

REPORT OF THE CONTINENTAL CIVIL SOCIETY CONFERENCE ON THE PROPOSED AFRICAN UNION GOVERNMENT

Theme
*Accelerating Africa's Integration and
Development in the 21st Century:
Prospects and Challenges of Union
Government*

**Ghana Institute for Management and Public Administration
(GIMPA), Green Hill-Achimota,
Accra, Ghana**

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From a “grand debate” to grand actions for a united Africa

Civil Society Communiqué to the Assembly of the Heads of States Meeting during the 9th Ordinary Summit¹

We, the undersigned organisations from all five regions of the African Union and the Diaspora welcome the opportunity of the Grand Debate to decide on the next steps for the acceleration of political and economic unification of our beloved continent.

There is a clear consensus among us in favour of rapidly accelerating continental integration in order to respond to current and future economic, political and social challenges. Accordingly, we support the proposal for the establishment of a Union Government. We believe that the Union Government must be a People’s Union and must be built on values of participation and democracy in its construction and implementation at continental, regional and national level.

A sufficient body of Summit Decisions and research exists for your Excellencies to decide in this Summit on elements of the proposal for Continental Government without further delay. You have, we believe, a historic responsibility to act decisively and not prolong the process further with suggestions of more studies and audits. There is no need to choose between Africa Union Government and the strengthening of the Regional Economic Communities. We need to accelerate both levels of implementation, as they are critical to the realisation of African citizens’ aspirations for continental integration.

Further, your Excellencies, we recognise that in committing to the realisation of an African economic community and political union in past Summits, you have already affirmed the concept of people’s sovereignty, shared responsibility and non-indifference².

The presence of renewed growth rates, reduced incidences of conflict and war and more open and democratic societies encourages us to call on you to seize this opportunity for a bolder acceleration of continental integration based on the full participation of its peoples. We agree that the acceleration of deeper continental integration of Africa needs to be achieved within a feasible, time-bound and realistic framework.

Consequently, we call on your Excellencies to consider;

A democratic and participatory Union

1. Amending the Protocol to the African Parliament by changing its mandate towards a legislating African parliament directly elected by universal suffrage with proportional representation in the January 2008 Summit
2. Giving a mandate to the African Parliament to establish an expert group on elections to advise, after consultation with national electoral bodies, on the legal, operational and financing modalities for continental wide elections from 2009 onwards

¹ Over 150 men and women from 100 organisations in 30 countries across Africa and the Diaspora extensively discussed the proposal to establish African Union Government during the Continental Conference on Accelerating Africa’s Integration and Development in the 21st century. This followed publications, public consultations, people’s hearings and media work by civil society organisations and a few Governments in seven countries namely, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Libya and Zimbabwe on the proposal.

² Most importantly, the Constituent Act of the Africa Union (2001), the African Peer Review Mechanism, the African Charter on People’s and Human Rights (1986), the Abuja Treaty on the establishment of the African Economic Community (1991)

3. Adopting the feature of the proposal requiring consultations with Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) before the adoption of Assembly decisions. Further, you need to ensure that the mandate and programme of ECOSOCC be adequately reinforced and resourced to enable it to reach out to marginalised groups.
4. Reporting back to your national assemblies after the Summit and be personally available to lead the public debate with diverse constituencies.

Implementation of existing policy and rights standards

5. Endorsing the values contained in the Proposal for Union Government and further including the respect for a common African citizenship and gender equality as core values.
6. Ensuring that the bodies responsible for monitoring and enforcement of commitments on human rights, development and democratic governance are properly resourced to enable them to fulfil their mandates effectively. By doing this, we will avoid the current situation whereby, existing continental treaties and commitments of member states are inadequately implemented nationally.
7. Addressing the urgent need for more functional judicial structures of the AU as means to ensure that member states can be held accountable to their commitments. Further, that you consider rapidly adopting and implementing the proposed protocol to establish a merged African Court of Justice and Human Rights.

African citizenship

8. Removing all visa requirements for African citizens to travel across the continent as a first step towards a Protocol on that enshrines the right to residence, work and movement. Without continental citizenship, continental Government is meaningless.
9. Respecting the rights of citizens, fulfilment of our basic needs, the right to vote and papers enabling us to claim other rights.
10. Adopting a decision that Member states should initiate a sustained citizenship mass education programme for adults and children to create a culture of positive self-consciousness in being African. This should be overseen by a newly established steering committee in the Office of the President of the African Union.
11. Strengthening the commitment to Africans in the diaspora by formally recognising them as the fifth political region of Africa, granting of African citizenship and appointing a Deputy Commissioner for diaspora affairs.

Shared Sovereignty and continental executive institutions

12. We call on you to extend to the African Union Commission and other organs, the authority and resources to enable them to effectively implement the common policy and rights standards. Doing this does not imply a further loss of sovereignty.³
13. The establishment of an expanded Executive Council to include not only Ministers of Foreign Affairs but also Chairpersons of Ministerial conferences is a critical decision you could make in this regard.
14. Lastly, we propose that you adopt existing proposals for specific tax on airline tickets and imports to generate resources for the structures and programmes of the AU.

Strengthening regional institutions

15. We note that acceleration of the Union Government and Economic Community should not imply the end of the RECs. Closer collaboration between the RECs is a pre-condition for an effective integration. Your Excellencies will recall that the adoption of the 1991 Abuja Treaty took place in the understanding that the RECs are the building blocks for continental economic integration.
16. Currently, the rationalisation of the RECs has virtually stalled leaving duplication, overlapping economic mandates, incoherent political mandates and weak harmonisation with existing continental organs and institutions. Yet, we affirm the role of the RECs as a critical force for economic integration, common tariffs, currencies, policy standards and peoples participation.

³ This would include among other issues the right to food, health and other essential services, peace and security, energy and infrastructure, climate change and global policy negotiation.

17. Your Excellencies can act boldly in this regard by calling for the popularisation and adoption of the Draft Protocol on the rationalisation of Regional Economic Communities in the January Summit 2008. Further, the number of RECs need to be brought down to five representing the five regions of Africa.

Strengthening national institutions

18. We invite you to establish a focal point in the leadership of the ministry of foreign affairs with responsibility to provide information to civil society organisations, parliamentarians and the general public about national engagement in AU discussions.
19. Further, we invite you to champion the establishment of a national steering body on AU Affairs, independent of executive control but including representation from relevant ministries, parliament, other constitutional bodies and civil society, to champion and popularise AU affairs and accelerate implementation.

As we ask these decisions of you, we commit our organisations to communicate with our national delegations and machineries in our capitals, as well as to the citizens and peoples in Africa and the diaspora through the mass media.

Lastly, we recognise the historic moment this Grand Debate could mark for Africa's destiny. The responsibility lies not only with yourselves, your Governments but the people of Africa.

As a first step, we will seek out our national delegations at the Summit and our governments at home to take the necessary steps during and after the Summit to adopt decisions and take the necessary actions for a united Africa.

Signed

Abantu, Ghana, Abibiman Foundation, Ghana, African Civil Society Coalition On Hiv/Aids, Nigeria, Actionaid International, South Africa & Kenya, Afrimap, UK & SA, Afro Media Works, Canada/Ghana, AFRODAD, Mozambique, Afroflag Youth Vision (AVU), Ethiopia, Akuapem Community Foundation, Ghana, Alliances For Africa, Nigeria, AMCP, Mali & Togo, Amnesty International, UK, APRM, Ghana, Ashango/Epag, Ghana, AU Dispoara Forum Mission, Ghana, AWEAPON, Uganda, AWPDP, Ghana, Catholic Secretariat, Ghana, CDD-Ghana, Ghana, CDD-Nigeria, Nigeria, CEDEP, Ghana, CGD, Burkina Faso Claydord Consult, Ghana, Codesria, Denmark, COHRE, Ghana, DHPD, Benin, Dzreke Virgins Association/ CUC, Ghana, El-Friends Of Ghana, Ghana, Faculty Of Law, University Of Ghana, Ghana, Fahamu, US and UK, Federation Des Femmes Entrepreneurs, Cote D'voire, FEMNET, Kenya, FEMNET, Zambia, Fifen/Fefeedes, Cote D'voire, Friends And Rivers And Water Bodies, Ghana, GCAP, Liberia, GAPVOD, Ghana, GAWE, Ghana, Ghana Aids Commission, Ghana, Ghana Society Of Physically Disabled, Ghana, Ghana TUC, Ghana, God And Glorious Partners International, Ghana, Ibis West Africa, Ghana, IDEG, Ghana, IGD, South Africa, Institute For Local Governance, Ghana, Interights, Senegal, International Centre For Conflict Human Rights, Ghana, IRRI, Uganda, ISODEC, Ghana, IUHR, Ghana, Kaleo Baptist Women Development Programme, Ghana, Komenda Traditional Council, Ghana, Lecia, Ghana, Mwengo, Zimbabwe, Namibia Dev. Trust, Namibia, National Governance Programme, Ghana, Network Of Ethiopian Schools, Denmark, Northern Net Work For Development, Ghana, OATUU, Ghana, Opoku Foundation, Ghana & UK, OSIWA, Nigeria, Oxfam International, PADEAP, Nigeria, Pan African Revival Network, Ghana, PAWA, Ghana, Plan International, Senegal, Poverty Reduction Forum, Zimbabwe, Send Foundation, Ghana, SOCDA, Somalia, Springs Human Resource Support Services, Ghana, The Ark Foundation, Ghana, TICAD Civil Society Forum, Japan, Trust Africa, Senegal, TWN, Ghana, UN Millenium Campaign, Universite D'abomey Valami-Osiwa, Benin, University Of Development Studies, Ghana, V.T.F, Ghana, WACSOFF, Burkina Faso, WANEP, Ghana, Wildaf-Benin, Benin, Women Peace And Security Network Africa, Liberia, Young Women's Christian Association, Ghana, Zimbabwe Exiles Forum, Zimbabwe

Adopted Accra, Ghana, 23rd June 200

1.1 Background

In line with its goal of bringing civil society's voice to bear on *The Grand Debate* on *Continental Union Government* which is expected to be the only item on the agenda for discussion by African leaders at the African Union's forthcoming Accra Summit, the Ghana AU Civil Society Coalition, convened by the Institute for Democratic Governance with sponsorship from OXFAM, The Open Society Initiative for West



Africa (OSIWA) and AfriMAP, organized a two-day continental conference for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) from across Africa. Under the theme, *Accelerating Africa's Integration and Development in the 21st Century: Prospects and Challenges of Union Government*, the conference which was attended by representatives of over one hundred (100) CSOs from over thirty (30) countries from Africa sought , among other things, to:

- ❖ Provide an avenue for synthesizing continental civil society positions on the *Grand Debate* on the establishment of the African Union Government;
- ❖ Provide a platform for continental civil society leaders and activists to debate the proposal; and finally,
- ❖ Help formulate a common continental civil society position on the proposal

DAY 1 [SESSION I]

1.2 Opening of Conference

Officially opening proceedings at the conference, Dr. Emmanuel Akwetey, Executive Director of the Institute for Democratic Governance and Convener of the Ghana AU-Civil Society Coalition, having welcomed participants, provided an overview of the public consultations undertaken by the Ghana AU Civil Society Coalition, particularly its continued interactions with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the Grand Debate. After introducing the Chairperson and members of the panel for the opening session – comprising Mr. Ozias Tungwarara (Director, AfriMAP), Dr. Tajudeen Abdul Raheem (Gen. Sec., Global Pan-African Movement and Director, Justice Africa) and Dr. Esi Sutherland (Research Fellow, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana) – Dr. Akwetey encouraged participants to seize



the opportunity to ensure the reflection of civil society's position in the final outcome of the debates at the Accra Summit.

