

Introduction

The AU -the African Union- is the linear descendent of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The OAU ceased to exist in 2001-2002 with the birth of the AU. The AU is the African government-centred, continent-wide body of 55 member's states established to represent the joint interest of African countries, and to eventually create a Union of African States, which will be a single country of Africa to replace the current 55 countries. The AU has laid out, on paper a roadmap for the creation of a real Pan African unification, and the Diaspora is a big part of those plans.

In 2003 the AU amended his constitution called the AU Constitutive Act) to clarify its fundamental relationship with the Diaspora and to invite the Diaspora to join the organization to help African unify.

In **article 3(3q)** of the AU's amended Constitution, "the AU hereby" invite(s) and encourage(s) the full participation of the Diaspora as an important part of our continent, in building of the African Union"

The advent of the African Union (AU) can be described as an event of great magnitude in the institutional evolution of the continent. On 9.9.1999, the Heads of State and Government of the Organisation of African Unity issued a Declaration (the Sirte Declaration) calling for the establishment of an African Union, with a view, inter alia, to accelerating the process of integration in the continent to enable it play its rightful role in the global economy while addressing multifaceted social, economic and political problems compounded as they are by certain negative aspects of globalisation.

The main objectives of the OAU were, inter alia, to rid the continent of the remaining vestiges of colonization and apartheid; to promote unity and solidarity among African States; to coordinate and intensify cooperation for development; to safeguard the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States and to promote international cooperation within the framework of the United Nations. Indeed, as a continental organization the OAU provided an effective forum that enabled all Member States to adopt coordinated positions on matters of common concern to the continent in international for and defend the interests of Africa effectively.

Through the OAU Coordinating Committee for the Liberation of Africa, the Continent worked and spoke as one with undivided determination in forging an international consensus in support of the liberation struggle and the fight against apartheid. (Source: OAU)

The Vision of the AU

The AU is Africa's premier institution and principal organization for the promotion of accelerated socio-economic integration of the continent, which will lead to greater unity and solidarity between African countries and peoples.

The AU is based on the common vision of a united and strong Africa and on the need to build a partnership between governments and all segments of civil society, in particular women, youth and the private sector, in order to strengthen solidarity and cohesion amongst the peoples of Africa.

As a continental organization it focuses on the promotion of peace, security and stability on the continent as a prerequisite for the implementation of the development and integration agenda of the Union.

The AU exists from several commissions of these commissions the Economic, Social and Cultural Commission (ECOSOCC) is the first to invite the Diaspora to take part. The ECOSOCC is a grouping of 150 community-based organisations, which are also called NGOs (Non-governmental Organizations) and civil society organizations. The Diaspora has been designated 20 members of that 150

The AU defines the African Continent as being divided into 6 geographical regions:

1. North Africa
2. South Africa
3. West Africa
4. East Africa
5. Central Africa
6. the Diaspora

In 2005 the AU defined the Diaspora as "...peoples of African descent and the heritage living outside the continent, irrespective their citizenship, and who remain committed to contribute to the development of the continent and building of the African Union.

“Geographically, this large population, variously estimated as between 150 – 350 million folks, is to be found in;

- a. The USA
- b. Canada
- c. The Caribbean
- d. Central and south America (including Brazil, Surinam and the Guyana’s)
- e. Europe

To accept the invitation to participate as part of the AU the Diaspora need to be organised. The interim ECOSOCC had agreed a date in March 2007 to represent the first gathering of the permanent members of that AU commission, including voting members from the Diaspora. However, that was changed to December 2007 to finalize the preparation that lead to the Summit of May 2012.

Finally, the Declaration took place on May 25th 2012 in South Africa, with all Heads of States and or representatives from, African, Europe, Caribbean, North American, and Brazilian, as well as other leaders around the world present. The Declaration now makes all people of African Descent (African Diaspora) the official 6th Region of the African Continent.

NB: Republic of Haiti has now become the first African Diaspora country to move from its observer status to becoming an official member of the African Union in 2013.

Preamble (A) African Diaspora History in USA

African Americans, one of the largest of the many ethnic groups in the United States. African Americans are mainly of African ancestry, but many have nonblack ancestors as well.

