AFRICAN GOVERNANCE ARCHITECTURE FRAMEWORK
AFRICAN GOVERNANCE ARCHITECTURE (AGA)

The African Governance Architecture (AGA) is inspired by the Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU) that expresses the AU’s determination to ‘promote and protect human and people’s rights, consolidate democratic institutions and culture and ensure good governance and the rule of law’. This determination is buttressed by related objectives and principles contained in Article 3(g and h) and Article 4(m) of the Act on the promotion, protection and respect for human rights, democratic principles and institutions, and good governance. These ideals are further reinforced by norms, pronouncements, decisions and instruments adopted by the AU in particular the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG).

The mandate of AGA stems from the Decision of the 15th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of African Union (AU) Heads of State and Government (AU/Dec.304 (XV) held in July 2010 which recalled the decision adopted by the 16th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the AU and endorsed by the 14th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of African Union (AU) Heads of State and Government to dedicate the theme of the 16th Ordinary Session of the African Assembly to the Shared Values of the AU, that was held in Addis Ababa in 2011 and provided a mandate for putting in place a ‘Pan-African Architecture on Governance’.

In order to give effect to the Assembly decision on the Establishment of the Pan-African Governance Architecture, the African Union Commission (AUC) established AGA as a “platform for dialogue between the various stakeholders” who are mandated to promote and strengthen democratic governance in Africa, in addition to translating the objectives of the legal and policy pronouncements in the AU Shared Values.
AGA OBJECTIVES

The principle objective of AGA is guided by the Declaration of the 16th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union adopted in 2011 to create a framework for dialogue among stakeholders with an ultimate aim of harmonisation of AU Shared Values instruments and coordination of initiatives towards promoting and consolidating democratic governance on the continent.

The specific objectives of the AGA are to:

a. Accelerate the ratification, domestication, implementation and monitoring of African Shared values instruments
b. Deepen synergy, coordination, cooperation and harmonisation of shared values instruments among AU organs, institutions and RECs on democracy, governance, human rights and humanitarian affairs.

c. Enhance the capacity of AU organs, institutions and RECs to support Member States to strengthen governance and consolidate democracy through implementation of shared values agenda

d. Enhance popular participation and citizen engagement in attainment of democracy, governance and respect for human and peoples’ rights

e. Coordinate evaluation and reporting on implementation and compliance with AU norms on governance and democracy as envisaged by article 44, 45 and 49 of the ACDEG.

f. Foster dialogue and share comparable lessons on trends, challenges, opportunities and prospects for improving governance and democracy among Member States

g. Generate, manage and disseminate knowledge on African shared values agenda, democratic governance in Africa.

h. Facilitate joint engagement and deepen synergy with the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) in strategic interventions: preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention and post-conflict, reconstruction and development in Africa.
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The guiding principles of the AGA permeate the statutory instruments of the AU especially the Constitutive Act and the African Charter on Elections, Governance and Democracy. These include:

a. **Effective participation** of the African peoples in strengthening and consolidating democratic governance in Member States and continental affairs;

b. **Respect for democratic principles**, human rights, the rule of law and good governance;

c. Holding of **regular, transparent, free and fair elections**;

d. Promotion of the principle of **separation of powers**;

e. Promotion of **gender equality and youth empowerment**;

f. Promotion of **transparency and fairness** in the management of public affairs;

g. Condemnation and **rejection of acts of corruption**, related offenses and impunity;

h. Condemnation and **rejection of unconstitutional changes** of governments.

i. **Strengthening political pluralism** and recognizing the role, rights and responsibilities of legally constituted political parties, including opposition political parties.

AGA STRUCTURE

AGA embraces four interrelated and dynamic components.
AGA NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK

AGA is premised on a normative construct and vision derived from standards, principles and practices, enshrined in the various AU Shared Values instruments that AU Member States have committed to. These include but are not limited to:

a. **The Constitutive Act of the African Union**, which establishes the African Union and defines its objectives, in particular a commitment to promote democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance.

http://www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/Constitutive_Act_en_0.htm

b. **The African Charter of Democracy, Elections and Governance** expounds upon the constitutive act, committing Member States to the adherence of universal values and principles of democracy and respect for human rights. It promotes the adherence to rule of law, the holding of free and fair elections, and the rejection of unconstitutional changes of government.

http://www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/AFRICAN_CHARTER_ON_DEMOCRACY_ELECTIONS_AND_GOVERNANCE.pdf

c. **The African Charter of Human and People's Rights** recognizes the rights, duties and freedoms that accrue to all Africans and commits Member States to undertake to adopt legislative or other measures to give effect to those rights.

http://www.achpr.org/instruments/achpr/

d. **The OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa**, defines the term “refugee” and ensures that those seeking asylum will be protected.

http://www.achpr.org/instruments/refugee-convention/


f. **Protocol to the African Charter establishing the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights**, provides for the functions, responsibilities and jurisdiction of the Court, along with the process for submitting to the Court.

http://www.achpr.org/instruments/court-establishment/

g. **Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa** requires State Parties to combat all forms of discrimination against women through appropriate legislative, institutional and other measures. It also commits State Parties to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of women and men to eliminate harmful cultural and traditional practices and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes, or on stereotyped roles for women and men.

