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**Analysis of the African Union as a system of integration in the
economic and political fields**

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DEDICATORY

To my father Joaquín for being my unconditional support throughout my college years, for his absolute love and big heart that have allowed me to achieve all the most significant goals in my life.

To my brothers Juan Martin and Juan Francisco for being my example to follow, for never leaving me alone in the worst and best moments of my life and for being the most unconditional love I have ever had.

To my nephews Joaquín and Tomás for being my infinite joy and for giving me hope when I needed it the most.

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Analysis of the African Union as a system of integration in the economic and political fields

Abstract

This work aims to analyze the African Union (AU) as a system of regional integration in the economic and political spheres during the period 2002-2022. It emphasizes the historical background and the objectives achieved during this period, which were defined in various guidelines established by the Pan-African Agenda 2063, as well as the future perspective of the AU. This work is a systematic literature review using a Prisma methodology. The results show that the AU represents the first step towards the sustainable development that the region needs; however, there are still various deficiencies in achieving the objectives set for its 55 member states. Additionally, the importance of taking action on issues of security and peace, as well as in economic and governance areas, is highlighted for a true future evolution.

Key words: African Union, Regionalism, Agenda 2063, Regional Integration

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1. Introduction

Regional integration among countries can become a feasible mechanism if it is carried out correctly and relevant to the needs of a region. States can achieve considerable objectives in their economic, political, and social development by being part of an integrative project. Throughout history, the African region has faced various challenges in its quest for sustainable development. After the aftermath of such significant events on the continent as slavery, colonization, and subsequent decolonization, Africa embarked on a new perspective of integration.

With the advent of globalization in 1990, Africa began to focus on regional integration, which was driven by the growth of trade and investment in other regions of the world where economic growth was notable (Expósito and Mohedao, 2004). The African Union (AU) represents the main integration framework covering the entire region. Founded in 2002, the AU was created with an optimistic perspective by providing itself with more solid administrative mechanisms that allow it to exercise greater dynamism within the member states concerning its predecessor: the Organization of African Unity (OAU) (Paterson, 2012).

This thesis seeks to analyze the historical background that has allowed the establishment of the AU, followed by the objectives achieved by this integrative system in the period between 2002 and 2022 and finally analyze its possible future evolution. This work will be carried out employing a systematic literature review using PRISMA methodology. The bibliographic material will be found in virtual libraries, existing academic articles, and official web pages, among others that will allow establishing the pertinent analysis for this literature review article.

1.1 Objectives

1.1.1 General Objective

To analyze the African Union as an integration system from an economic and political perspective during the period 2002–2022.

1.1.3 Specific Objectives

1. To evaluate the historical background for the formation of the African Union.
2. To analyze the economic and political achievements and objectives of the African Union during the period 2002–2022 as an integration system.
3. To analyze the prospects, challenges, and possible evolution of the African Union in the future.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

Historical Background of Regional Integration

Regional integration arises from the state, a key actor for regionalism that originates and evolves in a Western European context, to later be "exported" through colonization around the world; this can be defined as "a legal, political, and social entity endowed with its personality, independent, neutral, and devoid of historicity." (Calduch, 1991). In antiquity, there were societies with defined political consolidation and governmental structures that can be considered precursors to the state, such as Egypt, Greece, and Rome. During the Middle Ages, rooted in Europe between the 5th and 15th centuries, monarchies gained relevance in society, gaining total control over territories and communities. With the advent of the Renaissance and the Modern Era, new theories about the political organization of the state and its structure emerged, serving as the basis for what is now considered the modern state. Similarly, the

principles of state sovereignty began to be established, a principle that would materialize with the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. "The secularization of international politics affirmed at Westphalia offered the conditions for the development of an international public law, based on the principles of sovereignty and the voluntarism of states, and also on the recognition of an international society endowed with autonomy and legislative power" (Alcaine, 2010).

The idea of regional integration gradually emerged with different events that sought to establish dialogue between countries for agreements, alliances, and the creation of common objectives. Empires can be considered a precedent for regionalism; these were enduring systems of organization, exercising their power and control over various extents of territory. Their form of government centered on the highest authority, from which administrations were delegated to specifically control each assigned section of territory. There were empires around the world with significant influence in their territories, including the Roman Empire, the Mongol Empire, the Aztec Empire, and the Inca Empire in America, among others (Alcaine, 2010).

The Congress of Vienna, held from 1814 to 1815, is a clear example of how states sought to reorganize Europe and restore harmony to the region after the Napoleonic Wars. Among the agreements reached by the countries that participated in the convention, including Austria, Great Britain, Prussia, and Russia, were the redistribution of territories and the demarcation of borders, the creation of alliances to prevent future conflicts, and the restoration of monarchies. The Congress of Vienna can be considered one of the most important events for the formation of international relations that will materialize in integration processes in the future.

On the other hand, on the South American continent in 1821, "the republic was organized that we have known under the name of the Gran Colombia, with the union of Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Panama." (Blanco, 2007). This process can be considered a project of integration after the end of Spanish colonialism and the independence wars that the continent was going through, a project that aspired to political union and economic development through South American unification among several territories led by the liberator Simón Bolívar. However, in 1831, after various political tensions, Gran Colombia could not continue with its integrative vision.

Finally, in contemporary times, with the official end of World War I in 1919 with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, the League of Nations was born, an organization that once again contemplates the existence of European dialogue. However, it weakened as it failed in its main objective of maintaining peace in Europe with the onset of World War II. Subsequently, in 1945, the United Nations was created, becoming not only a dialogue organization for European states but also for all other countries in the world that are members of it. It has become a regional and global cooperation body today (Alcaine, 2010).

1.2 Regional Integration

"Regionalism is based on the idea of a region, that is, on a limited number of states geographically linked and with a high degree of interdependence between them. In international relations, it can be understood as a supranational subsystem of the international system or as an emerging regional formation with its own dynamics." (Serrano, 2008). For the existence and continuation of a regional integration system, there must be triggering factors deeply linked to the history of that region, factors such as wars and economic depressions, among others, that have marked its community. As humans, trying not to repeat the history that caused harmful consequences in the past is the perfect opportunity for an integration mechanism to be fruitful; likewise, maintaining situations of positive collaboration can also help to strengthen integrative bonds. As an example, we can consider Europe, a region that, after years of war and social and economic conflicts that gravely affected the continent, has been able to establish the European Union, a project that seeks collaboration among its member states with the most important objective: to ensure that its harmful history does not repeat itself. In fact, since the creation of the EU, the European continent has been experiencing its longest period of peace in history.

Currently, many countries have achieved different forms of integration, some being more advanced than others in commercial, political, social, and economic aspects. In the economic sphere, different levels of regional integration can be defined as:

- A preferential trade agreement establishes favorable commercial conditions among them, usually in the form of tariff reductions or the elimination of trade barriers.
- Free trade zone: elimination of tariffs among member countries
- Customs union: common tariff against third countries.
- Common market: free movement of goods, services, people, and capital.
- Economic union: integration of economic and monetary policies.

In the political sphere:

- Political union: creation of a supranational state.

An example of a regional integration system that has evolved is the European Union, which had its beginnings with the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1950 among France, West Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium, and the Netherlands to promote a common market among the states. In 1957, the European Economic Community was established through the Treaty of Rome, with new members joining, including Portugal, Denmark, Spain, the United Kingdom, and Greece. The organization's structure already contained organs of great importance for the existence of deeper integration, including the European Parliament, the European Commission, the European Court of Justice, and the Council of Ministers. In 1992, with the Maastricht Treaty, a giant step was taken towards the presence not only of a mechanism for economic integration but also one of political cooperation with the creation of the European Union, which was driven by the implementation of a single currency for all member countries: the euro. According to Perrota (2013), the process of European integration emerged as a response to a historical challenge where sovereign states faced the question of how to establish a balance of power in the region after recurrent conflicts. This leads to the understanding that the triggering factor for the existence of an integrative system in Europe is the enmity experienced by the states during the tragic wars that lasted for decades on the continent. On the other hand, around the world, the desire for integration among states begins to emerge. In Latin America, ALALC (Latin American Free Trade Association); in the Middle East, the Arab League; and in Africa, the Organization of African Unity.

1.2.2 Historical Background of the African Region

From the 8th century onwards, several empires were formed in the African region that undoubtedly laid the foundations of what the African region is today. The Ghana Empire, which encompassed the territories we now know as Senegal and Mauritania, controlled the trade routes of salt and gold. Next, the Mali Empire was consolidated from the 13th to the 16th centuries, becoming a much larger empire with great economic power and considered one of the most prosperous empires in West Africa. It exercised control over Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, and Guinea, with the majority of gold traded in Africa, Europe, and Asia coming directly from this empire. Subsequently, the Songhai Empire, with great Islamic influence, had its beginning in the 15th century and continued until the 16th century. On the other hand, the Ethiopian Empire, consolidated in what is now Ethiopia and Eritrea, played an important role in promoting Christianity on the continent.

The first historical precedent that deeply marked the African people was slavery. Ilife (2013) argues that most of Africa had its first contact with the outside world through the slave trade. Before the arrival of the European continent, there were already defined slave trade routes on the continent, connecting sub-Saharan Africa with the Middle East and North Africa. There were also slave trade routes to America to work mainly on plantations established by African empires and Arab traders. In the 16th century, with the colonization of America by Spain and Portugal and the desire to acquire the great wealth of raw materials that the American continent possessed, attention was focused on Africa to meet their need for labor. "Thus begins an incessant flow that will last four hundred years, in which millions of Africans will compulsively cross the Atlantic Ocean on slave ships to later be sold to the colonizers of America." (Sierra, 2010). The consequences of slavery on the African population led to a sense of betrayal, as the introduction of firearms on the continent caused many sovereigns to exchange these goods for slaves, intervening in their villages and tribes to exploit their trade. Sierra (2010) also argues that the slave trade resulted in

stagnation, and it could even be said to be a setback in economic terms for the African continent. Sectors such as agriculture, textile industry, mining, handicrafts, ceramics, and local trade experienced a gradual decline as they shifted towards a more profitable activity: the export of people.

At the same time that the process of enslavement in Africa was taking place, between the 15th and 19th centuries, there was a phase of exploration of the African continent by the European continent to locate and identify the mineral wealth of the continent and discover new maritime routes for trade with India. Wabgou (2012) and Malamud (n.d.) assert that the massive African colonization that spanned from 1885 to 1957 resulted in the violation of human rights, interference in territories and traditional political structures, the disintegration of almost all traditional forms of political organization, the suppression and obstruction of autochthonous socio-political structures, and the establishment of total dominance, among other devastating impacts.

The explorations on the continent ended in the 19th century, when European powers decided to meet in Berlin to reach agreements and design joint strategies to overcome their conflicts and rivalries in African territory. Thus, the Berlin Conference (1884–February 1885) was born. Among them, Germany, France, Great Britain, and Portugal played central roles during the conference, leading to decisions about the future of Africa being made without considering the interests of African societies or their social, cultural, economic, and political characteristics. (Wabgou, 2012). Several colonies were established by different European states; Britain established its colonial power in Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Ghana and had influence in Sudan and Egypt. On the other hand, in the territories of Algeria, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Cameroon, and Madagascar, it was France that dominated its colonial system; Portugal had colonies in Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, São Tomé, and Príncipe. Italy in Eritrea, Somalia, and Libya. Germany's colonial power on the African continent was brief; however, it had colonies in Togoland, Namibia, Cameroon, and some areas of Tanzania.

