

African Development Forum III

Defining Priorities for Regional Integration

3 - 8 March, 2002, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Consensus Statement and the Way Ahead



Economic
Commission for Africa

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PART I: Preamble

The Consensus

- 1. Unity is the overwhelming demand of Africans across the continent. Political and economic integration will fulfill the aspirations of Africans of all walks of life.**
- 2. African unity is a challenge facing citizens of all African countries, governments, elected representatives, civil society, and the private sector. Africa's political and economic integration is a concern for all Africans.**
- 3. Common values embedded in African traditions, rule of law and constitutionalism form the foundation for an effective and democratic African Union. Ownership by the Africa people, both women and men, forms the linchpin of legitimacy.**
- 4. Africa has been a pioneer of regional integration, from the aspirations of the first nationalists in the eighteenth century through the historic Pan African Congresses to the first regional federations, and including numerous initiatives at regional and sub-regional integration which have had mixed success, the Lagos Plan of Action, followed by the 1991 Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community, , and regional economic communities which have been envisaged as the building blocks of African economic integration.**
- 5. Africa's efforts at regional integration have been hampered by many factors, including the failure to achieve economic transformation and development, the low level of implementation of treaty obligations, conflict, and an overly economic approach that has neglected the resolution of political differences. Experience from other developing regions indicates that deep structural factors also stand in the way of effective integration.**
- 6. Progressive sharing of sovereignty is required so as to achieve the greater common good. Integration requires governments to forego some of their sovereign powers, in both the political and economic spheres, in order to achieve more prosperous, stable, democratic and powerful African collectivity.**
- 7. The commitment by African Heads of State, at Sirte in September 1999, Lome in July 2000, and Lusaka in July 2001, to create the African Union represents the most serious attempt to achieve regional economic and political integration. The African Union promises to fulfill the aspirations of African citizens across the continent. It places a profound responsibility on Africa's leaders, at both national and regional level.**
- 8. Building an African Union will require the commitment of competent and visionary leaders as well as staff appointed purely on the basis of merit, professional qualifications and insulation from political influence.**

PART II: Challenges

Broadening Participation and Deepening Ownership

9. The process of regional integration must be owned by the African peoples. It must be broadened from a government-led process to one that engages the broadest spectrum of Africans, including citizens, their elected representatives, civil society organizations, intellectuals and academics, the private sector, and the diaspora. To this end, it is incumbent upon regional and sub-regional organizations, governments and other stakeholders, including the media, to provide information about all aspects of the African Union to the African people as widely as possible, using all media and all languages.

10. Parliaments and parliamentarians have a central role to play in mobilizing and representing the people. National parliaments have the responsibility of passing the necessary legislation to realize integration and of providing the necessary oversight of their governments' policies, budgetary appropriations and other measures relevant to regional integration. Elections and referenda provide the required democratic legitimation for integration.

11. Civil society participation in consultations and fora at all levels is important to ensure the widest ownership and legitimacy of the process of integration. Civil society has a role to play in supporting and ensuring the realization of targets for representation, human rights, international cooperation and regional integration.

12. The Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union should be a priority institution to ensure the effective representation of civil society organizations and their input into the decision-making processes of the Union. Civil society should be represented in specialized technical commissions of the Union.

13. Women should be involved in operationalizing all aspects of regional integration in order to consider organizational culture, structures and processes that may conflict with women's empowerment goals. Gender equity in institutions for representation for the African Union must be ensured.

14. Given that half the population in Africa is youth, the active participation of young people in the processes and institutions of the African Union is important. Youth are at the center of many of Africa's problems including the HIV/AIDS pandemic and conflict; and youth are similarly the key to solutions to these crises. Special measures are required to ensure that young people are represented in these institutions.

15. The private sector needs to be brought into the structures of decision-making of the African Union in a more meaningful manner. The Constitutive Act of the Union includes provisions that give status to the private sector and civil society organizations as two major components of the economic integration process, and mandates their participation in the specialized technical commissions. The private sector and civil society organizations need to be proactive in finding regional mechanisms for coordinating their input into the African Union in accordance with these protocols. A private sector forum for dialogue with the African Union and other regional initiatives including NEPAD should be created.

