PREFACE

So much has already been written on Africa's plethora of problems, its backwardness, underdevelopment, dependency, imperialism, neo-colonialism, colonialism, foreign military interventions in the internal affairs of African States, apartheid and racism, indebtedness, inter-state conflicts, the politics of its mineral resources, its geo-strategic importance to the foreign powers and, so many other related issues that I almost found myself in a difficult situation as to what should be studied. It was at that point that I endeavoured to free myself from the dilemma by gradually accepting to pursue the study titled NIGERIA AND OAU (1970-83). In it, I have attempted to highlight the role Nigeria sought to play in the Organization of African Unity (OAU), since the 1970s. This is important in view of the continuing socio-political, economic, cultural, scientific and technological problems of the continent despite the concerted efforts of the African political association to solve them.

The OAU was set up in May 25 1963 against the backdrop of the conditions existing in Africa at that time. As a consequence, expectations ran high that, the organization would be able to deal with the situation which if, left with the states individually, they being ill-equipped would not be able to surmount them. But as the years went by, it
became apparent that the African institution could live up to its expectations. But why is it so?

Moreover, the Nigerian first civilian government (from 1960-66) could not assert itself on issues of the continent. Why if one may ask? May be, it was due to the Low-Profile, Low-keyed foreign policy pursued by the government.

With the increasing interventionist activities of extra-continental powers in the internal affairs of African States, there arose the need for the organization to be propped up to enable it to play its expected role effectively. This was necessary in view of the absence of the radical leaders like Nkrumah of Ghana, Modibo Keita of Mali, Nasser of Egypt, and the towering personality and fatherly image of Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, either due to death or ousted from power through military coups engineered from outside.

With this vacuum, Nigeria felt most suited and capable of filling the gap as a result of its size, population, oil wealth from her Organization of Petroleum-Exporting Countries (OPEC) membership, stable government ushered in by the military, the advent of the Murtala Mohammed/Obasanjo regime, the new found foreign policy of 'equal friendship' with all, and the convergence of her national interest with that of the OAU.
Despite Nigeria's increased role in OAU since the early 1970's not much material on Nigeria and OAU is available nor much work has been done on Nigeria and OAU. This is a modest attempt to fill up this gap through the available primary and secondary sources.

Chapter one as the introduction is on the background of Nigeria's transformation soon after the civil war in its domestic and foreign policy that brought about the watershed in the international politics of Africa. Chapter two is on the determinants and objectives of Nigerian foreign policy. The rest of the chapters dealt on the problems of Africa, Nigeria and OAU achievements, and the limitations of both Nigeria and OAU. The last chapter attempts at future prospects.