1.3 Chairperson's Remarks

In his opening remarks, Mr. Tungwarara gave a brief overview of AfriMAP's mission and



objectives, which he indicated is to, among other things, monitor African governments' compliance with commitments made under the AU and other international treaties. Touching on the significance of the conference, Mr. Tungwarara indicated that the African continent today is no longer debating or grappling with the question of who will govern it; but rather, how it will be

governed. He therefore encouraged members to effectively engage in the deliberations to provide a concrete basis for recommendations for policy makers and to inform decisions on the form and nature of how to govern the continent.

1.4 Opening Address – Dr. Tajudeen Abdul-Raheem

In an unequivocally assertive tone, Dr. Tajudeen Abdul-Raheem underscored the need for making a definitive move towards increasing continental integration by adopting the Union Government proposal at the AU Summit in Accra. Highlighting vigorous efforts by such African leaders as Dr. Kwame Nkrumah in uniting the continent, Dr. Abdul-Raheem reiterated the desire of ordinary men and women of the continent to move across the length and breadth of Africa without visa restrictions. He condemned the current practice where stringent visa requirements are imposed on Africans while the rest of the world is allowed, almost unhindered, to move freely across the continent.



In that light, he challenged the Ghanaian government to take the lead, consistent with its historic role in the quest for unity across the continent, in removing visa requirements for other Africans across the continent. Questioning the rationale of the African leaders' hesitation to uniting the continent, Dr. Abdul-Raheem also emphasized that African leaders are able to “alter the claws of colonialism hanging over the continent” if they so choose, and urged the leaders to eschew the foot-dragging and work towards the immediate unification of the continent. On whether the unification of the continent should be *gradual* or *immediate*, as has become the subject of on-going on the *Union Government* proposal, he reiterated that “those who want to go slow do not know the history of Africa. The time is now!” He concluded.

1.5 Speech by Ghana’s Minister of Foreign Affairs – Hon. Nana Akufo Addo



Hon. Nana Akufo-Addo, Ghana’s Minister for Foreign Affairs, emphasised the importance the Ghanaian Government attaches to the involvement of non-state actors in the work of the AU, highlighting his Ministry’s numerous interactions with Ghanaian CSOs on the *Union Government* proposal. The Minister further outlined a number of continental-level consultations undertaken on the subject by the AU, which he indicated, was in line with the letter and spirit of the

AU’s Constitutive Act, which seeks the involvement of civil society in its programs. He further underscored the need for the Grand Debate on continental integration to be people-driven, reminding participants that continental integration is a process which will need the involvement and contribution of all peoples across the continent. Emphasising that the continental union government will not be achieved on a silver platter, the minister stressed that Africans must be prepared to sacrifice and endure some “pain” in order to make the unification of the continent a reality.

Hon. Nana Akufo-Addo also acknowledged the role of Dr. Nkrumah (of Ghana) in the creation of independent African Commonwealth. In line with that history, the Minister pledged that Ghana shall strive to work towards the fulfilment of what Nkrumah started on the continent, *once the people decide the course it must take*. He however identified such factors as globalization, diverse linguistic and historical backgrounds among African countries as some of the real challenges that face the formation of the *Union Government*. Underscoring the importance of continental integration, the Minister noted that the rapid integration on the continent provides the most effective framework for harnessing the human and material resources of the continent for the benefit of its peoples; he reiterated the need to unite the continent.

1.6 Presentation of Citizens Passport

In a symbolic move, a 17-year old Ablavi Agbodza of Togo, representing all youth across Africa, having made a passionate appeal to African governments to unite the continent in order to push the cause of the continent’s youth in the areas of education, employment, among others, also presented a sample of a proposed *African Citizens Passport* to the Minister and his family.



1.7 Results of Country Consultations - Hakima Abbas

Presenting a summary of views expressed by participants in various country-level consultations on the Grand Debate, Ms Hakima Abbas indicated that in all, 10 broad-based consultations took place in 7 countries across the continent. After acknowledging the country-level lead persons on the public consultations, she summarized the views collated from those consultations as follows:



- ❖ That despite differences over the form and pace of continental integration, an overwhelming majority of the peoples were in favour of a unified government;
- ❖ That the People want to be heard; they are ready to be engaged in public consultations on continental integration;
- ❖ That the African people want the AU to be strengthened and existing decisions implemented; and
- ❖ That the African people want the acceleration and enforcement of policies that promote free movement of the African peoples across Africa.

1.8 Poetry Recital – Professor Atukwei Okine



In a poem, *Pharaonic Eagle*, dedicated to Ghana, in general, and to Dr. Kwame Nkrumah in particular, Prof. Atukwei emphasized the desire of every ordinary African to call (any part of) Africa his *home* regardless of where he is born. Reinvoking memories of Dr. Nkrumah and other notable Pan-Africanists such as Dr. Dubois, Prof. Atukwei offered an advice that Kwame Nkrumah would most likely have offered contemporary African leaders as they meet at the Accra Summit: “Seek you first a common African home and all shall be well with you.”

1.9 Moderator’s Remarks - Dr. Esi Sutherland

Closing the morning session, the Moderator, Dr. Esi Sutherland, noted that the African continent



is not as poor as it is often portrayed; she underscored the need to work towards making the riches of the continent beneficial to the people. In that respect, she tasked civil society organizations to relate the Grand Debate to the “everyday life and circumstances of the people.” Reminding participants of the enormous challenges facing the continent as it seeks to

integrate, Dr. Sutherland referred to one of Dr. Nkrumah's OAU Summit speeches in which he warned his colleague Heads of States and Governments that the continent's problems could not be solved with flowery language and pious resolutions, but rather with keen determination and focus.

[SESSION II]

“Assessment of Progress of Continental Integration Interventions”

In an attempt to clarify the subject and focus of the presentations for the session, Mr. Ozias Tungwarara, Director of AfriMAP and moderator for the session noted that since the formation of the OAU, there appeared to be a broad consensus on the pressing need for deepening continental integration. Despite that consensus, however, there appears to be little progress. To explore attempts made towards integration, and to find out what the sources of the failures have been, there was the need to explore the question of regional integration across the continent from both the theoretical and practical perspectives.

PRESENTATION I

2.0 *“From Regionalism to Union Government: Reflections on Post-Colonial African Integration and Progress so far” – Prof. S.K.B. Asante*

2.1 *Regionalism and Africa's Search for Development*

Reflecting on the topic in his presentation, Professor Asante noted that the concept of regional cooperation has for long been widely accepted as a key aspect of continental African development policy, and that the current attempt to enhance regional integration is only a reflection of the historical trajectory of the continent in that regard. He however explained that the concept of regionalism particularly became an adopted framework for economic organization in Africa (as in other parts of the world) only after the formation of the Coal and Steel Community, (later the European Economic Community and currently the European Union) in 1945.



Enumerating efforts at regional integration on the African continent, Prof. Asante made reference to such treaties as the *1973 Declaration on Economic Cooperation and Development*, the *1979 Monrovia Strategy*, the *1980 Lagos Plan of Action*, the *Cairo*

Agenda of 1995 and the more recent *NEPAD* initiative in 2001. These attempts, he said, were the result of the implicit acknowledgement, across the continent, of the need to work together to deal with the problems of poverty, lack of infrastructure, and to strengthen the negotiation positions of member states.

2.1.2 Regional Economic Communities: Achievements and Challenges

Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Prof. Asante noted, were created to provide the framework for regional integration. Among other broad objectives, the RECs were expected to expedite the formation of an *African Economic Community* by stipulating and ensuring compliance with specific macro-economic criteria; to build industrial bridges among member states; harmonize currencies and improve intra-regional trade. For him, these goals have remained largely unfulfilled as is evident in the negligible level of intra-African trade. He noted, for example, that while trade between Africa and Europeans and Americans is about 40% and 35% respectively, intra-African trade hovers around only about 5% of Africa's total trade volume. Some of the problems accounting for this state of affairs, Prof. Asante noted, included the following:

- ❖ Weak institutions i.e. inadequate institutional capacity;
- ❖ Lack of commitment to adopted protocols at regional levels;
- ❖ The cold war; and
- ❖ Globalization

The Cold War, Prof. Asante specifically noted, dampened the urge of continental integration by providing opportunities to be exploited by *great powers* affiliations.

2.1.3 New Trends in Regional Integration across the Continent

Prof. Asante further explained that since the demise of the Cold War in the early 1990s, however, there has been steady, renewed energy to rebuilding regional institutions across the continent. Consequently, a new treaty, viz., *The Abuja Treaty of 1991* was signed to provide a focus for harmonizing the various RECs to facilitate overall continental integration – African Economic Community. Faced with globalization and other economic pressures, the OAU was transformed to the AU in 2001 with the focus of fast-tracking the implementation period of the Abuja Treaty. The new trends in regional integration are further exemplified in the current efforts across the continent to:

- ❖ Increase the participation of private sector in works of the RECs
- ❖ Enhance joint efforts at promoting peace and security across the continent; and
- ❖ Harmonize monetary and immigration policies at the regional levels, he emphasized.

2.1.4 Need for African Union Government

On the importance of an African Union Government, Prof. Asante noted that the only way to achieve economic development to fulfil the needs and aspirations of the people of Africa is through a sustained shift to continental planning. The difficulty, he emphasized, is the question of how to move from the African Union to a continental African Union Government. According to



him, an African Union Government, when formed, must be strong enough to address the numerous problems facing the continent; anything less will be counterproductive to the course of Africa's development. In his opinion, RECs must be the building blocks of an eventual African Union Government. Towards this, he suggested a tentative roadmap that revolves around the RECs , which in his opinion, will be the most logical way to building a strong, workable continental Union Government.

