

LITTERING THE LANDSCAPE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF NIGERIA IN THE TRANSITION OF O.A.U TO THE AFRICAN UNION

Abdullahi Shehu Gusau

Assistant Lecturer, Department of political science, Federal University, Lafia, Nasarawa
State, Nigeria

Abstract

Every nation in the global arena pursues a foreign policy that is consistent with its existence as a nation and relates to other independent states in the international system. These policies are aimed at protecting the country's cultural values, ideological goals and national security. Nigeria entered committee of independent nations in 1960 full of hope and vigor and ready to expend its political, economic and natural human resources for the growth, unity and development of Africa. Nigeria since independence thus pursues foreign policies that are in tune with the beliefs and aspirations of the founding fathers of this great nation, a foreign policy that is concentric in nature and content and which has as one of its core values-‘the Africa Centre Piece’. It is this core value of the Nigerian foreign policy that made our political leaders to vigorously pursue the goals of African development with full commitment. This paper titled: Littering the Landscape; An analysis of the role of Nigeria in the transition from the OAU to the AFRICAN UNION is an exposition of such commitments. The paper is divided into six sections thus: (1). Introduction, (2). Theoretical issues, (3). The OAU: Achievements and setbacks, (4). The African Union: Problems and Prospects. (5). The role of Nigeria In the Transition from OAU to the African Union and (6). Conclusions and Recommendations.

Keywords: Development, Transition, Nepad, The O.A.U, The African Union

Introduction

A vision in the words of Abdallah Bujra “is a mental picture that an individual, a country/nation or a continent has. It is often articulated in a few sentences, for example, as a preamble to a document, sometimes the future vision is captured in a short simple and catchy

slogan. In general however, a vision is often accompanied by a long term strategic plan on how to achieve the desired future”. (2012:1)

The vision of Nigeria as it regards Nigeria’s relationships with the outside worlds is well documented in the country’s constitution. Nigeria’s foreign policy thrust is concentric in nature taking into cognizance three major levels of international relationships i.e.; the first level is the immediate neighborhood (of West Africa), followed by the 2nd level which is Africa in general and then the 3rd level which is the world at large.

Many African countries and indeed the international communities looked up to Nigeria for a leadership role in Africa, partly due to its high population (i.e. human resources), large land size, abundant mineral resources and economic potentialities. It is within this articulated vision of Nigeria’s foreign policy thrust that Nigeria as a country pursues its national interests and values in Africa and the world in general. It is however, in line with the willingness and commitments to the growth and development of internal cohesion, political and economic independence, pursuits of peace and security in Africa that this paper seeks to look at the role of Nigeria in the transition from O.A.U to the African Union.

Theoretical Issues.

A theory of integration and or international relations focuses mostly on how state and non-state actors work together in order to ensure continuous harmony and sustenance of the different units in the relationships. Prominent among the theories that best explain these relationships are; the structural functionalist theory and the system theory.

Structural Functionalist Approach: - Classical functionalists are of the view that in the community, the experience of a rewarding common activity will change people’s attitudes towards each other and erodes those attitudes which previously reinforce the separateness and demanding competitiveness. And that such activity must grow gradually as a result of the learning experience of previous successes. According to David Mitrany “ the historical task of our time is not how to keep nations peacefully apart, but how to bring them actively together” (1957:228). The major theoretical thrust of structural functionalism is that peace is akin to national coactivity rather than national coexistence and that man can be freed from his ties to national loyalty by engaging him in a fruitful international cooperation which could increase welfare rewards to individuals beyond those to be provided by the state if it works alone.

The importance of the structural functionalism is its ability to explain succinctly the binding of social and cultural forces that promises higher rewards in international cooperation

than that promised by nation – state. Neo – functionalists like Deustch (1957:5 – 6) and Lindberg (1963:6), are of the view that structural functionalism as a theory of integration provides a working condition for states to move towards attaining collective peace and security, because the reason for the existence of every political community is security and welfare. According to Lindberg “.....political integration is (1) the process whereby nations forego the desire and ability to conduct foreign and key domestic policies independent of each other, seeking instead to make joint decisions or to delegate the decision – making process to new central organs, and (2) the process whereby political actors in several distinct settings are persuaded to shift their expectations and political activities to a new Centre”. (Lindberg 1963:6).

