

# Africans firm on UN veto

By Thalif Deen  
INTERNATIONAL PRESS SERVICE

UNITED NATIONS — The 53-nation African Union (AU), the largest single regional group at the United Nations, is exercising its political clout by refusing to back down on its demand for two permanent seats in the U.N. Security Council — but with hard-to-get veto powers.

With its unyielding stand, reinforced at a second summit meeting of African nations in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa last week, the AU has undermined an intense bid by the Group of Four, namely Germany, Japan, India and Brazil, for new permanent seats minus the veto.

All four countries, co-sponsors of a resolution for the expansion of the 15-member Security Council, dropped their demand for vetoes hoping it would help them overcome strong opposition from some or most of the five veto-wielding permanent members (P-5): the United States, France, Britain, China and Russia.

The P-5 have been accused of wanting to hold onto their veto powers while denying the same powers to newcomers.

But with the AU sticking to its guns, the proposal to add new veto-less permanent members to the Security Council has come to a virtual dead end — once again.

A draft resolution introduced by the AU says the new permanent members should be accorded the same prerogatives and privileges as those of the current permanent members, including the right to veto.

The resolution followed a decision taken at the first AU

summit meeting of heads of state in Libya in early July.

"The AU should continue to demand veto power," says Bill Fletcher Jr, president of the Washington-based TransAfrica Forum, a non-governmental organization (NGO) that is also a centre for activism focusing on conditions in the African world.

He pointed out that the AU represents nearly one billion people who have little if no voice at the global table.

"Either participation in the Security Council means the same for all participants, or it should be treated as a farce," Fletcher told IPS.

Last month, one U.S. newspaper quoted unnamed U.S. administration officials as saying that the United States is opposed to giving new members veto powers "out of concern that it might paralyze the Security Council" and also dilute U.S. power at the United Nations.

"What is the point of Security Council reform if it leaves the fundamental power structures intact? The argument for expansion must not only be linked to equitable representation but also to formal power," Kwame Akonor, director of the African Development Institute, told IPS.

"The fact is that the veto power (of the Security Council) still is a key instrument of international politics," he said. "The African Union should therefore not compromise on its demands for immediate veto rights for any new permanent council members."

"Akonor also pointed out that it is quite clear that the AU has neither P-5 support nor the two-thirds majority needed to sustain its position

but sacrificing this principle (in any reform discussions) is a declaration by Africa of its willingness to remain a silent non-actor in world politics.

"The point cannot be overemphasized, especially if we bear in mind the fact that over half of the Security Council's current agenda deals with Africa," he added.

At a press briefing last month, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan described as "utopian" attempts to either abolish the existing vetoes or create new permanent seats with veto powers.

"It is utopian to think we can do it. Many member states would want to do that, but it is not possible. And they are not willing to create additional vetoes (either)," he added.

"What is important, Annan argued, is to have effective representation on the Security Council, and to make it more democratic, to ensure that voices of other regions are heard.

"And I think that sort of change would not only make the decisions of the Council much more acceptable generally, but also the Council itself will gain in greater legitimacy. And I think that is enough of an achievement for us to be able to move forward and not insist that if we cannot withdraw the (existing) veto from the other Five, we keep the status quo. That is the option," he said.

Bill Pace, general secretary of the World Federalist Movement, says that the expansion of the Security Council is an important goal "to revitalize the Council's representivity and legitimacy."

"My organization, however, fiercely opposes adding more

vetoes or more permanent members to the Council. Permanent membership has resulted in dysfunction and ineptitude. As the world becomes more democratic, this imperial anachronism must be discarded," he added.

According to an African diplomat, the Addis Ababa summit rejected a proposal by Nigeria, the current AU chair, "on the need to show more flexibility towards forging a unified African stance on the expansion of Security Council membership."

He said the proposal had called for abandoning the veto right for Africa's bid to get two permanent seats on the Security Council.

According to one published report, the majority of AU member states, including Egypt, Algeria, Libya, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Congo and Mali, rejected the proposal for a compromise stressing that the AU should demand two permanent seats for Africa but with veto powers.

Currently, the 15-member Security Council has five permanent members and 10 elected members rotating on a geographical basis. The AU wants it expanded to 26 members as against 25 by the Group of 4.

But the two groups remain sharply divided on the issue of veto power, threatening to bring the reform process to a standstill.

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## Charlotte's plan for CIAA tourney

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Over the last six years, the third largest college basketball tournament has been housed at the RBC Center in Raleigh.

Charlotte offers a central location of the arena and clubs, bars and restaurants.

## Woman charged with fraud on farmers

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — An Ohio woman has been charged with conspiring with two former Florida college administrators to collect \$400,000 from a settlement reached with black farmers who had wrongly been denied government loans.

Kimberly Colston Woodruff, 43, was arrested last week at her home in Columbus. She pleaded not guilty to five fraud and conspiracy counts before a federal magistrate Monday in Jacksonville.

Former Edward Waters College administrators Emma Okari Brooks and Daniel Anekwu have each pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy and face up to 10 years in prison. Woodruff, formerly of Tallahassee, faces a maximum of 30 years in prison if convicted, Assistant U.S. Attorney John Sciortino said.

Woodruff is accused of posing as Anekwu's wife and using her name and others' on false settlement applications to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, then splitting the profits with Brooks.

Brooks' attorney has said a group from Arkansas that spoke at black churches nationwide promoted the farm loan settlement as a legal way to get compensated for past discrimination, even for those with only ancestral ties to farming.

Uptown, which has had issues with crime lately, will be secure, McCrory said.

After the Fourth of July Sky Show, a group of teenagers and police got into an altercation. And then there was the problem with cruisers clogging Uptown streets on week-end nights.

"Center city is safe today. We've already made vast improvements," McCrory said.

Those improvements include adding more officers to patrol the streets, removing tree limbs that were blocking streetlights and changing the timing on the traffic lights to make traffic move more smoothly.

Of the 120,000 fans expected to attend the tournament, the majority will be black.

Lenny Springs, chairman of the Charlotte organizing committee, said "Fans that come to the CIAA tournament will be treated with the same respect and dignity as fans that come here for the ACC. Charlotte has a way of doing things right.

"I've said to the city and county we're going to do it right as it relates to this tournament. It's no secret that 99.9 percent of the folks coming to Charlotte are people of color," Springs said. "We're going to be working with the police department as it relates to community relations and sensitivity. Leave here today assured that if Lenny Springs has anything to do with it, we're going to work in partnership to get it right."

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