Accelerating Regional Integration

16. At the dawn of the 21st century, economic integration is imperative if Africa is to succeed in meeting its development goals and becoming an effective partner in the global economy.

17. Africa's commitment to a common market and dismantling internal barriers to trade is manifest in a series of regional and sub-regional agreements and institutions, including the Lagos Plan of Action, the Abuja Treaty, and the establishment of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the advent of the African Union. In the coming years, it is imperative that Africa takes rapid, sequenced, realistic and irreversible steps to realize these commitments and goals and to turn economic integration from an aspiration into an effective reality.

18. Powerful obstacles stand in the way of integration and must be overcome. These include the small and disjointed nature of African countries' economies and their common dependence on the export of primary commodities, their weak industrial and agricultural base and the low level of intra-regional trade, problems arising from the unequal distribution of benefits from integration schemes, vested interests in incomes from trade tariffs, and weak capacities for implementing treaty commitments.

Macro-Economic Policies

19. The convergence of fiscal and monetary policies will serve as a foundation for economic and monetary union, and macro-economic policies for convergence will be key requirement for integration schemes. To date, this vital aspect of integration has been relatively neglected. Attaining macro-economic policy and performance convergence among the members of RECs is a challenge that has rarely been met due to a number of diverse factors.

20. For effective macro-economic convergence and integration, countries will have to cede some degree of sovereignty in economic policy-making for collective interest. The principle of subsidiarity needs to be examined along with modalities for its implementation to identify the best locus for decision-making for different aspects of economic policy. There is a need to build harmonized structures for trade and investment legislation and judicial processes.

21. It will be important to ensure that macro-economic policies to promote regional integration are compatible with poverty reduction, growth and development. Mechanisms for monitoring this aspect of economic policy outcomes should be developed, especially through the Annual Report on Integration in Africa.

Regional Economic Communities

22. Africa's RECs were established as building blocks towards regional integration. Six have been identified as key blocks, namely Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic Community of West

African States (ECOWAS), the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD), the Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), with the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) joining them later.

23. The proliferation of RECs has created problems, including, inter alia, those associated with overlapping membership to multiple RECs, , and the financial burden of multiple subscriptions to different RECs. There is a need to align these RECs so that they complement the African Union. There is also a need for mechanisms to ensure coherence, reduce duplication, rationalize structures, and harmonize policies and work programmes.

24. Sub-regional institutions have a key role to play in regional integration. RECs can best play their role of promoting economic integration if they can have supranational authority to enforce their decisions. Improved mechanisms are needed for RECs and their member states to coordinate and monitor their policy-making processes and ensure effective and harmonized implementation of their policies including gender concerns. The African Union should commission a report and recommendations on this issue from the ECA.

The Private Sector

25. Private sector investment will be a key factor in generating economic growth. To this end, African countries should seek to promote and implement private-sector friendly investment policies in a manner that is coordinated and harmonized, take advantage of regional cooperation possibilities and pay particular attention to encouraging intra-African investment and trade. Regulatory frameworks need to be harmonized and simplified. However, Africa's private sector is small, weak, fragmented and poorly organized.

26. Informal trade forms a large proportion of regional trade, which needs to be mainstreamed into integration arrangements. Foreign direct investment is, by contrast, focused on relatively few sectors, especially minerals, and is concentrated in a small number of countries. Africans must also focus on micro, small and medium-size enterprise development as these constitute the engine of employment creation and income generation, an to ensure the socially equitable outcomes of regional integration.

27. The growth of the private sector requires a capable state that provides an enabling environment, specifically the effective regulation of financial institutions and the creation of well-run capital markets. Credit institutions need to be supported to provide finance at all levels, alongside risk management mechanisms and guarantee services. Governments can also act as a catalyst in the delivery of support services to the private sector.

28. The African private sector suffers from a shortage of skills, and good information services relating to trade, finance and marketing. Such information services, alongside effective marketing agencies and liaison centres, will enhance the capacity of the private sector.

