

Committee: African Union

Agenda Item: Taking feasible actions towards the successful implementation of The Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA)

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Introduction

Our agenda item will consider the condition of The Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA). Being a continental effort for the infrastructure of Africa, we first saw its idealistic evolution (“Assembly AU 9 (XII) _E.Pdf,” n.d.) with the 2009 African Union Assembly 12th Ordinary Session in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt. The 2009 AU Summit has been prominent in addressing the water-related developments and the precursor of SDGs, the MDGs (“ARC Briefing Note on the Outcomes of the Eleventh African Union Summit, 24 June to 1 July 2008 - UN Conference Centre - Sharm El-Sheik, Egypt,” n.d.). The issues pointed out the need for infrastructure in Africa. Hence, the member states widely discussed its other aspects in the following AU Assembly sessions. As an example, the 2009 African Union Assembly 13th Ordinary Session followed the implementation of economic independence (“9560-Assembly_en_1_3_july_2009_auc_thirteenth_ordinary_session_decisions_declarations_message_congratulations_motion_0.Pdf,” n.d.).

After these discussions of the aspects of infrastructural development, PIDA was first proposed at the 18th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly in January 2012 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (Kodjo, n.d.). This assembly included the AU nations and the outside attendance (Ghana Broadcasting Corporation 2012), varying from UN representatives to the chairman of the Consultative Committee of the Communist Party in China. This means that PIDA’s establishment may be influenced by the exposure of states outside of Africa.

PIDA was founded with the goal of improving infrastructure throughout Africa under a continental framework. With an eye toward the future, PIDA was established with the goal of enhancing Africa's infrastructure within a single, pan-continental framework. Information and communication technology, transportation, energy, and water are the four key sectors in which its strategy has focused on integrating and coordinating efforts. Significant investment possibilities had to be created in order to close infrastructure gaps and promote regional integration and economic growth while adhering to sustainable development goals.

Fifty-one high-impact projects were identified by PIDA's Priority Action Plan (PAP), which included efforts to manage shared water resources, construct transcontinental highways and railroads, increase access to renewable energy, and bridge the digital divide. This comprehensive plan underlined PIDA's revolutionary role in integrating African states and establishing the continent as a rising force in the global economy.

Through the program, infrastructure challenges in the African continent would be addressed alongside the promotion of regional integration. Indeed, PIDA—an ambitious attempt to transform key sectors like energy, transport, and water, along with ICT—has been inspired by international collaboration and triggered by the progressive debates of the Assemblies of the African Union. It represents Africa's determination to attain sustainable development and economic independence, and it also draws up a roadmap for the attainment of the said objectives through its Priority Action Plan. As PIDA develops, it could create a new future for the continent by bridging the gaps and establishing Africa as a major player in the world economy.

Definition of Key Terms

AU Summits: The AU Summits are attended by the heads of state and government of the continent twice a year. These are the highest decision-making levels of the AU and an occasion for leaders to discuss issues that involve peace, security, development, and governance of the continent.

In addition to the discussions, these summits have come up with major policies, such as the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa, whose formal approval was given during the 18th Ordinary Session in January 2012 (“Assembly AU 9 (XII) _E.Pdf,” n.d.). The AU summit has played a vital role in charting the course for infrastructure agendas for a period in Africa and allowed many of its member states to share their results with its other allies.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): The United Nations established the eight important global priorities known as the Millennium Development Goals in 2000 (“United Nations Millennium Development Goals,” n.d.). These programs are aimed at reducing poverty, hunger, disease, and inequality. Africa's infrastructural development and, more importantly, the need to assist efforts for access to clean water, sanitation, and health care were underlined by these goals. Even though the MDGs were officially discontinued in 2015, they played a significant role in demonstrating the necessity of programs like PIDA in order to bridge Africa's numerous infrastructural gaps and achieve what is actually considered progress on the continent.

Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA): The Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa of the African Union keeps a strategic plan that aims to make the infrastructure much better on the continent and contribute effectively to regional integration and economic prosperity (“Program Infrastructure Development for Africa (PIDA) | African Union,” n.d.) of the continent. Within those areas, PIDA focuses on regional cross-border initiatives covering energy, transport, transboundary water, and communication and information technology sectors. In these areas, there lies much prospect of enhancing socio-economic development, economic growth, and trade on the continent. PIDA can potentially enhance integration and unleash the potential of the continent for sustainable development by improving the infrastructure in those areas, which would lead to a prosperous Africa. In achieving PIDA, the AU would advance regional integration with the aim of the general growth of the continent and ensure free movement within the regions and between the regions.

