
AFRICAN UNION (AU)

OAU Established: 25 May 1963

On 26 May 2001, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was legally transformed into [African Union](#) (AU).

Membership: 53 States – Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Kenya, the Kingdom of Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Kingdom of Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe

Background: The Organization of African Unity (OAU) was established on 25 May 1963, at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and the [Charter of the OAU](#) was signed on that occasion by the 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 with due regard for the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and to coordinate and harmonize Member States' economic, diplomatic, educational, health, welfare, scientific, and defense policies.

On 9 September 1999, the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity issued the Sirte Declaration, calling for the establishment of an African Union, with a view, inter alia, toward accelerating the process of unity among countries of the continent, enabling it to better participate in the global economy and to better address social, economic and political problems.

Since 1999, three summits have been held to facilitate the implementation of the African Union (AU). The Lome Summit (2000) adopted the [Constitutive Act of the African Union](#), which specifies the objectives, principles, and organs of the AU. The Lusaka Summit (2001) drew the road map for the implementation of the AU. The Durban Summit (2002)

launched the AU and convened the First Assembly of Heads of States of the African Union.

Structure: In structure, the OAU began as one entity, whereas the AU, integrating itself with the African Economic Community and building other structures, consists of: the Assembly (determines common policies); the Executive Council (coordinates and makes decisions on common policies); the Pan-African Parliament (implements policies); the Court of Justice (ensures compliance with the law); the Commission (the secretariat); the Permanent Representatives Committee (assists the Executive Council); the Specialized Technical Committees (assist the Executive Council in substantive matters); the Economic, Social and Cultural Council; the Peace and Security Council (makes decisions on prevention, management and resolution of conflicts); and the Financial Institutions (consisting of the African Central Bank, the African Monetary Fund, and the African Investment Bank).

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:

2009: The 12th Ordinary Session of the Assembly met on 1-3 February in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. In its [decisions and declarations](#), the Assembly strongly condemned the coups d'etat that took place in Mauritania and Guinea in 2008, and reaffirmed its support for the [Sirte Declaration](#) on the reform of the UN Security Council.

At the same meeting, Libyan Colonel Muammar al-Gaddafi was chosen to succeed Tanzania's Jakaya Kikwete as Chairman of the African Union. In his inaugural speech following his selection, Gaddafi called for greater African unity and stated that he would continue "to insist that our sovereign countries work to achieve the United States of Africa."

On 16 May, the AU Peace and Security Council held a joint meeting with the UN Security Council at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The meeting focused primarily on the situation in Darfur, Sudan, but also involved discussion of the issues of promoting human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Africa.

The 13th African Union Summit, including the 13th Ordinary Session of the Assembly, took place from 24 June to 3 July in Sirte, Libya. The theme was "Investing in Agriculture for Economic Growth and Food Security," and as such it focused primarily on economic issues. At the summit, the African leaders also agreed to transform the African Union Commission into the "African Union Authority." The new organization would be headed by a president and have an "enhanced role to coordinate foreign affairs, trade and defense policies." For the AU Authority to come into being, all 53 African states will have to agree to the changes and ratify an amended version of the AU Constitutive Act.

2008: The Tenth Ordinary Session of the Assembly convened from 31 January to 2 February. The Assembly decided to intensify efforts to push for reform of the UN Security Council.

The Eleventh African Union Summit, including the Eleventh Ordinary Session of the Assembly, the Sixteenth Ordinary Session of the Permanent Representatives Committee and the Thirteenth Ordinary Session of the Executive Council was held in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, from 24 June to 1 July. The theme was "Meeting the Millennium Development Goals on Water and Sanitation." No issues related to nonproliferation or arms control were discussed.

2007: The Eighth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 22-30 January. The themes were "Science, Technology and Scientific Research for Development" and "Climate Change in Africa."

No issues related to nonproliferation or arms control were discussed. The Assembly appointed the Republic of Ghana to the Chairmanship of the African Union for 2007.

It welcomed the developments in Somalia after Ethiopia's intervention upon the invitation of the legitimate Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia, and Ethiopia's decision to withdraw its troops from Somalia. It called for an immediate deployment of the African Union Mission in Somalia, and urged the international community to provide financial, logistical, and technical support for the deployment.

The Assembly welcomed the progress in peace and stability in Africa, especially the transition process in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), progress between the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army; the Peace Agreement between the Government of Sudan and the Eastern Front; the Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement between the Government of Burundi and Palipehutu/FNL; and the pursuit of the transition process in Mauritania.

2006: The Sixth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union was held in Khartoum, Sudan on 23-24 January.