- 29. Women form a majority of micro-entrepreneurs and have the potential to expand their involvement in business activities at all levels. Measures to promote women's participation in the private sector include enhancing their participation in decision-making structures, providing training programmes specifically adapted to their needs, and eliminating laws and cultural practices that hamper their activities. Mechanisms to protect women against sexual harassment at border crossing points should be established.

Infrastructure

30. The integration of transport, communications and energy infrastructures are integral components of regional integration. Strategies need to be developed to improve connectivity and complete the missing links in transport networks, develop more efficient communications, and exploit the potential of pooling power grids. Mechanisms including public-private partnerships need to be examined to encourage private sector investment in physical infrastructure.

31. The transport sector is hampered by physical obstacles and other problems including inadequate maintenance, insecurity, poor management and inadequate financing. A range of actions including policy reform, improved maintenance, greater investment in infrastructure, safety and security, and better financing mechanisms are called for. The environmental impacts of infrastructural development warrant attention.

32. African states, in partnership with the private sector, should implement the Plan of Action for the Way Forward Beyond the United Nations Transport and Communications Decade (UNCTADA), and allocate adequate resources. States should adopt appropriate measures and harmonize policies for the implementation of the Plan of Action. Sub-regional and regional organizations and international partners should play an active role in the mobilization of resources and should organize the periodic monitoring and review of the implementation of the Plan of Action.

33. Although Africa is abundantly endowed with natural resources such as oil, natural gas, uranium and hydropower, there are major imbalances in their geographical distribution. Many are trans-boundary resources, especially water. Most of these resources are best exploited by regional approaches. Environmental protection and monitoring also requires regional cooperation. The African Union should look to the African Development Bank for modalities for financing investment in these sectors.

Free Movement of People

34. To foster intra-African investment and cooperation, the removal of impediments to free movement of labour and capital is important. African countries should remove restrictions on travel and right of establishment. A medium term objective is to adopt common sub-regional citizenship including sub-regional passports, as a stepping stone to a common African citizenship and African passport. Underpinning this should be definition of citizenship in terms of rights, duties and responsibilities. This should be a priority for the African Union.

35. Africa should move towards a common citizenship, through the initial steps of harmonizing citizenship, naturalization, immigration and employment laws, and through progressively removing restrictions on travel.

Gender Equity Concerns

36. While acknowledging the commitment of many African governments to women's rights through the ratification of the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action, the level of implementation has been below expectation. There is a need therefore to establish common gender equity standards for sectoral performance. The ECA's African Center for Gender and Development (ACGD) should be given the responsibility for monitoring progress towards implementation of these commitments.

37. In order to ensure sustainable development, gender-sensitive policies are needed that integrate women's concerns at regional, sub-regional and national levels. Gender impacts of macro-economic policies warrant special attention. Gender analysis of budgets and monitoring of the gender-differentiated impacts of macro-economic policies are potentially vital tools for promoting this. Women's needs for efficient infrastructure to reduce their time burden, particularly as it relates to informal cross-border trade, need special consideration.

HIV/AIDS

38. HIV/AIDS is Africa's most urgent threat to survival. Along with malaria and other infectious diseases, HIV/AIDS is a threat to economic development and integration and must be addressed at a regional level. Regional integration may increase population mobility and hence increase the transmission of HIV. Migrants and refugees should have equal access to HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment. On the other hand, regional integration offers the prospect for coordinating policies across countries, synchronizing interventions and scaling up resources. Regional mechanisms can facilitate access to global resources in the fight against HIV/AIDS. The supply and production of medicines as well as vaccine research is most efficiently pursued at the regional level.

39. Continental commitments to overcome HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases, as made by African Heads of State at Abuja in April 2001, can be realized, enhanced and monitored by regional mechanisms. A joint AU-ECA-UNAIDS-WHO group, with an input from civil society, should monitor the Abuja Declaration and formulate an annual report for submission to the AU Summit. Countries need to put in place mechanisms for the implementation of these commitments at national level, complete with monitoring mechanisms. A regional center of expertise and research in analyzing, monitoring and developing public policies with respect to HIV/AIDS should be established. Existing regional networks concerned with HIV/AIDS should be strengthened.

