

8. International Organizations (I)

8.1 ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY (OAU)



Map of Africa showing members of OAU

Origin

The seeds from which the OAU germinated can be traced to the epoch of Pan-Africanism. The idea of Pan-Africanism was borne out of the desire of the Afro-Americans who were treated as inferior, to survive under a hostile environment in which they found themselves. In this organized struggle for equal rights with the Whites, the intellectuals among the negroes (persons of African origin) organized protest movements, research organizations, conventions and congresses which were aimed at racial integration and solidarity, African nationalism and Pan-Africanism. Among the prominent names associated with these movements, congresses and conventions for the promotion of African nationalism and Pan-Africanism were Dr

Alexander Crummell, Dr W.E.B. Du Bois, Dr William Sandas Scarborough, Henry Sylvester Williams, Marcus Garvey and many others.

The contributions of Marcus Garvey and Dr W.E.B. Du Bois towards the development of Pan-Africanism were quite outstanding and remarkable. Marcus Garvey who was an Afro-Jamaican was a radical, showman, great orator and mass leader. He sought to unite all Blacks the world over in order to fight colonialism and racism, and ultimately unite all Blacks into a united African nation in the African homeland. Garvey established conventions which served as the forum for political education, social mobilization, and negro unity in the African homeland. The convention which was held annually met for the first time in New York in August 1920. On the other hand Dr W.E.B. Du Bois, an Afro-American, was a scholar and university don. His goal unlike that of Marcus Garvey was limited to securing for the Africans the right of participation in the governments of their respective countries, and eventual self-government for the Africans. He sought for African solidarity and unity but not for one "United African nation" as advocated by Garvey. Dr Du Bois organized Pan-African Congresses in order to realize his objective. The first Pan-African Congress was organized by Henry Sylvester Williams in London in 1900. When Sylvester Williams died in 1911, Dr Du Bois took over from him and organized five other Pan-African Congresses between 1918 and 1945 in Europe and America. The Pan-African Congress of Manchester in 1945 which was the last of these Du Boisian Congresses was attended by over 200 delegates from all over the coloured world. Prominent African leaders like Dr Nkrumah of Ghana, Chief H.O. Davies and Chief S.L. Akintola from Nigeria, Mr. Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, T.A. Wallace Johnson from Sierra Leone, Peter Abrahams of South Africa, and many others, attended and participated actively at the Conference. The conventions of Marcus Garvey and the Pan-African Congress of Dr Du Bois tremendously influenced the African leaders in their ideas of decolonization, African nationalism and African unity.

These lofty ideas continued to ferment, grow and gain firm ground among the African leaders until by 1960 when many African countries gained their independence. Influenced by these ideas of African nationalism and Pan-Africanism, independent African countries started to organize on their own initiative Pan-African meetings. The first among these meetings was the Conference of Independent African States which met in Accra Ghana in April 1958, attended by then independent States namely Ghana, Liberia, Libya, Morocco, the Sudan, Tunisia and the United Arab Republic. This was followed by the All African People's Conference which was held in Accra Ghana in December 1958, in Tunis in 1960 and in Cairo in 1961. Around this period when most African countries had gained their independence, the independent African States started to organize themselves in camps instead of one united organization. The first major group was the Casablanca bloc which comprised Ghana, Guinea, Mali, the United Arab Republic, Tunisia and Algeria. This was a radical group and was committed to the ideas of Socialism, African Continental Government, and African High Command. The Second major group was the Monrovia bloc to which Liberia, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Chad, Zaire, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroun, Niger, Gabon, Benin Republic, Somalia belonged. There was a third group, the Brazzaville Twelve which was made up of only the Francophone African States. The Brazzaville Twelve later fused with the Monrovia bloc as the two had common ideology and values. The Monrovia group which was considered to be a conservative group was opposed to socialism, African High Command and African Continental Government. The Group was committed to the idea of gradual process towards African Unity, total decolonization of Africa, economic co-operation among African states, equality and sovereignty among independent African States. The two main blocs —

Casablanca and Monrovia — continued to exist separately until May 1963. The Lagos Conference of the Monrovia group held in January 1962 paved the way for the formation of the OAU. The Statesmanlike and conciliatory speech of the Emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie, at the Lagos Conference of the Monrovia group contributed immensely to the fusion of the two blocs at Addis Ababa in May 1963.

