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OAU plans continental 'early warning system'

ADDIS ABABA: The head of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) has called on African experts meeting in the Ethiopian capital to devise an early warning system on the continent's flashpoints.

Mr Salim Ahmed Salim, OAU secretary-general, said such a system would greatly help the cash-strapped organisation to detect and prevent conflicts across the world's poorest continent.

"If the full potential of the conflict prevention and management capacity of the OAU is to be fully realised, it will no doubt need the backing of a continent-wide early warning network," Mr Salim said.

The network would enable the OAU to prevent or prepare itself to deal adequately with arising conflicts, he said.

It was not clear how the system would be funded. A previous plan to set up an OAU peacekeeping force failed owing to the organisation's near-bankruptcy, many members not paying their dues. — Reuters
not identifying a crisis but acting on it
OAU meeting seeks to solve Africa’s problems with dialogue

BY TOKAYE TAIDESE

Addis Ababa — The Organisation of Africa Unity (OAU) foreign ministers meet in Addis Ababa today to consider the problems of the poorest continent and to seek to settle them with words rather than brute force.

Sudan’s alleged support for terrorism, and conflict in Burundi, Somalia, Liberia and Senegal are the most troublesome issues to be discussed at the three-day conference.

More than 100,000 people have been killed in the past two years in Burundi, but diplomats and officials said the OAU secretary-general, Salim Ahmed Salim, will oppose military intervention at this stage and call for more talks to cool ethnic passions.

The United Nations Security Council is expected to discuss soon a proposal by the UN secretary-general, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, to set up a rapid intervention force with a minimum strength of 8,000 troops.

The council failed to support an earlier proposal for the force to be based in neighbouring Zaire, ready to intervene in Burundi. So Boutros-Ghali said each contingent should be based at home until it is called in.

The OAU, however, holds that recent international pressure has helped thwart Burundi’s descent into total tribal warfare.

Burundi has asked for the OAU team of 65 military observers that is stationed in there to be expanded.

In a draft report, Salim suggested a conference to promote a regional initiative on Burundi and the Great Lakes region, which also includes Rwanda, Tanzania and Zaire. The region has been destabilised by the 2 million Rwandan Hutu refugees that have been there since 1994.

Salim is expected to call on the international community to accelerate moves to isolate hardline politicians who are stirring up trouble in Burundi and to encourage moderates to assert themselves.

The OAU is concerned at what diplomats said was a stepped-up drive to recruit and train paramilitary forces and to arm militia in Burundi, where the Tutsi-dominated army is at war with Hutu rebels.

Sudan will present its response to an OAU demand that Khartoum’s government extradite three Egyptian Gunnmen suspected of involvement in an assassination attempt on Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak last June.

Diplomats said Sudan faced condemnation by some countries for its alleged support of terrorism and failure to hand over the men Khartoum has argued that it does not know where the men are.

Ministers will also review proposals from outside Africa to strengthen the OAU’s role of managing and defusing conflicts before they erupt into full-scale war or ethnic bloodbaths.

Some OAU member states fear external assistance could compromise the independence of OAU peace-making efforts.

Sadako Ogata, the UN high commissioner for refugees, is expected to be co-chairman of a council of ministers’ meeting with Salim and voice her concern at Zaire’s plan to expel its 1 million Rwandan Hutu refugees, the diplomats said.

Salim regrets a lack of resources has stalled vital steps in the peace process in Liberia. The steps include disarmament, demobilisation and the reintegration of soldiers into society.

On Somalia, faction leaders would be urged to avoid steps that could plunge the country back into warfare and to promote urgent dialogue to establish a broad-based government.

The ministers were expected to endorse an OAU trade ministers’ position that developed nations cancel the continent’s $317 billion external debt.

Cameroon will host another OAU council meeting in June. It will be followed by the organisation’s annual African leaders’ summit — Reuters
OAU gets tough with non-paying nations

ADDIS ABABA — Seventeen OAU states owed about $35m in membership arrears and had no right to speak at OAU meetings, an official report said on Friday.

The report by the OAU committee on contribution was prepared for an OAU foreign ministers' meeting today. It said 25 of the OAU's 53 member states had paid their contributions.

Although arrears had declined from $55.3m in June last year, the $35m debt was "a grave and serious impediment" on the OAU's activities.

It listed the states in arrears as Chad, Comores, Somalia, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Central African Republic, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Sao Tome and Principe, Gambia, Niger, Seychelles, Rwanda, Burundi, Zaire, Cape Verde and Djibouti.

Sudan, which had been behind, had paid up. The 17 listed countries had lost their right to speak and vote at OAU meetings and were suspended from OAU specialised organisations.

Their nationals were barred from OAU posts.

The committee recommended that Somalia, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Burundi should be exempt from sanctions for a year. — Reuters
The organisation has ducked out of delivering for far too long, writes Olawale Fapohunda.

OAU should put ideals, not mouth on the line
SOUTH AFRICA must take the upcoming summit of the Organisation of African Unity beyond just another toothless talkshop, challenges OLAWALE FAPOHUNDA, a Nigerian lawyer who co-ordinates international campaigns for the Lagos-based Civil Liberties Organisation.

PRESIDENT Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, not a man to mince his words, addressed his fellow heads of state at the 1986 summit of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) with the following stinging review of the body's record.

"Over a period of 20 years nearly three quarters of a million Ugandans perished at the hands of governments that should have protected their lives. I must state that Ugandans felt a deep sense of betrayal that most of Africa kept silent. The reason for not condemning such massive crimes has supposedly been a desire not to interfere in the internal affairs of a member state, in accordance with the charters of the OAU and the United Nations. We do not accept this reasoning, because in the same organs there are explicit laws that enunciate the sanctity and inviolability of human rights."

The OAU assembly of heads of state and government will be meeting once again in Yaounde, Cameroon from Monday to Wednesday.

The poor publicity in the days before this gathering is understandable, as many will justify it as a talkshop where African leaders meet to pat each other on the back for jobs not done. There will be the usual pomp and the pageantry of African leaders in flowing robes. And nothing will happen.

The formation of the OAU in 1963 was greeted with an enthusiasm which, all too soon, gave way to despair when it emerged that the organisation was largely a club for the preservation of leaders and their regimes.

Untold atrocities were committed in the name of national security, resulting in a proliferation of one-party states and military dictatorships. As for economic development, it is a sad cliché to note that poverty continues to be the lot of the majority of the people of Africa while their leaders live in opulence.

In the 33 years since the formation of the OAU, little has changed. Victories against colonialism and apartheid are hailed as achievements, but in the case of South Africa, the role of several African countries was limited to verbal condemnation, while they entered into all kinds of economic and political compromises with the old South African government.

In the field of human rights, perhaps the only significant development was the adoption of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights. But it is widely held as little more than a delusion as the OAU continues, unbroken, its tradition of silence on human-rights violations on the continent.

There have been the silences over the atrocities committed in Idi Amin's Uganda, in Nguema's Equatorial Guinea and in Bokassa's Central African empire. When Dhalo Telat, a former secretary-general of the OAU, was murdered, the incident provoked neither protest nor comment from the OAU or African governments. All are quick to point to Article III of the charter, which forbids interference in the internal affairs of states by OAU members.

Nigeria is now the focus of all civilized states but it will not be a surprise if the atrocities committed in the name of General Abacha go unnoticed by his colleagues at the meeting.

The international community, specifically the Western world, seems deliberately confused as to what to do about Nigeria. European leaders have been quick to say that the initiative has to come from African states, knowing that few African leaders are better than the Nigerian counterpart.

The birth of South Africa under President Mandela gave rise to new expectations. It was hoped that the new leadership, victims of human-rights violations themselves, would set the agenda for the rest of the continent. Indeed, the leadership rose to the challenge and did, in the case of Nigeria, begin a global campaign against the dictator.

