

## **THE AFRICAN UNION (AU) AND DEMOCRACY PROMOTION IN AFRICA: PROSPECTS AND LIMITATIONS**

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Abstract

**In 2001, the African states established the African Union (AU) as a successor of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Since its establishment, the Union has made a significant effort to become an active player in promoting democracy in Africa. This represents a significant change in tempo from its predecessor, the OAU, also raises important questions as to exactly how committed the AU is in promoting democracy in Africa since the majority of its member states are autocratic/dictatorial regimes and leaders. This paper addresses the so forth question by examining a number of cases in which the AU has—or has not—been able to realize its goals and agenda due to the presence of such regimes and leaders within the Union.**

**Keywords:** Africa, African Union, democracy in Africa, obstacles, autocratic and dictatorial leaders

## **AFRİKA BİRLİĞİ (AB) VE AFRİKA'DA DEMOKRASİ'NİN TEŞVİK EDİLMESİ: BEKLENTİLER VE SINIRLAMALAR**

Özet

**2001'de Afrika Devletleri Afrika Birliği Örgütü'nün (OAU) halefi olarak Afrika Birliği'ni (AU) kurdular. Kuruluşundan bu yana Birlik Afrika'da demokrasiyi teşvik etmede aktif bir oyuncu olmuştur. Bu, sefeli olan OAU'ya göre tempoda önemli bir değişiklik temsil emektedir ve AU'nun demokrasiyi teşvik etmeye ne kadar bağlı olduğuna dair önemli sorular ortaya koymaktadır çünkü üye ülkelerinin çoğu otokrat/diktatörlük rejimleridir. Bu yazı, içerisinde bu tür rejimler ve liderlerin varlığı nedeni ile AU'nun hedeflerini ve gündemini gerçekleştirdiği veya gerçekleştiremediği bir dizi vakayı inceleyerek adı geçen meseleyi ele almaktadır.**

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Afrika, Afrika Birliği, Afrika'da demokrasi, engeller, otokrat ve diktatör liderler

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

During their inaugural meeting in Durban, South Africa, on 9 July 2002, the African heads of state replaced the 39-year-old Organization of African Unity (OAU) with the latest international organization: the African Union (AU) (Reynolds, 2002). Africans across the continent have different perspectives as to whether the continental organization, the AU, can be more effective than its predecessor in promoting democracy throughout Africa, as many of its leaders are the same individuals who presided over the OAU—an organization known as the “dictators’ club” (BBC NEWS, 2006; Ohia, 2009). Some are quite optimistic that the AU will play a positive role in promoting democracy, cooperation, and economic development in Africa, while others are not so, claiming that the continent’s political and economic problems are too complex to be effectively addressed by the organization. The latter also believes that in spite of the AU’s Charter, some of the African presidents making up the AU Assembly will stifle the AU from developing the power necessary to effectively engage Africa’s political problems—particularly, if such an act can bring about chances of intervention in the internal affairs of countries across the continent. The question to raise at this point is where is the AU heading with these dictators still in office? Will it be able to make any progress? Can a ‘United States of Africa’ be realized with all these tyrants in power?

This paper aims to increase the degree of awareness regarding the workings of the AU as an organization with a focus on democracy in Africa. It seeks to examine how the AU promotes and defends democracy in the continent, while also creating a foundation for future research by identifying a number of relevant cases in which the AU is committed to restoring democracy in Africa—a task that, among other issues to consider, involves brief but detailed investigation into cases bearing potential witness to the premises here. In addition to this, the paper will look at how democracy is progressing in Africa after the creation of the AU. The methodology for this paper is essentially secondary as materials were obtained from available literary works which include books, newspapers, academic publications, and internet sources. The primary sources have been used in the form of official AU documents, such as treaties and doctrines. The first section, therefore, commences with a brief account of democracy and its practice in Africa, followed by the second section which explains the consequences of crises of such democracy. Later, the formation of the AU and its membership criterion is examined. The paper goes on to investigate the AU’s ability to act as well as the challenges it is facing. The final section is the summary and conclusion.