Priority Action Plan (PAP): The Priority Action Plan, which is often referred to as PAP, is a plan integrated into the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA). This plan sets clear goals for the future of the PIDA and its missions. Generally, PAP takes action to implement the infrastructure projects planned in PIDA.

Feasibility: Feasibility is the possibility that something can be made, done, or achieved or is reasonable (“Feasibility” 2024). In our topic, we evaluate the future extent of infrastructure projects on the African continent. This concept will be followed by the economy, politics, and fields related to Africa’s diplomatic climate.

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs): Public-Private Partnerships are collaborations made between government efforts and private enterprise, often on large infrastructure projects that the private partner may finance, plan, or execute (“Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs): Definition, How They Work, and Examples,” n.d.).

Agenda 2063: Being first proposed in May 2013 (“Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. | African Union,” n.d.), it is considered the future plan of the African region, aiming to be a unified state group in Africa. This plan’s goals are identified with the reduction of conflicts, economic fostering, and peace in African states without being exempt from outer pressure. This ideal is considered with the pan-African ideology consolidating the prospective unification of the states with African ancestors and history.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the seventeen goals that are projected to be finished by 2030 (“THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development,” n.d.). These goals are similar to the MDGs; however, they follow a more unified pattern with concrete goals that are aimed to be finished in a selected time.

Regional Economic Communities (RECs): Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are a group of regions that are considered to have different positions in their functions (“Regional Economic Communities | African Union,” n.d.). These are considered clusters used to strengthen African trade in a macroeconomic evaluation. This is a pillar of the African Union’s Pan-African understanding of solidarity between African regions. In other words, an independent African common market within the region is expected to use the REC regions as main components.

African Economic Community: Being adopted in 1991 and put into force in 1994, the African Economic Community is a part of the treaty “Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community.” This treaty is about supporting trade inside the African territories, deciding on the future of the trade, and creating new guidelines (“Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community | African Union,” n.d.). These guidelines and protocols’ fields vary from agriculture to science, showing a vast scope. Besides these guidelines, this treaty exercises the movement of the African people between states. Also, the treaty encourages the relationship between African states and the African states’ relations with the outer states.

Political Stability: Political stability is a parameter used to understand the functioning performance of a government. Generally, a politically stable country is fine with the preservation of its political functions. These governments follow a resistant ruling party as they do not experience a difference in the political climate without civil unrest. A politically stable government can do long-term planning, opening them to outer investments with increased prosperity.

Major Actors Involved

African Union (AU)

The African Union is the most prominent actor on our agenda item, and it constructed the terms related to the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa. Its establishment goes back to 2002 (“About the African Union | African Union,” n.d.). However, the African states were unified under the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which was established in 1963 and maintained its existence until 1999.

OAU was the leading actor in African unity before AU’s establishment. Especially in its establishment, OAU has followed a mission that is mainly to act against the colonization acts of the colonists and promote the sovereignty of the African states. With more than thirty years of service, OAU has paid significant attention to the independence of Africa. Around the late 1990s, the Heads of State and Government of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) decided to establish a new organization, thinking that OAU’s structure was not efficient in addressing the changing world’s needs. This decision came with the proposal of AU in the Sirte Declaration (“SUMDECLUNREF.Pdf,” n.d.).

The new organization comprised a bigger protocol for the AU’s mission. Recognition of disease control, trade policies, etc., were put into this protocol, adapting to Africa’s problems more deeply.

AU’s structure comprises its decision-making organs as The Assembly of Heads of State and Government, the Executive Council, the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC), Specialised Technical Committees (STCs), the Peace and Security Council, and The African Union Commission. The AU structure promotes the participation of African citizens and civil society through the Pan-African Parliament and the Economic, Social & Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) (“About the African Union | African Union,” n.d.).

The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (AfCHPR), AU Commission on International Law (AUCIL), AU Advisory Board on Corruption (AUABC), and the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child are among the organizations that deal with legal and judicial issues as well as human rights concerns. The African Monetary Fund, African Investment Bank, and African Central Bank are among the continental financial institutions the AU attempts to establish (“About the African Union | African Union,” n.d.).

In general, the AU is an organization of states in the African region that supports pan-African ideology with efforts for the benefit of Africa.

New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is an organization established by OAU in 2001 (“NEPAD | Division for Inclusive Social Development (DISD),” n.d.), which was ratified in 2002. The organization’s focus was on reducing poverty and adopting a sustainable path while empowering women.

