

CHAPTER SIX

THE ROLE OF THE ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN UNITY IN REGIONAL CO-OPERATION AND STABILITY

6.1 Introduction

A thorough understanding of the role of the former OAU (hereafter referred to as the OAU) as elected initiator of regional co-operation in Africa and Africa-negotiator in the international arena is of material importance because the past role of the OAU can also influence the roles that the African Union (AU) and South Africa may in future play on the Africa scene. The historical role of the OAU in interstate co-operation in Africa and international public administration, creates against this background the opportunity to sketch the OAU's struggle for survival and certain future perspectives for the AU.

This chapter sets out to explain the inherent characteristics by which Third World states are known, and which are indicative of specific historic trends and attitudes, as well as certain complexities of the African continent. These factors are important to consider for an understanding of the task of the OAU in regional co-operation and stability in Africa. For this reason, it is also important to also take a brief look at the division in the OAU ranks as an aid to gain a better understanding of how the OAU handled conflict, peace and security in order to promote stability in Africa.

Furthermore, an exposition is provided of the OAU's attempts to handle the economic challenges in Africa. This includes the role of the OAU as economic co-ordinator in Africa, the OAU's African Priority program for Economic recovery, the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation, the OAU's Declaration on the political and socio-economic situation in Africa, the OAU's re-launching of Africa's economic and social development. This is followed by an overview of the African Economic Treaty as well as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as further attempts to improve the economic situation in Africa.

As a backdrop against which stability in Africa can be evaluated this chapter also focuses on the OAU's handling of inter-state conflict in Africa. To cast more light on the issue, inter-state conflict in Africa is explained in terms of disputes in which only OAU members participate; disputes in which OAU members and colonial or settlers governments participate; and disputes caused by relations between OAU members and states outside Africa.

Finally, the establishment and structures of the AU are highlighted. The chapter concludes with a summary of the information contained in this chapter.

6.2 Inherent characteristics of Third World states

The modern Third World is a picture of the remnants of the old colonial dispensation. As a result, the Third World states cannot be regarded as a homogenous group at all because these states are influenced by the aid of the Portuguese, British, French and German colonial masters, as well as the availability of oil in the Arab states. Within the African context one can refer to four unique economic worlds. (1) The oil-producing and exporting countries, of which the Gross National Product shows a higher income per capita than that of Sweden and Switzerland. (2) The so-called New Industrialised States. These have succeeded in stimulating local industrialisation to such an extent that it managed to some extent to fill the gap left by the withdrawal of the First World enterprises during the post-colonial era. (3) These states show clear signs of economic management, although limited. This group focuses especially on mining industries, which are mainly financed by overseas capital. However, their effective and efficient economic growth is directly influenced by high population growth rates and the sensitivity of their economic systems to external economic fluctuations and natural disasters. (4) This last group is made up of the so-called "primitive states", sometimes referred to as the "basket cases", and is responsible for the creation of the well-known African reputation, which by implication means ongoing political instability, reserve shortages, high population growth and large-scale economic mismanagement, and which includes Nigeria, Chad, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia and Mozambique (*Cf. Magyar 1988:14*).

Certain homogenous trends can be seen in Africa. In the first place, a kind of fragility has come into being because of the presence of unformed national communities, the inherent weakness of the national political structures and the resultant widespread disloyalty to those

political structures. This weakness is mostly prevented by putting in place a one-party government. The second characteristic is the total absence of a national economy. Thus the economy is rather focused on a broader world-economy, which has also been called a "Euro-African variety". The relative openness of such an economy has led to a growing gap in terms of development between Africa and Europe. This situation was made worse by the frightening growth of the African population, and international support hardly makes a dent in the problem. The social stratification system is the third homogenous characteristic of importance: A number of individuals share in certain middle class aspirations which stem from utilising overseas training opportunities which at the same time far exceed the employment creation capacities of underdeveloped economies of Africa. The level of frustration is therefore high, and can be seen throughout this group, because expectations cannot be fulfilled (*Cf. Wallerstein 1967:247-248*). What makes the Africa situation even more complex is the unequalled divisions caused by ethnic, cultural and linguistic heterogeneity. The rationalisation of differences between states can therefore be expected to be more divisive in nature. Institutional breakdown, chaos and political experimentation, all of them typical elements in the formation process of any nation state, were the dominating characteristics of the political process in Africa during the nineteen-sixties, -seventies and -eighties. All these factors emphasise that Africa is currently in a very explosive development phase. Conflict between states and unrest in states internally have been going on incessantly in Africa, despite efforts by the OAU to defuse such situations. Such conflicts involve not only nearby states, but often also international interference (*Cf. Legum et al. 1979:23-24*).

Against the above background, one can highlight six general features of the developing states in Africa:

- low levels of technological development;
- low levels of productivity;
- high population growth;
- high levels of unemployment and poor utilisation of trained manpower;
- the states are dependent upon agricultural production and the exportation of primary products; and
- the dominance, dependence and vulnerability of these states within international relations (*Cf. Todaro 1977:24*).

This situation is affected even further by the personalities, personal convictions and skills of African leaders, since these factors play a determining role in the formulation of national policy in Africa. Of importance also are the history and the circumstances that bring a leader in Africa to the fore. The nature of a the former colonial government of a state as well as the way in which independence came into being are also factors that need to be brought into the equation (Leistner in van Wyk 1993:160).

Three basic value-characteristics can be identified in Africa:

- some or other minimum level of economic welfare;
- a certain political and social group composition; and
- a degree of political status linked to certain groups.

If African leaders should ignore these three value-characteristics, or should allow the balance among them to be disturbed, it could result in internal unrest in the states concerned (Asante in van Wyk 1993:260). This viewpoint carries a lot of weight if one looks at the African leader's method of totally oppressing millions of starving people, while those so-called democratic leaders of Africa live in wealth. This lack of balance can be regarded as the foundation of most of the modern political instability in Africa, and usually results in *coup d'etats*, which are used as an aid to redressing the political balance (Van Wyk 1993:260).

Another characteristic of Third World states is the influence of the international community, commonly referred to as the “externals”. Since the colonisation of the continent, the “externals” have had the upper hand in all matters to do with the economies of African countries. In the first place the colonial powers laid down the structures of the African countries economies. At the beginning, half way and towards the end of the colonial period, the African economies were specifically designed to benefit the colonial powers. This is irrespective of whether the resource base of a given African country was mineral resources, agriculture, land to be populated by colonial settlers or a combination of any of these resources – the result was the same; an economy which was outward oriented to suit the foreign colonial countries (Bujra 2003:8).

At independence, the politically independent countries found themselves tied up to the colonial economies and to the international economic system, which the former colonial powers and their allies – western European countries and North America (US and Canada) – dominated. This essentially meant that almost all technologies and industrial products of all kinds were produced in the Western countries who had monopoly over these, and who set the price for the African buyers. In addition they controlled most of the small industries, which they started in African countries, including the control of the mineral resources by their companies. They controlled the commodity market and therefore set the prices for all commodities produced by the African economies. They further controlled the financial system and set the interest rate and other conditions for all African borrowing. Finally they controlled the service industries – for example insurance – and at the same time provided the expertise and personnel to help African countries whose human resources were highly underdeveloped. Needless to say they advised the African governments not to disturb this economic structure and to continue this inherited relationship with the international economic system. After all this was the “natural” division of labour in the world. Any attempt by African governments to change their economic strategies and policies in order to restructure or re-orientate this relationship to their advantage was quickly stopped by various instruments, which the Western countries had, and still have over the African countries. These instruments varied from the manipulation of the financial system against African countries, manipulation of commodity prices, withdrawal of technical assistance, of investment, and sometimes direct sanctions. In the face of this formidable power, most African countries continued their economic policies and “development” in the way established by the political development that was being diplomatically but firmly guided by the “international community”. At the more formal level of treaties, the EU continued with its Lome now Cotonou Conventions (renewed/renegotiated every several years), which guided the unequal trade relations between African countries and the EU countries. More recently the US established the Programme – Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). And more interestingly, the British and French (the two largest and most powerful former colonial powers) recently decided to synchronise and coordinate in details their African policies to the extent that their African Ambassadors hold joint meetings biannually (Bujra 2003:8).

And once again, in the beginning of the year 2000, the World Bank (WB) in association with its partners (mainly from amongst the “international community”) came up with yet another document – this time in the form of a book – “*Can Africa Reclaim the 21st Century?*”

This book essentially articulates the long-term strategies of African development from the perspective of the WB and the rest of the Donor community. It is expected to provide the intellectual inspiration to African policy makers when they formulate their development strategies.

It is clear that internal and external vision for African development have existed since the early years of independence. These visions differ fundamentally with regard to their development strategies. However the present dominance of the external vision on African development, simply reflects the reality – that of the weakness of Africa and the strength and power of the “externals”.

6.2.1 Synopsis of Africa’s complexities

Against the background provided above, it is necessary to consider African realities within the global context by means of a short summary. This should serve to highlight the complexities of the political, economic, cultural and social circumstances that prevail on the African continent. Unlike Europe, the African continent faces a series of problems that were not present during the early development of European integration through the EU, such as a violent history of continuous *coup d’etats*, constant natural disasters and subsequent food shortages and desperate poverty, combined with religious, political and ethnic tensions and wars, as well as the rapid spread of diseases such as HIV/AIDS in the later years.

- **Decolonisation**

Before 1951, only Ethiopia, Liberia, Egypt and South Africa were independent states in Africa. The rest of Africa, at present 53 states, moved from colonial dependence to sovereign independence over the course of 50 years. However, this transitional period did not occur without political instability. Following below, attention will be paid to changes in leadership and governments, which occurred in Africa during this period.

- **Changes in leadership and governments**

Approximately 100 leaders disappeared from the scene from 1963 to 2000 as a result of military and civil coups, cleansing campaigns, dismissals and assassinations. Since 1963,

every year except 1988 saw one or more African government being violently taken over. What is even more important is the fact the 80 of all coups occurred in only 30 of the 52 independent African states. Africa has experienced 186 *coup d'etats* between 1956 and 2001, half of which occurred in the 1980's and 1990's (Strategic Plan of the AU Commission – Volume 1: Vision and Mission of the AU, African Union Commission May 2004 in Honner 2004:9). Anaclet Rwegayura, a journalist for the Pan-African News Agency (PANA) stresses the difficulties faced by the AU to promote democracy in its institutions and develop a democratic culture throughout the African continent: "...in many countries the basic tenets of democracy such as respect for the rule of law, freedom of speech, freedom to institutionise and a fair, secret and independently monitored voting system, are not upheld" (Rwegayura 9 June 2004 in Honner 2004:9).

- **Political system changes**

The majority of African states are either ruled by military or one-party governments. Since 1989, resistance developed against Marxism and Leninism, which resulted in the pursuit of a political and economic system with more freedom. Only time will tell what the end result will be of this change in the African political scene.

- **Economic and social infrastructure**

The single most important problem with the interpretation of economic and social statistical information that is provided by African states is the variety of methods used to collect statistics and, consequently, the interpretations ascribed to this information. Any decision-making based on such statistical information is thus subject to unknown risk factors.

- **Economic structure and production**

Large parts of Africa, and particularly Southern Africa, have significant natural resources. The disparate distribution of these resources resulted in uneven settlement patterns among local population groups. Africa also shows the trend that certain production factors, such as entrepreneurship, technical competence and investment capital are largely absent among many population groups. Of the world's poorest states, 31 are in Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa is the world's poorest region: only South Asia is poorer (*Cf.* Afenda 2003: Africa: Promoting

Economic Development and Political Stability 2003:1). By 2002 only 10 of a total of 53 African states had a national per capita income of 1000 US dollar or more. African economies are also relatively small. In comparison, the combined gross national product of sub-Saharan Africa, excluding South Africa, with a population of 480 million is the same as that of Belgium with a population of 10 million. The largest part of the population of Africa derives their income from agriculture, in most cases merely on subsistence levels. All African states have so-called “open” economies and are mainly dependent upon foreign trade and investments. Since 1990, the production of food per capita has decreased at an alarming rate, especially in light of the significant effect of HIV/AIDS and ethnic wars on the economically active population. In addition, government expenditure, particularly in the areas of education and training, has increased significantly. Military spending replaced much needed national priorities, such as agricultural development, environmental protection and national health.

- **Weakening socio-economic conditions**

Against the background of a population growth rate of 3 percent per year, it is understandable that the per capita income of Africa south of the Sahara decreased by 1.2 percent per year during the period 1980-2000, in comparison with an annual growth rate of 1.7 percent per year during the period 1965-1973. The economically inactive part of the African population, those between 1-14 years, is relatively large in comparison with the economically active group, those between 15-64 years.

Against the above, a brief look is taken at the task the OAU had in Africa.

6.3 The task of the Organisation of African Unity in Africa

According to Telli, the OAU represented a task that was created by a number of environmental circumstances and events. In this regard, he remarked that: "The ever-widening circle of freedom in Africa, the hastening pace of economic groupings, the re-absorption and settlement of border disputes inherited from the past, the assertion of African personality and dignity on the international scene are all evidence of this powerful, systematic Pan-African drive of which the OAU has become the expression" (Telli in Cervenka 1969: xi).

However, it appears the aspects mentioned above were inextricably bound to the hatred of colonialism and white supremacy. This makes it clear that the Africa value-system was supported by the ideology of Pan-Africanism on the basis of three broad assumptions: (1) Africa had to come to the fore with its own solutions and that should have precedence over international interference. (2) Colonial borders are inviolable, and all effort to balkanise or change these, should be resisted. (3) All white minority governments in Africa should be overthrown (Van Wyk 1987:58-59). However, the task the OAU had should be seen in a broader light, especially since the operational context of the OAU was more universal in nature than that of most regional Organisations, even than that of the OAS (Tandor in Van Wyk 1993:260). In this regard, it had become clear that the nationalist elites of Africa knew very well that political co-operation was the best way to establish modern economies, thus moving away from a continental system which was used – or more correctly, abused – mainly for the extraction of raw materials. To this end, the OAU created certain regional and functional Organisations, under continental supervision. In this regard the Africa Development Bank, the Inter-Africa Coffee Organisation and more than forty other commercial, banking, communications and training institutions, which had direct links with the UN's ECA can serve as examples (Legum *et al.* 1979: 37-38).

The testing of the success of OAU efforts to put in place regional co-operation cannot be performed with the necessary validity, in terms of the systematic analytical practices of certain theories with regard to international governmental Organisations (see Chapter Two, section 2.10). These variables must be borne in mind only within such a testing process – it would be better to look for functional equivalents. Such testing can contribute little value in circumstances where there are still reservations about the political development process (Chime 1977:113-115).

