

**The Africa Union and its Institutions, edited by John Akokpari, Angela Ndinga-Muvumba and Tim Murithi, Sunnyside: Fanele and Centre for Conflict Studies, xxvi +390pp, ISBN 978-1-920-19603-5**

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Due to rising global problems, multilateral institutions have been on the rise especially since 1945. Some have maintained a global outlook, some are continental, and some regional and have been attempting to resolve the rising problems at their level of operation. For Africa there has been a plethora of problems which led to the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963, at the beginning of the coming of independence of African states. OAU addressed a number of problems bedeviling the African continent, but changes in the current global environment the OAU was transformed into a new institution, the African Union (AU) in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, to deal with the emerging problems in this fast globalizing era. This phenomenon and records of change requires an academic enquiry to provide the much required knowledge on the AU. The book, *The African Union and its Institutions*, is therefore timely and welcome as it seeks to serve such purpose.

The book is divided into four parts with a separate introduction and conclusion. The introduction provided a brief background to the making of the AU, the set objectives and the intended goals for the integration of the African continent. Justification for such text was provided in essence noting, the authors noted ' there is dearth of scholarly work on the new body, and academics, researchers and analysts are still playing a catch up in producing detailed and analytical knowledge about the AU' p. 4.

Part one deals with the transformation of the OAU into the AU. The first chapter dwelt on conceptualizing Pan Africanism and changes that have occurred in terms of its usage and operationalization. Also, the chapter examined the co-relation between pan Africanism and integration in Africa. The author's vision for Africa is clear, "there is only one way forward - Africa must unite or disintegrate individually. Without unity, there is no future for Africa", p.37. Chapter

two dealt with changes in Africa's conflict prevention strategies from those of non interference to those that favor active involvement of the African Union. The chapter also addressed the challenges and prospects for the successful implementation of the doctrine of non indifference. Chapter three analyzed the transformations that had taken place in Africa, the African Union, in particular, to move from traditionally security conceptualization, which is centered on the military to modern one, which places emphasis on human security. The last chapter in this part is an analysis of Africa's experience with integration examining the factors that were, and are still, at play in shaping integration. Since there are so many challenges to integration, the author recommends that “the continent's leaders must agree to the form, approach and sequence of integration and development” p.105.

Peace and security are issues that are dealt with in part two. Chapter five is largely a comparison of the role of the OAU and AU in peacemaking and in the final examining major moves that has been done under the African Union to deal with aspects of peacemaking with the author noting, “the ultimate question is whether this commitment will prove to be sustainable in the short- to medium-term” p.129. Chapter six offers an analysis of the experiences of the African Union and regional economic communities in peacekeeping efforts. The chapter gave excellent examples of experiences of the AU and five regional communities from southern Africa, West Africa, Central Africa, East Africa and North Africa. Chapter seven brings one of the security menace, HIV/AIDS, in Africa into fore. The chapter indentified some impacts of the menace on security in Africa as well as locating the place and activities so far of the African Union and some regional organization in dealing with HIV/AIDS. In the final chapter, the author argues that “efforts to mitigate HIV/AIDS will need to work synergistically with existing socio-economic, humanitarian and peace and security strategies for a long time” p.180. Chapter eight dealt with security issues surrounding internally displaced people in Africa, analyzing the magnitude of the problem, mechanisms in place for dealing with problem, and setting the stage for establishment of the AU frame work.

Part three addressed issues of governance and civil society. Chapter nine, ten and eleven dealt NEPAD. The first one analyzed the origins of NEPAD and the borne of contentions in its conceptions and consequent functions, with author reminded that “it is critical that NEPAD is not regarded as casted in stone, but seen as an ongoing process” p.224. The second one, focusing on the critics of NEPAD, clearly exposed the origins and caused discontentment with NEPAD and, finally, giving recommendations on the way forward. The last chapter on NEPAD is a review of NEPAD's African Peer Review Mechanism, illuminating on challenges, success so far, and suggesting ways of overcoming the challenges. Chapter twelve is an analysis of the African Court on Human and

People's Rights largely addressing issues of its origins, composition, mandates, and jurisdiction. The chapter also illuminated on challenges facing the court in order to operate effectively. Chapter thirteen analyzed the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECCOSSOC) of the AU and its relationship with the civil society in quest to shape development in Africa, with the author noting that “the greatest challenge for civil society...will be to claim its legitimacy, by demonstrating an ability to add value to the continent by introducing viable solutions and alternatives to Africa's challenges” p.303. Chapter fourteen reviewed the progress of the AU institution organ of the Pan African Parliament (PAP), explaining on the roles and structures of the PAP. The last chapter in this part addressed the place of gender equality in the frame work of the AU. Efforts by the OAU and, recently, by the AU were analyzed in detail, with key challenges and prospects for success being highlighted. Areas where the commission needs to work on were highlighted, providing a knowledge gap for building new research and formulating relevant policies.

Part four dealt with AU and its relations with the outside world. Chapter sixteen examined the relationship between the AU and the Diaspora, illuminating on the contending issues and suggesting policy issues for action in establishing international and representational framework for AU-Diasporan interaction. The last chapter dealt with the interaction between the AU and the European Union (EU). Key issues raised has to do with support for the AU from EU, interactions to promote economic integration, as well as the EU providing a framework through which the AU can emulate as an institution is still in its formative stage.

The conclusion provides ties up issues that were raised in the text with the author concluding that “while spawning opportunities, the AU and its institutions also face enormous but not insurmountable challenges. With genuine determination of Africa to succeed, many of these challenges can be mitigated” p.380.

In the final comments, the book is well suited for researchers and students on Africa and African institutions. It is a good text for those wishing to comprehend international organizations, South-South cooperation, as well as North-South cooperation.