has faced some challenges, its prospects for effectiveness are high, especially within the context of the Kagame study and report on the institutional reform of the AU (Qobo 2007).

Agenda 2063

The AU adopted Agenda 2063 as Africa's long-term development plan. The AU set out seven aspirations, which set out a clear vision for Africa to be achieved by 2063. The agenda's seven aspirations are (AU n.d. e):

1. a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development;
2. an integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance;
3. an Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice, and the rule of law;
4. a peaceful and secure Africa;
5. an Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values, and ethics;
6. an Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children; and
7. Africa as a strong, united, resilient, and influential global player and partner.

Moreover, several initiatives have been identified as the flagship projects of Agenda 2063, the successful implementation of which has the potential to change the face of Africa and begin to reverse the divisive borders established by the Berlin Conference.

One of the aspirations of Agenda 2063 is democracy, good governance, and the rule of law. However, the current democratic and governance architecture is based on internally entrenched systems established after the Second World War and before the independence of African countries. Governance systems that require African countries to hold elections every four or five years have not helped the countries to grow their economies. Instead,

much time and resources are spent developing five-year national development plans that must align with the election cycle. It is not surprising that African countries do not make much progress in addressing the needs of the citizens and eradicating poverty. Despite the regularity of elections in Africa, unemployment and inequality have increased.

Africa prides itself on its abundant natural resource base. However, it has not managed to stem the tide of natural resource extraction for the benefit of the rest of the world, rather than Africans. During colonialism, there was significant hope that upon independence, Africa's citizens would be able to access these natural resources and change their developmental fortunes. More than 50 years later, the AU is churning out more plans, that never get implemented.

Global Programmes Focusing on Africa

The AU and its institutions do not exist in isolation from the rest of the world, in which it seeks to be a dynamic player. While the AU seeks to influence global developments, other players also seek to influence the AU and its Pan-African agenda, for their own interests. This section briefly highlights programmes for Africa's development that have been conceptualised and implemented by international organisations, particularly the UN. This is important to demonstrate the fact that there are external forces that have a powerful influence on Africa's development trajectory; even more powerful than the AU and its member states. Most of the time, these externally determined programmes have little effect on Africa's development goals and aspirations. This also demonstrates the AU and its member states' weakness in dealing with the rest of the world, which continues to impose programmes they view as serving Africa.

The global actors have intervened through different programmes, which included the following:

Unied Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD) (1986-1990)

The UN General Assembly adopted UNPAAERD in June 1986 to address the dire economic and social conditions in Africa, which started in the 1970s. The key areas of concern at the time included sluggish economic growth and food production, high levels of external debt amid declining international assistance, and environmental degradation due to drought, resulting in famine and hunger in many countries.

The programme was launched for implementation after the five-year existence of the Lagos Plan of Action. This means that the international community paid no regard to the African programme. In retrospect, even though the Lagos Plan was premised on the principle of self-reliance, it dawned early on African leaders that they could not implement it without external financial resources. Therefore, the launch and implementation of UNPAAERD was a demonstration of the adage: 'He who pays the piper calls the tune'. This saying still applies to the relationship between Africa and the global community today.

UN New Agenda for the Development of Africa (UNNADF) (1991-2002)

UNNADF was initiated after an agreement between African countries and the international community to address what was viewed as an African economic crisis. UNNADF was largely premised on funding from official development assistance (ODA), a feature that negated the key foundation of the LPA's call for self-reliance for Africa's development. The promised funds worth $30 billion did not materialise at the implementation level. The anticipated external trade opportunities for African countries did not yield the expected results. African countries also failed to diversify their economies and relied on a few commodities. African countries were encouraged to develop long-term national development strategies and adhere to the regular conduct of elections as a sign of good political governance.

The first round of UNNADF ended in 2002, a year after NEPAD was established. The UN had appointed a panel to

undertake a review of UNNADF and their review recommended that UN support to Africa be subsequently undertaken through NEPAD. By 2002, NEPAD had become internationally recognised as the long-term development programme of the AU (UN 2002).

The Bretton Woods Institutions

The Bretton Wood Institutions, namely the World Bank (WB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Trade Organisation (WTO), wield significant power and influence on African countries' economic, financial, and social policies. The World Bank was created in 1944 to provide loans and grants to its members who needed financial assistance for economic development. The bank has 187 members globally, of which 54 are African countries.

The IMF was also established in 1944, in response to the Great Depression of the 1930s. It started off with 44 founding member countries. As of 2023, the IMF boasts 190 members, 51 of which are African. The IMF provides short-term financial support to African countries to enable them to ease balance of payment adjustments. It is also now involved in poverty reduction measures under the Enhanced Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative.