After World War II, the weakening of European powers paved the way for the process of decolonization in Africa during the 1950s, marking the first African independence in Libya in 1951 and Ghana in 1957. This period of decolonization extended until the 1970s. "Through this process, African populations cease to be integrated into a position of subordination in the imperialist structure of the international system configured in the 19th century. At the same time, they become part, theoretically on an equal footing, of the cessation of hostilities in Algeria and the recognition of its independence. This event marked a step towards dialogue about the integration of independent African countries. Subsequently, in 1961, the King of Morocco convened the Casablanca Conference, intending to deepen the idea of regional integration in Africa.

This conference led to the creation of various institutions aimed at promoting cooperation and integration among the countries of the continent, which in turn reflected the momentum towards greater collaboration and unity among African states. In the same year, once again, the Brazzaville conference resumed its discussion and proposed the creation of a pan-African federation, emphasizing several fundamental principles, among which equality among states, respect for the sovereignty of each country, and non-interference in the internal affairs of other states stood out. In 1963, with all the African countries that had achieved independence present, a conference was held between the two currents in Ethiopia, where it was agreed to establish the first pan-African organization known as the "Organization of African Unity" (OAU).

This is how the OAU came to be established in 1963, an organization where Iglesias (2017) states it was adjusted to the demands that arose in the context of African independence, focusing especially on the challenges to maintain the stability of the borders that had been inherited from the colonial period. The OAU Charter was initially signed by 32 states, and during its validity period, another 21 countries joined the organization, resulting in the majority of African states being part of it. Due to its historical context, although the OAU laid the foundations for the beginning of an integration system in Africa, its influence was very superficial among the newly independent states. Due to its historical context, although the OAU laid the foundations for the beginning of an integration system in Africa, its influence was very superficial among the newly independent states.

The OAU was established in 1963 as an organization, and Okello (2014) asserts that it adjusted to the demands arising in the context of African independence, focusing especially on the challenges of maintaining the stability of the borders inherited from the colonial period. The OAU Charter was initially signed by 32 states, and during its validity period, another 21 countries joined the organization, resulting

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The Organization of African Unity created several main organs to develop its functions and objectives, such as the Council of Ministers, the Assembly of Heads of States and Governments, and a General Secretariat. The main objectives of the organization were to eradicate colonialism in its entirety, promote fraternity and unity among African countries, guarantee sovereignty, and strengthen actions for the welfare of the African community system of states of European origin (Serrano C., 2000). Although the African region came to be considered independent of European rule, Africa was geographically fragmented by the hand of Europe, and this in turn led to internal ethnic, social, and political conflicts in the region such as civil wars and a hard time maintaining adequate support for the new independent states. The former British colonies in Africa underwent a relatively peaceful decolonization process, but regarding the former French colonies such as Algeria, Cameroon, and Nigeria, the independence mechanism was violent due to coercive measures towards the independence movements. In the case of Algeria, its independence war was long-lasting and with fatal consequences of violence, lasting almost eight years, from 1954 to 1962. In 1960, a meeting was held in Brazzaville, in the Republic of Congo, where representatives from twelve former French colonies participated. The primary objective of this meeting was to formalize a request to France for t.

In 1789, with the French Revolution, there was a crucial moment for the evolution of the state, where sovereignty no longer resided in the monarch but in the people. Constitutional documents were also created, which not only influenced the formation of the national state in France but also the political and legislative creation of other states in different parts of the world. According to Quijano (2014), the Eurocentric power model was established as a standard for all populations. The dominant Eurocentric cognitive perspective promoted the widespread adoption of the same institutions and the pursuit of homogeneity in all areas. This helps to understand why many countries, in their quest for regional integration, would look to Europe as a reference for the design and development of an integrative project.

The idea of regional integration gradually emerged with different events that sought to establish dialogue between countries for agreements, alliances, and the creation of common objectives. Empires can be considered as a precedent for regionalism; these were enduring systems of organization, exercising their power and control over various extents of territory. Their form of government centered on the highest authority, from which administrations were delegated to specifically control each assigned section of territory. There were empires around the world with significant influence in their territories, including the Roman Empire, the Mongol Empire, the Aztec Empire, and the Inca Empire in America, among others.

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Regional Integration

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Historical Background of the African Region

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control over Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, and Guinea, with the majority of gold traded in Africa, Europe, and Asia coming directly from this empire. Subsequently, the Songhai Empire, with great Islamic influence, had its beginning in the 15th century until the 16th century. On the other hand, the Ethiopian Empire, consolidated in what is now Ethiopia and Eritrea, played an important role in promoting Christianity on the continent.

The first historical precedent that deeply marked the African people was slavery. Illife (2013) argues that most of Africa had its first contact with the outside world through the slave trade. Before the arrival of the European continent, there were already defined slave trade routes on the continent, connecting sub-Saharan Africa with the Middle East and North Africa. There were also slave trade routes to America to work mainly on plantations established by African empires and Arab traders. From the 16th century, with the colonization of America by Spain and Portugal, with the desire to acquire the great wealth of raw materials that the American continent possessed, attention was focused on Africa to meet their need for labor. "Thus begins an incessant flow that would last four hundred years, in which millions of Africans will compulsively cross the Atlantic Ocean on slave ships to later be sold to the colonizers of America." (Sierra, 2010). The consequences of slavery on the African population led to a sense of betrayal, as the introduction of firearms on the continent caused many sovereigns to exchange these goods for slaves, intervening in their villages and tribes to exploit their trade.

Sierra (2010) also argues that the slave trade resulted in stagnation, and it could even be said a setback in economic terms for the African continent. Sectors such as agriculture, textile industry, mining, handicrafts, ceramics, and local trade experienced a gradual decline, as they shifted towards a more profitable activity: the export of people.

At the same time that the process of enslavement in Africa was taking place, between the 15th and 19th centuries, there was a phase of exploration of the African continent by the European continent to locate and identify the mineral wealth of the continent and discover new maritime routes for trade with India. Wabgou (2012) Malamud (n.d.) asserts that the massive African colonization that spanned from 1885 to 1957 resulted in the violation of human rights, interference in territories and traditional political structures, the disintegration of almost all traditional forms of political organization, the suppression and obstruction of autochthonous socio-political structures, and the establishment of total dominance, among other devastating impacts.

The explorations on the continent ended in the 19th century when European powers decided to meet in Berlin to reach agreements and design joint strategies to overcome their conflicts and rivalries in African territory. Thus, the Berlin Conference (1884 and February 1885) was born. Among them, Germany, France, Great Britain, and Portugal played central roles during the conference, leading to decisions about the future of Africa being made without considering the interests of African societies or their social, cultural, economic, and political characteristics. (Wabgou, 2012). Different European states established several colonies; Britain established its colonial power in Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Ghana, and had influence in Sudan and Egypt.

On the other hand, in the territories of Algeria, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Cameroon, and Madagascar it was France who dominated its colonial system; Portugal had colonies in Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe. Italy in Eritrea, Somalia, and Libya. Germany's colonial power in the African continent was brief, however, it had colonies in Togoland, Namibia, Cameroon, and some areas of Tanzania.

After the Second World War, the weakening of European powers paved the way for the process of decolonization in Africa during the 1950s, marking the first African independence; Libya in 1951 and Ghana in 1957. This period of decolonization extended until the 1970s. "Through this process, African populations cease to be integrated into a position of subordination in the imperialist structure of the international system configured in the 19th century. And at the same time, they become part, theoretically on an equal footing, of the system of states of European origin" (Serrano C., 2000). Although the African region came to be considered independent of European rule, Africa was geographically fragmented by the hand of Europe, and this in turn led to internal ethnic, social, and political conflicts in the region such as civil wars and a hard instability to maintain adequate support

for the new independent states. The former British colonies in Africa underwent a decolonization process considered relatively peaceful. However, for former French colonies such as Algeria, Cameroon, and Nigeria, the path to independence was violent due to coercive measures against independence movements. Nonetheless, Durez (2019) states that after the decolonization process, France established strong ties with its former colonies in sub-Saharan Africa through cooperation agreements in economic, cultural, and military areas.

In the case of Algeria, its independence war was long-lasting and with fatal consequences of violence, lasting almost eight years, from 1954 to 1962. In 1960, a meeting was held in Brazzaville, in the Republic of Congo, where representatives from twelve former French colonies participated. The primary objective of this meeting was to formalize a request to France for the cessation of hostilities in Algeria and the recognition of its independence; this event marked a step towards dialogue about the integration of independent African countries. Subsequently, in 1961, the King of Morocco convened the Casablanca Conference intending to deepen the idea of regional integration in Africa. Benavides (2012) argues that integration in Africa is a long-standing process, whose origins date back to ideologies and political orientations that emerged even before the era of decolonization.

This conference led to the creation of various institutions aimed at promoting cooperation and integration among the countries of the continent, which in turn reflected the momentum towards greater collaboration and unity among African states. In the same year, once again the Brazzaville conference resumed its discussion and proposed the creation of a Pan-African federation emphasizing several fundamental principles, among which equality among states, respect for the sovereignty of each country, and non-interference in the internal affairs of other states stood out. In 1963, with all the African countries that had achieved independence present, a conference was held between the two currents in Ethiopia, where it was agreed to establish the first Pan-African organization known as the "Organization of African Unity" (OAU).

The OAU was established in 1963, an organization where Okello (2014) asserts it adjusted to the demands arising in the context of African independence, focusing especially on the challenges of maintaining the stability of the borders inherited from the colonial period. The OAU Charter was initially signed by 32 states, and during its validity period, another 21 countries joined the organization, resulting in the majority of African states being part of it. Due to its historical context, although the OAU delimited the foundations for the beginning of an integration system in Africa, its influence was very superficial among the newly independent states. The Organization of African Unity created several main organs to develop its functions and objectives such as the Council of Ministers, the Assembly of Heads of States and Governments, and a General Secretariat; the main objectives of the organization were: to eradicate colonialism in its entirety, to promote fraternity and unity among African countries, to guarantee sovereignty, and to strengthen actions for the welfare of the African community. Herrera (2014) argues that despite the OAU's efforts to promote unity among the different independent states in their struggle for national liberation, it is important to take actions that go beyond the political realm.

The aforementioned will lead the African region to optimize and reform the OAU. Thus, in 1999, at the IV Extraordinary Summit held in Sirte, several measures were adopted to strengthen and adapt the organization to the new contemporary challenges facing the continent. The Sirte Declaration outlined several objectives, including enabling the organization to play a more dynamic role in meeting the needs of the population, striving to eradicate the development of conflicts, mobilizing the continent's human and natural resources to improve living conditions, and implementing the objectives described in the Charter of the Organization of African Unity and the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community (AEC). The latter would allow the consolidation of various institutions, such as the African Court of Justice, the Pan-African Parliament, and the African Central Bank. With the planned reforms, in 2000, at the V Extraordinary Summit of the OAU, through a unanimous decision by the region's heads of state and government, the creation of the African Union was initiated.

