

AFRICAN UNION
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UNION AFRICAINE
UNIÃO AFRICANA

SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL OFFICE

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**REPORT
OF THE CHAIRPERSON
TO THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS**

June 2010 to January 2011

Contributions

from

**AU Southern Africa
Regional Office,
Lilongwe, Malawi**

I. Introduction

The mandate of AU SARO is to represent the Au in the southern Africa region as well as develop and maintain constructive and productive relationships between the Au and Member States in the region (SADC and COMESA) .Consistent with the AUC core areas of activities and mandate of the Office, the AU-SARO, during this period, monitored and contributed to the advancement of integration and development in Southern Africa.

II. Peace and security in the southern Region

The implementation of appropriate economic policies and progress in economic growth and development continue to ensure peace and security in the region. The 21 September has been the culmination of the 2010 Year of Peace and Security, declared at an African Union (AU) special session on the consideration and resolution of conflicts in Africa in Tripoli on 31 August 2009. In implementing the decision taken by the Au assembly in Kampala, "urging Member States to fully

take ownership of this initiative, including by signing and ratifying relevant AU instruments, including the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, and effectively implementing the commitments contained therein, as well as by intensifying their efforts for peace”, the AU-SARO disseminated the then received documents and materials from AUC Headquarters to all SADC Ministers of education for their information and action, received the Peace Journey in Africa team on 29 August 2010 for the Malawian segment, hold various meetings with some officials regarding the celebration day and attended a series of programmes and events organized by the team (planted a tree for peace, football match etc).

The achievements recorded during this period, particularly in the consolidation of peace and democracy within SADC, are generally commendable.

III. Regional Integration, Economic Development in the Region

Regional integration remains a vital instrument for the promotion of development. The Office during this period continued to work closely with UNECA-SA and the AU-SARO Regional Delegate attended and delivered an opening speech to the meeting organized by UNECA-SA on “Responses to the Impacts of the Global Financial and Economic Crises in Southern Africa” Lilongwe, Malawi and at a workshop in Lusaka, Zambia organized by SRO- ECA and SADC aimed to develop the **Regional Human Development Report 2010(RHDR2010)** for southern Africa which will build on the work of UNDP for the past reports and will be published biennially. The report for this year focused on the interaction between Human development and Regional Integration.

The summit of Heads of state and government of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) was held in Windhoek, Namibia on 16-18 August 2010. H.E Hifikepunye Pohamba, President of Namibia has taken over the SADC chairmanship for the next year 2010-2011. Major decisions, observations and recommendations have been taken related to the establishment of the SADC customs Union, to an agenda for Establishing the COMESA–EAC-SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area and to the establishment of a Regional Poverty Observatory.

The Summit took also the decision to convene an extraordinary summit on Economic Development on the 20, November 2011 to come up with remedial measures regarding the impact of the global economic crisis on food security, climate change, HIV and AIDS and Gender and Development of the region. Indeed, most of the countries in the region continued to take relevant economic measures to cope with the shocks from the world economy and are intensifying efforts at the implementation of sound macroeconomic policies to redress the effects of decline in price and demand for primary products, decline in foreign aid and uncertainties in foreign direct investments. These policies were also directed at the deepening of structural transformation, towards infrastructural development, food security, and the diversification of exports in order to ensure sustainable economic growth and development. This has led to some positive results which need to be consolidated.

SADC governments are in full swing implementing regional projects in term of infrastructures for the benefit of all the people in the Region. The implementation of the Kazungula Road/rail Bridge Botswana-Zambia Project is on course in its first phase and will constitute a good part of the North-South transport corridor (Lubumbashi-Durban), the launching of the Shire -Zambezi world Inland port which intends to open Malawi and Zambia to the Indian Ocean and will reduce transport costs of imports by up to 60 percent for the region.

In implementation of the Kampala Assembly Decision 20, the commemoration of Africa Day for Food and Nutrition Security was held on 30 October 2010 in Lilongwe.

The AU-SARO attended the COMESA Summit in kingdom of Swaziland 18th August -1st September 2010. The theme of the Summit was "Harnessing Science and Technology for Development".