The Systemic Approach: - The system theory or approach to the study of integration regarded the nation state as sole actors in the international system and always in interaction with each other in order to make the region, continent or the whole world an organized complexity. The system approach refers to a structure on its own having different parts which are interrelated and interdependent, and which undergoes various processes to maintain its existence. Morton Kaplan’s system is a modification of his structural functionalism after it has been criticized for its focus on the integration in the European Community only which started in the 1950s.

A further expansion of structural functionalism espouse the domain of peace and security and general welfare of the individuals in the integration as the major reason why members of nation states will surrender their liberty in order to gain higher rewards in a community. Although, in a systemic relationship, the parts of the units are also state and non-state actors, but the pattern of the relationships according to Hoffman “is the Relations between the basic units of world politics, characterized by the scope of the objectives pursued by those units and of the tasks performed among them as well as by the means used to achieve those goals and perform these tasks”. (www.preservearticles.com).

It is however, based on the above that the study intends to situate the research essay within the framework of the system theory because, if we view the world as an organized complexity that is regulative and adoptive, then each system in the units exists for certain purposes that it adopt and regulate itself to the environment. Some of the exponents of the system theory includes; David Easton, J.D.Singer, Karl Deustch, Anatole Roppart etc.

The OAU: Achievements and Setbacks

The organization of African Unity was founded on May 25, 1963 during a meeting of 30 Heads of state who signed its charters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The current roster of 54

countries includes all the countries in Africa with the exception of Morocco which withdrew in 1984.

However, the birth of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was not a flight by night affair and in the words of Ekpebu "yet the subsequent journey to the formation of the O.A.U was not in itself a smooth one, a great deal of in-fighting and rivalries had to be overcome to allow the formation of the organization at Addis Ababa in 1963. The independence crisis in Zaire in 1960 was instrumental in fragmenting African politics at the time."(Ekpebu 1999:189).

Therefore, in the effort to establish the O.A.U, two factors became predominant and their interplay greatly affects the growth and development of this regional organization. These events include:

a) A movement for the formation and consolidation of independent states within existing boundaries, and

b) A pan African movement aspiring to unite all the states of Africa to join forces for general or particular purposes. The latter was proffered by the radical group led by Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, while the former was more favored by the conservative group which include; Nigeria and Togo. But to both group what was quickly realized was that solidarity is of paramount important in order to check the spread of divisive extra African influences all over the continent and thus during the October 1961 16th session of the UNO, Ethiopia called upon African states: "to join in the creation, under Article 52 of the UN charter, of a regional organization of African states, the basic and fundamental task of which will be to furnish the mechanism whereby problems which arise on the continent and which are of primary interest to the region could in the first instance, be dealt (with) by Africans, in an African forum, free from outside influence pressure." Ademicael, B (1976). (The O.A.U and the U.N:9).

On January 7, 1961, representatives of Guinea, Ghana, Mali, Morocco, Libya, Egypt and the Algerian provisional government, meeting in Casablanca, adopted a charter which later become known as the Casablanca charter. The charter provided for a joint military command and an African common market. The group also advocated for a socialist development of all Africa around a strong central authority. The Casablanca group met with the modified conservative group from Lagos and through a great deal of consultative activities were able to unite all Africa under the OAU in 1963. Thus, the charter establishing the OAU stipulates in its Article (1) thus.

1. The High contracting parties do by the present Charter establish an organization to be known as the Organization of African Unity and

2. The Organization shall include the continental African states, Madagascar and other island surrounding Africa.

While the organization is guided by article II of the charter thus.

1. To promote the Unity and solidarity of the African states.

2. Coordinate and intensify their cooperation and efforts to achieve a better life for the people of Africa.

3. Defend their sovereignty, their territorial integrity and independence.

4. Eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa, and to promote international cooperation, having due regard to the charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

To this end, the member states, shall coordinate and harmonize their general policies in the fields of

1. Political and diplomatic cooperation.

2. Economic cooperation, including transport and communications.

3. Educational and Cultural cooperation.

4. Health, Sanitation and Nutritional cooperation.

5. Scientific and Technical cooperation.

6. Cooperation for Defense and Security.

The organization of African Unity shall function in lieu of certain institutions brought into place by the various articles of its charter. These institutions include:

1. The Assemblies of Heads of States and Governments which is the supreme organ of the organization and discusses matter of common concerns with a view to coordinating and harmonizing the general policy of the organization.