Higher Education, Research and ICT

40. The 21st century is an era of knowledge-based economies. Investment in the educational sector will be key to Africa's achievement of the Millennium Development Goals for poverty reduction and human resource development. This priority should be reflected in increased appropriations for education by African countries.

41. Integrated investment in the fields of education, research and human capital development will be essential to reverse Africa's marginalization in global higher education and research, to enable the continent to address its scientific and public policy challenges. Policies to promote the retention of expertise and reversal of the brain drain should be developed, including creating an enabling environment for the private sector to be involved in knowledge creation. Africa should identify and promote regional centres of excellence in higher education and research, especially in science and technology, strengthen its links with the diaspora, and establish strategic partnerships with international partners to promote priority areas for research. African universities should themselves develop strategic plans and should promote shared curriculum development, sharing of staff and exchange of students.

42. The African Union, ECA and RECs can support higher education by convening a task force to examine the challenges for higher education and research for the AU, African governments and other institutions. This strategy should include strengthening regional centers of excellence, securing greater funding for higher education and research including endowments that will ensure the independence of universities, establishing a database of African scholars and specialists, and setting up a specialized journal on higher education in Africa. The ECA is encouraged to take the lead in integrating these efforts and raising them to the requisite political level, through the mechanism of a series of workshops and conferences. As a culmination of this, and in order to promote the achievement of the goals of the OAU Decade of Education in Africa at its mid-term, the AU should convene an extraordinary summit on education and development in Africa.

43. Harmonizing qualifications frameworks across Africa will promote equal access and facilitate accreditation, transfer and movement of skills, and the realization of the right of establishment

44. Information and communications technology (ICT) is fundamental to Africa's future economic development. ICT cuts across the various aspects of regional integration and has the potential for accelerating the integration of Africa's markets and raising the continent's global competitiveness. Currently, Africa's ICT suffers from myriad handicaps, including inadequate funding, poor physical infrastructure, weak regulatory and legislative frameworks, dearth of human resources, and lack of ICT policies.

45. African governments in partnership with all stakeholders, in particular the private sector should establish working groups on ICT at the national level using the framework of the African Information Society Initiative. A variety of initiatives including training, sensitization and the promotion of internet access should be pursued. Institutional reforms can allow for more effective private sector participation in ICT. ICTs offer the possibility of enhanced regional approaches to major social issues including the struggle against HIV/AIDS.

46. African governments in collaboration with other stakeholders can play a key role in advancing an ICT agenda for regional integration focussing on such areas as policy and regulatory frameworks, infrastructure development, capacity strengthening, partnership

and regional co-operation. Special effort should be made to mainstream ICTs in the issues of regional integration. We should not lose sight of the need to take into account the cross-cutting issues of content development and gender dimension in all areas of ICT policy development and implementation.

Ensuring Equitable Outcomes among States

47. Africa's larger countries can be the engines of regional economic integration, providing the capital, the markets and the leadership to enable the continental project to succeed. The capacities of Africa's largest nations also places on them special responsibilities for heeding the special requirements of their smaller neighbours.

48. Africa's smaller countries may fear losing some of their special national character in a process of integration. Targeted measures to ensure they are able to retain important aspects of their social, cultural and economic life will be required.

49. Integration involves the reduction in tariff barriers which in turn may initially lead to a loss of taxation revenue from international trade. In some cases these losses may be painful and cause difficulties for macro-economic management. Compensation mechanisms for affected countries need to be examined where necessary. Despite the many observed difficulties with such compensation mechanisms, they will be required to enable countries to correct and/or absorb adverse short-term impacts of integration on government revenues.

50. Other mechanisms for ensuring government revenues during the integration process include shifting away from reliance on customs duties to other forms of taxation. Mechanisms for addressing fears of loss of sovereign decision-making include multi-track approaches to integration that take into account the level of integration of different countries.