## **2. DEMOCRACY AND ITS PRACTICE IN AFRICA**

After independence, the sub-Saharan Africa experienced a continuing and deepening crises of democracy signaled by a series of military coups and tensions between the civilian and military leaders. The generals accused political leaders of corruption and economic mismanagement. In fact, they spoke on behalf of the people and

promised to rid the system of such malpractices, solemnly promising to return the affected countries to civilian rule as soon as operations were completed. There was no immediate reason to doubt the sincerity of the then-untainted men in uniform. Existentially, neither they nor the public had had any prior knowledge of absolute power in the new African states. Very quickly, the generals discovered that military coups were the easiest and the fastest route to state power, the only economic good left in Africa. Thus, all promises to turn over power to civilian rule at the earliest possible time evaporated into thin air while coups, instead, became a recurrent phenomenon, as such making it impossible to distinguish between the corrupt civilian presidents for-life and military dictators for as long as they last.

In this context, the belated cynical move by the OAU to deny coup makers any recognition should be seen rather as a play by the civilian wing of the African dictatorships to outflank their military rivals than any concern whatsoever for democratisation on the continent. This is notwithstanding the fact that military regimes, compared to civilian governments, are prone to using directly and uninhibitedly what they know best—that is, sheer force. Clearly, the struggles for democracy in Africa have represented the latest moment of accelerated change in a long history of endeavours for freedom. This is an exceptionally complex era, often driven by unpredictable events, new social movements, and visions anchored in the specific histories, social structures, and conditions of each country, whose national, regional, and international forces converge unevenly and inconsistently. On top of it all, economic and political crises reinforce each other, altering the terrain of state–civil society relationships, the structures of governance, and claims of citizenship.

Nonetheless, from the point of view of democracy, what is of greater relevance is the fact that all dictatorships rely on illegitimate power and coercive methods. Therefore, depoliticisation of the political process under presidents for-life and militarisation of politics under military dictators in Africa are tantamount to the same issue from the point of view of those who seek genuine democracy. In Africa and at the time when representative political institutions used to exist, liberal democracy never took root, and such attempts as to adopt liberal democracy after independence succeeded only in producing one-party dictatorships. This accounts for an analysis of what went wrong in the post-independence period. The continent, at this time, is plunged into an ever-deepening crisis of democracy.

The mid-1990s was a period that marked people's confrontation with the crises of democracy in Africa. They had had enough, and the democratization movement had started in earnest. The situation was so dismal that even the military, by and large, had lost appetite for its futile coups and its leaders had started looking for other avenues for scrambling out of the threatening situation. Africa was plagued by every possible turmoil imaginable—in terms of democracy, economy, politics, food and agriculture, and governance, to say the least. There was virtually nothing to aspire to even among the usual powermongers. What were new by the end of the decade were arguments which centered around the democratic alternatives of the sub-Saharan

Africa that could potentially curtail the authoritarian reflexes of the post-colonial state, thwart coups or raise the costs for the perpetrators, and facilitate the decentralization and dispersal of power, thereby dissolving incendiary clashes in conflict prone countries in Africa.

By the beginning of the 21 century, the authoritarianism and statism of the early post-independence years was in retreat. Where it did persist, though, it was vigorously contested in a context in which democratic aspirations were firmly implanted in the public's consciousness and the pluralization of associational life had become an integral part of the political landscape. It was a sign of the changed times, that democracy was seen as indispensable for development. This found expression in popular pressure for "democratization" and, to some extent, an end to economic mismanagement and corruption.

Is there any significance in this change of perspective? Such significance lies in the fact that it simply marked a shift from abstract thinking to a more pragmatic one. This, in turn, helped to narrow the gap between intellectual praxis and practice. Hence, intellectuals and popular forces got involved in the same kind of struggle, as similarly marked by the democratization movement towards the end of the last century and the beginning of the new millennium.

### **3. THE CREATION OF THE AU**

The AU is an initiative that replaced the OAU,<sup>3</sup> itself established on 25 May 1963 in Addis Ababa, upon the signing of the OAU Charter by representatives of 32 governments (Hillion, 2004a: 584, 2004b: 1-22; Naldi, and Konstantinos, 2002: 1-22; Naldi, 1999: 2). A further 21 states later joined, with South Africa becoming the 53 member in 1994. The principal task of the OAU was to advance the development of the African states in a variety of fields, including dispute resolution which sought to be accomplished by promoting co-operation and urging collaboration among its members (Hillion, 2004a: 584, 2004b: 1-22; Naldi, and Konstantinos, 2002: 1-22; Naldi, 1999: 2). It was by acclamation that the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government in July 1999 in Algiers accepted an invitation from Colonel Muammar Ghaddafi to the 4th extraordinary summit in Sirte (Adusi, 2004). The purpose of the extraordinary summit was to amend the OAU Charter in order to increase its efficiency and effectiveness. The theme of the Sirte summit was 'strengthening the OAU's capacity to meet the challenges of the new millennium'. This summit was concluded on 9 September 1999 with the Sirte Declaration.

