African Union and Intra-African Relations an Appraisal

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Abstracts

The article carried out an objective appraisal of African Union and Intra-African Relations. The article deduced African Union has become a pillar for intra-African Relations within the African region. That the precarious nature of the African region arising from high level of poverty, poor and bad governance, corruption, insecurity and lack of visionary leaders, and hinging on the premise that no nation can survive in isolation necessitated the imperative of intra-African states relations as facilitated by African Union. The article employed the use of secondary data which basically involve the review of existing literatures on the topic. The article is qualitative in nature and thus employed descriptive and analytical method for Data collection and analysis. For further understanding the article provided conceptual clarification of some concept that are repeatedly used in the subject matter. The theory of intergovernmentalism was adopted to explain the importance of intra-African state relations as the basis that ensure the level of stability African countries have for now. The paper concludes that the AU has demonstrated intentional efforts, through the introduction of different policies and programmes towards the realisation of African unity and fostering Intra-African relations. The paper recommends that governments at states levels that constitute the body of AU should imbibe the doctoring of the theory of Intergovermentalism by demonstrating unbiased commitment to the AU agreements at each of their summit.

Key Words: African Union, Intra-African Relations, Regional Integration intergoverntalism, Development,

Introduction

Following its transition from the Organisation of African Union (OAU) to African Union (AU), the African Union activities have been centred on fostering Intra-African relations through economic partnership among and within member states, deepened integration and strengthening cooperation for development. This is premised on the idea that continuous process of Intra- African relations and integration within the African continent may include African states in coordinated and intensified cooperation for development.

The role of the African Union (AU) in the promotion of unity and solidarity of its member states remains imperative with a view to achieving development in the continent. The AU is saddled with responsibility of attaining socio–economic integration through a concerted effort to alleviate poverty and tackle corruption, to strengthening good governance through political process and civil rule which underscore transparency and accountability in the democratic system. Coordinate and intensify their cooperation and efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa.

The study found the use of intergovernmentalism theory suitable in the analysis of the subject matter. The theory holds that states and their government as the principal agents driving integration and policy-making to protect their geo-political interests and economic concerns of their constituencies. (Hoffman 1982, Taylor 1991). Also the theory considers integration as a series of bargaining between heads of government of the leading states in the African region. (Mattli, 1999;78).

This study therefore is carried out to appraise the AU efforts, policies and programmes to achieve intra-African relations in other to achieve its objective. To identify and evaluate the impact series of AU programmes to strengthen Intra-African relations, To discuss the problems and prospect of the AU policies and programmes towards fostering Intra-African relation. As well as proposing workable recommendations to aid the AU efforts towards the realisation of inclusive African integration through a well mapped out policies and programmes on Intra-African relations.

Conceptual Clarifications

The African Union

The African Union is the successor organisation to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the African Economic Community (AEC). The OAU was established on 25 May 1963, with its headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. At that Conference of Independent African States 30 of the 32 independent African states signed the OAU Charter. The remaining two, Togo and Morocco signed before the end of that year. Morocco withdrew from the OAU in 1985, after admission of Western Sahara. It is now the only African state that does not belong to the AU.

The African Union (AU) was officially launched in July 2002 in Durban, South Africa, following a decision in September 1999 by its predecessor, the OAU to create a new continental organisation to build on its work. The decision to re-launch Africa's pan-African organisation was the outcome of a consensus by African leaders that in order to realise Africa's potential, there was a need to refocus attention from the fight for decolonisation and ridding the continent of apartheid, which had been the focus of the OAU, towards increased intra-African relations for cooperation and integration of African states to drive Africa's growth and economic development.

The objectives outlined in the OAU Charter were to promote the unity and solidarity of African states; coordinate and intensify their cooperation and efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa; defend their sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence; eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa; promote international cooperation, giving due regard to the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; coordinate and harmonise members` political, diplomatic, economic, educational, cultural, health, welfare, scientific, technical and defence policies.

Intra-African Relations

Intra-African relations could basically be defined as the relationship between and among African states. It is majorly to foster development within among the African states, to facilitate political, economic, trade, military, cultural and social development. According to Mathin (2021). Intra-African relations are critical to

the development of the respective African states in particular, and the continent in general. At the political and security end of the relations, African states need each other to reinforce political stability and security in the region. As a result of the porous borders within Africa, and governments' inability to secure those borders, positive relations between neighbouring states are critical to stability and development in the region. It is often the case that most serious threats of states within Africa start from the fringes of those states. Thus, collaborative effort by neighbouring states to ensure the establishment of effective democratic political systems and good governance is imperative.

