



October 11-14, 2007  
Columbia University

First Conference of Independent African  
Heads of State and Government, 1963

## **Background Guide**

Chaired by Colin Felsman

---

## COMMITTEE INTRODUCTION

The first meeting of the heads of state of the free nations of Africa was called to provide a forum on the future of the African continent. At the time of the conference (May 22-25, 1963), much of Africa still labored under the harsh yoke of colonialism. As the Colonial powers begin to release their holdings, the newly emancipated nations of Africa had to make momentous decisions concerning their future. They had to choose between capitalism and communism, tradition and modernity, democracy and dictatorship and unity and diversity; all issues that needed to be dealt with by Africans and for Africans.

The primary goal of this representational conference is to draft and approve a charter which will serve as the basis for a union of African states. As they write their drafts, heads of state must weigh the impact that their decisions will have on the future of their own countries, the continent and the world. Rather than striving to write a single, comprehensive document, delegates are urged to draft a number of smaller, more tailored working papers which will deal with those pressing issues that must address. These working papers can then be combined to form a final draft of the charter. Delegates will also be presented with a rough outline of issues debated by their foreign ministers, which may be used as a basis for the charter.

A second goal is to allow the assembled heads of state to discuss and overcome their differences to create a coalition so that Africa may participate in world forums as one unified front. Delegates are encouraged to confront and resolve their disagreements for the sake of the future of Africa.

Ketema Yifru, Foreign Minister of Ethiopia and a chief organizer of this conference, charges the heads of state with drafting documents through “long discussion and compromise” and “in a spirit of brotherhood” with “complete agreement on all decisions.”

---

“Differences,” he says, should be “limited to questions of procedure, approach of tactic, but never on substance or the destiny of our peoples. If we fail, surely history will never forgive us, for it shall not give us another occasion.”

Throughout the conference delegates will be faced with domestic, regional and international developments that will necessarily shape the course of debate and force delegates to tackle a variety of subjects simultaneously.

## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

*Dear Delegates,*

Welcome to CMUNNY II. My name is Colin Felsman and I am a third-year in Columbia College pursuing a double major in Political Science and Anthropology. I have been actively involved in Columbia's Model United Nations club for several years. Last year I served as both head delegate for the traveling team and crisis director for the *Historical Security Council of 1948*. My interest in Africa has been nurtured by a childhood in Zimbabwe and Mozambique, as well as extensive time passed in South Africa and the region at large. Since arriving at Columbia University my interest has been augmented by a coursework and internships.

My two vice chairs will be Jason Ping and Cameron McClure. Jason, a first-year in the School of Engineering and Applied Science, hails from Vancouver, Canada. He plans to major in Economics and Operations Research. In his free time, he likes to play the violin and read the Wall Street Journal. Originally from Oregon, Cameron is a first-year student at Columbia College. Although Cameron is considering a five-year dual degree program with the School of International Policy and Administration, a major in sociology is also a possibility. As crisis director we have Maximus [Max] Taffel. Currently a senior concentrating in political science, he looks forward to working with the rest of the staff and all of you in committee to make this a thrilling ride through the history of African politics. Also essential to this committee, Amy Wang, a first year in Columbia College born in Shanghai, China who currently lives in New Jersey hopes to study economics and political science in order to pursue a career in international law or international affairs. Finally allow me to introduce, Ambika Dani, a freshman in Columbia College. Possibly majoring in Economics or Chemistry, Ambika is originally from India; she has since lived in Nigeria for 13 years, and thus considers the African continent home.

Given the ever-increasing interdependence necessitated by our globalizing world, international institutions now are more important than ever. This committee will step

---

back to May 22, 1963, landing at Addis Ababa for the First Conference of Independent African Heads of State and Government. Amid a myriad of political tensions, from the Cold War's battle for ideological outposts to the continental movements to evict European colonial oppressors, a spirit of Pan-Africanism is quickly taking root. As delegates, you will confront the issues of a complex time, in search of common ground and with hopes of establishing a "continental consensus" on Africa's future.

Although some nations have enjoyed the fruits of independence for nearly half a decade, others still struggle against rigid colonial bonds. As such, each delegation must actively advocate a political agenda that reflects their distinct situation while simultaneously constructing a charter that confronts more global issues.

