

AFRICAN UNION

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SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL OFFICE

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**Report of Activities
Of AU Office Lilongwe
For the Report of the Chairperson
to the
9th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council
Banjul, The Gambia
28 – 29 June 2006**

I. Introduction

The mandate of the AU Southern Africa Regional Office, Lilongwe is to develop and maintain constructive relationship between the African Union and Member States in Southern African Region, and with Southern African Development Community (SADC) as well as the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). In this context, the activities of the Representation Office of the AU to Southern Africa, inter alia, entails increasing awareness about the AU and its work in the region, regular consultations with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), harmonization of specific policies in geo-political and socio-economic activities of the African Union in Southern Africa and the promotion of unity, solidarity and enhancement of Pan-African spirit in the Southern African Region. Thus, in the period under consideration, the AU Southern Africa Regional Office had worked on the consolidation and establishment of relations with the Member States in the region, RECs, and intergovernmental as well as non-governmental organizations that are partners in development in the region. The Office participated in conferences and seminars that were designed to address specific development issues in the region as generated by regional and global developments.

II. Consolidation/Establishment of Relations

The AU Regional Delegate to SADC paid courtesy call on the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. Davies Katsonga, M.P. on 22 February 2006. The Honorable Minister appreciated the decision of the AU

Commission to establish AU Regional Office to SADC in Lilongwe and welcomed the appointment of the new Head of the Office. He underscored and acknowledged the importance of regionalism for accelerated and sustainable development in the region. The Regional Delegate had discussions with the Minister of Economic Planning, Hon. D. Faiti, M.P., on 21 April 2006. The Minister expressed satisfaction on the orientation of the work of the AU Regional Office for SADC and shares the view for the need for rationalization of RECs for stronger continental integration.

During this period, the AU Office worked on the deepening of cooperation with the Ambassadors and High Commissioners from developed and developing countries in Lilongwe. The Ambassadors and High Commissioners welcomed the role of regional integration in the promotion of economic development and were generally prepared to coordinate and cooperate as appropriate with the AU in their activities in the region especially in projects on poverty alleviation and the promotion of good governance. The general view was that SADC represents an important pillar for continental integration and development.

The intergovernmental organizations are important partners in the development process in the region as they attempt to implement global resolutions, decisions and declarations. For this reason, the AU Office during the period of this report sought the deepening of cooperation with them especially, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations AIDS Program (UNAIDS), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank. Other important bilateral bodies are the British Department for International Development (DFID) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The Representatives of these bodies shared the views of the AU on the development issues in the region, and supported regionalism as important strategy for sustainable development in SADC. The intergovernmental organizations and bilateral bodies expressed support for the activities of the AU, including the African Peer Review Mechanism and NEPAD, and are willing to continue to work with AU as appropriate in the context of their respective mandates.

The Commissioner for Economic Affairs and the AU Regional Delegate to SADC met the Deputy Executive Secretary for COMESA in Lusaka, Zambia, during the RECs meeting in March 2006. The Deputy Executive Secretary expressed firm support for regional integration in the continent. He welcomed the idea of AU Regional Office to SADC as a coordinating outfit for the activity of regional

integration arrangements with those of the AU. He shares the view of the AU on the need for rationalization of RECs.

III. Participation in Seminars and Conferences

The AU Regional Office to SADC during this period participated in a number of Conferences and Seminars at which discussions focused on solutions to critical issues militating against development in the region. The Regional Delegate gave the Keynote Address at the Workshop that discussed improved methods for the control of pandemics in Africa at the AU Center for Ticks and Tick Borne Diseases, in Lilongwe, on 20 February 2006. The Office was represented at the Southern Africa Meeting on the Rationalization of the RECs in Lusaka, 9 to 10 March 2006. The AU Regional Delegate gave the Keynote Address at the Land Redistribution Workshop organized by the Southern African Regional Poverty Network and the World Bank, in Pretoria, South Africa, 13 to 17 March 2006. The AU Regional Delegate represented the AU at the World Health Day Commemoration on 7 April in Lusaka, Zambia. This event emphasized working together for better health care system especially in the developing countries to confront the complex challenges of health. The Office represented the AU at the Migration and Development Workshop organized by Migration Dialogue for Southern Africa (MIDSA), 24 to 25 April 2006. The Workshop examined the implications of migration on African countries and suggested some solutions to the critical issues. The AU Regional Delegate represented the AU at the Regional Strategic Planning Meeting on AU ECOSOCC organized by the African Forum and Network on debt and Development (AFRODAD), in Harare, Zimbabwe, 27 to 28 April 2006. This meeting discussed the modalities through which regional representations could be realistically made towards the General Assembly of the ECOSOCC of the AU scheduled for March 2007. On 25 May 2006 the Regional Office with the support of the African Group in Lilongwe commemorated the 43rd anniversary of the Africa Day in the context of the AUC theme, "Working together for Integration and Development".

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