

The AU Chairmanship Competition is Technically From East Africa But Logically They are From Three Different RECs

The chairmanship of the Pan-African organisation is a role that invites complex analysis and nuanced interpretation. The importance of the chairmanship and the exercise of authority derive from the Constitutive ACT. Nevertheless, this prestigious role is unparalleled in its breadth and magnitude, which the continent urgently requires.

In light of the various facts at hand, it is imperative to scrutinize the chairmanship, considering both its dynamism and limitations, through the lens of the collective consciousness and developmental stage of its members. Nonetheless, the genuine political and institutional ramifications can only be evaluated through a historical lens, as this institution has developed and attained its present form and significance through practical interactions.

Assessing and underscoring the ceremonial significance of the African Union Commission (AUC) chairmanship is essential, while simultaneously inviting a series of inquiries. What actions has the AU undertaken in its sixty-five years of existence to enhance the well-being of Africans? Where can one find the documentation that supports the defense of African citizenry globally? How can we assess the impact and contributions to the welfare of ordinary citizens? When was the most recent occasion we observed active engagement in the stabilization of the conflict among the member nations?

It is widely recognized that Africans are experiencing a constrained existence within their own continent. Travel to neighboring countries is contingent upon obtaining a permit and possessing all requisite documentation. It is noteworthy that the borders within Africa remain accessible primarily to a select group of privileged Africans, whereas their European counterparts enjoy the freedom to traverse the continent at will. This is due to the expectation that Africans should honor the constructed colonial boundaries.

The most significant shortcoming of the OAU/AU during its tenure has been its failure to establish a framework for the free movement of its citizens, despite its ongoing efforts to combat colonialism and marginalization. Moreover, the perspective of postcolonial African leaders on sovereignty is influenced by a mindset shaped by colonial experiences.

It is noteworthy that both the OAU charter and the Constitutive Act of the AU have indirectly enshrined these prohibitions, thereby alleviating the discourse surrounding Eurocentric sovereignty. Should the African leaders find themselves unable to address this historical burden, what rationale exists for anticipating development and equal citizenship alongside the global community?

It is somewhat contradictory that African leaders prioritize securing a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) before addressing the internal issues within their own governance structures, which may be indicative of a fundamental deficiency. The global community may mock our plight, as numerous African member states grapple with food security challenges, pervasive civilian conflicts, and a youth demographic perilously seeking better opportunities across the Mediterranean Sea. What is the purpose of being part of the UNSC if there is a lack of respect for one's own citizens domestically? This represents a profound misjudgment in self-reflection.

On the contrary, I find myself critical of the inequities present within the United Nations, particularly regarding the veto power wielded by certain superpowers and their influence over this

multilateral organization. Nevertheless, Africa must accelerate the implementation of internal reforms that prioritize the interests of its citizens in order to assert its presence on the international stage, including at the United Nations Security Council and other significant platforms.

I am capable of articulating numerous additional challenges and deficiencies of the African Union and its leaders. Nevertheless, it is also of the utmost importance to highlight some of the accomplishments that have been made in the past and the positive developments that are presently underway. The struggle against colonialism and apartheid holds a significant position in the hearts of many Africans and progressive individuals worldwide. In my opinion, the ratification of the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) agreement will be a keystone in the regeneration of Africa, among many other accomplishments.

The Op-Ed seeks to illuminate three critical issues of considerable importance. The discourse centers on the forthcoming AU Chairmanship, examining its constraints and implications. Considering this, it is essential to evaluate the past, present, and future succinctly. The AU and AUC conduct their operations in a rather unusual fashion, and for those of us who have been examining this topic for decades, it presents a significant challenge.

How is it possible for an organization of the magnitude of the AU to fail to establish transparent and comprehensible structures? What is the reason for the appropriate supervision of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) by the AUC and their management through the Abuja Treaty directives?

