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Exposing the Factors Militating Against the African Union Led Regional Integration in Africa

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Abstract: **The world entered a new phase of international relations in 1945 as the World War II ended. This new phase brought with it the increasingly prominent feature of political, economic and even socio-cultural collaborations and globalization, which took the form of regional integration in many cases. This scenario became imperative due to the realization of the fact that regional economic integration and cooperation is a major framework for the development of the various regions of the world. Little wonder, this period experienced a surge of both international and regional organisations world over. Africa not wanting to be left out in this move; formed her premier organisation called the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963. When the OAU became unsuccessful in driving the process of African economic integration; it quickly metamorphose to African Union (AU) in 2002 in-line with emerging challenges of globalization and the unipolar world order that emerged at the end of the Cold War. This paper's main focus is to expose and appraise the challenges faced by the AU led regional integration process in Africa, whether it has fared better than its predecessor. Expectedly, we have wholly concerned ourselves in this paper with identifying and discussing some of the factors militating against the smooth integration ride of Africa in details in order to expose all aspects of their complexities. All materials used are drawn basically from secondary sources and content analysed.**

Keywords: **Factors; Militating; Africa; Regional Integration; Cooperation; Development.**

1. INTRODUCTION

Africa perhaps has no option than to quickly and properly integrate both within herself and into the world economic and financial systems to ensure sustainable growth, reduce extreme poverty and enforce development (ACBF, 2006; Ishmael, 2020). Due to the emerging trends in a rapidly globalizing world where regional integration is considered one effective means by which countries and regions of the world would maximize full benefits within themselves and as a regional bloc with other regions. This new trend first surfaced in 1945 after the Second World War, and the end of the Cold War in 1991 further intensified their importance and proliferation world over, with their number hitting 575 as at July 31, 2013 (Sakyi & Opoku 2014).

Thus, we have seen the rise of numerous international and regional organisations driving various integration processes in both the international and regional levels. Hence, we have organisations such as the United Nations (UN) established in 1945; the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) popularly known as the Breton Wood institutions created in 1944; General Agreement of Trade and Tarff (GATT) in 1947, which later became World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 1995; Oil Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in 1960, among others, at the international level, while at the regional or continental level, organisations such as the European Union (EU) has existed in Europe since 1952 in the form of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC); the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) was established in North America in 1992; the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established in Asia in 1967; the Arab League in the Middle East in 1945; and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963, which later became African Union (AU) in July 9, 2002.

Howwever, apart from the African Union (AU) and Africa's general integration and cooperation efforts which are our main focus in this paper, the scope of this work does not cover a detailed analysis of factors responsible for establishment of all other above mentioned organisations. However, a consensus for the purpose of their existence include: promotion of equitable growth, improves competition among member states, lowers transaction costs, allows for economies of scale, attracts foreign direct investment, and facilitates macroeconomic coordination easier and better (Olubomehin & Kawonishe, 2004).

It is common knowledge that globalization has exposed the global economic system into a highly competitive environment in which only the economically vibrant nations and regions can survive the challenges that accompany it. One sure way to tackle this, is effective regional integration which oblige participating countries 'preferential economic and political regimes' targeted at enhancing their developmental fortunes (Gomes, 2014). This according to Gomes Jailson, is the reason regional integration first mobilizes the integrating states to stand up to the challenges of globalization by absorbing its pressure and understanding the antics of those who dictate the process. Only then will integrating regions be able to create regional "preferential advantage in global competitive landscape at the world goods, services, technologies and labour markets" (Gomes, 2014).

Furthermore, investigations into the phenomenon of integration will always reveal that integrating states gradually pull together towards becoming a single economic unit in the process. Regional integration in the words of John Rourke, is a process in which sovereign states cooperate bilaterally or multilaterally through IGOs (such as the IMF) or processes such as the G-7 meetings. He went on to say that, it means such a close degree of economic intertwining that, through formal agreement or informal circumstances, the countries involved begin to relinquish some degree of their sovereignty and act as an economic unit (Rourke, 1995). The faster this process takes place, the better for integrating states.

This process was witnessed at the 10th Extraordinary Summit of the African Union's Heads of State and Government in Kigali, Rwanda, on March 21, 2018, when the majority of Heads of Government who participated in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) endorsed the Kigali Declaration and the Free Movement Protocol. This was regarded as a watershed moment for Africa because the AU member states agreed to establish a continental-wide free trade zone with the ability to negotiate trade agreements as a single entity rather than as a collection of different states (Ishmael, 2020).