2. The Council of Ministers which consists of foreign Ministers of member states. It is responsible to (1) above and entrusted to among others prepare conferences of the Assembly, implement its decision and coordinate inter-African cooperation.

3. The General Secretariat to be directed by the administrative secretary General as appointed by the Assembly.

4. The commission of Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration.

The Major Achievements Of The Oau

Despite the plethora of divisive elements encountered during the early period in the formation of the OAU, a lot of achievements and / or better results could still be credited to

the founding fathers of the OAU in four (4) major areas, even though these areas are not only in line with the basic principles of the organization as stipulated in Articles I and II of the charter establishing the OAU, but also inclusive and of common concern for the lives of the people of Africa. These areas are:

1. The anti-colonial struggle: - It is obvious that striving for the total liberation of the African continents is the priority objective of the O.A.U. This is contained in Article II (4) of its charter. These goals are achievable in 2 ways i.e one, through peaceful and democratic means, and two, through non-peaceful means. Decolonization through peaceful means was evidence in:

a) The adoption of the Lusaka manifesto in 1969 by the conference of the non-Aligned states, and the United Nations General Assembly. The manifest was a document emphasizing the intention of African states to solve the twin problems of colonialism and racism through peaceful means.

b) The missions of the chairmen of O.A.U 1970-1972 to NATO member states, Switzerland and Japan to convince them to stop giving aid to colonialist and racist regimes. While decolonization through non-peaceful means includes:

- a. Establishment of liberation committee.
- b. Training of freedom fighters and volunteer corps
- c. De-linking diplomatic relationships with racist and colonialist regimes E.g. South-Africa and Portugal.
- d. The Kinshasa agreement of 13th December. 1972 between MPLA and FNLA.

Related to the above, is the twin issue of arms race and the rise of insurgency. The fight against colonialism and racism and the rise of insurgency in post-independent African states is a major concern of the O.A.U. We have already discussed the anti-colonial struggle of the O.A.U. Arms race was on the increase in most part of Africa from South to the North and some part of the West Africa. Therefore, the concern over armaments in Africa poses a serious challenge to the O.AU. The armament is not limited to conventional weapons, but also to the spread of nuclear weapons. But since these arms, import into Africa, the O.A.U therefore, working closely with the U.N.O through the General Assembly resolutions 1652 (XVII) of 24, November, 1961 and 2033 (XX) of December, 1965 were able to achieve the de-nuclearization of Africa.

2. Peaceful Settlement of Disputes: By the provision of Article 19 of the O.A.U charter, African countries in their Unity want an end to senseless border and internal conflicts. The Article clearly stipulates that:

Member states pledge to settle all disputes among themselves by peaceful means and, to this end, decide to establish a commission of mediation, conciliation and Arbitration, the composition of which and conditions of service shall be defined by a separate protocol to be approved by the Assembly of Heads of States and Government-- in (El – Ayouty Y. (ed) 1975:51)

Thus since its creation in 1963, the Organization of African Unity has had to deal with a number of border disputes, one of the most important legacy left behind by colonialism. Notable among these disputes was the Algerian-Moroccan Dispute of 1963-67 and in the words of Ekpebu"---, the boundary between Algeria and Morocco created a great deal of difficulty due to the ambiguity of the old colonial boundaries. In fact, beyond the northern Mediterranean coastal region no clear line of demarcation was really made in the desert parts of the two countries. It led, therefore, to claims and counterclaims between the North African countries in the early sixties"(Ekpebu 1999:192). The OAU was able to settle the border disputes through the Bamako Agreement which established an ad hoc committee consisting of ministers from Ethiopia, Ivory coast, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan and Tanzania. The efforts of this committee resolved the conflict through the General Treaty of Cooperation and Solidarity in January 1969 and by May 1970 a boundary agreement was concluded between the two (2) countries.

In its ceaseless efforts to find peace, the organization does not limit itself to border disputes between member states e.g Somalia-Ethiopia-Kenya disputes; Senegal and Guinea; the Congo and Zaire; Uganda and Tanzania etc.

