

AFRICAN UNION (AU) - PREVIOUSLY ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY (OAU)

OAU Established: 25 May 1963.

On 26 May 2001, the OAU was legally transformed into African Union (AU).

Membership: 53 States.

Background: The Organization of African Unity (OAU) was established on 25 May 1963, at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and the Charter of the Organization was signed on that occasion by Heads of State and Government of 32 African States. The Organization was established to promote the unity and solidarity of African countries; to defend the sovereignty of members; to eradicate all forms of colonialism; to promote international cooperation having due regard for the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; to coordinate and to harmonize Member States' economic, diplomatic, educational, health, welfare, scientific, and defense policies.

Structure: In structure, the OAU began as one entity, whereas the Union, integrating itself with the African Economic Community and building other structures, consists of: The Assembly of the Union; The Executive Council; The Pan-African Parliament; The Court of Justice; The Commission; The Permanent Representatives Committee; The Specialized Technical Committees; The Economic, Social and Cultural Council; and The Financial Institutions.

Verification and Compliance:

Verification: The AU mandated the Council of Ministers to take the necessary measures to ensure the implementation of decisions and, in particular, to prepare the constitutive legal text of the Union, taking into account the Charter of the OAU and the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community. Under the Constitutive Act of the OAU, Article 9 mandates that the Assembly composed of OAU Heads of States and Governments, as the supreme organ of the Union, with the power to monitor the implementation of policies and decisions of the Union as well to ensure compliance by all Member States. *Compliance:* The non-implementation of regulations and directives from the Assembly shall attract appropriate sanctions.

Developments:

2002: The Special Session of the OAU Council of Ministers devoted to the African Union, which was held in Durban, South Africa in July, addressed various issues including the Secretary-General's progress report on the implementation of the key tasks related to the transition from the OAU to the African Union; the finalization of the Draft Rules of Procedure of the Assembly, the Executive Council, and the Permanent Representatives Committee; the Statute of the Commission of the African Union; and consideration of the protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.

The first meeting on 1 July deliberated extensively on the Draft Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the African Union, the establishment of a Peace and Security Council (PRC), which would replace the former OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. At the end of its deliberations, among other things, a consensus appeared to have emerged on a number of key aspects of the Protocol, namely on the need to establish a Peace and Security Council with the ability to take quick action with regard to the conflicts in parts of the continent. The afternoon session was devoted exclusively to discussing the Draft Rules of the Assembly, the Executive Council, the Permanent Representatives Committee, and the Statute of the Commission.

2001: The Constitutive Act of the AU entered into force on 26 May after Nigeria deposited the 36th instrument of ratification on 26 April 2000. At the July Summit in Lusaka, Zambia, the OAU members endorsed a plan to transform the OAU into the AU the following year.

2000: At the OAU Summit in Lome, 27 African countries signed the Constitutive Act of the AU. The Constitutive Act provided for the establishment of the AU to achieve greater unity and solidarity between the 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; and promote peace, security, and stability on the continent. The Act also provided for the establishment of various institutions, including the Pan-African Parliament; Court of Justice; financial institutions, in-

cluding the African Central Bank; African Monetary Fund; and African Investment Bank.

According to the Act, the establishment of the AU will be completed upon the deposit of the 36th instrument of ratification of the Constitutive Act of the African Union and will enter into force 30 days after the deposit of the instruments of ratification by two-thirds of the Member States of the OAU.

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