According to the neo-functionalists (see Chapter Two, section 2.10.3.2), the presence of viable supra-national institutions is the Alpha and Omega of the integration-progress of any community. It is possible that this assumption does not contain the whole truth. Yet the absence of such institutions within the Africa experience is a critical shortcoming. New decision-making methods should be compiled, and the concomitant enforceable power in that regard must be progressively strengthened before Africa-integration efforts will be able to move past the nationalist-domineering phase (Chime 1977:403). Mr Neil van Heerden,

former Director-General of Foreign Affairs, was, however, more simplistic in his approach to this matter: "We do not have to create the same values and norms – we must just learn that we are able to help each other – that it is much better to co-operate: Our common experience should be aimed at creating a better life for our people – but we should still recognise the large, broad differences between us, and accept them as such" (Van Wyk 1993:186).

According to Karl Deutsch (in Chime 1977:403), "the creation of a 'security community' with a view to promoting regional co-operation, has as its aim the urgent settling of internal disputes within that community. To the pluralists, this aspect is not an unreachable Utopia, but rather an essential and basic stage in the integration process." Chime has the following to say about this: "Things being what they are on the international scene, this trite finding ought to be a continental wisdom among Africans. Yet, if the truth were told, Africans will find that despite the overriding commitment to fight the enemy in the South, we have shed incomparably more blood, wasted by far more material resources and squandered unspeakably more resources financially in fighting between African States than in the pertinent struggle to liberate the rest of the continent. This is a basic folly that would make many an early Pan-Africanist turn in his grave (Chime 1977:403).

From the above, it is clear that practically expressing the objectives the OAU had will have to accommodate not only emotional anti-colonialist ideals but also African community values. The role-playing of political office-bearers and their personal preferences will also have to be discounted. It will therefore not be possible to limit the task the OAU had to the simplified format of the OAU Charter. The ideals of the individual community groupings will also have to be taken into account, and efforts will have to be made to work out a new plan for Africa, and to make it work. Whether the OAU succeeded at its task will therefore have to be judged in accordance with the spirit in which the OAU was called into being, as well as the way in which the objectives of the OAU Charter were achieved.

6.4 Division in the Organisation of African Unity ranks

The establishment of the formal structure of the OAU in 1963 didn't mean that the division that had existed in African ranks before this event, would now suddenly be something of the past. In practice, two loose ideological groupings continued in existence. There were many differences of opinion as to how soon and in which form a Pan-African union and an

"African High Command" had to be created (Okumu in Van Wyk 1993:261). However, three differences dwarfed these differences in OAU ranks:

- The joint struggle against colonialism and neo-colonialism;
- The ideal that Africa should have more of a say in world matters; and
- The joint desire to quash all forms of apartheid (Rust 1977:3).

The continued existence of the *Union Africaine et Malgache de Coopération Economique* (UAMCE) and other regional Organisations in Africa, after the OAE was established, immediately drew attention. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the OAU (August 1963) member states recommended that these groups should do everything in their power to merge with the special institutions of the OAU (*Cf.* Keesing's Contemporary Archives 16-19 November 1963:19737).

This recommendation was not popular at all. The division continued after the establishment of the OAU, and even caused further division between North and South. For instance, the Arab members of the OAU continually tried to involve the OAU, politically, in the Arab-Israeli conflict. However, most OAU members shied away from more than mere symbolic sympathy with the Arab cause. This division in African ranks clearly did not contribute anything to the solution of Africa's problems, with the help of the OAU (Andemicael 1979:15).

During 1964, shortly after the establishment of the OAU, widespread differences of opinion arose among the members of the OAU with regard to the handling of the second Congo crisis. This caused the UAMCE to change into a political Organisation, the *Organisation Commune Africaine Malgache et Mauricienne* (OCAM). The role of OCAM came up during a meeting of this Organisation at Nouakchott, Mauritania, where the members took a unanimous decision not to participate in the upcoming summit of the OAU at Accra (1965), since Ghana was suspected of planning to murder Pres. Hamani Diori of Niger (Andemicael 1979:15). What is of importance here, is the fact that the thirteen French-speaking OCAM members, all members of the OAU, rebelled openly against OAU authority. The OAU had appointed a special ad hoc committee to handle the Congo crisis (*Cf.* Cervenka 1977:147 and Wallerstein 1967:125). However, the continued existence of the Monrovia group as assured

by the fact that their original Lagos Plan had been converted into the OAU Charter (Cervenka 1977:144).

The idea of an East Africa Federation came into being shortly after the OAU Charter had been signed. However, this effort of Julius Nyerere, Jomo Kenyatta and others came to nothing, as a result of events such as the border dispute between Kenya and Somalia, Malawi's economic independence from the apartheid government of South Africa, the political ambitions of Africa leaders and the growing conflict between liberation movements in the still dependent African states. Disputes in the fields of tourism, military co-operation, trade agreements and many others also contributed to the effort falling by the wayside (Cervenka 1977:152).

Against this background the radical elements within the OAU fell, by the end of 1965, in four categories: (1) The radical-nationalist states such as Algeria, the Congo (Brazzaville), Ghana, Guinea, Mali and Tanzania (the strongest of the four categories); (2) the All-African Trade Union Federation (AATUF), which recognised no borders in terms of membership, since all African trade unions became members; (3) the radical opposition parties of various independent African states, such as the Sawaba of Niger, the *Union des populations du Cameroun* (UPC) of Cameroon; and (4) certain liberation movements. This last group included especially the then Portuguese-East Africa, Morocco, SWAPO of the then South West Africa and the ANC of South Africa (Wallerstein 1967:226-227). The willingness of the radical groups to participate in the OAU was based on the expectation that it would be possible in time to persuade the more conservative groups to join a more united front, which would contrast with the loose prescriptions of the OAU Charter (*Cf.* Nwechwe in Cervenka 1977:ix-x). The role-play of the African leaders, however, also had a direct influence on the banding together of the African states. Regardless of the differences of opinion in terms of the ideology of absolutism, of which Kwame Nkrumah was in favour, no one was pleased by the arrogant, haughty way in which Nkrumah treated those who did not agree with him (*Cf.* Meredith 1984:195-196). It was therefore to be expected that the *Revue Internationale de Socialisme* held the opinion that the disintegration of OAU member states would come naturally. According to this article, the future of the OAU was becoming more and more problematic: "... It is therefore necessary to ask the question: Why was the OAU founded? Was it in order to bring about the aspirations of the peoples of Africa for complete liberation, for unity and progress? Or was it rather to serve the interest of neo-colonialism, which

hoped, under cover of the Organisation, to consolidate certain acquired positions and to prolong the domination of monopolies and exploitation in African countries?" (Hoskyns 1969: 71).

It is interesting how many efforts were made by the various groups within the OAU after 1965 to create alternative Organisations to reach the objectives of the OAU. During May 1966 there was talk at Tananarive, Madagascar, about creating a French-speaking Common Market. The Algerian weekly, *Révolution Africaine*, voiced harsh criticism against this, regarding the idea as blatantly undermining everything for which the OAU stood, and adding that it would serve no purpose other than to divide OAU ranks even more (Cervenka 1977:161). This effort was followed, shortly after, by the founding of the East-African Community on 6 June 1967 at Kampala, with a view to ensure the commissioning of an East-African Common Market (Cervenka 1977:161). The objective of this common market was: " ... to strengthen and regulate the industrial, commercial and other relations of the member states to the end that there shall be accelerated, harmonious and balanced development and sustained economic activities the benefits whereof shall be equitably shared" (Chime 1977:22).

The above undercurrents could clearly not make any positive contributions to the effective and efficient functioning of the OAU. Even the then Secretary-General of the UN, U Thant, attended the fourth General Assembly of the OAU at Kinshasa during September 1967 " ... to assist in salvaging the crumbling of the OAU" (Delorme in Aluko 1977:125). South Africa, too, contributed to the division in OAU ranks at this stage by entering into full diplomatic relations with Malawi (December 1967). The OAU reaction to this was diverse, ranging from demands that Malawi be banned from the OAU to harsh criticism against Malawi. Chad and Ghana, on the other hand, had sympathy with Malawi. The attacks against Malawi ended up having no more than rhetoric consequences, underlining the division in OAU ranks (Cervenka 1977:22). A further shock in African ranks came when the Ivory Coast announced a policy of dialogue with South Africa on 28 April 1971 (Delorme in Aluko 1977:125). Any link with the RSA, whether directly or indirectly, clearly caused great tension and division in African ranks. A good example of this state of affairs was the Lonhro case. The then Administrative Secretary-General of the OAU (Nzo Ekangaki) entered, on behalf of the OAU, into a contract with a London-based company, Lonhro, on 9 January 1974. Under this contract, Lonhro would be the sole controller of consultation services in

respect of oil imports to Africa. The African press, once the contents of the contract became known, expressed bitter criticism against Ekangaki personally and demanded that he resign, purely because Lonhro had formerly had dealings with the colonialist and racist governments of the South (Cervenka 1977:32-33).

The OAU also suffered continual internal staff problems. There were struggles, for instance, between French-speaking versus English-speaking groups, Arab versus African groups, and smaller versus larger states. The Administrative Secretary-General was powerless to do anything about all these clashes, even though all of them were in conflict with the OAU Charter, which stipulated that no member state had the right, via its officials, to promote the interests of that state above those of other member states (Cervenka 1977:30).

Friction between the Arab and African member states of the OAU was caused by more than just the world wide oil crisis. A special aid fund to the African states, which was to be made available to the OAU by Arab states by agreement (June 1974) was not transferred in accordance with the demands of the African leaders to the African Development Bank, but placed under supervision of the Arab League. This forced the OAU members to enter into individual agreements, based on merit, with the Arab League, in order to get the necessary development loans. This displeased the African leaders, who wanted loans without any such contractual obligations (*Cf.* Keesing's Contemporary Archives 24-30 March 1975:27042). However, the Arab/Africa relationship went a lot further: Basically, it boiled down to open Arab manipulation of the OAU. For instance, the Arab League was continually seeking support in the international forum for its struggle against Israel. Hilary Ng'wengo, sub editor of the Kenyan journal, *The Weekly Review*, wrote (in August 1974) the following on this matter: "From a moral and ideological point of view, Africa may have no choice but to support the Palestinian cause and the general effort of the Arab people to regain their rightful place in the world community. But Africa must eschew empty rhetoric in her relations with her Arab friends" (Cervenka 1977:169).

This situation caused so much inherent tension that a joint Arab/African meeting was held in Cairo on 9 March 1977. Upon this occasion the so-called "Declaration and Action Programme for African-Arab Co-operation" was compiled (Keesing's Contemporary Archives 20 May 1977:28354).

A further aspect which caused considerable division in OAU ranks was the preference that various OAU leaders showed to individual, and sometimes opposing, liberation movements. These preferences were often dictated by personal policy convictions or interests of African leaders. The struggle in Angola is one of the best examples in this regard. Pres. Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire liked supporting the *Frente Nacional de Libertacao de Angola* (FNLA) especially because he was of the opinion that he could expand his own influence in Angola by way of this brother, Roberto, the leader of the FNLA, especially if the FNLA should come to power in Angola. In the same way, Zambia preferred the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) to the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), because Zambia was concerned about the continued existence of its vitally important export route to the world – the Benguela railroad, which runs through the south of Angola (Cervenka 1977:47-48 and the Rand Daily Mail of 22 December 1977:10).

Pres. Gafaar al-Nimeiry of Sudan referred to the division in African ranks as a danger, which benefited mainly external powers. He was of the opinion that ideological and political differences in Africa withheld the African member states of the OAU from expressing their true viewpoints clearly and honestly. For this reason the life expectancy of the African continent and its peoples as well as that of the OAU was in danger. International interference was, according to him, the worst danger ever to face the African continent, because it caused the division of the continent into certain groups, which made it possible for the great powers to play cat and mouse with Africa. The OAU's prescriptions regarding the forming of alliances were continually being transgressed, creating a climate for international conflict. Against this background it was essential for the OAU to investigate its own Organisational institutions and to make the necessary adjustments and at the same time to revise its Charter (Pretoria News of 4 July 1977:3). Despite this appeal to get the OAU house in order, the tide of dissension continued. Even in the united front of the Arab League, there were visible cracks. For instance, the delegates of the Arab League walked out of the 16th General Assembly of the OAU in Monrovia (July 1979) because Pres. Sadat of Egypt defended his peace negotiations with Israel (Keesing's Contemporary Archives 20 May 1977:29841). A similar situation arose when the Polisario Front: Western Sahara attended the OAU's meeting of the council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs at Addis Ababa in 1982. Upon this occasion one third of the members walked out in protest against the presence of the SADR (Keesing's Contemporary Archives 14 May 1987:31487).

This splitting into groups is characteristic of the history of the OAU, and can be linked mainly to ideological differences. It is an already accepted custom to refer to radical or militant groups on the one hand and moderate or middle-of-the-road groups on the other within the context of the OAU. However, it is misleading to classify certain states as militant or moderate if they are actually following a fence-sitting policy by supporting either the militant or the moderate view, depending on which matter is being discussed, and what they may be able to negotiate for themselves in the process. Once, when the OAU could not meet twice in a row, Esterhuysen compiled a tentative list of OAU states: There were 13 radical, 14 moderate and 23 fence-sitting states (in Van Wyk 1993: p 265). This shows clearly the undercurrents that existed within the OAU, which had a significant influence on the value of the OAU's operational actions, and therefore on its right of existence. The next section will take a look at the successes of the OAU in terms of regional co-operation.

6.5 The Organisation of African Unity and the handling of economic challenges in Africa

The most important African problems faced by the OAU immediately after it had been established, were the following:

- the slow growth of the Gross National Product;
- the presence of single-consumer-products economies;
- the limited size of African economies;
- the backwardness of the African agricultural industry;
- the limited extent of industrialisation in Africa;
- the absence of an inter-Africa infrastructure; and
- the economic dependence of African states from their former colonial authorities and other industrialised Western states (Cervenka 1977:177).

The above problems also form the basis upon which the economic initiatives of the OAU should be judged.

6.5.1 The OAU as economic co-ordinator in Africa

Before the founding of the OAU, certain instruments were created to try and address the economic problems of Africa. One of these was the Development Bank of Africa (DBA).

During the second "All African People's Conference" (August 1963) an agreement was entered into that the DBA should consist only of African members, should be run with African capital, and that its policy should be determined only by Africa, but because of its problems with working capital, a decision was taken that the bank had to be allowed to receive and administrate special funds from outside. The bank was also given much more flexibility in terms of the appropriation of domestic funds than any other bank in the world (Wallerstein 1967:142). This illustrated once again the typical behaviour the African member states of the OAU had, by which a situation could be manipulated as they wished, and solely for their own benefit. Loans to the DBA had to be made available without any strings, for African states to appropriate as they wished. Section 38 of the founding conditions of the DBA stipulated that the DBA's decision-making could not be influenced by political preferences. However, decisions concerning co-ordinated industrial planning, and new African transport routes, went awry exactly because of political preferences (Wallerstein 1967:142). An Africa Development Fund was also founded during this time, in which the US undertook to make available some 60 million dollars over a period of three years (Cervenka 1969:74-75). The ECA began its activities as an economic development Organisation in Africa even before the OAU came into being. During the first session of the OAU's Economic and Social Commission in Cairo (1964) the ECA's right of existence was questioned – because only the ECA could give answers as to the setting of a uniform external import tariff. This meant that the OAU's Economic and Social Commission had no role to play in this regard, and thus left that responsibility to the ECA. The ECA and the OAU's Economic and Social Commission co-operated on various levels after that (Cervenka 1977:177-178). Two examples of this co-operation were, according to Chime, the meeting of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Geneva (March-June 1964), followed soon after by the formation of the so-called Group 77. The value of Group 77 for Africa was described in the *Jeune Afrique* as follows: "... to the Third World what trade unionists are to workers: an avant-garde force which institutionalises the solidarity of the underprivileged class and poses the demands of this class to the haves" (Cervenka 1977:297).

