

Influences in Africa - Part One the African Union

By Fr. Bill Turnbull W.F.

Organisations such as the **Organisation of African Unity (OAU)**, and its successor the **African Union (AU)**, have developed from the roots of the **Pan-Africanism** of the early 20th. Century. They were built upon the optimism of many of the first leaders of Africa's independent countries. The unity they wished to form was an attempt to face common problems together, to develop their countries, improve the situation of their people, and to bring peace and economic improvement to the continent. ^[01]

This optimism has faded over the last sixty years but is now beginning to see a revival in present-day African leaders, what some call an **African Renaissance**. Major events, both within the continent of Africa and worldwide, have stopped much of the progress which was thought possible. The basic idea of Africa being able to **help itself** has been slower to realise than thought. The former Super-Powers used the continent as an area of confrontation when they bought various Leaders and supplied them with arms. During this time, especially in the 1970s, the **OAU** built up relations with the Arab World

and turned to it for development aid. The West's involvement has continued in a more subtle way since the 1990s through 'covert operations', and the economic control by governments, the power of multi-national corporations, and the major global financial institutions.

THE ROLE OF THE OAU

The primary objectives of the **OAU** were to support liberation movements, and to mobilise Africans and friends of Africa internationally to fight against colonialism, and for African colonies to gain their independence. This was achieved under **OAU** leadership. Therefore, in terms of its main objectives, the **OAU** was a great success. ^[02]

The **OAU** has been criticised for not achieving much during its time. It is true that it did not get involved with many of the internal matters of various countries, nor did it condemn the actions of many of Africa's dictators. Despite this it played an important role in conflict resolution and the economic development of the continent, especially in debt servicing issues.

Foot Notes 01: See Influences in Africa (Organisations) - Part One in White Fathers - White Sisters, Issue 327, April-May 1996 at <http://www.thewhitefathers.org.uk/327org.html>

02: Making the African Union succeed by Chen Chimutengwende, page 12, New African, June 2003.

Abbreviations: **AEC** = African Economic Community; **Implementation of the African Information Society Initiative (AISI)**; **APPER** = Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery; **AU** = African Union; **CAEC** = Central African Economic Community; **CMC** = Conflict Management Centre; **COMESA** = Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa; **CSSDCA** = Conference on Stability, Security, Development and Cooperation In Africa; **ECA** = Economic Commission for Africa; **ECOSOC** = UN Economic, Social and Cultural Council; **ECOWAS** = Economic Community of West African States; **EPAP** = Eminent Persons Advisory Panel (of the **AU**); **EU** = European Union; **G8** = Group of 8 (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, UK, and USA); **IDRC** = International Development Research Centre; **LPA** = Lagos Plan of Action; **MAP** = Millennium Partnership for Africa's Recovery Programme; **NAI** = New Africa Initiative; **NEPAD** = New Partnership for Africa's Development; **OAU** = Organisation of African Unity; **PAFMELSA** = Pan-African Movement for East, Central and Southern Africa; **PSC** = Peace and Security Council; **PTA** = Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern Africa; **RECs** = Regional Economic Communities; **UAM** = African and Malagasy Union; **UEMOA** = West Africa Economic and Monetary Union; **UNESCO** = UN; **WANS** = West African National Secretariat.

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It has taken the continent from colonial times, to independence for its countries, through the Cold War era, and into the completely different situation of today's post-Cold War world.