Intra-African Relations could also have some security benefits as states watch out for their neighbours and disrupt any rebel activities across their common borders. Intra-African Relations basically involves the weak-links in respective African states and their impact on the continent's institutional architecture, security and economic development on the continent. Intra-African cooperation is multifaceted. This explains that with reference to bilateral contacts between states or often between leaders that are sometimes close and at others less so and with reference to intergovernmental organizations that are sometimes close and at others less so. At the continental level, those organizations include the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and its successor organization, the African Union (AU), as well as regional economic communities like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) or the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The chapter also investigates the drivers and obstacles for political and economic cooperation and integration and shows how leaders benefit from the status quo

Literature Review

The African Union

The Constitutive Act of the African Union was adopted during the Lomé Summit of the OAU on 11 July 2000. The Lusaka Summit in 2001 (37th Ordinary Session) subsequently agreed to a transition period of one year (with the option to extend this period if necessary) while member states and the General Secretariat embarked upon intensive consultations to prepare for the inaugural meeting of the African Union in Durban, South Africa, in July 2002. The Lomé Summit in 2000 also acknowledged the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and

Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA) as creating a synergy between the various activities undertaken by the OAU/AEC that should help to consolidate the work in the areas of peace, security, stability, development and co-operation. A subsequent Memorandum of Understanding on the CSSDCA was adopted by the First Standing Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa, held in Durban in July 2002, as part of the OAU/AU Summit. Within the AU the CSSDCA initiative has largely been overtaken by events and the unit dealing with it has been renamed the African Citizens Directorate Organisation (CIDO), located within the office of the Chairperson. (Thomas:2023)

The African Union Objectives

In general, the African Union objectives are more comprehensive than those of the OAU. The objectives of the African Union, as contained in the Constitutive Act (Article 3), are to:

- Achieve greater unity and solidarity between African countries and the peoples of Africa;
- Defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of its Member States;
- Accelerate the political and socio-economic integration of the continent;
- Promote and defend African common positions on issues of interest to the continent and its peoples;
- Encourage international co-operation, taking due account of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- Promote peace, security, and stability on the continent;
- Promote democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance;
- Promote and protect human and peoples' rights in accordance with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and other relevant human rights instruments;
- Establish the necessary conditions which enable the continent to play its rightful role in the global economy and in international negotiations;
- Promote sustainable development at the economic, social and cultural levels as well as the integration of African economies;
- Promote co-operation in all fields of human activity to raise the living standards of African peoples;

- Co-ordinate and harmonise the policies between the existing and future Regional Economic Communities for the gradual attainment of the objectives of the Union;
- Advance the development of the continent by promoting research in all fields, in particular in science and technology; and
- Work with relevant international partners in the eradication of preventable diseases and the promotion of good health on the continent.

Structure of the African Union

The Constitutive Act of the African Union provides for an Assembly of Heads of State and Government as the supreme organ of the Union which, as with the OAU Summit, originally met annually, an arrangement subsequently changed to allow for two regular meetings per year in January and July. The Executive Council is composed of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Member States and meets twice a year in ordinary session, similar to its predecessor, the OAU Council of Ministers. The Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC), composed of Permanent Representatives to the Headquarters of the Union in Addis Ababa (usually the head of African states` diplomatic representative to Ethiopia) meets every month. The general practice is that the Assembly of Heads of State and Government occurs after the Executive Council meeting, which in is held after the Permanent Representative Committee meeting. (Thomas, 2019)

The Commission

The Commission serves as the secretariat of the Union. Article 2 of the Statutes of the Commission states that the Commission should be composed of a Chairperson, a Deputy Chairperson and eight Commissioners, although the Assembly may review this number. The Assembly determines the structure, functions, regulations and size of the Commission and elects the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Commission.