The assembly congratulated the 10 countries elected to the Peace and Security Council for a two-year term. Furthermore, the assembly requested that the Peace and Security Council place a stronger emphasis on conflict prevention and post-conflict resolution. However, it also commended the Council on its efforts in Darfur, Sudan despite logistical and financial difficulties.

Decisions were also made about UN reforms. Those decisions included a renewal of the mandate of the Committee of Ten established to promote and support the Common African Position to push UN reform and a request for a progress report to the next Ordinary Session of the Assembly in July.

The Seventh Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union was held in Banjul, The Gambia on 1-2 July. The chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E. Mr. Alpha Oumar Konare, in his opening speech, called for the ratification of the Pelindaba Treaty by the 28 member states that had yet to do so. Resolutions were made affecting the Peace and Security Council; calling for greater emphasis on conflict prevention and ensuring implementation of the Continental Peace and Security Framework

2005: The Fourth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, held in Abuja, Nigeria on 30-31 January, adopted decisions relating to nontraditional security issues, to conflicts in Cote d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Somalia, and to the [Non-Aggression and Common Defense Pact of the African Union](#).

The Assembly authorized the Executive Council to adopt a Common African Position on the subject of United Nations reform.

The Seventh Extraordinary Session of the Executive Council was held on 7-8 March in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The session formulated a Common African Position on the Proposed Reform of the United Nations or the '[Ezulwini Consensus](#).' This consensus contained elements on the challenge of combating inter-state conflict, the proliferation of conventional weapons, terrorism, and peacekeeping, recommending the implementation of the Pelindaba Treaty among other security reforms. Furthermore, the consensus advocated institutional reform of the United Nations, pointing out the lack of representation of the continent and requesting an expansion of the Security Council to include the allocation to Africa of two permanent seats with veto power and five non-permanent seats.

The Fifth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union was held in Sirte, Libya on 4-5 July. Opening remarks were made by Mu'ammer al-Qaddafi, the president of Libya.

During the session, the Assembly established the [Sirte Declaration on the Reform of the United Nations](#), which emphasized the need for institutional reforms to allocate greater representation for the continent on the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations

2004: The Second Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union was held in Sirte, Libya on 27 - 28 February. The session adopted the [Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defense and Security Policy](#). The detailed declaration defines the concepts of defense and security, lays out common security threats, and states the objectives and goals of a common defense and security policy.

The first session of the Pan-African Parliament of the African Union was held on 18 March under the leadership of President Gertrude Mongella from the United Republic of Tanzania. The Pan-African Parliament's [objectives](#) included the facilitation of the effective implementation of the policies and objectives of the African Union and the promotion of peace, security and stability.

On 25 May, the African Union established the Peace and Security Council in order to work toward conflict prevention, management and resolution. At the Peace and Security Council's first meeting, the decision was made to deploy ceasefire missions to the Sudan and Somalia.

The Fifth Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the African Union met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 30 June-3 July. Decisions were issued on the Draft Protocol to the [OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism](#), on the African Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism, on an African Common Position on Anti-Personnel Landmines, and on the crises in Sudan, Burundi, Equatorial Guinea, the Ethiopia-Eritrea Peace Process, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The Third Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 6-8 July. The assembly made decisions relating to the 'operationalization' of the protocol relating to the establishment of a Peace and Security Council. Member states that had not signed or ratified the protocol were urged to do so. Decisions were also made about the situation in Darfur to deploy observers. However, the assembly stressed that despite the humanitarian crisis there, it could not be called genocide.

2003: The Second Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union was held in Maputo, Mozambique on 10-12 July. The session adopted several decisions related to peace and security:

AU/6 (II), "[Decision on the African Defense and Security Policy](#)" requests the commission to conduct further consultations with all stakeholders, including ministers responsible for defense and security and legal experts, with the goal of finalizing the Common African Defense and Security Policy in time for consideration by the next Session of the Assembly, or at an Extraordinary Session of the Assembly.

AU/8(II) Add. 11, "[Decision on the Elaboration of a Code of Conduct on Terrorism](#)" emphasizes the need to establish a code of conduct on counterterrorism and recognizes that the importance of such a code should facilitate and promote negotiations on the drafting of a Global Convention on Terrorism.

AU/15(II), "[Decision on Terrorism in Africa](#)" expresses concerns over the increasing threat posed by international terrorism.

With the deposit of the instrument of ratification by the Republic of Nigeria, the [protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council](#) entered into force on 26 December. The Peace and Security Council is a collective decision-making organ and warning arrangement for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts.

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, including the African Central Bank; African Monetary Fund; and African Investment Bank.

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

Point of Contact:

Chairperson: Colonel Muammar al-Gaddafi, Libya

African Union Headquarters
P.O. Box 3243
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia
Tel: (251) 11 551 77 00
Fax: (251) 11 551 78 44
Website: www.africa-union.org