Group 77 consisted of Asian, African, Latin-American and Caribbean states. Israel and Cuba were excluded and Yugoslavia and Cyprus included (Wallerstein 1979:149). The OAU itself did not have a direct economic role to play in Africa until May 1973. It was only then that the General Secretariat of the OAU tried to enter – guided by eight basic principles to an

economic agreement – a new "Commonwealth Sugar Agreement" with the European Common Market. These principles later formed the accepted basis for collective negotiations in the international arena for all African states (Chime 1977:298).

During the OAU summit at Tripoli in Feb 1974, it was decided that the OAU, with the help of the ECA, the Arab League and the UN's International Development Organisation (UNIDO) would endeavour to:

- create an orchestrated program for the building of oil refineries in order to meet Africa's needs;
- appeal to all African states to exert proper control over their energy resources and equipment; and
- to consider a proposal for the creation of an Africa Oil Institute (Keesing's Contemporary Archives 15-21 July 1974:26619).

These decisions did not have the desired effects. The negotiating powers of the OAU on economic level can only be seen in an indirect way, via the UN resolutions. The ten year initiative of Group 77 came to fruition on 1 May 1974 when the General Assembly of the UN passed two resolutions laying down the principles for new relationships between rich and poor states. The first was the "Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order" (NIEO) and the other the "Programme of Action". Later that same year, the UN also passed a "Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States", which tried to put in place standards for the management of international economic relations, and at the same time to promote the NIEO (Cervenka 1977:168). The OAU's involvement with Europe in the Lomé Agreement in 1975 also had negative results for this Organisation. By 1977, the agreement had not yielded any positive results, causing President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia to say that the African states, under the leadership of the OAU, had – " ... negotiated the Lomé Convention in the belief that it would confer on (their) exports terms and conditions more favourable than those granted to the products of other countries. After some two years of implementation of the Convention, (they) now have many reasons to doubt that this is the understanding and policy of the Community" (Asante in Van Wyk 1993:267).

The rhetoric upon such occasions was characteristic of the African states and how they conducted themselves within the international economic forum. On one such occasion,

President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania addressed the Royal Commonwealth Society in London, and said: "Rich countries do not only increase the price of a tractor to the extent of the extra oil costs directly involved in producing it ... As a result we do not only pay from our poverty for the extra wealth acquired from us by the oil producers. We also compensate the people in the wealthy countries for any loss which they experienced through the transfer of wealth from their economies to the oil producers" (Cervenka 1977:185-186).

Despite all the aforementioned efforts to stimulate economic growth, which was aimed mainly at exports, most African states showed very slow economic growth during the nineteen-seventies. Low levels of productivity, a limited and dilapidated industrial basis, high dependence on a narrow margin of primary exports and low life expectancies were the order of the day. National balance of payments showed larger and larger deficits, while per capita income was steadily declining, and a rising inflation (more than 20% 1977-78) made matters even worse. In addition, the annual deficit on the combined current account rose from 4 billion US dollars in 1974 to almost 10 billion US dollars in 1978-79. The foreign debt of the Sub-Saharan region alone rose from 6 billion US dollars in 1970 to 32 billion US dollars in 1979 (Asante in Van Wyk 1993:267). According to Cervenka, the failure of the economic integration of Africa in this time could be contributed to mainly two factors: The first and most important of these was the general economic condition of most African states, and the second was the dissension and competition between the OAU's Economic and Social Commission and the ECA. The Executive Secretary of the ECA said about this that – " ... unless the continent successfully [put] its own house in order by restructuring its economy at the national, sub-regional and regional levels, it [would] remain the periphery of international economy even if a NIEO were to come into existence" (Asante in Van Wyk 1993:267).

In 1975 the ECA undertook a four year detailed study of Africa's economic performance 1960-1975. Although the performance during this period did not meet the targets set by the UN Second Development Decade, Africa as a whole performed well and certainly better than the subsequent 25 years 1975-2000 (*Cf.* Adedej 2002:13).

During the 1960-1975 period, Africa's GDP rate was 4.5%; its export was 2.8%; its agricultural growth was 1.6%; and its manufacturing grew at 6%. According to Adedej, "In retrospect, the period 1960-1975 has tragically, turned out to be Africa's golden era!" (*Cf.* Bujra 2002:3).

By the end of the 1970's decade and despite this reasonable economic performance, there were clear signs that Africa was facing a serious economic crisis. "What is clear to most observers however is that the strong optimism of 1960s concerning economic development, slowly gave way, first to hesitation, then to pessimism and by the end of the 1970's to a consensus of gloom." (Bujra 1982: 18).

Late in the 1970s (1978 Prof. Adedeji, the Executive Secretary of the UN's Commission for Africa) had began to make his gloomy predictions and warnings on Africa's economic prospects – predictions which have proved to be very accurate. "Africa, more than the other Third World Regions, is thus faced with a development crises of great portent iii If past trends were to persist ... the African region as a whole will be worse off relatively to the rest of the world at the end of this century than it was in 1960" (Adedeji in Bujra 2003:3).

And three years later (1981), the World Bank was also making similar predictions. Africa, the World Bank states, was facing a "dim economic prospect" in the 1980s – virtually no growth in per capita income, if you are an optimist, and a negative rate of growth (-1.0% per year) if you are not (Bujra 2003:3).

According to the ECA, African Governments had three options for facing "the anticipated crises: Firstly to increase self reliance and self-sustainability and more effective and efficient measures for intra-African co-operation and mutual help. These (measures) would require vision and statesmanship quite out of the ordinary. Another option would take the form of a surreptitious surrender of the economy in return for substantial foreign aid, a temptation which might be impossible to resist. A third option would be to wait and see and hope whilst continuing with conventional measures which avoid creating antagonism (Cf. Naldi 1999:240-250).

The OAU and in collaboration with the UNECA mobilised African intellectuals and political resources to discuss the crises (above options) and come up with a vision and a plan of action for getting Africa out of the crises and towards a better future (Bujra 2003:3). This serious effort led to the now famous Monrovia Declaration (1979) which articulated Africa's vision of its future. The strategies of the Monrovia Declaration were incorporated in the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos (1980). These three documents contained respectively

(a) the most clearly articulated vision of Africa's future, (b) a practical plan of action on how to achieve faster development towards that vision, and (c) political decisions supporting the vision and the plan of action as well as achieving effective economic co-operation and integration.

- **The Monrovia Declaration (1979)**

This declaration provided a vision and scenario of Africa's future. The Africa of 2000/2020 will "have a high degree of self sufficiency, a democratic national development which will distribute the fruits of our efforts more equitably, will have a strong African solidarity and that Africa will carry more weight in world affairs" (Cf. Bujra 2003:3).

It appeared all the OAU's efforts to create anything, economically speaking, was just talk – no one was prepared to put his money where his mouth was. One example of this was illustrated during a meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs (December 1976) where a decision was taken to put in place – over a period of 15 to 20 years – an Economic Community of Africa that was not affiliated with the UN like the ECA. Not much has come of that to this day (Keesing's Contemporary Archives 26 August 1977:28521). By the end the nineteen-seventies most African states were even more dependent upon more foreign interests, investments, technology, skills, development theories and economic growth and the exportation of raw materials and agricultural products. There are various reasons for this "spasmodic" economic growth in Africa:

- the general objective of almost all the OAU conferences, in the first decade of its existence, was aimed at the political struggle to obtain the independence of those states which were still under colonial rule. For the reason, economic development, as important as it was for Africa, played second fiddle;
- the leaders of Africa paid attention to the national integration of their domestic economies first and foremost, thus giving preference to their internal political, economic and social development programmes: "The immediate concern, then, was to build viable nation states based on their own traditions and customs, and on the promises which had been held out to the masses";
- the political and economic heterogeneity of the African states saw to it that various different development routes were followed; and

- the overlapping of the activities of the OAU's Economic and Social Commission and the ECA on the level of economic development saw to it that the OAU's activities were limited to the minimum (Asante in Van Wyk 1993:267).

The ECA's actions in 1977 during the joint meeting of African and Arab states in Cairo, showed once again that the initiative for economic reform had to come from outside of Africa. Upon this occasion, a number of development projects were identified, and it was decided that the research costs for four of these would be carried by the ECA. The total capital needed for these projects would come to 1327 million US dollars. The projects would cover the following:

- a trans-African transport network consisting of ±30 000 km of national roads and ±47 000 km of secondary roads, which would serve some 40 African states;
- a evaluation of Africa's natural resources, especially the water base and water resources;
- a Pan-African Telecommunication Network (PANAFTEL); and
- a communal computerised database.

It was decided upon this same occasion that –

- technical and financial aid for studying the viability of the development projects and the basic infrastructure of Africa, and the financing of such projects, would be encouraged;
- the financial reserves of the Arab Bank for the Economic Development of Africa (ABEOA) would be expanded so that the ABEOA could play more of a role in Africa;
- trade relations among African and Arab states would be strengthened by way of agreements ensuring preferential treatment; and
- Arab investments in Africa would be encouraged by putting in place a system of investment guarantees in the African states ((Keesing's Contemporary Archives 20 May 1977:28354).

These decisions were followed up by the above mentioned so-called Monrovia Strategy in July 1979. Upon this occasion the OAU, with the support of the ECA, decided to break away

from the old approach of international economic dependence by creating a new economic order on national, subregional and regional levels, and in which each would strive for the principles of self-maintenance and self-sufficiency (*Cf. Asante in Van Wyk 1993:201*).

The Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) (April 1980) was adopted shortly hereafter by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government. It provided the framework and strategies for implementing development programmes. The LPA based its strategies on some important principles which it considered will lead to an alternative form of development and will take Africa out of its crises. These were based on the following principles::

1. Self reliance as the basis of development – at the national, sub-regional and regional levels.
2. Equity in the distribution of wealth at the national level as a fundamental objective of development;
3. A public sector as essential for development.
4. Outside capital as an unavoidable necessity that should be directed to those areas where African capital is lacking or inadequate – such as mining, energy and large scale projects;
5. Inter-African economic co-operation and integration as essential that should be effected as soon as possible.
6. Change in the international economic order to favour Africa and Third World countries as essential and Africa should continue to fight for a NIEO (*Cf. Bujra 2003:5*).

On the basis of these principles, the LPA gave primacy to the development of Agriculture (first for food and then for export), Industrialisation (to satisfy basic needs), Mining Industries (to recover total and permanent sovereignty over national resources, establish mineral based industries), Human Resources, and Science and Technology. These principles and the Plan of Action – the detailed Programme – were discussed extensively by Governments, as well as by African intellectuals. The later were generally critical of the details in the Plan but strongly supported the basic principles behind the LPA.

The Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU passed the special Final Act of Lagos in 1980 aimed at achieving an African Common Market by the year 2000. Clearly the issue of economic co-operation and integration was so important to the Assembly of Heads of Government and State that they felt the need to pass a special and separate Act. It was argued

that without such economic co-operation and eventual integration of the generally small national economies, it would be impossible to achieve any meaningful alternative development as a way out of the crises. More importantly, without such co-operation and integration, Africa would not be strong enough to bring about any change in the existing international economic order. And such a change was crucial if Africa was to have any meaningful space to embark on an alternative form of development and to overcome its crises (Cf. Bujra 2003:5-6).

The LPA had to serve as implementation resource for the Monrovia Strategy, in accordance with which the economic guidelines for an African development strategy were set out, with two approaches: (1) For 1980-90 the emphasis would be on the economic strengthening of the Central, East, Northern and Southern African sub-regions; and (2) the objectives for 1990-2000 would be closer economic co-operation among those regions, tackling joint economic development projects and harmonising financial and monetary policy in Africa. This economic community had to be in full operation by 2000. The Secretary-General of the then OAU was tasked with implementing and co-ordinating the Lagos Plan, which represented the first Africa formulation and realisation of preferential long-term economic and development objectives of African states initiated by the OAU itself (Cf. Keesing's Contemporary Archives 7 November:1980: 30557). According to Asante its main theme was: "Africa's reduction of dependence on external strategy. Hence the Plan identifies as its basic objectives 'self-reliance', both national and regional, and 'self-sustainable development' ... To be described as Africa's 'economic Magna Carta'"(Asante in Van Wyk 1993:268).

The OAU also endeavoured to promote inter-Africa trade in practice by institutionalising two Africa Trade Exhibitions, and was seen as Africa's tactical resources for the creation of a new international economic order. Despite this, Cervenka was of the opinion that – “compared with the progress made by the OAU on decolonisation, and with the success of its international campaign against apartheid, its performance in the economic field has been disappointing” (Cervenka 1977:176).

This makes it understandable that an Organisation such as SADC came into being in April 1980, with members from South Africa's neighbouring states, namely Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, with the purpose of " ... (reducing) their growing dependence on Pretoria for jobs, trade routes,

telecommunications, transport and energy ...”(*Cf.* Southern Africa Report of 11 July 1986:5 and Keesing’s Contemporary Archives 3 December 1982:31836).

An OAU report on the success of the SADC’s performance pointed out that its members' dependence on South Africa remained unchanged despite efforts to change this. According to the OAU, the SADC needed a massive inflow of technical, managerial and financial reserves for the successful implementation of its economic development programmes (Southern Africa Report of 11 July 1986:5 and Keesing’s Contemporary Archives 27 March 1981:30788).

South Africa provided goods to the value of ±R2 000 million per year to the member states of the OAU. Of the nine member states of the SADC, Tanzania was the only one that professed not to have traded with South Africa (*Cf.* South Africa 1988-1989:Official Yearbook of the Republic of South Africa:207). This shows clearly that the SADC plan did not hold much water – the other OAU states also needed South Africa desperately. On 20 July 1985 at Addis Ababa the "Addis Ababa Declaration" replaced the Lagos Plan, since, as Julius Nyerere put it " ... the implementation of the Lagos Plan of Action had to date been unsuccessful"; the new proposals were the result of a review and revision of the Lagos Plan” (Southern Africa Report of 11 July 1986:8).

The new plan included a five-year program consisting of:

- methods to expedite the implementation of the LPA;
- special interventions to address food problems and to promote the rehabilitation of agricultural development in Africa;
- methods to reduce Africa's foreign debt;
- creating a communal platform for action on sub-regional, regional, continental and international forums; and
- steps for acting against the consequences of the destabilisation policy of SA on the economies of Southern Africa.