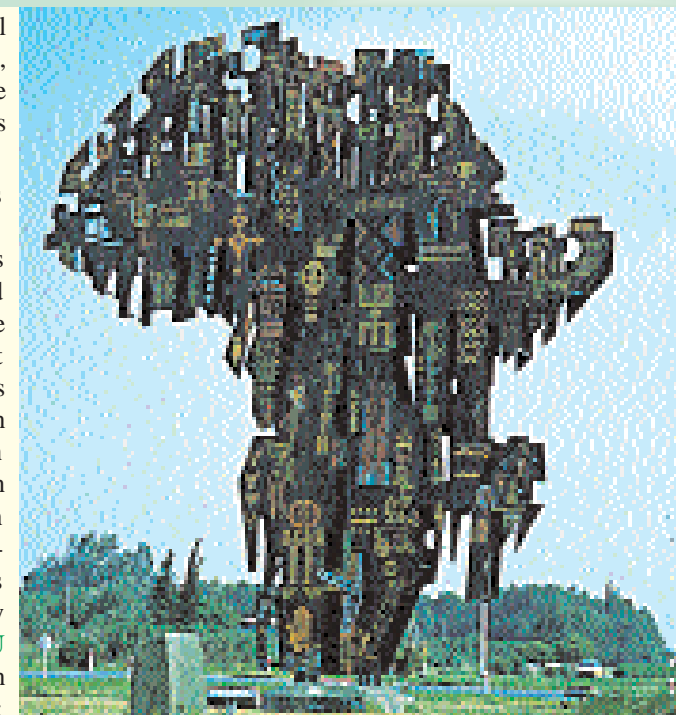
Over the same sixty years the outsider's view of Africa has changed from the **mysterious dark continent** to simply as a place where, famine, poverty, war and corruption are rife. The **OAU** and the **Pan-Africanist** dream have been caught in this melee and the former's work has been seriously hampered by it. On an economic level alone agreements such as **The Lagos Plan of Action** have been greatly restricted by external factors such as the repayment of debt and the imposition of Structural Adjustment Policies (**SAPs**) by the International Monetary Fund (**IMF**) and World Bank. The **OAU** has been involved in the de-colonisation of Africa; countries gaining independence; transitions of power; peace-keeping operations and resolving disputes. Despite this involvement there are still wars being fought in Africa between countries for financial and territorial gain, while basic human rights are ignored.

FROM THE OAU TO THE AU

The aim of the **AU** is to lead an intensified, well co-ordinated and sophisticated struggle against neo-colonialism and for the total unification, democratisation and the development of Africa and its peoples globally.

This will be done through the second liberation of Africa, which must be unequivocally based on Pan-Africanism. The first liberation was led and co-ordinated by the **OAU**; the second liberation will now be led and co-ordinated by the **AU**. ...

The second liberation is also equally about fighting for the re-structuring and democratisation of the current and unjust system of



international relations, including its institutions and the international trading regime which are all totally unfair to developing countries and are in favour of the interests of the industrialised world. ^[02]

The present drive to form the **African Union (AU)** was first proposed and promoted by the Libyan leader, **Moammar Gadhafi**, to establish a United States of Africa. The **AU** is seen as a new approach to **African Unity** loosely modelled on the European Union. The main original aim of the **OAU** was to help the continent become independent and to get rid of colonialism. Present day Africa finds itself in a completely different world with different problems to resolve - such as globalization - and the **AU** has to take on the mantle of guiding the continent in this new situation.

Treaties which were honoured by the **OAU** are under review as the structure, expertise and

Picture above: A symbolic map of Africa close to Algiers Airport, Algeria

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staff of the OAU are being gradually adapted into the AU. The **Constitutive Act of the AU**, which was signed by 27 countries at the OAU Summit in Lomé in 2002, provides for this transition and the building of the new structures. The establishment of the AU was legally reached, according to the **Act**, when the 36th member

ratified it. The inaugural session of the AU took place in Durban, South Africa, in July, 2002, following up what had been agreed at the OAU Summit the previous year and the fifty-three OAU states are now part of the AU.

A problem which the OAU had has been inherited by the AU, that is which languages to use.

THE AFRICAN UNION (ORGANS) STRUCTURE

THE ASSEMBLY

The **Assembly** is made up of Heads of States and Government of the Union, or their accredited representatives. It is the AU's supreme organ and the main policy making body which meets at least once a year in ordinary session. The Chairmanship of the **Assembly** is held for one year.

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

The **Executive Council** is made up of the Foreign Ministers, or other Ministers or Authorities, designated by the Governments of Member States. It is answerable to the **Assembly** and meets at least twice a year in ordinary session. The **Executive Council** will co-ordinate and take decisions on policies of common interest such as: trade, security, food, agriculture and communications.

THE PAN-AFRICAN PARLIAMENT

The **Pan-African Parliament** is being set up to help the African peoples participate in governance, development, and economic unity of the Continent. The Parliament's protocol was signed by Member States and is in the process of ratification. It will consist of elected representatives from the 5 Regions of Africa (North, East, West, Central and South).

THE AFRICAN COURT OF JUSTICE

At first the **Court of Justice** will be advisory but eventually it will be the **Supreme Court** of the Union and will rule on human rights abuses in Africa using a common legal framework.