African Union and Intra-African Relations

The role of the African Union (AU) in the promotion of unity and solidarity of its member states remains imperative with a view to achieving development in the continent. The AU is saddled with responsibility of attaining socio–economic integration through a concerted effort to alleviate poverty and tackle corruption, to

strengthening good governance through political process and civil rule which underscore transparency and accountability in the democratic system. The Journal of African Union Studies (JoAUS: 2012), The economic objective of the AU and discusses the desirability to shift from intra-continental marketing to intercontinental trading and investment with other continents, diversification of her economies and strengthening of her common market, so as to impact positively to world trade and sustainable development goals. On continental peace and security, the AU also needs to adopt a stern approach against terrorism pervading the continent through legal and military options to curtail the menace. (JoAUS: 2012),

In spite of the efforts of AU and by extension other regional organisation on Intra-African relation, AU according to Journal of African Union Studies (2012) Identifies challenges of insecurity, incessant conflicts, overdependence on foreign Aids, corruption, political instability, inept leadership, inadequate infrastructural development, as bane of good governance and development confronting member states of AU. The paper proposes pragmatic steps to be explored by AU in curbing various challenges in a bid to improving the standard and quality of states and the African peoples.

Intra-Africa relation is also shaped by continental and regional institutions and agreements. This makes the African Union (AU), the continental institution, a critical bedrock in understanding the relations among these states. (JoAUS 2012), The Constitutive Act establishes the framework within which African states will engage each other as they focus on building a strong regional organization to strengthen the respective states and engage the rest of the world effectively. The Center contributes to the achievement of this goal by working closely with institutions within the AU. According to CESDOSED researches (2023) intra-African trade and economic relations. It examines the situation from historical and cultural perspectives, and how these drivers inhibit or potentially enhance Intra-African relations. (CESDOSED,2023).

Below are List of the Programme Initiated by AU to Boost Intra-African Relations

1. **Boosting Intra-African Trade (BIAT)**

One of the major programme of the AU to foster Intra-African relations is the January 2011, AU Summit endorsed the recommendation of the 6th Ordinary

Session of the AU Ministers of Trade held in Kigali from 29 October 2 November 2010 to fast track the establishment of a Pan-African Free Trade, besides The January 2012 African Union Summit of Heads of State and Government focused on the theme of "Boosting Intra- Africa Trade" (BIAT). The choice of the theme was both appropriate and timely, given the challenges that were facing the trade, and the need to come up with strategies to improve the situation. Journal of African Union Studies ((JoAUS, 2016)

I. Trade is widely accepted as an important engine of economic growth and development. There are many regions and countries of the world that have been able to lift their people from poverty to prosperity through trade. In Africa however, trade has not served as a potent instrument for the achievement of rapid and sustainable economic growth and development due mainly to three interrelated basic features: size, structure, and direction. At around 3%, the share of Africa in global trade is insignificant.

II. Another key feature of Africa's trade, which has had some adverse implications for its impact on economic growth and development, is its high external orientation and relatively low level of intra-regional trade. Intra-African trade stands at around 13% compared to approximately 60%, 40 %, 30% intra-regional trade that has been achieved by Europe, North America and ASEAN respectively. Even if allowance is made for Africa's unrecorded informal cross-border trade, the total level of intra-African trade is not likely to be more than 20%, which is still lower than that of other major regions of the world. (JoAUS: 2016).

III. That African countries do not trade much with each other has meant that they have been unable to fully harness the synergies and complementarities of their economies and take full advantage of the economies of scale and other benefits (such as income and employment generation) that greater market integration would have provided. There are cases where products and services could have been sourced competitively from other African countries but were procured from outside the continent.

IV. Due to the fact that Africa does the bulk of its trade with the outside world and the exports are heavily concentrated on primary commodities, the continent has

been particularly vulnerable to external macroeconomic shocks and protectionist trade policies. This is evident from the recent global economic and financial crisis which, although not of the making of African countries, has had adverse impact on the continents economic performance. Thus a major lesson to be drawn from the systemic shocks in the global economy is the need for Africa to promote intra-regional trade.

V. Boosting intra-African trade and deepening regional market integration constitute a necessary response to the challenges facing Africa in the multilateral trading system and the global economy. The boosting of intra-African trade and the deepening of Africa's market integration, by fostering competition among African countries, will assist in enhancing their capacity and prepare them to compete more effectively on the global market.

VI. The Action Plan for Boosting Intra-Africa Trade specifically aims at deepening Africans market integration and significantly increasing the volume of trade that African countries undertake among themselves. To effectively achieve this, the plan is divided into seven clusters namely, Trade Facilitation, Trade Policy, Productive capacities, Trade related Infrastructure, Trade Finance, Trade Information and Factor Market integration. Implementing of the actions in each cluster is expected to significantly contribute to Boosting Intra African Trade. Journal of African Union Studies ((JoAUS, 2016).