I look forward to a weekend of productive debate and leave you with this mandate from His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie during his speech at the 1963 African Summit:

*"We stand today on the stage of world affairs, before the audience of world opinion. We have come together to assert our role in the direction of world affairs and to discharge our duty to the great continent whose two hundred fifty million people we lead. Africa is today at mid- course, in transition from the Africa of yesterday to the Africa of tomorrow. Even as we stand here we move from the past into the future. The task on which we have embarked, the making of Africa, will not wait. We must act, to shape and mould the future and leave our imprint on events as they pass into history."*

Sincerely yours,

Colin Felsman

Chair, First Conference of Independent African Heads of State and Government

---

## COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

To ensure that the committee runs fluidly, please carefully review this outline of structure and procedure.

Although the 1963 conference brought together over thirty African nations, for logistical reasons, our simulation will consist of only the 15-20 most influential African leaders. Rather than serving as head of states, the dais will act as members of the OAU secretariat. From this position, the chair will facilitate debate and serve as a non-partisan interlocutor between delegates. The committee will be administered through a permutation of traditional parliamentary procedure, granting the dais the right to recognize both speakers and motions.

Each delegate should come prepared with key issues for the OAU charter. This will streamline the process and prevent unnecessary unmediated caucuses. In preparation, delegates will no doubt discover the historical importance of the Monrovia and Casablanca groups. While these may serve as bases for lobbying support, we urge all delegates to overcome factionalism, and step out of rigid voting blocks: a prime motivation for this meeting was to bridge the gap between progressive integrationists and more traditional moderates.

To ensure that delegates remain true to policy, you will be able to request information from foreign ministers, as well as other cabinet officials. However, it is critical to mention that these positions need not be static; for as heads of nascent governments, you have the opportunity to—within reason—alter your national stance.

---

*Voting*

As this is a summit meeting of heads of state and government, resolutions and summit wide action orders will require a full consensus. However, non-substantive matters will be conducted based on standard parliamentary procedure. As there is a diverse array of topics to be addressed, the dais will look favorably upon the drafting of multiple resolutions. Unfortunately, the honorable delegate representing Oliver Tambo will be unable to vote on substantive matters, as he is a member of the African National Congress party and not that of the ruling Apartheid regime. He will be able to vote on all non-substantive orders, as well as providing invaluable guidance on the response to Apartheid.

---

## **HISTORY**

Though a historical committee should obviously require some historical background, a caveat is first needed. We cannot breach the history of a continent and its various movements in a short section, and instead will point out key debates necessary for the conference. Please delve deeper into these issues and come prepared to debate the merits of unity of a continent in the midst of change.

### *Colonialism in Context*

The colonial era saw years of injustice and oppressive rule that permanently changed the traditional structures of society and arbitrarily created African states to fit European territorial disputes. It is critical to distinguish between the systems of direct (preferred by France) and indirect rule (preferred by Britain), for these in part set the stage for ensuing anti-colonial movements. In addition, the Belgian exploitation of the Congo under the guidance of King Leopold and the later establishment of an Apartheid regime in Southern Africa contribute to the political dynamics of each state. United in opposition to colonialism as a concept, revolutionary leaders underwent varied experiences that subsequently shaped their opinions towards African governance.

### *Independence Movements*

#### **Southern Africa**

Though there is not a revolutionary representative from Rhodesia at our conference, it will certainly be an issue of consideration. The major opposition movements were ZANU and ZAPU, which functioned largely as a guerilla

---

movement to undermine the struggling state. Their operations were largely based out of the territories of what is now Mozambique and Zambia, and could potentially be strengthened with independence in either of these states. Created in 1948, the Apartheid regime functioned on a hierarchical system of racist rule, and as such is a symbol for all that Africa's independence leaders opposed. Despite increasing resistance from groups like the African National Congress and its militant Umkhonto we Sizwe, the Apartheid regime maintained control over Southern Africa. To ensure its stability, the government adamantly opposes any and all independence movements on the continent.

### **Ghana**

Ghana was first state to achieve independence (excluding Ethiopia and Egypt which were never colonized), in 1957 under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah. As a champion of Pan-Africanism, Nkrumah hosted the first African independence summit in 1958 as a forum for intellectual debate and to outline practical steps in the decolonization movement.