THE COMMISSION

The **Commission** is the **Secretariat of the Union** playing a central role in the daily management of the Union. It is made up of the Chairperson, the Deputy Chairperson, and eight Commissioners, and its work is determined by the **Assembly**. The Commissioners are: **Peace and Security** (Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, and Combating Terrorism); **Political Affairs** (Human Rights, Democracy, Good Governance, Electoral Institutions, Civil Society Organizations, Humanitarian Affairs, Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons); **Infrastructure and Energy** (Energy, Transport, Communications, Infrastructure and Tourism); **Social Affairs** (Health, Children, Drug Control, Population, Migration, Labour and Employment, Sports and Culture); **Human Resources, Science and Technology** (Education, Information Technology Communication, Youth, Human Resources, Science and Technology); **Trade and Industry** (Trade, Industry, Customs and Immigration Matters); **Rural Economy and Agriculture** (Rural Economy, Agriculture and Food Security, Livestock, Environment, Water and Natural Resources and Desertification); and **Economic Affairs** (Economic Integration, Monetary Affairs, Private Sector Development, Investment and Resource Mobilization). *continued on page 8*

It was suggested that they should be African languages based on the continent's five regions: Arabic for the North; Hausa/Twi for the West; Swahili for the East; Khosa for the Southern; and Lingala for the Central. Eventually it was agreed that the working languages will be Arabic, English, French, Kiswahili, Portuguese, and Spanish.

It is hoped that the AU will continue and deepen the work done by the OAU, and further it in fields such as economics, politics, democracy, human rights and conflict resolution. It will be able to do this with the **Economic Community of Africa (ECA)**, the **Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Co-operation in Africa (CSSDCA)**, and the **New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)**. Together they should be able to give Africa bigger voice in global affairs and resolve the many problems that face the continent. It is already clear that the AU is ready to tackle such challenges as aid and development issues; corruption; and HIV/AIDS. Whether it will be successful is another matter and whether it will be able to clean up Africa's image by dealing with these matters and facing up to the remaining dictators, still has to be seen.

THE AU, NEPAD AND CSSDCA

The first rule of law is economics. That is why central to the AU's plans is NEPAD ... It has been much debated since its inception. It is a realisation that Africa is hostage to Western or "white" capital, much of it taken from Africa, in human and material terms. A realisation that Africa does not have the power to take it back, so we must ask nicely and promise to be good. ^[03]

The AU, the **New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)**, and the **Conference**



on Security, Stability, Development and Co-operation in Africa (CSSDCA) have been developed greatly in the past decade into three initiatives to improve the situation in Africa as a whole. NEPAD and CSSDCA are an integral part of, and get their legislative authority from the AU. They are important elements in the AU's development and transition from the OAU, as well as in the economic and political transformation of the African continent. The CSSDCA is a policy development forum to improve common values; to monitor and evaluate the implementation of decisions taken by the AU; to make links between the AU and the AEC.

The economic programme for Africa, which has become known as NEPAD, was pioneered by four African leaders: Thabo Mbeki (South Africa), Abdoulaye Wade (Senegal), Olusegun Obasanjo (Nigeria), and Abdelaziz Bouteflika (Algeria). NEPAD is a merger of Thabo Mbeki's **Millennium African Plan (MAP)** and Abdoulaye Wade's **OMEGA Project** which was first called the **New African Initiative (NAI)** and so was

Foot Note 03: *The Union takes shape* by Pusch Commey, page 9-10, *New African*, June 2003

Picture above: children of nomadic peoples at Karbubu, Niger - will they have a voice in the AU?

renamed **NEPAD**. It was endorsed and adopted by the **OAU Summit** in July, 2001. **NEPAD** is an essential part of the **OAU/AU** structures, though concerns have been expressed that it is being developed as a threat and in opposition to the new **AU**. It has been said that **NEPAD** is dividing Africa and is a return to the **Casablanca** and **Monrovia** blocks of the early 1960s.

The idea is that **NEPAD** should be a catalyst to development in Africa, while sustaining the

relationship between Africa and the Western donor countries, and organisations, which fund the projects. To this end the **G8** adopted **NEPAD** as part of its **Plan for Africa** in July, 2001. They agreed to join in a partnership to fund and implement various initiatives such as in the areas of peace and security initiatives; commercial growth and sustainable development; education; health care, especially concerning **HIV/AIDS**; and agricultural. The **G8** countries have also

THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE

The **Permanent Representatives Committee** is formed by the Permanent Representatives of Member States accredited to the **Union**. It is responsible for preparing the work for the **Executive Council**, and may set up such sub-committees or working groups as necessary.