The World Bank and the IMF have significant influence on the economies of their members in Africa. The influence varies from policy prescriptions to governance conditionalities that are tied to their loans and support. Examples of World Bank conditionalities include the disastrous Economic Structural Adjustment Policies (ESAP) of the 1980s, whose main thrust was market liberalisation (Crawford 1997). African governments were torn between the need to reduce public expenditure for economic efficiency, and pursuing their social development objectives. The result of ESAP was mass impoverishment (Kawewe & Dibie 2000).

The World Trade Organisation was established in 1995, taking over from the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which had provided rules of global trade since 1948. It has 159 members, of which 44 are African. Given the influence that these institutions have in determining the course of

development of African countries, it becomes difficult for African countries to claim economic, financial, and social independence. The fact that most of the loans that the African countries receive come with conditionalities is a negation of the development and implementation of independent national development policies and the attainment of AU's continental development programmes and its Pan-African Agenda.

Some of the rules of the WTO could also potentially hamper the optimisation of the implementation of AfCFTA's regional integration agenda. Commenting on the AU's 2019 application for Observer Status at the WTO, Erasmus (2019) maintains that the WTO views the 55 AU member states as "independent and sovereign states" whose responsibilities are to the national audience, and not to the AU collective aspirations. He further notes that, "The WTO is a multilateral organisation. Its objectives are about the rules-based liberalisation of global trade, not regional integration" (Erasmus 2019). This means that primacy for AU members states lies with their individual WTO obligations, and not with the AU's objective to "speak with one voice in international trade negotiations…to ensure that Africa is effectively integrated and represented in the international trading system" (WTO 2019), as was being requested by the AU to the WTO.

AU and Pan-African Institutional and Structural Challenges

Each time the AU creates a new development initiative, it also establishes institutions to drive the implementation of the new programme. For that reason, the continent has witnessed the establishment of new institutions over the years. The multiplicity of institutions comes with many challenges, and the AU has not been spared. One of the challenges that Africa has faced in the implementation of the AU's master plan involves a lack of institutional capacity and coherence. About five years after the establishment of the AU, questions were already being asked about the capability of AU institutions and organs to deliver on the 14 objectives of the Constitutive Act.

Furthermore, the RECs were also championing regional projects that were not always in alignment with those of the AU/NEPAD. The poor co-ordination in the implementing of projects bred inefficiencies in financial and human resource allocations. Yet these resources were coming from the same member states that belonged to the RECs and the AU. Arising from this and other challenges, an audit of the AU was undertaken by a high-level independent panel in 2007, and another review in 2017 (AU 2017b).

Audit of the African Union: 2007

By 2007, the euphoria that characterised the launch of the AU, its organs, and its institutions had started wearing off. Despondency was starting to creep in due to the delayed realisation of the benefits that had been promised at the launch of all the initiatives that accompanied the establishment of the AU and NEPAD. As part of the efforts to address the challenges confronting its member states, the AU Assembly called for an audit of the AU, with a view to strengthening the continental institution and accelerating the implementation of the identified programmes. Thus, an independent High-level Panel of the Audit of the AU was established by the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the AU to undertake an audit review of the state of the union in 2007 (AU 2017). The panel produced a comprehensive report (also referred to as the Adedeji report) and some recommendations to the AU Assembly.

Overall, the key recommendations of the audit report speak of the need for accelerated continental integration and transformation, based on a clear set of ethical values. The report emphasises the need for participatory transformation, highlighting that, "establishing strong ethical values in pursuit of Pan-African transformational goals is the only way of promoting solidarity and the acceptance of the oneness of the African humanity" (AU 2007:204). The report recommends that "ethical and moral values constitute the foundation of political, economic, social and cultural activities at the national, regional and continental levels" as means of accelerating the attainment of continental objectives. Unfortunately, the report was never

considered by the Heads of State and Government, and its recommendations were never implemented.

Study on the Institutional Reform of the AU: 2017

In 2016, the AU Assembly called for another study on the institutional reform of the AU. The basis of the decision to undertake the study in 2017 was, once again, a realisation that the AU, like the OAU, was not capable of delivering on the AU objectives. The AU Assembly acknowledged that the AU was facing too many challenges, which hampered it from adequately responding to the needs of the continent. According to the Assembly Decision: "the unfortunate truth is that Africa today is ill-prepared to adequately respond to current events, because the AU, despite its achievements, still has to be made fit for purpose... Without an AU that delivers, the continent cannot progress, and we face the likelihood of yet another lost opportunity" (AU 2017:4).