But many of us find the double talk of Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo confusing. And some are still unable to decipher the mystery surrounding the sudden withdrawal of the support of the South African government for a meeting of the African Union on human rights, which was held in Johannesburg early this year.

Many of us also still try to come to terms with South Africa's position at the recent session of the United Nations Human Rights Commission, when it did not support the call for a special rapporteur on Nigeria.

But even in the face of these setbacks, South Africa remains our only hope.

The leadership of South Africa must use the OAU meeting to seize the initiative on human rights in Africa. They must tell the summit that the OAU's incoherence and non-interference policy has become an excuse for persistent human-rights violations.

The South African delegation should also arm itself with the programme of action proposed by Amnesty International at the 1993 OAU summit and which calls on the OAU to publicly and regularly address violations of human rights in its member states and to strengthen and implement the African charter on human rights.

Furthermore, human-rights issues should not be left to governments alone.

The role of NGOs on the continent should be properly acknowledged and given a place within the OAU. South Africa's voice could strengthen the lobby for a proposed NGO forum to the OAU Assembly.

Finally, South Africa cannot afford to inherit the OAU's tradition of silence on human-rights violations. Silence from South Africa will spell tragedy for the vast majority of the peoples of Africa. — Independent Foreign Service
SA TO ASSIST PEACE PROCESSES

OAU summit delayed by row over UN post

YAOUNDE: President Nelson Mandela told the OAU summit here yesterday that South Africa would not shrink from its responsibility to help resolve conflict and advocate human rights on the continent.

The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) summit, opened three hours late yesterday, apparently because of deliberations over a possible replacement for UN secretary-general Dr Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

The turmoil came after US Under-Secretary of State for African Affairs Mr George Moose said in a broadcast interview on Sunday that Washington would support another African candidate for the post of UN secretary-general.

The United States has made it clear that does not favour renewal of Boutros-Ghali's five-year mandate at the end of the year.

Boutros-Ghali, who cancelled his public schedule on Sunday in apparent reaction to the US stance, was lined up among the keynote speakers at yesterday's opening.

The summit was inaugurated by the OAU chairman, Ethiopian leader Mr Meles Zenawi, who is to hand over the revolving annual presidency to President Paul Biya of Cameroon.

Among other prominent figures expected to speak during the opening ceremony were President Yasser Arafat of the National Palestine Authority and OAU secretary-general Mr Salim Ahmed Salim.

Onlookers applauded as President Nelson Mandela said South Africa would not shrink from its responsibility to help resolve conflict and advocate human rights on the continent.

He said the OAU would scrutinise mechanisms to guarantee human rights as well as preventing, managing and resolving conflict.

The OAU had also contributed to the holding of elections in a number of African countries.

"South Africa supports all these programmes and we are immensely proud and enriched to have been an integral part of their implementation," he said.

"To the limit of our capacity, we pledge not to shirk our responsibility in contributing our fair share."

Mandela said South Africa would continue its assistance to the peace process in Angola and Burundi and the efforts to resolve conflicts in Liberia, Somalia and Sierra Leone.

He also pledged solidarity with the Saharawi Democratic Republic's drive for self-determination.

"Particularly in Angola and Burundi, our government has endeavoured to undertake such practical actions as requested by the OAU and (UN) agencies, and within the limit of resources at our disposal."

"We are aware that it is our success or otherwise in resolving all these conflicts which will determine whether the African renewal we strive for will in fact succeed."

Mandela said African countries were justified in demanding economic and scientific benefits from their former colonial bosses but had to break out of the cycle of dependence imposed by "those in command of immense market power."

South Africa, like other African countries, suffered under an unjust system of international relations that made the country party to the struggle for better access to markets, improved handling of the debt burden, increased commitment to investments and improved trade conditions.

"Most countries on our continent have taken deliberate measures to bring their economies and trade regimes in line with the market imperatives prevalent in the world today, in accordance with the advice of multilateral financial institutions."

"But the question has been rightly posed: Has there been reciprocal action by those who control, particularly, the resources required for sustainable development, such as investments and markets?"

Mandela added that development was further dependent on sustainable use of the environment: "Modern environmental challenges extend far beyond the capacity of individual countries and we need, as a continent, to find ways of working together to preserve Africa's heritage."

Even without the delay, this latest summit was under a cloud after Nigeria accused host country Cameroon of planning a military offensive on the disputed Bakass peninsula in the Gulf of Guinea. — Sapa-AFP
OAU calls for an ‘African UN chief’

YAOUNDE, Cameroon: African leaders yesterday urged the United States to re-think its opposition to UN Secretary-General Dr Boutros Boutros-Ghali’s bid for a second term, saying their continent deserved to have one of its own in the job.

The head of the Organisation of African Unity, Salim Ahmed Salim, acknowledged that an OAU declaration of support for Boutros-Ghali lacked the power to block a US veto of his second term.

The hope, he said, was that the declaration, approved on Monday, would prompt “new reflection on the part of the United States”.

“What’s significant is that Africa has taken a position no different from many other non-African nations,” he said, referring to Washington’s virtual isolation on the issue.

The US said Boutros-Ghali, an Egyptian, has been too slow to reform the world body and does not deserve a second term.

As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, the US has the power to veto his election when a decision is made in a few months.

Despite the expression of support, hammered out in a four-hour private session on Monday, the declaration was far from a ringing endorsement.

Four countries refused to support it — Rwanda, Ghana, Ethiopia and Somalia.

In addition, the final version appeared to stress more enthusiasm for an African UN chief rather than Boutros-Ghali himself.

US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, George Moore, said he believed the wording left open the possibility of another African candidate being embraced by the OAU, something the US would support.

“We’ve said all along we’re quite sensitive to the desire of African states to see an African continue as head of the organisation and we’ve made clear our willingness to consider a qualified African candidate for that job,” he said on Monday.

The question of Boutros-Ghali’s level of support among African states has dominated the OAU summit. — Sapa-AP
Africa's leaders are accused of abandoning youth to conflict and exploitation

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) summit is accused of abandoning its prepared speech on the plight of children caught up in the continent's conflict. Leaders are said to have chosen a different path, focusing on economic and security issues instead of children's rights. The summit's declaration was short and bland, according to sources.

"No child soldiers. No child soldiers," a group of children chanting. Yet, their voices were drowned out by the hautly placed leaders, who seemed more concerned with their own agendas.

"We are the leaders you are abandoned," a young man dressed as a soldier addressed the summit. "We are the leaders who have been abandoned by our own governments."

The OAU summit, held in Addis Ababa, has been described as a failure in terms of addressing the plight of child soldiers. The summit's agenda was dominated by economic and security issues, leaving little room for discussion on children's rights.

"The OAU Summit has failed the children of Africa," a senior official of the African Union stated. "We have failed our children."

The summit's failure to address the issue of child soldiers has been met with widespread criticism from human rights organizations. The African Union's commitment to protecting children's rights has been questioned, as child soldiers continue to be used in conflicts across the continent.

"We are the leaders of tomorrow," a young girl dressed as a soldier added. "We are the ones who will lead our continent."

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First SA official for OAU’s secretariat

SA will second an official to the OAU’s secretariat in Ethiopia for the first time since the body was founded in 1963, the Department of Foreign Ministry has announced.

Deon van Schoor, a present a director in the Africa division of foreign affairs, will serve as a senior political officer at the OAU’s head office in Addis Ababa from next month – AFP.
OAU wants new African candidate for UN post

The chairman of the Organisation of African Unity has opened the way for another African to be elected UN secretary-general, urging African leaders to submit other names after the United States vetoed incumbent Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

This appeared to break a deadlock following the November 19 US veto when African states still seemed reluctant to put forward other candidates while Boutros-Ghali remained in play.