THE SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL COMMITTEES

The **Specialized Technical Committees** are responsible to the **Executive Council**, and deal with issues at Ministerial Level. They prepare projects, programmes, follow-up and evaluate the implementation of decisions taken by the organs of the **Union**. The **Assembly** may form more **Committees** or restructure the existing ones when necessary. The **Committees** are made up of Ministers or senior officials responsible for the various sectors. The present **Committees** are for: Rural Economy and Agricultural Matters; Monetary and Financial Affairs; Trade, Customs and Immigration Matters; Industry, Science and Technology, Energy, Natural Resources and Environment; Transport, Communications and Tourism; Health, Labour and Social Affairs; and Education, Culture and Human Resources.

THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL & CULTURAL COUNCIL (ECOSOCC)

The **Economic, Social and Cultural Council** is an advisory organ composed of different social and professional groups of the Member States of the **Union**. NGOs will also contribute through this **Council** and its work is determined by the **Assembly**.

THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

The **Peace and Security Council (PRC)** will replace the former **OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution**. It will have 15 members from all 5 Regions of Africa appointed by the **Assembly**. The **PRC**'s function is to: promote peace, security and stability; monitor, anticipate and prevent disputes and conflicts; undertake peace-making and peace-building functions to resolve conflicts; authorise the mounting and deploying of peace missions; and to recommend to the **Assembly**, intervention, on behalf of the **Union**, in a Member State. An African Standby Force will be established to cooperate with the UN, national authorities, NGOs and other international and regional organisations.

THE FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

The **Financial Institutions** are: the African Central Bank; the African Monetary Fund; and the African Investment Bank.

agreed to open their markets to African exports, to continue debt relief, and to increase aid.

To qualify for **G8** assistance African countries have to commit themselves to: fight corruption; practice good governance and the rule of law; human investment; reduce poverty; and encourage economic growth policies. The status of the countries is checked by the **African Peer Review Mechanism (APERM)** which has set up by **NEPAD** for this purpose. A delicate balance has to be kept here to stop an African (**NEPAD**) initiative appearing to be dominated by the West (**G8**). **APERM** has a vital role in this and also in countering the view that if **NEPAD** works there is no need for the **AU**. To do this **APERM** has to keep relationships with both the **G8** and African leaders.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

The intention and determination of the **OAU** Founding Fathers, to whom we pay great and deserved tribute, the martyrdom and sacrifice of thousands and thousands of Africans led us to the path of freedom and the conquest of a freely moulded destiny.

... today welcomes us and tells us that never again another mind than the African mind will define Africa, that never again will its children accept slavery, racism or any form of oppression. ...

... when we mention Kwame Nkrumah, we have summed up in one name the appeal of all our heroes and precursors who, from the embryonic stage of Pan-Africanism to the doors of our present situation, have embodied our thirst for justice and dignity.

Apart from the optimism and exaltation, it is the resolute will of the damned of the earth to grab from fate the control of their destiny in all lucidity, brotherhood and in the com[mun]-ity of nations. Because nobody will do it for us. Rich in human resources and having extraordinary and considerable potentialities, Africa,



through its initiatives and mediation, continues to endeavour to engage itself resolutely in the path of peace, stability, security and good governance.

We are on the road to an Africa standing on its feet, dignified, prosperous, determined to be a credible and respected partner within the international community.

We are on the road to fraternity, solidarity, peace with all the peoples of the world.

We are on the road to guarantee that never again no other non-African will define Africa. [04]

The extract above was part of the address given by Amara Essy, the interim Chairman of the **AU**, at the Durban Summit. It gives some of the historical roots and foundations of the present **AU**. Since the time of Kwame Nkrumah African leaders have fought to be independent

in every sense of the word. If what Amara Essy said is taken at face value, there is no place for non-Africans in Africa. If that is so then the AU may cause itself isolationist difficulties.

The AU already has many problems to face and no doubt it will be expected to resolve them quickly. Perhaps those who participate in its work will lose patience when progress is slow. As said before, the AU is based on similar ideas to the EU and even after all the years of working together there still is not the great European unity and common policy in the EU which many desire. In this line the AU has problems yet to face, such as: xenophobia in Africa; ethnic divisions; land issues; corruption; development resources; incorporation of African systems; and to redraw colonial borders.