As reported by the AU (2017a:5), the report came up with 30 recommendations which were clustered into five key pillars:

1. Focus on key priorities with continental scope, and improve the division of labour with regional economic communities;
2. Realign African Union institutions to deliver on those priorities;
3. Connect the work of the AU more directly to citizens;
4. Manage the business of the AU more efficiently at both the political and operational levels; and
5. Sustainably self-finance [the AU's] activities.

Some of the recommendations of the report have already been implemented. For example, a Reform Unit in the Office of the AU Chairperson has been established. The Reform Unit's main task is "implementing the day-to-day activities to be delivered on the reform process" (AU n.d. f). Further, the harmonisation and reductions of the commissions have been completed, enabling the move from eight to five commissions. It remains to be seen whether the challenge of the union is simply institutional and funding-related or whether existing issues result from a lack of

leadership, ownership, and responsibility, which starts at the national level and manifests itself at the continental level.

This speaks to the frustration expressed by President William Ruto of Kenya in May 2023 at what he called poor management of the AU due to the interference of some heads of state and government. Ruto said, "We have the wrong architecture in the management of the African Union. The AU Commission Chairman can do very little because we have retained all the powers as Heads of State, and yet you cannot run one country and run the continent" (Garowe 2023).

Ruto's questioning of the appropriateness of the architecture for the management of the AU two years after the adoption and ongoing implementation of the Kagame report on institutional reform is worrisome. It highlights how the values, principles, cultures, behaviours, and ethics brought by individual member states actively work to either weaken or strengthen the AU and its agenda.

An Alternative Path?

Internationalism and its ideals have also broken down the bonds that were formed around the political phase of Pan-Africanism. A new African Economic Pan-Africanism is required: one that focuses on the economy and development of the continent. The economy knows borders. Indeed, Africa is not one, but 55 geographical spaces that must be individually governed. It is only the political aspects that remain collective. That is why AfCFTA is such a ground-breaking tool not only for Africa's economic independence but also a disruptor for Africa's economic development.

Conclusion

The chapter has demonstrated that the AU and Pan-African Agenda are well rooted in the Pan-Africanist movements of the 1900s. These movements influenced African leaders of early independent African countries, such as Ghana, Nigeria, and Kenya. Having been fired up through the Pan-African Movements,

these leaders were instrumental in establishing the OAU in 1963. The same values developed within the Pan-African movements permeated through the agenda of the OAU.

Despite all the efforts made by the OAU and its member states at the time, various factors prevented the successful implementation of these programmes – some of these were domestic to Africa and others external. The domestic factors included inadequate financing, insufficient human resources, poor infrastructure, weak institutions, poor economic policies and lack of long-term planning, and over-reliance on external support. The issue of regular elections and democratic practices has not yielded the promised results. Instead, every cycle of elections brings about anxiety and a replanning by the incoming government, whether new or incumbent. The two-terms requirement for heads of state and government mean that every four, five, or ten years, countries go back to the drawing board and reprioritise their development plan to align with the petty priorities of the new head of state and government, and not the consistent needs of the population.

As demonstrated above, the AU and its Pan-African Agenda have been very clear since the evolution of the regional institution. Africans want to extricate themselves from the political control, exploitation, oppression, and resource plunder of the Western world. Over the years, they have proclaimed their desire to freely chart their own destiny in many development plans. However, at the same time, they have also yielded to the pressures of the same system they are trying to disentangle themselves from. As such, the foundations for building "The Africa We Want" remains weak. In a bid to find new implementation modalities for the development programmes, almost every decade, the AU does a review of the current programme, then instead of revamping the foundation to make it work, they develop a new one. Many decades of development potential are lost this way.

Going forward, nothing short of an AU and Pan-African economic revolution will enable Africa to meet its development aspirations and achieve the vision of the AU. Even Europe had to go through an industrial revolution as part of establishing the strong

levels of industrialisation seen across many European countries. AfCFTA will not be effectively implemented without some hard sacrifices by Africans themselves. Similarly, implementing initiatives such as the African passport, free movement of people, and the high-speed train all require Africans to break mental, emotional, and psychological barriers. Africans, particularly the national and regional elites, should endeavour to do what they have never done before and how they have never done it before. Failure to achieve this will relegate the AU and its Pan-African agenda to mere rhetoric, consigning the dreams and aspirations of many Africans to the dustbin of history.

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