Initially, it endeavors to resolve the structural impediment caused by the discrepancy between the configuration specified in the Abuja Treaty regarding sub-regional arrangements and the RECs. This discrepancy may impede the effective implementation of the AUC chairmanship and commissioners election in terms of gender parity and equitable regional representation. When I observed three men standing as representatives of East Africa, I was perplexed as a researcher and began to query the structural impediment of the African Union without being cynical.

The rationale for my conclusion is that it aligns with the provisions of the Abuja Treaty. Nonetheless, they are, in a logical sense, derived from three distinct regional economic communities. For instance, H.E. Mahmoud Ali Youssouf of Djibouti is affiliated with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) regional economic communities, particularly in the Horn of Africa. His Excellency Raila Amolo Odinga of Kenya serves as a representative for the East African Communities. H.E. Richard Randriamandrato, representing Madagascar, is affiliated with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Island Oceania Communities (IOC).

Secondly, it consistently concerns me, as a thoughtful citizen of Africa, the role of the AUC chairperson and their mandate in relation to the significance of the electoral process. Some individuals understand that the chairmanship position primarily oversees the commission and functions as the “chief account officer,” possessing a limited mandate to introduce and implement changes accordingly. This prompted us to examine the context and conduct of the AUC structure with great care. The AUC, functioning as an organ, and the AU, serving as a supervisory body, ought to be evaluated according to their respective merits.

Third, it appears to me that the member states will not permit themselves to be excessively governed by a supranational entity. Some leaders may not permit or acknowledge the possibility of their relevance being overshadowed at the national level. Consequently, the member states anticipate

that the chairperson will exercise their authority to manage the commission's daily operations within a constrained mandate.

They likely anticipate that the chairperson comprehends the member states, that he or she respects their perspectives and refrains from expressing opinions in their names, and that he or she does not infringe upon the states' prerogatives. The same is true for the member states' expectations of the chairperson.

Regional integration and cooperation among African states are shaped by the unique roles and structures of each Regional Economic Community (REC), which may not effectively align with the overarching objectives of the Abuja Treaty intended to establish a unified African Economic Community. Disregard for ratified documents and the lack of coordinated planning and implementation will endanger large-scale sub-regional and regional projects.

However, until the structure is brought into proper alignment, it will be extremely challenging to accomplish the goals and actualize the vision of the African Union, which is a pan-African organization. Before we get into the competition, I would want to talk about certain structural issues, which are mentioned in the headline. Many of us consider these challenges to be a big hurdle.

The issue here is how an organization has structured its in-house operations to effectively promote regional agendas and advocate for its citizens. While we can certainly acknowledge several positive developments, the lack of structural coherence ultimately leads to weak service delivery. Therefore, I strongly encourage prompt correction as a concerned citizen.

The AU structure is not a playground for African citizens, as is always the case. The protagonists are those who are affiliated with the government structure, regardless of whether they are a nuclear physicist. The sole method of ascending the ladder is to acquire high-level positions by being an affiliate of a government position, either present or past. This method will replicate the actions of the African government in their respective countries within the AU structure, with a few exceptions.

It is noteworthy that none of the candidates have addressed the structural challenge confronting the African Union. This action indicates a lack of comprehensive understanding regarding the challenging terrain they are about to enter, which complicates the implementation of the AU Treaties and declarations. However, the inefficiency may stem from the composition of the question and the manner in which the moderators addressed it. It is essential to evaluate the performance, approach, and overall responses of the three candidates to the posed question.

Mahmoud Ali Youssouf of Djibouti commits to enhancing the capabilities of the African standby peace force. He commits to He aspires to elevate intra-African trade to 80%. Mahmoud Ali Youssouf champions the cause of enhanced African representation in the global arena and dedicates himself to the pursuit of a prosperous, peaceful, and unified Africa.

Mahmoud Ali Youssouf contended that in a "multipolarized world," Africa must be integral to the Global South, asserting that economic transformation will empower the continent to engage with great powers on equal footing. He demonstrated a profound understanding of AU frameworks and policies and was unreserved in attributing the subpar performance of the AU to a deficiency of political will among member states. His comprehensive understanding of AU frameworks and acronyms significantly enriched his commentary.