The AU starts at a disadvantage in the Global situation and needs to fight to re-structure and democratise international relations and trade, to take them away from bias against developing countries. It cannot do this in isolation and without the financial help of the West such as given

through NEPAD. Before anything is done to improve the ordinary African's situation it is estimated that the AU will need an annual budget of US\$64m. once it is all set up. It is difficult to see where this money will come from as US\$39m is still owed by members. All contributions will have to rise and no doubt the five wealthiest members - Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Nigeria and South Africa - will pay the most. The budget, as with OAU, will be 85% to fund the AU and 15% for projects.

No doubt the African Diaspora will be useful in this respect. Work has already begun to include them in the AU - such as part of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council. The AU has already held talks with the Foundation for Democracy in Africa (FDA) and the Western Hemisphere African Diaspora Network (WHADN) to this end. No doubt the Diaspora can play an important role as they have done in the past and let us hope that the AU will remember that Africa has many friends abroad who want to see it succeed.

From Pan-Africanism to the African Union

Compiled by Fr. Bill Turnbull W.F.

The following are some key dates and events in Pan-Africanism, the OAU, and the AU.

EARLY PAN-AFRICANISM

- 1900 - the first Pan-African Congress is held in London.
- 1912 - the first African National Congress is founded.
- 1919 - the Pan-African Congress meets in Paris - 57 representatives attend.
- 1920 - Marcus Garvey founds the Negro Empire and the First Black Parliament in New York.
- 1921 - the Pan-African Congress meets in London and Brussels.

- 1923 - the Pan-African Congress meets in London and Lisbon.
- 1927 - the Pan-African Congress meets in New York.
- 1937 - the International African Service Bureau is formed, succeeds the International Friends of Abyssinia.
- 1940 - Marcus Garvey dies in London after serving a long prison sentence.
- 1944 - Pan-African Federation formed under the leadership of the International African Service Bureau, by uniting 13 organisations at meeting in London, to put forward demands for autonomy and independence.

1945, October - the Pan-African Federation meets in Manchester. Nkrumah founds the West African National Secretariat (WANS) at the meeting to promote a United States of Africa. [01]

1946, August - WANS promotes the West African Federation as a way to form a United States of Africa.

1958, April 15-22 - the founding of the first Conference of Independent African States (Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Morocco, Libya, Egypt and Algeria present) in Accra, Ghana.

April 29 - the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) is established in the UN Economic, Social and Cultural Council.

November 23 - drafting of a Charter for a Union of African States by Ghana and Guinea (signed later by Mali), and an All-Africa People's Conference is held later in Accra.

1960 - the Union of African States is formed.

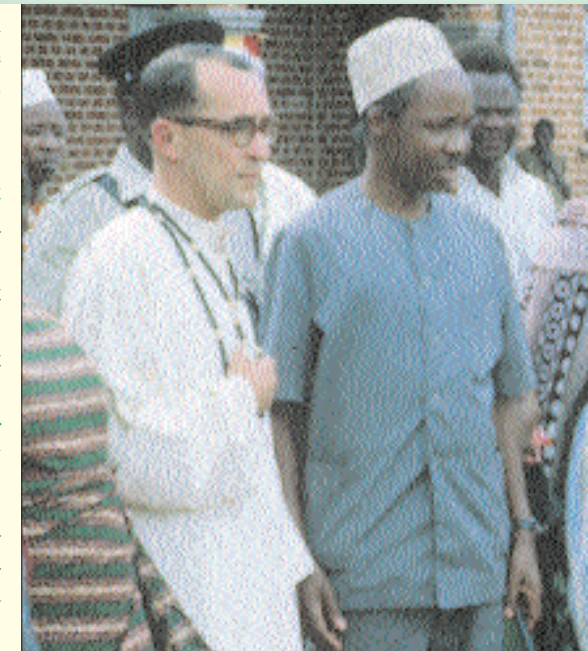
June 15-24 - the second Conference of Independent African States is held in Addis Ababa.

1961 - the African and Malagasy Union formed.

January 7 - Casablanca Charter is adopted by Algeria, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea, Libya, Mali, Morocco. It provides for a joint military command, socialist development of Africa with central authority, and an African common market. Supported by the Pan-African Movement for East, Central and Southern Africa (PAFMELSA).