African Americans are largely the descendants of slaves—people who were brought from their African homelands by force to work in the New World. Their rights were severely limited, and they were long denied a rightful share in the economic, social, and political progress of the United States. Nevertheless, African Americans have made basic and lasting contributions to American history and culture.

At the turn of the 21st century, more than half the country's more than 36 million African Americans lived in the South; 10 Southern states had black populations exceeding 1 million. African Americans were also concentrated in the largest cities, with more than 2 million living in New York City and more than 1 million in Chicago. Detroit, Philadelphia, and Houston each had a black population between 500,000 and 1 million.

Names and Labels

As Americans of African descent reached each new plateau in their struggle for equality, they reevaluated their identity. The slaveholder labels of *black* and *negro* (Spanish for black) were offensive, so they chose the euphemism *coloured* when they were freed. Capitalized, *Negro* became acceptable during the migration to the North for factory jobs. *Afro-American* was adopted by civil rights activists to underline pride in their ancestral homeland, but *black*—the symbol of power and revolution—proved more popular. All these terms are still reflected in the names of dozens of organizations. To reestablish “cultural integrity” in the late 1980s, Jesse Jackson proposed *African American*, which—unlike some “baseless” colour label—proclaims kinship with a historical land base. In the 21st century the terms *black* and *African American* both were widely used.

The Early History of Blacks in The Americas

Africans assisted the Spanish and the Portuguese during their early exploration of the Americas. In the 16th century some black explorers settled in the Mississippi valley and in the areas that

became South Carolina and New Mexico. The most celebrated black explorer of the Americas was Estéban, who traveled through the Southwest in the 1530s.

The uninterrupted history of blacks in the United States began in 1619, when 20 Africans were landed in the English colony of Virginia. These individuals were not slaves but indentured servants—persons bound to an employer for a limited number of years—as were many of the settlers of European descent (whites). By the 1660s large numbers of Africans were being brought to the English colonies. In 1790 blacks numbered almost 760,000 and made up nearly one-fifth of the population of the United States.

Attempts to hold black servants beyond the normal term of indenture culminated in the legal establishment of black chattel slavery in Virginia in 1661 and in all the English colonies by 1750. Black people were easily distinguished by their skin colour (the result of evolutionary pressures favouring the presence in the skin of a dark pigment called melanin in populations in equatorial climates) from the rest of the populace, making them highly visible targets for enslavement. Moreover, the development of the belief that they were an “inferior” race with a “heathen” culture made it easier for whites to rationalize black slavery. Enslaved blacks were put to work clearing and cultivating the farmlands of the New World.

Of an estimated 10 million Africans brought to the Americas by the slave trade, about 430,000 came to the territory of what is now the United States. The overwhelming majority were taken from the area of western Africa stretching from present-day Senegal to Angola, where political and social organization as well as art, music, and dance were highly advanced. On or near the African coast had emerged the major kingdoms of Oyo, Ashanti, Benin, Dahomey, and the Congo. In the Sudanese interior had arisen the empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai; the Hausa states; and the states of Kanem-Bornu. Such African cities as Djenné and Timbuktu, both now in Mali, were at one time major commercial and educational centres.

With the increasing profitability of slavery and the slave trade, some Africans themselves sold captives to the European traders. The captured Africans were generally marched in chains to the coast and crowded into the holds of slave ships for the dreaded Middle Passage across the Atlantic Ocean, usually to the West Indies. Shock, disease, and suicide were responsible for the deaths of at least one-sixth during the crossing. In the West Indies the survivors were “seasoned”—taught the rudiments of English and drilled in the routines and discipline of plantation life.

In recognition of our rich heritage, tenacity and our vast contribution to humanity, we embrace and celebrate our uniqueness, our triumphs and even the dark period in our history (slavery) as we move to a new dimension establishing the African Union 6th Region in USA through the following commissions:

- Global Dialog, International Relations, Peace & Stability
- Economic Co-operation and Sustainable Development
- Historical, Socio-Cultural and Religious Commonalities and Challenges
- Programs for Our Women & Children
- Education and Knowledge Sharing
- Issues Concerning Health & Disabilities
- Programs for Our Youths and Their Development
- Media and Image Building

From the Motherland to the heart of the Caribbean, Europe, Asia, Middle East, Canada, South, Central and North America we are a strong nation.