Formation

The Lagos Conference of the Monrovia group held in January 1962 decided to hold the next meeting at Addis Ababa in May 1963 and to invite the members of the Casablanca group so that the two groups could sink their differences and write as one organization. Effective diplomatic moves preceeded the meeting. On 25 May, 1963, thirty Heads of State and Government of Independent African States which included both the members of the Monrovia and Casablanca blocs assembled in Addis Ababa and under an atmosphere of brotherhood, co-operation and compromise adopted the Charter which established the OAU. Two Heads of States — Morocco and Togo, who could have made them 32 were absent. Article I of the Charter defined the Organization of African Unity as the organization which included the continental African States, Madagasca and all the islands surrounding Africa. The Charter provides that each independent sovereign African State shall be entitled to become a member of the organization. Since the formation of the OAU in May 1963, more African States have gained independence and joined the organization.

Objectives

The objectives of the organization are clearly outlined by the Charter Article II as follows:

- (i) to promote the Unity and solidarity of the African States;
- (ii) to co-ordinate and intensify their co-operation and efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa;
- (iii) to defend their sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence;
- (iv) to eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa;
- (v) to promote international co-operation, having due regard to the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Principles

The Charter which established the OAU provides under Article III the basic principles which guide the Organization in pursuit of its objectives. These are as follows:

- (i) All member-states are sovereign equal states. This means that the organization recognizes the principle of equality of member-states and should firmly adhere to it.
- (ii) There should be non-interference in the internal affairs of states by any other state of the Organization.
- (iii) The member-states should respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each member-state and its inalienable right to independent existence.
- (iv) Member-States should adhere to peaceful settlement of disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation or arbitration.

- (v) Member-States should unreservedly condemn, in all its forms, political assassination as well as subversive activities on the part of neighbouring states or any other state.
- (vi) There should be absolute dedication among member-states to the total emancipation of the African territories which are still dependent.
- (vii) Member-States firmly adhere to a policy of non-alignment with regard to all blocs.

Organs and their Functions

The OAU has four principal organs through which it performs its functions. These are

- (i) The Assembly of Heads of State and Government
- (ii) The Council of Ministers
- (iii) The General Secretariat
- (iv) The Commission on Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration.

The Assembly of Heads of States and Governments

The Charter of the OAU established the Assembly of Heads of State and Government as the supreme organ of the organization. The functions and powers of the organ are as follows:

- (a) It is the highest policy-making body of the organization.
- (b) It discusses all matters of common interest to Africa.
- (c) It co-ordinates and harmonises the general policy of the organization.
- (d) It determines its own rules of procedure.
- (e) It is empowered to review the structure, functions and acts of all the organs and specialized agencies of the organization.
- (f) It defends the Charter of the organization and has the power to amend it.

The Assembly is composed of the Heads of State and Government or the duly accredited representatives of all member-states. The Assembly meets at least once a year. Emergency or extraordinary meetings can in addition be summoned at the request of any State with an approval of a two-thirds majority of member-states. Each member-state has the right of one vote based on equality of member-states. All decisions of the Assembly are determined by a two-thirds majority votes of member-states. However, questions of procedure is determined by only a simple majority. A requirement of two-thirds of the total membership of the organization constitutes a quorum at any meeting of the Assembly.

Council of Ministers

The Council of Ministers ranks second to the Assembly of Heads of State and Government. It consists of Foreign Ministers or such other Ministers as are designated by the governments of member-states. The Charter provides that the Council should meet at least twice a year. It can also meet in extraordinary sessions at the request of any member-state and supported by at least two-thirds of all member-states. The functions and powers of the Council are as follows:

- (a) It prepares for Conferences of the Assembly which include the preparation of the agenda for the conferences.

- (b) It implements the decisions of the Assembly.
- (c) It co-ordinates inter-African co-operation in accordance with the instructions of the Assembly.
- (d) It handles any matter referred to it by the Assembly.
- (e) It is empowered to determine its own rules of procedure.

The principle of equality of states governs the operations of the Council. Thus each member-state is entitled to one vote in the Council. All decisions of the Council are determined by a simple majority of the Council. However, two-thirds of total membership of the Council is required for a quorum for any meeting of the Council. The Council is directly responsible to the Assembly.

General Secretariat

The General Secretariat is the administrative organ of the OAU and it is situated at the Headquarters of the OAU at Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia. The Secretariat is headed by a Secretary-General. The Secretary-General is appointed by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government on the recommendation of the Council of Ministers. The Charter provides for one or more Assistant Secretary-General of the organization and other employees who assist the Secretary-General in the administrative duties of the organization. The Secretary-General holds office for three years subject to re-election. The primary responsibilities of the General-Secretariat are to

- (a) implement the decisions of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government and the Council of Ministers;
- (b) treat all correspondence of the organization;
- (c) manage and control the finances of the organization;
- (d) prepare the annual budget of the organization subject to the approval of the Council of Ministers.