In order to monitor the implementation of the above decisions, a permanent follow-up mechanism would be put in place.

Regarding the question of foreign debt, the *Financial Times* reported that Africa had totally exceeded its own capacity to get itself out of debt: "As debt servicing has mounted from some \$4.1 billion between in 1981 to a forecast average of \$11.6 billion between from 1985 to 1987, so an increasing number of countries have been forced into rescheduling. The outcome provides immediate relief ... In spite of efforts by some donors to raise their commitments to Africa – notably the World Bank's \$1.2 billion special fund – the resources available fall well short of the needs of a continent whose infrastructure has deteriorated, plant and machinery run down, and whose exports have lost over 20 per cent of their purchasing power between 1973 and 1981" (Financial Times of 25 July 1985:81).

It can therefore be understood why the above-mentioned OAU summit requested the Africa "external" creditors, mainly Western governments, the IMF and the WB, to write off some of their loans, and to revise the lending terms in terms of some others. Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam of Ethiopia was more blatant in this regard, and said that: " ... creditors relished enriching themselves by exploiting less-developed countries. Financiers ... are trying to assert that our problems are the result of the failure of the economic policies we follow" (The Economist of 27 July 1985:81).

The naivety of the OAU summit, held in famine-ridden Ethiopia, was further underlined when it was made known that the African continent would be able to meet its own food needs within 5 years. *The Economist* reacted as follows: "The plan – if it can be called that, for few details were covered – is even less plausible than the already abandoned Lagos 'plan of action' of 1980, which called for self-sufficiency in food production and the establishment of an African common market by the year 2000" (The Economist of 27 July 1985:81).

Upon that same occasion, the ECA informed the OAU that at least 25% of all government spending in Africa will have to be used on agricultural development if Africa wanted to feed itself. However, the preference shown by African states for spending on defence budgets and the money spent on pacifying political rivals in urban areas with food subsidies, made it impossible to achieve this modest objective. The Addis Ababa Declaration ascribed the reasons for the economic decline in Africa to external causes, namely:

- the deterioration of international trade conditions and the resultant decline in export services;

- the unprecedented increase in interest rates and the extent of exchange rate fluctuations; and
- the deterioration of lending terms in terms of foreign capital as well as the reduction in concessional loan resources (Business Day of 25 March 1986 and (Cf. Keesing's Contemporary Archives October 1985: 33904).

Julius Nyerere said upon this same occasion: "We want to pay our debts, but we cannot agree to let our children die and our economies grind to a halt in order to carry burdens which have been so greatly increased by external events (Keesing's Contemporary Archives 1985:33904).

The financial dilemma of Africa was discussed once again in Paris on 25 February 1987 when the Chairperson of the OAU remarked that Africa had become an exporter rather than a receiver of capital. The reason was that more than 40% of Africa's expenditure went into paying off foreign debts. The African continent, with foreign debt of more than 370 billion US dollars, was heading for catastrophe (New Nation of 25 February 1987:8). No wonder, therefore, that the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the OAU appealed once more to their world-wide "external" creditors (Addis Ababa November-December 1987) to –

- allow more cancellations of Africa's foreign debts;
- accept payments in local currencies;
- to make the conditions upon which credit is granted more lenient;
- to reduce interest rates;
- to lengthen repayment periods;
- to convert short-term debt into long-term loans;
- to grant more concessionary loans; and
- finally, to bring the terms of loan repayment in line with the growth and development needs of Africa (Cf. IMF Survey of 11 January 1988:10 and Africa Research Bulletin 31 December 1987:8911-8914).
- However, this was not the end of Africa's and the OAU's economic misery. The OAU picture was even darker – they were behind on membership fees and their meetings cost a lot of money that they did not have. For instance, the cost of the OAU meeting in Liberia (1979) came to about R328 million. In this regard, *The Star* remarked:

"The 1977 summit cost the Gabon Government R615 million and let the country into bankruptcy. It was forced to borrow money from European banks at 15 per cent interest" (22 May 1981:19).

The newspaper further remarked, tongue in cheek, that Kenya wanted to make history by hosting the OAU summit in Kenya (June 1981) at a profit (The Star 22 May 1981:19). Unfortunately no proof could be found of Kenya succeeding.

In 1984, Peter Onu, Secretary-General of the OAU at the time, pointed out that the budget of the OAU would not realise. According to him, only 40% of the OAU's annual budget was paid out of membership fees – since the inception of the OAU in 1963. Only five member states had paid their fees in full up to that stage, ten had made partial payments, and thirty-five were outstanding altogether. Fees to the value of about 27 million US dollars were still outstanding (*Cf.* Crash Crisis Looms Large in Africa April 1984:21). That OAU gatherings were very festive occasions as can be seen from a remark by Leistner: " ... Guinea is reportedly spending more than R500 million to host the 20th summit of the OAU with the usual pomp and luxury" (Africa Insight 1984:122).

In 1986/1987, the OAU's budget came to about 23,3 million US dollars. According to Ide Oumarou, then Secretary General of the OAU, about 80% of the OAU's expenditure went into the salaries of officials and other maintenance costs. The problem of Africa's foreign debt remained unsolved. Furthermore, it had been impossible to hold an international conference on the rescheduling of such debts (Keesing's Contemporary Archives November 1986:34728-34729). Western creditors kept insisting that each case had to be investigated and evaluated on merit (Keesing's Contemporary Archives November 1986:34728-34729). A meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs (Addis Ababa 23-28 February 1987) was characterised by a fiery debate on the critical financial position of Africa. Eighteen of the OAU members were appointed to the Permanent Economic Management Committee (PEMC) of the OAU, with instructions to do an in-depth analysis of foreign debt, as well as the UN's "Plan of Action for Economic Recovery and Development for Africa (1986-1990)". According to this plan, specific proposals regarding an African viewpoint in this regard had to be formulated (*Cf.* Keesing's

Contemporary Archives October 1987:35436-35437).

The financial situation of the OAU itself also attracted considerable criticism, which was not welcomed at all. A report by the external auditors of the OAU regarding the financial statements of the OAU for the 1987/88 financial year, indicated that there were serious irregularities. This report – " ... spoke of 'glaring instances of incompetence, negligence and dishonesty on the part of some officials involved with financial management' and called for adequate measures to be taken to 'guarantee the seriousness of the Organisation, including disciplinary action against some senior staff'" (Keesing's Contemporary Archives August 1988:36082).

Ide Oumarou, Secretary General of the OAU until 1989, rejected the report as biased, and said that the auditor concerned was just airing personal grievances. The attitude of Africa regarding economic obligations to the West can perhaps best be summed up in the words of Mohamed (in West Africa 9-15 July: 2054-2055). "It is inadmissible for a foreign power, country or economic institution to presume what is best for a people ... Predictably, the response of African rulers to the new aid strings has been schizophrenic and dishonest. It is true that the domination of Africa by the West is at bottom the most important cause of the continent's crisis. The wretched legacy of colonialism is still an important factor in the life of the continent ... The policies that have produced economic crisis and ecological ruin since decolonisation have nothing to do with Marxism..." (Keesing's Contemporary Archives August 1988:36083).

The importance given to economic co-operation and integration by African leaders led them to transform, within ten years, the Final Act of Lagos to the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community in 1991. The treaty lays down in detail the process for achieving the Economic Community in successive stages over a period of 34 years. The Treaty clearly states that it takes into consideration the Monrovia Declaration, the LPA and the Final Act of Lagos. More importantly, in conducting interstate relations, it affirmed adherence of the earlier principles enshrined in the LPA, some of which it lists as:

- Equality and inter-dependence of member states
- Solidarity and collective self-reliance

- Inter-state co-operation
- Peaceful settlement of disputes
- Recognition, promotion and protection of human and people's rights
- Accountability, economic justice and popular participation in development
(*Cf. Keesing's Contemporary Archives October 1985:33904*).

Clearly the LPA continued to provide the inspiration of all future African visions and initiatives, until NEPAD.

The 1980 decade has been described as “the lost decade”. Africa was going through very serious economic and political crises – negative growth, collapsing economies, civil wars, collapsing states and state structures. And, as we will see below, the “international community” became very concerned with the “unending crises” which led to a belief that came to be called “Afro-Pessimism”. Implicit in Afro-Pessimism was the core idea that the African people – their societies, cultures, mindset and structures – are incapable of running their states and their economies and therefore they will remain in a permanent state of crises – stagnation and negative growth (*Cf. Bujra 2003:5*).

According to Abdalla Bujra (2003:5) Afro-Pessimism was born outside Africa and the idea was propagated both outside and inside Africa itself, by those who had a vested interest in Africa to remain weak and disorganised.

The Africans however generally had a different view of their crises – its causes, its continuation and the way out of the crises. While most Africans acknowledged that there were “internal” factors which had contributed to their crises and even its maintenance, they nevertheless put more emphases on the “external” origin of their crises and particularly their inability to get out of the crises. They argued that:

- (a) colonialism had created the basic conditions of the crises – dependant economies, distorted structures, artificial boundaries/ countries, divided people, undeveloped human resource and weak undemocratic state structures.
- (b) the international commodity market, financial system, the dominant role of the “five monopolies” enjoyed by the West, were, and still are extremely formidable barriers which

weak African governments – individually or collectively – were and are unable to overcome.

- (c) given these conditions, in which the international system continuously reinforced African countries economic dependence, to maintain their distorted structures, and to encourage the chaotic political systems inherited from the colonial states – given this situation – African countries found it very difficult to economically develop, create nation states, and develop their human and natural resources.
- (d) the direct intervention by the Bretton Woods institutions and the donor countries in African economies through Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), ostensibly to help Africans overcome their crises, simply perpetuated the unequal and exploitative relationship between the African and the global system (*Cf.* The Star 10 July 2001:6 & the Sowetan 10 July 2001:6 and The Cape Times 26 July 2001:8).

Given this general African perspective of their crises, they invariably came up with initiatives which started with basic strategies and appeals to change this unequal and harmful (to Africa) relationship. And the new approach to an alternative form of development, were clearly enunciated in the LPA's basic principles of development (see above).

Thus since 1980, all African initiatives (from the OAU and up to 1990 from the ECA), accepted the vision, framework, strategies and principles enshrined in the LPA. And to repeat the vision behind the LPA and the Lagos Final Act were articulated in the Monrovia Declaration (see above).

The above makes it clear that the OAU did not play a constructive role in the economic welfare of Africa. This aspect was clearly endorsed by its inability to keep its own financial house in order, internally. The absence of co-ordinated planning on the part of the OAU left vast gaps in terms of the development of the great potential of the African continent. As a result, almost every African state is currently suffering economic problems. It is clear that a mechanism to unlock the potential of the African continent, namely willpower and persistence – especially with a view to then using it jointly and for the benefit of Africa as a whole – is still lacking (*Cf.* Ewechue in Cervenka 1977: x-xi and the Sowetan Sunday World 22 July 2001:20). The most important limitation on the economic development of Africa is the scarcity of resources which can meet the needs of the diversified and growing social masses. The management of these scarce resources is a political as well as an economic

problem. There is a huge gap between what is expected of governments in terms of individual welfare, economic growth and national security and what those governments can actually offer (*Cf. Legum et al. 1979:15*). The national interests of individual African states are still more important than those of Africa as a whole and that plays a role in the inability of the OAU to act efficiently in the international economic arena. The success of the OAU initiative would depend upon the African leaders; capability to understand how essential it is to have change in terms of the principle of national economic development as well as co-operation on a continental level (*Cervenka 1977:190*). During the OAU's session in Addis Ababa (July 1990) Prof. Adedeji, the Executive Secretary of the UN's Commission for Africa acknowledged that the UN's Plan of Action for the Economic Recovery and Development of Africa (1986-90) had almost no chance of being fully implemented (*Cape Issues and Regional Integration October 1990:62-66*). Mr Barber Conable (in the *South African Economist June/July 1991:15*), President of the World Bank, said during the OAU summit at Addis Ababa (1991) that the economic situation in Africa was being made worse by the fact that Africa was no longer competitive in international markets, since productivity in Africa had dropped as low as never before, which caused production costs to shoot up to unprecedented heights. Conable added: "Although increased regional co-operation had been a dream of the OAU's founding fathers, little has been done to realise it" (*South African Economist June/July 1991:15*).

At this summit, the agreement of the Africa Economic Community (AEC) was signed, which was supposed to create an economic equal of the OAU itself. This agreement deviated, ideologically speaking, from the rhetoric viewpoint of Kwame Nkrumah: "... seek ye first the political kingdom, and all the other things shall be added onto it ..." (*Africa Report July/August 1991:10*). According to Nkrumah "the future Africa lay in the hands of the African leaders and that the development of Africa was the primary responsibility of Africa itself" (*Africa Report July/August 1991:10*).

6.5.2 The Organisation of African Unity's Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery

In 1985, when the OAU came up with its Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, 1986-1990, (Addis Ababa, July 1985) it was clearly stated in the preamble of the programme that "While reiterating our full commitment to the principles and objectives of

the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos, which are more valid today than ever, we have focussed ...” on a five year programme which consisted of:

- measures for an accelerated implementation of the LPA and the Final Act of Lagos;
- special action for improvement of the food situation and rehabilitation of agriculture;
- emphasis to be on overcoming drought and measures to alleviate Africa’s external debt;
- measures for a common platform for action at sub-regional, regional, continental and international levels; and
- measures for action against the effects of the destabilisation policy of South Africa on the economies of Southern African States.

It is to be noted that there is no mention of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) at all in the document. The issue of Aid is clearly discussed and gratitude expressed to the Donors and the UN System. However the OAU urged more Aid to Famine Relief. This document which was passed by the Assembly of Heads of States and Governments of the OAU in July 1985, clearly blames the external environment for the crises in Africa. In particular they blame the debt burden and the apartheid government in South Africa. According to this document “The dramatic increase in the volume of Africa’s external debt and the heavy debt burden is another source of our profound concern...” (FAO 1985:30).

“We are aware of the fact that shortcomings in development policies have contributed to the present debt crises. However, it is evident that the major causes of our country’s debt servicing problems are external ones and such causes are unfortunately beyond our control. These include, *inter alia*, the deteriorating terms of trade and the consequent reduction in export earning for debt servicing, unprecedented rise in interest rates, sharp exchange rate fluctuations, deteriorating terms of borrowing and the reduction in the flow of concessional resources, the combined effects of which resulted in net capital outflow from most of our member states. In this regard the 26 African LDCs have been most seriously affected.” (FAO 1985:30).

Incidentally this “Africa’s Priority Programme...” of 1985, was discussed and approved by the UN General Assembly in 1986 and was renamed 1986 as the 1986 United Nations

Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD) 1986-1990 (FAO 1985:30 and Bujra 2003:7).