Africa is calling its people from every place where they have been scattered throughout this hemisphere, this is our time and this is our season. We welcome the invitation of the African Union as the 6th region, through the CIDO and ECOSOC Commission. We choose to stand united, to build a strong nation and strengthen & empower the institute of the African Union as a voice for the people of African descent in the 21st century. Marcus Garvey says it best “Up you mighty race; you can achieve whatever you will”.

God bless the people of African Decent and long live Africa our homeland.

(B) Who We Are

In the past 400 years many immigrants have been a part of the United State of America's growth, and in the last 150 years of the twentieth century, many immigrants have been a part of the immense growth in the population of USA, which is very diverse with many People from Africa and the African Diaspora.

The need of the African Diaspora was identified several years ago by the People of African Descent who were concerned citizens, and saw the need for there to be an association with the express purpose of servicing the social, political, educational needs and interests of fellow residents and our children and advocating on their behalf at every level of civil society.

We are passionate about the welfare and well-being of every member of our community and affirm the spiritual groundings of our ancestors and their noble traditions of caring for of the elders and nurturing of the entire family. With these fundamental convictions guiding us, we seek to make a difference in the lives of the Black community, and all who live in USA and the city of Toronto region and the surrounding areas.

As a registered organization, African Union 6th Region USA Foundation Corporation seeks to provide prudent management of its affairs in compliance with all applicable laws. We also seek to provide such management and administration by encouraging the participation of as many members as possible in the process.

Mandate

African Union 6th Region USA Foundation Corporation. is the official headquarters of the African Union 6th Region in USA. Our mandate is to mobilize and unify all people of African Descent in USA and to elect representatives for USA in the African Union ECOSOCC Assembly.

Mission

Our mission is to support the promotion of African culture in USA as a means to: celebrate and preserve the shared heritage between Africa and persons of African descent in USA; consolidate African identity, unity and solidarity.

History

The African Union is the linear descendant of the Organization of African Unity which has been in existence since May 25, 1963. Since 2005 the African Union recognized the efforts of the African Diaspora and in order to engage civil society in their processes has created the 6th Region.

Activities

The Organization will engage in the following activities along the lines of the African Union-African Diaspora Program of Action and Consolidated Outcomes

1. Encouragement and intensification of the participation of the African Diaspora in Conflict Resolution, Peace Making/Keeping, Post-Conflict Reconstruction, Furtherance of Human Rights and Good Governance in Africa and the African Diaspora.
2. Establishment of mechanisms and instruments or strategic partnerships to mobilize resources, including the creation of a Diaspora Bank in USA to manage Diaspora remittances from USA; Provide innovative financial support to Diaspora entrepreneurship in USA; Mobilize resources for the engagement of the African Diaspora in USA as an important source of support for the African continent.
3. Establishment of an integrated African Diaspora Center in USA
4. Establishment of a framework for project development
5. The Organization through its Commissions will advise the American government on the African Union African Diaspora related issues.
6. The Organization shall work closely with the American Commissions to promote the integration and exchange between African and its Diaspora.
7. Promotion of African culture in USA as a means to: celebrate and preserve the shared heritage between Africa and persons of African descent in USA; consolidate African identity, unity and solidarity;

8. Leveraging of the influence and strength of African Diaspora entrepreneurs, professionals and intellectuals to: Mobilize human as well as capital resources to support economic development efforts in Africa and, in so doing, compile a comprehensive African Diaspora skills database in USA and corresponding market intelligence as a means toward identifying key areas of critical shortage and short, medium and long-term needs of the African development agenda;
9. Formation of strategic partnerships with existing African media in USA to: re-brand Africa and counter stereotypes about Africans and people of African descent; Provide both Africans in the Diaspora and Americans with better access to balanced information that enables them to appreciate the situation of the people in Africa and reflect the perspectives of Africa and the people of Africa; profile African challenges and African initiatives and in so doing ensure optimal placement of African success stories in the media;
10. Creation of durable mechanisms that take the differential experience of African Diaspora women and youth in consideration with the aim to: ensure their inclusion in the activities of the Organization; promote activities that empower African Diaspora women and youth in USA.