The Secretary-General and his staff are recruited from member-states. The recruitment from member-states is made on quota basis in proportion to the member-states' financial contributions to the organization. This recruitment policy is to ensure that no single state dominates the affairs of the organization. The Secretary-General and his staff should not seek or receive instructions or directives from any government or any other authority external to the organization, in the performance of their duties. Individual member-states should not influence the Secretariat in the discharge of its duties. The Secretary-General and his staff are governed by provisions of the Charter and the regulations approved by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in the performance of their duties.

Commission on Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration

The Commission can be seen as the judicial organ of the OAU. The composition and the conditions of service of the Commission is defined by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government. The Commission is charged with the responsibility of settling peacefully all disputes among member-states brought before it. As one can observe at present, the functions of the Commission are performed by Ad Hoc Committees appointed from time to time as each case arises. For instance, during the Chadian Crisis, a Committee was appointed by the

Assembly to settle the crisis. One can state that the commission has not yet been established as a permanent body as envisaged by the Charter.

Specialized Commissions

Article 20 of the Charter provides that the Assembly shall establish such specialized Commissions as it may deem necessary. These commissions include the following:

- (a) Economic and Social Commission
- (b) Educational and Cultural Commission
- (c) Health, Sanitation, and Nutrition Commission
- (d) Defence Commission
- (e) Scientific, Technical, and Research Commission

Each of the above specialized Commissions shall be composed of the Ministers concerned, or their designated representatives, from each of the member-states. These Commissions are established to facilitate the work of the organization in all its dimensions.

The Assembly of Heads of State and Government has also created the Liberation Committee. This is charged with the responsibility of organizing and aiding liberation movements in Africa. The Liberation Committee seeks to liberate the African territories still under foreign domination e.g. Southern Africa, by aiding their nationalist movements.

Finance

The Organization's funds are got from contributions from member-states. The contribution which each member-state makes is calculated on the basis of her GNP. However, no member-state shall be assessed an amount exceeding 20% of the yearly regular budget of the organization. Member-states' contributions are therefore proportional to their wealth — while rich nations pay huge amounts, poor nations pay very little amounts. The budget of the OAU shall be prepared by the Secretary-General from the contributions made by member-states. The budget is approved by the Council of Ministers.

Achievements

The organization of African Unity, despite its numerous problems which we shall discuss later, has made significant achievements. The major achievements include the following:

- (i) **Common stand on African issues in the international community:** Since the formation of the OAU the organization has served as a forum where African leaders deliberate on common problems facing African states, evolve common policies and strategies on major international issues affecting Africa, and speak with one voice in international organizations, particularly the United Nations. Consequently African States are gradually tending towards evolving into a bloc. Thus the view of African nations have significant weight in the UNO. The fact that African States hold together under the umbrella of the OAU strengthens African States and scares away the imperialist nations.
- (ii) **Peaceful settlement of disputes:** The OAU since its establishment has successfully settled numerous inter-State disputes. For instance, the OAU settled the armed conflict between Algeria and Morocco in October 1963. It also settled the boundary

dispute between Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya. It resolved the dispute between Burundi and Ruanda over refugee problem in both states. There was also the settlement of the dispute between Senegal and Guinea by a 7-man panel of OAU headed by Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia. In the 1970s and 1980s the OAU settled many disputes between member-states; it mediated in the Arab-Israeli dispute and later took a common stand against Israel on its occupied territories. The OAU was deeply involved in the settlement of Chadian crises between Goukoni Wadeye and Hissen Habre and sent in an OAU peace-keeping force. The OAU made significant efforts in the settlement of dispute between Morocco and Polisario Movement (Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic) in 1982. It also mediated and brought about reconciliation between Nigeria and the four African nations — Tanzania, Zambia, Cote d'Ivoire and Gabon — that recognized Biafra (former Eastern Nigeria) during the Nigerian Civil War.

- (iii) **Liberation of African colonial territories:** Since the formation of the OAU in 1963, the OAU has helped liberation movements to free African territories still in bondage. Through such support and co-operation of the OAU, Mozambique, Guinea Bisau, Angola, and Zimbabwe were liberated. The OAU mounted big and relentless struggle against South Africa on the independence of Namibia. Through the action of the OAU and its diplomatic warfare, the International Court of Justice declared in June 1971 that South Africa's presence in Namibia was illegal as it violated the League of Nations' mandate. It has given a lot of financial, material and logistic support to the SWAPO towards the liberation of Namibia on the path to independence. The OAU is also waging diplomatic war against apartheid and white minority regime in South Africa and gives moral and material support to the ANC of South Africa in the termination of white minority government and the establishment of black majority government in South Africa. The OAU has successfully campaigned and gained the expulsion of South Africa from the UNO and many international social activities. The OAU championed and succeeded in the imposition of economic sanctions against South Africa by the UNO. The OAU established and funds the Liberation Committee with its Headquarters in Tanzania, which aids all liberation movements in South Africa in effecting total liberation of Africa.
- (iv) **Economic co-operation:** The OAU has promoted economic co-operation in Africa. Member-States have tried to harmonize and co-ordinate their economic policies. They often give financial aid to other members with problems. The OAU discusses and takes common strategies on common economic problems facing African States. African States are making efforts to increase economic and commercial activities among themselves. The organization plans a communication network to facilitate the flow of goods and services, and easy movement of peoples of Africa. To this end the Trans-African Trade Fair was successfully held in Nairobi, Kenya.
- (v) **Regional co-operation:** The OAU has encouraged regional co-operation in Africa. It stimulated the formation of regional organizations eg the ECOWAS and the East African Community.
- (vi) **Promotion of African culture and identity:** The Organization has promoted African Cultural revival. It has championed African Cultural Festivals and All African Games. The first All-African Cultural Festival was held in Algiers in August 1969; while the