Partnership

51. The capacity of the existing regional negotiation machinery needs to be strengthened to enable Africa to effectively participate in the global trading system and negotiate in multilateral fora to best advantage, particularly post-Doha and the ACP-EU Cotonou Agreement. There is a need to strengthen Africa's negotiating capacity and expertise on trade issues, especially with respect to pharmaceuticals products including anti-retrovirals and other HIV/AIDS drugs. The ECA and ADB are urged to play a critical role in this regard.

52. Africa's debt crisis demands a regional approach, with concerted action at regional level and coordinated engagement with Africa's creditors and international partners. The views of African civil society should be brought to bear in a common African position in support of debt relief or write off where necessary.

Implementation of Regional Integration

53. The objectives, mechanisms and phases of the realization of the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community should be aligned with the process of establishing the African Union as far as possible.

54. Mechanisms for measuring and monitoring regional integration will be an important contributor to the integration process. The Annual Report on Regional Integration in Africa (ARIA) is a significant step in this direction that warrants support and cooperation. This mechanism should also serve as a forum for sharing best practices, learning lessons, and exploring modalities for deepening regional integration.

55. Mechanisms for measuring and promoting compliance with treaty obligations will be an important component of regional economic integration, to help overcome past problems of disappointments. The African Court of Justice, as stipulated in Article 18 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, is a core institution for the promotion of economic integration and the core values contained in the Constitutive Act of Union.

56. Regional economic institutions have key roles to play in regional integration. The ECA is an African expert community that, in its role as a think-tank, resource centre and facilitator of dialogue, can catalyze the process of regional integration. The African Development Bank has a role to play in fostering many aspects of regional integration, and can be exhorted to further orient its lending policies so as to support the objectives of the AU. It should foster best practices in financing integration projects.

Peace, Security, Democracy and Human Rights

57. Ensuring peace, security, human rights and democracy is a precondition for any form of development as well as political and economic integration. Peace and security are the essential requirement for the African Union. Peace and security in Africa is first and foremost a responsibility for Africans and must therefore be a priority for the African Union.

58. While recognizing the primary responsibility of Africa's leaders and peoples for regional peace and security on the continent, the roles of international actors need to be acknowledged. For this reason it is necessary to evolve new, effective and sustainable partnerships for peace and security in Africa as mandated by the Charter of the United Nations. In the exercise of its mandate, the UN Security Council should afford adequate, effective and sustainable support to regional initiatives for peace and security.

59. While peace and security promote the conditions for integration, the process of integration also reinforces peace and security. The construction of peace and security in Africa calls for stronger linkages among institutions, from the local through the national and regional up to global structures and mechanisms, notably the United Nations. Underpinning the African Union is the building of a capable state at the national level.

60. The involvement of stakeholders in peace and security initiatives is essential to their sustainability. The gross under-representation of women in decision-making on strategies and actions for conflict prevention, management and resolution, despite their unique experiences in conflicts, needs to be remedied. Modalities for the mobilization of women, including refugee women, in pursuit of peace need to be encouraged. The security of women in conflict zones and their protection from sexual abuse should be

ensured. The active participation of youth in promoting peace also needs to be developed, through encouraging their engagement in civil politics and civil society activities. The African Union should encourage citizen-based peace initiatives.

61. The African Women's Committee on Peace and Development (AWCPD) should be incorporated into the mainstream process of the African Union. As part of this process of engagement, membership of the Committee should be re-examined to ensure that it truly represents African women and their interests.

62. Africa's efforts to address its peace and security needs have been hampered by the complexity and intractability of its conflicts, the lack of resources commanded by the OAU and RECs, the lack of synergy between conflict management structures, and the absence of a workable early warning and prevention system. These ad hoc systems have registered some successes. We should not seek a single blueprint for a peace mechanism. The AU's, future peace and security architecture should seek to redress these shortcomings, in addition to broadening its concern to 'human security' in all its aspects. There is a powerful symbiosis between good governance, respect for human rights, social inclusion, economic development, and peace and security.