2.1.5 Tentative Roadmap

- ❖ RECs should be reinvigorated to become common markets and economic unions;
- ❖ RECs should coordinate at horizontal level by establishing cooperating committees to promote information sharing and joint consultations;
- ❖ Establish a Union Government Implementation Committee to supervise the creation of Union Government;
- ❖ Establish Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms to advise on implementation process of Union Government proposals;
- ❖ Ensure that the process of integration is championed by the people of Africa, not Heads of States and Governments.

The premise of this roadmap, he highlighted, was that African continental and political union can only be achieved within the framework of regional decision-making institutions that would eventually feed into a continental one. For this to be achieved, however, the decision on the form and shape of the Union Government must be made by the people of Africa, and not by the IMF or the World Bank, he reiterated.

2.1.6 Comments and Discussions

Generally, the discussions reflected a tension between feelings about *setting up ourselves to fail*



(by setting up a Union Government prematurely) and *continuing in failure* (by delaying the formation of a Union Government in the hope that RECs, which have largely proved ineffective in integrating the continent will eventually work).

While some participants disagreed outright with the presenter's explanation of the causes of RECs' failure in integrating the continent, preferring instead to attribute the problem to lack of political will on the part of African leaders

in uniting the continent, others argued that attempts at strengthening the RECs will face much the same difficulties as the Union Government will, if formed, and wondered why we should not move to the Union Government right away instead of concentrating on the RECs, which had failed to work in the interest of African integration for the past several years.



Similarly, other participants, conscious of the presenter's assertion that the Eastern African REC has moved to a stage where they have begun talks on the possibility of establishing a federal governance system among member states, wondered why it should be impossible to have a continental federal system of governance, if that is possible at the regional level. While others also expressed apprehension about the time-frame for the implementation of the proposed Union Government, they flatly discounted the suggestion that strengthening the RECs, rather than the outright formation of the Union Government, will be the way to go. Responding, the presenter argued that changes in the international environment such as the emergence of the cold war, the global economic depression in the 1970s, and the introduction of such programs as the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) across the continent were largely to blame for the inability of the RECs to promote deeper integration as these situations considerably lessened the need for integration and promoted, instead, individualist courses to the pursuit of development. He emphasized that the post-Cold War era RECs appear to



be performing well, and that strengthening them could be a significant step towards the integration of the continent.

Continuing, others stressed that the argument is not about having a Union Government at the expense of RECs; rather the Union Government in itself, is required to facilitate restructuring of the RECs. Taking the presenter on his

assertion that changes in international system in the past accounted for the failure of the RECs in uniting the continent, others argued that there is no assurance that future changes may not equally

enervate the RECs. In their opinion, there is no need to take chances – union government now!



Many discussants questioned the ability, preparedness or willingness of the RECs to promote the sort of people-driven development policies that the African people are currently yearning for. They pointed out that the RECs not only lack the structures to promote the inclusiveness of the masses in their decisions and to pursue the democratic principle of accountability, but also lack the ability to change their focus from pursuing neo-liberalist policies, which in

their view, have proven unhelpful to the course of development on the continent over the past few decades. To back their position, they pointed at the substantive ownership of the NEPAD, which is the working document of the RECs. They argued that although Africans proposed it, the final NEPAD document lacks the potency needed to serve the interest of the African people, rather than that of external powers.

Veering off the dominant theme of the discussions, others raised issues on relatively pristine areas in the ongoing debate:

- ❖ Between the Union Government proposal (bottom-down) and strengthening of the RECs (bottom-up), is there not a third way towards integration?
- ❖ What is the relationship between NEPAD, RECs and AU?
- ❖ If the goal of RECs is ultimately some sort of a continental Union Government, why the existing different structural organization in the RECs across the continent?

Summarising his responses to the issues raised, Prof. Asante noted emphatically that what is important is not simply forming a union government, but forming a union government that is able to withstand the challenges that are likely to arise from the processes of integration. He clarified that the NEPAD is a program adopted by the African Union for which the RECs have worked out plans of implementation.

PRESENTATION II

3.0 *“The Sovereignty Question and African Union Government: Reflections on the Past, Present and Future – Prof. Kofi Kumado”*

To begin his presentation, Prof. Kumado reminded participants that the African Union Government is no longer a proposal; it already exists and the debate is not about its establishment; but rather, about what structures to put in place to strengthen it. In a brief overview of the genesis of the African Union, Prof. Kumado indicated that just as Africa’s balkanization began in Berlin, the fall of the Berlin wall also provided



the urge to find a continental platform for action in several areas across the continent. The result of that urge, he indicated, had been the formation of the *Organization of African Unity* in the early 1960s. The OAU, he however indicated, faced several problems that hindered its effectiveness. Firstly, the OAU lacked central decision-making authority for propelling continental action in several areas. Secondly, there was the problem of certain changes in the international environment such as the emergence of globalization/trade liberalization from which the continent suffered many setbacks.

The renewed enthusiasm for continental integration, the result of which is the formation of the



African Union in 2001, Prof. Kumado noted, was the result of Western sanctions (against Libya) pushing the Libyan Government to look inward and revive its links with the continent. In his view, therefore, “the push the process [of continental integration] got would not have taken place without the sanction on Libya.” Supporting this

assertion, he enumerated several financial commitments made by the Libyan government to making the journey to the AU possible, so far.

On the question of sovereignty, Prof. Kumado indicated that the pure Westphalian interpretation of the concept of sovereignty is no longer relevant in international relations, and for that matter, the question of African integration. He cited the following global developments to explain his assertion:

- ❖ The enactment and implementation of international treaties at regional, continental and international levels;
- ❖ The internationalization of the concept of human rights;
- ❖ The acceptance of international humanitarian assistance;
- ❖ The emergence of globalization;
- ❖ The decolonization process in several countries across the world; and
- ❖ The acceptance of continental agreements such as the AU Constitutive Act which, in itself, acknowledges the interdependence of each state across the continent.

He further indicated that the question of sovereignty has never been a hindrance to the governments of the continent in international relations or in the setting up of continental institutions. He pointed to the following as the basis of his assertion:



- ❖ That the leaders on the continent, by choosing to sign and ratify the AU Constitutive Act (which confirms the interdependence of member states), ahead of signing the Optional Protocol to that Act is a proof that the African leaders did not consider their sovereignty threatened in anyway by the Act.
- ❖ Meaningful levels of cooperation among African Governments as reflected, for example, in the works of the African Working Group in the UN.

On the basis of the above facts, he reiterated that the concept of sovereignty is invoked by leaders of the continent only in circumstances when they perceive that their political standings or positions are threatened. This situation, he asserted, is fundamentally flawed as sovereignty is reposed in the people, rather than in the government. Highlighting the contradictions in the views of the leaders of the continent vis-à-vis the issue of sovereignty, he noted that all the leaders of the continent signed and committed their *peoples* to the Constitutive Act without consulting them (peoples) on that issue.

Reacting to those who point at language, currency and other differences across the continent as obstacles to the integration process, he reminded participants that even the different states that made up the United States of America once had different currencies, yet found a way to unite. In his opinion therefore, we all do not have to speak the same language as a precondition to having a Union Government. Similarly, the EU is doing very well despite the fact that not all countries within the European continent speak the same language.

On the current debate about the right approach to continental integration – whether *gradualist* or *instantist* – Prof. Kumado pointed out that the AU Constitutive Act commits the continent to a gradual approach, and emphasized that “the search for a Union or a United States of Africa is not about sovereignty, but about *which* structures to put in place, *when* and *how* to put them in place.” Therefore, to say that we need to put in place the needed structures is certainly not about the question of sovereignty, he reiterated.

3.1 Discussions

Discussions on this presentation were very limited and were rather dominated by questions. Among the questions asked were the following:

- ❖ How does the African Union Government (AUG) relate to the question of Africa’s sovereignty? Shall the AUG lead member states to lose their sovereignty or shall it rather help them consolidate it?
- ❖ Will African interests be protected more with unity than without unity?
- ❖ If AUG is not about sovereignty, but structures, what about the people?



- * Other members wanted to find out what the presenter’s opinion about the proposal to “making do with the RECs” is;

Responding to the sovereignty-Union Government dilemma, Prof. Kumado remarked that the issue of sovereignty needs not occupy a centre stage on the Grand Debate because states, with or without integration, will continue to lose their sovereignty. This situation he attributed to the irreversible phenomenon of globalization, the universalization of human rights and humanitarian interventions from across the globe. In his view, therefore, African nations must be thinking more on how to construct unity on the continent, rather than worry about losing their sovereign status.

3.2 SYNDICATE GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Under the topic, “*Assessment of Progress, Opportunities and Risks of African Union Government,*” participants were divided into four syndicate groups (Commissions), each of which was to discuss and/or assess progress and opportunities in one of the following thematic areas of governance on the African continent:

- ❖ *Democratic Governance, Human and Peoples Rights*
- ❖ *Trade, Economic and Human Development*
- ❖ *African Citizenship and Identity*
- ❖ *The Diaspora and African Union Government*

To facilitate this, each commission had a Moderator and a Resource Person. At the end of the deliberations, it was expected that a plenary session be organized the next day to discuss the reports of each commission.

DAY II [SESSION I]

4.0 PRESENTATION OF COMMISSION REPORTS



Proceedings on day 2 began with the submission of reports from the various commissions that were set up the previous day. The following are the reports and recommendations of each syndicate group.

4.1 Commission I: (*Democratic Governance, Human and People’s Rights*)

The *Democratic Governance, Human and People’s Rights Commission* recounted the historical attempts at mainstreaming and institutionalizing democracy and human rights on the continent. The commission further pointed out that the good governance deficit on the continent is largely embedded in the poor implementation of treaties and charters such as the African Charter on

Human and People's Rights. The commission attributed this problem largely to the lack of effective institutions to ensure compliance of governments to such provisions, as well as the lack of political will on the part of African leaders to comply. The commission therefore called upon African Heads of state to increase their level of commitment towards the welfare of their people in order to enhance the effectiveness of democracy on the African continent.