Second All-African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) was held in Lagos, Nigeria in 1977. The first All-African Games was held in Zaire, while the second was held in Lagos, Nigeria in January 1973. The OAU is making significant efforts in promoting African identity in the international community.

Problems

The objectives of the OAU are very lofty. The organization is making strenuous efforts in order to realize these objectives but she is faced with numerous problems which affect its effectiveness. The most important among these problems are as follows:

- (i) **Political instability:** Political instability is a major problem facing the Organization. There is wide-spread *coups d'etat* and counter-coups with the attendant constant change in governments of African States. The African governments are very fragile. This affects the Organization in four main ways. First, frequent changes in the governments of member-states means constant changes in the members (personalities) of the Assembly of Heads of States and Governments. This also involves changes in policies and lack of continuity. These affect the stability of the Organization. Second, this state of political instability weakens the force and zeal of most members to speak and act boldly and fearlessly in the pursuit of the Organization's best interest. This is for fear of being overthrown. Imperialists hunt for bold and fearless leaders of Africa and work through their countrymen to overthrow them e.g. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana Third, many Heads of State and Government of Africa are afraid to leave their respective countries to attend outside meetings like that of the Assembly, for fear of being overthrown in their absence. For instance, General Yakubu Gowon of Nigeria was overthrown in 1975 when he was attending the OAU Summit in Kampala. Milton Obote was overthrown when he was attending Commonwealth Conference in Singapore in 1971. Dr Nkrumah was overthrown when he was visiting Peking, China in 1965. Sometimes there may be very serious political unrest in a particular state at the time of the meeting of the Assembly which would require more priority attention of the Head of State concerned than the Assembly's meeting. Fourth, military overthrow in an African State may lead to a division in the OAU. Some members may support the new leader while others support the overthrown leader who had been working with them. For instance the overthrow of Milton Obote of Uganda by Idi Amin led to inter-state disputes among the OAU members. Some Heads of States who were friends of Obote did not recognize Idi-Amin's government.
- (ii) **Inter-state conflicts and civil war/internal crisis:** There are numerous and widespread inter-state conflicts and tension in Africa. Most of these conflicts and tension arise from border disputes. For instance there were conflicts between Ethiopia and Somalia; Algeria and Morocco; Ghana and Togo; Libya and Egypt; Morocco and the Polisario Front; Chad and Libya; and many others. There was the Chadian internal crisis of the 1980s which nearly divided the Organization. The Nigerian Civil War posed a big problem to the OAU as it could not settle the conflict between Nigeria and the secessionist Biafra (1967 to 1970). The Nigerian-Biafran War created a division within the member-states of OAU — those who recognized Biafra and those who supported Nigeria. The OAU has proved very incapable of settling the numerous inter-state conflicts and border disputes among member-states.