The vision to establish this hallmark AfCFTA in African integration and cooperation process has been ongoing for about forty years now. It went through several stages, including ratification by African leaders at the Lagos Plan of Action in 1980, culminating in the Abuja Treaty of 1991, which established the African Economic Community (AEC). AU Chairman, Rwandan President, His Excellency, Paul Kagame, presiding over the AU Summit of Heads of States and Government in March 2018, credited both treaties as the model and engine for Africa's integration. Similarly, the AU Commission Chair, in his address on the same occasion, expressed similar sentiments and added that integration in Africa is not an option, but a necessity if development is to be achieved (Ishmael, 2020).

Expectedly, every integration effort faces some obstacles in trying to achieve their purpose of establishment – whether international or continental. The problem here is, while some of these organisations and their regions such as those in Europe, North America and Asia, have cleverly devised appropriate measures of tackling these challenges and have achieved success in their integration process; others such as the African Union (AU) are arguably yet to find their bearing in this regard, despite some commendable progress here and there (Sakyi & Opoku 2014; Mlambo & Mlambo, 2018). It is in the light of the above that, this paper ex-rays the factors militating against regional integration in Africa using the AU, which is the chief coordinating body of all other integration attempts in the continent as a measure of success and failure. Africa has several sub-regions with each having an integrating body that the AU supervises.

In order to present our work in an organized manner, this paper has been split into four main segments. The first segment is the introduction where we have already shown the meaning and purpose of integration and cooperation in both global and regional perspectives. The second segment which is the next, traces the origin of integration efforts in Africa from the formation of Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963 to 2002 when the OAU officially transformed into an

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economic union known as the African Union (AU). The third segment beams its searchlight on the factors militating against the integration ride in Africa – whether the same factors that hindered the OAU are the same constraints in the way of the AU. The fourth and concluding segment highlights the key issues in the entire work to make judgment that regional integration has been greatly hampered in Africa due to age-long factors that have not been adequately addressed.

History of Regional Integration in Africa

There were several moves by African states and their leaders to achieve unity, integration and cooperation in the continent, but these attempts were largely abortive until the charter of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was finally signed in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 1963 (Elhiraika et al., 2016). The eventual emergence of the OAU was the combine efforts of African leaders and peoples of Africa origin across the globe in a bid to rescue Africa from the yokes of colonialism, racial discrimination and economic strangulation; and to establish closer ties among Africans (Ajala, 1988). In examining the history of regional integration in Africa, an assessment of the various events which resulted in the establishment of the OAU becomes imperative, in order to give insights to why the OAU could not achieve integration and bring about the much desired development to improve Africans living standard several years after its formation.

It was clear from all indications that African leaders and statesmen wanted to unite the continent for the purpose of a more coherent and vibrant political and economic bloc, but they were in many ways divided on their road-map to this unity they all longed for. Consequently, this division eventually assumed institutional dimensions and formations where African states and leaders were sharply split into two separate camps. One camp commonly referred to as 'the radicals' assembled themselves together in the Moroccan city of Casablanca in 1961 and subsequently became known as the 'Casablanca Group', while the other camp referred to as the 'moderates' pitched their tent in the Liberian capital city of Monrovia and eventually came to be known as the 'Monrovia Group' (Olubomehin & Kawonishe, 2004). Although, there was yet a third camp which was known as the 'Brazzaville Group' but later merged with the 'Monrovia Group', having reached a consensus on the establishment of a loosely knit group founded on the principles of economic, cultural, scientific, and technical cooperation (Nweke, 1987).

Even though there was agreement among the two divides on the urgent need for African states to unite and forge a common front, their divided approaches to achieve this lofty goal was a major stumbling block. For instance, while the Casablanca group proposed and established an African Consultative Assembly with a representative from each African state, the Monrovia group preferred a unity of aspirations and actions based on African social solidarity and political identity (Olubomehin & Kawonishe, 2004). In this manner African integration effort towed separate pathways, thereby largely slowing down the entire integration process and the activities of the body that eventually emerged from the process.