Following the adoption of the Constitutive Act of the AU, in terms of the Sirte Declaration of 9 September 1999, a decision was made in order to declare the establishment of the AU (Adusi, 2004). The Sirte Declaration was followed by summits in Lome in 2000, and in Lusaka in 2001, where the plan for the implementation of the Constitutive Act of the AU was adopted (Adusi, 2004). Upon this, the AU Act was ratified and entered into force on 26 May 2001, having been

based upon the common vision of a United Africa to strengthen solidarity and cohesion amongst its peoples (Nsongurua, 2002: 72, 93-94). As a continental organization, the AU focuses on the promotion of democracy, peace, security, and stability on the continent (The InterAfrica Group/Justice Africa, 2002).

The design of the AU, alongside the rapidity with which it was set up, reflect the tremendous urge felt by the parties involved towards establishing unity in Africa. According to the African Development Forum, "Unity is an article of faith in Africa, ingrained in popular mythology (The InterAfrica Group/Justice Africa, 2002). There is no other continent in which the popular desire towards common identification is so strong. For that reason, the architects of the AU have sought a blueprint inspired by the most successful model of regional unification.

#### **4. MEMBERSHIP CRITERION**

As mentioned above, the OAU started in 1963. It was a loose organization without any efficient political structures or economic focus. Therefore, one could say that there was no reason *not* to join the OAU. Indeed, no less than 33 African countries founded the OAU. Some 20 or so other countries joined the OAU when they gained their independence. Even the non-independent Western Sahara was admitted as a member in 1982. The membership of the OAU was transferred over to the AU when the latter was formed in 2000. What is important here is that most of the AU members had been there from the start and, as such, did not have to apply for membership and, evidently, did not have to meet any criterion beyond being African. At any rate, accepting new members is relatively easy since it only requires the approval of a simple majority.

One reason behind such a policy of "open membership" for all African countries in the OAU and, subsequently, the AU is that Africa is a continent clearly and solely defined from a geographical perspective. Thus, it is not surprising that the AU is open to any African state. Today, all Africans are almost-per definition-members of the new organization and-even if the AU has, indeed, built up new organs to enhance democracy and human rights in Africa- the tools for punishment or reward are almost non-existing. This works quite unlike the European Union (EU) which, on the contrary, uses its conditionality and democratic principles as a whip and carrot throughout its membership negotiations.

#### **5. THE ABILITY TO ACT**

What prospect does the AU have in terms of acting towards the enforcement of legitimate demands? Definitely, the organization has managed to increase its ambitions in theory. Yet, a recurring problem for the AU has been its meager ability to secure that the goals are fulfilled in reality-both in terms of over-viewing the implementation of the goals in each member state and acting in crises situations. In this respect, the formulations in the Constitutive Act of the AU are strong and clear: "Respect for democratic principles, human rights, the rule of law and good

governance”. The handicap with this formulation is that it is not specific and lacks details, making it difficult to monitor. Another important formulation in the Constitutive Act is the following: “Governments which shall come to power through unconstitutional means shall not be allowed to participate in the activities of the Union” (Heyns, Baimu, and Killander, 2004: 273-274).

This article is a weak statement since it does not specify what “unconstitutional” means. As some have inquired “does gaining or retaining power through a massively-rigged election constitute an unconstitutional usurpation of power?” (Siaroff, 2007). This definition does only allude to governments that have come to power, and not those who have been in power since the formation of the union (Baimu, and Sturman, 2003: 37-45). In contrast, when it comes to the practical implementation of the principles and the handling of crises, one main challenge for the AU is the lack resources and support provided by its member countries.

On a more optimistic side, however, the AU has indeed succeeded in taking several steps with regards to the promotion of democracy in Africa by explicitly addressing and tackling the causal links between unconstitutional changes in governments and insecurity, instability, and violent conflict. Not only is it trying to improve the general norms of multi-party democracy, separation of power, and the rule of law, but it has also made it mandatory to invite observers to elections held throughout the continent. For instance, as to the ‘unconstitutional changes of governments’, it has specified mandatory penalties for illegitimate usurpers of power, including immediate suspension from the AU activities. Additionally, such figures become banned from running in future elections and holding ‘any position of responsibility in political institutions of their state’, while becoming prone to trials before ‘the competent court of the Union’. As to other states within the Union, they are not only prohibited from supporting unconstitutional changes of government, but also from offering asylum to the usurpers (Kane, 2008: 43-63). It is easy to tell, henceforth, that the systemic shift in the African Union’s Policies has been taking a gradual, but steady trajectory.