Solange (2018) argues that the objectives of the African Union reflect those of the OAU but are broader in scope. The OAU has fulfilled its purpose and must be replaced by an entity better equipped to address the contemporary needs of the African continent. The objectives of the African Union set out in the Constitutive Act of 2010 are:

- Achieve greater unity and solidarity between African countries and the peoples of Africa.
- Accelerate the political and socioeconomic integration of the continent.
- Promote and defend common African positions on issues of interest to the entire continent and its peoples.
- Stimulate international cooperation, duly taking into account the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Promote peace, security, and stability on the continent.
- Promote democratic principles and institutions, popular participation, and good governance.
- Promote and protect human rights following the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and other relevant instruments.
- Create the necessary conditions that enable the continent to play its rightful role in the global economy and international negotiations.
- Promote sustainable development in economic, social, and cultural spheres, as well as the integration of African economies.
- Promote cooperation in all spheres of human activity to raise the living standards of African peoples.
- Coordinate and harmonize the policies of regional economic communities to achieve the gradual attainment of the Union's objectives.
- Foster the development of the continent by promoting research in all fields, particularly science and technology.

According to the official website of the African Union, the AU is considered a continental organization composed of the 55 member states that encompass all the countries in the region. It was officially founded in July 2002 in Durban, South Africa, becoming the successor to the Organization of African Unity. African leaders reached a crucial consensus: to unlock the continent's maximum potential, it was essential to broaden the focus beyond the struggle for colonial independence, the protection of human rights, and the elimination of apartheid. The African Union must also move towards closer cooperation and integration of the continent's countries to actively promote economic growth and the overall development of Africa.

The African Union achieves its objectives through several main active participatory bodies. At the decision-making level, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government acts as the principal organ, followed by the Executive Council, the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC), the Specialized Technical Committees (STC), 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, and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) (African Union, n.d.). On the other hand, among the bodies in charge of judicial, legal, and human rights issues are the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (AfCHPR), the AU Commission on International Law (AUCIL), the Advisory Board on Corruption (AUBC), and the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

In the field of education, Carretero (2022) mentions that the improvements in this field are quite significant due to the reduction of the illiteracy rate; the author suggests that with the help of international organizations such as UNESCO, the African region can reach 100% literacy in this century.

On the other hand, in the economic and financial spheres, the African Union has established three key financial institutions to strengthen it. These institutions will promote effective socio-economic development by facilitating the appropriate mobilization of resources and promoting the expected development of this sector. Among these bodies are the African Monetary Fund (AMF), which aims to promote the integration of African economies through the elimination of trade barriers and the promotion of greater monetary unification. On the other hand, the African Investment Bank (AIB) will pursue relevant objectives about regional investment activities in the public and private sectors by making resources available to establish sustainable investment projects. It is important to emphasize that the AIB will provide the necessary technical assistance in each member state for the proper implementation of these projects. Finally, the African Central Bank (ACB) will focus on creating an African monetary policy that can propose the establishment of a single currency throughout the continent.

In addition to the above, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCTFA), which can be considered the largest economic integration zone in the world in terms of the number of participating

countries, is of great relevance in the economic sphere. It is undoubtedly one of the most important projects that the AU has established to achieve its prosperous path towards integration. As of June 2020, 54 countries have joined the agreement, leaving only Eritrea out of the initiative. This demonstrates a broad consensus among African states regarding this emblematic project, which aims at the economic integration of the entire continent, encompassing not only trade but also investment and the mobility of people (African Union, n.d.). Bidaurratzaga et al. (2021) analyze that the creation of this free trade area offers a wide potential for the entire continent in various aspects; it is expected to contribute to the increase in low levels of trade between African countries, as well as the improvement of conditions and opportunities for women, the diversification of the productive structures of the economies of the countries of the region, and the generation of higher value-added employment by integrating into global or regional value chains. As an example of how the African Union intends to take advantage of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) in its relationship with other continents, such as the European Union, Kuditchar (2022) notes that African elites intend to use the AfCFTA in collaboration with European institutions to profit from natural resources.

Furthermore, it is significant to mention the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in the field of African integration. Pasaje (2020) argues that after the failures experienced by African governments to address the challenges of underdevelopment, broader solutions were sought with the creation of regional groupings. Given that Africa is a vast region, both geographically and culturally, the inclusion of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in the AU integration system gives this body a unique quality compared to other integration systems. The RECs represent institutions with specific objectives for each area of the African continent, thus addressing their particular needs and playing a fundamental role in promoting cooperation among all member states. For Pereyra (2007), the Regional Economic Communities are the fundamental pillars of the AU. Eight regional economic communities can be distinguished:

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

Since its foundation, ECOWAS has been able to promote the free movement of people and goods among its member countries, the elimination of several trade barriers, and a harmony of political coordination. In addition, it is important to mention the creation of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), created in 1994 by 7 ECOWAS member states, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo; these states have come to achieve a common monetary union, the CFA Franc. "The success of WAEMU is mainly due to the creation of the Central Bank, which prevails over the national authorities at the financial and monetary levels. In return, member states benefit from stable and non-inflationary monetary policies" (Felix, n.d.). With this, it can be understood how central institutions that play a general role in the African Union, such as the Central Bank, have a very important role within the institutions with more specific functions, which contributes to the regional integration process harmoniously and realistically.

Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)

It has 11 member countries: Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Angola. Its main objectives are the elimination of taxes and the consolidation of free traffic of goods, services, and people (African Union, 2023).

The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)

Its focus is mainly commercial, and it is considered a customs union made up of 21 countries. It has an estimated population of approximately 406 million inhabitants and covers an area of about 12.8 million square kilometers (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, 2023).

East African Community (EAC)

It is made up of seven member states: Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda, Somalia, and South Sudan. It has achieved several objectives in areas such as health, infrastructure, education, and tourism. It has also achieved the establishment of a customs union by its member states (African Union, 2023).

Arab Maghreb Union (AMU)

It has five member states in North Africa: Morocco, Mauritania, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya. Although its development has not reached its full potential due to differences among the member states, the AMU's main objective is economic and political cooperation among them, as well as the strengthening of the Maghreb community. (African Union, 2023).

Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD)

It covers the Sahel-Sahara region and thus has 29 member countries. The organization focuses on addressing the shared challenges faced by the Sahel-Saharan countries while promoting regional integration to improve the living conditions of its citizens. (African Union, 2023).

Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)

According to IGAD's official website, its development framework focuses on sustainable management and conservation of biodiversity resources in the context of agriculture and environment, promotion of health and social development, implementation of tools to sustain peace and security, corporate development services, and economic cooperation (African Union, 2023).

Southern African Development Community (SADC)

Sixteen members are part of the organization: Angola, Botswana, Comoros, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, the Seychelles, South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. According to its website, its primary objectives are to achieve economic development, peace, and security, promote growth, reduce poverty, raise the standard of living and quality of life of the people of Southern Africa, and support socially disadvantaged groups through regional integration. These aims will be realized through enhanced regional integration based on democratic principles and equitable and sustainable development (African Union, 2023).

Regional integration in Africa is undoubtedly one of the most significant at the global level in terms of the number of countries involved and the diverse demographic conditions it encompasses. Given the vast territorial extension of the region, it is logical to implement Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as a key strategy, which would not only facilitate greater control over each regional economic community but would also contribute significantly to the achievement of the objectives set by the African Union. The inclusion of countries in RECs, whether in different geographical areas, allows for a gradual evolution that can be better adapted to the economic, political, and social realities of each region. As mentioned by Chrisia et al. (2014), regional communities in Africa can bring about much-needed economic development, and true integration must embrace globalization as a real phenomenon of great influence on development.

As seen above, the African Union has considerable potential to become a thriving regional integration system. Its internal mechanisms have evolved for the benefit of each region, and it is safe to say that Africa's historical background has contributed significantly to its progress to date.

2. Methods

For the research of this systematic literature review article, the methodology called PRISMA 2020 will be used. This methodology was developed to assist authors in clearly documenting the rationale for the review, the actions taken during the process, and the results obtained (Page et al., 2020). The PRISMA guidelines establish the use of a set of elements intended to ensure the completeness and transparency of a systematic literature review article, which in total consist of 27 items. However, due to its length, this paper will focus on the elements considered of greatest relevance, which will be detailed below.

2.1.1 Eligibility Criteria

The eligibility criteria selected for this research article include the type of document, the language (Spanish and English), and the relevance of the content concerning the topic analyzed in this research

project. Priority will be given to documents that provide information that contributes to the development and substantiation of this specific research.

2.1.2 Sources of Information

To obtain relevant information on the topic of analysis, searches will be conducted in various bibliographic databases, including Scopus, Scielo, Web of Science, and Research Gate. In addition, significant articles related to the topic will be identified using the Google Scholar search engine. This strategy will ensure that a wide range of relevant studies will be obtained and will contribute to the reliability of the article in all its sections.

It is essential to mention that, to objectively classify the articles found, a matrix has been designed in Excel which allows organizing the different search strings used in bibliographic databases, as well as the most important data of each document, such as title, author, year of publication, DOI or ISSN and abstract; this tool will facilitate the good follow-up of the eligibility criteria mentioned above and, at the same time, the exclusion of documents that do not provide relevant information for the research.

2.1.3 Search strategy

To obtain the search strategy, search strings were created with words relevant to the topic of analysis. In the bibliographic databases of Scopus and Scielo, three search strings were used: African Union, African Union Integration, and African History. While in Web of Science, only two strings were used: African Union and African Union Integration. A total of 23 documents were found with the three search strings in Scopus, 149 documents in Scielo, 764 in Web of Science, and 37 in Search Gate. On the other hand, the most relevant documents were obtained through Google Scholar in the same way with the three search strings mentioned above, but with more specific words; a total of 42 documents were collected.

2.1.4 Selection Process

The selection process to determine whether the documents found met the established criteria was carried out in several stages. First, an initial review of the summaries of the documents was carried out to classify them preliminarily. Then, those selected were subjected to a more detailed and analytical review, considering all the information contained in them. Finally, additional classifications were made to organize them so that they could be useful in the various sections that make up the research article.