3. Social and Economic Cooperation: The struggle for economic cooperation in Africa was given priority in the O.A.U. In fact it was paramount that in the preamble to the O.A.U Charter it was spelt out thus:" the O.A.U Heads of State and Government recognize their responsibility to harness the natural and human resources of our continent for the total advancement of our peoples in all spheres of human endeavor"(The OAU 10th Anniversary 1966:36).The O.A.U was thus assigned the basic role of planning and directing the economic affairs of member states in the following areas:

- * Intensification of regional cooperation with a view to defining and carrying out projects of concern to the markets of several countries.
- * Mobilization of domestic financial resources in order to establish African funds in the service of development.
- * Acceleration of the process of industrial development on the continent with particular emphasis on multinational projects.

- * Harmonization and coordination of legislation and customs procedures.
- * Intensification of monetary cooperation and institution of payments between African states etc.

Furthermore, to boost economic development in the region; problems of trade became the prerogative of African leaders. This led to the creation of a section on Inter-African technical cooperation with the object of gradually substituting foreign technical assistance in Africa, African technical assistance. Also working through international economic organizations like; the Economic Commission for Africa, African countries were able to present a united front towards international agreements on commodities, eradication of tariffs and non-tariff barriers imposed on manufacturers of underdeveloped countries on the markets of developed countries and on the complimentary financing of development and technical assistance.

In the areas of social development, issues of refugees were given priority especially during the de-colonization era. Refugees are known as politically and economically displaced individual outside the boundaries or control of their home country. Refugees in Africa are classified into two (2) categories;

those from dependent territories and those from independent African states. The first category is closely connected with the liberation efforts directed against the remaining colonial regimes in Africa..... others are refugees in search of jobs and economic and social betterment, and young people dissatisfied with the colonial conditions and inferior educational opportunities. (Zdenek 1968:94 – 95)

During the OAU conference of 1965 in Accra, the Assembly of Heads of state and Government adopted a resolution titled "the problem of refugees in Africa" where it affirms "its desire to give all possible assistance to refugees from any member states on a humanitarian and fraternal basis"(Ibid:95 – 96).

Some Major Setbacks Of The Oau

During its forty-six years of existence and before its transformation to AU. The OAU faces or registered some setbacks in its operations. Some of the problems faced and which had a lasting impact on the organization was the divisiveness which characterized and indeed shrouds the mind of the founding fathers. Instrumental to this was the activities of 2 intergovernmental group i.e. the radical Casablanca group and the conservative Monrovia group. Though at the establishment of the OAU both groups were abolished, but the Monrovia group continued to exist and this became topical at the August 1963 OAU Council of ministers' meeting and a compromise was reached on the issue of sub regionalism within

the OAU. The meeting came out with two recommendations i.e. that any sub regional group should:

1. Meet geographical realities and economic, social and cultural factors common in the states;
2. Meet the need for coordination of economic, social and cultural activities peculiar to the states concerned. This pressure led to the transformation of the Union africaine et-Malgache (Brazzaville Group) into a purely economic and cultural union known as union Africaine et Malgache de cooperation Economique.

Furthermore, the second Congo crises re awakes the general differences among O.A.U members and in early 1965 the UAMCE re-transform into a political organization known as the Organization Commune Africaine, Malgache et Mauricienne (OCAM) which its founders describe as " a new African grouping whose aim, within the context of the O.A.U. is to reinforce cooperation and solidarity between Afro-Malagasy states, and to speed up their political, economic, social and technical, and cultural development."(Ademicael 1976:13 – 14).

This divisive characteristic of the members of the O.A.U also led to aligning of former French colonies with France which led to signing of many economic and defense pacts. This factor continued to plague O.A.U and destroys its efforts in attempting to solve African problems. Thus according to Wallerstein." the first problem the O.A.U faced as a political entity was its relationship to other organizations- to African regional organization, to international organizations, to pan-African non-governmental organizations. The policy of the O.A.U was what I have previously described as a "search for organizational preeminence" (El – Ayouty et al(1975) (b):20).

