



For the African Union, Failure Is Not An Option Say Delegates

By Bernard Otabil and Adwoa Asiedu

Participants attending the Thursday plenary on "Building an effective African Union" urged member countries to show firm commitments to addressing integration at the grassroot level if the dream of having an African Union is to become a reality.

Dr. Kwesi Botchwey, a former Finance Minister of Ghana and now Director of Africa Research and Programs at Harvard University chaired the plenary, with contributions from Ambassador Said Djinnit, Assistant Secretary-General, OAU, Prof Maria Nzomo, University of Nairobi and Dr Tajudeen Abdul-Raheem, Secretary-General, Pan-African Movement.

Ambassador Said Djinnit urged stakeholders to do a lot more in ensuring that there are common values that could be pursued by member governments to ensure that the Union works to the advantage of all.

"I strongly believe that an effective African Union should be built on a solid ground on a set of shared values in the areas of security, stability, development and cooperation," he said.

Ambassador Said Djinnit supported his argument with examples from other



Ambassador Said Djinnit, Assistant Secretary-General, OAU

regions. He noted that the European Union establishment was made possible only when European countries agreed on common values to sustain their common endeavour," he said

"Unity based on geography cannot be sustained," he said.

Discussant Dr. Tajudeen Abdul-Raheem presented perhaps the most chilling and moving real examples of the frustration Africans face when moving from one country to another within the continent.

According to Dr Abdul-Raheem, it should be fairly easy to move from Cape Town to Cairo without encountering the very many passport controls that cause frustrations for most travellers.

Recounting his personal experiences, he stressed that the free movement of people within the European Community should be emulated in Africa.

Participants attending the session gave support to the views expressed by the presenters urging more Pan-African ideals to form and sustain the African Union.

A delegate contributing to the discussion urged that there should be policies and structures in place to ensure that a person elected to the proposed African Parliament has a Pan-African spirit.

Just who should be elected to this proposed African Parliament was the subject of much discussion among the delegates. Some delegates said members of the proposed Parliament should be elected by the people in member countries, noting it will be difficult to influence the decision of the masses if the elected representative to the par-

liament is believed to be out of tune with the objectives of integration.

The exchange on how to make the African Union a reality demonstrated that there is a wide consensus of approval for the idea. It was quite evident that African stakeholders are committed this time around to ensuring that a firm commitment is made to address the crippling problems of the continent through the integration.

Douglas Zormello, a delegate from Ghana, a partner with KPMG in Accra, expressed his satisfaction with the way the deliberations went and also the enthusiasm shown by participants.

"The process {of integration} must involve all stakeholders- the civil society, academia, policy makers and government. We should not be pessimistic about the Union. We must see the positive side of it and work towards achieving our goals", he said.

Dr Zormello however believes that divergence of values and objectives could prove very costly if not properly addressed in the formation of the Union. "We should identify common interests, prioritize our objectives and pursue these goals," he said.

The African Union: No need to create another OAU

By Doua Gouly

Participants in plenary session 8 showed very strong support for the presentations on the Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU). The mood was one of hope for great popular participation in the AU.

The presenters attracted the sympathetic attention of the participants in this session with the relevance of their comments. Notably, the desire expressed by Prof. Maria Nzomo of the University of Nairobi, in Kenya to see popular participation in the decision-making associated with the Union was roundly endorsed by the participants.

"The current perception of the African Union greatly risks making it like the OAU. The institutions already established remain the exclusive domain of Heads of State and Ministers. This has to be swiftly corrected through the creation of other core institutions, through which women, youth and the rest of civil

society can contribute to the operations of the Union. »

Prof. Avocksouma Djora of the University of N'djaména, in Chad, totally agreed with the views of his colleague from Kenya. He went even further and stated, « All the major decisions should be taken by referendum in the countries making up the Union. This has already been done in Europe and there is no reason why the same cannot happen in Africa. The Treaty of Maastricht invoked strong reactions from almost all the peoples of Europe. The African Union should also inspire such popular awareness and involvement. »

The Central African Minister of Public Works, Transport and the Environment, Hon. André Toby-Kotaza, also supported the views of his colleagues. «The time when leaders could make

decisions without consulting the people is past. The people have to be consulted at each stage of African integration. It is only in this way that they will feel involved in the life of the Union. »

Hon. Oumarou Ibrahim, a Deputy in the National Assembly of Niger, expressed similar sentiments. Agreeing with the principle of popular participation in the Union, he stressed that, « the composition of the Pan-African Parliament should take all African peoples into account. »