63. The promotion of peace and security is founded on the development of shared core values of human rights and rule of law. These should percolate to all sectors of society and should be included in educational curricula. International humanitarian law should be more widely and effectively disseminated. Another component is promoting African traditional ethical values and philosophies including cultures of peace and tolerance, and giving a role consonant with international human rights standards to traditional leaders and civic groups . A key core value is a moral consensus against resolving disputes by force of arms and taking power by unconstitutional means.

64. It is necessary to seek harmonization and coordination between the peace and security functions of the African Union and those of the RECs. The African Union should seek means of clarifying the roles and responsibilities of these different African organizations, and should create a formal mechanism for cooperation between them. The African Union should consider establishing an African council for security, to coordinate the peace and security functions of the AU with inputs from the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA), NEPAD, and the RECs, as well as providing an interface with the United Nations Security Council.

65. The African Union should set priorities, including the tasks of setting standards and establishing mechanisms for conflict prevention in a timely fashion. In this respect, the AU should seek to accelerate the resolution of conflicts and to facilitate the establishment of capable governments that can ensure peace and security in conflict-stricken countries.

66. All human rights instruments, adopted by the OAU and ratified by African states, should be incorporated in the Constitutive Act of the African Union, thus making them integral components of the African Union. There should be rationalization, consolidation and strengthening of the implementation mechanisms of these instruments. In particular, ratification of the Protocol on the Establishment of the African Court for Human and Peoples' Rights should be expedited. African states are urged to incorporate the fundamental human rights instruments into their domestic legal systems. The mandate of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights should be expanded to include an observer function to enable it to monitor and report on human

rights violations while they are taking place, with a view to taking preventive action as well as seeking remedies after the fact.

67. The HIV/AIDS pandemic is a premier threat to peace, security, democracy and public service capacity, demanding a concerted response at all levels.

68. The constitutional order of the AU should incorporate the various instruments for African Human and Peoples' Rights, along with systems and institutions including those relating to the promotion and protection of children's, women's and refugees' rights and humanitarian law. The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights must be strengthened so as to serve as an effective guardian of human rights across the continent. The establishment and adequate resourcing of the African Court for Human and Peoples' Rights should be expedited, and people as well as governments should be represented therein. RECs should establish consultative fora and mechanisms to promote dialogue on human rights and the rule of law within their member states.

Ensuring an Effective African Union

69. The African Union is a political, economic and social project. It aims to create a democratic space across Africa, to promote economic development, and to reflect a common African identity. These elements cannot be separated.

70. The success of the AU will depend on good governance, stakeholder participation, human rights and democratization at all levels. There is a need to deepen democracy and promote participation. The criteria for a country's continued membership in the AU should include a commitment to respect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Adherence to constitutionalism is the core principle.

71. Africa needs to refine the principles of constitutionalism, and strengthen the basic principle enunciated in Article 30 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, namely the suspension of governments that come to power through unconstitutional means from participation in the activities of the Union. Minimum democratic standards should be set and only countries that meet these standards should be represented in the Pan African Parliament. All officers of the Pan African Parliament should be elected representatives.

72. The institutional capacity and the technical human resource competence of the African Union, including the current OAU Secretariat, needs to be strengthened to ensure the effective implementation of the economic integration process.

73. The sequencing of the setting up of the institutions of the African Union is a matter of importance requiring careful attention. Representative and participatory institutions should not lag behind the executive institutions. Establishing and strengthening the Pan African Parliament goes hand-in-hand with establishing the legitimacy and authority of the executive organs of the African Union.

74. The Pan African Parliament will be the central representative and legislative institution of the African Union. The Pan African Parliament and other institutions of the African Union should seek to strengthen democratization at the national level by supporting national parliaments to overcome the constraints they face, including flawed electoral processes and lack of professional capacity and experience. In order to mobilize the people, broaden participation and ensure legislative protection of

integration, it will be vital to ensure the participation of parliamentarians at every stage and forum relevant to integration.