The “lost decade” of the 1980 was marked with two fundamental characteristics: Firstly the widespread economic and political crises in almost all African countries. Secondly the strong intervention by the Bretton Woods institutions with the now discredited SAPs with the aim of restructuring Africa’s economies. Strong armed tactics were used by the World Bank to force African governments to accept the SAPs. According to Bujra (1982:30) the African people were never consulted – particularly by their governments. The implementation of SAP’ s inflicted serious disruption on African countries economies. There was considerable opposition to SAP’ s from the people and African intellectuals. “Of course as we look back at the 1980s, very few of us can doubt that we were, in one way or another affected by SAPs that many of our countries have been pursuing. In some cases the impact of such a programme has led to riots because of the tremendous suffering they imposed on the people: loss of jobs, reduction in social services, impossible increase in prices, generalised poverty and the constant threat of destabilising society as a whole. Indeed, these programmes continue to be formulated and implemented as if people do not matter” (in ECA Biannual Report of the Executive Secretary, 1979-1980 1981:28).

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), under professor Adedeji acted more like an economic commission of the OAU rather than of the UN, and reacted to the generalised African crises and the very widespread criticism and attack on SAPs, by producing a detailed document arguing for an Alternative Framework for Development (AFD). This was an alternative to SAPs and takes the Bretton Woods programme point by point countering them with alternative policies which, it was argued, would take Africa out of its present crises. The central issue in this document was not only that the Alternative Framework and policies were considered to be very relevant to the African situation, but that SAPs were essentially perpetuating the African crises by forcing a linkage of weak crises ridden African countries to the powerful global system on terms which gave total advantage and dominance to the global system and nothing to African countries (Bujra 1982:30).

6.5.3 The African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation

As the Title of the Charter implies its basic objective is the democratisation of the development process in order to enable people's participation in the production process. The Charter came out of an International Conference organised by the ECA. The Charter was later adopted by the OAU.

“The Charter calls for the emergence of a new era in Africa – an Africa in which democracy, accountability, economic justice and development for transformation become internalised and the empowerment of the people, initiative and enterprise and the democratisation of the development process are the order of the day in every country. It delineates the actions that are required by all concerned – the people and their organisations, governments, African and non-African NGOs and the international community – to achieve the aforesaid objectives and also proposes national and regional mechanism to monitor and report on the progress made in the implementation of the Charter” (Charter, Arusha 1990:1-2).

The core objective of the Charter was to inject a different approach in development thinking – that the actual participation of the people in the development and production process, is expected to bring about quicker economic growth, economic justice and general development. However this can only be done and actualised if there is genuine democracy at all levels – at the grass roots, at the level of various Organisations, enterprises and governments.

The Charter, (whose conference was organised by Adedeji, Executive Secretary of the ECA and the driving force behind the AAF and SAPs) continued the fight started by AAF and SAPs against the Bretton Woods approach to development through SAPs. The Charter was taking up a political issue with the WB and the IMF and their SAP' s. The political argument of the Charter is that firstly the economic framework being forced on African governments was undemocratic and does not allow people to participate in the economic and development processes. In fact under SAPs and their conditionalities, Organised labour and Organised professional associations, were being systematically destroyed so that labour will not have the power to negotiate with owners of enterprises. This was an essential demand and condition of foreign investors. Secondly the governments were extremely undemocratic.

Hence the Charter insists that the democratisation of the development and productive process by enabling the people to participate was not only essential, but was contrary to the Bretton Woods philosophy of development and its programme of economic reform. The Charter therefore logically argues that, the democratisation of development and production process, is an alternative approach and is more likely to take African countries out of their present crises than the SAP' s.

6.5.4 The Organisation of African Unity's Declaration on the Political and Socio-Economic Situation in Africa

This is an important Declaration that also reacted to the continuous crises facing African countries. The Declaration clearly articulated the OAU's views on the changing nature of the international environment and the position of Africa in this environment. The OAU's Assembly of Heads of State and Government were seriously concerned with the negative impact of the international system on African countries. Like previous OAU Declarations and Initiatives, this 1990 Declaration in Addis Ababa argued that the main cause of the African crises lies in the way Africa relates to the international system – a relationship which is totally detrimental to Africa and therefore the cause of its deepening crises. The concerns of the OAU were on two related aspects of the African crises:

- (a) The deteriorating African countries
- (b) The increasing number of internal conflicts – particularly the armed conflicts and civil wars

The declaration pointed out that “throughout the decade of the 1980's, most of their productive and infra-structural facilities continued to deteriorate. The per capita income of their people fell drastically ... There has been a sharp decline in the quality of life in our countries ... And this contrasted sharply with the alarming rise in Africa's external debt ... which shot up from about US\$50 billion in 1980 to about US\$257 billion by the end of 1989. The intervention of the WB and IMF with their SAP' s raised alarm bells with the OAU. Most of our countries have entered into SAP' s with the international financial and monetary institutions, mostly at heavy political and social cost ... We are very much concerned that ... there is an increasing tendency to impose conditions of a political nature for assistance to Africa.” (OAU, Declaration, 1990: 2).

The Declaration stated clearly the determination of the African governments to pursue development on the basis of “self reliant, human-centred and sustainable development on the basis of social justice and collective self reliance so as to achieve accelerated structural transformation of our economies. Furthermore, the governments were also “determined to rationalise the existing economic groupings in our Continent in order to increase their effectiveness in promoting economic integration and establishing an African Economic Community.

“These are objectives we set for ourselves in the LPA in 1980. We reaffirm their continued validity as well as the fundamental principles of the LPA and Africa’s Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, including the sectoral priorities contained in them in particular, the urgent need to attain self-sufficiency in food production, to promote science and technology for development and to establish a viable industrial base on the Continent. In this connection, we commit ourselves to the pursuit of sound population and environmental policies conducive to economic growth and development of our Continent”(Assembly of Heads of State and Government. 1990. OAU Declaration in Bujra 2003:7).

It is important to note here that both the objectives and the sectoral priorities of the Declaration were very different from those of the SAP’ s (*Cf.* Bujra 2003:9).

In addition to this strong statement on the nature of the economic crises and the role of the Bretton Woods institutions in its perpetuation, the OAU’s Assembly of Heads of State and Government made two important decisions on two internal political issues which were of great concern in Africa – namely resolving all types of conflicts and supporting democracy. These decisions were:-

1. “We .. renew our determination to work together towards the peaceful and speedy resolutions of all the conflicts in our continent.
2. “We ... assert that democracy and development should go together and should be mutually reinforcing. It is necessary to promote popular participation of our people in the process of government and development” (Bujra 2003:9).

Thus without changing the OAU Charter, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, for the first time, extended the scope of the OAU to intervene in internal conflicts of member states. Secondly the commitment to democracy was also very important since the OAU, again and for the first time, made a choice and preference on the type of political system of sovereign member states.

The importance of this Declaration lies in the assertion that the OAU had to deal with the political problems of conflicts and democracy as a necessary precondition to progress in economic development. It was after this Declaration that the OAU established in 1993 the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. Almost all the conflicts that the OAU was dealing with at the time, were internal conflicts within member states – a departure from previous practice of dealing only with inter-state conflicts (Bujra 2003:10).

Despite this Declaration and the establishment of the Mechanism to resolve conflicts, conflicts continued and the economies of most African countries continued to deteriorate in the 1990's. Hence the OAU soon came up with another initiative.

Seen against the above-mentioned OAU experience it is clear that the creation of all kinds of sophisticated structures and mechanisms such as the OAU and its subordinate structures offered no guarantee that its objectives would be reached. The need for economic progress must be understood and nurtured within the value system of the relevant community that has an interest in it. Only in this way can the correct mechanism be created which can be used to the benefit of the community. In the case of the OAU it is a typical Western model that serves as blueprint and therefore did not nearly meet the real needs as economic co-ordinator in Africa – Africa needs a model that can give short- and long-term answers on the basis of a subsistence economy, namely that the community produce only enough to meet today's needs. This is why in Africa external financial aid is handled so carelessly, and with so little responsibility (seen from a Western perspective).

6.5.5 The Organisation of African Unity's re-launching of Africa's Economic and Social Development

In 1995 the OAU Heads of State and Government met in Cairo in an Extra-Ordinary Session, to seriously review, analyse and reassess the root causes of economic and social problems with a view to recommending remedial measures and a lasting solution that should be taken by African governments and peoples, with the support of the international community.

The Meeting however, noted that for many years the OAU had adopted many plans, strategies and programmes for the development of the countries, individually and collectively. "Unfortunately these plans were not adequately implemented by the majority of the countries and therefore called on African countries to rectify this situation in the following manner:

- Firstly people should be the centre and object of development
- Secondly governments should ensure the involvement of the people in the conception, implementation and monitoring of development plans, programmes, and projects;
- Thirdly special attention should be paid to the full involvement of women in the social and economic development efforts" (Keesing's Contemporary Archives November 1995:33200).

"Africa is a resilient continent and is a continent in transition. It has immense human resources. With a strong will, more determination, planning and vision, we can make Africa an economic power that it ought to be". And while the Meeting reaffirmed the OAU's commitment to the LPA, it adopted the Cairo Agenda for Action for re-launching Africa's economic and social development. The Agenda for Action recommended:

(a) Democracy, Governance, Peace, Security, Stability and sustainable Development. These could be achieved through promoting national unity, promoting good governance, through a policy of regionalisation and decentralisation, through clarifying the role of government and the private section in development, through measures to eradicate the causes of refugees and displaced persons, and through maximum political and financial support of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Resolution.

(b) Food Security.

- (c) Capacity Building and Human Resources Development
- (d) Structural Transformation of African Economies – but once again reaffirming very different strategies and policies from those of the SAPs.
- (e) Effective Mobilisation and Efficient Utilisation of Resources.
- (f) Regional Economic Co-operation and Integration”(in Keesings’s Contemporary Archives October 1995:33402)

Each of these areas were dealt with in greater detail with important suggestions on policy options. Most of these areas recommended for action and the policy options, were, with slight variation, similar to those in the 1985 Africa’s Priority Programme, and the IPA of 1980. However the ECA’s AAF and SAPs differs from the others in that it discussed specific policies and their implications as realistic alternatives to the then policies being implemented by SAPs

6.5.6 The African Economic Community Treaty

The AEC Treaty was adopted at Abuja on 3 June 1991 and entered into force on 12 May 1994, behind the time schedule envisaged by the LPA (see Appendix 1). By virtue of Article 2 an African Economic Community was established. Its objectives were: to promote economic, social and cultural development and the integration of African economies in order to increase economic self-reliance and promote development, to harness and develop Africa’s human and material resources; and to promote co-operation so as to raise the standard of living and enhance economic stability, foster peaceful relations among member states and contribute to the progress, development and economic integration of Africa. These aims were to be achieved by, *inter alia*, the liberalisation of trade through the abolition of customs duties on imports and exports and non-tariff barriers in order to establish a free trade area, the adoption of a common trade policy vis-à-vis third States, the harmonisation of national policies in agriculture, industry, transport and communications, energy, trade, money and finance and science and technology, the establishment of a common external tariff, the removal of obstacles to the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital and the right of residence and establishment, and the establishment of a common market. Not unlike the European Union, the AEC envisaged a role beyond the economic sphere in the social and political worlds, leading eventually to political union (Naldi 1999:242).

Naldi (1999:21-24) argued however, as is common with regional economic integration Organisations, integration is to be achieved progressively in six stages over a transitional period not exceeding forty years. The first stage, reflecting the Lagos Plan recommendations, requires the strengthening of existing regional economic communities, including the creation of new ones where they do not exist. The second stage involved the gradual removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers and the gradual harmonisation of customs duties in relation to third States. The third and fourth stages are the establishment of a free trade area and a customs union, while the next stage is the establishment of an African Common Market. The final stage envisages: (a) the consolidation and strengthening of the African Common Market through the inclusion of free movement of persons, goods, capital and services, as well as rights of residence and establishment; (b) the integration of all economic, political, social and cultural sectors, establishment of a single domestic market and a Pan-African Economic and Monetary Union; (c) the setting up of an African Monetary Union, including a single African Central Bank and a single African currency; (d) harmonising and co-ordinating the activities of regional economic communities; (e) setting up the structures of African multinational enterprises in all sectors; and (f) setting up the structures of the AEC institutions.

6.6 The establishment of the New Partnership for Africa's Development

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is a merger (done in July 2001) of the Millennium Partnership for Africa's Recovery Programme (MAP) and the Omega Plan. The New Africa Initiative (NAI) was born out of the merger. NAI was then approved by the OAU Summit of Heads of States and Governments in Lusaka, July 2001. NAI was then revised and its policy framework was finalised by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government's Implementation Committee which then became NEPAD.

NEPAD's goals are to promote accelerated development, to eradicate poverty and to halt the marginalisation of Africa in the global process (New Partnership for Africa's Development. Part II. Department of Foreign Affairs. October 2001:29-40)

NEPAD claims to be:

- a holistic integrated strategic framework for the socio-economic development of Africa;

- it is a plan which has been conceived and developed by African leaders.
- it is a commitment that African leaders are making to the African people.
- it is a commitment that African leaders are making to accelerate the integration of the African continent into the global economy.
- it is a call to the rest of the world to partner Africa in her own development (*Cf.* Bujra 2003:12).

However, NEPAD are far from being modest as this statement of its spokesman testifies: “Before NEPAD the African landscape had been littered with failed initiatives, development plans and programmes of action. Of note were the regional initiatives of the LPA (early 1980’s) and the Abuja Treaty establishing the AEC (early 1990’s). For a variety of reasons including lack of capacity, the lack of political will, outside interference and the lack of resources these past initiatives were unsuccessful. However, fortuitous convergence of circumstances, both within and outside the continent, has created the opportunity for the latest initiative” (in Bujra 2003:11). Given the fact that the document of this quotation aimed at explaining NEPAD to a large and distinguished African gathering at the African Development Forum, in Addis Ababa on 7 March 2002, it was rather overstating the possibility of NEPAD succeeding where others have failed. According to Bujra (2003:11) the document did not explain what the “fortuitous convergence of circumstances” are which will make NEPAD succeed where others have failed. It is not surprising therefore that NEPAD is drawing criticism, especially from Civil Society Groups (Bujra 2003:11).

Adedeji (2002:15) points out that NEPAD has not been mentioned in the AU’s Constitutive Act, nor does NEPAD mention the AU Act. Both the Act and NEPAD have similar development sectors to focus on. “Are both intended to work along parallel lines? The impression is given, perhaps inadvertently, that although the AU is the supreme body – having replaced the OAU – NEPAD is special and is not to be integrated into the AU. It has its own institutions which are quite different from those of the AU ... How will the NEPAD Implementation Committee of Heads of States relate to the AU Executive Council? Will the NEPAD Secretariat now being set up not in Addis Ababa but in Pretoria remain a separate and independent entity? Will it be absorbed by the Commission of the Union. There are indeed many substantive issues where reconciliation and clarity is needed in the relationship between the AU and NEPAD” (Adedeji, Nairobi, April 2002).