4.2 Commission II (*Trade, Economic and Human Development*)

Among the broad recommendations made by the commission are the following:

- ❖ It is imperative to learn from our former colonizers and take steps to harmonize macro-economic policies across the continent;
- ❖ Opportunities must be explored to forming cartels in the production of gold, diamond and other products in which the continent abounds;
- ❖ Concessionary trade agreements by African states must not only target external trade partners; efforts must also be made to provide similar concessions to other African states in relevant areas in a manner that facilitates intra-African trade;
- ❖ Opportunities must be explored to connect African economies in a manner that enhances their capacities to add value to the continent's products. Opportunities for collaborating in the areas of infrastructure, energy, technology, and social services must be explored and maximized in this direction;
- ❖ Vigorous efforts must be made to facilitate the convergence of RECs in various policy areas so as to help them take common positions on relevant issues in order to strengthen their positions on the world stage;
- ❖ Human rights issues need to be dealt with a little more purposefully in order to facilitate the development of the African people;
- ❖ To be able to strengthen their negotiation positions, it is important for countries across the continent to meet and formulate a common position ahead of major trade meetings/negotiations between members of the continent and external trade partners;
- ❖ Education should be intensified across the continent on the issue of integration and every effort made to discourage xenophobia on the continent; and finally;
- ❖ Concrete efforts must be made to address the brain drain conundrum across the continent.

4.3 Commission III (*African Citizenship and Identity*)

The committee asserted that African identity is the best guarantee for the dissemination of African aspirations, and that African citizenship and must be treated as an entitlement, rather than as a privilege. The group noted that the Union Government proposals, as they currently appear, do not fully address the question of African citizenship as regards, for example, the right of Africa's citizens to freely move across the continent. The focus, the group noted, rather seems to be on dividing up power between states than genuinely empowering Africa's citizens. The group also bemoaned the current situation where

incumbent governments go to any lengths to rig national elections, thereby making void the citizens' right to vote.

On the question of African identity, the group also noted that the issue of 'who is an African' (among other questions, who within the diaspora would be included) is still not settled and needs to be subjected to wider public debate in order to give meaning to wider continental citizenship rights (as relates to voting and election to public office within the newly evolving AU structures). The group also noted that while ECOWAS had moved forward on issues of a common West African citizenship, and while there were discussions within SADC about freedom of movement, these rights remain largely confined to paper, with no concrete plans to implement them. They noted with sadness that even at the national level, a passport does not guarantee that you can access the rights that go with it. There was therefore the need to ensure that the new structures at the African level genuinely empower citizens and not only governments or the Union Government itself, by making citizenship rights practically relevant to their citizens.

Among the recommendations made were the following:

- ❖ Citizenship education should be a priority to assist in developing a common sense of African identity, overcoming ethnic differences, and strengthening common values.
- ❖ The Union Government proposals should pay attention to issues of citizen participation in relation both to economic (especially freedom of movement) and political (right to vote) matters.
- ❖ A definition of African citizenship is needed so that continental rights have meaning.

4.4 Commission IV (*Diaspora and African Union Government*)

The commission noted that the African Diaspora has been historically instrumental in the unification of the continent. They noted that the very concept of *Pan-Africanism* originated from the Diaspora. Acknowledging the inability of the OAU to effectively mobilize the Diaspora for the continent's development process, the commission further noted some of the efforts made by the AU to strengthen its links with and mobilize the Diaspora to speed up the continent's development processes. Among some of those efforts pointed out by the commission were the establishment of the Western Hemisphere African Diaspora Network (WHADN); the amendment of the AU's Constitutive Act to include an article that calls for the participation of the Diaspora in the activities of the AU; launch of the *Joseph Project* by the Ghana Government to facilitate the return of *willing* African Diasporans back to the African continent, etc. etc.

To strengthen the AU's link with the Diaspora, the commission also made the following proposals:

- ❖ Need to formally make the Diaspora the 6th region of Africa
- ❖ Appoint Deputy Commissioner for the Diaspora

- ❖ Current collaboration between individual countries and Diaspora – such as those between the Republic of South Africa and the Diaspora – should be broadened to include the AU;
- ❖ Diaspora must be encouraged and strengthened to become a central actor in Africa’s integration process.

4.5 Discussions, Questions, and Additions to Commission Reports

On the reports submitted, the following comments and additional proposals were made.



- ❖ Efforts must be made to ensure the harmonization between the organizations and mechanisms in terms of policy and practice in the area of human rights and democracy on the continent;

- ❖ Framework for Union Government must be clear on whether there is such thing as a “democratic model” best suited for Africa;
- ❖ Emphasize paradigm shift from *dependency* on foreign aid to *self-reliance*;
- ❖ Efforts must be channelled into forming an African standing force;
- ❖ Accountability must be highlighted in the workings and structures of the AU;
- ❖ CSOs must find appropriate avenues for pushing for the implementation of several unimplemented declarations on human rights within the framework of the African Union Government;
- ❖ African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights must be enhanced by giving it quasi judicial powers; and finally
- ❖ The African Court of Justice should be made a supranational body serving as a continental appellate court.

Other participants also expressed their displeasure at the current practice throughout African Universities where nationals of countries from other parts of Africa are considered as *foreign/international students* and are therefore charged “international tuition.”

Some participants underscored the need to link the issue of human rights to the implementation of the APRM. Others also suggested that the APRM, in order to be effective, needs to be ran independent of control by the continent’s governments. Other discussants also highlighted the need to work consciously to improving relations between Black Africans and Afro-Arabs on the continent as a first step to promoting the idea of the African citizenship and identity and to foster integration amongst the African peoples. In other words, while admitting that diversity in terms of culture, language and other related differences cannot be avoided among African nations, there is

the need, they emphasised, to find ways to manage the continent's diversity and to discard the mindset of perceiving other Africans as foreigners. In an interesting submission, a participant indicated that civil wars in some of the African countries, such as in Somalia are not simply domestic, but an expansion of the pan-African struggle as *pro-regional* and *anti-regional* coalitions clash.

[SESSION II]

5.0 Reports On Public, National-Level Consultations

This session sought to assess the views from the grassroots across the continent on the question of continental Union Government. Reports were received from three countries, namely Ghana, Ethiopia, and Senegal. There was also a summary of continental consultations – those by the AU and AU-affiliated institutions. The following were the report from each country.

5.1 Ghana

The consultation processes in Ghana, it was reported, began with the formation of the Ghana AU Civil Society Coalition. Comprising about 33 different CSOs, the Coalition sought to provide a platform for people to engage on the Union Government processes and debates. In all, four different pre-AU Summit events were organized by the Ghana AU Civil Society Coalition and the Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG). Following is a summary of the reports on these events:



- **April, 2007** – a teach-in workshop that sought to increase understanding of the African Union among members of the coalition so as to enhance their impact on deliberations at the Summit was organized.
- **May 25 (AU Day)** – An elaborate media campaign aimed at sensitizing the public on the AU Summit and mobilizing the people to debate the future of continental integration was launched.
- **June 1st, 2007** – interactive session with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that sought to find out the position of the government on the debate, collect and collate civil society opinion on the subject in an attempt to impacting the Government's position on the debate was also organized. This forum drew over 100 high-profile civil society representatives and actors and participants from the academia, private sector, media etc. etc. to debate the issue of continental union government.
- **June 16th, 2007** – Three regional outreach programs that sought to provide the platform for ordinary men and women from the country to engage on the debates about the

continental Union Government proposal and also to collate their views on the subject was organized by the Coalition and IDEG. The outreach programs drew a total of over 500 participants.

- **June 22-23** – A 2-day Continental Conference of Civil Society Organizations (currently underway) seeking to harmonize continental civil society position on the debate on the Union Government proposal and to maximize continental civil society’s impact on the debate during the upcoming Summit was also organized.

5.2 Ethiopia

On Ethiopia, it was reported that a variety of lectures, followed by an interactive forum on the



African Union Government on May 25, 2007 were held. The interactive forum brought together about 150 participants from a wide spectrum of society – ranging from ordinary men and women to experts on integration – to debate issues on continental integration. Forum participants generally made the following recommendations:

- ❖ That every process of the Union Government should involve every member of the African society
- ❖ That the formation of the Union Government should adopt a bottom-up, rather than a top-down approach
- ❖ That there should be a regular common platform on which people can freely express their views concerning the Union Government
- ❖ That the artificial boundaries on the continent must be discarded if the objectives for the establishment of the Union Government are to be achieved.

5.3 Senegal

Organized by Oxfam, AfriMAP and the Senegalese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a consultative forum on the Union Government was reportedly held on June 18, 2007. Among the key views expressed in the consultation processes included the following:

- ❖ That the African union is absolutely necessary for the survival of the continent in the current international environment;
- ❖ That all sections of society, including women, children and the youth must be involved in the processes of establishing the continental Union Government;



- ❖ That there is the need to translate all documents in relation to the Union Government into local languages to enhance effective information dissemination; and
- ❖ That there is the need to set up ministerial portfolios in key areas such as finance, education and foreign affairs to work out the coordination of other sectors of the continental economy into a full Union Government

6.0 Reports on Continental Level Consultations

It was reported that continental level interactions/consultations on the subject of a Union Government were done at three different levels: **inter-ministerial conference, an all-inclusive consultation session, the creation of an AU's Accra Summit website.**

6.1 An inter-ministerial conference

Attended by African foreign ministers and some of the continent's development partners, an inter-ministerial conference was held in Durban South Africa, on May 8-9, 2007. Three key proposals considered at the conference were to:

- i) Create the United States of Africa
- ii) Reinforce the AU and its Commissions
- iii) Maintain the status quo by doing nothing

6.2 An all-inclusive consultation attended by all members of the AU represented by their ambassadors, CSOs, Pan-African Parliamentarians, Ministers of Foreign Affairs etc. was also held in Durban, South Africa. Among the major proposals made at the conference were the following:

- iv) Support the creation of the African Union Government
- v) Harmonize and rationalize the RECs
- vi) Need to put appropriate structures in place in areas of communication etc, before the establishment of the African Union Government

6.3 Creation of AU Summit Website: The creation of an AU website was also undertaken to provide information on the on-going debate on the continental union government proposal

6.4 Discussions on the Public Consultations

Reacting to report on the AU's all-inclusive consultations, a participant expressed his dissatisfaction with the degree of participation of certain important segments of society, particularly women and the youth. Participants from Nigeria and Mali indicated that not much took place in their countries by way of coordinated public consultations on the subject of integration, and expressed displeasure at the huge apathy and general lack of



enthusiasm among the media and publics on the subject of Union Government in their countries.

On the formation of the Ghana AU-CSO coalition, a participant remarked that CSOs in Africa appear to be much more reactive than proactive and questioned the need to form an AU Civil Society Coalition. On that critique, it was clarified that the Ghana AU Civil Society Coalition is not a new NGO, but rather a collection of existing network of CSOs who only came together to maximize civil society's inputs into the debate on the Union Government proposal. While others emphasized the need to simplify the debates on the Union Government proposal at the grassroots level across the continent, others stressed the need to include the youth, faith-based organizations, film producers, teachers and the disabled in order to broaden the scope of ongoing public consultations on the issue. Other participants emphasized the need to extend the consultations beyond the Accra Summit.