Another major setback faced by the O.A.U is in the handling of disputes among member states. The role of the O.A.U here is only that of mediating between disputants and has no power to impose a collective will on recalcitrant members. Even in some cases its meditative role does not produce instant remedies to feud as evidenced in the prolongation and persistence of the Congo crises. On this Wallerstein asserts that "The O.A.U was unable to play a decisive role principally because its members were fundamentally and passionately split over the politics of the Congo and the definition of the O.A.U role "(Ibid: 24).

In conclusion, the growths of sub regional organizations within the O.A.U have negative impacts on the functions of the O.A.U. In the areas of conflict resolutions and management sub regional organization like ECOWAS' ECOMOG is playing a leading role. Therefore, in the words of late Kwame Nkrumah, until its recent transformation to A.U.

"Today what we have already achieved is nothing short of the O.A.U. which allows for an association of individual African States with only paper coordination and void of any centralized political direction... instead of the Africa we dreamed at Addis Ababa, Africa strong and United to face the strong task before us, we have now developed an Africa which is balkanized and fighting itself and therefore, profits no member state."(Ibid: 8).

The African Union

A little over two years ago {Now 4 years), the world ushered in the twenty first century and the new millennium with widespread fanfare and celebration. The African continent also welcomes the new millennium with feelings of enthusiasm, vigor and a new found disposition tackle the developmental burdens that the continent has been saddled with for such a long time. One manifestation of this renewed vigor has been the establishment of the African Union (Joy 2002:12).

The birth of A.U. earlier initiated by Libya's Mouamar Gaddafi in 1999 could not be said to be borne out of the failure of the O.A.U, but a historical truism which dated back to the late 50s and early 60s when the continent was in search of a viable forum to unite all countries of Africa under one umbrella. Then the 'radical' Casablanca group had opted for a union Government of Africa, while the conservative groups opted for some loose union which gave birth to the O.A.U. Thus as we approached the end of the 20th century, the idea of an African Union was mooted by the Libyan leader, Colonel Mouamar Gaddafi during the 4th O.A.U. Extraordinary Summit in Sirte, Libya September 1999. This new African Union will reflect as a sovereign supra-national entity. Though, the pan Africanists vision of mouammar Gaddafi was not endorsed, but a declaration (the Sirte Declaration) was adopted and stated, inter alia:

1. Decided to establish the African Union by 2001.
2. Rested the Union on the firm base of an African Economic Community by calling for the accelerated actualization of the organs of the community, particularly the coming into being of the pan African parliament in December 2000; and
3. Directed the O.A.U. Council of ministers to ensure the timely preparation of the enabling instruments of the union.

Establishment

African Union was established by Article 2 of the constitutive act which states inter alia "The African Union is hereby established in accordance with the provision of this act"(Article 2,Text of the Constitutive Act of the African Union).

Objectives

The establishment of the A.U. which its constitutive act was adopted at the 35th O.A.U Summit in July 2000 Lome, Togo could be said to represents the vigorous attempts by African leaders to achieve greater developments for the continents. This attempt was much more reflected in the objectives of the new A.U; spelt out in fourteen terms and which includes:

1. To achieve greater unity and solidarity between the African countries and the peoples of Africa;
2. Defend the sovereign, territorial integrity and independence of its member states;
3. Accelerate the political and socioeconomic integration of the continent;
4. Promote and defend African common positions on issues of interest to the continent and its peoples;
5. Encourage international cooperation, taking due account of the charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
6. Promote peace, security and stability on the continent;
7. Promote democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance;
8. Promote and protect human rights in accordance with the African charter on Human and people's Rights and other relevant human rights instruments;
9. Establish the necessary conditions which enable the continent to play its rightful role in the global economy and international negotiations;
10. Promote sustainable development at the economic, social and cultural levels as well as the integration of African economies.
11. Promote cooperation in all fields of human activity to raise the living standards of African peoples;
12. Coordinate and harmonize the policies between the existing and future Regional Economic Communities for the gradual attainment of the objectives of the Union;
13. Advance the development of the continent by promoting research in all fields, particularly in science and technology; and
14. Work with relevant international partners in the eradication of preventable diseases and the promotion of good health on the continent"(Ibid: Article 3).

Institutions of the A.U.