IV. Shared values

Political Development

Sound political development is a shared value that is vital to the attainment of continental integration. Southern African Political leaders continue to take appropriate actions towards this ideal and the consolidation of regional integration arrangements. The region had made considerable progress in

consolidating democracy, establishing the rule of law, and promoting human rights. Political and economic environment in the region (excluding Madagascar) during this period continues to be peaceful and encouraging. Member states and stakeholders took necessary actions to sustain them as priorities in the effort to attain higher standard of living in the various countries and the region.

Elections which were largely perceived as free, peaceful, fair, transparent and credible by most observers present, including AU Observers were held in some five countries of the region. These represented good developments for the creation of sound democracy in the region. There was, to a large extent, compliance with AU code of conduct on elections, as stipulated in the OAU/AU Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa and the AU Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, as well as the constitutional, legal framework, and electoral laws of the country. The political and socio-economic environments were essentially free of violence before, during and after voting. The successes in these elections are, to some extent, indications of maturing democracy and political development in the region. It is expected that this process would in the future be consolidated and that other countries in the region would enhance their democratic process in similar manner.

Coordination of the African Group

The Office devoted significant attention to the coordination of African Group in Lilongwe in the effort to promote integration and development in the region. During this period, the Office organized three meetings for the African Group (7 countries), one meeting for the SADC Group and one meeting of EU-AU Ambassadors in Malawi. The discussions at these meetings dealt with the political, economic and social development issues emanating from the countries in the region. In addition, these meetings discuss international economic issues that are tangential to integration and development in the region.

During this period also the AU-SAR Office acknowledged the changing of the Malawian flag and the AU Regional Delegate attended the display of the new flag which has full sun in the middle depicting the changes in the progress of the

nation at the new Malawi Parliament Building by H.E Prof Bingu wa Mutharika, President of the republic of Malawi and current chairperson of the African union.

V. Institution and capacity building

Capacity Building: African Union Summit Model

The Office in his mandate to popularize the Organization in the region and also play an advocacy role, has started a program on capacity building with some universities. The **African union model summit** is students based activity .It involve students assigning themselves to the African countries in groups of 4 or 5.Each group studies the country they represent i.e the economy, the infrastructures, the history, the governance, the electoral system, the education, peace and security issues etc) of the country. The students become experts on the country they represent. At the end of the study, students will hold a model African union summit on a given issue affecting Africa .Each group will present its argument according to its study of the country it represents. Senior staff and Heads of faculties were assigned to guide the students in the whole exercise and the learning materials were sourced from African Union Southern Regional office (AU-SARO) in Lilongwe. This was pilot project where the AU-SARO was the parent body .The success of this program at the CUNIMA University in Malawi called for the AU-SARO to undertake similar events in other universities (Zimbabwe, Zambia, Namibia etc.) in the SADC region for the next years. This Progamme has trained numerous graduate students on the principles and practices of AU as well as exposing them to a wide range of global and continental issues that would be pertinent in future assignments. It is one way in which the African union can have an impact on the ground, in particular for the youth.

Advocacy

Another important instrument of advocacy of AU in the region is the regular issue of the AU-SARO Bulletin. The Bulletin provides current information on the activities of the Office of the AUC on continental integration. It is widely distributed throughout the region and to the outside world through print and

electronic media. A new format of the Bulletin is being designed and the next volume will be ready early February 2011.

Constraints and Remedial measures to be taken.

The AU-SARO faced many constraints related to its lack of staff. The positions (6Posts) which were decided by the Maputo Summit are not yet filled. During this period the AU-SARO lost its Finance and Administration officer and the position is still to be filled .The socio-Economic and political Environment of the region call for recruiting the Senior Political Officer who has not been replaced after being transferred as Head of Division (P5) Defense and Security to the Headquarters, one Senior socio-economic officer(P3) ,one Senior information and communication officer (P3) for strengthening AU-SARO which need the full complement staff to fulfill its mandate.

VI. Conclusion

The Office during this period worked with all stakeholders on regional integration and development in Southern Africa to ensure full attainment of the core areas of activities of the AUC and its mandate. Regional integration and development remain high in the agenda of activities of the countries in the region and continuous efforts were made for their advancement.

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