We can observe a change in the management of the organization within the structure of NEPAD in 2008. The political organs of the AU and African states announced their political declaration on “Africa’s development needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward,” which further called for the General Assembly’s consideration of the situation in Africa. This changed the organization’s commitments with new suggestions from the General Assembly (“N0847085.Pdf,” n.d.).

This organization can be considered a contributor to our agenda item as it considers a few of the PIDA’s main themes, which are infrastructure, ICT development, and natural resource management.

NEPAD is also taking action in enforcing the Agenda 2063’s plans with further planning in the continental strategic development, regional integration, and resource mobilization (“NEPAD / AU Development Agency | African Union,” n.d.).

Being based in South Africa, NEPAD has a structure that is under the control of the African Union and the NEPAD Steering Committee. Previously, NEPAD HSGOC was also a component of the control body; however, it has been disbanded in 2018. The organization also partners with international organizations, which accelerated with the AUDA's establishment benefiting NEPAD.

African Union Development Agency (AUDA)

African Union Development Agency (AUDA) is an organization that was created with the outcomes of the 31st Ordinary Session of the Assembly of African Union Heads of State and Government in Nouakchott, Mauritania, which was in June 2018 ("Who We Are | AUDA-NEPAD," n.d.). AUDA's creation led to its merger with the NEPAD, becoming AUDA-NEPAD. This establishment is an actor in global reforms aimed at improving the function of the African Union.

African Development Bank (AfDB)

African Development Bank is a financial institution based in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire (Bank 2019). An agreement first signed by African nations in Khartoum, Sudan, in 1963 led to the creation of the African Development Bank in 1964. This establishment demonstrated the concerted attempt to create a financial institution concentrated on regional integration, development, and economic progress in Africa. The bank, which is headquartered in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, was founded in 1966 with the specific goal of lending money to governments and private businesses throughout Africa in order to promote economic growth and development. These initiatives played a significant role in creating the framework for both continental integration and economic expansion.

The bank quickly saw that this would not work and broadened its focus to include healthcare, education, and agriculture in order to alleviate the socioeconomic issues that African countries were confronting. In order to increase its ability to perform such jobs, it devised additional mechanisms. For instance, it established the African Development Fund in 1972, which gave low-income nations grants and loans at a reduced interest rate. Smaller-scale development initiatives were supported by soft loans from the Nigeria Trust Fund, which was founded in 1976.

Since then, the AfDB has remained at the forefront of several innovative projects, such as the 2012-launched Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa. PIDA is primarily concerned with filling the gaps in energy, transportation, water resources, and ICT. Because of its technical and financial know-how, this initiative was applicable and successfully improved regional integration.

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) is a regional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) [\[Updating\]](#). As it is a commission of the UN, it can be referred to as ECA. UNECA is built from 54 member states on the African continent. This commission is structured to improve Africa's economic power. This mission is also supported by the 2030 and 2063 agendas.

UNECA canalizes its sources to create equal grounds for the stakeholders of projects in Africa. Also, the organization is responsible for think-tanks that are dedicated to researching prospective sustainability projects, political relations, and intersectoral trade in Africa.

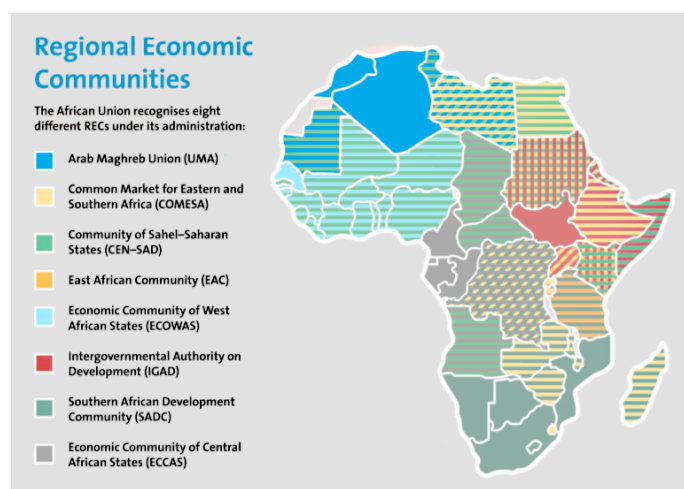
Considering all of these factors, the economic (most likely) changes' interpretation in Africa is related to UNECA. They are involved with these changes as a branch of ECOSOC and, therefore, the UN.