The new African Union will function through certain organs and / or institutions in order to achieve its stated objectives. These institutions are:

1. The Assembly of the Union: This is akin to the Assembly of Heads of State and Government or their representatives. It is also the supreme-organ of the Union that meets once in a year in ordinary session. The office of the chairman of the Assembly shall be held for a period of one year by a Head of State elected by the member states. The Assembly shall function on a wide range of issues which include:

- a) Determination of the common policies of the union;
- b) Receive, consider and take decisions on reports and recommendations from the other organs of the union;
- c) Consider requests for membership of the union;
- d) Establish any organ of the union;
- e) Monitor the implementation of policies and decisions of the union as well ensure compliance by all member states;
- f) Adopt the budget of the union etc.

2. The Executive Council: This is the administrative arm of the Union and composed of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs or as designated by the Government of member states. The Executive Council shall meet twice in a year in ordinary session. The Executive Council is responsible for coordinating and taking decisions on policies in areas of common interest to member states, which could include such areas as

- a. Foreign trade;
 - b. Energy, industry and mineral resources;
 - c. Food, agricultural and animal resources, livestock production and forestry;
 - d. Water resources and irrigation;
 - e. Environmental protection, humanitarian action and disaster response and relief
- etc.

3. The Pan-African Parliament: This parliament is established in order to ensure the full participation of all peoples of Africa in the development and economic integration of the continent. The parliament will compose of people's representatives, Governmental and non-Governmental organizations and the civil society organizations.

4. The Court of Justice: which statute, composition and functions shall be defined in a protocol relating thereto.

5. The Commission: This is otherwise known as the secretariat of the union, and composed of a chairman, his or her deputy/deputies and commissioners. The structure, functions and regulations of the commission shall be determined by the Assembly.
6. The Permanent Representative Committee
7. The Specialized Technical Committees: These include such committees as:
 - a) The Committee on Rural Economy and Agricultural Matters;
 - b. The Committee on Monetary and Financial Affairs;
 - c. The Committee on Trade, Customs and Immigration Matters;
 - d. The Committee on Industry, Science and Technology;
 - e. The Committee on Transport, Communications and Tourism;
 - f. The committee on Health, Labor and Social affairs; and
 - g. The Committee on Education, Culture and Human Resources.
8. The Economic, Social and Cultural Council: This was established under Article 22 of the constitutive act of the A.U. This council shall be an advisory organ made up of different social and professional groups of member states of the union. Its functions, powers, composition and organization shall be determined by the Assembly of the Union.
9. The Financial Institutions: This will include the followings:
 - a. The African Central Bank;
 - b. The African Monetary Fund;
 - c. The African Investment Bank.

**The role of Nigeria in the Transition from OAU to the African Union.
Commitment to Goals of African Unity.**

Nigeria plays and is still playing a decisive role in many spheres of Africa's development, and these roles may be positive or otherwise depending from which ideological point of view one is standing. Starting from the pan African vision and or movement which laid emphasis on the oneness and unity of Africa as a continent and the black race in general. Nigeria has played an important role by creating the leeway (the Monrovia group) which unified the divisiveness that surface between the radical Casablanca group led by Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and the Brazzaville group consisting of countries of former French colonies. Thus writing in the same vain, Ambassador Brownson asserts that "in the 40 years (now 52) since Nigeria's independence, the landscape of Africa is literally littered with the evidence of Nigeria's commitment to the goal of African Unity (2001:8)

The Monrovia declaration of 1979

The Monrovia declaration AHG/ST.3 (XVI) states inter alia, "..... Commitment of the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity on Guidelines and

Measures for National and Collective Self-Reliance in Social and Economic Development for the Establishment of a New International Economic Order”. Thus the Monrovia Declaration of 1979 provided the vision and scenario of Africa’s future. The Africa of 2000/2020 was to “have a high degree of self-sufficiency, a democratic national development which will distributes the fruits of our efforts more equitably, will have a strong African solidarity and that Africa will carry more weight in world affairs”.in Bujra, From the OAU to the AU. *www.bujra.com.pg.5*