He added, «I think that popular representation should be established effectively at parliamentary level. Such inclusion will enable all Africans to feel a part of all phases of the operations of the Union. »

The participants felt, as did Prof. Nzomo, that «we should not fear the problem of finance for ensuring the presence of representatives of the

people in the institutions of the African Union ». In their view, the resources will come from the people themselves. »

« In fact, » observed Oumarou Ibrahim, « A lot of money is spent on wars and other conflicts while the people suffer from malnutrition and untreated diseases. Such issues have become their priorities. »

8 March 2002

International Women's Day

Five years for Transforming Transport in Africa

By *Norbert N. Ouendji*

Parallel to ADF III, the 12th Conference of African Ministers of Transport and Communications on Wednesday adopted a Plan of Action phased over a five-year period (2003-2007) aimed at transforming the transport and communications sector on the continent.

Basically, this Plan of Action, again called « The Way Forward », underscores private sector participation and market access liberalization as main objectives. The Forum has particularly urged organization of a workshop on air transport liberalization.

Emphasis has also been given to human resources development and the fight against poverty. On this last point, the Ministers have launched an appeal to the donor community, to help member States develop their socio-economic standards through infrastructure development and urban and rural services.

One of the main activities within the framework of proposals is a study on the impact of HIV/AIDS on transport and communications development and on awareness-raising campaigns.

Moreover, the Plan of Action proposes the setting up of a database on transport, promotion of intra-regional trade, free movement of people and goods inside and outside of the continent, and improvement of safety and security, among other recommendations. Environmental protection was also among the priorities, as well as establishment of policies that encourage trade along the identified corridors.

The contribution of N'guessan N'guessan, Economic Consultant for Transport and International Trade helped to highlight the urgency of this strategy. He revealed that harassment of all sorts on certain highways in West Africa can cause a loss of more than CFA 2 billion per year, that is the equivalent of the purchase price for around 50 vehicles.

The measures taken by the 42 States represented at the 12th Conference (including 26 Ministers) « are hopeful for the future of integration on the continent » affirmed Hamadou Hachim Koumare, who is in charge of the Transport Sector at ECA. He confirmed that « these pro-

posals will contribute to establishment of the African Union and implementation of the New Partnership for the Development of Africa (NEPAD) ».

To ensure effective implementation of the Plan, an annual assessment will be carried out in each sub-region.

The 12th Conference of Ministers of Transport and Communications, which was chaired by the Ethiopian Minister of Transport, is counting on support from OAU/AU and from NEPAD to realize their objectives. The Conference has also appealed to development partners for support to their efforts.

Art in service of the “spirit” and development

By *Maria Thundu*

Among the many topics being discussed at this week's ADF III, one that is not on the formal agenda is arts and culture and societal development.

To be fair, while the arts have not held centre-stage in the plenary sessions, it has definitely been part of the overall ADF III offerings this week with the on-going art exhibition in the Conference Centre and the African Mosaïque fashion and music gala hosted at the Sheraton Hotel Thursday evening.

There are those who would say that we should be spending the limited time and money available on the more “serious” issues of integration and African Union. But most artists, musicians and young people would disagree. For them, art, drama, music and literature are also of great human and national importance.

“The role of the arts in development is a very important one,” said Indrias Getachew, Ethiopian writer and photographer. “The arts create bridges between people and artists act as ambassadors to other cultures, creating awareness and appreciation of lifestyles and peoples across the continent,” he said.

Getachew's exhibition of photographs taken on Senegal's infamous Gorée Island, a major slave trading and holding centre in bygone days, is currently on display at the Alliance Ethio-Française, through 16 March.

His goal for the show, he said, was

Free Movement for Africa's Citizens A Must for Regional Integration

By *Marie-Noëlle Guichi*

The question of freedom of movement of people and goods in Africa was the center of the concerns of the majority of the participants in the session devoted to the Citizenship Thursday, with participants saying both are necessary if regional integration is to become a reality.

Several people offered personal stories of their experiences traveling from one African country to another.

For example, there was Chidi Anselm Odinkalu, who spoke of how he was blocked at the border – in Africa – his mother continent. An African residing in London, he said he waited two months to obtain an entry visa in Zimbabwe, being an African residing in London.

Another person spoke of the hassle encountered while in transit via Nairobi to attend ADF III. She said negotiated in vain for a visa so that she could exit the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport

and spend the night in a hotel during her overnight stay. Instead she was forced to sleep in the airport because “foreigners have been declared undesirable by Kenya's President Daniel Arap Moi.”