2.1.5 Assessment of the risk of study bias

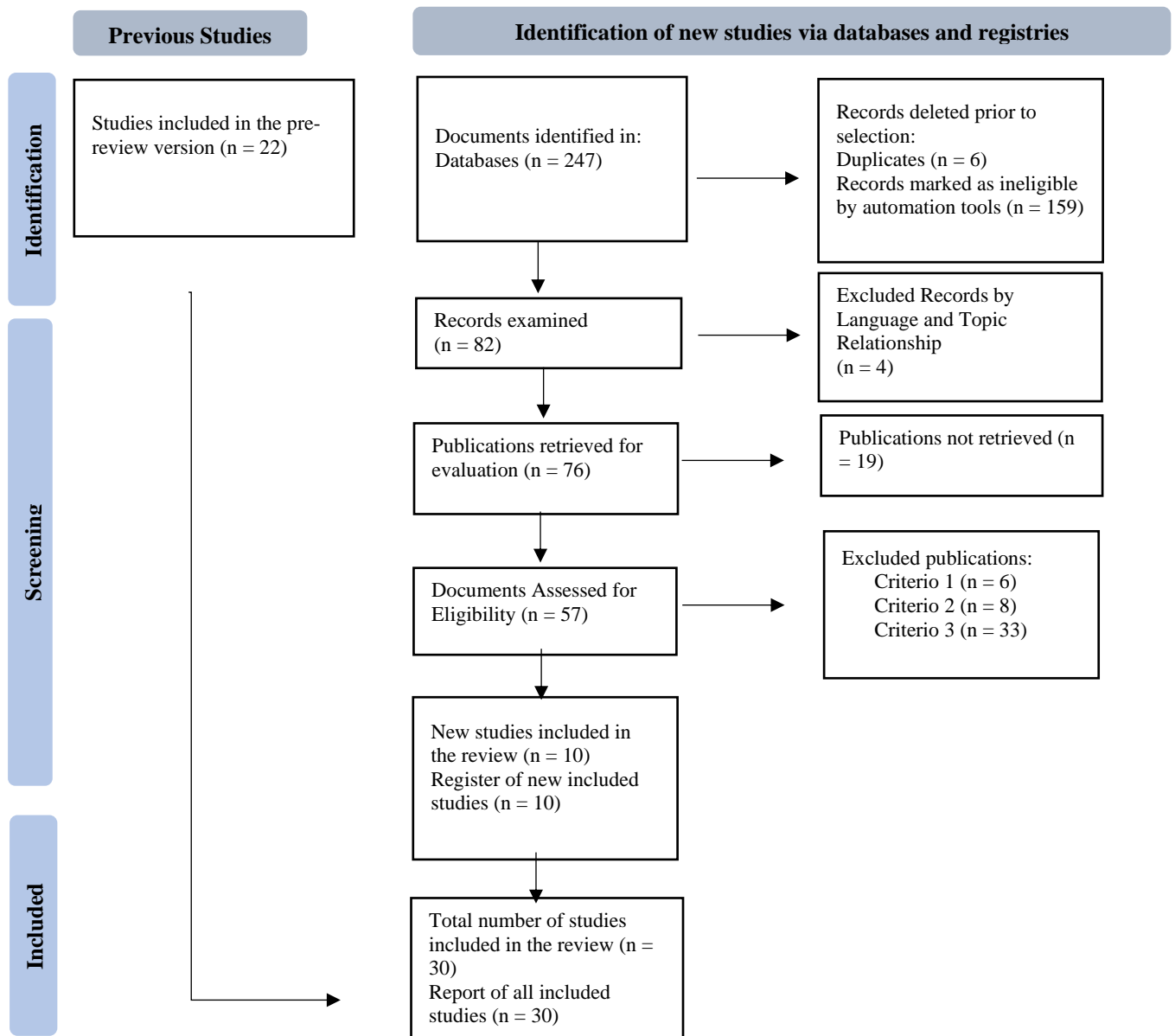
At the time of the information search in bibliographic databases, it was observed that they yielded documents that had no relevance to the topic of analysis, therefore, the Google Scholar search engine was used as a tool to find more specific documents to be discussed in this research article.

2.1.6 Research Results

The search for information yielded relevant documents in Spanish and English to be adequately incorporated in this article. After classifying the documents considered suitable in the Excel matrix previously elaborated with the documents collected from the aforementioned bibliographic databases, a total of 30 relevant articles were identified. This in turn will facilitate the effective development of the various sections of the article and more importantly for the presentation of the relevant results.

Table 1 below shows the selection process of the bibliographic documents.

Figure 1.
PRISMA Flowchart



Note: Elaboration based on Page et al. (2021)

3. Results

Since its establishment in 2002, the African Union has succeeded in meeting defined objectives in the various areas that are an intrinsic part of an integration system. The AU has focused primarily on addressing human rights, peace, and security issues throughout its management to date, with secondary focuses on the political and economic contexts. Due to the continent's background in its post-colonial era, the African region has faced a series of internal conflicts, including the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 and several civil wars in countries such as Somalia, Angola, and Liberia, these events have underscored the need for sustainable development to be based on security, peace and human rights stability as fundamental principles. However, the current and future vision of the AU aims to deepen different factors such as economic and political factors to achieve true regional integration.

To obtain a clear vision of the objectives achieved by the African Union, two general periods will be considered. The first period covers the period from 2002 to 2012 where the objectives achieved by the AU will be explained. The second period, from 2013 to 2023, will consider an analysis of five member countries with different internal situations according to various guidelines set out in the African Union's Agenda 2063.

Period 2002-2012

In 2003, one year after the establishment of the African Union, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) was created, where member states undergo a mutual evaluation of their governance, socio-economic development, and policy adoption, among other relevant points. Currently, 38 countries are members and any state belonging to the African Union can join voluntarily.

For Kebonang and Fombad (2006) although the mere existence of the APRM or its expectation of transparent assessment as part of it will not be able to put an end to bad governance in its entirety, they can certainly reduce the severity of the abuses that have plagued many African countries. On the other hand, Escusa (2011) notes that the APRM is still maturing in its development and has a truly continental dimension where different states from North Africa, Southern, and West Africa are part of it. In contrast, Herberd and Gruz (2008) criticize the APRM for the slowness in the evaluation process of each country and point out that the administrative and technical process has been contradictory and ill-defined at times. Makotsi et al (2021) recommends that member states should look for ways to make the process more inclusive, including non-state actors such as former diplomats, academics, and people specializing in governance and African international relations.

Subsequently, in 2004 the Pan-African Parliament was established, although the objective of the institution is to have legislative powers for its actions, for the moment it has advisory powers, budgetary oversight, and consultation giving a space for citizens of all African countries to be involved in discussions and decisions on the problems and challenges affecting the continent (Pan-African Parliament, 2022). Amadi (2016) notes that the Pan-African Parliament is the only parliamentary body that has been able to achieve a significant place in the history of the region and although the institution is still grappling with several challenges, the achievements it has made are because of its mission to be a true catalyst for the advancement of democratic ideals in Africa. He further asserts that, if it continues at this pace of development, the Pan-African Parliament can go a long way in making a difference in Africa's democratic path. On the other hand, Borarinwa (2015) relates the African Parliament as a weak structure for the consolidation of the continent's democracy and requires a commitment to strengthen its institutional capacity.

An important milestone to mention in the economic and commercial aspect, is the establishment of a Customs Union by the East African Community (EAC) in 2005, as mentioned above EAC is part of the regional economic communities part of the African Union. The main objective of the creation of the Customs Union is to facilitate trade between EAC member countries, where their products can move freely without paying import or export taxes, and establish a common external tariff (East African Community, 2022). Matte (2019) analyzes that the EAC, although it has had significant progress in increasing trade for member states, faces slow decision-making by member states, making it difficult to execute regional decisions. Yiblet (2024) asserts that it is important to aggressively encourage state participation in true trade integration by leveraging the collective strengths of governments, the private sector, and civil society for the continued resilience and sustainability of the EAC. Dobronogov et al (2012) state that the main reason

that there cannot be feasible economic development in the EAC is that three of the five member states are landlocked. On the other hand, Drummond (2015) emphasizes the economic development that EAC members possess thanks to their possession of natural resources such as gas and oil, the income from these must be carefully monitored to avoid creating macroeconomic imbalances. Concerning the EAC Customs Union, Rauschendorfer and Twum (2020) conclude that there is high domestic market protection by Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania which implies that the common external tariff is becoming increasingly unusual, posing a threat to the potential of the customs union.

In 2008 it was proposed to launch a free trade area between three regional economic communities: the East African Community (EAC), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), called the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) and by 2015 it was officially established (East African Community, 2021). Shinyewa and Othieno (2011) assert that the TFTA should provide a mechanism to finance economic development and compensate members who have lost revenue from tariffs and the most underdeveloped economies. Albagoury and Anber (2018) agree that TFTA gains have not been distributed equitably among the states, the most beneficiary nations being South Africa and Egypt because of their economic structural characteristics. For Onyango (2020) the TFTA despite its slow ratification process has achieved great progress in the establishment of negotiation modalities, in its structures, rules, and guidelines such as the liberalization of tariff lines and the elimination of non-tariff barriers to trade.

By 2009, COMESA, another regional economic community, decided to establish a Customs Union to facilitate internal trade among its member countries (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, 2024). Endale and Taddesse (2019) point out that, although states employed specific commitments to establish this customs union, they face several challenges such as limited trade diversity, economic heterogeneity, revenue loss from import and export taxes, lack of political commitment, and poor infrastructure. Conversely, Belete (2015) argues that the growth of trade within COMESA's customs union depends on improving the production of goods and services through the establishment of strong institutions, good governance, and both domestic and foreign investment.

Period 2013-2023

The official AU website claims that in 2013, on the fiftieth anniversary of the OAU, African leaders recognized the need to shift and focus Africa's agenda beyond the struggle against apartheid and the attainment of political independence, which had been the main objectives of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the predecessor of the African Union. Instead, they centered on priorities such as inclusive social and economic development, continental and regional integration, democratic governance, peace, and security, among other issues. These efforts were aimed at repositioning Africa as a prominent player on the global stage. Thus, in 2015, Agenda 2063 was born, outlining various scenarios for proactive delineation of possible achievements of this regional integration system over 50 years. This project is being implemented through ten-year implementation plans (FTYIP, in English), which entail the execution of a total of five ten-year plans. The first of these plans was developed from 2013 to 2023 (African Union, 2023).

For Agenda 2063 to be effective, Ndizera and Muzee (2018) recommend addressing certain concerns related to the persistence of sovereignty by some countries. These countries must be willing and committed to undertaking relevant actions to carry out internal socioeconomic restructuring. They also suggest that the guidelines of the Agenda be communicated to the entire African community. Often, these projects are only known by the societal elite, while ordinary citizens are left to bear the consequences of decisions made on their behalf. Therefore, it is essential for citizens to actively engage and take ownership of these projects.

Additionally, Pérez (2020) highlights the significant value of Agenda 2063 from both a scientific and practical perspective. This agenda not only identifies critical factors essential for achieving the established objectives but also develops strategies to address threats and risks throughout the region. Despite being a project in progress, there is a recognized lack of comprehensive assessment of costs and benefits for national governments regarding continental integration. Furthermore, growing exploitation by external actors, such as transnational corporations, and concerns over African countries' external debt are noted. Despite these challenges, the author welcomes the initiative of this project as an opportunity to tackle

the continent's major challenges. Mlambo et al. (2022) assert that the AU's Agenda 2063 is crucial for ensuring a self-sustainable region. However, it is impossible not to notice that Africa has failed to consolidate collective economic development after colonization due to political instability, military coups, and lack of human rights guarantees. Although regional economic communities exist, they are fragmented and have not fulfilled their expected role. If state leaders do not work together for the continent's pro-development, Agenda 2063 will remain a utopia. Similarly, Opeyeoluwa and Fatokun (2022) urge decision-makers in Africa to take full responsibility for the implementation and success of Agenda 2063. If successful, Africa will demonstrate to the world its accountability for its development from within, not necessarily from outside.

