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Doctoral Students in African studies

Module: The Role of Regional Organisations for Africa’s Development

Dear students,

Again given your level, I tried to make it easier for you, and I have shortened it for you to be able to read it fully and understand it. As a start to this course, I have used powerpoint. So you will have two documents to download.

Course 2: THE AFRICAN UNION

The OAU had been created in 1963 to eliminate the last vestiges of colonialism and apartheid, strengthen unity and solidarity of African states, coordinate and intensify cooperation for development, defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States and promote international cooperation in the framework of the United Nations must give the torch to the AU. The Charter of the OAU was signed on that occasion by the heads of state and government of 32 African states.

On September 9, 1999, the Heads of State and Government adopted the Sirte Declaration calling for the establishment of an African Union, with a view, inter alia, to accelerating the process of integration in the continent to enable it play its rightful role in the global economy while addressing multifaceted social, economic and political problems.

Since 1999, three summits have been held to facilitate the implementation of the African Union (AU). The Lome Summit (2000) adopted the Constitutive Act of the African Union, which specifies the objectives, principles, and organs of the AU. The Lusaka Summit (2001) drew the road map for the implementation of the AU. The Durban Summit (2002) launched the AU and convened the First Assembly of Heads of States of the African Union.

In 2002, the Durban Summit officially launched the African Union, whose headquarters is based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Fifty-three (53) African countries are members of the organization. Its main goal is to strive for the promotion of accelerated socio-economic integration of the continent in order to promote development and strengthen unity and solidarity between African countries and peoples.

The AU is based on the common vision of a united and strong Africa and on the need to build a partnership between governments and all segments of civil society, in particular women,
youth and the private sector, in order to strengthen solidarity and cohesion amongst the peoples of Africa.

As a continental organization, it focuses on the promotion of peace, security and stability on the continent as a prerequisite for the implementation of the development and integration agenda of the Union. The African Union supports among others, sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of its Member States. It wants to encourage international cooperation, taking due account of the Charter of the United but also works with relevant international partners in the eradication of diseases and promoting health on the continent.

**Structure of the AU**

In structure, the OAU began as one entity, whereas the AU, integrating itself with the African Economic Community and building other structures, consists of many branches:

1. **The Assembly** composed of Heads of State and Government or their duly accredited representatives. Under the Constitutive Act of the OAU, Article 9 mandates, the Assembly composed of OAU Heads of States and Governments became the supreme organ of the union, with the power to monitor the implementation of policies and decisions of the union as well to ensure compliance by all Member States.

   According to the Act, the establishment of the AU would be completed upon the deposit of the 36th instrument of ratification of the Constitutive Act of the African Union and would enter into force 30 days after the deposit of the instruments of ratification by two-thirds of the Member States of the OAU.

2. **The Executive Council** composed of Ministers or Authorities designated by the Governments of Member States.

3. **The Commission** : Peace and Security Council (PSC)

4. **Pan-African Parliament** composed of five (5) representatives from each Member State having ratified the Constitution; The Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), an advisory organ composed of different social and professional groups of the Member States of the Union.

5. **The Court of Justice.**

7. The Specialized Technical Committees, as The Committee on Rural Economy and Agricultural Matters.

8. The Committee on Monetary and Financial Affairs: The Committee on Education, Culture and Human Resources, among others.

The African Union Commission is one of the most important organs of the Union. It plays a central role in the daily management of the African Union. The Commission represents the Union and defends its interests. It prepares strategic plans and studies for the consideration of the Executive Council. It also ensures the development, the promotion, the coordination and harmonization of programs and policies of the Union with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and ensures gender integration in all programs and activities of the Union.

The Commission is composed of a President, a Vice-President, and eight (8) Commissioners and staff. It manages eight departments:

**Peace and Security**: Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, and Combating Terrorism...


**Social Affairs**: Health, Children, Drug Control, Population, Migration, Labour and Employment, Sports and Culture.

**Human Resources, Sciences and Technology**: Education, Information and Communication Technology, 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, Natural Resources and Desertification.

**Economic Affairs**: Economic Integration, Monetary Affairs, Private Sector Development, Investment and Resource Mobilization.