75. Parliaments have a key role to play in key issues such as HIV/AIDS, fighting poverty and promoting human rights, in order to ensure democratic ownership, more informed policymaking and more effective implementation and oversight. There is no issue that is beyond parliaments. Regional organizations are urged to involve parliamentarians in their activities through the African Parliamentary Union. The relationship between the Pan African Parliament and existing sub-regional parliaments needs to be examined. National, sub-regional and regional parliaments should all be 'people's parliaments' rather than rubber-stamp 'president's parliaments'. There should be no delay in holding direct elections to the Pan African Parliament. In the interim period in which members of the Pan African Parliament are nominated from existing national parliaments, it is important that strict democratic criteria be observed, so that the Pan African Parliament consists solely of democratically elected members.

76. Building upon the OAU-CSO meeting of June 2001, the African Union should establish the Economic, Social and Cultural Council as a consultation mechanism for liaison with stakeholders. This forum should be expanded to include African civil society organizations, the private sector, research institutes, relevant African organizations in the diaspora, in order to ensure the widest possible stakeholder participation. One of the functions of this mechanism is to focus activities of monitoring the African Union and other regional and sub-regional organizations and initiatives.

77. The African Union needs to pay special attention to gender concerns including gender-balanced representation in the Union itself and in the process of consultation to establish the Union. On the way to ensuring gender equity, the Pan African Parliament should meet the Beijing commitment of a minimum 30% representation of women and other African Union structures and institutions should endeavour to replicate this. An Advisory Committee on Gender operating at all levels will be a means of ensuring this. A Commission on Gender should also be established to monitor and enforce compliance with objectives of the regional and global platforms for action on women and gender issues.

78. The African Union needs to concern itself with major regional threats including HIV/AIDS.

79. The African Union should investigate new mechanisms for financing to avoid complete dependence on the dues of Member States. One mechanism for this is the levy of revenue direct to the African Union. The establishment of special mechanisms, that can provide expertise both on mobilizing funds and on ensuring financial accountability, should be considered.

International Partnership

80. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is Africa's premier development partnership initiative today. While the African Union is a political union of sovereign states affirmed by treaty, NEPAD is a programme of support to the African Union, adopted by the OAU Summit in July 2001. NEPAD goals, inter alia, are to achieve the International Development Goals adopted at the UN Millennium Summit.

81. Africa's unification demands special efforts and considerations from Africa's development partners. The combination of the International Development Goals, the move towards the African Union, and the adoption of NEPAD, provide an unprecedented unifying vision and framework for Africa's development over the coming decades. The special features of this partnership include its African ownership, its focus on monitorable outcomes accepted by all, and its move away from an exclusively country-by-country level of action at both African and international level, towards a development strategy that deals with Africa as an integral unit.

82. NEPAD shares the same basic principles and aims as the African Union, seeking an integrative response to Africa's plight, and adding a powerful economic and partnership dimension. The secretariat of NEPAD, as currently constituted, requires engagement with the institutional and political infrastructure of the AU, and other specialist multilateral institutions including ECA and ADB, if it is to succeed. NEPAD is urged to establish a forum for engagement with Africa's elected representatives through the mechanism of the African Parliamentary Union. Integration of parliamentarians into NEPAD's envisaged peer review and self-monitoring mechanism is recommended.

83. NEPAD needs to pay special attention to the involvement of women in its consultations and decision-making processes to ensure that its policies and programmes appropriately prioritize the rights and needs of women.

84. The HIV/AIDS component in NEPAD needs to be strengthened in line with the immense scale of the pandemic in Africa. Education, prevention and treatment all need to be targeted.

85. A succession of international conferences and agreements has underlined both the possibility and imperative of a regionally unified and internationally-endorsed consensus on development goals and principles of partnership. Among these we can specially mention the International Development Goals adopted at the UN Millennium Summit, the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the ADF 2000 Declaration 'Leadership to Overcome HIV/AIDS', the Abuja Summit Declaration on HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases and the UN General Assembly Special Session resolution on HIV/AIDS, and the ECA's Compact for African Recovery adopted at the Joint Conference of African Ministers of Finance and Economic Planning in May 2001. These provide a scaffolding that enable us to move to a higher level of coordinated international development partnership. These commitments must be borne in mind and fully integrated into new emergent high-level initiatives. These commitments range from promises to legal obligations. The importance of establishing institutions and mechanisms to ensure their fulfillment cannot be underestimated.