"In order to preserve Africa's chances for a second five-year term of office, it is time for African states to present other qualified candidates together with that of Dr Boutros Boutros-Ghali," OAU chairman and Cameroon President Paul Biya said in a letter to African heads of state or government.

Boutros-Ghali's term expires on December 31 and the US has vowed to keep using its veto to deny him a second term on the grounds that the UN needs a more reform-minded leader to take it into the 21st century.

Biya said that, according to his information, "the council still seems favourable to the principle of a second term of office for Africa to the post of UN secretary-general."

World body needs more reformist chief, says US general"

Among Africans spoken of as potential candidates are UN Under-Secretary-General Kofi Annan of Ghana, who heads UN peacekeeping operations, Ivory Coast Foreign Minister Amara Essy, Hamed Algabas of Niger, secretary-general of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, OAU secretary-general Salim Ahmed Salim of Tanzania, Foreign Minister Mostapha Naasse of Senegal, and Olara Otunnu, a former Ugandan UN envoy who heads the New York-based International Peace Academy.

US ambassador Madeleine Albright yesterday welcomed Biya's call for African leaders to put forward new candidates for the post.

She said Biya's "very important letter" to other African leaders should "provide the Security Council with a way of dealing with this issue".

Asked for her reaction to Biya's suggestion that new names should be submitted along with that of Boutros-Ghali, Albright said "the verdict (was) the same" regarding the current incumbent.

Albright has ruled out any compromise which might enable the 74-year-old Egyptian to remain in office beyond December 31.

The UN General Assembly elects the UN chief on the Security Council's recommendation.
OAU wants two seats on UN Council

Lack of justice, fairness and openness has kindled many uprisings in Africa

HARARE — African leaders are today set to stake the continent’s claim to be a major player on the world stage, and to shake off its image as a wretched outcomber.

The Organisation of African Unity, which holds its 33rd annual summit here on June 2-4, is expected to press its demand for two permanent seats with veto power on an expanded United Nations Security Council.

And many of the 30 heads of state due at the summit — including the new leader in Kinshasa, Laurent Kabila — will no doubt echo President Nelson Mandela’s view that the time is ripe for a political and economic African renaissance.

Zambian President James Kenneth Kasambara acknowledged at a preparatory meeting ahead of the summit that “most of Africa continues to be haunted by conflicts, hunger, economic decline and disease.”

At the same time, he complained that this led to an “untrue” perception in the rest of the world that Africa is “an insignificant partner in international, political and economic relations.”

In past years the OAU has regularly used colonial legacies, apartheid and Cold War interference in African affairs, as whipping boys to divert attention from its own failures.

Now, nearly 40 years after the winds of independence began to sweep through the continent, three years after the end of apartheid and with the Cold War long gone, those excuses are no longer available.

Collective wisdom

“Lack of justice, fairness and openness in governing have kindled many uprisings. Nowadays the call for democracy, human rights and accountability can no longer be ignored,” said Mr. Mandela.

Mr. Mandela said in an address to Zimbabwe’s parliament during a recent state visit “The time has come for Africa to take full responsibility for her woes and use the immense collective wisdom it possesses to make a reality of the idea of the African renaissance.” — Sapa-AFP
OAU's credibility on line as summit gets under way

Unresolved conflicts point to organisation's impotence

BY PETER FABRICUS
AND NEIL SHAW
Star Foreign Service

The Organisation of African Unity starts its 33rd annual heads of state and government summit in Harare today, still facing charges that is powerless to do much about the continent's real problems - but at least now trying to address them.

SA officials hope that at least one concrete achievement will be to persuade a majority of African nations to commit themselves to a total ban on the manufacture, selling or stockpiling of landmines, as SA has.

Although democracy is blossoming, especially in the south, a coup in Sierra Leone, the expulsion of Zairian president Mobutu Sese Seko and unresolved conflicts in Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia, Angola and Somalia underscore the continent's continuing instability and the OAU's impotence, diplomats say.

All these are on the agenda, as is the row between Libya and the West over the Lockerbie bombing.

The debut of self-proclaimed president Laurent Kabila of the Democratic Republic of Congo is likely to be the newest event of the summit, overshadowing the OAU's ongoing frustrations.

Despite its recent creation of a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, the OAU has had little or no impact on either the Sierra Leone or Congo crises and seems unlikely to its impact on SA-led efforts to resolve the Congo crises was at very best marginal, diplomats say.

But one diplomat observed: "It's still a talk shop but at least they're talking about the right issues now," noting that the organisation spent its first quarter-century focusing almost exclusively on decolonisation but was now starting to debate the continent's underlying crises of political conflict, genocide, poverty and famine.

The main initiatives flowing from these new directions have been the conflict-resolution mechanism and the African Economic Community (AEC) - an ambitious plan, conceived in 1991, to create an Africa-wide economic and political union, including within it an African court of justice.

Tomorrow the summit will constitute itself as the AEC to launch the body formally, but so far it exists in name only.

The conflict-resolution mechanism has also not lived up to its name so far.

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, in a recent interview in which he branded the OAU as a "trade union of criminals", said he expected nothing of substance to come out of this week's summit.

Asked about the AEC launch, he said: "We signed the protocol in Abuja in 1991; now what we want to see is implementation."

OAU Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim is expected to be re-elected to an unprecedented third term, despite grumblings from some member countries and OAU officials who believe he has achieved very little.
HARARE: African leaders gather here today to take another step towards establishing an economic community, hoping to influence the international economic environment in its favour.

The heads of states and governments — here for three days to attend the annual Organisation of African Unity (OAU) summit — are expected to hold the inaugural session of the African Economic Community (AEC).

The continent, which last year showed signs of economic recovery due to an increase in agricultural output and a rise in petroleum prices, ironically saw more of its people being relegated to poverty.

Thirty-three of the 41 poorest and most heavily indebted countries in the world are in Africa.

The OAU hopes that the projected AEC will lure investment to member countries.

OAU secretary-general Mo Salim, Ahmed Salim said: "Africa will be able to articulate its collective position and strengthen its ability to defend its interests, in a world in which organised economic groupings stand a greater chance to emerge competitive."

With corruption and economic mismanagement being seen by international investors as the norm in Africa, the OAU has realised it is time to urgently change its image.

"Foreign investors have continued to ignore investment opportunities in Africa," said Salim.

There is ... an urgent need for our member states to launch an intensive campaign to change the image of our continent in the major capital markets." — Sapa-AFP
The Organization of African Unity (OAU) will no longer accept coup

AOU, will no longer accept coups

Headquarters, New York City, 4 October 1921

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Headquarters, New York City, 4 October 1921
West and its economies are targets, not allies — Mugabe

HARARE: President Robert Mugabe has given notice that the West and its economies will be targets rather than allies during his stewardship of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) over the next 12 months.

Assuming the chairmanship of the OAU, which has achieved little of substance in 34 years, Mugabe repudiated both the dominant Western view of democracy and its market economics.

In his tone-setting inaugural address as chairman of the 53-nation body, Mugabe said on Monday that Africa should not be herded into inappropriate forms of democracy.

“Democracy to take root anywhere, it should be proudly pursued with an eye on the policy for which it is intended.”

“There is need to avoid the danger of being compelled by self-appointed mentors to go through the motions of democracy without enthroning its substance,” he said.

Arguing that the ground needed to be prepared for democracy in those parts of the world not used to it, he added: “We have reason to question the motives of those who would stampede our governments willy-nilly to adopt democracy without the necessary preparations.”

Yesterday, opening the inaugural meeting of the African Economic Community, a fledgling common market which exists more as an aspiration than a fact, he said Africa, faced resurgent Western influence exercised through economies rather than governments.