h. **African Charter on Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration** aims to ensure quality and innovative service delivery that meets the requirements of all users while encouraging the efforts of Member States in modernising administration and strengthening capacity for the improvement of public service. [http://www.au.int/en/content/african-charter-values-and-principles-public-service-and-administration](http://www.au.int/en/content/african-charter-values-and-principles-public-service-and-administration)


n. **The Algiers Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes** addresses the importance of strengthening the capacity of the AU to deal with the scourge of unconstitutional changes of government.

o. **The Lome Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes of Government**, which affirms and updates the Algiers Declaration, committing to the AU’s rejection of unconstitutional changes in government.

p. **The Conference on Stability, Security, Development and Democracy (CSSDCA) Memorandum of Understanding**, reaffirms the fundamental link between stability, human security, development and cooperation in a manner that reinforces each other.
q. The OAU/AU Declaration on Principles Governing Democratic Elections, provides for democratic elections as a basis of the authority of any representative government and states the principles for such elections, including guidance for observers and monitors. http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/compilation_democracy/ahg.htm


s. The New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic & Corporate Governance commits to ensuring that Heads of States’ respective national constitutions reflect the democratic ethos and commit support to democracy and good political governance; economic and corporate governance; socio-economic development; and the African Peer Review Mechanism. http://www1.uneca.org/Portals/nepad/Documents/declaration-on-democracy-political-economic-corporate-governance.pdf

t. The Memorandum of Understanding on the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) establishes partnerships with the States who have signed on to the mechanism and commits to implementing the shared commitments as established in the Constitutive Act. http://aprm-au.org/admin/pdfFiles/aprm_mou.pdf

u. The Kigali Declaration on Human Rights in Africa reaffirms the principle that all human rights are universal, indivisible, inter-dependent and inter-related. It reaffirms Member States commitments to upholding and protecting these rights. http://www.achpr.org/instruments/kigali/

v. The Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa reaffirms the commitment to gender equality and agrees to accelerate the implementation of measures to combat discrimination and ensure the full and effective participation of women in peace processes. http://wgd.au.int/en/sites/default/files/Solemn%20Declaration%20on%20Gender%20Equality%20in%20Africa%2028SDGEA%29.pdf

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: AFRICAN GOVERNANCE PLATFORM (AGP)

In an effort to operationalize AGA, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government Declaration affirmed the importance of establishing an African Governance Platform in Assembly/AU/Dec.1 (XVI), a basis for facilitating harmonisation of instruments and coordination of initiatives in governance and democracy. Consequently, the Platform was established as the institutional framework of the AGA, composed of AU Organs, Institutions and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) with a formal mandate for the promotion and sustenance of democracy, governance and human rights in Africa. The Platform serves as a first concentric circle that draws inspiration and inputs from representative of AU Organs, Institutions and RECs and a second circle of continental stakeholders in the private sector, development partners, civil society and the diaspora.

AFRICAN GOVERNANCE PLATFORM MEMBERS

The respective mandates of the Platform Members point to the centrality of human rights, democratic governance and the participation of citizens for the transformative development and integration in Africa. These include:

a. **The AU Peace and Security Council**, the standing decision-making organ for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts, with a mandate to promote peace, security and stability in Africa.  
   http://www.peaceau.org

b. **The AU Commission**, which is the Secretariat of the Union entrusted with executive functions, including driving the African integration and development process in close collaboration with African Union Member States, the Regional Economic Communities and African citizens.  
   http://www.au.int/en/commission

c. **The Regional Economic Communities**, which have a mandate to facilitate cooperation and provide security, economic, and development support at a regional level  
   http://au.int/en/recs

d. **The African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights**, which is mandated to protect and promote human and peoples’ rights on the continent. It is specifically mandated to interpret the provisions of the Charter upon a request by a state party, organs of the AU or individuals. The Commission has also adopted many resolutions expounding upon the provisions of the Charter.  
   http://www.achpr.org/
e. **The African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights**, that was established to complement and reinforce the functions of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights by strengthening the human rights protection system in Africa and ensuring respect for and compliance with the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, as well as other international human rights instruments, through judicial decisions. [http://www.african-court.org](http://www.african-court.org)

f. **The Pan-African Parliament** which is informed by a vision to provide a common platform for African peoples and their grass-roots organizations to be more involved in discussions and decision-making on the problems and challenges facing the continent. Its ultimate aim is to evolve into an institution with full legislative powers, whose members are elected by universal adult suffrage. [http://www.pan-africanparliament.org](http://www.pan-africanparliament.org)

g. **The African Peer Review Mechanism** which is a mutually agreed programme, voluntarily adopted by the AU Member States, to promote and re-enforce high standards of governance. It has a mandate to ensure that the policies and practices of participating countries conform to the agreed values in the following four focus areas: democracy and political governance, economic governance, corporate governance and socio-economic development. [http://aprm-au.org/index](http://aprm-au.org/index)