- (iii) **Interference in the internal affairs of member-states:** Some member-states of the OAU do not adhere strictly to the principles of the organization as provided by the Charter which states that member-states should not interfere with the internal affairs of other member-states. Some member-states frequently flouted this provision and this caused serious conflicts and tension and tended to destabilize the OAU. For instance, Tanzania under Nyerere intervened in Uganda in order to dethrone Idi-Amin, and Libya intervened in the internal affairs of Chad.
- (iv) **Financial problem:** The accomplishment of the objectives of the Organization requires huge financial contributions from member-states. The Charter provides that each member state should contribute to the funds of the Organization on the basis of her GNP. But most member-states do not pay their dues to the Organization. Many member-states are in debt arrears to the Organization for many years. They do not pay their contributions as a result of lack of devotion and commitment to the Organization, and secondly, most member-states are very poor. Consequently the Organization lacks funds with which to prosecute its programmes. The OAU cannot embark on Pan-African Defence Force without solid financial base. The first time the OAU sent a peace-keeping force to settle a conflict was during the Chadian crisis but this attempt failed because the OAU had no funds to maintain the force. Nigeria and other states that sent their forces were compelled to bear the cost of maintaining such forces. The weakness of the OAU stems mostly from the poverty of the Organization and which is mainly responsible for non-implementation of its numerous lofty decisions.
- (v) **Absence of Pan-African defence force:** The world powers have vested political and economic interests in Africa. This narrow and selfish pursuit of vested interests had pushed many world powers to interfere with the internal affairs of African States. The extreme dimension of this external interference, is external aggression which violates the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the States concerned. Few examples can illustrate this case. In 1967, Israel occupied Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. OAU did nothing to aid Egypt. On 22 November, 1970, Guinea's capital, Conakry was invaded from the sea by about 300 armed white mercenary soldiers. During the Chadian crisis, France sent military personnel and equipment to Chad. There was also the invasion of Zaire's Shaba Province in 1978. The reaction of the OAU to each of these and the other invasions was to adopt resolution condemning the external invasion. In fact, the greatest the OAU had done was to adopt a resolution at Khartoum's Summit in 1978 immediately after Zaire's Shaba invasion, to establish in principle a Pan-African Defence Force. But since the adoption of this resolution, the Pan-African Defence Force has never been established up till date. The absence of Pan-African Defence Force (African High Command), to ward off external aggression from Africa, has exposed African states to external aggression and insult. It has made the OAU a "toothless bull dog". The Organization is noted for passing resolutions without implementing them.
- (vi) **Economic dependence:** African States are developing nations that suffered economic exploitation in the hands of imperialist nations. There is massive economic poverty and they depend economically on the developed nations of the world. These African nations shamelessly and continuously beg developed nations for financial and technical aid. These economically dependent nations are prey to the developed ones and there is no way they can speak against their benefactors nor adopt aggressive

independent policies. Thus the OAU is indirectly remotely controlled by big foreign nations. On the other hand, the OAU lacks the requisite technical and scientific resources which would enable it discharge its function. There is also a total absence of economic integration among member-states and there is no hope that this can be realized in this generation.

- (vii) **Close-ties with former colonial masters:** The imperialist nations — Britain, France, Belgium, and others dominated African countries and they are still in control of these countries in the form of “neocolonialism”. Most African nations particularly the former French Colonies have strong ties with their erstwhile colonial masters. Consequently, member-states of the OAU tend to be influenced by their former colonial masters. In fact some members are more attached to their former colonial masters than to the OAU. This results in ideological polarization, lack of internal cohesion, lack of unity of purpose and action.
- (viii) **Apartheid, racism and minority government in South Africa:** One of the greatest problems facing the OAU is the eradication of apartheid and racism and the termination of white minority government in South Africa. The OAU has passed numerous resolutions condemning South Africa’s apartheid policies but the white minority government continues waxing strong and perpetuating her obnoxious policies and action. The OAU has supported liberation movements morally and financially towards the liberation of South Africa from White domination. It has also adopted economic sanctions against the regime which has not been effective in dismantling the apartheid regime. The OAU requires Pan-African Defence Force in order to liberate the South Africans from apartheid, racism and minority government. This is a task which the OAU must accomplish.
- (ix) **Cultural differences:** Africa is made up of numerous ethnic groups with a diversity of cultural patterns. More importantly Africans are divided by language differences. The colonial masters imposed their languages on Africans, thereby minimizing the language problem. But the problem still remains as the African States are divided by two *major* languages: English and French. But the most divisible cultural factor is religious differences. The two main religious beliefs — Christianity and Islam — tend to divide Africans. These religious beliefs have dominated and strongly influenced the politics of African states. The member-states of the OAU tend to be polarized on issues affecting religious beliefs, and thus diverse religious beliefs tend to act as destabilizing factors.
- (x) **Fear of domination and leadership problem:** Leaders of many member-states struggle for leadership of the Organization. There is the factor of personality clashes, and the fear among member-states of domination by certain African leaders who are over-ambitious and thereby hijack the Organization to achieve their selfish purpose. Often the OAU leadership fails to secure the required support and co-operation from member-states. Sometimes the leadership lacks competence, ideological commitment, enthusiasm, dynamism, initiative and courage.

Conclusion

The OAU requires sincere commitment to the ideals of the Organization by member-states, a solid financial base through regular and substantial contributions by member-states, a Pan-

African Defence Force, decolonization of member-states, non-interference in the internal affairs of member states, political stability, and competent leadership, for the Organization to continue achieving its objectives.