Next, four guidelines outlined in the first ten-year plan of Agenda 2063 will be analyzed, taking into account five African countries with widely different internal development situations: Nigeria, Burundi, Rwanda, South Africa, and Somalia. The aim is to examine how the African Union, through measures adopted with tools such as Agenda 2063, has been able to achieve its predetermined objectives. The following results obtained will be discussed in the discussion section; thus, the tables in this section will be detailed purely qualitatively.

First guideline

Table 1

Real per capita income would be one-third higher than 2013 levels.

	2013	2022	2063
Nigeria	2976,8	2162,6	3969,07
Burundi	241,5	259	322
Ruanda	704,5	966,2	939,33
Sudáfrica	7441,2	6766,5	9921,6
Somalia	453,1	592,1	604,13

Note: Based on the official World Bank website, 2023.

Using the information provided in the table, it can be observed that in the year 2022, the countries of Burundi, Rwanda, and Somalia experienced growth in their per capita incomes, while Nigeria and South Africa recorded a decline. Additionally, the third column of the table shows the projected incomes that these five countries are expected to achieve according to the African Union's Agenda 2063.

Second guideline

Table 2.

GDP will grow by 7%.

	2013	2022	2063
Nigeria	6,7	3,3	7,40
Burundi	4,9	1,8	5,60
Ruanda	4,7	8,2	5,40
Sudáfrica	2,5	1,9	3,20
Somalia	7,5	2,4	8,250

Note: Based on the official World Bank website, 2023.

In this guideline, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of each country was taken. It can be seen that the only country that has been able to grow its GDP is Rwanda from 2013 to 2022, unlike the other four countries mentioned. In the third column, we can take the gross domestic product benchmarks that should be reached by 2063.

Third guideline

Table 3.*The incidence of hunger will be only 20% of 2023 levels.*

	2012-2014	2020-2022	2063
Nigeria	9,7	15,9	3,18
Ruanda	33	31,6	6,32
Sudáfrica	5,2	7,9	1,58
Somalia	64,2	48,7	9,74

Note: Based on the official website of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2023. Prevalence of undernutrition (%)

In this third guideline, the prevalence of undernutrition as a percentage was used as a reference to measure the incidence of hunger. It is important to note that Burundi does not appear in the table due to the lack of official data available to measure this parameter. The official website of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) provides a two-year range of data related to this guideline, as shown in the table.

In the table, it can be seen how Nigeria and South Africa have increased their undernutrition prevalence percentage from the period 2012 to 2014 to the period 2020 to 2022, while Rwanda and Somalia have reduced it. The column for the year 2063 shows the malnutrition prevalence percentages that each country is expected to achieve.

Fourth guideline

Tabla 4.*Job opportunities will be available to at least one in four job seekers.*

	2013	2020	2023
Nigeria	3,71	5,6	3,58
Burundi	1,57	1	0,86
Ruanda	11,8	11,8	14,95
Sudáfrica	22	24,3	28,4
Somalia	18,92	19,6	19,19

Note: Based on World Bank official website, 2024. Unemployment rate (%)

This guideline considers the unemployment rate in percentage of each country as a key factor, where three years were taken as the reference year 2013, year 2020 given the unemployment incidence caused by COVID-19, and year 2023. It is observed that Nigeria and Burundi experienced a decrease in their unemployment rate from the year 2013 to the year 2023. In contrast, Rwanda, South Africa, and Somalia experienced a percentage increase in their unemployment rate during the same period. This guideline will not have an insight until the year 2063 since there is no correct statistical technique to analyze it, so it will only be analyzed descriptively between the years 2013, 2020 and 2023.

As previously mentioned, the data in the tables will be analyzed in the discussion section in a way that is more congruent with the external and internal factors of each country and what is foreseen within Agenda 2063.

Omitola and Peace (2009) argue that African countries are naturally endowed with great economic potential. With the right mechanisms, effective programs to harness these resources, and the right political leadership to steer the affairs of the African Union, this vision will eventually become a reality. It may take many years, but it is certainly a step in the right direction. According to Agara and Edogiawerie (2023), the AU is an organization incapable of mediating existing conflicts on the continent because of its lack of power to intervene in its member states.

Concerning the future of the AU, Kouassi (2017) points out that the African community must have a progressive mentality, where the region leads its own social and economic development, always considering its external factors such as colonization, neocolonialism, globalization, and slave trade as main

points in its growth strategy. In addition, Balogun (2023) points out that two causes limit progress in the institutionalism of the AU and must be managed for its future development: internal political factors that influence the ability of leaders to manage their positions in the region and instability in the application of the norms and rules of this integration system. In terms of security, Check and Hlanyane (2021) determine that the trigger for insecurity challenges, such as the killing of people and the damage caused by wars, is due to the way the state is conceived. Therefore, to achieve future improvement, the continent's multilateral organizations need to reassess and structurally transform the state base in the region. Similarly, Jentzch (2014) notes that coordination between global and regional actors, duplication of structures, and waste of resources need to be addressed so that the AU and its sub-regional organizations can mobilize the necessary resources to support their peacekeeping operations. It is equally important for the AU to raise its funds through trade taxes. For Mackatiani et al. (2014) maintain that insecurity and instability in Africa are interlinked. They are linked to the weakness of states as sovereign powers and the limited capacity of state structures to maintain social and political order. If governance and leadership do not promote democracy, territorial integrity cannot be assured. Territorial integration leads to infrastructure diversification, business development, and wealth creation. In addition, the continent's natural resources attract developed countries to exploit these new resources and, in the process, fuel conflicts that threaten peace and development in Africa.

On the other hand, Chekol (2020) states that for the AU to evolve, there must be a genuine commitment from its member states to allow continuity of the ambitious objectives of this integration system. Tenaw (2024) also recommends that the AU strengthen its mediation capabilities, establish regional centers for dispute resolution, invest in the development of peacekeeping troops, and prioritize preventive diplomacy through active participation in early warning and mediation systems. On the trade front, Cofelice (2018) argues that the main challenges to realizing an African free trade area are inherently political rather than economic. The AfCFTA represents an opportunity for African countries to promote trade among themselves, diversify and structurally transform the continent's economy, and pursue significant human rights and anti-poverty objectives. However, harmonizing national priorities to achieve regional and global public goods will require strong political will, determination, and coordination efforts by African political leaders. On the other hand, Chekol (2020) affirms that for the AU to evolve, there must be a real commitment by its member states to allow continuity to the ambitious objectives of this integration system. Tenaw (2024) also recommends that the AU strengthen its mediation capabilities, establish regional centers for dispute resolution, invest in the development of peacekeeping troops, and prioritize preventive diplomacy through active participation in early warning and mediation systems. On the trade side, Cofelice (2018) argues that the main challenges to the realization of an African free trade area are intrinsically political rather than economic. The AfCFTA represents a window of opportunity for African countries to promote their trade with each other, diversify and structurally transform the continent's economy, and pursue important human rights and anti-poverty objectives. However, harmonizing national priorities to achieve regional and global public goods will require strong political will, determination, and coordination efforts by African political leaders.

As previously mentioned, the data in the tables will be analyzed in the discussion section in a way that is more congruent with the external and internal factors of each country and what is foreseen within Agenda 2063.

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Concerning the future of the AU, Kouassi (2017) points out that the African community must have a progressive mentality, where the region leads its own social and economic development, always considering its external factors such as colonization, neocolonialism, globalization, and slave trade as main points in its growth strategy. In addition, Balogun (2023) points out that two causes limit progress in the institutionalism of the AU and that must be managed for its future development: internal political factors that influence the ability of leaders to manage their positions in the region and instability in the application

of the norms and rules of this integration system. In terms of security, Check and Hlanyane (2021) determines that the trigger for insecurity challenges, such as the killing of people and the damage caused by wars, is due to the way the state is conceived. Therefore, to achieve future improvement, the continent's multilateral organizations need to reassess and structurally transform the state base in the region. Similarly, Jentzch (2014) notes that coordination between global and regional actors duplication of structures, and waste of resources need to be addressed so that the AU and its sub-regional organizations can mobilize the necessary resources to support their peacekeeping operations. It is equally important for the AU to raise its funds through trade taxes. For Mackatiani et al (2014) maintain that insecurity and instability in Africa are interlinked. They are linked to the weakness of states as sovereign powers and the limited capacity of state structures to maintain social and political order. If governance and leadership do not promote democracy, territorial integrity cannot be assured. Territorial integration leads to infrastructure diversification, business development, and wealth creation. In addition, the continent's natural resources attract developed countries to exploit these new resources and, in the process, fuel conflicts that threaten peace and development in Africa.

On the other hand, Chekol (2020) states that for the AU to evolve, there must be a genuine commitment from its member states to allow continuity of the ambitious objectives of this integration system. Tenaw (2024) also recommends that the AU strengthen its mediation capabilities and establish regional centers for dispute resolution, invest in the development of peacekeeping troops, and prioritize preventive diplomacy through active participation in early warning and mediation systems. On the trade front, Cofelice (2018) argues that the main challenges to realizing an African free trade area are inherently political rather than economic. The AfCFTA represents an opportunity for African countries to promote trade among themselves, diversify, and structurally transform the continent's economy, and pursue significant human rights and anti-poverty objectives. However, harmonizing national priorities to achieve regional and global public goods will require strong political will, determination, and coordination efforts by African political leaders. On the other hand, Chekol (2020) affirms that for the AU to evolve, there must be a real commitment by its member states to allow continuity to the ambitious objectives of this integration system. Tenaw (2024) also recommends that the AU should strengthen its mediation capabilities and establish regional centers for dispute resolution, invest in the development of peacekeeping troops and prioritize preventive diplomacy through active participation in early warning and mediation systems. On the trade side, Cofelice (2018) argues that the main challenges to the realization of an African free trade area are intrinsically political rather than economic. The AfCFTA represents a window of opportunity for African countries to promote their trade with each other, diversify and structurally transform the continent's economy, and pursue important human rights and anti-poverty objectives. However, harmonizing national priorities to achieve regional and global public goods will require strong political will, determination, and coordination efforts by African political leaders.

4. Discussion

With the information obtained in the results section through 30 bibliographic sources, it was possible to effectively develop the present research work. These bibliographic sources include books, articles, book sections, master's theses, and official web pages.

The results indicate that, during the first period addressed in the previous section, which spans from the creation of the African Union in 2002 to 2012, it has managed to establish the functioning of several entities within its structure:

African Peer Review Mechanism (2003)

The existence of the APRM cannot completely eradicate bad governance, but it can mitigate the severity of abuses of power that have affected numerous African countries (Kebonang and Fombad, 2006). Moreover, the APRM continues to progress and has a truly continental dimension (Escusa,2011). In contrast, Herberd and Gruz (2008) see the APRM with shortcomings in the administrative processes and the evaluation process. The APRM is an innovative initiative, however, it needs to take more strategic steps to facilitate the logistics of its processes.

African Parliament (2004)

Amadi (2016) relates parliament as a path to democratic development in Africa and has been a parliamentary body with positive development. On the contrary, Borinwa (2015) considers parliament as a weak institution with institutional incapacity. If parliament in the future can get full legislative powers to pass and create laws in the AU, it would have much more weight within the AU.