### **Congo**

The Congo crisis was sparked by a complex chain of events, eventually resulting in the arrival of a United Nations peacekeeping force. Before the formal achievement of independence on June 30, 1960, a controversial election process ended with the selection of Lumumba as prime minister (over his main competitor Tshombe) and Kasavubu as president and head of state (Kanza 97). Yet civil unrest quickly ensued as the commander-in-chief of the Force Publique, Lt. General Janseens, instigated the restless army with the message "after independence = before independence" (Nzongola-Ntalaja 98). Belgian forces arrived in the region of Katanga on July 10 under the pretense of restoring order (Nzongola-Ntalaja 99). However, the next day, on July 11, Tshombe alarmed the

nascent Kinshasa government, with his announcement that, “the government of Katanga has determined to proclaim the independence of Katanga,” and economically align itself with Belgium (Kanza 199). Through the use of diplomatic means, followed by a deployment of “Operation Morthor” in September 1961, the UN attempted to quell the Katanga secession (Gibbs 167). This extensive intervention did not conform “to the popular image of a passive ‘peace-keeping’ force” but rather significantly influenced the domestic politics of the Congo, contributing to the ensuing assassination of Lumumba (Gibbs 163).

### **More**

Various movements in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and across the continent may also prove relevant at the conference.

---

## COMMITTEE TOPICS

### *Casablanca and Monrovia*

During the preliminary talks leading up to this meeting, two blocs have formed based on different countries' approaches to the idea of African unity. The Casablanca Group, led by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, believes in the immediate implementation of a program of African unity throughout the continent. His ideas are supported by the governments of Guinea, Mali, the United Arab Republic (Egypt), and Morocco.

In opposition to the Casablanca Group is the Monrovia, or the Conservative, Group. They believed in a gradual approach to addressing the need for African unity. The leaders of the Monrovia Group were Nigeria, Liberia, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire and Cameroon. Most African states have publicly declared their allegiance to one or the other of the two groups, although a few, most notably Ethiopia, have declared their neutrality. In fact, this meeting was originally planned only for the heads of state of Monrovia Group nations, but has since been modified to act as a summit meeting for both groups where they can work out their differences and reach common ground.

Although the two groups disagree on how to implement the changes they desire, both generally agree on the following issues as ones that need to be addressed:

1. The creation of an organization of African states, including the drafting and ratification of a charter and the establishment of a permanent secretariat.
  2. The establishment of regional organizations to encourage economic cooperation.
-

3. The end of colonialism in Africa and the establishment of independent governments in all African states.
4. The end of oppressive, minority-rule Apartheid governments such as those in South Africa and Rhodesia.
5. The establishment of system of general cooperation between all African states on all issues that concern their governments and the continent as a whole.
6. The relationship of the new African organization with the United Nations and the international community at large.
7. The establishment of conflict prevention, management and resolution mechanisms, as well as plans for general disarmament and the encouragement of peaceful resolution of disputes.

### *Capitalism and Communism*

This meeting takes place in 1963, and thus the impact and influence of the Cold War on African politics cannot be ignored. As the United States and USSR vie for power across the globe, newly liberated and unsuspecting African states are caught in the crossfire and suffered dire consequences. Each of the two great powers recognizes that this meeting is an ideal opportunity to gain allies and destroy opponents, and although they have not been invited, they will undoubtedly be influential.

---

## **POSITIONS**

### **His Majesty King Hassan II of Morocco**

Crowned on March 3<sup>rd</sup> 1961, only a few years before our conference, HM King Hassan has had a long political history. Exiled by the French in 1953, then Prince Hassan and his father Sultan Mohammed V were allowed to return home in 1955 to participate in the negotiations for Morocco's independence. Hassan was appointed Commander in Chief of the new Royal Armed Forces and led a series of successful campaigns against rebel groups, although rumors of extreme brutality on the part of his troops abounded. He had a reputation as a playboy and a lover of luxury and lavish parties. Recent relations with Algeria have been tense and minor skirmishes have broken out along their shared border as both governments jostle for control of border territories. King Hassan is also looking toward Western Sahara, a phosphate-rich Spanish colony with which Morocco shares its southern border, knowing that Spain will not hold onto the territory forever. The government of Mauritania, however, also is interested in Western Sahara's natural resources, and a bitter rivalry between the two countries has ensued.

### **His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, King of Kings of Ethiopia and Elect of God**

Born Tafari Makonnen in 1892, his father was the Governor of the Harar district and a cousin of the Emperor Menelik II. He rose through the ranks of the Imperial Government quickly, succeeding his father as Governor and then through a combination of luck and political cunning, attained the rank of Ras (akin to Lord) and was named heir to the throne. After the Empress died suddenly of an unexplained illness, Ras Tafari was crowned emperor on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1930, and very early in his rule introduced Ethiopia's first written

---

Constitution, which included an appointed legislature. When Italy invaded Ethiopia in 1935, Selassie led the army into battle himself but was eventually defeated and fled the country, ostensibly to plead Ethiopia's case to the League of Nations, an organization in which he believed strongly. He was unable to return to his country until 1941, when Britain defeated the Italians in North Africa and returned him to power. He believed strongly in the power of African unity and lobbied for the independence of other African states with his European allies. The escalating border dispute between Algeria and Morocco concerned him greatly and he had offered his services as a mediator in the conflict. He had a close relationship with Modibo Keita, President of Mali, with whom he hoped to work to avoid violent conflict between African states.