The recent years in Africa have witnessed the revival of multi-party democracy in many countries across the continent, in particular South Africa, Ghana, and Nigeria. These nascent democracies and their leaders have been at the vanguard of moves to create a mechanism and framework for sustainable economic growth across the continent. While progress has been made with regard to political transitions toward democracy in Africa since the inception of the AU in 2000, the process of nurturing and consolidation of the democratic system has remained a daunting task. In this respect, evidence suggests that democratic transition is relatively easier than building and sustaining a democracy from scratch. It is one thing to reject authoritarian rule, and quite another to build the institutional and cultural foundations for democracy. Put another way, there cannot be democracy without democrats.

As the AU moves toward its 10th anniversary in 2012, it continues to draw a great deal of attention to its handling of mounting crises on its territory (Adeyanju, 1997). However, across the continent, the AU is also faced with crises that test its commitments and capabilities to fulfill the ambitious agenda it has adopted upon its very inception. While the formation of the AU has ignited hope that Africa can gradually break from a past characterized by bad governance, exploitation, devastating poverty, disease, and institutionalised corruption, the new initiative is being greeted with scepticism within certain constituencies across the continent. Moreover, as regional conflicts continue to exact a toll on impoverished countries, the question of whether Africa's leaders are up to the challenge of transformation remains open (African Development Forum (ADF III), 2004). While some have embraced democratic principles, others continue to rule through rapacity, despotism, and corruption (African Development Forum (ADF III), 2004). This division, combined with the reluctance of progressive leaders to engage anti-democratic figures fuels fears that there is insufficient political will to transform the encouraging rhetoric into tangible reality (Adusi, 2009). As the AU is in the process of outsourcing responsibility on the continent, quite a lot will depend on its ability to form a 'seamless web' of organizations, collectively able to deal with Africa's conflicts and other problems, and whether the organization is based on shared values and ambitions.

## **6. CHALLENGES AHEAD OF THE AU**

It is important that African countries pursue and encourage the development of democracy themselves. The new organization has set-as its primary targets-the acceleration of economic, political, and social integration of Africa with the establishment of a 'United States of Africa' as its ultimate goal. It also places premium on the promotion of human rights, the entrenchment of democracy and good governance on the African continent (Adusi, 2009). However, a closer look at the goals mentioned so of the AU and those who constitute its leadership reveals how the body is unlikely to achieve any of the goals it has set. For example, there are heads of states in the AU appointed as president-for-life, either self-designated and/or military-backed leaders, and their authority or legitimacy has never been questioned.

The challenge is that, if the AU is ever intending to promote democracy on the African continent, it must first and foremost abrogate the automatic membership. Throughout the world, all serious bodies have constitutions and charters that set out the benchmarks that prospect members must attain before they are admitted. This contrasts the AU where membership is automatic regardless of the history of a government or the means by which it came to power. This is self-deception-one of the reasons why the AU is still presided by dictators; it is such automatic membership policies that have provided them with a safe haven to act as they please in their respective countries and, yet, attend the AU meetings.

The automatic membership policy, hence, must be abolished and benchmarks set for would-be member countries to attain prior to admission. They must demonstrate their commitment to democracy, rule of law, and fight against corruption and poverty as seen in the European Union (EU). This must change if the AU is ever going to be a 'United States of Africa'. The AU should push for genuine democracy in its member countries and rid herself of dictators, while also insisting that leaders who are not democratically elected by their citizens cannot join the body. If one such figure wishes to join the body, then, they must subject themselves to the rigours of elections. Simple demands like these will encourage these individuals to consider their position carefully. In the meantime, the African Union must lobby all those democratically-elected leaders to force those who continue to hold their citizens in bondage be released by standing down and allowing free and fair elections to be held. Any figure of state who refuses to do so should be suspended until such elections are carried out.