Aims and Objectives

1. We aim at defending and maintaining the true African Heritage
2. We aim at helping African Diasporas as well as individual organizations to maintaining order/unity and to be effective in the society.
3. We aim to support member organizations practically:
 - By organizing “Fund Raising” programs
 - By co-coordinating financial contributions among member organizations
 - By organizing programs to strengthen member organizations (e.g. Conferences, Meetings, Seminars, Tours, etc.)
4. We aim at coordinating strategies for effective mobilization of the African Diaspora.
 - By regularly meeting and exchanging ideas

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- By regularly conducting mobilization campaigns together.
5. We aim at training and equipping leaders of member organizations for good governance by conducting/establishing:
 - Seminars
 - Workshops
 - Short courses
 - Training school/center
 6. To advance social integration of the Diaspora community, through the commissions by organizing
 - Youth activities
 - Entertaining programs and activities (e.g. music concerts)
 7. Information center (Public relations)
 - Internet (Website)
 - Mini- library
 8. Promoting African Arts and Culture
 9. Offer advice on legal and welfare aid issues
 - Health care
 - Housing
 - Employment
 10. Establish project execution methodologies (For the benefit of Africa as a Continent)

The Commissions (The Operational Guide)

The Commission is the Secretariat of the Union entrusted with executive functions. It is composed of 10 Officials: A Chairperson, a Deputy Chairperson; Eight (8) Commissioners and Staff members. The structure represents the Union and protects its interest under the auspices of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government as well as the Executive Committee. The AU Commission is made up of Portfolios. They are: Peace and Security; Economic Co-operation and Sustainable Development; Historical, Social-Cultural and Religious Commonalities and Challenges; Women and Children; Knowledge Sharing and Education; Health and Disability; Youth and Development; Media and Image Building.

Mission and Values of The African Union Commission

The mission of the Commission is become “An efficient and value-adding institution driving the African integration and development process in close collaboration with African Union Member States, the Regional Economic Communities (REC) and African citizens”.

The values to guide and govern the functioning and operations of the Commission are:

- Respect for diversity and team work;
- Think Africa above all;
- Transparency and accountability;
- Integrity and impartiality;
- Efficiency and professionalism; and
- Information and knowledge sharing.

The Commission will endeavour to fulfil its Mission by developing clear goals and strategies. The values indicated above will constitute the basis on which the AU6RUSA will achieve its Mission. They will also encourage the development of a service culture for the entire organization.

The Commission will be guided by the following principles:

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- Subsidiarity and complementarity with other Organs, Member States and RECs;
 - Results orientation, feasibility and impact focus;
 - Close coordination and cooperation with the RECs;
 - Coherence of policies and programs; and
 - A networking approach that takes advantage of available resources through other players.

Guided by these values and principles, the Commission will endeavour to achieve its Mission through implementation of clear goals and strategies and by committing the requisite resources for effective discharge of its mandate. This would require the AU6RUSA presenting specific proposals to give full effect to its texts, and bring new possibilities and benefits to the citizens of Africa.

Partnership

Africa Union 6th Region USA hope to develop a number of ground-breaking partnerships with the rest of the world aimed at enhancing cooperation and consolidating growth of the continent. The philosophy underpinning Africa's new partnerships is predicated on specific objectives with pre-determined "Win-Win" outcomes for the mutual benefits of the parties involved. It is based on the principle of trust, equality and mutual respect. It aims at obliterating the age-long pattern of donor-recipient relationship, to one founded on reciprocal obligations and responsibilities. These partnerships are consistent with the clearly defined vision and development strategy of the African Union (AU), with particular emphasis on speeding up industrialization, development of infrastructure, development and acquisition of technology and know-how and development of human capital, all of which are outlined in the Commission's Strategic Plan.