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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF SEVEN CHAIRED BY
PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO OF THE
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

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The Fifth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union at its meeting in Sirte, Libya, set up a Committee of Seven under my Chairmanship to provide further reflection and guidance on the proposals for a Union Government.

Pursuant to this decision and with a view to facilitating deep reflection and broad based consultations with different segments of the African publics, I convened a two-day Conference on the theme, "Africa and the Challenges of the Changing Global Order: Desirability of Union Government", in Abuja, Nigeria, from 12-13 November 2005.

The Conference was attended by a broad section of the African community at local, state, regional and continental levels. All members of the Committee of Seven and several others within this AU Assembly were invited. The meeting was attended by Presidents Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal, Kufour of Ghana, Mbeki of South Africa, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia and Mr. Ahmed Ouyahia, Head of Government of Algeria. Also present were the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Prof. Alpha Oumar Konaré, and the foreign ministers of Algeria, Nigeria, Egypt, Ghana, Ethiopia, Libya and Senegal.

The Executive Secretaries of various Regional Economic Communities including ECOWASS, CEN-SAD, the East African Community, the Deputy Executive Secretary of SADC and Director of COMESA also attended the meeting. Key resource persons were drawn from various segments of African Civil Society including community based organizations, professional groups and associations, universities and research institutions. The President of the Pan-African Parliament, Mrs. Gertrude Mongella and Nobel Laureate and President of the AU Economic, Social and Cultural Council, Prof. Wangari Maathai were also in attendance.

The Abuja meetings produced a set of recommendations and conclusions. It also suggested that the AU Commission should organize an Expert group to further reflect on different aspect of the Union Government

and prepare a road map on the way forward. This Experts Group met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 12-14 December 2005 and made proposals to the Chairperson of the Commission . The proposals along with additional inputs from the Chairperson of the Commission were then submitted to me.

Based on these consultations, I convened a meeting of the Committee of Seven on 22 January 2006 in the Africa Hall on the 4th Floor of the Friendship Hall in Khartoum. The meeting was attended by all members of the Committee including Nigeria, Algeria, Senegal, Kenya, Gabon, Lesotho and Uganda. Libya also attended as an Observer.

The meeting agreed as follows:

1. The Character of the Union

- There is a clear consensus among African on the desirability of a Union Government based on a set of common values powered by a principle of strict adherence and created to facilitate the achievement of clearly defined and identifiable goals;
- The Union must be a union of the African people and not merely a Union of governments;
- The creation of the Union must be based on a multi-layered approach and incrementalism;
- Regional Economic Communities are expected to serve as building blocks for the continental framework;

2. Programme of Action

As a way of moving forward therefore, the Committee also agreed on the following line of action:

a) Review of Integrating Institutions and Programmes

The AU Commission should appoint a Consultant to review existing integrating institutions. The review must start with the basic outline of the nature and character of the desired political union based on commonly

shared core values as distilled from continental and regional frameworks and programmes starting with the underpinning philosophies of the AU Constitutive Act.

The review will thereafter provide a factual description and assessment of current state of integration as it relates to the operationalisation of these values and goals outlining the specific and general challenges.

The review will also suggest programmes, initiatives, policies and decisions that will be required to facilitate the achievement of the defined and desired goals.

It is expected that the review will draw on existing documents containing decisions by the AU and particularly seek to provide a value added to ongoing reviews by the commission as well as other external bodies. The review must go beyond theoretical constructions and elaboration of current strands in the integration process to ensure that the final product is policy friendly, containing a range of practical guide and steps, particularly an indicative road map to the formation of a Union Government.

Upon conclusion of the review a range of consultative workshops designed to elicit and include comments and observations by various segments of African public should be undertaken.

b) **Framework of Consultation**

The meeting proposed four consultation workshops with the following target participants:

- i) state actors particularly : policy makers, judiciary, parliamentarians and defence;
- ii) civil society organizations;
- iii) indigenous African private sector representatives and relevant African multilateral financial institutions;

- iv) a multi-stakeholders workshop to facilitate a synthesis of the outcomes of the three previous workshops.

As part of deepening the support base for the process each of the workshops should be held in different regions of the continent. In addition, it is important that deliberate efforts should be made to involve and include the regional economic communities in the workshops.

The review will then be finalized and a presentation made to the Committee of Seven for its consideration.

- c) **Review of the nature, structure and functions of the Commission**

It is also imperative that the process should review collectively the current structure, nature and functioning of the AU Commission with a view to making it more robust and effective. Our suggestions in this regard should be included in the review of the integrating institutions and the final road map.

3. Work Plan and Time Table

In light of the above, the Committee also agreed on the following work plan.

- **December 2005 – January 2006:**
 - Identification and appointment of the lead consultant on the evaluation;
 - Preparation of the draft background documentation, agendas and framework document for the consultations on the basis of the assigned objectives i.e. mainly defining the purpose of the Union Government, the core values, steps and processes to enforce it etc. including the timetable and venues for the consultations.
- **End of February 2006:** Submission of the evaluation report by consultant

- **First week of March 2006:** Review the report prepared by Consultant.
- **End of March to end of June 2006:** Consultative Workshops
- **June 2006:** the Experts finalize their report and hand it over to the Chairman of the Commission.
- **June 2006:** Presentation of the Draft Indicative Roadmap on Union Government by the Committee of Seven to the AU/AHG in Banjul, Gambia.

The political will that has been generated must be nurtured and sustained. Time is of essence. Hence final decision on our Road Map must be taken by the AU Summit in June 2006.

CONCLUSION

The Meeting agreed to propose that this august Assembly should request the Commission to follow up on this report in accordance with the Work Plan and the framework of action contained in it.

It also noted that in the course of its proceedings, the proposals were also enriched by the submission of Members of the Committee and the contribution of the Leader of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya as an observer. The Committee agreed therefore that it would also recommend that the Commission should consider all other pertinent ideas discussed during this Session, including the contribution of the Leader of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, as well as others that may be submitted or arise through consultations with all relevant stakeholders and Experts as envisaged in the Report and to submit a consolidated document with a roadmap for consideration to the Assembly at its next Ordinary Session in June 2006.

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