The AU is unlikely to make any progress if its leaders are pampered and encouraged to do as they please. This must be fully grasped that Africa cannot harness her strategic importance in the new global order unless there are democratic and institutional reforms that will spare the continent of absolute dictators and their corrupt machinery which, for so long a time, has been responsible for the misery and high levels of poverty seen throughout Africa. The AU, as such, should work closely with the elected political leaders to push for reforms that will make the member countries more accountable towards their citizens. It will be proper for all undemocratic regimes to be suspended and readmitted when they have demonstrated-beyond all reasonable doubt-that they are prepared to allow democracy and the rule of law to work in their nations. Not only should those countries where coup takes place be suspended, but also all other nations whose leaders engage in human rights' abuses and corrupt practices that push their citizens into chronic poverty.

In addition to the policies mentioned above, the AU must compile annual reports on human rights, corruption, and abuse of power in all its member states, and sanction those found to be in breach of its Charter, while engaging the peoples of Africa in its respective programmes. Parallel to these efforts, universities and other institutions of higher education must be involved in such initiatives so as to sensitise people and to build grassroot support in member states. Across the continent, the principles stipulated by the Charter must be established-in universities, colleges, high schools, etc.-to raise awareness of what its functions and activities. The advantage is that, since students are going to be the future leaders and policy-makers in Africa, their involvement will help inculcate a positive image of the AU and help to strengthen its position.

Additionally, the AU must insist that children of former dictators cannot automatically replace them once they leave office. The current situation in Africa where children of the former dictators have been installed as presidents in sham

elections is not only an insult to the people of these countries, but an indictment on the credibility of the AU as a body. The trend is not only dangerous, but also a recipe for conflict and instability. The earlier the AU sends a clear message to these leaders, plainly the better. These individuals and their offspring must be prevented from establishing dynasties in Africa.

With respect to business and economy, efforts of some leaders to transform the AU into a robust and reliable commission with more powers to conduct business on behalf of the continent has met fierce resistance, continuing—regretably—to be thwarted by these old corrupt guards who see every reform as a threat to their power and luxurious lifestyle. They carry on undermining any works to move away from a current position as a ‘talking shop’ into serious problem-solving body. They continue to resist every attempt to transform the AU into a useful body and neutralise the good intentions of the body—those that include improving human rights, empowering women, fighting corruption, harmonised migration, fighting crime and alleviating poverty and promoting democracy.

An issue of Africa Union depicts on the status of the continent in business as follows:

“But history offers a clear verdict: governments that respect the will of their own people are more prosperous, more stable, and more successful than governments that do not. Democracy is about more than holding elections; it’s also about what happens between them. Repression takes many forms, and too many nations are plagued by problems that condemn their people to poverty. No country is going to create wealth if its leaders exploit the economy to enrich themselves, or police can be bought off by drug traffickers. No business wants to invest in a place where the government skims 20 percent off the top, or the head of the port authority is corrupt. No person wants to live in a society where the rule of law gives way to the rule of brutality and bribery. That is not democracy that is tyranny, and now is the time for it to end”. He added “Make no mistake: history is on the side of these brave Africans and not with those who use coups or change Constitutions to stay in power. Africa does not need strongmen; it needs strong institutions”. People everywhere should have the right to start a business or get an education without paying bribe. “We have a responsibility to support those who act responsibly and to isolate those who do not” (Adusi, 2009).

It goes without saying, then, that the AU will not be able to reverse decades of low per capita income, low productivity, slow pace of social and economic development, poor state of infrastructures, and weak economies if steps are not taken to ensure that democracy is established on the continent, and that all leaders admit liability in elections, fight corruption and poverty, and promote peace, stability, and development. The AU must adopt resolutions that insist these tyrants step down, improve their human right record, and fight corruption and embezzlement that have

turned their countries into slave camps. If the AU is ever going to realise any of the goals it has set, then, it must as a matter of necessity purge itself of the dictators.

## **7. SOLUTION TO THE CRISES OF DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA**

The demise of colonialism, coupled with the military take-overs that occurred in Africa, created conditions of fear and a threat to democracy. By the same token, the political consequences of these drastic and decisive transformations are quite enormous and far-reaching. Apart from such negative territorial effects on democracy, the domestic conditions failed to provide the important ingredients for either a peaceful transition or democratic development. In an environment of deteriorating economy and scarce resources, the distribution of national resources was rigidly subjected to the dictates of ethnic affiliations, favouritism, cronyism, nepotism, and family ties. Deeply-rooted as it still is, corruption captured the hearts and minds of even parliamentarians and other government functionaries whose existence depended on the flow of external development aid. In the end, corruption, combined with the desire to hang on to political power and to change the constitution to enable a third term, gave rise to coups and undemocratic regimes in Africa.