Apart from NEPAD's status, it has been criticised on more substantial grounds. Bujra (2002:15) stated the following critique of NEPAD:

“The most fundamental flaws of NEPAD, which reproduces the central elements of the World Bank's *Can Africa Claim the 21st Century* (see section 6.2) and the ECA's Compact for African Recovery, include:

- (a) The neo-liberal policy framework at the heart of the plan, and, which repeats the structural adjustment policy packages of the preceding two decades and overlooks the disastrous effects of those policies;
- (b) The fact that in spite of its proclaimed recognition of the central role of the African people to the plan, the African people have not played any part in the conception, design and formulation of the NEPAD;
- (c) Notwithstanding its stated concerns for social and gender equity, it adopts the social and economic measures that have contributed to the marginalisation of women;
- (d) That in spite of claims of African origin, its main targets are foreign donors, particularly in the G8;
- (e) Its vision of democracy is defined by the needs of creating a functional market;
- (f) It under-emphasises the external conditions fundamental to Africa's development crisis, and thereby does not promote any meaningful measure to manage and restrict the effects of this environment on Africa's development efforts. On the contrary, the engagement that it seeks with institutions and processes like the World Bank, the IMF, the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the United States Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, the Cotonou Agreement, will further lock Africa's economies disadvantageously into this environment;
- (g) The means for mobilisation of resources will further the disintegration of African economies that we have witnessed at the hands of structural adjustment and WTO rules;

Bujra, (2003:4) having made substantive critique of NEPAD, proceed to list strategies and policies which need to be pursued by African governments instead of those suggested by NEPAD. According to him what the African scholars are calling for are essentially contrary to the fundamental philosophy and assumption behind NEPAD For example:

1. With regards to external environment – they call on action towards stabilisation of commodity prices; reform of the international financial system (to prevent debt, exchange

rate instability and capital flow volatility) as well as of the WB and IMF an end to IMF/WB structural adjustment; fundamental changes in the existing agreements of the former OAU.

2. At the local, national and sub-regional levels, development policy must promote agriculture, industry, services including health and public education – must be protected and supported through trade, investment and macro-economic policy measures. A strategy for financing must seek to mobilise and build on internal and intra-African resources through imaginative savings measures; reallocation of expenditure away from wasteful items, military expenditure, and corruption.

3. These measures require, above all, the reconstitution of the developmental state: a state for which social equity, social inclusion, national unity and respect for human rights form the basis of economic policy.

It is clear that the African scholars were not only critical of NEPAD but had definite alternative ideas (such as those above and others which we have listed). And these ideas, twenty years later, and by a younger generation of African scholars, are a repeat of those in the LPA. Ironically, many of those younger scholars who attended the conference and made the above declaration, may not have seen the LPA document.

The following section will deal with how the OAU handled inter-state conflict in Africa.

6.7 The Organisation of African Unity and the handling of inter-state conflict in Africa to promote stability

The OAU had, in terms of the OAU Charter, no disciplinary authority over any OAU member who failed to comply with the provisions set out in the OAU Manifesto. Only indirect pressure, with the support of the other OAU member countries, could be exerted. In contrast with Organisations such as the OAS and the Arab League, the OAU could hardly be described as a defence alliance (see Chapter Two), mainly because of the fact that the basic elements of such an alliance are lacking in it. The OAU Charter stipulated that member countries must co-ordinate and harmonise their general policy in respect of defence and security within Africa, and also provides for the creation of a Defence Commission. However, this provision was not ratified by way of a collective defence agreement among all member states. The OAU defined its attitude regarding aspects such as international tension and disarmament as one of non-committal to a specific power block and all endeavours were

aimed at settling all these aspects by way of discussion and negotiation. Cervenka emphasises the former viewpoint when he says that the most striking characteristic of the OAU Charter was the fact that no OAU member can be forced to accept any of the OAU's decisions: "The essence of the OAU is voluntary co-operation between the Member-States for the attainment of common objectives specified in the Preamble, the Purposes, and the Principles" (Andemicael 1979:15-17)

However, it will not do to ignore the power and influence of the OAU. Its decisions are usually conveyed in the UN and have often resulted in UN decisions (*Cf.* Cervenka 1997:12).

The role that the OAU had played in conflict between states must be understood against the background of the nature and content of peace and security in Africa. To cast more light on this issue, interstate conflict in Africa can be divided in the following categories:

- disputes in which only OAU members participate;
- disputes in which OAU members and colonial or settlers governments participate; and
- disputes caused by relations between OAU members and states outside of Africa.

Each of these categories should be looked at in more detail:

6.7.1 Disputes in which only Organisation of African Union members participate

Two kinds of disputes can be seen in this regard:

- territorial and border disputes between neighbouring states; these are the cause of various diplomatic incidents and dissension. It does not happen often that war results from this kind of dispute, but it can lead to explosive situations;
- certain exceptional situations within individual African states caused by ethnic, religious, political or ideological differences and leading to conflict between states, as well as giving rise to accusations of foreign interference and to an outflow of refugees.

These conflicts were normally regarded as being outside the jurisdiction of the OAU and the UN, except where it touched international relations as such. Interference in such a case usually followed action by another African state.

6.7.2 Disputes in which Organisation of African Union members and colonial or settlers governments participate

This category of conflict caused both the OAU and the UN great worry within the Africa spectrum, particularly since it took place against a backdrop of the racial differences between the independent African states and those that remained under colonial or settler control, namely former South Africa, former Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and former SWA (now Namibia). The main elements of this confrontation boiled down to the following:

- the stubborn refusal of these governments, in contravention of the UN Charter, to comply with the stipulations regarding human rights and the self-realisation of human beings; and
- the determination of the Africa states to use all possible resources to bring about the necessary political change and thus also to establish the new nationalist governments.

6.7.3 Disputes caused by relations between Organisation of African Union members and states outside of Africa:

In this case, two kinds of disputes are distinguished:

- intervention by non-African states in internal African conflicts. The Congo crisis is an example of a conflict in terms of ethnic differences, competitive leadership and internal faction fights. In this case the OAU and UN saw the prevention of foreign interference as an important objective; and
- the arms race in Africa, particularly in Southern Africa, the Horn of Africa, North Africa and parts of West Africa. Here it included conventional and nuclear weapons. It was an objective of both the OAU and the UN to keep Africa free of nuclear weapons (*Cf.* Van Wyk 1993:212).

Border problems are synonymous with, though not unique to, the state dispensation in Africa. Various categories can be distinguished. Some cases are of a purely legal nature, whereas others are the result of geographic interpretation, for example Nigeria/Cameroon. Some cases are symptomatic of political or social conflict, for example Somalia/Ethiopia, and Somalia/Kenya. Others were caused by so-called general aspects, e.g. the status of colonial legacies, state legacies in terms of land, and the rights and obligations placed on such land during the formation of the alliance. Other border problems may be unique to certain states or areas (*Cf. Andemicael 1979:17-20*).

Against this background, a closer look can be taken at the arbitration role of the OAU in the regional conflicts in Africa.

6.7.4 Conflict management in Africa

The first opportunity that the OAU had to act as peacemaker in Africa was during the Morocco/Algeria border dispute. This dispute started in February 1958 when Morocco protested against the so-called French exploitation of the Sahara Desert area (Allott in Ingham 1974:123-124). The OAU inherited the border dispute and appointed – on 15 November 1963 – an ad hoc commission to draw up a unique set of rules so that action could be taken to settle the dispute as soon as possible. In the meantime Haile Selassie (Ethiopia) and Modibo Keita (Mali) took the roles of personal peacemakers upon themselves and succeeded on 30 October 1963 to get the heads of state of Algeria and Morocco to commit themselves to a mutual agreement. This agreement brought the fighting to an end, but did not offer a solution in terms of the border dispute (Zartman in McEwan 1968:123 and Cervenka 1977:97).

The viewpoint of the OAU regarding national borders was recorded during the Conference for Heads of State and Government held at Cairo in 1964. According to this, all OAU member states promised to respect the geographic borders existing at the time of independence (Zartman in McEwan 1968:123). This effort was clearly aimed at preventing border disputes in a formal manner, and thus to create a basis upon which transgressors could be punished, particularly in cases where the transgressor had supported the aforementioned decision to respect geographic borders. The OAU's problems did not end with border disputes, however. Another inherited problem was the so-called Congo crisis. Even before

1960, there had been differences of opinion in African ranks regarding the role that the UN was supposed to play in the Congo. These differences were some of the main reasons why Africa was split into the Casablanca, Monrovia and Brazzaville groups (Allott in Ingham 1974:124). It is possible to understand Julius Nyerere's frustration when he remarked: "The OAU exists, but its members are divided, and they consequently work against each other. No single meaningful decision, or even compromise, may be possible" (Cervenka 1977:84).

During a meeting of the Conciliation Commission of the OAU regarding the Congo crisis, it was decided to refer the matter back to the OAU's Assembly of Heads of State and Government, with a meeting that was scheduled for 8 December 1964 at Addis Ababa. It was also recommended that seven steps for restoring peace would be taken there:

- the withdrawal of all foreign mercenaries;
- the immediate cessation of foreign interference;
- cease-fire agreements wherever people were at war;
- general amnesty to all who had been involved in the genocide at Stanleyville;
- a round table meeting of all Congolese leaders;
- free elections in the Congo; and
- sending out fact-finding missions to the Congo and its neighbouring states (*Cf.* Guelke 1964:152).

The reason this matter was referred back was that the Conciliation Commission could not win the support of the Congolese Prime Minister for the withdrawal of the mercenaries or for the cease-fire (Guelke 1964:152). It is clear from this that the OAU structure was not accepted enough to make an impression on the Congolese government. Moise Tshombe said that his government always relied on the sincere co-operation and openness of the OAU, especially based on the principles of its Charter regarding the sovereignty and independence of OAU member states. Against this background, he had no choice but to reject the decisions of the commission, since these decisions did not take account of the realities of the situation (Keesing's Contemporary Archives 6-13 February 1963:20564).

The ensuing joint meeting of the OAU and the Security Council of the UN in Addis Ababa on 9 December 1964, were dominated by the open hatred against whites, following on the entry of foreign parachutists and the genocide in the Congo-Brazzaville. M. Charles-David Ganao, the then Min of Foreign Affairs of the Congo-Brazzaville: " ... described the

parachute action as 'an aggressive act long planned ... with the aim of re-establishing White control in Africa' ... he said *inter alia*: 'To save the lives of an insignificant White minority tens of thousands of Blacks have been massacred. In their own country in Africa they have no security, seeing that the White man is untouchable and if anything happens to a single White man, this may endanger the lives of millions of Africans' (Keesings's Contemporary Archives 6-13 February 1963:20564).

From the Congolese conflict, therefore, clearly nothing good or constructive came for Africa, nor for the OAU in particular, in terms of regional coherence or co-operation. Rather the crudeness of African leadership, and that which lay ahead for the African continent, were brought to the attention of the Western community, even though the Western community did not at that point yet realise the true consequences of African freedom for the world community.

During the OAU meeting of 21 October 1965 at Accra, the creation of an African defence Organisation was discussed once more. During this time, an appeal was made, asking member states to set apart certain military units for specific African objectives. They also pleaded for a strict international arms boycott against South Africa (Keesing's Contemporary Archives 6-13 February:20565). That was the first effort of the OAU to have an international policy of boycotts instituted against South Africa. What was especially noteworthy in this case was the fact that the trade partners of South Africa didn't pay attention to the appeals of the OAU at that stage (Keesings Contemporary Archives 6-13 February 21052). South Africa had clearly been a thorn in the flesh of the OAU from the very beginning. South Rhodesia, too, enjoyed the ongoing attention of the OAU from the OAU session at Lagos in February 1964. During the Assembly of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs at Addis Ababa December 1965, the OAU demanded *inter alia* that Britain should suppress the white rebellion in South Rhodesia and should thus prepare the way for a majority government by 15 December 1965. Should this not take place, the member states of the OAU would break existing diplomatic ties with Britain. This threat fell on deaf ears and only nine of the OAU's member states carried out the threat. According to Julius Nyerere, that was the death of coherence within the OAU (in Cervenka 1977:114). The OAU's dissatisfaction with this attitude of the West came to the fore during an OAU summit at Addis Ababa (1968) where Britain, the USA, France, West-Germany and Japan were condemned because of their

political and military co-operation with the racist government of South Africa, enabling South Africa to continue its racist policy (Cervenka 1977:123).

The OAU sometimes also decided how and where it would become involved in dealing with African conflict. When the Middle-Eastern crisis arose between Israel and Egypt, the OAU decided in 1967 that the matter could only be dealt with by the UN, despite the fact that Egypt was a full member of the OAU (Cervenka 1977:158). The Nigerian Civil War gave the OAU the opportunity to act as mediator in an African conflict (1967) – an advisory Consultative Committee of the OAU arrived in Lagos on 22 November 1967 to investigate the matter, but was criticised afterwards as "...condoning genocide and ... proving itself a rubber stamp" (Keesing's Contemporary Archives 24-31 August 1968:22879), despite the nine-point peace plan that was submitted. The direct result was that no peace efforts led to anything, and this limited success can be ascribed mainly to the fact that available resources were limited, which in turn place a limitation on Africa's dream to be completely independent, under the banner of the OAU (Keesings Contemporary Archives 24-31 August 1968:22879). Two good examples are the lack of highly trained staff, politically as well as militarily speaking, and the lack of the necessary expertise to put in place control measures in terms of financial resources. In this regard the frustration and embarrassment experienced by the OAU during the joint Chad peace initiative is a typical illustration: "The Organisation not only seriously compromised its autonomy during its operations in Chad; it also tainted its image as a tool of Western capitalist states, as the Peace-Keeping Force relied on the US and Great Britain for ... logistical as well as financial support" (Keesings's Contemporay Archives 31 May – 7 June 1969:23384).

Its hatred against white minority governments in Southern Africa made the OAU even bite the international hand that tried to feed it. At the time of the unilateral independence of South Rhodesia in 1970, the OAU accused Britain of betraying the majority of people in Zimbabwe, as well as of the fact that the Rhodesian Republic only succeeded because of the inefficiency, conspiracy and ambivalence of Britain (*Cf.* Asante in *Internasionales Afrikaforum* 1986:59).

The actions of the OAU in Africa were also characterised by behaviour that ranged from changes in the political climate of Africa and demands made upon the OAU itself. For instance, the OAU acted as peace-maker in terms of the Middle-Eastern crisis in 1971, despite its previous viewpoint in this regard. On 21 November 1971, the OAU submitted a

peace plan to Prime Minister Golda Meir of Israel and President Anwar Sadat of Egypt – of which the contents were never made known. However, the OAU commission was not able to find an acceptable settlement between the Egyptian demands that negotiations could not continue on those conditions. The failure of the OAU in this regard was blamed on Israel during the next OAU summit at Rabat – since Israel was so dead set against any proposal that would lead to Israeli soldiers being withdrawn from occupied territory (Cervenka 1977:125-126).

During the OAU session on 14 December 1971 President Idi Amin of Uganda touched once more upon the need for a continental defence plan for Africa. He said that after thorough investigation into the future defence of Africa, and especially with the threat that Southern racist governments held for Africa, Uganda was willing to serve as basis for training such a force, under supervision of the OAU. However, the OAU could not reach consensus on this matter, and decided to refer it to a study group of military specialists (Cervenka 1977:161). It would seem from the above that the OAU member states saw such a task force as a possible threat to the sovereignty of African states, and that is why they did not want to take a definite decision.