However, at the first African Heads of States Summit in 1963 in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital, African leaders were able to forge a common front by establishing the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). Among principal issues of discussion was economic integration and cooperation. The discourse continued to be a burning topic even in subsequent OAU summits. Unfortunately, the clamour for stronger and better regional economic integration structure in Africa after the formation of the OAU yielded little or no results until the Monrovia 1979 Summit where African leaders once again struck a consensus by deciding to establish an African Common Market (Olubomehin & Kawonishe, 2004).

In 1980 in Lagos, Nigeria, an extraordinary summit of the OAU gave ample opportunity to OAU leaders to draft in detail what was agreed in Monrovia the previous year. This detailed blueprint was able to fashion out the major policy directions to follow to arrive at a successful regional economic integration in the continent. Interestingly, all African heads of states and governments pledged their strong commitment to this project in order to promote economic and social development, as well as the integration of African economies in order to increase self-sufficiency and favour the continent's endogenous and self-sustaining development (Olubomehin & Kawonishe, 2004).

Actions slowly followed yet in another summit in Nigeria, this time in Abuja in June 1991 where the decision to establish the African Economic Community (AEC) was finally fine-tuned and perfected. This development brought about the emergence of the OAU's inauguration of functional reform mechanism or agent to fan the ambers of regional economic integration and cooperation in Africa. It is note-worthy to state that the popular Abuja treaty being referred to here, was actually the edited version of the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) endorsed in 1980. The AEC was thus saddled with the responsibility of ensuring the commitment of African states and governments to achieve within a specific time-frame African socio-cultural and economic integration.

The AEC from its official commencement in May, 1994 continued to engage both the new and already existing regional economic communities (RECs) in the continent with expert advice on workable and practical steps of achieving their goals. As a result, the AEC has had ongoing interactions with regional economic communities (RECs) such as the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the East African Community (EAC), to mention a few.

A point was reached in the life of the OAU that, its leadership came face to face with the obvious fact that the organisation had failed in solving Africa's integration challenges. Therefore, there arose the clamour for its restructuring. There was a growing feeling that it was time to reorganize the body to suite global contemporary trends especially that, the organisation has succeeded in fulfilling the two primary reasons for its formation, which were decolonization and the abolition of apartheid in South Africa. Late Lybian President Muammar Gadaffi was one foremost and vocal advocate of the transformation of the OAU to AU at the Sirte summit in 1999. Finally, after a few more summits, the OAU eventually metamorphosed to the African Union (AU) on July 9, 2002 in Durban, South Africa.

The transformation of the OAU to AU was greeted with loud ovation across the continent as many considered its establishment as the beginning of a rapid integration of African economies to deliver the much needed development of the continent. However, three decades down the road in the AU led integration and cooperation experiment; the continent is yet to reap the full dividends of integration. Analysts and academics alike have attributed this poor outing of Africa and the AU to the lackadaisical political will and commitment on the part of governments of member states in respecting protocols; among many other factors.

Factors Militating Against the AU led Integration in Africa

The need for African unity, integration and cooperation to accelerate economic growth and development has been on the rise for several decades now. Both pan-Africanists and nationalists alike in colonial and post-colonial periods lend their voice in this clarion call. In contemporary time, the challenges of globalization and economic marginalization of Africa by the advanced capitalist world has even further rekindled and heightened the clamour for integration and cooperation. This persistence in the call for effective integration in Africa clearly revealed that it is a cardinal requirement if Africa is to achieve significant economic growth and development (Ishmael, 2020; Gammadigbe, 2021). This is also a pointer to the weight of the task in the hands of the AU and the entire continent. The AU is central in our discourse because it coordinate all integration efforts in Africa. Therefore, whatever constitutes itself against the AU's integration efforts automatically is our interest in this discourse. Some factors militating against integration in Africa include the followings.

Lack of Political Will Among Member States

Perhaps the most destructive and complex factor against regional integration in Africa that the AU must contend with headlong, is the lack or near absence of sustained political will as well as commitment on the part of governments of member states to domesticate and execute policies and programs agreed upon. Political will and commitment of member states is what drives any integration efforts to success (Bala, 2017). Member countries most often barely pay lip service to protocols and agreements. This is a major factor that accounts for the unwillingness and unseriousness on the part of integrating states to meet deadlines for attaining targeted important goals. Sadly, Member states' political will and commitment to properly implement agreements reached under various integration arrangements have not matched the continent's great enthusiasm for regional integration (ACBF, 2006). Often times, member states only get involved in the process of signing protocols that are left unimplemented.