The Lagos Plan of Action 1980

Another perspective through which one can understand and indeed appreciate the role of Nigeria in the transition from the OAU to the African Union is through the LPA. The Lagos Plan of Action remains the boldest steps ever taken by African leaders to save the continent from the malaise of economic underdevelopment, political instability, and insecurity. Nigerian academia and bureaucrats play a crucial role in the drafting and formulations of policy inputs that led to the emergence of the LPA in 1980. In the words of A.I. Egiebade “this document known as the Lagos Plan of Action remains today the only authoritative official record of Africa’s serious attempt to change the depressing economic conditions of the African countries” in From OAU to AU: the Quest for Development. *www.cencod.com. pg.3*

The Sirte Declaration

The transformation of the OAU to the African Union, though, a gradual process which span many decades, is a product of political compromises made by the OAU leaders at their 4th Extra-ordinary summit in Sirte, Libya on September 1999 which was hosted by Libya’s Mouammar Qaddafi, who presented at the 1999 summit a draft charter where he proposes “the united states of Africa with one government, one leader, a single army, one currency, one Central Bank and one parliament that makes laws for the whole continent which should be borderless”. Ibid.pg.5. Thus, following the Sirte declaration which gave birth to the constitutive Act of the African Union, the actual transformation from the OAU to the AU began on the 26th, May 2001 a month after Nigeria deposited her instrument of ratification of the Act (April, 25, 2001) which enabled the Act to acquire the 2/3 ratifications needed for its entry into force.

The New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD)

The New Partnership for Africa’s Development as an organ of the African Union represent AU’s strategic policy framework aimed at eradicating poverty and placing African countries on a path of sustainable growth and development thereby extricating the continent from global marginalization and exclusion. The “P” in NEPAD represents a partnership

between the governments and peoples of Africa and between Africa and development partners. The NEPAD derives its sustenance from the trio of Lagos Plan Action (LPA), the Final Act of Lagos (1980) and the Abuja Treaty (1991). All these three (3) continental documents were drafted and finalized in Nigeria using Nigeria's human and material resources, In fact given Nigeria's role during the formative period of the African Union, Nigeria has chaired both the African Union and the steering and implementation committee of the New Partnership for Africa's Development between 2004-2006.

Conclusion and Recommendations.

In conclusion, therefore, without any iota of doubt, from the foregoing, one will understand that, Nigeria is blessed with both human and natural resources needed for the country's growth and development and that of Africa in general. Thus working hand in hand with other African countries and their leaders and given this visionary outlook as enshrined in the constitutive Act of the African Union, the development of Africa and its impact in the international system is guaranteed. Nigeria, though often described as a giant dwarfed by inconsistent policy, poverty, poor health delivery system, lack of quality education, poor or bad governance. But despite all these inadequacies, Nigeria has not failed in her commitment to issues of peace and security in Africa and the world in general if viewed from her roles in different peace keeping missions within and outside Africa.

For Nigeria to however, assert itself in Africa, emphasis should be on improving good governance, controlling corruption, increasing access to quality education, food and health security among its populace and of course infrastructural development which is consistent with the motive for rapid and sustainable socioeconomic development.

References:

- Ademicael B (1976) The OAU and the UN:UNITAR Regional study. No. 2.APC, USA, New York.
- Brownson N.D (2001) The Evolution of the African Union: Paper for the National Seminar on the African Union and the Challenges of cooperation and integration – the Presidency, Abuja.
- Bujra A: From the OAU to the AU.www.bujra.com. Accessed 20/10/2012.
- Constitutive Act of the OAU
- Egiabade A.I. From the OAU to the AU: The Quest for Development. www.cencod.com
- Ekpebu L.B (1999) Africa and the International Political System. Sambookman. Ibadan.

El – Ayouty Y.(ed)(1975). The OAU after Ten Years: Comparative Perspectives. Praeger publishers Inc. USA.

Joy O. (2002) The African Union and the Challenges of Development in the 21st Century: Lecture series No,1. University of Ilorin.

Lindberg L.N (1963) The Political Dynamics of European Economic Integration. Stanford Univ. Press.

Mitrany D (1957) The Functional Theory of Politics. Martin Robertson. London.

Stanley H. in “Evaluate the System Approach to the Study of International Politics. www.preservearticles.com accessed 20/10/2012

The OAU 10th Anniversary (1966) OAU Scretariat, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Zdenek C. (1968) OAU and Its Charters. C.Hurst and Co. London.