

Charter of the Organization of African Unity (1963/1963)

Adopted in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 25 May 1963 and entered into force on 13 September 1963. Replaced in 2001 by the Constitutive Act of the African Union (see below), when the OAU was succeeded by the AU. The full text is available at www.au.int

Excerpts

We, the Heads of African States and Governments assembled in the city of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia,

Convinced that it is the inalienable right of all people to control their own destiny;

Conscious of the fact that freedom, equality, justice and dignity are essential objectives for the achievement of the legitimate aspirations of the African peoples;

Conscious of our responsibility to harness the natural and human resources of our continent for the total advancement of our peoples in all spheres of human endeavour;

Inspired by a common determination to promote understanding among our peoples and co-operation among our states in response to the aspirations of our peoples for brotherhood and solidarity, in a larger unity transcending ethnic and national differences;

Convinced that, in order to translate this determination into a dynamic force in the cause of human progress, conditions for peace and security must be established and maintained;

Determined to safeguard and consolidate the hard-won independence as well as the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our states, and to fight against neo-colonialism in all its forms;

Dedicated to the general progress of Africa;

Persuaded that the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to the principles of which we reaffirm our adherence, provide a solid foundation for peaceful and positive co-operation among states;

Desirous that all African states should henceforth unite so that the welfare and well-being of their peoples can be assured;

Resolved to reinforce the links between our states by establishing and strengthening common institutions;

HAVE AGREED to the present Charter.

Establishment

Article 1

1. The High Contracting Parties do by the present Charter establish an Organization to be known as the Organization of African Unity.

2. The Organization shall include the continental African states, Madagascar and other islands surrounding Africa.

Purposes

Article 2

1. The Organization shall have the following purposes:
 - (a) To promote the unity and solidarity of the African states;
 - (b) To co-ordinate and intensify their co-operation and efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa;
 - (c) To defend their sovereignty, their territorial integrity and independence;
 - (d) To eradicate all forms of colonialism from the continent of Africa; and
 - (e) To promote international co-operation, having due regard to the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
2. To these ends, the member states shall co-ordinate and harmonise their general policies, especially in the following fields:
 - (a) Political and diplomatic co-operation;
 - (b) Economic co-operation, including transport and communications;
 - (c) Educational and cultural co-operation;
 - (d) Health, sanitation and nutritional co-operation;
 - (e) Scientific and technical co-operation; and
 - (f) Co-operation for defence and security.

Principles

Article 3

The member states, in pursuit of the purposes stated in article 2, solemnly affirm and declare their adherence to the following principles:

1. The sovereign equality of all member states;
 2. Non-interference in the internal affairs of states;
 3. Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each state and for its inalienable right to independent existence;
 4. Peaceful settlement of disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation or arbitration;
 5. Unreserved condemnation, in all its forms, of political assassination as well as of subversive activities on the part of neighbouring states or any other states;
 6. Absolute dedication to the total emancipation of the African territories which are still dependent;
 7. Affirmation of a policy of non-alignment with regard to all blocs.
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