Regional Economic Communities (RECs)

As we have mentioned Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in the “Definition of Key Terms” section, this subsection will not consider the definition of the organization. It will mainly be about the relationship of RECs as major actors in the agenda item.

RECs are groupings of African areas that are meant to be evaluated as economic components of the African economy. AU specifically created these areas to better investigate the economical exchanges throughout Africa and the outer nations. Better consideration of the agenda item and possible resolutions may require using referrals of these economic communities as individuals. These groups are:

- Arab Maghreb Union (UMA)
- Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)
- Community of Sahel–Saharan States (CEN–SAD)
- East African Community (EAC)
- Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)
- Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
- Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)
- Southern African Development Community (SADC) (“Regional Economic Communities | African Union,” n.d.)



(Source ECDPM, 2018; (“Regional Economic Communities – PACCI” 2024)

People's Republic of China (PRC)

People's Republic of China's (PRC) relations go back to the 20th century when Chinese representatives visited African states. Hence, these visits were important as the PRC was seen as a permanent member of the UN Security Council with the votes of African member states (Sess.: 1971) (1972). These visits, therefore, can be seen as acts of removing the Republic of China's (ROC) impact on African member States, eradicating their recognition of ROC.

Besides these efforts, the PRC has concentrated on creating new investments in areas that are outside the PRC's territories. These investments are considered inside the "Going Out" strategy ("N0847085.Pdf," n.d.) of the PRC. In these investments, the PRC considered Africa to spread their political power. Forum for China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) has also been an accelerator for Chinese-African relations throughout this strategy.

PRC's actions in Africa don't end with the Going Out strategy. They have been a big controversy about the PRC's "Chinese Debt Trap" strategy. This phrase is being used to describe their economy and create loans for the African states, regardless of their evaluation of financial status (Himmer and Rod 2022). PRC's strategy of creating economic dependency on themselves with loans has been seen as harmful as the nations that benefitted from the loans were not politically and financially stable enough to make decisions to take loans. Additionally, acknowledging that the PRC already prohibits the loan-taking states from adversely acting in the diplomatic fields, some of the undisclosed points of the loan agreements may have a bigger future punishment on the African states ("AidData | How China Lends: A Rare Look into 100 Debt Contracts with Foreign Governments," n.d.).

On the other hand, the PRC is developing its trade network with new projects. Belt and Road Initiative has been seen as the most prominent, aiming to develop their trade routes in different ways, which vary from constructing new infrastructure to improving on the already existing ports.

This initiative seeks to finish over 2,600 projects in more than 100 countries (Al Jazeera English 2021). Africa covers 44 of these countries in the project, which is the continent with the most countries in the initiative.

PRC has been a nation that benefited from Africa in the past. However, with the new strategies, the PRC seeks to create economic collaborations with the African states. These collaborations have been to be controversial. Still, the PRC is evident in Africa's economy.

International Money Fund (IMF)

International Money Fund (IMF) is an organization established to ensure stability through the member states of the fund ("Factsheets List," n.d.). They are mainly focused on exchange-rate stability and being the global lender for nations in need. Therefore, they strive for a stable economy between its members.

IMF and Africa have engaged in interactions with many initiatives and projects, such as but not limited to the Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative, Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI), and Containment and Relief Trust (CCRT).

General Overview of the Issue

In order to improve infrastructure across Africa under a continental framework, PIDA was established. In order to improve Africa's infrastructure within a unified, pan-continental framework, PIDA was founded with a view toward the future. The four main areas in which its approach has concentrated on integrating and coordinating efforts are water, energy, transportation, and information and communication technology. In order to meet sustainable development goals, eliminate infrastructure gaps, and encourage regional integration and economic growth, significant investment opportunities have to be developed.

PIDA concentrates on developing specific infrastructures for transport, energy, ICT, and transboundary water resources (“About the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa - Virtual PIDA Information Center” 2017). AUDA-NEPAD is also an organ of PIDA that closely manages the required projects under the scope of PIDA.

Furthermore, PIDA has a Priority Action Plan (PAP) for its planned projects. This plan lays forth specific objectives for the PIDA's future and its missions. In general, PAP acts to carry out the infrastructure projects that PIDA has planned. PAP considers 51 programs that carry more than 400 projects within the various fields. These extend to 2020. It is reported that 409 of these projects have been in activity.