Odinkalu, who is the Senior Legal Officer, International Centre for Human Rights, said that a true African Union must include the concept of universal citizenship for Africans. In this regard, he said, one of the first concepts that must be studied is the fluidity of borders. “The best thing for Africa would be to issue a unique passport to which all the Africans could have access.”

It was an idea that many in the gathering supported, saying that it is unacceptable that the Africans are obliged to request an entry visa to Ethiopia, a country they say is a historical symbol for African Unity. It was in 1963 in Addis Ababa that African Heads of State signed the Charter of the Organization of African Unity.

to “capture the feel of Goree, to take people there,” adding that Gorée is an important historical centre for many from the African Diaspora, although most Africans, including many in his own country, are not aware of this place and its historical and spiritual significance.

“It's very unfortunate that we don't really know much about the history of those outside our own borders,” he said.

Art clearly has an important role to play in the area of development, agreed Gunther Cyranek, Information Officer at UNESCO who claims that art and music are of the people, and is not something just for the “elite.”

“Art is a medium for expressing identity. People have the ability and get the opportunity to give specific expressions,” which, he added, is why UNESCO supports young artists as much as possible.

In terms of regional integration, art is definitely one way to connect people across the continent. There is a long history in Africa of efforts in this regard, a lot of it supported by the OAU through various art festivals. Recently, SADC has been focusing on inter-regional cultural exchanges and devoting more attention to culture.

Next month, a new organization called the African Observatory of Cultural Policies enters the scene. Its mission is to



Indrias Getachew

enhance development of “national and cultural policies in the region and their integration in human development strategies through advocacy and promoting information exchange, research, capacity building and cooperation at the regional and international level.”

This Observatory was created with the help of such organizations as the OAU, UNESCO and the Ford Foundation, with an aim of creating a professional organization whose main concerns will be to assess the cultural needs of African countries, promote cultural life and be a resource centre for the continent.


EDITORIAL
**ADF III: Endings,
Beginnings**

Today's closing session will mark the end of a very successful ADF III and yet participants will leave Addis knowing that this ending only marks a beginning.

In the course of this week, which in reality was way too short to attend to all the subject matter that needed addressing, more than 1,000 participants from across the continent put forth their best efforts to tackle the issue of "Defining Priorities for Regional Integration". The realities of the transition to the African Union also got a fair share of the focus.

A common theme heard during many of the deliberations was that if Africa is to have a stable and prosperous future, integration and unity are indispensable.

Also addressed was the need to include all the "stakeholders"—those ordinary citizens who are directly affected by decisions and plans made by their leaders on their behalf.

One criticism of ADF III was the lack of attention paid to issues concerning women and youth, the first comprising more than 52 per cent of the continent's population in many countries, and the latter representing the majority of the African population and the continent's whole future.

It's been suggested that this ADF III conference should be considered as just a beginning of the dialogue required and specific plans need to be adopted in follow-up gatherings.

Yet, it is not enough to wait for the next organized conference to continue discussing the issues raised here. Delegates must take it upon themselves to return to these issues at home and in other forums. It will be a long, hard and sometimes uncomfortable engagement for achieving integration goals but the end results will justify the effort.

A frequent criticism made about conferences such as this is that there is so little follow-up. People come, they talk, they make recommendations. A report is made. The people leave. The reports become just another set of documents to add to the bookshelf.

But, there is a strong feeling that, by its very nature, this particular conference will be different. This is primarily because integration seems urgent and inevitable. The Union is actually coming about "late" on the Pan-African agenda. What is now needed is effective management of affairs, exceptional commitment from leaders, and the fullest participation of African peoples.

A common sentiment expressed that when it comes to these matters, for Africa, failure really is not an option.

Unity In Respecting Accords Key to Union Success

By Jérémie Sindayirwanya

To create the African Union is primarily an act of trust between our States.

This will demand that States respect the letter of the Constitutive Act of the Union, in which is invested with supranational competences with regards to justice, and the rules and regulation of regional economic infrastructure.

If this document is to be effective, all its members must respect it, said those taking part in Thursday's discussion on "The Roles for Supra-Regional Organizations and the UN in the African Union." Some participants were sceptical that this will happen.

Many were sceptical this will ever come to pass.