Warning that the privatisation urged by financial advisers to the developing world could see Africa’s resources surrendered to foreign control, he said:

“The establishment of market-driven economies is not a panacea to Africa’s economic ills.”

Instead, Africa should pursue its 50-year plan to achieve a continental common market by 2030.

“The entire developing world is facing hostile policies emanating from the World Trade Organisation and international financial institutions.”

“It would appear there is a co-ordinated political agenda by the North aimed at suppressing the development of developing countries.”

“Together, we must resist the recolonisation of our countries under a facade of programmes to safeguard the global environment or globalisation,” he said.

Mugabe regularly cites the legacy of colonization as a challenge to his own country’s economy, which is currently engaged in a restructuring programme.

And yesterday he warned his peers: “We have to unshackle the chains of economic oppression imposed on us by history over the last five centuries.” — Reuter
Western economies to be 'targets, not allies'

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OAU urges move away from military coups to full democracy

Nigerian and Burundian leaders told to start move towards elections as summit links transition to democracy to growth and development for entire continent

By Cathy Pickrell AP

OAU leaders came out more strongly than ever before at the Harare summit in favour of democracy throughout the African continent, linking the transition to popular governments to economic growth and development.

They denounced the coup in Sierra Leone and endorsed armed action by the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) led by Nigeria, to topple the military government.

Although Burundi and Nigeria were not named in open discussion and were not condemned in resolutions of the OAU’s 33rd summit, Mugabe and Salim said they were under a spotlight.

Mugabe said the OAU was putting structures in place to deal with emerging conflicts and crises such as the Sierra Leone coup.

"Two or three years ago we did not address, as the OAU, issues that had to do with coup d’etat as such. We merely regretted that they had occurred. But now we want to address them and address them as vigorously as we can," he said.

"It may take us some time, but that is our position."

Salim said the OAU was leaving it to the 16 nation Ecowas group to resolve the crisis in Sierra Leone, but had offered strong moral support and had urged African and the world "not to do anything that would give comfort to that regime."

Responding to a journalist who accused the OAU of hypocrisy in its dealings with Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Laurent Kabila’s Democratic Republic of Congo, Salim said, "I don’t agree that the OAU is a toothless bulldog. The OAU is increasingly a becoming involved in areas that were considered no-go areas."

Talking about progress... United Nations secretary-general Kofi Annan with Rwandan President Pasteur Bizimungu at the OAU’s 33rd assembly of heads of state and government in Harare.

CATHY PICKRELL/AP

We do not accept coups," he said.

OAU secretary-general Salim Ahmed Salim said the organisation had made it clear to Burundi’s President Pierre Buyoya and Nigeria’s Sani Abacha that their military governments had to be seen as making way for democracy.

Salim, elected on Monday to an unprecedented third four-year term as secretary-general, said the OAU had sent envoys to Nigeria to tell General Abacha that his regime was unacceptable.

"We are still committed to seeing democracy come to Nigeria. A democratic Nigeria will set a very important example in Africa," he said.

On Burundi, he said, "we have made it clear to President Buyoya that his situation is not different from Sierra Leone, that it has to be addressed to and that we want to see a return to democracy."
The most recent OAU summit was, in fact, a meeting on Friday, OAU Secretary General addressed the officers of the organisation at the opening of the conference. The Secretary General stressed the importance of internal and external support for the organisation.

African Union, OAU, Dithers on Response Force

AFRICA
OAU to resist 'bullies'

HARARE — African states, complaining of being bullied at World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations, began a meeting in Harare yesterday aimed at forging a united front for talks in Geneva next month.

"The big trading nations have been dictating the pace," Zambian Industry and Commerce minister Nathan Shamuyarira told the opening session of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) meeting.

"They have been taking decisions which they then ram down our throats," Shamuyarira said.

He said the interests of African countries and others in the developing world should dominate the WTO programme because they were in the majority, but agreements have favoured developed countries.

He was speaking to experts preparing for the first meeting of ministers of trade in the OAU's African Economic Community, starting tomorrow.

The agenda calls for the ministers to outline a "road map" for the period 1998 to 2000, that will enable African states to participate effectively in the future work programme of the WTO.

An essential part of the formulation of the "road map" would be the review of a proposal for technical assistance and support to facilitate such participation.

The meeting will also review proposals for a "positive agenda" of issues of concern to Africa. — Sapa-AFP

Soweto 7/4/98
Africa ‘cannot escape blame’

HARARE African states lamenting their sidelined status in world trade were told by Zimbabwe’s President Robert Mugabe yesterday to take advantage of a new US interest in the continent.

Mugabe, chairperson of the Organisation of African Unity, made the remark in an unusually self-critical opening address to the first meeting of ministers of trade in the OAU’s African Economic Community.

Although he held that drought, debt and bullying by bigger states were partially responsible for the drop in Africa’s share of world trade from five percent to two percent over the past decade, Mugabe told the ministers, who are trying to forge a united front before World Trade Organisation talks in Geneva next month, that Africa cannot escape blame for its underperformance.

Referring among other developments to the new US initiative on Africa promoted by President Bill Clinton during his recent African tour, Mugabe said “Let us take full advantage of this good-will and interest shown in Africa by tying our bootstraps and rising to the challenge.”

“Anchored on growing peace and solid stability on the continent, the adoption of the principles of good governance, popular participation and democracy, let us make this the dawn of the African renaissance.”

The term “African renaissance” was coined by South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, and used repeatedly by Clinton during his African tour.

However, Mugabe’s trade minister, Mr Nathan Shamuyarira, opened a preparatory meeting yesterday with the more usual complaint that developing countries were bullied at World Trade Organisation negotiations.

“The big trading nations have been taking decisions which they then ram down our throats.”

Mugabe said the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations had showed that “not only did (Africa) have a limited capacity to trade, but it also lacked the capacity to negotiate as a region.”

Mugabe called on African states to put the continent on the path to growth by “forging a new partnership through planning and acting together, and speaking with one voice.” — Sapa-AFP
OAU to focus on drug trafficking, child labour

Bonile Ngqiyaza

INCREASED drug trafficking among the youth, women abuse and child labour were identified at a meeting of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in Pretoria yesterday as problems that needed specific attention.

OAU director Cemavi Johnson told delegates that Africa could not achieve sustainable development without the close involvement of women who constituted 51% of the continent's population.

He said all cultural and traditional practices negatively affecting the welfare of women, such as violence against women, should be discarded.

"The youth, who constitute the most dynamic, imaginative segment of our African society need to be at the centre of all endeavours in our socio-economic development," he said.

Vremudia Diejoumoa, an International Labour Organization (ILO) representative for East Africa, said the globalisation of the world economy was an insurmountable trend which should not be feared.

"After decades of economic stagnation and unprecedented decline, Africa's development prospects now appear bright with evidence that the African economic recovery is beginning to take root."

The main issues for Africa, he said, were to overcome rampant unemployment, poverty, social exclusion and the refusal to respect workers' rights.

The OAU secretary-general's report from an earlier meeting called for the age of 18 years to be established as the minimum age at which children can be drafted into armed forces, militias and rebel forces.
Mboweni selected to chair OAU labour body

Pearl Sebolza (230)

Labour Minister Tito Mboweni has been elected as the chairman of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) labour and social affairs commission for the coming year.

Mboweni, who takes over from Ugandan Labour and Social Welfare Minister Paul Etsang, was elected at a ministerial meeting of the commission’s 21st session at the weekend.

The commission, which represents 54 countries, met in Pretoria to discuss labour and social issues, child labour, the increase in drug trafficking and consumption, the impact of globalization of employment and socio-economic development and poverty.

In his role as commission chairman, Mboweni would have the task of co-ordinating the activities of the African group to harmonise their views in preparation for the 56th session of the International Labour Conference which meets in Geneva in June.