### **President Gamal Abdel Nasser of the United Arab Republic**

A passionate Pan-Arabist and opponent of colonialism, Nasser rose through the ranks of the Egyptian army and was instrumental in the coup that deposed the Egyptian monarchy and named General Muhammad Naguib as President, Prime Minister and Chairman of the Egyptian Revolutionary Command Council. Nasser himself was named vice-chair of the body, but he vied with Naguib over the next few years, and while serving as Premier under Naguib he survived an attempted assassination that he claimed had been ordered by Naguib. He used this as an excuse to remove Naguib. Accusations that the assassination attempt was staged abounded but were never substantiated. He was subsequently elected President, receiving 99.9% of the vote, and has served in that capacity in the eight years since. In 1955, Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal, causing an international crisis during which the canal was attacked and seized by a combined French, British and Israeli force. They were forced to withdraw after pressure from the United States and Soviet Union. Nasser was seen to have won a great victory over the colonial powers. In 1958, Egypt entered into a union

---

with Syria, forming the United Arab Republic, of which Nasser was also elected president. The union dissolved in 1961, but Egypt has continued to use the United Arab Republic as its official name.

### **President Ahmed Sekou Toure of Guinea**

Born in 1922 to a poor Muslim family of farmers, Toure's schooling was limited. He was expelled from his technical secondary school for organizing a student strike. He became very involved in various unions and eventually founded his own. Making himself secretary general, he lost his job and spent a brief time in prison. As he rose in power through the unions, he developed an interest in politics and was appointed Mayor of Conakry, but still maintained a strong belief that Marxism was the solution for Africa's problems. As the president of one of West Africa's strongest unions, Toure was a powerful political player in mid-1950s Guinea. When he was approached in 1958 by President De Gaulle of France and Guinea was given a choice between "independence" – completely cutting off all ties - or a continued relationship with France, Toure urged independence even though he had indicated that he felt a relationship with France would have been a better choice only a few days before. He was scornful of Francophone African countries that chose to maintain ties with their former colonial master, and broke off diplomatic ties with many of them. He had a very close relationship with Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, with whom he formed the Ghana-Guinea Union in 1959, which was joined by Mali in 1961 and formed the basis for the Casablanca Bloc. He also had a close personal friendship with Felix Houphouet-Boigny, who he knew from his union days.

### **President Dr. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana**

Born Francis Nwia Kofi Ngonloma in what was then called Gold Coast, Nkrumah left Ghana as a young man to attend Lincoln University in the United

---

States. He remained in the USA for ten years, during which time he received two bachelors' degrees, including one in Sacred Theology, and two master's degrees. He returned to Ghana in 1948 and became a major player on the pro-independence political scene and even formed his own party, the Convention People's Party in 1949. He continued to use legal means to lobby for Ghana's independence from Britain and was eventually sentenced to three years in prison for his role in organizing a series of strikes, boycotts and other incidents of civil disobedience. While in prison, however, the British government decided that their presence in Ghana was through and allowed a Legislative Assembly to be elected, of which Nkrumah's party won 34 of the 38 seats. Ghana received its independence at midnight on March 6<sup>th</sup>, 1957, and was declared a republic in 1960. Subsequently it held its first presidential elections, which Nkrumah won by a landslide. As his power grew, so did the authoritarian leanings of his policies. He passed a number of bills making strikes illegal and allowing the arrest and indefinite detainment without trial of anyone suspected of treason. He grows more paranoid as well and more obsessed with the idea that someone was trying to assassinate him. There have also been rumors that he plans to declare himself Life President of Ghana. He is very close with President Toure of Guinea and President Keita of Mali, with whom he created a union between the three nations.