One strong reason why the lack of political will on the part of political leaders and governments in Africa towards integration is the unwillingness to surrender part of their sovereignty to the supra-national body, which is a grave requirement for a successful integration experiment. Until the African Union takes full control of its sphere of operation to evolve mechanisms to enforce compliance to its rules and sufficiently sanction erring members, progress in regional economic integration and cooperation in Africa may continue to be a mirage for a long time (Olubomehin & Kawonishe, 2004).

Incessant Conflicts and Wars

Another major factor militating against African regional integration that has always, and will continue to demand the AU's rapt attention; is the incessant conflicts, wars and unbridled violence, which weakens the continent's capacity to promote integration and cooperation. This is perhaps the most militant factor militating against the AU led integration project. Africa is one continent in the world that is highly prone to conflicts and endless wars. The AU since inception has been in the middle of this cross-fire. The same could be said concerning most of the RECs in the sub-regions of the continent. Violent crisis, conflicts and wars are known arch-enemies of regional integration and cooperation anywhere in the world. Conflicts disrupt integration and development processes by bringing economic activities to a halt (ACBF, 2006). The preponderance of conflicts in Africa has worsened the rate of poverty across the continent. This has made it difficult for the continent to experience accelerated and sustained economic growth and development, as wars quickly destroy the already inadequate infrastructural facilities, human capital, etc. This conflict situation has greatly weakened the capacity of African states to concentrate on achieving integration and development in the continent (Bala, 2017). Conflicts and war are constantly heard off across the continent such as São Tomé and Príncipe 2003; Guinea-Bissau 2003 and 2012; Mauritania 2005 and 2008; Madagascar 2009; Niger 2010; Mali 2012; Egypt 2013; and Central African Republic 2013; and still counting (Sakyi & Opoku, 2014). For instance, the Sierra Leonean and Liberian wars in the 1990s in no small measure hindered the progress of both the ECOWAS sub-region and the efforts at the continental level at large. Currently, Mali is experiencing crises, fighting is ongoing in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, and lots more.

Low Level of Intra-African Trade

The AU's most pressing challenge is determining how to promote inter and intra-African trade. A number of factors have contributed to the low volume of trade that African states typically record in their trade with one another. One is that, most African countries produce only raw materials that have little demand elsewhere in Africa. For many African countries, only a few commodities account for the majority of their exports to the rest of the continent (Mutume, 2002). For example, in Angola, petroleum products alone account for more than 90% of exports to other African countries, whereas in the Seychelles, fresh fish accounts for nearly 98% of such exports. African countries are still attempting to undo a legacy that has been dominated by trade with their former colonial rulers rather than trade with one another. Despite the fact that Senegal surrounds Gambia, trade between the two countries is negligible. Senegal's main trading partner is France, while Gambia has extensive trade with the United Kingdom. It has been observed that, due to trade barriers within Africa, exports from Tunisia and Cameroon frequently end up in French warehouses before being redirected to each other's market shelves (Mutume, 2002).

Over-Lapping Membership in RECs

In Africa, overlapping membership in regional economic communities (RECs) by member nations in the AU, has hampered the overall goal of regional integration project. The RECs were established as stepping stones to regional integration and cooperation, and there are now 13 RECs covering a wide range of functions and intentions: almost all African countries belong to more than one of these RECs; 27 countries belong to two, 18 are in three, and one in four. In addition to the sub-regional RECs, there are well over a hundred other multinational or bilateral organizations dedicated to fostering cooperation in specific areas such as telecommunications, aviation, maritime transport, banking, river management, agriculture, energy, and others (Olubomehin & Kawonishe, 2004). The Arab League and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) are two prominent examples in this regard. The Arab League's membership is working against Africa's economic integration. This is because the Arab world, which includes African countries north of the Sahara desert, is united in promoting Arab interests worldwide. The Arab League's interests do not always coincide with the interests of African countries south of the Sahara (Njemanze, 2004). The fact that OPEC exists as a commodity cartel works against Africa's economic unity. This is due to the fact that its membership includes non-African countries, dividing the continent into OPEC and non-OPEC members. The boat of African economic integration is moving against the tide, as OPEC's allocation of production quotas affects the price of crude oil in the world market, and the high price of crude oil has a negative impact on the economies of non-OPEC African countries. Crude oil prices will continue to be a source of discord in the relationship between OPEC and non-OPEC African nations (Njemanze, 2004).