He would also steer the commission on the adoption of a united position on child labour and follow up on issues of African representation at the International Labour Organisation.

Foreign Affairs Minister Alfred Nzo, who delivered the keynote address, said that to foster the regional cohesion and co-operation spearheaded by the commission, Africa needed to establish a common position on questions like labour, employment and other social matters.

He urged African leaders to continue taking a strong stand against the use of children in armed conflict and in the campaign for a global ban on landmines by ratifying the landmine convention.

Fall of Meiring sad — Nyanda

Bonile Ngqiyaza

SA NATIONAL Defence Force (SANDF) deputy chief of staff Lt-Gen Siphiwe Nyanda, has expressed sadness at Gen Georg Meiring’s departure and said this should not detract from the “immense contribution” he made in transforming the army.

In a letter to the Sunday Times yesterday, Nyanda said some quarters would welcome Meiring’s early exit, but the SANDF could only “look back with sadness at the circumstances” of his departure.

A decision on Meiring’s replacement will be taken shortly, although Nyanda is widely tipped to assume the position.

A discredited military intelligence report alleging a plot by senior African National Congress members and military officers to overthrow President Nelson Mandela had implicated Nyanda, among others.

Judges

Continued from Page 6

natores to the petition against Tshabalala. Gaigut, Squires, Hugo, Combrink, Levinsohn and Niles-Duner.

The commission, scheduled to meet again in October, is expected to re-advertise for the post at the end of July.

However, it appears almost certain that Tshabalala’s first-round opponent — former Afrikaner Broederbond executive member Judge Willem Booyzen — will not be nominated again. Known supporters of Booyzen concede privately that he stands little chance even though 16 KwaZulu-Natal judges nominated him in the first round.

Tshabalala, a member of the Natal Bar for 39 years before he was appointed a judge of the Gazette High Court, was nominated by the National Association of Democratic Lawyers (Nadel).

Tshabalala said it would be “very difficult” for him to refuse another nomination by Nadel. However, because of the controversy following the judges’ petition, “I do not want to say anything at this stage. I want to wait until this whole thing cools down.”

Comment: Page 11
ILO urges even-handed policy on Aids

The International Labour Organization (ILO) told a tripartite conference on a Southern African Development Community code on HIV/AIDS and employment yesterday that HIV infection should not be used as grounds for the termination of employment or for differential treatment of employees. "Government employers and employee representatives should ensure that occupational benefits are not discriminatory in substance and provision," said the conference.

The International Labour Organization's special adviser on HIV/AIDS, Tendai Shandu, said the conference had noted "with concern that the efforts to protect the health and rights of the workforce of deceased and HIV-positive employees are largely ineffective." "The code and the implementation guidelines should provide for a framework of benefits for employees with HIV/AIDS, as well as their families," he said.

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Frank Nnemeh, Johannesburg
Africa still bloody on OAU’s 35th birthday

NAIROBI — On its 35th anniversary, the Organisation for African Unity (OAU) watches over a continent it has been unable to prevent from being soaked in blood, forced economically backwards, ethnically divided and dragged down by foreign debt.

This is one perspective of the organisation founded as a Pan-Africanist panacea by such luminaries of African independence as Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Haile Selassie of Ethiopia.

With its 53 member states, the OAU celebrates its 35th anniversary today, and shortly afterwards President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe will hand over the OAU presidency to Blaise Compaoré, 47, president of Burkina Faso.

Compaoré lists the ability by African states to successfully intervene in each others’ crises as paramount. An effective peacekeeping force would enable states to respond to their own problems, preventing the need for foreign intervention, he says.

In its 35-year history, the OAU has seen enough disaster in the form of a seemingly endless list of conflicts — among them Biafra, Mozambique, Angola, Sudan, Uganda, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Burundi, Rwanda, Chad, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Algeria, Morocco, Central African Republic, Congo, Djibouti and Zaïre.

With more than 20 million people killed, and 50 million more displaced or made refugees, or victims of AIDS, illness or famine, the OAU has seemingly done nothing.

Critics say in its favour is that it masterminded the Tanzanian intervention in Uganda in 1979 that ousted dictator Idi Amin and that its annual conference allows a pan-continental exchange of ideas.

The interest of member states in its affairs is slim sometimes only half of 53 countries attend the conference. An estimated $45 m is owed in unpaid subscription and other fees.

Where its future lies in intervention and peacekeeping in each others’ countries to stop what President Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania calls “the African leaders’ ability to sully the continent’s image with wars and economic mismanagement.”

Kenyan Foreign Minister Kalonzo Musyoka said in 1995 Africa did not need separate peacekeeping structures from what the UN had elsewhere. In the light of the UN failures to prevent killings in Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia and Zaïre, this has to be revised.

The US backs what it calls the African Crisis Response Initiative, a scheme to train peacekeeping units. It has yet to be tried, but for it to succeed, it has 35 years of prejudice and damnal failure to overcome before anybody sees it as more than another waste of time — Sapa-DPA
OAU still grapples with need for peace force

By Christian Jennings

Nairobi, Kenya – On its 35th anniversary, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) watches over a continent which it has been unable to keep from being soaked in blood, forced economically backwards, ethnically divided and dragged down by foreign debt.

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With its 53 member states, the OAU celebrated its 35th anniversary yesterday. President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe will shortly hand over the OAU presidency to Blaise Compaore (47), president of Burkina Faso.

Like Mugabe, Compaore regards a successful ability by African states to intervene in each other’s crises as paramount. The creation of an effective peacekeeping force which will enable African states to respond to their own problems will prevent the need for foreign intervention.

In its 35-year history the OAU has seen enough disaster and a seemingly endless list of conflicts – among them Biafra, Mozambique, Angola, Sudan, Uganda, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Burundi, Rwanda, Chad, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Algeria, Morocco, Spanish Sahara, Central African Republic, Congo and Zaire.

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Critics say in the OAU’s favour that it masterminded the Tanzanian intervention in Uganda in 1979 that ousted dictator Idi Amin, and that its annual conference allows a pan-continental exchange of ideas.

**Intervention**

But the interest of member states in its affairs is slim, sometimes only half of the 53 countries attend the conference, while about R225 million is owed in unpaid subscriptions and other fees.
NKRUMAH REVIVED

Like an alcoholic who, after the years of denial, finally admits to having a problem, Africa appears to be realising that it has to get out of its many crises it has to admit that there are problems

As the 53-member Organisation of African Unity (OAU) celebrated its 35th anniversary this week at the top of the agenda were a set of new priorities, some of them would have been unthinkable a few years back.

The new priorities comprise:
- a twin strategy conflict resolution, democratisation and human rights on the one hand, and economic integration and development on the other.
- Both arms of the strategy recall and seem to vindicate the goals articulated—ahead of their time—by Ghana's first president and one of the founders of the OAU Kwame Nkrumah.

The proposed twin strategy is spelled out in a report by Canadian consultants who were last year commissioned to review the OAU secretariat.

The report calls for two functional departments in a flatter, five-department OAU structure. The idea is for the present political affairs department to contain the Centre for Conflict Management, plus two divisions—one dealing with political cooperation and democratisation, and one with refugees.

A new Community Affairs department will bring together all units dealing with socioeconomic issues addressed by the 1991 Abuja Treaty on building the African Economic Community.

The recommendations are expected to be adopted at the OAU summit in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on June 8-10.

It was Nkrumah who, a few months after Ghana's independence in 1957, observed: "Our political independence will be meaningless unless we use it so as to obtain economic and financial independence."

He called the All-African Peoples Conference, the precursor of the OAU, in December 1968 to galvanise support for the liberation of the continent which were still under colonial rule.

Africa's liberation from colonialism probably ranks as one of the OAU's few achievements.