East African Community Customs Union (2005)

Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania are highly protective of their domestic market, making it difficult to have a common external tariff, which is a threat to the customs union (Raushendofer and Twum, 2020). For true trade integration to exist, the strengths of governments and the private sector must be leveraged (Yible, 2024). In addition, the natural resources that countries possess present a great opportunity if their revenues are properly monitored (Drummond, 2015). The EAC Customs Union needs a deeper commitment from states so that there can be alignment with trade policies.

Free Trade Area - TFTA (2008)

For Albagoury and Anber (2018) the revenues received by the TFTA have not been distributed equitably among the states. Therefore, states should provide optimal mechanisms for the most underdeveloped countries to benefit (Shinyewa and Othienno, 2011). The TFTA has achieved optimal tariff measures, and through this it can continue to implement a line of trade development.

Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa Customs Union (2009).

COMESA to achieve trade growth depends on its production of goods and services with institution building, good governance, and foreign investment (Belete, 2015). In contrast, for Endale and Taddese (2019) the challenges to the establishment of a Customs Union in COMESA are the diversity of trade, loss of import taxes and lack of political commitment from states.

To analyze the following period of analysis from 2013 to 2023, which will be presented in the results section, where the tables presented will be examined, a general context will be provided for the countries mentioned: Nigeria, Burundi, Rwanda, South Africa, and Somalia. These countries were selected due to their diverse economic, political, and social situations within the African region, as well as their different internal contexts. The guidelines will be analyzed individually for each country.

Nigeria

Located in the western region of the African continent, Nigeria is one of the most influential countries in the African economy. The country maintains its state form as a Federal Republic and its main commercial resources are oil and natural gas (Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, 2023). Iyekekpolo (2016) states that Nigeria has maintained several internal conflicts created by the prevalence of the terrorist group Boko Haram, which occupies a large geographical part of the North of the country and its objective is to establish a totalitarian Islamic state, this group has caused the death and displacement of thousands of Nigerians and has gone from using rudimentary weapons to using more sophisticated methods such as bombs, kidnappings and recruitment of children as suicide bombers. According to the Global Terrorism Index (GTI), Nigeria as of 2023 is ranked number 8 among all other states globally.

Guideline 1: Real per capita income would be one-third higher than 2013 levels.

Nigeria in 2013 had a GDP per capita of \$2976.8 while by 2022 it reflected a GDP per capita of \$2162.6. This shows that there was a decrease in this value during these 10 years. The Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation (2023) explains that the stability of Nigeria's trade balance depends on various external factors, such as fluctuations in oil prices and changes in the value of the exchange rate against the dollar. He also describes that due to the COVID-19 health crisis, in addition to the constant oil price slumps, Nigeria's economy entered a period of recession in 2019 and 2020. By the year 2022, the Nigerian GDP per capita reflected the figure of \$2,065.77, and in the year 2022 of \$2162. While the World Bank cannot so far provide the figures for the year 2023, what can be demonstrated in this yearly span is the presence of gradual growth after the recession. The per capita value that the African Union has set for the year 2063 according to the first guideline is \$3969.07, therefore, if Nigeria continues with moderate growth, it could meet the target set in the first guideline.

Second guideline: GDP will grow by 7%

The Nigerian GDP in the year 2013 was 6.7 while in the year 2022 the Nigerian GDP reflected a value of 3.3. Again, a recession which is caused by the guidelines defined in the previous guideline. The AU is aiming for a Nigerian GDP of 4.6 by 2063. This is a value that Nigeria achieved and surpassed in 2013, therefore, the trend is positive for Nigeria to increase its GDP in the following years.

Third guideline: The incidence of hunger will be only 20% of 2023 levels.

The level of malnutrition in Nigeria increased to 15.9 percentage points in the period 2020-2022, a quite noticeable growth compared to the period 2012-2014, where malnutrition was prevalent at 9.7%. The official website of UNHCR (UN Refugee Agency) in 2020, stated that the internal crisis caused by the Boko Haram group has forced millions of people to move and affirms that this crisis has been aggravated by famine and malnutrition caused by the fighting, which also implies the difficulty in accessing basic foodstuffs. On the other hand, climate change has played a major role in the food crisis, with rising temperatures reducing the amount of land available for both agriculture and pastoralism, as well as the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic (United Nations Group for Sustainable Development, 2020). The AU expects that by 2063 there will be only a percentage prevalence of 3.8.

Fourth guideline: Job opportunities will be available to at least one in four job seekers.

The unemployment rate in Nigeria in 2013 was 3.70, in 2020 it had increase to 5.70, due to the difficulties noted above, and in 2023 it dropped to 3.58. Ikuteyijo (2021) explains that in Nigeria the increase in conflicts, and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have influenced that in the year 2020, there is an increase in the unemployment rate. Even for these different factors, it can be noted that in the year 2023, Nigeria has managed to reduce its unemployment rate, which allows predicting that it could reach the guideline established by the African Union.

Burundi

The state of Burundi is located in the east of the African continent, after its independence in 1962, several internal conflicts arose; two civil wars took place in the seventies and nineties, due to the great social tension caused by the two main ethnic groups in the country: the Hutu and Tutsi. However, after the last elections in 2020 the country is experiencing relative political stability and its current form of government is a Presidential Republic (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain, 2023).

First: Real per capita income would be one-third higher than 2013 levels.

As established in the results section of the first guideline, it was shown that Burundi achieved a GDP per capita of \$241.5 in 2013 and \$259 in 2022. While it is true that there is growth, it is essential to note that this country is one of the smallest states in the African continent; therefore, an increase in its GDP per capita can be easily reflected by the size of its economy. A report by UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund, 2023) states that due to the different socio-economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, extreme weather events, and different disease outbreaks, Burundi has been exposed to the presence of less dynamic progress in terms of its economic situation. The African Union's agenda aims for Burundi's GDP per capita to reach \$322 by the year 2063, which, if not a very high monetary growth, with the country's current situation, is a value that could be achieved with the necessary measures.

Second guideline: GDP will grow by 7%.

For GDP in 2013, Burundi recorded 4.9 percentage points while in 2022 it recorded a decrease to 1.8%. UNICEF (2023) explains in a strategic project for Burundi that in the year 2022, the local currency had a depreciation of 28% which was influenced by the increase in the cost of oil and food; in addition, the GDP of Burundi depends mainly on the agricultural sector and due to the various extreme effects given by climate change, this has prevented the growth of this sector, deteriorating its contribution to GDP. The AU aims that by 2063, Burundi will have a GDP of 5.6%.

Guideline 3: The incidence of hunger will be only 20% of 2023 levels.

As explained in the results section, it has not been possible to obtain official data on the percentage prevalence of malnutrition in Burundi, therefore, the analysis of this guideline will be omitted.

Fourth guideline: Job opportunities will be available to at least one in four job seekers.

In 2013, Burundi had an unemployment rate of 1.57%, followed by 1% in 2020 and 0.86% in 2023. The gradual decrease in the Burundian unemployment rate is noticeable. However, UNICEF (2023) explains that access to formal employment is limited, especially for young people and women. If the unemployment rate has declined, it may be partly attributable to migration within the country, which means that a smaller proportion of the population is seeking employment. As a result, this may lead to a lower unemployment rate, although it may not necessarily be the direct result of specific policies to reduce unemployment. Burundi needs to take measures that act directly to decrease the unemployment rate.

Rwanda

Rwanda, like Burundi, suffered several internal ethnic conflicts, which led to the DATE genocide where about 800,000 people were exterminated from the Hutu ethnic group, however, Rwanda is considered a country that has an accelerated development that has been supported by the political stability that the country maintains. The country has 13.3 million inhabitants and an area of 26,338km, making it one of the smallest countries on the African continent with a high population density (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain, 2023).

First Guideline: Real per capita income would be one-third higher than 2013 levels.

In 2013 Rwanda had a GDP per capita of \$704.5, while by 2022 it will climb to \$966.2. In this analysis it should also be taken into consideration that Rwanda is one of the smallest countries within the African continent, an increase in its GDP per capita can easily be reflected by the size of its economy. However, there have been measures for growth as noted by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD, n.d.) Rwanda is a country with a high level of resilience, due to its great capacity to recover after the effects left by the COVID-19 pandemic, it also sustains that macroeconomic projections for the future remain strong and positive due to increased public spending on investment projects aimed at attracting private sector capital, as well as the increased resilience of the agricultural sector thanks to the implementation of successful irrigation programs. According to the guideline, Rwanda has already surpassed the African Union's target GDP per capita of \$939.33 by 2063. This verifies Rwanda's steady economic growth.

Second guideline: GDP will grow by 7%.

Rwanda's GDP per capita in 2013 was 4.7% and by 2022 it will reach 8.2%, almost doubling in just 10 years. As previously explained, the economic context of the country is in a remarkable growth and this together with the government policies taken will allow an optimal deployment in economic terms. By the year 2063, the AU expected a growth rate of 5.4%, which Rwanda has exceeded. Despite this, Rwanda remains a low-income nation with a high population density.

Third guideline: The incidence of hunger will be only 20% of 2023 levels.

According to the percentage prevalence of malnutrition in the period 2012-2014 was 33%, while for the period 2020-2022 it decreased to 31.6%. In a strategic plan conducted by the World Food Program (WFP, 2018) emphasizes that access to food in Rwanda depends mostly on seasonal variation. Along these lines, Rwanda needs to take more strategic policies to improve the trend of malnutrition prevalence. The African Union expects that by 2063, Rwanda will have a malnutrition prevalence value of 6.32%, this could be achieved if the country maintains its favorable economic trend and proper management in its governance.

Fourth guideline: Job opportunities will be available to at least one in four job seekers.

Rwanda's unemployment rate in 2013 was 11.8 percentage points as well as in 2020 and 2023 it reached 14.9%. There has been a gradual growth in the unemployment rate, which can be explained by the population density of the country, as this means an increasing annual demand for employment of new population of working age (Swisscontact, n.d.). Rwanda would need to create job opportunities to keep pace with its population growth to reduce its unemployment rate.

South Africa

As of 2022, South Africa had an estimated population of about 60 million people and currently stands out as one of the most influential countries in economic and political terms within the African continent. This is due to its advanced industrial development and its participation in important international blocs such as the G20 and the BRICS (Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, 2023).

First Guideline: Real per capita income would be one-third higher than 2013 levels.

In 2013 South Africa reached a GDP per capita of \$7441.2 and in 2022 there was a decrease to \$6766.5. A country risk report made by CESCE (2022) explains that although South Africa is the most important economy in the region, there are different limitations that the country is going through that do not allow it to enhance its economic development. Constraints such as the depletion of mineral resources, the electricity supply crisis, and the drop in foreign investment in the country. The African Union hopes that by 2063 South Africa will reach a GDP per capita of \$9921.6.

Second guideline: GDP to grow by 7%.

As for the South African Gross Domestic Product (GDP), it was 2.5% in 2013, followed by a decline of 1.9 percentage points by 2022. This is due to the context explained in the previous guideline. CESCE (2022) notes that South Africa has an abundance of natural resources and a significant working-age population density, which could enhance its development. However, this potential is limited by the various structural factors such as its economic deficiency, high crime rates, and insecurity. By the year 2063 the AU expects GDP growth at 3.20%, this could be achieved with proper investment in strategic sectors to help economic stagnation.

Third guideline: The incidence of hunger will be only 20% of 2023 levels.