Underdeveloped Economies of African States

Regional integration and cooperation have been proven to thrive better among countries and regions that have reached high level economic growth and development. In other words, industrialized states and regions stand a better chance of achieving economic integration and cooperation. This is so, because member states operating economies of scale bring to the integration table what perhaps is needed by some or all other integrating states. In this manner, states utilizes the regional economic space so created to maximize economic gains through larger market and other forms of trade interactions. This is one factor that has fostered the regional integration and cooperation experience of the European

Union (EU) and the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA). An ideal way for successful integration is for nations with low economic development to first grow and develop their economies to reasonable levels of optimal production before forming regional economic blocs and not the other way round.

The truth is, most African economies are yet to come close to optimal economic production. This clearly accounts for the abysmally low level of economic activities among the integrating states and within integrating regions in the continent (Mlambo & Mlambo, 2018). The economies of a regional bloc that must succeed must first be competitive to allow for division of labour and specialization among member states. Nigeria recently closed her borders to Benin Republic because that country was flooding the Nigerian market with cheap foreign rice. Apparently, it is right to conclude that, Benin Republic is yet to have locally produced item of trade with Nigeria in competitive terms. For instance, "research indicate that, members of COMESA export nearly similar primary product such as coffee, minerals and textiles, and import manufactured goods from their main trading partner, the European Union" (Geda & Kibret, 2002). What this means is that, COMESA countries are not yet in any competitive intra-regional trade; neither are they complementing themselves in their trade among them and within their region. Sadly, in this instance, their overall economic wellbeing or otherwise is solely dependent on the actions of the EU. Any of the COMESA countries could decide to pull out of the integration and still maintain its trade with the EU. Morocco pulled out of the OAU in 1984 only to rejoin the transformed AU in 2017, 33 years after it left, yet nothing happened to her. The point being made here is that, economic competition within a region ensures that integration evolves a mechanism for enhancing economic gain and minimizes loses for member countries as well as the economic bloc. Most countries in Africa depend heavily on the exportation of natural resources and primary products, most of which does not form part of their intra-regional items of trade; a factor that clearly account for the low volume of their intra-regional trade (Geda & Kibret, 2002).

Africa's Heavy Debt Burden

African leaders are also concerned about the continent's heavy debt situation. The impact of the debt crisis and externally imposed Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) on Africa jeopardizes the continent's ability to integrate economically. As a result of the debt crisis, underdevelopment appears to have taken on a terrifying proportion in the continent (Fawole, 1992). At the end of 2004, the total debt stock was estimated to be $330 billion in nominal terms, with African countries continuing to pay more than $30 million per day on loans contracted over the previous 30 years. As a result, African countries are allocating their scarce resources to debt servicing rather than to growth and social sectors. The current reality in Africa is that, even if domestic macroeconomic mismanagement and political instabilities do not obstruct the realization of economic integration, it is expected that the daunting problems of external debt and the attendant IMF-imposed SAP packages will be enough to wreak incalculable havoc on Africa's already prostrate economies, preventing the achievement of both economic integration and development in the continent (Bala, 2017).

Lack of Infrastructural Facilities

Another militant factor militating against the AU led integration drive in the continent is inadequate or inefficient physical infrastructures across the continent. Most nations in Africa suffer either a total absence, sub-standard or even dilapidated infrastructural facilities, particularly in the transport and communications sector (Sakyi & Opoku, 2014). Moreso, regarding the transportation sector, unimaginable cost differentials abound between Africa and other parts of the world. For instance, it has been observed that, import freight costs more than twice as much in landlocked African countries as it does in Asia. In fact, shipping a car from Tokyo, Japan to Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire costs $1.500, whereas shipping the same car from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to Abidjan can cost up to $5,000 (Olubomehin & Kawonishe, 2004).

In fact, the statistics is even more scaring on the side of telecommunications, the observation shows that, there are only 1.2 telephone lines for every 100 people in Africa, the lowest rate in the world, and phone calls between African countries can be 50-100 times more expensive than calls within North America (Olubomehin & Kawonishe, 2004).

