

## **Lesson 5: Formation of OAU**

### **1. Video Lesson**

### **2. Competencies**

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

Discuss the origin of OAU and AU

### **3. Brainstorming Question**

What was the aims of OAU?

## **Lesson Presentation**

### **A. Formation of OAU**

One of the issues in the Pan-Africanism Movement was materializing the unity of Africans particularly African states. The slogan for this leading idea was to establish the United States of Africa. Some nationalist African leaders such as Julius Nyerere & Kwame Nkrumah considered the creation of nation states as the first step towards creating a larger United States of Africa. But in many African countries, nationalist movements and their leaders have begun to give priority to their national cause and achieving independence of their respective countries. These African nationalists insisted that pan-Africanism should be materialized better after the African countries first achieve independence and underlined that Pan-Africanism should not be allowed to weaken the position and sovereignty of the emerging individual African nation states.

Bringing political integration in Africa was a very difficult task and most of the African countries were divided. The ties between the independent African states and their colonial masters were very strong even after independence. For instance, most of the African countries that were colonized by France were very much dependent on their colonial master, France. As we have seen already, many of these former French colonies had formed their own block before the establishment of OAU, known as the Monrovia Group. Ideology was the other dividing factor. After the cold war, some African states became pro-West while others were in favor of the Eastern block and became Socialist oriented. Among the leaders of the first African states to achieve independence, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana was in favor of the Eastern bloc that was led by the Soviet Union while the president of Ivory Coast, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, was in favor of the West i.e. the capitalist block. Because of their ideological differences, the African states were facing difficulties to reach consensus on some important issues and take measures against states involved in internal conflicts. The Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie, had played a significant role in bridging the gap between the Casablanca and Monrovia blocs and the establishment of the OAU.

The OAU was founded in May 1963 in Addis Ababa, by 32 African states with the main aim of bringing the African nations together and resolving the issues within the continent. Its first ever conference was held on May 1, 1963 in Addis Ababa. The OAU had the following primary aims:

- To coordinate and intensify the co-operation of African states in order to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa;
- To defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of African states.
- To eradicate of all forms of colonialism and white minority rule

### **Transformation from AAU to AU**

On 9 September 1999, the Heads of States and Governments of Africa met in Libya at an OAU Summit and issued the Sirte Declaration which called for the establishment of a new continental Organization known as the African Union that replaces the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The main reason behind the issuance of the Sirte Declaration was a desire to hasten the process of integration of the African states and help Africa contribute its part in the global economy besides confronting with the adverse effects of globalization in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres.

### **Establishment of the African Union**

The new African continental union, the African Union (AU) that officially replaced the Organization of African Union (OAU) was officially inaugurated in July 2002 in the South African city of Durban. The new continental organization had a strong ambition of establishing a united, wealthy and peaceful Africa, directed by the Africans themselves and capable of discharging its responsibility in global developments. In order to materialize its objectives, the African Union has established six agencies like that of the United Nations Organization (UNO) to enforce its decisions. These AU organs included:

- The Assembly of Heads of States and Governments
- The Executive Council
- The Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC)
- Specialized Technical Committees (STCs)
- The Peace and Security Council and;
- The African Union Commission