On a rather disappointing note, a number of discussants indicated that what has happened so far in the consultations on the Union Government proposal is simply *information sharing* and *sensitization*, rather than *genuine, deep consultations*. This problem participants attributed to the fact that not only has the consultation processes been championed only by a few CSOs in the various countries; but also that the information sharing strategies used by these CSOs were largely on *ad hoc* basis. Participants therefore called for the need to involve the various public constituencies on a regular, more consistent basis. Others indicated the need to entrench knowledge of and excite public enthusiasm on the debate beyond the Accra Summit.

The following steps were suggested in that regard:

- ❖ Mainstream continental government issues in school curricular throughout the continent;
- ❖ Adopt an elaborate continent-wide media strategy for promoting continental integration;
- ❖ Liaise with policy-makers, and parliamentarians on public consultations;
- ❖ Harmonize CSO approaches to public consultations at both domestic and continental level;
- ❖ AU must be lobbied to fund CSO consultations on continental integration;
- ❖ Do follows-up to measure the level of dissemination of information at the grassroots;
- ❖ Liaise with local government units, such as District Assemblies, in order to build wider grassroots support for the Union Government proposal and other related issues;
- ❖ Find appropriate means to engage the AU Commissions in the public consultations processes; and finally;
- ❖ Take steps to ensure that a decision is made on the citizens' passport at the Accra Summit.

7.0 Reflections –The Way Forward

Reflecting on the deliberations at the end of the two-day conference, the following action points were proposed as a guide to public education efforts by the CSOs on the question of continental integration:



- ❖ Form national-level AU CSO Coalitions which will have the necessary resources (human and financial) specifically committed to pursuing the issue of continental integration at the country level;
- ❖ Disseminate communiqué of conference to Heads of States and Governments of all 53 member states of the African Union;
- ❖ Publicize communiqué of the conference at both national and grassroots level in individual countries by actively engaging the media;
- ❖ Adopt Pan-African media strategy to promoting the issues of continental integration on the continent;
- ❖ Establish monitoring mechanisms to see *what* decisions have been taken by the various governments relative to the Union Government proposal and *how* those decisions are implemented, and follow it up with another conference coinciding with the January 2008 Summit that will report and validate CSO findings in that regard;
- ❖ Create peoples' forum to review implementation of previous recommendations of CSO previously forwarded to the AU leaders before institutions on continental integration;
- ❖ Task an independent institution to stimulate the debate on continental integration by organizing meetings and to link up with civil society so as to deepen understanding of the issues of pan-Africanism among the peoples across the continent; and finally,
- ❖ Set up a group to harmonize approach and structure of consultations to ensure that CSOs' proposals and recommendations to the African leaders are uniform.
- ❖ Propose the setting up of an *integration fund* with contributions from Africans and companies operating in Africa, to curtail AU's overdependence on foreign assistance to support continental integration efforts;
- ❖ Propose the setting up of *Ministry for African Integration* at the national level to move the question of African integration away from the sole purview of foreign ministries on the continent;

- ❖ Analyze further opportunities for influencing policy and policy-making at the AU beyond the current conference;
- ❖ Monitor, in our national campaigns, what our national leaders say and do on different continental platforms in a way that facilitates our engagement with these leaders on issues of the AU;
- ❖ The communiqué must be popularized. Each individual institution (CSO) must pick issues from the communiqué to work with so as to effectively popularize the debate on integration;
- ❖ Give real content to *forms* proposed and adopted in roadmap towards African integration so as to enhance the content of integration;
- ❖ Find ways to engage in monitoring and advocacy processes that are able to direct issues and events towards concretization of specific integration efforts at both national and regional levels;
- ❖ Proactively take up civic responsibility and find the resources to continue the debate;
- ❖ Find means to mainstream AU-related matters into each institution's work plans.

8.0 Appreciation

Closing the conference, Dr. E. Akwetey, O. Tungwarara and Dr. Tanko expressed their collective appreciation to the staff of IDEG for organizing the conference, and to all participants for their enthusiastic involvement in the debates.

Report was prepared by
Collins R. Afedo & Abdulai Abdul-Gafaru

9.0 APPENDIX

(i) Address by Ghana's Minister for Foreign Affairs

Address by the “Honorable Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Ghana at the Continental Civil Society Conference on the African Union Grand Debate at GIMPA, Accra, Ghana on the 22nd and 23rd June, 2007.

Chairperson, Representatives of the West African Civil Society, Nananom, Minister Victor Gbeho, Prof. S. K. B. Asante, Prof. Atukwei Okai and other good friends, Participants, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the President of the Republic, His Excellency John Agyekum Kuffour, the government and people of Ghana, let me welcome you all to this continental Civil Society Conference on the AU Grand Debate. The holding of this Conference, the first to be organized ahead of an AU Summit, is a demonstration of the significance that Ghana attaches to the participation of non-state actors and grassroots representatives in the work of the AU and their reflections on its programmes and policies. Such a conference creates an avenue for appropriate policy advice and suggestions that should assist the process of peace, security and development on our might Continent.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The theme of this conference, “Accelerating Africa’s Integration and Development in the 21st Century; Prospects and Challenges of Union Government” reflects on the agenda of this year’s AU Summit, the Summit that will deal with the future direction of the continent as it grapples with the notion of the Union Government. Various consultations have been held at national, regional and continental levels, including the all-inclusive consultation that took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in late May. That consultation benefited significantly from the active participation of CSOs from across the continent, underlying the wisdom of the African Union in seeking the active involvement of Non-State Actors in its affairs. It is our hope that the independent roundtable on the Union Government that will feature as part of the Programme will provide an essential input for the deliberation of the Assembly that will take place very soon.

Participants, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is self-evident that whatever decision that is taken by our Heads of State on the issue of continental integration through the Union Government will need to be implemented not just by governments, but by everyone on this continent, by every African citizen. Integration is, and must remain, a domain of public concern, entailing public participation. It must be a people-driven project that will be conceived and implemented by all and which will have consequences for every citizen on the continent. Accra (and our country Ghana) is deeply honoured to be the venue for such a crucial decision. As the first colonial county in sub-Saharan Africa to be independent, which is this year celebrating with modesty, but, hopefully, with understandable pride, the golden jubilee anniversary of her independence, the event that lit the torch for the liberation of our continent from imperialism and racist rule, we were present at the creation of an

independent African Commonwealth and given the important role our first president, Kwame Nkrumah, played in the development of this process, we would strive to be present at its fulfillment whenever the African people decide on the course that it must take. We have a responsibility, however to stress that integration is a process and not a stand-alone decision and all African people have a role and responsibility to bring it to fruition.

Accordingly, the engagement of governments and all segments of our population in this enterprise is a continuous process. Governments and the African Civil Society will have to define their competence and responsibilities in this regard. The Grand Debate in Accra, therefore, will serve as the beginning of a process in which we must all stand shoulder to shoulder to shape the destiny of the African continent and its peoples.

This is a great and inspiring responsibility, which places a high premium on the compact between African Governments and their citizens. The efforts of all African people must interweave and interconnect in the pursuit of our common goal. Moreover, we need to coordinate our objectives, means and purposes.

We must also recognize that our joint responsibility is one that will require sacrifice, pain, endurance, fortitude and handwork, but which, ultimately, will bring great joy at its destination. Further, we need to look at the prospects, but also at the many challenges that a Union Government presents to us, challenges such as globalization, the eradication of poverty, language, diverse backgrounds etc. one thing, however, is clear—the rapid political and economic integration of our continent provides the most effective framework for harnessing the vast human and material resources of Africa for the benefit of her peoples, resources which have all too often been exploited for the benefit of others, not her own. Africa cannot afford to be left out of the process of forging viable regional and continental associations whilst the peoples and nations of other continents of the world, North America, South America, Europe and Asia, are coming together to advance and defend their common interests and purposes.

Our generation must be the generation that refuses to accept that Africa and her peoples must be perpetual victims of the human struggle, the so called scar on the conscience of humanity, that insists that an independent and self-reliant Africa can be built on the principles of democratic accountability, respect for human rights and the rule of law, that believes that a system of good governance will promote growth and prosperity of our continent, so that at long last the long-suffering African Peoples can be released from mass poverty and join the global movement for prosperity and dignity amongst the peoples of the world.

The modernization and industrialization of the economies of Africa are, thus, the great tasks which our generation has to realize.

Once again, welcome to Accra, which we believe to be heartland of modern Africa. Accra is rich in all senses and we invite you to partake of the joys and savour the delights of our city, your home away from home. We invite you to nurture and consolidate our African family compact through your stay here in every productive manner that can be envisaged.

I wish you all successful deliberations at this conference. May today's Debate and hopefully, the final outcome at the end of the Ghana AU Summit bring brighter days to Africa.

AKWAABA, our famous word of welcome!

(ii) **Outline of Paper Delivered by Prof S.K.B. Asante on Regional Integration**



Ghana - AU Civil Society Coalition

**From Regionalism to Union Government:
Reflections on Postcolonial Africa's Integration Experiences
and Progress So Far**

**Outline of Paper Delivered at the
Continental Civil Society Conference
On The Proposed Union Government**

By: Professor SKB Asante

On June 22, 2007

Venue: GIMPA, Greenhill Achimota, Accra

**PART ONE: AN OVERVIEW OF POSTCOLONIAL INTEGRATION
EXPERIENCES**

I. INTRODUCTION: REGIONALISM AND DEVELOPMENT

- The wave of Regionalism
- Before and after 1945
- Regionalism and development

II. THE CASE FOR REGIONALISM IN AFRICA

Problem of balkanization resulting in fragmentation and small domestic markets

Problem of poverty

Weak production structures

Limited infrastructure

Reflections of regionalism in African development strategies

Establishment of Regional Economic Communities (RECs)

III. ASSESSMENT OF AFRICAN REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES (RECs): BETWEEN STANDSTILL AND PROGRESS?