The Hutus massacre in Burundi during 1972 was a further step in the OAU's failure as peace-maker. Burundi refused any interference from the OAU point blank. OAU frustration came to a head in 1973 because of the way in which the UN handled the South West Africa question (Keesings's Contemporary Archives 15-22 July 1972:25371-25373). During the OAU summit at Addis Ababa (1973) this matter was regarded as the test of Africa's trust in the UN: "... we are disappointed by the double standards in the UN. It went to war in Korea; it went to war in the Congo. If there is any challenge that ought justifiably to push the UN to the most extreme act in the defence of Justice, it is the defiance of the Organisation by South Africa over Namibia ... Namibia is allowed by the UN to scream and bleed in the hands of apartheid South Africa" (Keesing's Contemporary Archives 17-23 December 1973:26246). Upon this same occasion the Arab League also had its first tangible victory over the OAU by forming an official alliance among the Arab/African states in a "Declaration of Policy". Thus, forty-two African states severed their diplomatic ties with Israel (Cervenka 1977:151-152).

The war in Angola was also an embarrassment to the OAU, as it proved the OAU Liberation Committee's inability to bring peace to the MPLA, FNLA and UNITA in Angola. The closest they could get to this, was the signing of the so-called NAKURU agreement in Kenya 1975 which, however, was broken again immediately after because of new violence breaking out (Keesing's Contemporary Archives 17-23 December 1973:26246). The OAU's role as peace-maker in Angola can therefore be recorded as a dismal failure. Although a special session of the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government was convened, the serious dissension among OAU ranks saw to it that no useful decisions could be taken, so that Kenneth Kaunda said in a press release: "Our failure to find a solution here confirms that the OAU has no power to shape the destiny of Africa. The power is in the hands of super-powers to whom we are handing over Africa for our failure" (Cervenka 1977:141).

The occupation of Entebbe airport, Uganda by Israeli soldiers in 1976 shook OAU ranks to the core. Apart from the personal humiliation suffered by Idi Amin in this regard, the African leaders were very angry, because it emphasised clearly that Africa did not have the ability to defend itself: "There was resentment at the ease with which the mission was accomplished, resentment at the fact that the Israelis crossed into the heart of Africa apparently undetected and underlying fears that the Israelis had set a precedent that could be imitated by South Africa" (Keesing's Contemporary Archives 9 April 1976:2766)

The identification of South Africa as primary external enemy can be seen clearly in the above.

The OAU handed the Rhodesian matter over to the so-called Frontline states from 1975 – which paved the way to the Geneva Convention on 26 October 1976. Although the Liberation Committee of the OAU support the Frontline states, this committee functioned completely independently and outside of the OAU, so that the OAU served as a mere rubber stamp for the actions of this committee. The years 1975 and 1976 were therefore characterised by a serious deterioration of the OAU's role as peace-maker (Keesing's Contemporary Archives 13 August 1976:21885-21886).

The coming into being of a joint African defence force remained a threat to the sovereignty of African states. During the meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Khartoum on 13 July 1978 the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Congo accused those African states that had sent a joint task force to Zaire, namely Morocco, Senegal, the Central

African Republic, Togo, the Ivory Coast, Gabon and Egypt, to a breach of the OAU Charter. He described this task force as nothing other than that which had in mind the destabilisation of African governments and the suppression of democratic forces. It was, therefore, as a result of this event that the OAU summit of July 1978 approved a new viewpoint regarding an African defence force and the interference in the interior affairs of states. According to this, the OAU:

- rejected military treaties and alliances with non-African states, but nevertheless recognised the right of each African state to choose its own ideological system, and to ask any other state for help if its sovereignty or territorial integrity were under threat;
- rejected the idea of an African intervention force not formed within the context and objectives of the OAU and pleaded for the reactivation of the OAU's Defence Commission so that the creation of a defence force could be considered anew;
- confirmed compliance with the principle of respect for territorial integrity and the sovereignty of states, as well as the settling of disputes, by way of peaceful methods, so that interference by foreign countries could be prevented;
- rejected the policy of force and interference in Africa, regardless of the source, and undertook to resist all efforts to re-colonise the continent;
- demanded that differences between African states be settled peacefully and within the African context;
- demanded that the maintenance of peace in Africa be the responsibility of Africa itself alone;
- reconfirmed the rejection of certain non-Africa states which made use of mercenaries to jeopardise the stability and security of Africa; and
- reconfirmed the desire to eliminate foreign military bases in Africa (*Cf.* Cervenka 1997:132-183).

This stand was clearly taken to improve the image of the OAU among its member states even though there were reservations about how enforceable those decisions were. The Defence Commission recommended shortly after that a joint African army should be put in place. The OAU meeting in Monrovia (17-21 July 1979) was in favour of this recommendation in principle, but requested the Defence Commission to submit a further report on the formation, financing and equipping of such army (*Cf.* Keesing's Contemporary Archives 13 October 1978:29258-29259). The OAU followed a strategy of procrastination in this regard,

especially since the matter was so sensitive, thus endeavouring to prevent further dissension in OAU ranks. The following can also be cited as reasons why a joint African defence force did not get off the ground:

- the absence of mutual trust between African states; and
- the financial costs relating to such a defence force.

The OAU's Defence Commission said, during April 1981 in a report to the OAU, that some 1000 million US dollars would be needed for this purpose (Keesing's Contemporary Archives 21 September 1979:29842). This emphasised only too well how impossible a dream it was.

OAU member states found talk of the unification of Chad and Libya very upsetting. This idea came up after the opposing liberation movement in Chad had been defeated and the governments of Chad and Libya decided on 6 January 1981 to co-operate until there was full unity between the two states. Certain African states immediately saw this as a threat to their own survival, since Chad, the poorest country in Africa, was geographically ideally situated to be used a platform for military action against other states. Ideologically, too, it was a threat, as everyone knew about Col. Gaddafi's objective to create an Islamitic Sahara-state. There was also a possibility that the Soviet Union could get a foot-hold there. The OAU, with 12 member states, therefore hurriedly signed (14 January 1981) the so-called Lomé Communiqué, in which the unification of Chad and Libya was rejected. It was also recommended that Libya withdraw all its troops from Chad, and that the OAU peace force be sent to Col Gaddafi immediately. Gaddafi rejected the communiqué as if it wasn't worth the paper it was written on. However, various attempted negotiations between Chad and Libya came to nothing, and the OAU was not able to implement the recommendations in the Lomé document (Cf. Leistner in *Africa Insight* 1984:125 and Grundy in *Africa Events* 1968:10-11).

The OAU had a similar experience with the Polasario Front of the Western Sahara. This liberation movement demarcated an area in the Western Sahara in February 1976, calling it the Sahara Republic. This step immediately caused dissension in OAU ranks, particularly when Algeria insisted during the OAU summit that year at Addis Ababa that the Polasario Front should be given liberation movement status in the OAU. Morocco and Mauritania threatened to withdraw from the OAU immediately if such a thing should be allowed. The

dissension that followed, later also had a negative effect on the hostilities between the Polasario Front and Morocco, which rested mainly on ideological differences (Keesing's Contemporary Archives 30 October 1981:31163). In addition, the OAU, in the eyes of the Polasario Front, did not have much status. After the fighting in Western Sahara, a special peace committee of the OAU submitted a memorandum to the Polasario Front on 27 August 1981 in which cease-fire proposals, and conditions for general elections, were set out. There was no immediate reaction to this (Cervenka 1977:48). From 22-28 August 1982, this special OAU peace committee, also called an implementation committee, met at Nairobi to discuss new guidelines for holding general elections in Western Sahara. The committee itself could not reach agreement regarding the matter of direct negotiations and the withdrawal of Moroccan troops, but it did succeed to agree on certain details regarding conditions for the elections. The dissension even at this level in the OAU made the task of the OAU as peace-maker almost impossible – how could objectivity win out over party politics in such a situation? This later almost caused a rift in the OAU. *The Star* (9 August 1982): "The 19-year-old Organisation of African Unity has been left close to break-up as members meeting in Tripoli face a stalled summit and the possibility of a breakaway movement ... The current crisis stems from the admission to the OAU of the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) which has been proclaimed by Polasario guerrillas fighting Morocco for control of the Western Sahara ..." after which some twenty OAU members boycotted the summit in Tripoli (Keesing's Contemporary Archives January 1985:33324-33325).

The session of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs at Addis Ababa (February-March 1984) was once again almost disrupted by the Sahara matter, and clearly threatened the unity and continued existence of the OAU. The efforts of the appointed implementation committee of the OAU to implement the OAU resolutions of 1983, regarding the conflict in Western Sahara, failed dismally, and underlined the OAU's inability to keep the peace (*Cf.* *The Star* 9 August 1982). President Denis Sassou-Nguesso of the Congo, who had played an active role in the peace efforts in Chad throughout, said at his inauguration as new chairperson of the OAU (July 1986) that it was essential to achieve peace on the African continent – that was the only basis on which the economic, social and cultural progress of Africa could be built. For this reason, the Western Sahara, Chad, Angola and Mozambique would have to get incisive attention. He also warned that " ... a failure to resolve conflicts would result in history condemning Africa 'for having spent our meagre resources and energy on arms and other destructive instruments' instead of having put them to better use" and also suggested

that "a council of wise men" be formed to bring the violence in Africa to an end (Keesing's Contemporary Archives November 1986:34729).

During a session of the OAU in February 1987 at Addis Ababa, an appeal was made to Chad and Libya to come to a peaceful solution for the conflict there (Keesing's Contemporary Archives November 1986:34729). During May 1988, Col Gaddafi himself recognised Chad as an independent state, and also promised to institute a "Marshall Plan" for the rebuilding of Northern Chad. The OAU played no peace-making role in this regard (Keesing's Contemporary Archives January 1985:33324-335436). Ethnic violence had broken out between Senegal and Mauritania which led to a dispute between these two OAU member states. By July 1990, the OAU had still not been able to quell this conflict (Record of World Events – News Digest for July 1989:36807). The OAU summit at Abuja (July 1991) appointed a four nation committee to try and prevent the possibility of full-scale civil war in Ethiopia. This committee had to bring all the warring parties together in Somalia in order to settle the disputes (Keesing's Contemporary Archives Record of World Events News Digest for July 1990:37604). This problem, too, remained unsolved.

The results of the internal political instability of the OAU member states became very clear at this OAU summit. Since the previous OAU summit in 1990, nine of the African leaders had lost their positions as heads of state as a result of election results or pro-democratic coup d'etats. More than a dozen others had to loosen their iron grip on the power base, while many others were on the point of being deposed (*Cf.* The Star 7 July 1991:1). During a meeting of the OAU at Kampala (May 1991) a declaration was issued regarding the security, stability, development and co-operation in Africa in which a framework for reducing violence and human suffering on the African continent, with the idea that each African state should comply with a minimum set of democratic requirements, and: "This move reflects the growing African awareness that the efforts at economy recovery underway for a number of years cannot succeed unless some fundamental political reforms are introduced (*Cf.* Cape Issues on Regional Integration. October 1991:5).

The reasons for the failure of the OAU as African peace-maker are many. Cervenka is of the opinion that it can be ascribed particularly to a lack of specialist human resources, especially where the actions of the OAU can be measured against those of the UN. As a result, the various commissions could not do their work properly. He further ascribes it to the

dissension in OAU ranks – especially when these commissions needed, in terms of the OAU Charter a two third majority vote to sanction their actions (Cervenka 1977:37). However, the OAU was subjected to the limitations of any international Organisation from its inception, e.g. the absence of a central, enforceable authority structure. For this reason the OAU could only act successfully with regard to matters of general interest. As soon as an effort was made to force the OAU to accept the will of a minority group, the Organisation ran the risk of disintegrating (Legum *et al.* 1979:38). This made it clear that the ability of the OAU to interfere in disputes between states was extremely limited. The settling of disputes between African states rested mainly on the personal involvement of individual heads of state (Paden and Soja 1970:306-307). With this, the influence of international interference must also be borne in mind, since in Africa, this really did play a role. What also became clear was the fact that the OAU was not able to establish a system of collective security in Africa (*Cf.* Grundy in Africa Events 1968:11). This weakness meant that there was even more of a threat that Africa could be used as an international war arena (Cervenka 1977:xii). The OAU was applying crisis management throughout in its handling of African conflicts, and identified intra-state conflict, inter-state conflict and external threats as definite fields of action. The security situation in Africa became so unstable, and the role of the OAU so meaningless, that: " ... those that the founding fathers of the OAU in 1963 sought to exclude from Africa's destiny are now being invited to come back to Africa to exploit Africa's political divisions and economic weakness to their own advantage" (Asante in Internationales Afrikaforum 1986:57-58).

It is also clear that the political leaders in Africa were themselves so uncertain of their positions as state leaders that they would, in principle, not support OAU action against any member state, since such action could well be taken against themselves next time. This situation made sure that the OAU was toothless, allowing conflict in Africa to continue.

In the immediate post-Cold War period, the OAU was still firmly rooted in its ideal to protect state sovereignty and its unwillingness to intervene in the internal conflicts of member states. Yet, many of the conflicts that Africans were trying to deal with were internal and deadly. They also threatened to destabilise neighbouring states. Its stance on sovereignty was perhaps the main weakness of the OAU when it came to conflict management, and one that threatened to render the Organisation irrelevant in the new international environment. Indeed, the Organisation's earlier stance in countries like Mozambique, meant that it had little relevance

to the resolution of the conflict in the country. The OAU would soon realise that its political stance did not suit the post-Cold War climate. It thus slackened its approach, admitting that sovereignty could no longer be seen as absolute (*Cf. Olonisakin February 2000:3*).

The above gives a closer description of OAU action in its own circle. OAU action outside of the intentions of the Charter, yet still in the Africa context, are naturally intertwined with this.

In 1993 the OAU assumed greater responsibility for conflict management on the continent. At the 1993 OAU Summit in Cairo, the OAU Central Institution and the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution were established (further referred to as the Mechanism). Although the OAU principle of non-interference in internal affairs was restated, the Mechanism also was also charged with the task of dealing with internal conflicts in the region. Prior to the establishment of the Mechanism, the OAU had created a Division of Conflict Management in 1992, with its own budget within the Secretariat. Overall, there has been optimism that the Mechanism will fare much better than the OAU Commission on Mediation, Reconciliation and Arbitration, which was established in the 1960's and was expected to be the Organisation's main instrument for conflict management. However, the Commission appeared to have been doomed from the start, as it did not address the practical realities of the region (*Cf. Sesay 1998*). Additionally, its lengthy and costly judicial process made the Commission unattractive to many member states. The Commission was dissolved in 1977, with the OAU opting for other methods of conflict management, such as the use of good offices (*Olonisaken February 2000: 3*).