8.2 THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS)

Origin

In pursuit of the goal of economic integration of West African States, Nigeria and Togo initiated an action in 1973 which resulted in the formation of the ECOWAS. On 28 May, 1975 the Heads of fifteen States of West Africa assembled in Lagos, Nigeria and signed the Lagos Treaty which formally established the ECOWAS. The fifteen nations were Nigeria, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Benin, Togo, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, The Gambia, Senegal, Mauritania, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. The ECOWAS has grown from 15 to 16 member-states with the admission of Cape Verde Island. Although the ECOWAS Treaty was signed in May 1975, ECOWAS did not take off until January 1977 when the Executive Secretary was appointed. It was in March 1977 that a Task Force made up of experts from member-states met to set up the administrative structure of the Secretariat at its Headquarters in Lagos.



Map showing member states of ECOWAS

Aims and Objectives

The primary goal of ECOWAS is to build strong, virile, dynamic and self-reliant economies in the West African States. This would ultimately result in eventual elimination of poverty in the West African sub-region and the absence of domination and subjugation by external forces. Article 2 of the Treaty states clearly the objectives of the organization:

- (i) To co-operate and develop in all fields of economic activities particularly in all the fields of industry, transport, communication, energy, agriculture, natural resources, commerce, monetary and financial matters.
- (ii) To co-operate and develop in social and cultural matters.
- (iii) To raise the standard of living of the people through economic co-operation and development.

- (iv) To increase and maintain economic stability and growth through trade liberalization and harmonization of economic, industrial and monetary policies of member-states.
- (v) To foster close relations among member-states through elimination of custom duties on imports and exports, trade and administrative restrictions among members, and of obstacles restricting free movement of persons, services, and capital among member states.
- (vi) To achieve ultimately the economic union of the West African sub-region.
- (vii) To contribute to the overall progress and development of the African continent.

Institutions

The ECOWAS has the following organs:

- (i) **ECOWAS Summit:** This is composed of the Heads of State and Governments. This is the highest body of the organization. The ECOWAS Summit is responsible for policy making of the organization. It meets at least once a year. Its chairmanship, which rotates among members, is only for one year.
- (ii) **ECOWAS Council of Ministers:** This body is like the OAU Council of Ministers. It consists of Economic Ministers or such other Ministers as are designated by governments of member-states. The Council of Ministers meets more frequently than the Summit, at least twice a year. Its primary responsibility is to implement the decisions of the ECOWAS Summit, prepare for the meetings of the Summit and make recommendations to it.
- (iii) **THE SECRETARIAT:** This is the third organ. It is headed by the Secretary-General assisted by two Deputy Executive Secretaries. It has its Headquarters at the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria, Abuja. It is responsible for the administrative duties of the organization.
- (iv) **The ECOWAS Tribunal:** This is fourth organ of the Organization. It is responsible for the interpretation of the ECOWAS Treaty. It ensures justice and equity. It is the judicial organ of the organization.
- (v) **Specialized commission:** ECOWAS has four technical and specialized Commissions namely,
 - (a) The Trade, Customs, Immigration, Monetary and Payment Commission.
 - (b) The Industry, Agriculture and Natural Resources Commission.
 - (c) The Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Commission.
 - (d) Social and Cultural Affairs Commission.

The specialized Commissions are established by the Treaty as instruments for achieving the various aspects of the organization's objectives.

The ECOWAS Fund

The ECOWAS Fund is the common fund of the organization established for co-operation and development within the West African sub-region. The fund is financed through three main sources namely;

- (a) contributions from member-states
- (b) income from the organization's enterprises and
- (c) receipts in form of loans and grants from outside the Community.

The purpose of the ECOWAS Fund is to provide a viable financial source for financing the organization's development projects such as industries. It is also utilized to pay compensation to member-states who suffer losses as a result of trade liberalization or as a result of the location of any of the Community's projects or enterprises. The Fund is also established in order to finance national and community research. It is used to grant loans for development projects in member states. The ECOWAS Fund encourages industrial and development projects in less developed nations of the Community.

The Fund is managed by a Board of Directors. The Board which meets at least four times a year has its Headquarters in Lome, Togo.

Achievements

The ECOWAS has already made significant progress in its few years of existence.

- (i) It has established the ECOWAS Fund. It has already given loans to some member-states for the construction of bridges that link member-states.
- (ii) It has embarked upon the construction of Trans West African highway network which is in two phases — Trans Saharan and Trans Coastal highways in which over two-thirds has been completed.
- (iii) The establishment of Ecobank Transnational Incorporated (ETI) should be seen as a credit to ECOWAS. The Ecobank which was incorporated in Lome in October 1985 had its principal objective as the control of the activities of the operating units which it will establish for the provision of banking, economic, financial and development services in ECOWAS States.
- (iv) It has embarked On the prosecution of a programme aimed at creating telecommunications network which will link up all the capitals of the 16 member-states which will enable them make direct calls with citizens within member-states.
- (v) ECOWAS has provided a re-afforestation programme. The programme provides for tree replanting, campaign against desertification, bush fire, pest and poaching.
- (vi) The Community has sponsored a ministerial meeting which encouraged agricultural and industrial development. It has defined areas of industrial development and co-operation for member-states.
- (vii) It has provided a policy for intensification of bilateral cultural agreements and exchange programmes between member-states.
- (viii) ECOWAS provided the Community with the protocol on free movement of persons within the West African Community. Citizens within the Community can move freely from one member-states to another without the requirement of visa; and can stay in such a member-state for a maximum of 90 days on condition he does not work or establish.
- (ix) ECOWAS has approved a proposal for a Common Defence Force —*The Allied Force*. This will be composed of units from the armies of the member-states. This