Principal objectives of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs)

- **Macroeconomic policy convergence** – harmonizing economic and financial policies of member countries with a view to creating an economic and monetary union as a key requirement for accelerating regional integration in Africa
- **Infrastructure development** – to increase the existing transport and communication links and to create new ones as a means of strengthening the physical integration of the RECs and promoting the movement of persons, goods and services within the communities
- **Production sector** --- to promote autonomous industrialization within the communities through the development of large intermediate and capital goods industries etc and promote multinational enterprises – all aimed at establishing an industrial base to support the development of agriculture and other key sectors
- **Intra-community trade---** to stimulate intra-community trade by gradually reducing and then abolishing customs duties and non-tariff barriers to build up large markets

- **WHAT HAS BEEN THE EXPERIENCE OF THE RECS IN THE FOLLOWING SECTORS?**
- Market integration
- Production structures
- Infrastructural development
- Macroeconomic policy convergence

IV. INTERLOCKING PROBLEMS OF AFRICAN REGIONALISM

- Market integration approach
- Management of regionalism – the issue of political commitment
- Inadequate institutional mechanisms at the national level
- Institutional deficiencies of RECs
- Lack of participation of interest groups, private sector, civil society

- The challenges of the Lome and Cotonou Agreements: towards pan-African integration or Eur-African integration?
- Significant achievements so far:

V. TOWARDS AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY (AEC) AND AFRICAN UNION (AU)

(a) *A new wave of Regionalism in the 1990s: Rationale for new regional initiatives

- Increasing globalization
- Acceleration of pace of regionalism
- The emerging world of trading blocs in South-East Asia, Europe and the Americas
- Rapid changes in technology
- Liberalization of world trade

(b) Response to Africa's increasing marginalization

- Adoption, in 1991, of the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community (AEC)
- Transformation of existing RECs into more dynamic groupings:
 - *PTA (1981) into COMESA (1994)
 - *SADCC (1980) into SADC (1992)
 - * Adoption of a Revised ECOWAS Treaty
 - * Relaunch of the old East African Community (1996)

(c) Experience of the AEC integration process

- *Problems besetting implementation of AEC Treaty
- The single OAU /AEC Secretariat
- The RECs and AEC
- Towards African Union

VI WHAT IS THE STATUS OF AFRICA'S INTEGRATION PROCESS TODAY?

- African Union: So far so good?
- The RECs and post-Cold War Africa
- Popular participation in integration process: parliaments (regional and national), private sector, trade unions, civil society and the media
- EAC towards federal government by 2010?
- Transformation of ECOWAS Executive Secretariat into Commission with supranational powers
- Emergence of an Africa speaking in the same language in terms of APRM and NEPAD institutions, democracy and good political governance, economic governance, corporate governance
- The RECs and NEPAD implementation process
- Implementation of the APRM

NOTE: *It is this new reinvigorated status of the RECs which, in my view, should constitute the building blocs for a strengthened Union African Government.*

PART TWO

THE GRAND DEBATE: FROM REGIONALISM TO UNION GOVERNMENT/UNITED STATES OF AFRICA

WHICH WAY AFRICA? TOWARDS A STRONG UNION GOVERNMENT BASED ON THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNIONS OF THE RECS OR A WEAK AFRICAN UNION GOVERNMENT INCAPABLE OF ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT?

- Since independence the all-engaging issue of African unity both political and economic has become a powerful force. It is generally believed that the only way to achieve the economic reconstruction and development essential to fulfill the aspirations, needs and demands of the peoples of Africa is through *a sustained shift to continental planning, so as to unite increasingly the resources, markets and capital of Africa in a single substantial economic and political unit.*
- How can this be achieved?

Road map for a strong Union Government by 2015 through regionalism

- As building blocs of the projected African Union Government, RECs be effectively reinvigorated and strengthened to enable each one of them, in the five sub-regions, to attain the *level of a full fledged common market and subsequently a viable political, economic and monetary union*.
- RECs to adopt common integration approach and strategies towards the goal of regional economic, political and monetary union
- Each REC to work towards achievement of common fiscal policies, a common monetary and financial system, common investment code, common agricultural policy, common industrial policy, common infrastructural *policy*, common transport and energy policies etc.
- Collaboration of the sub-regional common markets or economic and monetary union would then be directed at achieving an African Common Market and an African Economic Community with
- African Common Agricultural Policy, African Common Industrial Policy, African Common Infrastructural Policy etc as basis for a strong Union Government capable of meeting the development challenges of Africa
- Participation of African people to provide democratic framework of integration

Implementation strategies :

- ECOWAS, SADC, COMESA etc to coordinate their objectives and activities at the horizontal level
- Establishment of coordinating and cooperating committees at the regional level to provide, inter alia, for regular exchange of information, prior consultations, joint financing of projects, and merging of certain bodies performing similar duties or institutions whose functions overlap
- Establishment of Union Government Implementation Committee
- Monitoring and evaluation mechanism
- ***NOTE: This approach is based on the fact that continental economic and political union in an African setting can only be achieved within the framework of sub-regional decision-making institutions which can***

cement the essential minimum agreements into a binding continent-wide pact.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the process of African regionalism, whether or not integration succeeds in achieving the objective of a Union Government as a basis for a United States of Africa will be decided by the African countries themselves. Outsiders can do no more than to assist, to provide some lubricant for the mechanism for African continental cooperation and integration; the motive force must come from within Africa. That motive force will be lacking in power unless there is a widespread conviction among the peoples of Africa that cooperation and integration among the member states of the regional economic communities leading to a Union Government of Africa is an important component in the drive to a better future

Indeed, against the background of the emerging world economy, coupled with the current post-Cold War or post-apartheid new wave of pan-Africanism, the wave of African renaissance, as reflected in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and its groundbreaking initiative, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), it is up to us, in Africa, to determine whether this first decade of the new millennium will set the seal on our economic, social, and political decline or, instead, represent the dawn of our human renaissance.

We have all the keys in our hands. The African Union Government, as our continental approach to collective self-reliance, self-improvement, to mutual understanding and cooperation, and to joint planning of the future, is an essential key. We must learn how to use this key without delay and without hesitation. Through a Union Government of Africa, the people of Africa should prove to an increasingly skeptical and cynical world:

that we have the grit, the will and determination to turn Africa from being a so-called dark continent into a beacon of light; from an economically backward and vulnerable continent into a self-reliant, self-sustaining and prosperous one; and from being the citadel of political instability, insecurity and social conflict and unrest into one of stability, security, democracy, good political, economic and corporate governance and continental Union Government as a basis for a United States of Africa.

This constitutes a historic challenge that all of us face. It is a sacred duty we owe to Mother Africa.

(iii) Transcript of Prof. Kumado's presentation

**(TRANSCRIPT of: 3RD Session of the Continental Civil Society
Conference on the African Union Government)**

***THE SOVEREIGNTY QUESTION AND AFRICAN UNION
GOVERNMENT: REFLECTIONS ON THE
PAST, PRESENT AND THE FUTURE***

**Presentation by:
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Chair, Distinguished Participants, ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to begin traditionally by thanking the organisers for the invitation to participate in the Conference.

I must confess that I did not really know what I was asked to come and say. And when I came and saw the words proposed in your banner I was even more confused, because from my intimate relationship with the process, the Union Government is no longer a proposal. The Union Government as lawyers understand it is what is called “legal fiction”. In fictional terms, the Union Government exists, in practical terms on the ground we cannot see its structures, institutions, etc, and therefore people are talking about a grand debate. Actually the study that the chairman mentioned, if you look closely at that study, the Accra Summit is supposed to discuss the next step for the Union Government. So when I came and saw the word proposal in the title of your conference I was a bit confused. Therefore, if my presentation seems confused, then the organizers have contributed in a large measure to the situation.

I want to recast the topic I was given, I mean ‘**the sovereignty question, and the African Union Government: reflections on the past, present and the future**’. I want to turn it a bit round and start with the Africa Union thing and end with sovereignty and some reflections.

The search for a platform for collective action for Africa began almost at independence of African countries. So it is not a new idea. In recent times there have been some discussions in Ghana by the media and some other institutions in the subject and what surprises me in those discussions is that people go over the arguments which have been raised and rehearsed time

and again at the very beginning of the search. Those arguments led to what people know as the Monrovia and the Casablanca groups. Out of the Monrovia group, there was another splinter group known as the Brazzaville group. It was out of the effort to reconcile the difference between these groups that the OAU was born. Then you have the Ghana-Guinea- Mali Union.

You can take the Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union, which was established by treaty as part of the modern strategy towards the Union Government being on the ground and you can look at this union as a kind of early precursor of the regional economic communities in Africa.

Now you can also factor in other developments, like the fall of the Berlin wall. I put this in because the balkanization of Africa took place in Berlin and the fall of the Berlin wall had some important implications for the resurgence in interest in Africa for a common platform for collective action. The African countries began to discuss their political structures and the process of democratization and market liberalization took place almost immediately but the agenda for the OAU had not been completed so the process could not be moved forward. An important gap remained which was South Africa and the last puzzle in the jigsaw was the independence of South Africa in 1994 and the elimination of apartheid, because that meant the end, effectively, of the decolonization process. At that point, it seemed clear to our leaders that the OAU was no longer the appropriate platform for moving the process of the United States of Africa forward. The OAU had a major weakness and that was that it did not have a central authority. Nobody could make a decision in the OAU. Indeed at the beginning of the life of the OAU it did not appear to be the case but the first Secretary-General it was alleged, misused those powers on a particular matter and at the next meeting of the Assembly it was decided that the General Secretariat will just be a secretariat; it will be there when the Assembly meets and goes, there will be

nobody to commit Africa to anything so that those kinds of mistakes would not be made.

If you look back, it always took a long time for the African Union to respond to crises in Africa. There was no one even to take provisional measures, not even the chairman or chairperson for the time being. At this point in time in 1994, we can also look at the main problems-globalisation and market liberalization seemed to be knocking Africa like some waves at sea; the debt problem and when you look at the Sirte Declaration, you will see that the third problem was put there. One of the objectives to be set for African Union was that it must make sure that those to whom Africa owed money must cancel the debt. This was one of the objectives set out. Quite clearly, Africans were looking for a way to strengthen their collective action.

Now they have been reviewing the charter over a six-year period. As I mentioned at another place recently, over that six-year period, the review process, after six sessions, did not move beyond defining the mandate of the review committee. Each time they met for two or three days in Addis Ababa, they would discuss what the mandate was, time would be up and the meeting would end.

The main problem was that the countries constituting the review committee were not sending the same persons to the sessions, so for each session fresh delegates arrived and each delegation tried to understand what their mandate was.

I would say the international community helped Africa with the sanctions against Libya. During the sanction period, the only countries in the world that kept faith with Libya seemed to be the African countries. So Gadafi was looking for a way of saying thank you to the African countries. That may be the reason why he organised the extraordinary meeting in Sirte. After the Declaration, the Secretary-General wrote to all the member countries to say

that the work that the Declaration asked to be done was not anticipated when the budget was being prepared, therefore, there was no money in the budget for that work. Promptly Gadafi put one million dollars into the Voluntary Fund. No other country is known to have put in any money in that Voluntary Fund. Gadafi also made it possible financially for Togo to host that summit which adopted the Constitutive Act by contributing financially to the hosting cost.