February 15 - the ECA divide Africa into four sub-regions and establish offices.

May 8-12 - Leaders from 20 African States meet at the invitation of President William Tubman (Liberia). They are opposed to the Casablanca Charter and are known as the Monrovia Group. [02]



1962 - the African-Malagasy-Mauritius Common Organization is formed.

January - Monrovia Group meets in Lagos and adopt a draft charter for an Organisation of Inter-African and Malagasy States. 12 French-speaking States from the group form the African and Malagasy Union (UAM), known as the Brazzaville Group.

THE ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN UNITY

1963, May 23-26 - Prior to the meeting of the Heads of State Foreign Ministers meet in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, hosted by Haile Selassie, to resolve the differences between various groups. 32 Heads of State sign the OAU Charter on the 25th. May to establish the OAU. The Casablanca, Monrovia and Brazzaville Groups disappear. The 25th. May is celebrated as Africa Day. [03]

Foot Notes 01: Participants include S.L. Akindola (Nigeria), Raphael Armatoe (Togo), Wallace Johnson (Sierra Leone), Jomo Kenyatta (Kenya), and Kwame Nkrumah (Gold Coast/Ghana). 02: The countries are Benin [Dahomey], Burkina Faso [Upper Volta], Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo [Brazzaville], Ethiopia, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Madagascar, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Togo, and Tunisia.

Picture above: the late Julius Nyerere, former President of Tanzania, a great Pan-Africanist

- June 3** - President Sekou Toure (Guinea) announces that the **Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union** has been dissolved.
- August 2-11** - the inaugural meeting of the **Council of Ministers** of the **OAU** is held in Dakar, Senegal.
- September 25** - the **PAFMELSA** is disbanded.
- 1964** - the **African Development Bank** is established and the **OAU** approves a protocol setting up the **Commission of Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration**.
- July** - the first **Assembly of the OAU Heads of State and Government** meets in Cairo, Egypt, chooses Addis Ababa as its HQ and Diallo Telli (Guinea) as the Administrative Secretary-General. The **Cairo Resolution on the Inalienability of Colonial Boundaries** is adopted.
- 1965, November** - the **Union of Maghreb Countries** (Algeria, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia) is formed.
- 1969** - **OAU Convention on Refugees** is adopted.
- 1975, May** - the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** is established.
- 1976, December** - the **African Economic Community (AEC)** is established in the **Kinshasa Declaration**.
- 1977, July** - the **OAU Heads of State and Government** endorse the **Kinshasa Declaration** in Libreville, Congo.
- 1980, April** - the **OAU Heads of State and Government** reaffirm their commitment to establish an **AEC** through the **Final Act of Lagos**. The **Lagos Plan of Action** and the **Final Act of Lagos** aim to improve the economic situation of African countries by moving away from mainly agricultural exports, by finding more local raw materials, self-reliant development, and encouraging cooperation and trade between **OAU States**.
- 1981** - the **Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern Africa (PTA)** is established, later to become **COMESA**. The **African Charter on Human and People's Rights** (Nairobi) and the **Grand Bay Declaration and Plan of Action on Human Rights** are adopted by the **OAU**.
- 1982** - 2 attempts to hold an **OAU Summit** in Tripoli, Libya, fail due to international political problems. As a result the Summits are held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 1983-90.
- February** - the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (Western Sahara) joins the **OAU**. Morocco protests as it is fighting the Sahrawi and eventually leaves the **OAU**.
- 1983** - the **Central African Economic Community (CAEC)** is established.
- 1985** - **Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (APPER)** is agreed to help in the various crisis, such as the drought, famine, external debt and development issues, of the 1980s.
- November** - Morocco leaves the **OAU**.
- 1986, October 21** - an **African Charter on Human and People's Rights** (approved in 1981) comes in to force and a Commission is set up in Banjul, the Gambia, in June 1989.
- 1988, May 13** - 25th anniversary **OAU**, at the meeting the **OAU Heads of State and Government** further steps are taken to establish the **AEC**.
- 1990, July** - the 26th. Ordinary Session of the Assembly of **Heads of State and Government** in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, adopts the declaration on the **Political and Socio-Economic Situation in Africa and the Fundamental Changes Taking place in the World** and the **Charter on Popular Participation**.