h. **The Economic, Social and Cultural Council**, which is the vehicle for building a strong partnership between governments and all segments of African civil society. It is an advisory organ composed of different social and professional groups of the AU Member States. It is mandated to promote dialogue and forge strong partnerships between governments and all segments of civil society, while also promoting and defending a culture of good governance, democratic principles and institutions, popular participation, human rights, social justice and gender equality. [http://pages.au.int/ECOSOCC](http://pages.au.int/ECOSOCC)

i. **The AU Advisory Board on Corruption**, which has a mandate to develop and promote the adoption of harmonized codes of conduct of public officials. It aims to develop methodologies on how to deal with the scourge of corruption and to disseminate information and sensitize the public on the negative effects of corruption and related offences [http://www.auanticorruption.org/](http://www.auanticorruption.org/)

j. **The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child**, which aims at protecting and promoting the rights enshrined in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, particularly to document information and encourage relevant national and local institutions to undertake initiatives towards this cause, while making recommendations to Member States. The Committee formulates and lays down principles and rules aimed at protecting the rights and welfare of children in Africa; [http://acerwc.org/](http://acerwc.org/)

k. **The African Union Commission on International Law** which aims at promoting the progressive development of international law in Africa and its codification. [http://pages.au.int/aucil](http://pages.au.int/aucil)

l. **NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency** is the technical body of the African Union, with a core mandate to facilitate and coordinate the implementation of regional and continental priority programmes and projects and to push for partnerships, resource mobilisation and research and knowledge management. [http://www.nepad.org/](http://www.nepad.org/)
The Platform serves as the coordinating arm or catalyst for the achievement of the goals of AGA. In this role, it does not assume or duplicate the functions established by other policy organs, rather it provides a framework for interaction, active engagement, synthesis and convergence amongst them.

The Platform is organised along five clusters:

* Democracy
* Human Rights & Transitional Justice
* Humanitarian Affairs
* Constitutionalism & Rule of Law
* Socio-economic, Service delivery and Urbanization*

* Formerly Governance Cluster
WORKINGS OF THE PLATFORM

The Platform offers a flexible and dynamic meeting point that facilitates information flows, exchanges and dialogue; and promotes synergies, mutual complementarity, close coordination, collaboration and concerted action on democratic governance issues. In this capacity, it performs the following specific functions:

a. Coordinate efforts by Platform Members to accelerate the elaboration, popularisation, domestication and reporting of African Shared Values on democracy, elections, governance, human rights and humanitarian assistance across the continent;

b. Facilitate the harmonisation of instruments and coordination of initiatives in governance and democracy amongst Platform Members;

c. Evaluate implementation of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance as envisaged by Article 45(c) of the Charter;

d. Encourage the active participation of African peoples in democratic governance initiatives and programmes;

e. Foster a systematic exchange of information on democracy, governance, elections, human rights and humanitarian assistance across the continent;

f. Create a framework for dialogue and cross-fertilization of ideas and comparable lessons and experiences among the Platform Members and key stakeholders in the promotion and strengthening of democratic governance in Africa; and

g. Strengthen the capacity of Platform Members to track compliance and implementation of the AU Shared Values by AU Member States.

AFRICAN GOVERNANCE FACILITY

The African Governance Facility (APF) is designed as a resource mobilisation mechanism to support Platform Members’ initiatives and programmes towards the promotion of and consolidation of democratic governance on the continent.

The facility is jointly owned and resourced by AGA platform members and Member States to ensure sustainability of Platform Initiatives through innovative and creative resource mobilization strategies.

The facility is located at the AUC and is governed by AU financial rules and regulations.
The Platform’s role in supporting its Members depends on deepened synergy, particularly with the organs responsible for evaluation, in order to enhance the sharing of knowledge and information. For example, the APRM’s standards and modes of evaluation at a Member State level are essential for other Platform Members in fulfilling their mandates.

Critical for AGA is its complementarity with the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). Both architectures address two key priorities of the AU in respect of its agenda for unity, integration and development. The AGA addresses the democratic governance agenda of the AU vision, while the APSA addresses the peace and security agenda. Normatively, AGA and APSA are joined together by the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and the Protocol relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council, respectively. The African Governance Platform recognises that democratic governance and peace are two sides of the same coin. For the AU, therefore, to achieve unity, integration and development both democracy and peace are critical enablers. Without democracy, there may not be sustainable peace. Without peace, democracy is rooted on a weak foundation. The Peace and Security Council, therefore, provides a bridge for coordination, joint programming and joint interventions by the two architectures in volatile situations that require an AU response.

AGA SECRETARIAT

Article 45 of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance mandates the African Union Commission as the coordinating structure for the implementation of the Charter. The Department of Political Affairs, as the responsible directorate for democratic governance within the African Union Commission, hosts the Secretariat of the African Governance Platform. In that capacity, DPA is responsible for the coordination of evaluation on implementation of the Charter with other key organs of the Union. Further to this, the Secretariat is mandated to assist member states in the implementation of the Charter.

The Secretariat in the discharge of its responsibility is expected to ensure coherence, synergy and coordination Platform Members, Clusters, Partners and civil society.