86. Lack of coordination among regional and international organizations and initiatives has been a problem. This has included lack of clarity over mandates and obligations. One of the lessons learned is that regional institutions must distinguish between their core, legally mandated functions, and additional functions that require partnership with other institutions and initiatives, for which they provide legitimacy and leverage. The full range of resources available in international, national and independent organizations must be utilized.

87. Existing understandings between Africa and other regions, for example the Europe-Africa Summit which culminated in the Cairo Declaration, 2000, must be evaluated and further explored in order to make best use of their opportunities in future.

88. African integration entails presenting common positions in international fora, such as the World Trade Organization and other international conferences on finance, trade, debt, the natural environment, infectious diseases, education and research, human rights, etc. Measures are needed both to ensure the requisite political will and the required technical expertise for these common positions to be adopted and argued. Africa's specialist regional organizations, including ECA and ADB, can play a leading role in this. The African Union and ECA should be jointly responsible for monitoring upcoming international fora and ensuring that African governments and specialists are able to convene and consult beforehand, where appropriate supported by the relevant international institutions, to produce a common position.

PART III: The Way Ahead

89. The establishment of the African Union requires a well-thought out sequencing and prioritization. It must be affordable. Establishing the participatory and representative institutions envisaged in the Constitutive Act should be given priority. The African Union will require competent and visionary leaders supported by a politically independent and professional staff appointed on the basis of merit.

90. The aims of the African Development Forum and the desire to make the African Union participatory complement one another. The Secretary General of the OAU and the Executive Secretary of the ECA should take advantage of the ADF process and seek ways and means of strengthening the linkages between the ECA and the AU.

91. Affirming the basic principle enunciated in Article 30 of the Constitutive Act is a priority. Comprehensive study and consultation on this principle should be undertaken in advance of the forthcoming ADF concerned with the theme of governance, in order to work towards the full and effective realization of this principle.

92. The full involvement of elected parliamentarians, through their regional body the African Parliamentary Union, in all aspects of the process of establishing the African Union, is strongly recommended as the basis for enhancing popular ownership of the AU.

93. The commitment of the African Union to the principle of gender equity is fundamental. In all aspects of the process of establishing the Union, in its representative institutions, and in its programmes such as NEPAD, the empowerment and representation of women should be a central component.

94. Annual meetings of civil society should be convened in advance of the African Union summit.

95. This Consensus Statement should be brought to the attention of the OAU Council of Ministers meeting in March as an expression of the consensus reached among participants at the ADF III. Subsequently, the Statement should proceed to the Inaugural Summit of the African Union.

96. This Consensus Statement should be also considered a relevant document for operations of the African Union, the RECs and NEPAD. The Statement should also be presented to the members of the NEPAD Steering Committee for their consideration, with an invitation for further dialogue.

97. Civil society and private sector consultations should take place to be able to produce a document that will inform the African contribution to the upcoming G-8 Summit in Kananaskis, Canada. The G-8 meeting should be able to benefit not only from governmental input but also from this wider process of dialogue.

98. The Focus Group statements, attached as Annexes, should be considered integral parts of this Declaration. Members of each Focus Group should distribute it to its members.

99. It is incumbent upon regional and sub-regional organizations, governments and other stakeholders, including the media, to provide information about all aspects of the African Union to the African people as widely as possible, using all media and all languages. An advisory committee of leading media figures in Africa should be established, to advise on how best to do this.

100. African leaders of today and the African people as a whole have the historic opportunity to realize the dream of unity. Africa cannot afford to fail in this noble enterprise. If the energies and commitments of the peoples of Africa, women and men, from all walks of life, are mobilized to participate in this common endeavour, then a strong and democratic African Union will finally become a reality. Africa must unite!

2002-03-03

Consensus statement and the way ahead

Economic Commission for Africa

African Union Commission

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