Foot Note 03: The founding countries are Algeria, Benin [Dahomey], Burkina Faso [Upper Volta], Burundi, Cameroon, Cent. African Rep., Chad, Congo [Brazzaville], Congo R.D.[Leopoldville], Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania [Tanganyika], Togo, Tunisia, and Uganda.

1991, June 3 - the **Abuja Treaty** is adopted by 51 countries, to gradually establish the **AEC** in Abuja, at the 27th. Ordinary Session of **OAU Summit**. The **AEC** is to be created in 6 stages to form an **African Common Market**.

1993, June - in the **Cairo Declaration**, the **OAU Summit**, in Cairo, establishes a **Mechanism on Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution**, with a **Conflict Management Centre**.

1994, January 10 - the **West Africa Economic and Monetary Union** (Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo) is created.

May - the **Abuja Treaty** and the **AEC** signs an agreement with regional African economic groupings to establish an **African Common Market**.

May 24 - South Africa joins the **OAU**, the 53rd. nation, after first multi-racial elections.

1995 - **Moammar Gadhafi**, Libya, is the first to propose forming the present **AU**.

April - the **African Regional Symposium on Telematics for Development** is set up.

May 3 - the 21st. Meeting of **ECA Conference of Ministers** adopts a resolution **Building Africa's Information Highway**. The **Cairo Agenda for Action** programme is re-launched.

1996, May 7 - The 22nd. meeting of **ECA Conference of Ministers** is held in Addis Ababa and adopts the **Implementation of the African Information Society Initiative (AISI)** to build Africa's Information and Communication Infrastructure.

1997 - **OAU members** establish the **AEC**. An **African Common Position on Africa's External Debt Crisis** is agreed.



1998 - the **OAU Heads of State and Government Summit** held at Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. **February** - a protocol is signed on relations between the **AEC** and **Regional Economic Communities**.

1999, July 12-14 - the 35th Ordinary Session of the **OAU Heads of State and Government** is held in Algiers, Algeria, at which the decisions to condemn **Unconstitutional Changes of Government** is passed.

September 8-9 - the 4th. **OAU Extraordinary Summit** is held in Sirte, Libya, and the **Sirte Declaration**, which calls for the establishment of an **African Union**, is adopted on the 9th. September.

THE AFRICAN UNION

2000, April - The governments of 6 West Africa countries (Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone) meet in Accra, Ghana, and agree to establish a **Common Central Bank** and a common currency. On **April 26** Nigeria deposits the 36th. instrument of ratification of the **AU**.

May 8-9 - the first Ministerial Meeting of the **Conference on Stability, Security,**

Picture above: Road side Independence decorations in Kampala, Uganda, 1962

Development and Cooperation In Africa (CSSDCA) is held in Abuja.

July - at the OAU Summit in Lomé, Togo, 27 OAU countries adopt the **Constitutive Act of the African Union** to transform the OAU into the AU. CSSDCA is approved.

September - the UN Millennium Assembly is held in New York, after which Presidents Thabo Mbeki (South Africa), Olusegun Obasanjo (Nigeria) and Abdelaziz Bouteflika (Algeria) launch the **Millennium African Recovery Program (MAP)**.

2001, January - President Abdoulaye Wade (Senegal) announces his **OMEGA Plan**.

March 2 - the African Heads of State at the Extraordinary OAU Summit in Sirte, Libya, declares the establishment of the **African Union** in the **Sirte Declaration**. It is agreed to merge the **MAP** and **OMEGA** plans and Senegal and Egypt become members of the **MAP** Steering Committee. The 2nd. March is known as **Africa Union Day**.

May - the UN **ECA** Conference, is held in Algiers, Algeria, adopts a **Compact for African Recovery**. On May 26 the **Constitutive Act of the African Union** comes into force after two-thirds of member countries (Nigeria being the 36th. on the 26th. April) deposit their Instrument of Ratification.

June - a **MAP** workshop is held in Abuja with **OMEGA** and **Compact** representatives to form the **MAP** Programme of Action. The **New Africa Initiative (NAI)** is born on July 3 by merging **MAP** and **OMEGA**.

July 9 - the **Constitutive Act of the African Union** is ratified by 51 countries at the OAU Summit in Lusaka, Zambia, and the AU is established. It is agreed that the OAU will be legally transformed into AU during the year (11 July 2001 to 10 July 2002). The **Constitutive Act** replaces the **Charter**

of the OAU, but the **Charter** is effective in the transitional period so that the OAU may evolve into the AU. The Protocol establishing the **Peace and Security Council** within the AU is agreed.

