

## UPSC Civil Services Examination

### UPSC Notes GS-I [World History]

#### Topic: African Union (AU)-Origin, Objectives & Controlling Bodies

African Union is a continental body which consists of 55 states belonging to the African continent. The African Union was launched as a successor to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 2002. OAU was established on 25th May 1963. The African Union (AU) has an area of around 29 million km<sup>2</sup> with over 1 billion people.

The primary languages of this union include French, English, Portuguese, Spanish and the common African languages. The Sahara and the Nile are the popular world landmarks included in this union.

#### How was the African Union originated?

32 heads of independent African States signed the OUA Charter in Addis Ababa Ethiopia on May 1963 for the establishment of Organisation of African Unity (OAU). This initiative was taken as a pan-Asian vision for a united and free Africa with a major focus on the freedom, justice, equality and dignity of the African people. The main objective of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was to eradicate the African states from colonisation and to promote unity and solidarity.

On 9th September 1999, the Heads of State and Government of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) called for the establishment of an African Union through the Sirte Declaration to enable the role of Africa in the global economy. Therefore, the African Union (AU) was officially launched in July 2002 in Durban, South Africa.

#### Visions of African Union (AU)

Re-launching of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) as the African Union was done to realise the potential of Africa to fight against colonisation with a major focus towards increased cooperation and integration of African states for economic development.

AU is guided by its vision of a peaceful, prosperous and an integrated Africa representing a dynamic force in the global economy and is driven by its own citizens.

## Objectives of African Union (AU)

The objectives of AU was laid by the Constitutive Act of the African Union and the Protocol on Amendments to the Constitutive Act of the African Union.

1. Achieving greater unity and solidarity among the African countries and the people.
2. Defending the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of the 55 Member States.
3. Accelerating the political as well as the socio-economic integrity of the African continent.
4. Promote and defend African common positions on issues of interest to the continent and its peoples
5. Encouraging international cooperation and promoting peace, security, and stability of the continent
6. Promoting the popular participation and governance of the continent including democratic principles and institutions
7. Development and promotion of common policies related to trade, defence and foreign relations strengthening its negotiating positions.
8. Invite and encourage the full participation of the African Diaspora as an important part of our Continent, in the building of the African Union.
9. Protect human rights in accordance with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.
10. To provide sustainable development of the continent at the social, economic and cultural levels.
11. Development of the continent through the advancement in the field of science and technology

### African Union- Controlling Bodies

Working of the African Union is implemented by several controlling bodies that are responsible for handling legal and judicial matters, principal decision making and human rights-related issues. To know more, refer to the table below:

Controlling Bodies of African Union (AU)	
Committees/Councils	Functions
African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR)	Handling issues related to Human Rights.
African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (AfCHPR)	
African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.	
AU Commission on International Law (AUCIL)	Handling the legal and judicial matters of the 55 member states
AU Advisory Board on Corruption (AUABC)	
The Assembly of Heads of State and Government	It is the governing body of AU having decision-making powers.
Executive Council	Handling foreign trade, social security, food, agriculture and communications of the continent.
Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC)	Manages the executive council.
Peace and Security Council	Facilitating a timely and effective response to any conflict and crisis in Africa.
African Union Commission	Responsible for the administration of AU.

The Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the African Peer Review Mechanism are also key bodies that constitute the structure of the African Union.