"Our States have already signed on

to thousands of legal instruments which they do not honour. This does not bode well for the Union" said Ms Maria Nzomo of the University of Nairobi. "It is absolutely essential to take note of two threats – legal and political – that could block the success of the Union."

The principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of member states that has characterized the OAU was maintained in the statutes of the AU, it was noted, despite the fact of how often this blocks interventions in disputes.

Others voiced the concern that including this principle in the AU document could serve as a basis for dictators to make deals so as not to be subject to the verdicts of the African Court

of Justice. The other menace on the horizon with this proposed constitution is that absence of the mandate to levy sanctions –either positive or negative – on States that do not respect what they have signed up to. The participants went so far as to express fears that payment of dues may be used to hold up the effectiveness of the Courts.

Participants regretted the absence of an independent mechanism independent for follow-up of the treaties in Africa. According to the Ethiopian Lawyers Association, the situation must change. Civil society is challenged ensure this follow-up at the national, regional and continental level, participants said.

Regional Integration Poses Challenges for Small Countries

By Francine Nzibarega

When it comes to the process of regional integration, smaller countries often have the most to lose.

During Thursday's session on "Protecting Small Countries in the Context of Regional Integration," which was chaired by Negasso Gidada, former president of Ethiopia, who commented that this question of protection of smaller countries was of interest because his is a large country surrounded by smaller countries such as Djibouti and Eritrea.

But one of the participants, General Louis Sylvain-Goma, secretary general of the Economic Community of Central African States, cautioned that one must be careful using concepts such as "large" and "small" countries. Another participant,

Professor Joseph Gahama from Burundi agreed. He offered an example of the countries like Kuwait and Switzerland which are in size "small countries" in terms of geography and population but that they have the states of a "large country" on the bases of their economic wealth and their capacity to resolve their conflicts.

Gahama then gave the example of the Democratic Republic of Congo as an example of a country that is technically nearly 80 times larger than its neighbor Rwanda but that found itself invaded by its much smaller neighbor.

There are several key issues that stand as problems blocking efforts for regional integration, said Sylvain-Goma, namely political and institutional problems and economic, social and cultural problems.

Malawi is very familiar with regional integration. It is very familiar with the impact of what can happen to a small country as a result of trade policy liberalization that allows for the free movement of people and goods as has happened in that region, said a discussion

participant. His country does not benefit from these liberalized trade practices because it cannot effectively compete with its larger regional neighbors. Instead, he said, it is larger countries like South Africa that benefit. "How does one stand up against this sort of challenge," he asked.

In the context of regional integration, a participant from Ile Maurice, asked qu'on tienne compte?? Of the specific problems that are faced by countries that are physically isolated like Ile Maurice and Seychelles.

Representatives Present for Heads of State Forum



Mrs. Lalla Ben Barka, Deputy Executive Secretary of ECA shakes hands with South African Vice President Jacob Zuma upon his arrival in Addis Ababa.

Representatives of some of Africa's leading Heads of State have come to Addis to participate in the ADF III Heads of State Forum scheduled for Friday morning. The Forum will be chaired by Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi.

South Africa's Vice President Jacob Zuma, is attending the Forum representing President Thabo Mbeki who had to cancel his previously announced attendance. Zuma arrived in Addis Ababa Wednesday evening and participated in Thursday's plenary on "Building an Effective African Union," and also in the NEPAD discussion.

Also in attendance is Abou Drhamane Sangare, Minister of Foreign Affairs for Cote d'Ivoire, representing President Laurent Gbagbo.

Algeria will be represented by Abdelatif Benachou, the former Minister of Finance and Presidential Advisor, He will speak on behalf of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. — **Norbert Ouendji**

NEPAD Excludes the Women

By Francine Nzibarega

According to participants in the Focus Group on Gender held on earlier this week, the question of gender was not envisaged nor included in the New Partnership for the Development of Africa (NEPAD).

They asked if women could lobby for the issue of gender to be made an integral part of NEPAD.

Regional integration cannot be fully realized without taking into account the issue of gender, they said, adding that for poverty eradication in Africa, one needs the participation of both women and men.

The Focus Group on Gender included representatives from international, national and regional women's organizations as well as men interested in the gender question.

Participants said economic policy adopted to accelerate regional integration must include the issue of gender

so as to take into account the contribution of women to the economic sector, whose work is often neither paid nor recognized.

The poverty of women Africa is due to inequalities of gender, they said.

There were also concerns raised about discrimination towards women in the business sector, noting that businesswomen in terms of receiving travel visas which impedes their ability to conduct cross-border trade.