### **President Dr. William V. S. Tubman of Liberia**

William Tubman was born to an Americo-Liberian family, the descendents of African slaves who had been resettled from the United States in Liberia. His father was a Methodist preacher, a general in the Liberian militia and had served as the Speaker of the Liberian House of Representatives. Tubman joined the militia at the age of fifteen, and over the next seven years divided his time between his military service and the study of law. He was elected to the Senate

---

in 1921 and resigned twice – once to defend Liberia when the League of Nations accused it of using slave labor, after which he was re-elected, and the second time to serve on Liberia’s Supreme Court. He was elected President in 1943, promising to increase civil and political liberties for all Liberians, and not only the Americo-Liberian community who had dominated politics, business and society since their arrival. He has remained President for the twenty years since, a position which he kept by rigging elections and passing constitutional amendments allowing him to extend his term in power. His government has a very close relationship with that of the United States, and believes fervently that his country would have been better off had there been an era of strong colonial rule.

#### **President Ahmadou Ahidjo of Cameroon**

A native of French-speaking Eastern Cameroon, Ahidjo entered politics in the 1940s and was a fierce proponent of the unification of Anglophone Northern and Southern Cameroon with the Francophone East. When he was elected as the nation’s first President, he convinced Southern Cameroon to join the nation but the South and East maintained a great degree of autonomy. Educated in France, he maintained close ties with the French government throughout his career.

#### **President Habib Bourguiba of Tunisia**

Born in Monastir on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1903, Bourguiba was raised in Tunisia but left as a young man to study law and political science in Paris. He met and married his French wife while living in France. The marriage took place after they found out she was pregnant with Bourguiba’s son. Shortly thereafter, she converted to Islam and they returned to live in Tunisia. Upon his return, Bourguiba became involved in Tunisian politics and formed his own party, for which he would spend the better part of a decade in prisons in Tunisia and France. He was freed

---

from jail by the Nazis in 1943 and sent to Rome, where the Italian government tried to enlist Tunisia's support against France. When he refused, they sent him back to Tunisia where he embarked on a long advocacy campaign to rally the international community behind Tunisia's fight for independence. When that independence finally came in July of 1957, Bourguiba was named President. Since the beginning of his time in office, he has demonstrated a deep commitment to promoting gender equality and providing universal access to education and health care in Tunisia. An ally of the United States since the end of WWII, he has managed maintain his alliance with the USA and keep excellent relations with both the Arab and African nations.

#### **President Félix Houphouët-Boigny of Cote d'Ivoire**

A medical doctor by training, Houphouët-Boigny was in his mid-thirties by the time he abandoned medicine to pursue a career in politics. He rose to power through the ranks of the French colonial government to the position of Prime Minister. When Cote d'Ivoire was granted independence in 1960, he was named President. A fierce opponent of Communism in all its forms, Cote d'Ivoire has not recognized the legitimacy of the People's Republic of China and does not have any official diplomatic dealings with the USSR. He is also a close personal friend of Ahmed Sekou Toure of Guinea.

#### **Prime Minister Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa of Nigeria**

Originally trained as a teacher, Balewa was exceptionally well educated for a Nigerian growing up under British rule. He studied in Nigeria and England, and used his education to climb through the ranks of the colonial government's Ministry of Education. From there, it was a short leap into the world of politics, where he was elected to the Assembly and advocated strongly for the rights of Nigeria's northern, largely Muslim, population. He served as Minister of Works,

---

Minister of Transport and was the Prime Minister when Nigeria became independent, a post which he still holds today, in 1963. He believes fervently in the power of African unity, and has led the Anglophone African nations in an effort to improve relations with their Francophone neighbors. He feels that nations like South Africa and Rhodesia are an affront to the continent and fully supports any and all measures to force a transfer of power in those countries to indigenous rule. He has also been very involved in negotiating a peaceful end to the crisis in the Congo (Kinshasa).

---

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES FOR FUTHER RESEARCH**

“African Union”. The History Channel Web-site. Retrieved 07:28, Sept. 24, 2007.  
from <http://www.history.com/encyclopedia.do?articleId=200360>.

Dinan, Desmond. Ever closer union? : an introduction to the European  
Community. Boulder: L. Rienner Publishers, 1994.

Haile Selassie, “Haile Selassie OAU speech 1963 African Summit”  
[http://www.nazret.com/history/him\\_oau.php](http://www.nazret.com/history/him_oau.php).

Maslahat al-Isti’amat (United Arab Republic). Summit Conference of African  
Independent States, Addis Ababa, 22-25 May, 1963. Cairo, Information  
Department.

Uniao Democratica Nacional de Mocambique. Memorandum to the African  
Summit Conference, Addis Ababa, 1963. Cairo, External Bureau of the  
Mozambique National Democratic Union.

---