Mahmoud Ali Youssouf asserts that the true wealth of Africa originates from its populace. He identifies this as the foundational locus for Africa's comprehensive advancement. He underscores the importance of quality education while navigating the obstacles that impact the sector. He emphasizes the importance of enhancing value for agricultural products as a primary focus for the agricultural sector. He also discusses the importance of cultivating specialized agriculture that leverages agricultural biotechnology and the most recent advancements in agricultural technologies.

His Excellency Raila Amolo Odinga of Kenya expresses a steadfast commitment to the principles of pan-Africanism. Mr. Odinga commits to realizing the aspirations set forth by the founding fathers of the African Union. He asserts that Africa is the most underdeveloped continent on the planet. He ascribes this to historical factors. He attributes the wealth of international finance to resource allocation and emphasizes the importance of enhancing value through the export of raw materials.

The current state of intra-Africa trade is at 15 percent, indicating that significant progress has yet to be realized since the inception of the African trade area. He discusses obstacles to the free movement of goods stemming from infrastructural deficiencies and regulatory impediments. He further committed to enhancing the continent's development by fostering quality education, health, value addition, intra-African trade, and infrastructure development, among other initiatives.

His Excellency Richard Randriamandrato of Madagascar commits to elevating Africa's annual economic growth rate beyond 3.14%. He recognizes the advancements in Africa's economy and commits to maintaining and enhancing growth moving forward. References The level of intra-Africa commercial trade stands at approximately 12.6 percent, in stark contrast to the over 50 percent observed in Europe and America. He expressed his intention to facilitate the enhancement of the unrestricted flow of goods and individuals across Africa, aligning with the objectives of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

"As a demonstrated his most impressive performance here, he called for a revitalization of Pan-Africanism and expressed his hope that in a few years' time, foreign military bases in Africa will be a thing of the past." This comment has the potential to be interpreted as a sort of reintegrate rhetorical gesture directed specifically toward anti-French feeling in West Africa.

In addition to this, he outlines his priorities by emphasizing the importance of utilizing Africa's vast potential in order to propel comprehensive economic growth. He reiterated his dedication to enhancing the function of the 55-member continental organization in assisting the socioeconomic development of the continent in the event that he was to be chosen by the people.

Candidates were inquired about their strategies for transforming the continents' abundant resources into wealth, reducing debt, and empowering Africa to achieve economic self-determination. What are the steps to establish the African Continental Free Trade Area? However, the response was either ambiguous or they were unable to elaborate on the extent of intrinsic structural challenges.

In conclusion, the African Union must engage in profound self-reflection; without such introspection, enacting meaningful change in the near future will prove exceedingly challenging. The RECs and the AU, in their present configuration, fail to serve the best interests of citizens; instead, they appear to function more as a refuge for certain fortunate politicians seeking to evade

accountability. In the absence of a refined form and structure, it becomes exceedingly challenging to achieve meaningful impact, as well as to expand both scope and scale.

The candidature process should ideally incorporate a predictable rotation both inter-regionally and intra-regionally; however, it is essential that this approach is guided by a robust matrix for optimal outcomes. The existing process is fraught with numerous constraints, particularly in its ability to attract and retain the continent's most exceptional talent. Why do we consistently appear as ex-officio entities when we fall short of fulfilling the aspirations of our citizens? What is the stance of various leaders, including those from academia, civil society, and the private sector?

According to the current procedure, I have serious questions about the Pan African organization's ability to produce leadership that is both accountable and effective. In a similar vein, the current procedure will not implement a selection process that is both open and based on merit for any of the positions that are being considered for the year 2025. In conclusion, but certainly not least, the Africa Union will be unable to achieve its goal of creating an inclusive society unless it emphasizes the participation of female runners for office.

Seife Tadelle Kidane (PhD) is a Director of the Centre for Governance and Intra Africa Trade Studies (CGIATS) at the University of Johannesburg.