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Sommario/riassunto

This work is an introduction to the origins, law and institutions of the African Union (AU). It examines the evolution, structures, legal standards and operational activities of this Pan-African organization, which replaced the Organization of African Unity (OAU) 10 years ago. Although the AU came into being in 2001, so far there is no comprehensive work which addresses the institution, its organs and structures, the scope of its operations, its legal framework and the normative standards underpinning its objectives and functions or those underlying the conventions, charters and protocols it has enacted or inherited from its predecessor, the OAU. It is the aim of this work to fill that void. It has been conceived as a manual, and not as a scholarly treatise, so as to serve as a basic introduction to the institutional and legal framework of the AU and its affiliated organizations. It is meant to offer a concise and clear picture of the nature and workings of a continental institution aimed not only at promoting peace and unity in Africa but also at ensuring human security, development, human rights protection and good governance for the peoples of Africa.