

Post-OAU Regional Institution Formations: An Efficiency and Relevancy Analysis

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The transformation from the Organization of African Unity (OAU) into the African Union (AU) has resulted in the establishment of several significant institutions. These include, among others, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), the African Union Foundation, and the Judicial, Human Rights & Legal Organs.

This article will discuss the background of NEPAD and APRM, their role in development and unification, and their challenges. After more than two decades of existence, evaluating its impact and analysing its flows is of utmost importance in light of the African population's current issues.

In this light, the NEPAD and APRM were an outstanding proposition for regional development and filling the governance deficit among AU member states. Nonetheless, today's recurring challenge is not due to the absurdity of ideas but rather the manner in which strategy and approach are prepared throughout the conceptualization stage.

The African Union has been tasked with attaining socioeconomic and political integration through a concerted effort to reduce trade barriers and to tackle insecurity and poor governance. In addition, the organisation's foundation charter stressed the importance of bolstering good governance through a political process and civil rule, both of which emphasise transparency and accountability in the democratic system.

The African Union is primarily responsible for achieving development and unification on the African continent. It is crucial that the AU continue to play a significant role in creating unity and solidarity among its member states through institutional development and an enhanced governance system.

Even if the African Union is successful in being designed to claim a strategy and structure that is considerably larger than that of the OAU. Nonetheless, throughout its history, it has been plagued by a complicated web of institutional misalignment between the desired objective and the approach, which impedes and even increases inefficiency.

Institutions are not static; they undergo change throughout time due to internal and external dynamics, which necessitate because of their organic nature. Organicity is associated with adaptability and significance, which need the construction of both structure and system for proper operation. Over time Darwin's thesis of "survival of the fittest" evolved into "survival of the adaptive." This is why, as always, Africans stress the importance of having an adaptive AU that can adapt its policies and strategies to new circumstances.

There are contestations about what tangible value is derivable from changing OAU to AU other than the change in nomenclature. Though the AU has introduced initiatives like NEPAD, the APRM, and the Peace and Security Council (PSC), their efficacy is contested. The theory subscribes to the premise that moving any existing framework without building institutional capacities is "Like 'new wine into old wineskins,'" a metaphor that illustrates the AU's current affairs.

True emancipation for Africans demands not just a break with the colonial past, but also a lasting political, sociocultural, and economic independence, the story of which should be conveyed unequivocally.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

First, it is necessary to inquire about what NEPAD stands for. Is NEPAD a nexus for Far Eastern philosophical experimentation; a development agency, a forum for neoliberal democratisation; or the leading edge of begiology?

Assuming all other factors remain constant, it is clear that "Begiology" is not a novel concept because it is based on an outdated paradigm. The assertion is made for obvious reasons, as "the new partnership" initially sought the financial support of western nations. Specifically, the appeal was made in Canada and Japan at the G-8 summit, and the strategy was comparable to the Marshall plan.

As we have seen, the 'NEPAD's flaw was planning its programme based on donors' budget (purse), and it was framed within the old adversarial and patronising relationships of "donors" vs "recipients." Consequently, the notion of "new" ties between "developed" G-8 countries and "underdeveloped" African states was bad deceit.

African officials have stressed that aid, investment, and debt relief promised by the G-8 and other donors must be provided quickly if African states are to fulfil the aims of NEPAD. It failed to illustrate the reality of the advertised cooperation and the "donor-recipient" context-breaking method.

As is well-known, there is no "free launch" in collective political negotiation, and it's challenging to develop efficient distributive and integrative cooperation to solve economic and political circumstances. The worst part is that it changes any existing unequal power relations between the donors and recipients. Given that Africa was the receiving end in this situation, there can be no conclusive or satisfying outcomes.

Almost two decades have passed since NEPAD's beginning; during that time, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America achieved remarkable growth while Africa sluggishly crawled along like a turtle. The global context impeded any effort by Africans to escape the vicious spiral. Partially, African leaders at various levels and institutions are captured by donor-driven initiatives and are unable to think creatively "without a box", as opposed to submitting project proposals for handouts.

The donors' role in the global economic and political infrastructure, in which they hold a position of leverage, and the basic game is to determine who is wooing whom. The Western focus is not on assisting Africans to escape poverty but rather on maintaining ideological visions and the expanding influence of external non-state entities such as multinational corporations and non-governmental organisations. It is difficult to understand how a 'partnership of equals' could exist in this situation.

The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)

The APRM is a voluntarily established framework for peer-to-peer evaluation to systematically assess and review the governance challenges at the Head of State peer level. The goal is to increase political stability and speed up economic integration by analysing the states' levels of democracy and political governance, economic governance and management, corporate governance, and socioeconomic development.

The objective of the APRM is to promote good governance and hold African leaders accountable to their citizens. The strategy is one of the most important stepping stones in the advancement of governance within a rigorous research mechanism that supports inquiry, monitoring and evaluation instruments. Yet, the APRM assessment does not have any punitive tool to make the organisation use the "*carrots and sticks*" effect.

Without acknowledging the agency of African citizens in shaping and overseeing their governments, the current conversation about governance in Africa is insufficient. When you consider APRM, a variety of questions arise. How democratically elected leaders and self-imposed leaders can discuss governance issues as peers?

What are the value and moral principles of APRM when it comes to resisting the persistent misuse of power and staying in control for an extended length of time without a democratic dispensation? Why do they require the exclusive agency APRM? whereas the African Union is an exclusive entity for the heads of state?

The entire concept of APRM, in which perpetrators conduct their own investigations, seems a bit strange. Government officials and their agencies are responsible for the majority of violations of human rights, corruption, maladministration, clientelism, and abuses of authority. How can you then request that the same power examine, review, and remedy itself? This is equivalent to administering and grading a test for a student.

How does APRM intend to implement "African solutions to African problems"? How did Africans separate themselves from the Western approach, and where did the idea of an African way

originate? Liberating the African mind or soul from imperialist or colonialist Western epistemologies and worldviews is essential for the continent to identify and develop its own distinctive path.

In conclusion

In order to effectively address the governance challenges in Africa, it is crucial to crafting a comprehensive strategy in collaboration with all relevant parties. The strategy needs to be complete with detailed timetables, resources, and other constraints. Improving governance must be at the centre of all institutional structures instead of being on the periphery of national development programmes in each AU member state. If APRM is to succeed, governments must fulfil the goals, and civil society/non-state actors must hold them to account.

Insecurity and repeated wars, excessive reliance on foreign aid, corruption, political instability/incompetent leadership, and insufficient infrastructure development can all be attributed to poor administration. The continental institution and its member states should develop good governance to ensure peace and stability.

For democratic institutions to thrive, civil societies must be fortified to assure political will, dedication, and responsibility. Africa's political and socioeconomic development must be given the highest priority, and sufficient funding must be made available. Objectives and ambitions for social protection need to be articulated, incorporated into national development plans and strategies, and safeguarded by legal mechanisms.

NEPAD should reorganise itself so it can avoid becoming a dumping ground for foreign work ethics and development plans. Instead, it should focus on developing indigenous knowledge systems. In the same way, APRM needs to change from peer to African Review Mechanism (ARM) in order to hold all African leaders accountable and take appropriate action against misconduct.

It is not inappropriate to continue congratulating people who probably conceived of APRM and NEPAD for their good deeds as they continue to be showered with accolades. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the systems they envisioned are useless and dysfunctional, they must involve in restructuring the system.

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