Indeed, the establishment of the Mechanism was an attempt by the OAU to shift from an ad hoc to a 'systematic' approach to conflict resolution (*Cf. Report of the Cairo Consultation on the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention May 1994:19*). At the core of the Mechanism is the understanding that, while early warning and conflict prevention lie at the heart of the OAU's conflict management objectives, there may be a need for peacekeeping and peacebuilding in situations where conflicts are already present. This is a clear indication of the Organisation's attempts to make itself relevant to the post-Cold War realities on the African continent. Evidence of this has been found in its response to the events in Rwanda and Burundi, among several other gestures (*Olonisaken February 2000:3*)

In Rwanda, the OAU played a prominent role in efforts to reach a settlement between the government and the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). This was initially done through mediation efforts between 1990 and 1992, of which the end result was the establishment of an OAU observer force to monitor the cease-fire. The OAU was also active in the Arusha peace process in 1993. The OAU force was reluctantly evacuated in 1994, when the much larger UN force left the scene – revealing one of the main weaknesses of the Organisation: that even when it is willing, it may not have the capacity to act. In Burundi, the OAU also deployed an observer mission in 1994 and appointed a special envoy to the country. The mission was terminated, following the coup of July 1996 (*Cf.* Report of the Joint OAU Task Force on Peacemaking and Peacekeeping in Africa, March 1998). The subsequent institution of sanctions against Buyoya's military regime was a clear indication that the OAU had turned a corner in its approach to conflict management on the continent.

The OAU, however, was still plagued by old problems, some of which related to the interests of its leaders, and others which are the natural consequences of managing an Organisation of this magnitude. Although the idea that the Organisation was a club of corrupt and autocratic leaders is gradually dissipating – given the emergence of more democratically inclined states – it is still possible for the personal interests of some leaders to affect their response to certain conflict situations. It was often thought that non-democratic leaders would find it difficult to oppose the internal conduct of another state whose rulers violate the human rights of the citizens. Additionally, even if all countries were to imbibe democratic practices, it is difficult to achieve consensus in an Organisation consisting of 53 member states, where each country has its own interests and its security priorities might be different from the next – and this is bound to affect the way it responds to conflict or crises in each sub-region – it is likely that groups of states that share borders and the same security concerns will evolve somewhat similar methods of addressing their security needs including their responses to conflict or impending or actual crises in the sub-region.

6.8 The establishment of the African Union

In 1999 the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU in Sirte in Libya, made way for a new continental Organisation by adopting the Constitutive Act (see Appendix 6) of the AU in Lome on 11 July 2000, in terms of the Sirte Declaration of 9 September 1999. It began with the acceptance of a proposal which Col. Gaddafi made to the Algiers Summit in July 1999, to hold an extraordinary session “to discuss ways and means of making the OAU effective” (AHG/Dec.140(xxxv) in Baimu and Sturman 2003:1)(see Appendice 3,4,5,6). Thereafter, he presented the African Heads of State gathered in Sirte on 9 September 1999, with his grandiose (and patently unrealistic) vision for a “United States of Africa”, with a single army, currency and powerful leadership. (Baimu and Sturman 2003:1). Member states agreed to a more appropriate revamping of the OAU into an “African Union’ with a new Constitutive Act to strengthen and update the Organisation’s scope and mandate (Sirte Declaration, 9/9/1999). South Africa had a firm hand in drafting of the Constitutive Act, which placed emphasis on the advancement of human rights, democracy and good governance. Ironically this focus was the antithesis of the terms on which Col. Gaddafi had ruled his own country for three decades. Nevertheless, his desire to take credit for the African Union was revealed by the number of Libyan envoys lobbying at the Lusaka Summit of 2001 for the launch to be held in Sirte. It undoubtedly also accounts for promises by Libya to pay the outstanding membership fees of eleven member states, to restore their voting rights at the Lusaka Summit (Baimu and Sturman 2003:2)

Libya’s influence among member states more generally was evident from the position taken by the OAU to lobby the UN Security Council on Libya’s behalf. Resolutions calling for sanctions against Libya to be lifted were passed at every OAU Summit from 1997 onwards. As its newest member of the OAU, South African President Thabo Mbeki had to obtain Col. Gaddafi’s ‘blessing’ for the AU launch in Durban, in a visit to Libya in June 2002. Informed speculation was that Gaddafi only agreed to this on condition that Libya be accepted into NEPAD (Baimu and Sturman 2003:2).

Libya surprised the Assembly in Durban with a range of proposed amendments to the Constitutive Act, including a single army for Africa, an AU Chairman with Presidential status and greater powers of intervention in member states – in other words, for an institution that came closer to a “United States of Africa”. Col Gadaffi argued that since the Assembly was

the supreme institution of the AU it could simply adopt these amendments and refer them to parliaments for subsequent approval. In his position as chairman, President Mbeki made the procedural argument that according to Rule 8 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly, items proposed by a member state must be submitted 60 days before the session (*Cf. Gaddafi's Grand Plan. 2000:4*).

Despite protestations to the contrary by Libya, the proposed amendments to the Constitutive Act were not received and distributed ahead of the Summit in conformance with this requirement. The subsequent decision by the Assembly was that proposals for amendment first be examined by the Executive Council (in accordance with Article 32 of the Act) and submitted for consideration by an Extraordinary Session of the Assembly to be held in 6 month's time. Speculation at the time was that this session would be held in Libya (Baimu and Sturman 2003:3).

It transpired that Libya hosted the Extraordinary Executive Council meeting in December 2002, but that the Extraordinary Heads of State and Government Assembly was held in Addis Ababa two months later. By all accounts the Tripoli Executive Council meeting conceded little more than the opportunity for Col. Gaddafi to reiterate his case, while the substance of the proposals was referred to an ad hoc ministerial group that subsequently met in Sun City, South Africa in January 2002. It was here that Libya's more controversial proposals were watered down, for example, the amendment to article 4 (h): "crimes against humanity as well as in cases of unrest or external aggression in order to restore peace and stability to the Members of the Union;" became "crimes against humanity as well as a serious threat to legitimate order to restore peace and stability in the Member State of the Union upon the recommendation of the Peace and Security Council" (Baimu and Sturman 2003:4).

The Heads of State and Government of the AU meeting in their first extraordinary session on 3 February 2003 adopted without any debate a number of changes to the Constitutive Act (the Act). The changes followed the recommendations of the AU Executive Council. (The amendments enter into force thirty days after deposit of the instruments of ratification by a two third majority of the AU member states. The large number of states that participated in the extraordinary session and the fact that the amendments were adopted without debate appears to indicate widespread support and prompt entry into force of such amendments is to be expected Baimu and Sturman 2003:3).

The changes to the Act include the addition of three new objectives aimed at ensuring more effective participation of women in decision-making, development and promotion of common policies and encouraging participation of the African Diaspora in the AU. There are also three novel principles related to the right of the union to intervene in situations where legitimate order is under threat, restraint of member states to enter into agreements which are incompatible with the principles of the African Union as well as prohibition of the use of the territory of member state to subvert other states. Other amendments include the elevation of Kiswahili as an official language of the Union and proscription of a member state to renounce its membership to the AU. The other changes are mostly institutional in nature. Particularly worthy of mention is the addition of a new article providing for the Peace and Security Council (PSC) (Baimu and Sturman 2003:3).

This act aimed at promoting solidarity, political and socio-economic integration, peace, democracy, sustainable development and human rights in Africa. The AU will evolve from the OAU and the AEC into one unified institution. By adopting the Constitutive Act during the Lome Summit, the African leadership had taken a bold and important step towards the renewal and regeneration of Africa in order to respond to the new challenges facing Africa in a new regional Organisational form. This process unfold in a period when South Africa joined the Troika of OAU/AU leadership in 2001 and assumed the Chair of the OAU/AU in 2002.

While upholding sovereign equality and independence, it is envisaged that the African Union will in the long term lead African countries towards developing a common defence policy, a single currency, market synergies, uniform legislation and the softening of borders.

The creation of the AU and the adoption of the Constitutive Act of the African Union was an important milestone in the process of creating political continental unity and the African Economic Community. From an African point of view it was seen as major achievement of the African leaders and a triumph for Pan-Africanism. It was envisaged that the AU would be a much stronger Organisation than the OAU (see Appendix 6).

Amongst the new principles of the Union are – the right of the Union to intervene in a member state, respect for democratic principles, human rights and good governance,

promotion of social justice and promotion of gender equality. Its development foci are similar to those of the LPA. Yet nowhere in the Constitutive Act is NEPAD mentioned.

The new Organisational structure (*Cf.* Constitutive Act of the African Union October 2001:6-16) of the new union constitutes:

- **The assembly**

The heads of government of all member states constitute the Assembly, the supreme decision making institution of the union. The Assembly meets once a year at an annual summit of the AU at which a chairman is elected. It makes decisions by consensus, failing which, decision is reached by two-thirds majority. Its functions are to determine common policies of the union, establish other supporting institutions, consider requests for membership, adopt the budget, give directives on the management of conflicts, war and other emergency situations, and to appoint and terminate the appointment of judges of the Court of Justice. It also determines appropriate sanctions against member states that do not comply with AU decisions and policies or who fail to pay membership fees.

- **The Executive Council**

Ministers of Foreign Affairs make up this council, which is accountable to the Assembly. It co-ordinates and takes decisions on matters such as foreign trade, social security, food and agriculture, communications, health, education and immigration. The Executive Council prepares material for discussion and approval by the Assembly.

- **The Permanent Representatives Committee**

This committee is composed of country representatives or ambassadors to the AU and is responsible for preparing the work of the Executive Council and acting on its instructions. It will be stationed at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

- **The Commission**

This is the secretariat of the AU and is composed of a chairman, a deputy and eight commissioners. They will operate from AU headquarters and handle administrative functions and the implementation of union decisions. It is the central communication institution and is responsible for co-ordinating meetings and activities of the AU structures. States wishing to attain or renounce membership of the union do so by informing the Commission chairman.

- **Specialised Technical Committees**

There will be specialised committees dealing with the rural economy; monetary and financial matters; trade and immigration; industry, science and technology; transport and communications; health, labour and social affairs; and education and culture. They will set up and co-ordinate projects and programmes of the union.

- **The Pan-African Parliament**

The Parliament will be made up for elected representatives from member states nominated by the five regions in Africa. The body will ensure the participation of people on the ground in the work of the AU, particularly in areas of development and economic integration. The powers and functions of the Parliament are still to be determined by the Assembly.

- **The Court of Justice**

The court will be responsible for pronouncing on human rights abuses in African states. A statute or legal framework will be set up within which it will operate.

- **The Economic, Social and Cultural Council**

This is an advisory council composed of professional and civic representatives.

- **The Financial Institutions**

Three institutions – the African Central Bank, the African Monetary Fund and the African Investment Bank – will be set up to provide funding for AU projects and programmes. The regulations governing these institutions are still to be defined.

- **The Peace and Security Council**

It is envisaged that the council will have 15 members who will be responsible for monitoring and intervening in conflicts. An early-warning mechanism is to be set up to alert the council about possible threats to security on the continent. It is to be financed by a peace fund. A pre-stationed African force will act on instructions of the council and a “group of elders” will act as an advisory institution.

6.9 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the inherent characteristics and complexities of Third World states, the task of the OAU in Africa, and the division in the OAU ranks. This has formed the basis for a comprehensive understanding of the problems the OAU had to face in Africa and encompasses the different facets of co-operation and stability.

An exposition of the OAU’s attempts to handle economic and inter-state conflict challenges in Africa was also provided.

What emerged from this analysis is the evidence that since independence the economies of most African states have been dominated by a series of financial crises; and largely characterised by sluggish performance. A combination of internal and external factors have been responsible for this state of affairs. The former include the pursuit of ill-advised economic policies, lack of financial resources, deficiencies in institutional and physical infrastructures, insufficient managerial/ administrative capacity, often leading to rampant corruption, inadequate human resource development, political instability, disparities in urban and rural development aggravated by ecologically unfriendly agricultural policies and exacerbated by a population boom. External factors include adverse terms of trade, a decline in financial flows, a decrease in commodity prices and high debt and debt-servicing

obligations. Although the international community is attempting to adopt co-ordinated programmes towards Africa aimed at ensuring economic growth, the African States have come to the conclusion that indigenous solutions are also possible and even preferable. The founding of an AEC and later NEPAD under the auspices of the OAU and the AU are the most significant development to date in this field.

It should be recalled that economic development was one of the principal concerns of the OAU and hence finds expression in the OAU Charter. Article 2(1)(b) thereof proclaims the need of African states to co-ordinate and intensify ... “co-operation efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa”, while Article 20 makes provision for specialised commissions to accomplish these functions.

The establishment of the AU and its structures were also explained. The AU Treaty is an ambitious, perhaps over ambitious, project that reflects the global trend towards regional economic integration. In addition, it is an indication of the readiness of African States to confront and solve their economic problems through indigenous solutions and turn themselves away from a reliance on aid and economic policies foisted upon them by external bodies. However, there cannot be any doubt that this will be a long-term proposition as many obstacles still need to be overcome and even the lengthy period set by the AEC Treaty may come to be seen as unduly optimistic. The success of the AU will depend to a large measure on the political attitude of the member states, particularly whether they will be willing to surrender some control over their financial and economic affairs. Enmities and rivalries will have to be set aside. The weakness and mismanagement of many African economies are obvious difficulties. But neither should legal problems be underestimated. The diversity of legal systems and the different national commercial and company law codes will not facilitate co-operation and harmonisation. Moreover, it would seem that many such laws, including conflict of laws rules, are so antiquated that they will be unable to meet the challenges ahead. Law reform, usually a painfully slow process, on a vast scale appears necessary as a condition precedent for the success of the AU. Nevertheless, these difficulties should not be exaggerated since the member countries of the EC overcame similar hurdles and the EU continues to evolve towards a longer term project for the future. In principle the Constitutive Act of the AU seems sound enough to fulfil its objectives but whether it will function in practice remains to be seen and much will depend on the various protocols forthcoming and

the creativity of the Court of Justice. Certainly the Protocol on the jurisdiction of the Court is a priority.

The original aim of providing for the right to intervene in the Au Act was informed by the desire to protect the individual by allowing intervention in situations of grave violations of human rights including crimes against humanity, genocide and war crimes. The amendment to article 4 (h) brings back the idea of protection of regimes and not individuals. In a sense it constitutes a step backward in the quest to enhance the protection of individuals. In a sense it constitutes a step backward in the quest to enhance the protection of individuals' rights against infringements by the state. While an intergovernmental Organisation like the AU is forced by its very nature to operate within the strictures of "lowest common denominator" politics, it should be wary of amending its founding instrument on the basis of diplomatic negotiating rather than sound legal principles.

The success of the AU will depend in large measure on the political will of the member states to put aside their differences, suppress the national interest, and co-operate through the Assembly and Council to attain the AU's objectives.

The next chapter will draw conclusions and evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the OAU in promoting economic co-operation, progress, peace and stability in Africa.