

SARNP Report back:

7th Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council- Ougadugu Centre, Sirte Libya

1 July 2005

The AU began the 7th ordinary session following the two-day meeting of the Permanent Representative council in Libya this week.

The Opening address was by the **Libyan Foreign Minister, Rahman Mohammed Shalgam**. The Minister looked at the events in Africa over the past year touching on its positive developments including the transition in Togo, the efforts made towards the restoration of stability in Somalia and the ability of the Cote d'Ivoriens to reach a peaceful settlement following the 2003 peace accord.

There were words of encouragement for states to follow up on the resolutions of the AU and the need to highlight the importance of the Africa achieving the MDGs. The Minister reiterated that states needed to work together to access more resources for the African development programme.

On the issue of debt cancellation he acknowledged that this was a good step for Africa but that states need to be realistic and realise that Africa should be built by its sons and African resources.

Minister Mohammed Shalgam spoke on the need for UN reform, both from the opinion that Africa needs to stand together to push for this reform and the need for there to be an African representative on the Security Council which should be selected by the AU.

The second address given by the **Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Alpha Oumar Konare** began by reminding the participants of the fledglingness of the AU and the progress it had made to date. He cited the structure of the Commission, the creation of the Pan African Parliament and the launch of ECOSOC as great strides in the development of Africa.

The Chairperson touched on the importance of member countries to support the AU through their financial contributions of which only 12 countries were up to date with. He further called on members to ratify the AU protocols, especially the protocols on corruption and on the rights of women and children.

The **Nigerian Foreign Affairs Minister, Oluyemi Adeniji** closed the public session with reflections on the importance of the AU meeting ahead of the midterm reviews of MDGs and the need for Africa to hold the international community to their promises of assisting Africa in its development.

All three speakers touched on the need for UN reform. Africa states represent 30% of the General Assembly and should use their influence to ensure a seat on the Security Council. The presentations all spoke of the mid-term reviews for achieving the MDGs and the challenges Africa faced. In each instance the international community was identified as needing to follow through with its promises to assisting Africa in achieving these goals.

Of concern was the low level of civil society presence at the Summit meeting. Unlike previous Summits this year there was no AU facilitated civil society meeting preceding the Summit, and the effects thereof could be felt.

Next on the programme is the Meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers in the Executive council which is a closed session. Thereafter, observers are welcome to attend the final session of the Summit at which the decision and agreements of the Executive Council will be presented.