OPPOSITION PARTIES

SOUND BUT NO SUBSTANCE

Boogieing before the party

Markon's latest opinion poll figures (see table) have been used by the opposition parties as a whip with which to beat the ANC. In one sense, this is what opposition parties are for: But in gauging the responses of the National Party (NP) and Democratic Party (DP), in particular, one is struck by a measure of self-delusion on their part.

The NP is correct in citing the ANC's tumble to 54% of the vote as a signal for a "joint opposition approach and a commitment to coalition formation in the Western Cape, Northern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng.

Since the Nats, at 19%, are the next most powerful party, this would seem to represent their best strategy for survival. They are, after all, lagging 44% behind the majority party.

A DIFFERENT PICTURE

Support levels of South African political parties in May 1999.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Nov '97</th>
<th>May '99</th>
<th>Change</th>
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<tr>
<td>African National Congress</td>
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<td>44</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Party</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Freedom Party</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Democratic Movement</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Party</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pan African Congress</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>+0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom Front</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatives Party</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azanian People's Organisation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>+0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other parties</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>+0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided voters</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mandela call at OAU to fight tyranny

Ouagadougou – President Mandela has taken his leave of the Organisation of African Unity, urging a younger generation of leaders to root out tyranny and put the continent on the information superhighway.

Mr Mandela, who bade the three-day summit a pre-retirement farewell and was due to leave today, told Africa’s new generation of leaders they had to work together for the good of the continent and its people.

"None of us is a superstar and none can succeed without the success of the other," he told the opening session in Burkina Faso yesterday.

He said Africa had a right and a duty to intervene to root out tyranny in spite of the OAU’s founding principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of member states.

The 30 leaders at the annual summit were taken by surprise by the death of Nigerian ruler Sani Abacha.

The summit has also been overshadowed by Horn of Africa fighting between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Mr Mandela said "I believe that we must all accept that we cannot abuse the concept of national sovereignty to deny the rest of the continent the right and duty to intervene when those sovereignty boundaries people are being slaughtered to protect tyranny."

He also urged the leaders to embrace a programme to "move our continent on to the information superhighway." – Reuters

**OAU tackles Eritrea border war**

Ouagadougou – Organisation of African Unity heads of state reached agreement here on the "principle of a mediation" sponsored by African countries in the dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

After discussing the advisability of multiple mediation initiatives in the conflict between the two Horns of Africa nations, the heads of state yesterday decided to set up a mediation committee, sources close to the summit said.

Up to now, only the United States and Rwanda have offered their services as "facilitators" between the two belligerents. They have come up with a peace plan which so far has remained a dead letter.

The modalities of an OAU intervention – as well as the personalities who would handle the mediation – remain to be decided, the sources said.

- Ethiopia delivered on its threat to attack Eritrea again unless it withdrew from disputed territory, launching a ground strike today against a border town.

With hostilities between the two Horn of Africa neighbours escalating, the US government prepared to evacuate at least another 120 of its citizens along with Germans, Egyptians and some Ethiopians.

At dawn today, the Ethiopian army launched a fresh attack with tanks and artillery on Eritrean positions in a bid to recapture the town of Zala Ambessa, 105km southeast of Asmara, the Eritrean government said.

Eritrea has called for talks with Ethiopia in the presence of high-level mediators. It said Ethiopia had effectively declared war and was using the threat of air strikes to blockade air and seaports. – Reuters, Saaps-AFP

The day fire rained from the sky, page 8
AFRICA

OAU summit faces test of commitment

OUAGADOUGOU — African leaders arrived in Burkina Faso on Sunday for their annual summit, with fighting between Ethiopia and Eritrea offering a fresh test of their commitment to conflict prevention on the continent.

Organisation of African Unity (OAU) foreign ministers, who spent three days drafting the agenda for yesterday's summit, have sketched out recommendations to defuse crises ranging from Angola to Sierra Leone.

But their response to the border conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea has been limited to a call for a cessation of hostilities and backing for a mediation initiative.

"If the situation (between Ethiopia and Eritrea) keeps on deteriorating we will see perhaps, in co-operation with the (US and Rwandan) facilitators, what we can do," OAU Assistant Secretary-General Pascal Gayama told a pre-summit news conference.

The presidents of Algeria, Botswana, Chad, Congo Republic, Central African Republic, Gabon, Gambia, Niger, Sierra Leone, Sao Tome, Tanzania and Zambia arrived for the summit which runs until tomorrow.

Outgoing OAU chairman, Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe, and the presidents of Cape Verde and the Comoros were also in town, as was President Nelson Mandela.

Diplomats predicted a shift in the focus of the peace efforts in the Horn of Africa to the United Nations (UN).

OAU sources say the task of the body, which has made conflict prevention its top policy priority with economic integration, was made more difficult by the fact that Ethiopia preferred to deal directly with the facilitators.

The 54-member OAU, which celebrated its 35th birthday this year, is the cherished symbol of a generation of African independence leaders.

Seek to affirm their sovereignty, they made counterintervention in the affairs of member states the guiding principle of their club.

The OAU set out in 1992 to change the image of the continent from that of war and disaster to one of business opportunity with a manageable risk. It set up a mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution in 1994 to help promote stability, but thus far it has attracted only limited support from member states.

Burkina Faso has dubbed this year's gathering "a summit for change" but, as always, that will depend on the leaders themselves.

On Sierra Leone, the ministers expressed full support for the Nigerian-led West African force that restored President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah to power and called for international help in transporting troops to mop up rebel resistance in remote areas.

On Angola, they want the UN Security Council to do whatever is necessary to force the former rebel movement Unita to demobilise its forces unconditionally. On the Comoros and separatist Anjouan, the ministers preached attachment to the unity and the territorial integrity of the islands.

The ministers expressed concern about a lack of progress in Somalia, an enduring hot spot riven by clan rivalry and whose summit seat will remain empty again because of lack of any central authority.

Libya has widespread OAU support for its campaign to end sanctions, imposed to force it to hand over two suspects for trial for the 1988 Lockerbie airliner bombing that killed 270 people over Scotland. — Reuter
OAU funding crisis 'could be a blessing'

Pule Molobeledi

THE serious financial problems which are being experienced by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) could be a blessing in disguise for peace on the continent, a former SA military adviser to Unita leader Jonas Savimbi told the African Defence summit meeting in Midrand yesterday.

Maj-Gen Daan Hamman said the OAU was faced with the daunting task of raising finances for its peace operations. This meant the organisation would focus on diplomatic initiatives intended to prevent conflict. While the organisation had achieved a degree of success with regard to its willingness to assume responsibility for conflict management, it was clear that individual countries were extremely cautious when it came to funding peace operations.

Peace missions, especially when extended to include preventative diplomacy, peace operations or peacemaking, could become extremely expensive, even when they were relatively small and not logistically intensive.

He cited as an example the 1994-1996 military observer mission to Burundi which cost the OAU about $7.2m.

"The underlying reality is that Africa's lack of financial resources will continue to force the OAU to concentrate on preventative diplomacy and conflict prevention rather than on the more ambitious peace operation aspect of conflict management."

Hamman, who is based at the SA defence ministry's foreign relations directorate, said this situation denied the organisation the freedom to unilaterally decide on the strategic, tactical and operational aspects of the peace operations that it wished to undertake.

"If it is unable to fund such an operation itself, then it follows that whoever does fund the organisation will have a large influence on the objectives of the mission."
OAU
1999
OAU leader to launch renaissance

ORGANISATION of African Unity (OAU) secretary-general Salim Ahmed Salim is expected to officially launch the SA chapter of the African Renaissance at a three-day conference in Johannesburg in October. Conference convenor Wally Serote said in Johannesburg yesterday that President Thabo Mbeki would deliver a keynote address at the gathering. United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, former Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere and former SA president Nelson Mandela are also expected to speak at the conference, to be attended by more than 1 000 delegates from all over Africa.