South Africa in 2012-2014 had a prevalence of malnutrition of 5.2% and by 2020-2022 7.9%. Due to the socio-economic aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and the lack of job opportunities, the majority of the rural population is unable to access basic commodities to combat existing malnutrition. In this guideline, the AU intends to reduce malnutrition to 1.58% by the year 2063.

Fourth guideline: Job opportunities will be available to at least one in four job seekers.

In 2013, the South African unemployment rate reached 22%. By 2020, this figure rose to 24.3%, and by 2023, it continued to rise to 28.4%. The percentage increase is mostly due to the lack of employment in the mining sector, the country's main productive sector where there is a shortage of resources (CESCE, 2022). South Africa should focus on other productive sectors to increase its job opportunities and decrease its unemployment rate, which is now in a critical state.

Somalia

Located in the Horn of Africa, Somalia faces challenges in consolidating its governmental structure, in addition to difficulties faced by the country such as terrorism, poverty, underdevelopment, and humanitarian crises caused by climatic phenomena such as floods and droughts (Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, 2023).

First Guideline: Real per capita income would be one-third higher than 2013 levels.

Somalia in 2013 had a Gross Domestic Product per capita of \$453.1 and in the year 2022 of \$592.1. While there is economic growth, it is relevant to recognize that given Somalia's status as one of the poorest countries in the African region, even minimal growth can have a significant impact and be easily reflected. According to an IFAD report (2021), Somalia's economy relies heavily on its natural resources such as agricultural land, fisheries and rangelands, which have been affected by droughts that in turn impact the economy. By 2063, the African Union aims for Somalia to reach a GDP per capita of \$604.13, which is not too far to reach.

Second guideline: GDP to grow by 7%.

Somalia achieved a GDP of 7.5 percent in 2013 and 2.4 percent in 2022. Imports, mainly food and industrial goods, constitute approximately 100 percent of GDP. On the other hand, exports have suffered severe impacts due to drought, existing internal conflicts, and intermittent bans on livestock imports for fear of transboundary livestock diseases (IFAD, 2021). The GDP that the AU aims for the country to reach by 2063 is 8.20%, Somalia has a long way to go to be able to achieve relevant economic development.

Third guideline: The incidence of hunger will be only 20% of 2023 levels.

The prevalence of undernutrition in Somalia for the period 2012-2014 was 64.2% and in the period 2020-2022 was 48.7%. Although there has been a decrease in the percentage, Somalia faces a high percentage value. This is explained by IFAD (2021), the Horn of Africa area faces severe drought and therefore crop damage. The drought is exacerbated by protracted conflicts and the weakness of the agricultural sector. These factors have resulted in significantly reduced access to food, acute malnutrition rates and an increase in overall mortality rates. The AU expects the prevalence of malnutrition to be reduced to 9.74% by 2063, Somalia needs to take comprehensive measures to improve its food security.

Fourth guideline: Job opportunities will be available to at least one in four job seekers.

The unemployment rate in 2013 was 18.92%, in 2020 it was 19.6% and in 2023 it was minimally reduced to 19.19%. The percentage growth is due to the effects left by the COVID-19 pandemic (IFAD, 2021). In addition to the factors explained above.

The results presented provide a perspective of what the African Union has been able to achieve in the period from its creation in 2002 until 2022, divided into two periods for better analysis. The first period of analysis is from the year 2002 to the year 2012, where the most significant entities that it has been able to achieve as a regional integration organization in the proposed period are based.

On the other hand, in the period 2013- 2022, an analysis of several guidelines proposed by the African Union as part of its Agenda 2063 project was presented. In this analysis, five AU member countries were considered: Nigeria, Burundi, Rwanda, South Africa and Somalia. These countries have internal differences in their economic, political, and social systems. Thus, according to the internal context of each state, it was possible to explain each guideline, observe its development, and conclude how these countries can reach the objectives defined in each guideline given by the African Union. The AU becomes a significant and fundamental organism for the timely development of each member country, due to the impulse it offers for the adoption of policies in different social, economic, political, and other areas. Although the African Union has not yet managed to acquire supranational functions that allow it to act and intervene directly within the different member states, its function stands out for the action it takes through the proposal and creation of different institutions, objectives and measures for the development of the region. This is why it is relevant to analyze this period to establish how the members of the African Union, being part of it, can rely on this integrative mechanism for its optimal evolution.

From a future perspective, the African Union points out on its official website the idea of being able to achieve different key projects to accelerate the economic growth and development of the African region in line with Agenda 2063. These projects focus on the areas of education, technology, infrastructure, arts, and culture, among others. Some of these projects are:

- Implement an African passport and free movement of people throughout the region.
- Establishment of African financial institutions to manage the financial sector such as the African Investment Bank, African Monetary Fund, Pan-African Stock Exchange, and the African Central Bank.
- African Virtual and e-African University to increase access to education.
- Annual African Economic Forum.
- Integrated high-speed rail network that can connect the capitals of member countries.

On the one hand, Omitola and Peace (2009) recognize that African countries have great economic potential due to their natural resources and with the right political vision the AU can achieve its future objectives. In contrast Agara and Edogiawerie (2023) point to the AU as an organization without the

capacity to mediate existing conflicts due to its lack of intervention in member countries. Chekol (2020) recommends that member states must be truly committed to achieving the AU's ambitious goals.

The African Union as a regional integration system faces significant challenges to achieve full development. Among the most relevant factors are the existing climate change, food security, terrorism and the deficit of access to education. Although there are major challenges for the AU, it is crucial to recognize that it is a growing regional integration system that with the right delimitations can achieve maximum potential for deep integration among the 55 member states.

5. Conclusions

The African Union is an integration system that has stood out for its evolutionary momentum in the region. Since its establishment, the AU has implemented objectives, guidelines, and institutions to strengthen the sustained economic, social, and political development of its 55 member states.

The AU's background provides essential context for understanding the continent's current situation, including significant events such as slavery, colonization, and decolonization. Understanding this historical background is crucial, as the AU's development and prospects are intrinsically dependent on it. Each region of the world has had a different history, and when creating an integration system, understanding this history allows states to understand their origins to form a bond of prosperity that helps overcome past adversities. Furthermore, in terms of governance, if the leaders of African states take into account the historical context of the region, they can make better decisions for the sustainability of the AU.

Upon analyzing the period of study initially indicated in the objectives, two periods of analysis were delimited within this period for a more pertinent investigation. After analyzing the first period, the importance of investigating the perspectives from Agenda 2063, a project that the organization has decided to prioritize, was determined. Therefore, several results were concluded from these analyses. In the period 2002–2012, the implementation of several institutions was evaluated, which has allowed for a more aggressive involvement in the integration process; however, they all have a long way to go for their correct implementation. On the other hand, in the period 2013–2022, several member countries of the AU were analyzed using the guidelines proposed by its Agenda 2063 project. The results showed that each country has very marked internal, economic, environmental, and political differences, and their development depends mainly on the policies that governments wish to adopt. If each state agrees to be part of the African regional integration system, then it must follow a path aligned with its objectives.

The African Union can be seen as the mechanism that the region needed to boost its development. The fact that all the countries in the African region are part of this integration system demonstrates the existing collaboration toward a future of progress. However, the African Union has several shortcomings in solving problems, mainly security and economic ones. For the organization to evolve in the future, member states must cooperate with it. For the AU to have a greater and more profound impact on the development of the continent, it is considered important that the ceding of certain aspects of sovereignty by the states occur in a progressive but constant manner, so that its influence is not limited only to the establishment of objectives to be met by its members but can have a real, practical, and direct impact on the well-being of the African people.

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7. Appendices

Appendix 1.

Literature review matrix

	Year	Document Type	Author(s)	Country of origin	Source Encoding	General Theoretical Content	Specific Theoretical Content	Database
1	2012	Article	Paterson, M	N/A	https://policycommons.net/artifacts/1445034/the-african-union-at-ten/2076792/	The African Union at Ten: Problems, Progress and Prospects	African Union general context	Google Scholar
2	2004	Article	Exposito, P y Mohedao, I	Spain	ISSN 1578-4479	Integration processes in Africa	Beginning of an African integration system	Dialnet
3	1991	Article	Calduch, R	Spain	ISBN: 84-87510-25-6	Concept and method of international relations	Definition of Regional Integration	Google Scholar
4	2010	Article	Alcaine, M	Spain	ISSN: 1989-4988	Europe during the Thirty Years' War and the Peace and Spirit of Westphalia	Westfalia for the international arena	Dialnet

5	2014	Article	Quijano, A	Spain	ISBN: 9789877220186	Coloniality of power, Eurocentrism and Latin America	Eurocentrism for different forms of regional integration	Redalyc
6	2007	Article	Blanco, J	Colombia	ISSN: 0121-182X	From Gran Colombia to the new Granada, Historical-Political Context of the Constitutional Transition	Conformation for Gran Colombia	Redalyc
7	2008	Article	Serrano, L	Chile	10.4067/S0718-090X2008000200004	On the nature of regional integration: theories and debates	Definition of regionalism	Scielo
8	2013	Article	Perrota, D	Argentina	https://www.academia.edu/4279760/La_integraci3n_regional_como_objeto_de_estudio_De_las_teor3as_tradicionales_a_los_enfoques_actuales	Regional integration as an object of study. From traditional theories to current approaches	European integration process	Google Scholar
9	2012	Book	Benavides de la Vega, L	Spain	ISBN: 978-84-8319-476-8	Regional integration and development in Africa African Integration	African Integration	Google Scholar
10	2013	Book	Ilife, J	Spain	ISBN: 9788446037750	Africa: history of a continent	African slavery context	Google Scholar

11	2010	Article	Sierra, G	Colombia	ISSN: 0120-3932	Slavery as a labor relationship, yesterday and today	African slavery context	Google Scholar
12	2012	Article	Wabgou, M	Colombia	https://doi.org/10.55441/1668.7515.n9.2926	Colonization and Decolonization in Africa and Asia in Comparative Perspectives.	African Colonization context	Google Scholar
13	2000	Article	Serrano, A	Spain	http://hdl.handle.net/10486/691000	The emergence of African states in the international system: the decolonization of africa	African post-colonial structuring	Dialnet
14	2019	Article	Durez, A	Colombia	https://doi.org/10.24201/fi.v60i1.2569	France's military interventionism in Africa: a limited Europeanization (1960-2019)	French colonialism in Africa	Scielo
15	2018	Doctoral Thesis	Solange, J	Spain	https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14352/16042	Integration and cooperation processes in Africa. Angola's role.	Organization of African Unity	Google Scholar
16	2022	Master Thesis	Carretero, A	Spain	http://riull.ull.es/xmlui/handle/915/31994	Comparative analysis of the Education and Gender Equality Policies of the African Union and UNESCO in Africa	Education African Union	Google Scholar