Sadly, Africa was cursed with leaders who undermined the peace, unity, and the security of the African peoples, abrogated the rule of law, manipulated periodic elections, suppressed the freedom of press, and infringed upon individual and group rights. They are those who have undermined the very tenets and pillars of unity, peace and stability, and democracy and development in Africa. All these maladies afflicting the African nations and its peoples across the continent have to end if they intend to secure such rights and conditions; only African peoples are capable of working toward the eradication of poverty, realization of African unity, sustainable development, and democracy. Any project, great or small, that disregards the participation of the masses will not be practicable. This must be the peoples' least criterion in pushing forward the ideals of an African socio-economic and political integration, leading them all toward the evolution of a 'United States of Africa' in the end. Finally, the governments of the respective countries must protect their subjects from harms, as this is the duty and obligation of any government worthy of the title.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

Despite the optimism and enthusiasm that greeted the formation of the AU, a number of African countries have been severely weakened by poor governance, escalating food and supply shortages, and brutal clampdowns by fragile regimes. Democracy still remains a very vital option in the transformation of Africa. Otherwise stated, it is the best guarantee for peaceful regime change as it offers better prospects for accountable leadership while ensuring that the people have the possibility of making use of the most potent weapon they have: the ability to vote in

and vote out their leaders. For the purpose of analysis, the theoretically-based hypothesis is that quite a lot will depend on whether the organization is based on shared values and ambitions. Regrettably, the old culture of non-intervention, and of seeing and hearing no evil, will take some time to be eradicated from the minds and attitudes of government and the AU officials. Leaders like Cameroon's Paul Biya, Gabon's Omar Bongo, Equatorial Guinea's Obiang Nguema Mbazogo, Libya's Mohammed Gaddafi and Sudanese's Omer Hassan Al-Bashir, etc, who have been in power for decades take the people for granted because they know that elections are just a facade whose results have little or nothing to do with the will of their constituencies (Mbaku, 1996: 99-118 and 1995: 268-291). Accordingly, their perpetual stay in power is indicative of the fact that they consider the AU as a forum to get approbation for their self-serving agenda. In some countries in Africa, the transition to democracy has been hijacked by incumbents determined to continue monopolizing power. In addition, in some other countries in Africa, where the transition to democracy seems to be progressing without major obstacles, policy reform has not progressed past the election stage. The elections were supposed to choose transitional governments that would engage the people in forming new constitutions and providing a framework for the reconstruction of the neo-colonial states. However, many of these new governments have not taken the job of designing new rules seriously; instead, they are repressive and, in many instances, continue to suffocate the civil society while making it very difficult for opposition parties to function. In some countries in Africa, elections simply legitimized incumbents and allowed them to continue their brutal and exclusionary policies. In fact, it is quite hard to draw a line between leaders who use the fallacy of flawed elections to maintain a vicious grip on power and those who get to power through military coups. Both scenarios, which are still visible on the continent, undermine the will of the people. Military coups in Ivory Coast, the election saga in Kenya, the unrest in Cameroon and the Central African Republic, the unrest in Libya, Mauritania, and others around the continent condemned by the AU have had a desired impact on the future of the electoral game in such countries. The undoing of the AU, similar to the OAU, may well be the absence of the political will with nothing binding or forcing countries to honor the engagements, declarations, charters, and resolutions that they enter into. This paper argues that the AU still has very visible relics of the OAU, and that it needs to do more to convince Africans that it has ceased to be a club or fraternity of comrades with doubtful legitimacies out to protect their mutual interests.

From the point of view of democracy what is of greater relevance is the fact that all dictatorships in Africa rely on illegitimate power and coercive methods. Therefore, depoliticization of the political process under presidents for life and militarization of politics under military dictators in Africa are tantamount to the same thing from the point of view of those who seek genuine democracy. Democratization in Africa thus requires a serious focus. The departure point is the acceptance that the issue of democracy on the continent leaves much to be desired. It is against the backdrop of this realization that the task of advancing democratic standards on the continent should be configured. Enhancing democratic development in Africa requires some

tough choices. The obstinacy of military dictators, even in the face of the negative consequences of their actions, can only be countered by a well-devised strategy to enhance compliance or in extreme cases, ostracise errant regimes. In this regard, it is essential that a group of democratic states establish a coalition to monitor the level of democratization. Either within a sub-regional or continental framework, such axis of democratic states should also be at the forefront of applying sanctions to undemocratic regimes. Such effort should complement already existing frameworks at the sub-regional and continental levels aimed at enhancing governance.

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