The African Renaissance urges Africa to forge its own destiny and to recover African pride. — Sapa
African peace deals 'inspire' OAU summit

Foreign ministers get to work

Algiers — The 35th annual conference of the Organisation of African Unity began with a boost from peace developments in the host country Algeria itself, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and in Sierra Leone.

The only early setback to the conference came with the boycott by Morocco, which froze its membership in 1983 after the OAU admitted the self-styled Democratic Arab Sahraoui Republic, headed by the Algerian-backed Polisario Front which seeks independence from Morocco.

Algeria returned to the fold of OAU leadership recently after opening dialogue with Islamic militants and this week released several of them from prison to mark its hosting of the OAU summit.

As OAU foreign ministers kicked off the conference yesterday to prepare for the heads of government summit on Monday, the South African Government ironically underscored the importance of peace to the continent, by withholding new Foreign Minister Nkosazana Zuma from the meeting to try to help complete the Congo peace agreement in Lusaka.

OAU secretary-general Salim Ahmed Salim paid tribute to the African leaders co-ordinated by Zambian President Frederick Chiluba in the Congo talks, to Algeria's peace efforts and to those who had contributed to Wednesday's signing of a peace agreement between the Sierra Leone government and the rebels fighting it.

South Africa's deputy director-general of foreign affairs for Africa, Welile Nhlapho, said peace progress in Algeria, the DRC and in Sierra Leone would be "an inspiration to the summit. The fact that these agreements have been "reached by Africans themselves, with very little help from 'outsiders', will also be inspiring."

Other issues which the conference will address:

■ Creating a way to enforce a convention combating proliferation of small arms in Africa

■ The signing of a convention against terrorism, sponsored by Algeria which had experienced an epidemic of terrorism.

■ A decision whether or not to adopt the recommendations of a consultant's recommendations that the bloated OAU democracy of 900 staff be reduced by 250.
PUSHING AFRICAN RENAISSANCE

Mbeki to urge OAU to become effective

JOHANNESBURG: President Thabo Mbeki is expected to urge structural reform of the OAU to make it a more effective organisation at its annual meeting next week.

President Thabo Mbeki takes a major step on to the international stage at next week's Organisation of African Unity summit, emerging from the towering shadow of Nelson Mandela.

The summit in Algiers is Mbeki's first foray into pan-African diplomacy since his inauguration last month.

Mandela, who was invited as a guest of honour, will stay away from the three-day summit starting on Monday to allow the 77-year-old, London-trained economist his due.

Mbeki is expected to carry on his predecessor's call for a revamped OAU prepared to intervene directly to stem the continent's wars and lead the way for economic integration in the next millennium.

Mandela, never the OAU's most vocal supporter, pressed the organisation to stop being a talking shop and boldly root out tyranny on the continent, ditching its traditional reluctance to interfere in the affairs of member states.

Democracy and economic improvement are central to Mbeki's self-styled "African Renaissance", aimed at paving the way for the continent to shed its image as the global poor house — marginalised, racked by poverty, war and corruption.

In his first weeks of power, Mbeki has shown signs that his philosophy of regional renewal is not merely a political slogan.

South African troops have been committed to an OAU and UN-led peace monitoring force to oversee a ceasefire ending the bloody 11-month war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The expected deployment of around 2,000 South African peacekeepers to the DRC would be the biggest long-term military commitment made by the new government.

Implementation of the Congo ceasefire will be critical to Mbeki's future position with the OAU, analysts say.

"His African Renaissance policy means nothing if there is no conflict resolution," Sagareen Nardoo, researcher at South Africa's Institute of International Affairs, said.

Mbeki has spoken of a moral duty for African states to act in the face of repression and to work together to improve the lives of their people.

His speech to the OAU heads of state will centre on globalisation and economic integration, a spokesperson for the South African foreign affairs department said.

Mbeki will bring a more businesslike approach to the OAU, observers believe. "Mbeki will want the organisation to become more effective. Expect him to be direct without necessarily projecting South Africa as the policeman of the region," Nardoo said.

The South African delegation will urge structural reform of the OAU and a possible review of its charter, which espouses non-intervention, the foreign affairs spokesperson said.

— Reuters
Instability on OAU agenda for final summit of century

NAIROBI - The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was formed more than three decades ago to bring together a continent emerging from years of European colonisation. But as the group prepares for its final summit of the century, Africa seems to be as unstable as ever.

When African leaders gather in the Algerian capital of Algiers on Monday, they will confront fighting in Angola, civil war in central Africa and ongoing strife on the Horn of Africa.

The fate of the disputed Western Sahara, claimed by Morocco and Berber rebels, remains undecided and more than four million people live in squalid refugee camps, homes to some for more than two decades.

Attempts to resolve African conflicts have run up against numerous obstacles over the years: mistrust, national pride, rampant greed and memories of genocide and other atrocities against civilians.

Still, it is hard to imagine where the continent would be without the organisation that declared in May 1963 that "all African states should henceforth unite so that the welfare and wellbeing of their peoples can be assured."

"If you're talking about (former Ghanaian president Kwame) Nkrumah's vision of a United States of Africa, the OAU has obviously fallen way short," said John Harbison, professor of political science at the City University of New York.

"But the OAU is a continuing symbol of an African collective sense, of being in charge of our affairs and providing a context and a framework."

As foreign ministers from the 52-member nations gathered yesterday ahead of next week's three-day summit of leaders, the organisation was able to point to two new successes.

Under OAU auspices and a smaller group of West African countries, Sierra Leone's government signed an agreement with rebels on Wednesday to end one of Africa's bloodiest wars. The ceremony took place in Lomé, Togo.

Meanwhile, representatives of warring parties in Congo agreed on a draft plan to end the 11-month-old civil war in the central African country. The fighting has claimed 100,000 lives since 1997 and has caused more than one million people to flee their homes.

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Libyan leader Col. Muammar Gaddafi will attend next week's OAU summit in Algiers.

The OAU's spotty record of success stems in part from its members' limited economic means. William Zartman, a leading academic expert on the OAU, said the large membership has also prevented a unified stand on the war in the Horn of Africa.

"The OAU summits 'provide a forum and corridors' for informal negotiations, said Zartman, director of African studies and conflict management programmes at John Hopkins University in Washington.

"Because of its own political divisions and fear of offending other heads of state, the OAU has been unable to take forthright positions on reconciliation in African disputes," he said.

United Nations secretary-general Kofi Annan (of Ghana) plans to attend the summit, and President Thabo Mbeki will make his maiden international voyage as South African president to the gathering.

After years of international ostracism, Libyan leader Col. Muammar Gaddafi is also expected.
Perils for last OAU summit this century

ALGIERS: African leaders gathered in Algiers yesterday for the last Organisation of African Unity (OAU) summit of the century, amid a flurry of peace-making attempts on the war-torn continent.

Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika played host to heads of state, including outgoing OAU chairman Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso and Sudan's Omar Hassan al-Bashir.

"I am optimistic for the year ahead," Compaore told Algerian state television, praising Bouteflika's commitment to the continent.

Here are some of the issues facing the summit and the OAU as the world's poorest continent prepares to enter the 21st century.

- **The Democratic Republic of the Congo:** Africa's third-largest nation has been at war since August 2, 1998 when Rwandan and Uganda-backed rebels took up arms against President Laurent Kabila. Kabila accuses Rwanda and Uganda, who propped him up to power in 1997, of invading. Zimbabwe, Namibia, Angola and Chad sent troops to fight for Kabila. Chad has since withdrawn. Kabila and fellow presidents signed a ceasefire deal in Zambia yesterday. The rebels did not, as rival factions squabbled over who should sign.