Peace and security are absolute prior prerequisites for regional integration, yet women who have specialised experience are often excluded from the peace process, they said. Women, they said, must be involved in efforts aimed at managing conflict.

The recommendations from this group will be forwarded for inclusion in the ADFIII Final Report.

Top Names in African Fashion Showcased

By Maria Thundu

Some of the top names in African fashion were present at the African Mosaique presentation "Weaving the Continent Together," a benefit program organized by the ECA and African Mosaique.

The flashy gala was held Thursday evening at the Sheraton Addis Hotel. Proceeds benefited the Ethiopian Children's Fund child protection and development fund.

A stellar array of international and local Ethiopian designers participated in the event. They included Ethiopian designers Desta Dejene, Gigi, Genet Kebede and Sara Abera, South African Sonwabile Ndamase, Fatiha Kitoun of Algeria and Alphadi of Niger.

Of the eight designers with clothes being modeled, only one was not present, and that was the talented and well-rounded Senegalese-based designer Oumou Sy.

Desta Dejene aims to recreate the past with her designs. She currently works with a production team named "People to People" that promotes Ethiopian culture: music, dance and fashion.

Designer Guenet Fresenbet, who is known as "Gigi" studied design in the United States. She is now based in Ethiopia and owns her own label, "Gigi's Designs." She is the founder of Ethiopia's first ever fashion magazine, "GIGI." She has worked in fashion houses around the world and she also owns a design studio in California. Her fashion designs are very traditional with an aim to promote Ethiopian clothing and textiles.

Ethiopian designer Genet Kebede, who got her fashion schooling in Buenos Aires, founded Paradise Fashion in 1991. Her fashions became fre-

quent runway material worldwide after her first show in April 1993 and they were also showcased during the 1996 African Mosaique show in Paris.

Sara Abera is an Ethiopian designer with her fashion roots in Europe, but she remains true to her culture. Although her designs are influenced by the western world, her use of hand-woven Ethiopian fabrics keeps her grounded. She has created a loyal bond with clients at Ethiopian Airlines and the Hilton Hotel in Addis as she designs their uniforms. She opened her own business, Sara Garment Designers and Manufacturers in 1989.

Seidnaly Alphadi, based in Niger is an innovative style expert who combines traditional and contemporary African materials to dress today's African woman. He was educated in Paris and Washington D.C. and is an internationally known designer. He gets his inspiration from his past, from the desert where he grew up.

Fatiha Kitoun, is a designer who had been dreaming of success since the tender age of 15. She travels frequently between Cairo and Algiers. Her career was launched by her 1963 Algiers show, which was her first. Her designs are inspired by nature and she takes special favor in the Algerian countryside.

Sonwabile Ndamase is the creator of Vukani! (Wake up!), a South-African based designer who has created garments for people from all backgrounds. He is one of the creators of the famous Madiba shirt, worn and loved by many, especially former South African president, Nelson Mandela. He is the executive president of the South African Fashion Design Association.

Civil Society Organisations Convene Special Meeting on NEPAD

By Maria Thundu

A special meeting for Civil Society Organizations attending ADF III will be held on 10th and 11th March (Sunday and Monday) in UNCC.

The meeting, "CSO Participation in the NEPAD Process," is being organized by the African Centre for Civil Society, within the ECA's Development Management Division (DMD)

The aim of this seminar is to "create a platform for CSOs to dialogue on the implementation of NEPAD," or-

ganizers said. The meeting will feature a series of consultations and discussions involving the various CSOs in attendance. It will take place in UNCC in Conference Room 3. All CSO representatives are encouraged to attend this session.

To confirm your participation or for more information, contact Jennifer Kargbo at Ext. 35243 or 44-52-43, in the Development Management offices, located on the 7th floor of the Secretariat building.

Final Report of ADF III Discussed

By Francine Nzibarega

On Thursday, the eve of the closing of the Third African Development Forum on "Defining Priorities for Regional Integration" the ECA Assistant Executive Secretary, Lalla Ben Barka, convened a meeting with various delegates organization representatives to begin talking about the priority issues to be elaborated in the final conference report.

The meeting, which was closed to the public, was comprised of represen-

tatives from the different discussion breakout sessions, focus groups, representatives from regional organizations, regional economic communities, and various experts who have the task of preparing the final outcome document.

The representative from the focus group on women and gender said the final report will include an annex of recommendations for the promotion of equality of the sexes.

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