If you remember those of you who are Ghanaians, Gadafi made a grand entry into Togo by land where in every country he left something behind but did not take anything from them. He even had enough fuel for that grand travel. So in a way, for me, that push, which the process got would not have been possible, if the sanctions had not taken place. Sometimes, out of adversity comes something good. What Kwame Nkrumah and Nyerere and the rest did with Haile Selasie in the beginning, Gadafi would, as it were, push far harder some thirty years later.

Around this time also, we had the rise of regional economic groupings, ECOWAS, SADC, COMESA, etc, and the UN's Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), all looking for ways of moving that process forward. But all these processes made slow progress. This is why Gadafi thought the process should be expedited and the rest was the Constitutive Act and the Pan African Parliament Protocol. When I said I was surprised the Constitutive Act was signed by everybody and ratified first, please you must understand that in Sirte when the Libyans unfolded their real plans, some of the Heads of State said they were not serious. One of the Heads of State said if he signed that document and arrived back home he would be arrested at the airport for treasonous, as his people did not give him the mandate to come and sign anything or their sovereignty away. But anyway, that leader signed the Constitutive Act in Lome, so quite clearly the Act did not contain anything that he considered treason. I think that, in reality, the Act did what

they wanted, so even if it had any impact on sovereignty, this was not important. You will see that the Constitutive Act commits Africa to a gradual approach to a United States of Africa. So I think no Head of State felt threatened. On the contrary, I felt they could not oppose the trend towards that union. As to what kind of union it would be, I am not sure that the Heads of State knew at the time or since then.

This is why sometimes, I would like Ghanaians to go easy on their government and the rest of our leaders in Africa; people are complaining that they are not educating the public and all of that. My close association with education tells me that you educate when you yourself are very clear on what you are going to educate the people on. Since the final end is not clear to our leaders, it is not fair to blame them for not educating us on what is not clear to them. But we can see the outlines of all the strategy they are calling gradualist. The regional economic groups are there to let them grow. We had taken from the Abuja Treaty, and put them in the Constitutive Act so they became organs of the African Union. Now we have started building the Court of Justice and Human Rights, the African Central Bank and things like that. When you have a protocol for the Court of Justice and Human Rights, nobody feels that their sovereignty is at stake. If you have an African Central Bank, nobody feels their sovereignty is at stake. But if you start sharing ministries, then you want fifty-three countries governments to be out of office or even if they form a college and rotate the positions, it will never be the turn of some before they die. So I think the more astute among the leaders thought that the first thing to do is to put Pan African institutions in place and face the political issues at the very end where everything needed will be already in place and those who are likely to oppose will be disarmed because everything is in place. This, I think, explains why the Pan African Parliament came on board very quickly. It is part of that process of establishing the collective platform for action and you can tell throughout

this process that no one mentions sovereignty. But my title includes sovereignty so let me spend a few minutes on that as well.

Sovereignty in its abstract form is now taught only in the classroom and should be taught only in classrooms because it does not correspond with or explain anything that happens outside the classroom anymore. I could easily have added socialism and communism to that list but some of my friends here will become angry and it is not African to come and annoy your host. Because if you read their arguments, they say to realize a Union Government for Africa we must have shared values. People do not realize that already the shared African values are many. They refer to the rule of law, human rights and they present all of these as if in the African setting there was no law and order and everything was in a state of chaos. I think there are some people in rural Ghana who would dispute that and say there was greater stability and security; pick pockets were not very busy and armed robbers were kept at bay when there was Africa and before Africa made contact with other cultures. So we have enough shared values. I think it is the scholars who worry about the shared values, and especially those scholars who have not grown up since they came from Harvard, Oxford, Howard, Sorbone etc and their notes from then are all they use from year to year.

But sovereignty in the sense of an attribute of a state which is indivisible, which produces the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of others, the principle that one sovereign cannot bind its successors, is just a classroom exercise. Every one in this room knows one thing; even in football no African state is sovereign. No African government can set football policy. As far as football policy is concerned, it is a certain Sepp Blatter and if he says it and you do not do it, the consequences follow and we all troop to Zurich, to say 'please we are ready'. Nobody bangs the table and says, 'what do you mean I am a sovereign state, I am a government of a

sovereign country and I want to make decisions and what are you talking about?’

Mr. Chair at the end of the day if you do not get anything intellectual out of my talk, it is deliberate. I think people have misunderstood the issues because they are being treated at ‘too-intellectual-a-level’. So I decided not to do it that way. That kind of sovereignty was put in place in 1648 in what was known as the Treaty of Westphalia, after what was known as the Thirty years War in Europe. But even then, in Europe, that kind of sovereignty started to disappear, when the sovereign was constitutionalised, and increasingly ceased to be the ultimate source of authority. The sovereign voice ceased to be the final word on any subject, because the sovereign had been constitutionalized and I use ‘constitutionalize’ in the sense that limitations have been put in place that the sovereign must respect.

But there have been other general pressures on this classroom sovereignty, for example, the emergence of inter-governmental organisations like the UN. Many of our governments are implementing things they say the UN says we must do. They do not say we are a sovereign nation even though our part in the decision making at the UN is light. The interesting thing is that we in Africa at the end of those meetings are the sovereign states which implement the UN decisions to the letter. The more powerful nations do not, but it is interesting that we are the ones who have not realized that our sovereignty disappeared a long time ago.

The other pressure on the sovereignty is the universalization of human rights and the acceptance of humanitarian intervention as a global norm from the day humanitarian intervention was accepted. We all agreed that human rights are universal. This agreement became an important pressure on the extent to which a country can say ‘I am doing this because I am sovereign’. That universalization also undermined the hallowed principle of non-

interference in the internal affairs of a country and it gave birth to humanitarian intervention.

The decolonization process itself was one of those pressures. In an old English decision, *Blackburn v. Attorney General*, there was an English man, Mr Blackburn who spent his own money defending English sovereignty whenever he thought it was threatened and on this occasion the judges told him he was engaging in a futile exercise, because, as the judges pointed out, just because the UK is sovereign does it mean that all these countries that the UK has given independence to can lose their independence through UK action. Can an Act of Parliament passed in the English Parliament annulling the Independence Act of Ghana of 1957 revert Ghana back to the colonial status? Maybe in the books of the English. I do not think the Governor-General will even get a visa to land in Kotoka International Airport or any other point of entry into Ghana.

Globalization is another source of pressure. With globalization, all kinds of things are happening above, around, and beneath us, over which we have absolutely no control. Sometimes we are given the impression that we have control as for example the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) that the European Union is trying to get us to sign on to. What are they doing? We have got our own economic blocks. You will think that if they really want to respect our sovereignty, the units they will negotiate with will be the regional economic blocks that we have so that the outcome of the negotiations will contribute to the regional integration process that we have. No! They are grouping us across these regional economic groupings that we have. Again the interesting thing is that some of our Ministers attend these meetings and gladly announce that they are chairing a negotiation of the African side. At that point no one talks about sovereignty.

Now within Africa also there have been pressures on this sovereignty. I take just two to save time, the APRM and the NEPAD. As you probably know the NEPAD is the Programme of Action for the African Union. In the APRM mechanism, governments offer themselves for peer review. It was very interesting when the process took place in Ghana. It was the first time that some people realized that something was happening to the sovereignty of Ghana. We have adopted our constitution and we have decided that the President should choose a majority of his ministers from Parliament, and these people came and told us that that provision was against good governance because those ministers become Trojan horses in Parliament and burden Parliament's ability to carry out effectively its oversight process. Who are they to come and tell us this? This constitution was submitted to a referendum and our people accepted it so what is their business? But it was interesting to listen to the debate. People recognized that that process meant that you were no longer the final arbiter even of the things and structures through which you seek to establish for yourself the good things of life called Government.

Now the African Union itself. The Constitutive Act has two contradictory things. The African Union recognized the sovereign equality of each member state but also the interdependence of each member state. If you put the two together, something must give way because if you say you are interdependent with others and at the same time you want to claim that you are the ultimate source of decision-making there is some trouble. So, by committing itself to respecting the sovereign equality of member states and the interdependence of member states, the African Union was admitting that sovereignty in the sense we are putting in the classroom has been fatally undermined. Not only that, the African Union has given itself the right of the Union to intervene in member countries for crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide, not with the permission of the country being invaded but just on the basis of the decision by the Assembly. So where is the

sovereign? Is the sovereign for that purpose the Assembly or the country in which the Assembly decides that there must be an intervention? And if I may say so because you raised something, Mr. Chair, on the question of the location of the sovereign, in the debate, most people in Ghana, for example, forget that, in Ghana, by the opening article of our Constitution, sovereignty resides with the people not the government.

And I think, Mr. Chair, if you allow me, let me enter my reflections from there; the problem about sovereignty in the Union Government issue is that until now the process has been a union between the states and governments rather than union of the African people. If there is a sovereignty issue, the problem is that the real sovereign has not been brought into the picture. The OAU, the regional economic blocks, these are all things brought into being by governments and states and here it is interesting that as far as I know, there is no African country in which the ratification of these legal instruments was subjected to a referendum. As far as I can remember in Ghana, the Constitutive Act was ratified by Parliament; it was not subjected to a referendum. I know my constitutional law friends will start attacking me saying 'did the constitution require something like that.' And my quick answer would be 'yes' because the ultimate repository of power in the country is the people. So you would imagine that fundamental issues like that should be put to the people. But we went the British way because also, we have some relics of British constitutional ideas. So I think that is what is falsely presented as the sovereignty issue, the fact that the steps that have been taken towards this union government are steps taken by states and governments rather than by the people. If that had been the case, I do not think all the debates that have taken place would have taken place. In fact I do not think this conference would have been necessary, if what they want ultimately is the United States of Africa.

There are all kinds of red herrings that get in the way. These include shared values, common currency, language problems and all of that. Yesterday, I was telling a friend that very few people remember two things about the United States – one, that the sovereign in the United States are the States because if you look at the federal constitution the residual power under the federal constitution is in the States and from time to time a maverick governor does something interesting as the California governor did recently. Impatient with President Bush's obstacles to the adoption of the Kyoto Standards, he said California will implement the Standards and set about trying to put the appropriate legislation in place. The second one is about currency. Very few people know that when the United States was born, each state had its own currency and if you visit those thirteen states and go to their museums you will see the currency they were using. For a very long time, the dollar was not in existence and the dollar became what it is today as a result of a Supreme Court decision when a federal agent refused to pay the tax which a state had imposed on the dollar to kill it and the matter ended with the court. The Supreme Court ordered that as a necessary part of the interstate commerce powers of the federation it could have a currency and that currency eventually killed the several state currencies. So we do not all have to be using 'the Afrique' before we have a Union Government.