17	2021	Article	Bidaurratzaga Aurre, E. et al	Spain	https://doi.org/10.26754/ojs_rued/ijds.565	Integration and economic transformation in Africa: potential and limitations of the African Continental Free Trade Area.	AfCTA	Google Scholar
18	2022	Article	Kuditchar, N	Brazil	https://doi.org/10.1590/S0102-8529.20224403e20210016	The AfCFTA in the Context of Africa-EU Relations: A Regulation Analysis of Some Stylized Facts	AfCTA	Scielo
19	2020	Thesis	Pasaje, J	Spain	http://hdl.handle.net/10366/144086	Economic integration in Africa: case of COMESA	African Regional Economic Communities	Google Scholar
20	2007	Master Thesis	Pereyra, D	Argentina	http://repositoriocyt.unlam.edu.ar/handle/123456789/361	Trade and integration in Africa: the role of the African Union	African Regional Economic Communities	Google Scholar
21	2014	Article	Chirisa, I.E., Mumba, A. & Dirwai, S.O.	Zimbabwe	https://doi.org/10.1186/2193-1801-3-101	A review of the evolution and trajectory of the African union as an instrument of regional integration	African Regional Economic Communities	Google Scholar

22	2017	Article	Iglesias, J	México	file:///Users/joaquinayanez/Downloads/mich_e,+63241-184039-1-CE%20(6).pdf ARREGLAR LINK	Organization of African Union-African Union. 50 years later: security, conflicts and leadership	Organization of African Unity	Google Scholar
23	2006	Article	Kebonang, Z y Fombad C	South Africa	https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265401018	The African peer Review Mechanism: Challenges and prospects	APRM functionality	Research Gate
24	2018	Article	Ndizera, V y Muzee, H	Camerún	https://doi.org/10.5897/AJPSIR2018.1114	A critical review of Agenda 2063: Business as usual?	Agenda 2063 UA	Google Scholar
25	2020	Article	Perez, T	Cuba	ISSN 2707-7330	Why an Agenda 2063 in Africa?	Agenda 2063 UA	Google Scholar
26	2011	Book	Escusa, E	Colombia	ISBN e-book: 978-958-695-799-1	The African Peer Review Mechanism: An Innovative Mechanism for Effectiveness and Credibility	APRM Functionality	
27	2008	Book	Herberd, R y Gruzd, S	Tanzania	10.20940/JAE/2009/v8i2a7	The African Peer Review Mechanism: Lessons from the Pioneers	APRM Functionality	Google Scholar

28	2007	Article	Kouassi, R	N/A	https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=2ba61dcba9936d51d17437ae190544a044c3b8b1	The Itinerary of the African Integration Process: An Overview of the Historical Landmarks	African Future Outlook	Google Scholar
29	2021	Article	Makotsi, A. Okoth,P y Odhiambo, B	India	ISSN 2279-0837	Challenges and Opportunities of the African Union Peer Review Mechanism (AUPRM) in Enhancing Electoral Democracy Kenya Since 2003	APRM Functionality	Google Scholar
30	2023	Article	Balogun, E., Mwaba, A.K.		https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-10971-3_13	African Union Reform: Challenges and Opportunities	African Future Outlook	Google Scholar
31	2016	Article	Amadi, E	Nigeria	https://www.iiardjournals.org/get/IJSSMR/VOL.%202%20NO.%201%202016/The%20Pan-African.pdf	The Pan-African Parliament (PAP): Issues, Challenges and Prospects.	Functionality of the African Parliament	Google Scholar
32	2015	Article	Borarinwa, J	China	ISSN 2225-0565	Emerging legislatures in Africa: Challenges and opportunities.	Functionality of the African Parliament	Google Scholar

33	2019	Article	Matte, R	United States	ISSN 2576-2052	Original Paper Analysis of the East African Community Integration Process as an Opportunity for Uganda's Medium-to-Long-Term Development.	Functionality of the East African Community	Google Scholar
34	2024	Article	Yiblet, F	United States	E-ISSN: 2378-702X	Economic Integration Challenges and Prospects in the East African Community.	Functionality of the East African Community	Google Scholar
35	2017	Article	Dobronogo, V	N/A	https://ssrn.com/abstract=2004929	An Economic Integration Zone for the East African Community: Exploiting Regional Potential and Addressing Commitment Challenges	Functionality of the East African Community	Google Scholar
36	2015	Article	Drummond, S	N/A	https://doi.org/10.5089/9781484364413.071	The Quest for Regional Integration in the East African Community	Functionality of the East African Community	Google Scholar
37	2019	Article	Endale, A y Tadesse, S	Indonesia	DOI: 10.7176/IAGS	COMESA: Prospects and Challenges for Regional Trade Integration	COMESA Customs Union	Google Scholar
38	2020	Article	Rauschendorfer, J y Twum A	Uganda	https://www.theigc.org/sites/default/files/2021/01/Rauschendorfer-and-Twum-2020-final-report.pdf	Unmaking of a customs union Regional (dis)integration in the East African community	EAC Customs Union	Google Scholar

39	2015	Article	Belete, D	Ethiopia	10.4314/mlr.v8i2.2	Regional Economic Integration in Africa: Challenges and Prospects	COMESA Customs Union	Google Scholar
40	2018	Article	Albagoury, S y Anber, M	Egypt	https://mpr.aub.uni-muenchen.de/id/eprint/92621	COMESA-EAC-SADC tripartite free trade area: challenges and prospects	Tfta Free Trade Area	Google Scholar
41	2011	Article	Shinyewa, I y Othieno, L	Uganda	10.22004/ag.econ.150241	Prospects and Challenges in the formation of the COMESA-EAC and SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area	Tfta Free Trade Area	Google Scholar
42	2020	Article	Onyango, C	Zambia	https://www.comesa.int/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Tripartite-FTA-is-ideal-for-strengthening-AfCFTA.pdf	Why the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area is Ideal for Strengthening African Continental Integration	Tfta Free Trade Area	Google Scholar
43	2022	Article	Mlambo, V. H., Thusi, X., & Gift Ndlovuand, S	N/A	https://doi.org/10.32936/pssj.v6i3.358	The African union's agenda2063 for Africa's development: possibility or ruse?	Agenda 2063 UA	Google Scholar
44	2022	Article	Opeyeoluwa, R. O., & Fatokun, S. O	Nigeria	https://doi.org/10.53982/jcird.2022.0301.06-j	A Critical Review of Agenda 2063: Prospects and Challenges for Africa's Economic Renaissance	Agenda 2063 UA	Google Scholar

45	2021	Article	Check, N. A., & Hlanyane, P.	South Africa	https://hdl.handle.net/10520/ejc-aa_ubuntu1_v10_n3_a5	Evaluation of silencing the guns in Africa: Issues, challenges, and future prospects.	African Future Outlook	Google Scholar
46	2020	Article	Chekol, Y	Ethiopia	https://doi.org/10.1177/0975087819899342	African Union Institutional Reform: Rationales, Challenges and Prospects	African Future Outlook	Google Scholar
47	2009	Article	Omitola, B., & Peace Jiboku, P.	N/A	https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Bolaji-Omitola/publication/342361959_Regional_Integration_Challenges_and_Prospects_of_African_Union/links/5ef0d74ca6fdcc73be945e4b/Regional-Integration-Challenges-and-Prospects-of-African-Union.pdf	Regional integration: Challenges and prospects for the African Union	African Future Outlook	Google Scholar
48	2014	Article	Jentzsch, B	United States	https://doi.org/10.2979/afriiconfpeacrevi.4.2.86	Opportunities and Challenges to Financing African Union Peace Operations	African Future Outlook	Google Scholar
49	2023	Article	Agara, B. O., & Edogiawerrie, M. K. O.	Nigeria	https://ojs.unpatompo.ac.id/index.php/jssi/article/view/193	African Union (AU) and the Governance Question in Africa	African Future Outlook	Google Scholar
50	2024	Article	Tenaw, A	Cameroon	https://doi.org/10.18535/sshj.v8i03.958	The African Union and Conflict Resolution: Challenges and Prospects	African Future Outlook	Google Scholar
51	2018	Article	Cofelice, A	N/A	DOI: 10.2478/tfd-2018-0032	African Continental Free Trade Area: Opportunities and Challenges	African Future Outlook	Google Scholar

52	2014	Article	Caleb Mackatiani1*, Mercy Imbovah2, Navin Imbova1	China	ISSN 2224-8951	Peace and Development in Africa: Prospects and Challenges	African Future Outlook	Google Scholar
53	2016	Article	Wisdom Oghosa Iyekepolo	Australia	https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2016.1177453	Boko Haram: Understanding the concept	Boko haram in northern Nigeria	Google Scholar
54	2020	Web Site	Grupo de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo Sostenible	N/A	https://unsdg.un.org/es/latest/stories/crisis-climatica-en-nigeria-la-onu-fomenta-el-dialogo-entre-agricultores-y-pastores	Climate crisis in Nigeria: UN encourages dialogue between farmers and livestock herders on land shrinkage	Impacts of the climate crisis in Nigeria	Google Scholar
55	2020	Web Site	ACNUR	N/A	https://www.acnur.org/emergencias/emergencia-en-nigeria?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjw3NyxBhBmEiwAyofDYbrevaNRLRPhI3Xg_IEd5mwbVfE6Cmm5VtxIHR0TeczZZ9T6kM3zxoCW20QAxD_BwE	Emergency in Nigeria	Boko Haram insurgency, food crisis	Google Scholar
56	2021	Web Site	UNESCO - Lanre Ikuteyijo	N/A	https://www.unesco.org/es/articles/en-nigeria-el-sueno-cualquier-precio-0#:~:text=Cada%20vez%20son%20m%C3%A1s%20los,ilegal%20explican%20este%20%C3%A9xodo%20masivo.	In Nigeria, dream at any cost	Unemployment caused by various factors	Google Scholar

57	2024	Web Site	UNICEF	Italia	https://executiveboard.wfp.org/document_download/WFP-0000155022	Draft strategic plan for Burundi (2024-2027)	Burundi Context	Google Scholar
58	2023	Web Site	UNICEF	N/A	https://www.unicef.org/executiveboard/media/18326/file/2023-PL20-Burundi-CPD-ES-ODS.pdf	Country programme document Burundi	Burundi Context	Google Scholar
59		Web Site	Fondo Internacional de Desarrollo Agrícola	N/A	https://webapps.ifad.org/members/eb/126/docs/spanish/EB-2019-126-R-13-Rev-1.pdf?attach=1	Republic of Rwanda Country Strategic Opportunities Programme (2019 – 2024)	Rwanda Context	Google Scholar
60	2019	Web Site	Programa Mundial de alimentos (PMA)	N/A	https://executiveboard.wfp.org/document_download/WFP-0000100330	Strategic Plan for Rwanda (2019-2023)	Rwanda Context	Google Scholar
61	2024	Web Site	Swisscontact	Suiza	https://www.swisscontact.org/es/paises/ruanda	Ruanda	Rwanda Context	Google Scholar
62	2022	Web Site	CESCE	Sudáfrica	https://www.cesce.es/documents/20122/0/INFORME+SUD%C3%81FRICA+-+19+diciembre+2022.pdf/dc23e07e-b373-8639-f567-479021a11970?t=1671640394593	Country Risk Report South Africa	Southafrica Context	Google Scholar
63	2023	Web Site	OFICINA DE INFORMACIÓN DIPLOMÁTICA	Somalia	https://www.exteriores.gob.es/Documents/FichasPais/SOMALIA_FICHA%20PAIS.pdf	Somalia country profile	Somalia Context	Google Scholar