2. African Union (Au) Passport to Spur Intra-Africa Trade

The African Union Passport that was expected to be officially launched during the 27th African Union Summit in Kigali, Rwanda on 14th July, 2016 is considered a prodigious triumph for the continent and it will ease free movement of people, spur economic growth and development as well as promote Intra-African trade. - Regional trade integration has long been a strategic objective for Africa yet, despite some success in eliminating non-tariff barriers within regional communities, the African market remains highly fragmented. A range of non-tariff and regulatory barriers still raise transaction costs and limit the movement of goods, services, people and capital across borders throughout Africa. Journal of African Union Studies ((JoAUS, 2016)

With the promotion of Intra-African trade, it will boost and ease doing business within African countries which later will reduce the trade deficit among African nations. According to the Rwanda's Foreign Affairs Minister Louise Mushikiwabo, the issuance of African passport is among the African strategic initiative intended to come as a possible rescue to disband all the restrictions to move which will eventually create a conducive environment for Africans to trade with each other. "Rwanda is ready for the AU Passport issuance. Other countries will also be working towards implementation of this decision. The free movement of people in Africa will spur our economic growth," she said during a press conference today 14 July 2016 organised in the sidelines of the African Union Summit currently holding at the Kigali Convention Center (KCC), in Rwanda. Journal of African Union Studies ((JoAUS: 2016).

3. Single Currency for African States

Another major drive by African Union to foster intra-African relations is the proposition of a single currency for African states. The African Central Bank (ACB) is one of the three financial institutions of the African Union. It will, over time, take over the responsibilities of the African Monetary Fund. The creation of the ACB, to be completed by 2028, was first agreed upon in the 1991 Abuja Treaty. The 1999 Sirte Declaration called for a speeding up of this process, with creation by 2020. (Muller, 2023)

When it is fully implemented via Pan-African Parliament legislation, the ACB will be the sole issuer of the African single currency (African Monetary Union/Afro), will become the banker of African Governments, will be the banker to Africa's private and public banking institutions, will regulate and supervise the African banking industry, and will set the official interest and exchange rates in conjunction with the African Government's administration. With the African Monetary Union (AMU) is the proposed creation of an economic and monetary union for the countries of the African Union, administered by the African Central Bank. Such a union would call for the creation of a new unified currency, similar to the euro; the hypothetical currency is sometimes referred to as the afro or afriq. (Adeyemi:2015). The single African currency is to be composed of currency units made up of regional union reserve bank currency units of which are made up country specific currencies (The Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) - Northern

Afriq, Southern African Development Community (SADC) - Southern Afriq, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) - Western Afriq or ECO, East African Community (EAC) - Eastern Afriq, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) - Central Afriq etc.). (Adeyemi: 2015). Furtherance to this proposition, the African Union conveyed a consultative forum to assess the implementation of the African Union Financial Institutions (AUFIs). The meeting held on 13- 15 December 2023 in Lusaka, Zambia gathered participants from the Ministries of Finance, Central Banks, African Union Organs and Specialised Agencies, Regional Economic Communities, Association of African Central Banks, African Securities Exchanges Association, and development partners look into the economic and political challenges impeding the Member States ability to sign and ratify legal instruments establishing the financial institutions, constraints that restrain the continent to collectively pool their sovereignty in order to mutualise their efforts and Resources for the establishment the AUFIs. African Union Financial Institutions (AUFIs, 2023).

Theoretical Framework

There are various theories that are applicable to this subject matter, theories like functionalism, liberalism, neo-functionalism and others. However, the study found the adoption and application of the intergovernmentalism theory as most suitable in providing workable analysis and objective appraisal of the African Union and Intra-African relations.

Intergovernmentalism theory holds that member states and their government as the principal agent driving integration and policy-making to protect their geo-political interests and economic concern of their constituencies. (Hoffman 1982, Taylor 1991). The major proponent of the theory was Stanley Hoffman and later advanced by Andrew Moravesik who submitted that states government controls the level and speed of on integration. (Rosamund, 2000). That is, the commitment of states towards a true regional integration is crucial to any international organisations efforts. According to Obiageli et (2017) the theory explains interstate cooperation and especially regional integration and Intra-state relations as a function of the alignment of state interests and preference coupled with power. In Mattli (1999:78) submission, he posited that intergovernmentalism considers integration as a series of bargaining between heads of government of the leading

states in the African region. That is it requires a situation whereby political leaders sacrifice part of their countries' sovereignty to attain common goal for all.(sheriff et al, 2017: 03).