I think the Dutch, French, English, the Belgians, and the Spaniards are doing very well in the EU. It is just that every one must now learn English because English is dominating every thing else not because it is a requirement of the Union. Interestingly, at a time, the French tried to kill it by attempting to kill all English words in the French language. They were not interested in killing the Spanish and Portuguese words because these did not pose a threat; only the English words did.

So I think the deficit is not in the sovereignty but in the failure of our governments to get the people make the decision on the Union Government

issues. But let me say quickly that the Union Government is just a reflection of a desire for that collective action. Everyday I hear people say that our future as a continent lies in us working together. But there are already in existence various platforms and forums in which we work together; the Africa group in New York works very well at the UN and at the WTO. For example, in the face of all criticisms, the African group selected Zimbabwe to chair the Commission on Sustainable Development. And, in the face of all criticism, the Group selected Libya to chair the Commission on Human Rights. Of course, the result was that, very quickly the Commission on Human Rights has been abolished and the Human Rights Council has been put in its place with a clear plan to make sure that a 'Libyan kind of country' will not be possible in future. But when the Africans put Libya forward, it was a sign of protest by the African group and we in Ghana should recognise that and not talk about sovereignty. It was the protest of the African group that made it possible for our illustrious son, Kofi Annan to become Secretary-General of the UN, because when Boutros Boutros Ghali was being denied a second term they protested that by convention, the other Secretary Generals have served for two terms and our man had served only one term and was being asked to go. So they said 'forget about Boutros Boutros Ghali and bring anybody else'. But 'the anybody else' served two terms; so that uncharacteristically, we served three terms. So the Africa group has been working without anybody talking about sovereignty and that is what I call (despite what I say) progress. These small victories may have influenced the decision that the Assembly made in Lusaka that the Union Government will be put in place by the multi-layered approach. This is what is meant by the gradual approach. We attack it from different directions till everything is fully in place.

Finally I think this conference is not a bad idea and I think the organizers should be congratulated. I would congratulate them even louder if they get the message out today that the search for a Union Government or United

States of Africa is not about sovereignty but about which structures to put in place, when and how to put them in place. To say that is to say we need to discuss the structures to be put in place and not the sovereignty. For us to implement our desire properly we have to think through carefully the way in which we want to move forward and I hope the organisers will put that across. I am sure that there may be questions because I am sure that I did not say what people wanted to hear. Hopefully, by asking pointed questions I might be able to clarify myself or contribute more and what you wanted to hear you may find it. I thank you for your attention.

* * * * *

Chairman: Thank you Oga Professor. I think this has been a very exciting lecture but before I open the floor for debates, questions and discussions, I must on behalf of Col. Gadafi and his people tell you off for exposing them in public. However on behalf of Africa Civil Society, thank you for exposing them for our information and knowledge and I think above all for the great contribution this afternoon which is to introduce theory into our discussion; a theory that leads to a conclusion of urgency which is to say in the constructions of institution and in moving towards design of outcome, circumstances and accidents often play an important part. However the real history of institution and institution building is not the accidents and the circumstances that come along but the capacity of active agents is to use the accidents and circumstances for their design. And I think this is the all important lesson today. You have also placed on the table for us today the question of the real meaning of sovereignty; that sovereignty is contested, that it exists in bits and pieces and that what is interesting about sovereignty is not what is in it which we do not often know but what we make of it and I think your call to all of us as devoted Africans that 'let's not debate sovereignty, let's assert sovereignty to achieve our purposes. We thank you for your contribution and insights.

(iv) Poem by Prof. Atukwei Okai

THE PHARAONIC EAGLE

*An Ode to the Republic of Ghana, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of
her Independence.*

Dedicated to the masses of the United States of Africa.

By Prof. Atukwei Okai

*“Thy kingdom come, O God,
Thy rule, O Christ, begin;
Break with thine iron rod
The tyrannies of sin”*

I

*In the beginning was the
Beginning
One scaled the electrified
Intimidating fence
It is in the gift to man to live
His dream in the present tense.*

II

*My God, I planted my feet
Firmly on a soil that is yours,
My heart is filled with thanks
And praise
And overflowing, and running
On all fours, it pours
Out the nectar of gratitude and awe
Upon the alter of the law that
Allows the dove to float and not fall.*

*In this jubilee, let us jubilate
And meditate
Pioneers to break free from shackles.*

*When, in silence, the leap year's
Moon, is sitting in state
And God proceeds to scribble
Upon the providential slate,
I keen my ears to catch
What the elements dictate.*

III

*The sermon still is very much upon
The mount,
The commandments still do not
Number more than ten.
The Almighty's hand is scribbling
Upon the face of the waters
I am struggling to read and to
Understand
That he who manufactures the air
Controls the soul's silent borders
And it is He who showers water
And sunlight across the hand.*

*I weave you soothsayer spider
Websites meant
For sleepwalkers in the dreamzones
Of despair.*

*To our ancient glories you are
The rightful destiny
Designated heir.
Step forth and drink in your fill
Of your warrior
Manufactured victorious air.*

IV

*I subpoena onto the parapets
Of our African space
The proud and patient presence
Of the founding fathers,
All the warriors, unlisted and
Unsung.
May the xylophones of Sundiata
Climb the stone
Temples of Monomotapa.
May the fontomfroms of
Mansa Kankam Musa
Ascend the Kilimanjaro of our hearts.*

V

*Tin Kon Kon Kon, tin kon kon!
Tin kon kon kon, tin kon kon!*

*Anthony William Amoo
Of our ancient, uprooted, but
Equalizing diaspora,*

*Casely Hayford,
WHERE ARE YOU?
Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia,
WHERE ARE YOU?
Obetsebi Lamptey and*

*Joseph Boakye Danquah,
ARE YOU THERE?*

*William Edward Burghardt Dubois
Of our beleaguered and vigilant
Diaspora,
Prophetic Kwegyir Aggrey of the cradle
Of Achimota,
WHERE ARE YOU?
Boycotthene Nii Kwabena Bonne II,
Osu Alata Mantse,
Ako Adjei and Edward Akufo Addo,
ARE YOU THERE?*

*Marcus Garvey
Of our awakened and desperate
Diaspora,
Toussaint L'Ouverture of heroic Haiti,
Nation moulder
Chaka the Zulu of Azania,
WHERE ARE YOU?*

*Ga Mantse Tackie Kome II
Of heroic GaDangme
And William Ofori Atta,
ARE YOU THERE?
George "Paa" Grant, grant me
An extension of the tenure of
Your blessings!*

VI

*My people, it was from the doldrums
I lifted you up;
It was into the skies I whipped
Your seeds,
My dreams for you never appeared
In disguise.
You were meant to rise as far
As the eagle flies.*

VII

*Take to the skies,
Return to your ancestral skies.
Recolonise the realm where
Aggrey's pharaonic eagle
Majestically flies,
Where the sea, eternally in season,
Never dries,
Where the spirit of the warrior, unsung,
Desperately cries
Out to you to come away from the crumb
That lowly lies
Around the octopus feet of him who*

*Your humanity denies.
Let them know that the land only
Belies
The quality of gold hidden in your
Psyche of the wise*

VIII

*The motherland still dreams of sons
And daughters,
Faithful and steadfast, upright and
Bold.*

*The fatherland still yearns for sons
And daughters
To regain and nurture the glory
Of old.*

IX

*I speak to you from the stoolroom
Of the African soul.*

*Take off your hats and sandals
Where you are standing is sacred
Ground.*

X

*The umbilical chord of the first man
On the planet earth
Is grounded in the Kenyan-Tanzanian
Bosom of the African soil.*

*The centre of the world, like the
Circumcised navel of the universe,
Planted like a royal seedling of yam
Before time was born,
Still patiently squats in the blood vessel
Of the heartbeat of Accra.*

*Your soul carries a unique blessing.
Your shoulders bear a historic burden.*

XI

*I speak to you from the stoolroom
Of the African soul*

*I do not come from Ghana
I was only born there.
I do not come from Nigeria,
Neither do I come from Zimbabwe
My soul was only conceived there!
I do not come from South Africa,
I do not come from Egypt
My spirit was only programmed there!*

*I do not come from Madagascar,
Neither do I come from Libya
My hair was only textured there.
I do not come from Rwanda
Or the expansive Sahara,
My structure was only
Geometricized there.
I do not come from the Congo,
I do not come from Ethiopia
My colour was only mixed there.
With all these abundant riches and
Resources of
Each of all these separate states
Of Africa,
If I come from any particular one
Of these countries,
Then I will be very poor indeed.*

But I refuse to be poor.

*No, I am aware enough to wish
To claim my full heritage.
I am fabulously rich like a citizen
Of china and India.
I am supremely powerful
And enviably wealthy just like
A citizen
Of the United States of America.*

*I hail from the over fifty states
On the continent.
I come from Africa.
AFRICA IS MY COUNTRY.*

*I was physically born in one
Single spot.
When I landed and woke up,
The people around me
Told me that the area was identified
As Ghana.*

*But should it mean that I
Should be imprisoned there,
Barricaded away from
All my inheritance and heritage
Spread across the continent?
No, Africa is like a house
With many rooms.
Chinua Acheba says:
The cock belongs to one house
But when it crows,
It is heard in the whole village.*

AFRICA IS MY COUNTRY.

XII

*Retreat into the stoolroom,
Reread the will and
Scrutinize the blueprint.
Go retrieve the ancestral compass
It must be somewhere.*

*I speak from the stoolroom
Of the African soul.*

*Seek ye now the Kingdom
Of a common Africa home*

AND

ALL SHALL BE WELL WITH YOU.

*Tell them I told you so, again.
Should they ask to know my name?
Tell them:*

Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah.

NOTES TO THE POEM:

Aggrey's Eagle: *In an effort to conscientize his Students at the Achimota school, in particular, and Africans all over the world in general and inspire them into a state of self-confidence for self-upliftment as Africans, Dr. Kwegyir Aggrey often narrated the story of a naturalist admonished the eagle that it was not a Chicken but an eagle and therefore should fly away into the sky which was its proper realm. After several Trials and false starts, the eagle finally succeeded in Abandoning the ground for the sky. In conclusion, Aggrey Stated: "My people of Africa, we were created in the chickens And we still think we are, but we are eagles. Stretch forth Your wings and fly! Don't be content with the food of Chickens".*