shall be managed by the Defence Commission which will be composed of the Defence Ministers and Chief of the Army Staff of member states. The Defence Commission will be supervised by the Defence Council which will be composed of Heads of State and Governments of member-states. The duty of the Allied Force shall be to carry out joint Military defence for member-states.

Problems

ECOWAS is faced with numerous problems which militate against its performances.

- (i) The greatest of these is economic poverty of member-states because their economies are weak and fragile. This makes it very difficult to get adequate funds for the implementation of its programmes. ECOWAS is at present very poor. Consequently Nigeria bears the financial burden of about 35% financing of the Secretariat and the Fund.
- (ii) The member-states of ECOWAS are economically dependent on Western Powers. Member-states depend largely on economic assistance, technical assistance, financial aid, loans from the Western Powers for the execution of their development programmes. Moreover, their economies are tied up with those of American and European nations particularly their former colonial masters. On the other hand, the trade relations of the member-states are mainly with American and European nations than with fellow African States.
- (iii) There is the problem of political instability in the sub-region. There is constant military intervention with concomitant changes in government. Constant changes in government of member-states result in changes of personalities/membership of the ECOWAS Summit. This, in turn, results in changes in policies, and in the instability of the organization.

Constant political crisis and military instability within member-states often result in frequent closures of national borders which disrupt the free flow of persons, goods and services within the Community.

- (iv) There is the factor of inter-state conflicts. Often there are occurrences of inter-state conflicts and tensions caused by either inter-state boundary disputes or interference in the internal affairs of member-states or violation of territorial integrity. Such conflicts create an atmosphere of ill-feelings which militate against unity and co-operation.
- (v) Some of the smaller nations have great fears that the big nations in the Community might dominate them. This results in mutual suspicion among members. For instance, some nations have the fear that Nigeria may exercise dominant influence in the organization. The small states feel they may lose their identity. These fears tend to slow down the pace of progress of the organization.
- (vi) The element of foreign interference in the Community is a very significant problem. The big powers, particularly the former colonial powers, nurse the fear that a strong economic community of West Africa would force them out of West Africa as they would lose close economic ties with their former colonies in West Africa. France in particular is not happy with her former colonies joining the Community. This is demonstrated by the fact that she supported the Francophone African Community of

Six (CEAO) when Nigeria and Togo were working seriously for the take-off of the ECOWAS.

- (vii) Differences in currency constitute a big economic barrier. All the former French West African nations except Guinea have a common currency. They have a Common Central Bank which issues C.F.A. Franc. They maintain close link with the French monetary system. The former British West African States have their own individual currencies, while Liberia has link with the American dollar. These differences in currencies create barriers in the exchange of goods and services in the Community.
- (viii) Communication problems create barriers to economic integration within the sub-region. As a result of historical and political experiences of the member-states, they maintained separate infrastructures. They built and maintain separate networks of roads, railways and telecommunications etc, that are designed to serve individual states rather than linking up neighbouring states, thereby inhibiting co-operation and integration.
- (ix) There is lack of faith, political will and commitment in the organization by most member-states which result in their non-ratification of most of the protocols and agreements of the organization. Many member-states do not implement most of the decisions reached by the organization. Furthermore, most member states do not pay their contributions to the organization which puts the organization in a position of great poverty, incapable of prosecuting its programmes.

KEY POINTS

1. Organization of African Unity (OAU)

Origin: OAU has its origin from Pan-Africanism, the idea born by Afro-Americans like Dr Alexander Crummell, Dr W.E.B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey and many others.

Formation: It was formed by thirty Heads of State and Government of independent African States at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 25 May, 1963.

Objectives

- (i) To promote unity and solidarity.
- (ii) To co-ordinate and intensify co-operation among member-states.
- (iii) To defend their sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence.
- (iv) To eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa.
- (v) To promote international co-operation.

Organs

- (i) *Assembly of Heads of State and Government* is the highest policy making body of the organization.
- (ii) *Council of Ministers* executes policies made by the Assembly and prepares for all the meetings of the Assembly.

