

CONTRIBUTION BY PRESIDENT JOSÉ EDUARDO DOS SANTOS
TO THE 9TH SUMMIT MEETING OF THE AFRICAN UNION

Accra, 1-3 June 2007

There is growing criticism of the organisation of the African Union and the running of its institutions, which are regarded as ineffective and ill-adjusted to current realities.

Because of this negative assessment, there are some who recommend profound changes in the political and legal thinking that has governed the shape and content of the structures of the continental organisation.

Only five years have passed since the establishment of the African Union and this is too short a time to make a serious evaluation leading to sensible final conclusions. We do not feel the time has come to make radical changes in the initial concept.

We acknowledge that there are shortcomings and that the goals set have not been attained with the requisite speed.

However, rather than radical changes leading to the revision of the Convention that established the Union, we propose the following organisational and methodological measures that could heighten the organisation's effectiveness and improve its structures and the way they are run.

1. Maintaining the character of the African Union as an association of sovereign states that seek to achieve common objectives, as set out when it was constituted.
2. Defining the role of each organisational level of the Union more clearly:
 - a) First level – Member states that exercise full sovereignty over their territories and whose international frontiers were inherited from the colonial powers:
 - b) Second level – The African sub-region, which is a grouping of a number of sovereign states that concert and harmonise their policies and engage in multiform cooperation, with a view to achieving sub-regional objectives as well as the general objectives of the African Union;
 - c) Third level – The African Union, which concerts and harmonises policies and practices cooperation and solidarity, supporting the sub-regions and states.
3. Each state has, of necessity, a government programme approved by its parliament.
4. Each sub-region should also have a programme (preferably a medium- or long-term one).
5. The African Union should have a minimum programme for a period of time to be established, and harmonise it with the two other programmes mentioned above:

- a) Democracy, peace and security for states; in this respect, establishing partnerships with the United Nations and the European Union for carrying out peace missions in the continent; resolving conflicts through dialogue and negotiations. The African Union should promote democracy and civic education for democracy;
 - b) Reaching concerted positions on public finance, monetary issues, economic planning and the environment;
 - c) Reaching concerted and harmonised policies on health, education, technical and vocational training, and also business management.
 - d) Water and food production.
6. Ministers could hold meetings to concert their positions every two or three years, in an alternating manner, so that there are never more than two meetings a year.
7. The African Union Commission could, in this way, have a light and non-bureaucratic structure whose main purpose is to centralise data and information, analyse phenomena, make studies, provide technical assistance to the sub-regions and muster external support. The chairperson of the commission should coordinate his or her action with that of the presidents of the sub-regions.
8. Lightening the structures of the Commission would free Union budget sums for supporting the poorest states.
9. It is proposed that there be an African Union Solidarity Fund for supporting the poorest states. The contributors to the Fund would be the countries that export mineral resources (including oil and gas), provided that their net financial reserves amount to more than six months of imports needed by the country concerned. The participation of foreign companies operating in Africa should also be negotiated, with a percentage of their net annual profits to be established, provided they are more than \$200 million. Five percent, for example. Voluntary contributions should be accepted.
10. Internationally, the Union should take part in all world negotiations and processes, particularly:
- a) Agreeing on a strategy for fighting terrorism;
 - b) Reforming the United Nations;
 - c) Meetings of the G8;
 - d) Issues related to world security and the environment, etc.

To this end, the chairpersons of the African Union and the Commission should be given a clear mandate.

If the ideas set out here are approved, the next step would be to give the chairperson of the Commission the task of presenting, within six months, draft projects for the restructuring of the

Commission, a revised programme of action and budget of the Union and regulations for coordination between the Commission and leading bodies in the sub-regions.

Angola is willing to support the chairperson in this work.