July 11 - the **NAI** is adopted at the Lusaka Summit and is renamed the **New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)**.

July 20 - the **G8** Summit, in Genoa, adopt a **Plan for Africa** in which they commit to a partnership in implementing **NEPAD**.

October 23 - 9 **Heads of State and Government (1st. Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee)** meeting consists of 15 States with 3 per OAU region, chaired by President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria meet in Abuja, Nigeria, and finalise the policy framework of **NEPAD**.

December - **NEPAD Implementation Committee** is established with 15 members made up of the Heads of State from Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, and 2 members from each of the 5 African Regions. The **NEPAD** Secretariat is established in Pretoria, South Africa.

2002, March 13 - the 75th. Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers of the OAU is held in Addis Ababa to finalise the procedures for the major organs of the AU.

March 18-22 - The **AU Ambassadors** and the **NEPAD Implementation Committee** meet in George Town.

March 25-26 - the second meeting of the **NEPAD Implementation Committee** is held in Accra, Ghana.

May 3 - the **Eminent Persons Advisory Panel** on the transition to the AU is established in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

June - **G8** Summit in Kananaski, Canada, endorses **NEPAD**, adopts **Africa Action Plan**, and agrees funds for progress according to the **African Peer Review Mechanism**.

July 8-10 - the **Heads of State and Government of the Assembly of the African Union** meet for its inaugural session in Durban and adopt the **Durban Declaration**. The AU comes into existence and supersedes the OAU (with 4 main organs, the **Assembly**, the **Executive Council**, the **Permanent Representatives' Committee** and the **Commission**) at its first official Summit. Thabo Mbeki, President of South Africa, is the first leader to preside over the AU. The AU/OAU Heads also elaborate on decisions passed at Algiers and Lomé meetings spelling out the sanction mechanisms that may be applied if unconstitutional government change occurs. **NEPAD** is adopted as an AU programme.

September - the **World Summit on Sustainable Development** is held in Johannesburg.

December 8-10 - the 1st. Extraordinary Session of the **Executive Council** on amendments to the **Constitutive Act of the African Union** in Tripoli, Libya. A **Ministerial Committee** to coordinate the activities of the AU is established and the interim period begins on the 9th. July, 2002, for one year. Amara Essy (Ivory Coast) is chosen as the interim **Chairperson** (equivalent of the OAU's Secretary General).



2003, July 11-14 - the 2nd. African Union Summit in Maputo, Mozambique. 41 out of 53 African Heads of State attend. Alpha Oumar Konare (former President of Mali) is elected as **Chairperson** of the **AU Commission**.

SOURCES: The African Union web site at <http://www.africa-union.org/home/Welcome.htm>; the African Union Organs at <http://www.africa-union.org/organs/organs.htm>; African Union in a Nutshell at http://www.africa-union.org/About_AU/au_in_a_nutshell.htm; 38th Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU, 8 July 2002: Opening Statement by Mr Amara Essy, Secretary-General of the OAU at http://www.africa-union.org/official_documents/Speeches_&_Statements/HE_Amara_Essy/. New African articles: African Union in danger of being stillborn by Baffour Ankomah, June 2002; African Union what next? by Pusch Commey, AU-EU, the contrasting Heritage by Antonio de Figueredo, Good news for all women of Africa by Tom Mbakwe, September 2002; The Union takes shape by Pusch Commey, Making the African Union succeed by Chen Chimutengwende, NEPAD A partnership of unequal partners by Prof, S.K.B. Asante, June 2003; African Union: So far, so good by Omar Ben Yedder, Maputo Summit Anecdotes from an insider, Africa - failed states or failed systems by Antonio de Figueredo, August/September 2003. Others: The African Union (Talking Notes for the SUM and SAIH Seminar, University of Oslo, Auditorium 7, Eiler Sunds Hus, Blindern, Oslo, Tuesday, 11 February 2003) by Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja; Milestones in the Stride from Pan-Africanism to the African Union compiled by Zekeriya Mohammed at http://www.geocities.com/hmbashaa/PanAfricanism_to_AU.htm.

Picture above: despite the years most things remain the same for the ordinary person in Africa