- (iii) The *General Secretariat* is headed by the Secretary-General and is responsible for the administrative duties of the OAU.
- (iv) *Commission on Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration* is the judicial organ of the OAU.

Finance: The organization's funds are got from the contributions made by member-states calculated on the basis of each member's GNP.

Achievements

- (i) Members speak with one voice on all African issues.
- (ii) It has successfully settled many inter-state conflicts.
- (iii) It helped to liberate Mozambique, Angola, Guinea Bisau, Zimbabwe and Namibia.
- (iv) It promotes economic co-operation.
- (v) It promotes regional co-operation.
- (vi) It promotes African culture and identity.

Problems

- (i) There is wide-spread political instability among member-states.
- (ii) There are wide-spread inter-state conflicts.
- (iii) Member-states interfere in the internal affairs of other States.
- (iv) The member-states are very poor which results in the poverty of the organization.
- (v) Member-states refuse to pay their annual dues to the Organization.
- (vi) There is an absence of Pan African Defence Force to deal with problems of aggression and subversion.
- (vii) Member-states are dependent on foreign powers.
- (viii) Most Member-states have close ties with their former colonial masters.
- (ix) Apartheid, racism and minority government in South Africa is a threat to OAU.
- (x) Cultural differences among member states constitute barrier to effective unity.
- (xi) There is fear of domination, and leadership problem.

2. Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

Origin: It was established by 15 Heads of State and Government of West African States at Lagos on 28 May, 1975.

Aims and objectives: The primary objectives of the ECOWAS is to build strong, virile and self-reliant economies in the West African States through economic integration of the West African States.

Institutions

- (i) *ECOWAS Summit* is the highest policy-making organ of the organization.

- (ii) *Council of Ministers* prepares for all the meetings of the Summit and implements its policies.
- (iii) *The Secretariat* which is headed by the Secretary-General discharges all the administrative duties of the organization.
- (iv) *The Tribunal* is the judicial arm which interprets the Treaty of the organization.

The ECOWAS fund: This is the common fund of the organization established for co-operation and development within the Community. Its headquarters is at Lome, Togo.

Achievements

- (i) The Fund gives loans to member-states for development projects.
- (ii) It has embarked on the construction of Trans-West African highway network.
- (iii) It has embarked on establishment of a telecommunication network programme.
- (iv) It has provided re-afforestation programme.
- (v) It encouraged agricultural and industrial development.
- (vi) It provided the protocol for free movement of persons within the West African Community.

Problems

- (i) There is economic poverty among the states
- (ii) There is economic dependence on Western Powers.
- (iii) Political instability within the member-states weakens the organization.
- (iv) There are wide-spread inter-state conflicts which militate against unity and co-operation.
- (v) Smaller states have great fears that big member-states might dominate them.
- (vi) There is constant foreign interference in the community.
- (vii) Differences in currencies among member-states are a barrier to real economic integration.
- (viii) Communication problems which exist in the sub-region create barrier to economic co-operation and integration.
- (ix) There is lack of political will and commitment to the organization by most member-states.

SAMPLE EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

Essay Questions

1. Outline the main objectives of the OAU and assess the extent to which the organization has achieved them.
2. Discuss the main problems facing the OAU.

3. What factors inhibit the OAU from serving as an effective instrument for unity and co-operation among African States?
4. What are the main achievements of ECOWAS?
5. What are the major problems which have tended to prevent ECOWAS from realising its objectives of economic union of West African sub-region?

Objective Questions

1. The OAU was established at
 - A. Addis Ababa in October 1960
 - B. Lagos in May 1963
 - C. Cairo in May 1963
 - D. Addis Ababa in May 1963
 - E. Addis Ababa in June 1963
2. One of the objectives of the OAU is to
 - A. establish a continental government of Africa
 - B. establish African high command
 - C. defend sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of African States.
 - D. realise economic integration of African States.
 - E. adhere to the principle of Welfarism.
3. Which one of the following is an organ of the OAU?
 - A. Economic Council for Africa
 - B. General Assembly
 - C. Assembly of Ministers
 - D. International Court of Justice
 - E. Commission on Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration.
4. One of the following groups of States are all members of the ECOWAS:
 - A. Nigeria, Ghana and Zaire
 - B. Guinea, Togo and Cameroon
 - C. Guinea Bissau, Burkina Faso and Cape Verde.
 - D. Liberia, Benin and Ethiopia
 - E. Senegal, Gambia and Libya.
5. Which one of the following is an organ both to the OAU and the ECOWAS?
 - A. Council of Ministers
 - B. Tribunal
 - C. Fund

D. Commission on Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration.

E. Authority.

Answers

1. D

2. C

3. E

4. C

5. A