The relevance of this theory to the study is based on the premise that for African Union to achieve her effort on Intra-African relations, African leaders must be truly committed to the course and initiative of the African Union. The study observed that most African leaders are just paying lip service to the discussion and agreement of the AU submits. Most African leaders still vigorously pursue their individual interest as against the interest of all. Following the postulations of proponents of the theory of intergovernmentalism to strengthen Intra-African relations, states or countries under the African union must demonstrate unbiased commitment to the programmes and policies of the AU, such as the single passport, the BIAT, the single currency proposition, political intervention to discourage military incursion and others.

Challenges of Intra-African Relations under the African Union

The African Union powers were too weak and its influence inadequate to deal with the internal and external conflicts, poor governance, human rights abuses, poverty, and underdevelopment from which much of Africa suffered. The AU was also considered incapable of meeting the challenges of globalization.

Other major challenges confronting the AU are failure to Implement Many of Its Decisions, failure to Hold Leaders Accountable, failure to Improve Intra-Regional Trade and failure to wean AU off External financial Dependence. Many of the AU members continue to nurture fear of insecurity in relation to the BIAT, international Passport and single currency.

Poor policy advice, resource deficiencies and a lack of institutional and physical infrastructure together with corruption, political instability and rampant underdevelopment served to hamper much of the socio-economic development pursued by the OAU.

Another major Challenges confronting the AU in her Intra-African relation effort is lack of commitment on the part of the leaders of states, government of countries

that constitute the AU. There is lack of cohesion to adhere to the resolutions of the AU submit to foster Intra-African relationship. Many of the leaders rely more on the China and other western traditional allied for trade and economic exchange above their AU member counterpart.

Success of the AU and Intra-African Relations

In spite of the challenges confronting the AU, the body has continued to make remarkable progress in line with the aims and objectives. The AU has enhanced the agency of African states, governments, and political class in the international arena in many ways. The AU serves as a forum for African governments to coordinate their policies and decisions on key international issues. It does this by convening summits every winter and summer for representatives of African states to discuss pertinent African as well as global issues and, if possible, take a common position.

The introduction and proposition of BIAT (Boosting Intra-African Trade), the single passport member states for ease of doing business within and among the states. The proposition a single currency. AU at call for the creation of a new unified currency, similar to the euro; the hypothetical currency is sometimes referred to as the afro or afriq.

A major achievement of the AU has been the gradual but steady socialization of the African political class to accept liberal values and norms as the basis for interstate cooperation. The promotion of liberal values by the AU represents a remarkable shift of approach to pan-Africanism, African leaders, who are often anti-West and anti-liberal, have historically monopolized the discourse on pan-Africanism and dominated continental unity scene.

Discussion of Findings

- In the course of carrying out this research study the study find out that the AU in line with her objective of achieving greater unity and solidarity between African countries and the peoples of Africa. Remains a significant international organisation to foster Intra-African relations.
- That the series of the policies and programmes inaugurated and proposed at the AU summit are all geared towards achieving a more impactful Intra-

African relations if leaders of states government can commit themselves to these initiatives.

- That most of the challenges confronted by AU in fostering Intra-African relations are posed by member state. As member state do not commit themselves to furthering actions on the agreement reached at the summit. It appears that all discussions dies as they depart from each submit. Everyone goes to do their normal business of governance without recourse to any AU agreement.
- That there are prospect in AU and Intra-African relations, if all the proposed policies and programmes as discussed above are embraced by all member state. That AU remains a body through intergovernmentalism is realisable in achieving common goal for Africa.

Conclusion

In the final analysis and appraisal, the study concludes that the AU has demonstrated intentional efforts, through the introduction of different policies and programmes towards the realisation of African unity and fostering Intra-African relations. The AU has enhanced the agency of African states, governments, and political class in the international arena in many ways. First, the AU serves as a forum for African governments to coordinate their policies and decisions on key international issues. It does this by convening summits every winter and summer for representatives of African states to discuss pertinent African as well as global issues and, if possible, take a common position.

Recommendations

The study recommends that governments at states levels that constitute the body of AU should imbibe the doctoring of the theory of intergovermentalism by demonstrating unbiased commitment to the AU agreements at each of their summit.

Also, funding is central and crucial to the implementation of the AU programmes and policies. Therefore states are urged to commit themselves to onward and timely remittance of dues to allow for smooth running of the union.

The AU should continue with the programmes initiated with required efforts, as all the programmes if fully implemented would go a long to the realisation of Intra-African relations.

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