Future plans of PIDA conjure to the year 2030. For its plans between the years 2021 and 2030, it is determined to finish more projects and develop ongoing projects. This period is called the PAP2 plan. These plans are thematically dispositioned to increase the proximity between the rural areas and the big cities. Through the scheme, regional integration would be promoted, and infrastructural issues on the African continent would be addressed. Indeed, international cooperation and the progressive discussions of the African Union's Assemblies have sparked PIDA, an ambitious endeavor to reform important industries like energy, transportation, water, and ICT. Through its Priority Action Plan, it lays out a roadmap for achieving the aforementioned goals and demonstrates Africa's will to achieve sustainable development and economic independence. By closing the gaps and making Africa a significant stakeholder in the global economy, PIDA has the potential to shape a new future for the continent.

Timeline of Important Events

Date:	Event:
May 1963	Establishment of The Organization of African Unity

1999	Shut down of OAU and establishment of African Union
September 10, 1964	Establishment of the African Development Bank
August 1, 1975	Assembly of Heads of State and Government 12th Ordinary Session
1 – 3 July 2009	Assembly of Heads of State and Government 13th Ordinary Session
January 2012	Assembly of Heads of State and Government 18th Ordinary Session
May 2013	Proposal of Agenda 2063
1991	Adoption of African Economic Communities (Put into force in 1994)

Past Solution Attempts

In 1991, the Abuja Treaty, which established the African Economic Community was signed, and it aimed to foster economic development and the economic integration of the countries. With the help of this treaty, the goal was to create a continent-wide economic community for trade and growth. It aimed to do this by creating a 34-year outline towards achieving the AEC by consolidating and creating new RECs to further the goal of unity, ultimately leading towards the creation of the PIDA later on. While being a cornerstone for future developments, it fell short of the impact it set out for due to its long implementation time and reliance on outside funding.

The NEPAD Infrastructure Short-Term Action Plan (STAP), launched in 2002, aimed to address Africa's urgent infrastructure gaps by implementing high-priority projects in energy, transport, water, and ICT to stimulate regional integration and economic growth.

Some of the projects included were the West African Power Pool, the Trans-African Highway Network, and the East African Submarine Cable System. While STAP successfully mobilized funding and identified over 50 projects, it faced challenges due to funding constraints, delays in project implementation, and insufficient institutional capacity. Its short-term focus and reliance on external financing highlighted the need for a more comprehensive strategy, which eventually led to the creation of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) to build upon STAP's foundations and expand the vision for Africa's infrastructure.

The Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) was implemented through strategic planning and regional collaboration. Targeted initiatives like the Priority Action Plans (PAP) identified transformative infrastructure projects in transport, energy, ICT, and water. The PIDA Service Delivery Mechanism (SDM) supported early-stage project preparation, while partnerships with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) ensured regional coordination. Financing mechanisms included public-private partnerships (PPPs) and innovative models like blended financing, alongside mobilization efforts through platforms such as the Africa Investment Forum (AIF). PIDA's integrated corridor approach under PAP II helped align infrastructure projects with economic and social goals. While these strategies enhanced project visibility and helped in acquiring some resources, implementation was hindered by insufficient funding, limited institutional capacity, and challenges in harmonizing policies across countries. Progress was also slowed by political instability in some regions and delays in project preparation.

Possible Solutions

Even after many of the previous efforts taken on this issue, there is still more that must be done in order to achieve a more prosperous and developed world for the countries of Africa. One of the most prevalent points of contention is that of funding. Many of the projects initiated in the region were cut short of their original purpose due to inadequacies in funding and support from the international community.

Even though funding is a vital issue, it must also be underlined that the reliance on outside parties comes at a cost in efficiency and overall benefit to the community of these projects, as in some cases these actions may be fueled by intentions that do not prioritize the prosperity of the nations in which the developments are being implemented.

As the goal behind The Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) is to aid in the economic growth of the nations in Africa, it is of utmost importance that it is able to connect these communities and ensure a robust infrastructure that would foster trade and boost cooperation between communities.

Ensuring that previous and upcoming projects maintain a level of safety and take into account the well-being of the people in the areas in which they occur is vital for the success and support of these projects. Extra care should be put into the sustainability and reduction of negative impacts of these projects to provide a balanced and effective solution to the issues at hand.

Useful Links

PIDA Website: You may use this website to learn more about PIDA's activities:
<https://www.au-pida.org/>

AUDA-NEPAD: You may use this website to find out more about NEPAD's activity: <https://www.nepad.org/>

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