Strengthening Popular Participation in the African Union

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There are three main sources of revenue for the AU. They are:

- Contributions by Member States according to a scale of assessment approved by the Executive Council
- Additional voluntary contributions by Member States to the solidarity fund
- Funds made available by external partners

Five of Africa’s wealthiest Member States each contribute 15 per cent of the assessed contributions: Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Nigeria and South Africa. These states are particularly influential in AU decision-making. The remaining 25 per cent is paid by the other Member States.

The approved budget for the African Union for 2009 was US$ 164.3 million, to be split between Member State assessed contributions of $ 93.8 million, and development partners contributions of $ 57.4 million (and the remainder to be financed from previous budget surpluses).

The Chairperson of the Commission acts as chief accounting officer to the AU and submits the budget of the Union to the organs of the AU for approval. The budget is adopted by the Assembly on the recommendation of the Executive Council and after consideration by the PRC.

The AU can and does impose sanctions on countries that are in arrears with their subscriptions. These sanctions range from limited access to facilities to suspension of voting rights. It is common for several countries at one time not to have the right to vote at AU meetings because their dues are not paid; this suspension of voting rights also extends to that country’s members of the Pan-African Parliament. Some countries in financial difficulty, such as those emerging from conflict, have successfully sought exemption from paying their subscriptions, or a reduction in the amount.