- **Ethiopia and Eritrea:** The "Horn of Africa" neighbors went to war on May 6, 1998, each accusing the other of invading. The OAU has tried repeatedly to rally the two sides around a framework agreement calling for a truce and an Eritrean withdrawal from land occupied since the start of the conflict. Differences over the interpretation of the deal have blocked progress.

- **Sierra Leone:** The country's president, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, and rebel leader Foday Sankoh signed a peace deal in Togo on July 7, giving the rebels a role in government and an amnesty to Sankoh who faced a death sentence for treason. OAU foreign ministers welcomed the deal and urged all parties to make it work.

- **Angola:** The country's civil war has dragged on for more than two decades. President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos and UNITA rebel leader Jonas Savimbi signed a peace deal in Zambia in 1994. The OAU accuses Savimbi of dragging his feet. OAU foreign ministers called for strict implementation of sanctions against UNITA, which funds its war effort with diamond sales.

- **Somalia:** Divided up among rival clans, Somalia has no central government and has not been represented at an OAU summit since 1991. An upsurge in fighting prevented the OAU sending a fact-finding mission as agreed at the 1998 summit. African foreign ministers urged peace.

- **Sudan:** As many as 1.3 million people have died in Sudan in 16 years of fighting or war-aggravated famine and disease in the mainly Christian south. The government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) resume peace talks later in July in Kenya. A regional grouping brokered the talks.

- **Libya:** Libya's leader Muammar Gaddafi wants African leaders to back his campaign for a full lifting of sanctions imposed after the 1988 Lockerbie airliner bombing over Scotland. The Security Council suspended the sanctions in April after Libya handed over two suspects for trial for the bombing.

- **Economic Integration:** The OAU agreed in 1991 to set up an African Economic Community by 2025. The heads of state and government, who later agreed to focus on strengthening existing regional groupings across the continent, will assess progress towards this goal.

- **Terrorism:** Host Algiers, which has been rocked by a seven-year Islamist revolt, and Egypt are among countries sponsoring a draft OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combatting of Terrorism. Egypt's president, Hosni Mubarak, will attend his first OAU summit since 1995, when Islamist gunmen tried to kill him at a summit in Addis Ababa.

- **Human rights and refugees:** Sierra Leone's civil war has put the spotlight back on human rights abuses across Africa. That and other conflicts have spawned the world's biggest refugee problem — with seven million people seeking refuge in neighbouring countries and up to 13 million driven from their homes. The UN High Commissioners for Human Rights and for Refugees, Mary Robinson and Sadako Ogata, will both be in Algiers for the summit — Reuters
Mbeki issues wake-up call to OAU heads

'Time to join global economy'

PETER FABRICIUS
The Star

Algeria - President Mbeki urged Africa's leaders to meet the challenge of globalisation with strong action to implement democracy, good governance and a common market, rather than by making moral appeals to the rich countries.

He was delivering the keynote address at the 45th Organisation of African Unity summit here.

Mr Mbeki criticised a draft resolution of the summit which complained about the negative effects of globalisation on developing countries and called for it to be conducted more democratically.

"Mere moral appeals from the have-nots to the haves are not likely to take us very far," he said.

Instead Africa should develop its own "sovereign continental capacity" to take part in the process of establishing the ground rules, institutions and practices to govern the global economy.

The way for Africa to start tackling globalisation was to put its own economic theory into practice, by creating a functioning mechanism to begin implementing the continent-wide African Economic Community (AEC), which the OAU envisaged eight years ago but which has remained a blueprint.

The OAU had to start taking the Abuja treaty establishing the AEC for what it was - "a legal document which, within our countries, has the force of municipal law."

"Accordingly, we cannot avoid putting in place and activating oversight structures to ensure that the law is in fact observed," Mr Mbeki said.

This might raise questions of national sovereignty, but by voluntarily acceding to the treaty, African governments had agreed to qualify their national sovereignty, because they believed that joining forces with others would better serve their national interests.

The OAU would need to put in place mechanisms and procedures to enable it to determine whether what it was doing at national, bilateral, regional, continental and global levels was consistent with the objectives of the Abuja treaty.

It would need to look at the efficacy of such existing institutions as the OAU secretariat, the UN Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank.

The body established to implement the economic community should report directly to the OAU heads of state, "as political economists who seek to build people-centred societies," Mr Mbeki said.

And in a move designed to foster democracy on the continent, Mr Mbeki said the OAU would ban governments that took power by force from attending future gatherings until they reform and open up to civilian rule.

He mentioned Niger, Guinea-Bissau and the Comoros, whose leaders had staged coups in the last year.

"We have decided that governments coming to power by military force will not be allowed into the next summit," Mr Mbeki said.

"In the meantime, we will be working with them to return them to democratic society."

He said a special OAU summit will convene from September 6-9 in Libya to look at how to deal with renegade governments.

The meeting also will address the restructuring of the 53-member organisation to make it more efficient and how to prevent and resolve conflicts when they happen.
STABILITY, GROWTH KEY AIMS

OAU prepares to oust coup leaders

ALGIERS: Coup leaders might soon be "red-carded" by the OAU as African leaders work for a stable, politically respectable continent. PETER FABRICIUS reports.

The Organisation of African Unity is moving to suspend from its ranks leaders who come to power through coups. The twin themes of the summit are conflict resolution and economic development.

Several leaders at the summit here have condemned leaders who have taken power by force. At least six leaders at the summit did so, three of them in the past year.

Zambian President Frederick Chiluba urged the summit leaders to "red-card" coup leaders, suspending them immediately from the OAU, but South African President Thabo Mbeki suggested a more realistic policy as he described it, of showing them a "yellow card"—giving them a year to move towards constitutional government or be suspended from the next year's summit.

In an acclaimed speech here, Nigerian leader Olusegun Obasanjo demanded that coup leaders be suspended, saying "We must be emphatic about upholding codes of good conduct. We must condemn coups and let the violators know there is no room for them in our company."

"We must not have any excuse, diplomatic or expedient, for sitting with those whose actions have clearly shown that they don't deserve our respect." OAU Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim echoed his sentiments, saying it was essential to ensure that the OAU put into operation its own declarations and commitments which it had not always done in the past.

"For instance, in Harare in 1997, African leaders made it clear that unconstitutional changes of government were to be a thing of the past. Yet coups still haunt our continent. This problem needs to be addressed to assure that democracy and the rule of law are nurtured and consolidated in Africa."

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said that in the past year Africa had witnessed, in the Comoros, Guinea-Bissau and Niger, "new examples of a problem we hoped we had put behind us—and new deviations from the principle, agreed to in Harare two years ago, that the will of the people must be the basis of authority in Africa and that governments, duly elected, should not be overthrown by force."

The growing intolerance of coups comes as the organisation takes responsibility for Africa's destiny, with a corresponding impatience among the continent's democracies for a past OAU tendency to blame ills on others.
OAU urges 'one voice' for Africa

Sirte, Libya – Over 40 heads of states attending the Organisation of African Unity summit in Libya have drafted a declaration emphasising unity and revitalisation in order to meet the needs of the continent in the next century.

The 12-page declaration is to be adopted at today's closing session in Sirte, about 450km southeast of the capital, Tripoli.

Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi addressed 42 African heads of state who arrived for the summit to discuss ways of restructuring the charter of the OAU to strengthen unity among 53 member states.

"When we speak with one voice we are able to defend and safeguard our collective interests," reads the draft declaration.

Colonel Gaddafi demanded yesterday that Africa have veto rights in the United Nations Security Council and that Western countries return to the continent all the treasures that they "had stolen".

"Tourists, scientists and researchers look at these African treasures at museums and pay to see them. This money belongs to Africa," he said. – Sape-AP