A compulsory prerequisite for successful regional integration is the availability of adequate infrastructures which include good road network, airports, seaports, functional rail transportation, power, etc (Bala, 2017). The importance of infrastructural facilities in ensuring a robust economy that effectively and efficiently utilizes its resources cannot be overemphasized in our today's world particularly in relations to regional integration and cooperation. Regions can only enjoy economic gains if the system operated has the ability to move resources, people, capital, and pass information seamlessly from the point of sourcing to the production centres, and finally ensure efficient distribution of its finished goods to the final consumers. This crucial process which enables free flow of goods, services and persons within the

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integration region is heavily dependent on adequate and functional infrastructural amenities (Bala, 2017). Africa's infrastructural deficit is growing by the day; and until this stumbling-block is reduced or completely removed, Africa may continue in the circle of unsuccessful integration experimentation.

Exclusion of the Private Sector and Civil Society Groups

The non-incorporation of the generality of Africans particularly the organised private sector into the regional integration outfits in the continent is a great undoing in achieving success. A good understanding and effective collaboration between the government and the private sector allows for all hands to be on deck in the business of integrating the continent (Geda & Kibret, 2017). Regional integration efforts that side-line the people and do not sufficiently mobilize the active participation of the organised private sector will always hit a brick wall along the line (Olubomehin & Kawonishe, 2004). African integration efforts undertaken by both the OAU and the AU have always taken the form of 'building a coalition of states' instead of 'uniting the people'. Just the way national policies need widespread mass participation in both the formulation and execution to succeed, so it is in the supra-national level. Leaving integration efforts solely in the hands of governments or state apparatuses is one strong disservice the process has suffered in Africa.

There is no gainsaying that regional economic development may never achieve its full potential without a robust involvement of the vibrant private sector as well as the activities of civil society groups. The negligence civil society groups suffer in the integration process in Africa shows that, not all countries have welcomed civil society's crucial role, particularly in contributing to the formulation and implementation of policy at all levels. Many countries impose restrictions on the overall operation of civil society organizations, particularly those concerned with governance and human rights issues (Teferi, 2010). The active participation by the generality of the population bringing their individual skills, education and ingenuity will always give the needed push and support integrative efforts require. The lack of this crucial angle in African regional integration, analysts argue, accounts for its weak regional blocs over the years compared to others like the EU and NAFTA in Europe and North America respectively (Geda & Kibret, 2002).

2. CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have attempted to demonstrate how the world from 1945, when the World War II ended, experienced a shift in approach to international politics in favour of internationalization and regionalism. This trend became even more famous at the collapse of the iron curtain in 1991 signaling the end of the Cold War. The emphasis on regional integration as an enterprise became an imperative as the consensus of their proponents saw it as a panacea for speedy economic growth and development for the regions of the world. Consequently, the world experienced a proliferation of organisations of regional integration springing up both in the international and continental levels, with Africa not being left behind as it established its pioneer regional body – the OAU in 1963.

We have painstakingly traced the circumstances that led to the formation of the OAU even though it was clearly not a smooth sail. The OAU emerged so that Africa could put her nascent economy in proper footing to enable her play a bigger and better role in the global economy. Unfortunately, the continent was soon disillusioned with the OAU as it was totally unable to facilitate any meaningful economic growth and development as originally envisaged. Africa's economic hopes were being dashed. A process for it immediate restructuring was set in motion, and eventually the OAU metamorphosed to African Union (AU) in 2002.

It is quite disturbing to realize that, even after the restructuring and the change of nomenclature, the AU is still faced with catalogues of problems in her bid to drive Africa to her integration promised land. Obviously, it has been evident that most of the challenges faced by the defunct OAU are still very much around. The AU and all other relevant authorities must rise to the occasion, as this array of stubborn factors standing in the way of Africa's integration and cooperation project need urgent and drastic actions to be leveled.

This paper has basically concerned itself with identifying and explaining in details the effects of some of these stronghold factors the AU and the entire continent must contend with to achieve success in regionalism. Despite that the list is lengthy, it is inexhaustible. We have decided to do this not to tell Africa's weakness or expose her to global ridicule and damnation. We have not also gone the way of proffering solutions to these vexing problems militating against the continent's advancement regarding integration; not because it will be unwise to do so, but we have rather decided to take quality time and space to make a critical but simplistic expository on these challenges with a bid to laying them bare to avoid any form of complexity in understanding and dealing with them.

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