

The New Partnership for Africa's Development and Regional Integration in Africa: Challenges and Prospects

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Abstract

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is the African socio-economic development plan based on a new partnership between African States and their development partners, especially the highly industrialized countries of the West. It is an initiative geared towards overcoming Africa's problems of underdevelopment, poverty, undemocratic regimes and poor cooperation among African states. However, since the inception of NEPAD, much economic integration had not taken place among the African states. Hence, the study sets to examine why NEPAD has not made considerable impact in integrating the sub-regional economic groups in Africa. The study is basically qualitative. It utilized existing literatures on African regional development in seeking understanding about NEPAD. The findings reveal that unlike the European Union (EU) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), regional organizations whose citizens are familiar with the workings of their economic mechanisms, many citizens in Africa have fuzzy knowledge of the African Union (AU) and the NEPAD. The study concludes by recommending that African leaders should involve the civil society, private organizations and ordinary people in the activities of NEPAD in order to create the necessary ownership of the project.

Key words: NEPAD, Africa, Development, Challenges, Prospects

Introduction

Africa is the second largest continent and the most fragmented in the world. There exists according to Nwabughuogu (2004) some 45,875 kilometres of boundaries in Africa as against 41,784 kilometres of boundaries in Asia considered as the second in the rank of highly fragmented states in the world. In terms of development, Africa has witnessed series of negative experiences that stunted her developmental strides. The two major factors to be considered here are slavery and colonialism. Historians according to Venter (2003), estimate that between 1650 and 1900, some 28 million Africans were forcefully removed from Central and West Africa as slaves. This human catastrophe has been referred to as the "black holocaust". With the end of slave trade in the nineteenth century following the industrial revolution, colonialism and colonial conquest emerged. European powers scrambled for the partition of Africa and they laid claims to virtually the entire

continent

Thus, between 1884 -- 1885, the scramble for Africa among the European powers went on with renewed vigour, and in the fifteen years that remained of the century, the work of partition, so far as international agreements were concerned, was practically completed. Colonialism was fully entrenched and colonial policies established. The Second World War, however, brought profound changes to Africa, showing purpose and vigour never seen on the continent in the past. The war threw up a decisive shift in power, away from Europe. As European influence declined, the emerging super powers, the United States and the Soviet Union (now Russia) competed for ascendancy. For different reasons, both were anti-colonial powers, thus, the 1941 Atlantic Charter which supported the right of all people to choose their own governments was also extended to Africa (Meredith, 2005).

By the 1960's when most of the African

states gained their independence, the realities of the enormous distortions inherent in the colonial economy came to the fore. First, according Anadi (2005) they were utterly left with highly fragile and structurally truncated economies, based on the export of one or two agricultural commodities with inherent price distortions in the international commodity market. Therefore, it can be said, that the 1960's witnessed a period of concerted efforts on the part of the newly independent states to restructure the inherited colonial economic mode of production in Africa. Interestingly, most of these newly independent states of Africa emerged from colonialism into independence with high hopes of rapid and sustainable socio-economic and political development. Thus, each country embarked on individual road development with the hope of achieving both agricultural and economic self-sufficiency, which they never did.

Having failed to achieve great development individually, the African leaders turned to regional organization as a platform for achieving continental self-sufficiency. To be sure, the ultimate goal of economic integration is to pull countries within a regional framework together in order to benefit from collective economic potentials. Historically, the effort started in Western Europe, where six countries gathered in Rome to sign a treaty announcing the birth of the European Economic Community (EEC) on March 25, 1957. European nations prior to the formation of EEC never bordered to integrate their economies for the sake of security and enhanced economic relationship, but the outbreak of the Second World War, which left Europe in ruins and divided, brought with it, a renewed interest in European unity. Thus, Europe became more prosperous and united through regional integration mechanisms. In Asia, the northeast Asians came together under the umbrella of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and benefited from regional collective economic potentials to the extent that ASEAN countries are now called Asian Tigers or

Newly Industrialized Nations (Mistry, 2005).

Therefore, African leaders have no choice but to adopt regional approach to development. For instance, Monga (2019) argues forcefully by asserting that since all African economies combined still represents only 3% of global GDP, regional integration platform will help create a single market, eliminate monopoly and enhance cross-border spillovers between coastal and landlocked countries. Integration in Africa will also improve security because expansion of international trade often correlates with a reduction of conflict. Again, Julian (2012) notes that African leaders have also come to realize the benefits of regionalism in stimulating stability and cooperation through inter-regional policies, institutional building, trade, and other issues of common interest; while Nieuwkerk (2008) claims that integration among African countries will strengthen their efforts to manage relations with powerful external actors and facilitate the expansion of markets that will aid industrialization.

In order to achieve efficiency and effectiveness in their development strides, African leaders saw the need to transform the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to enable them meet the challenges posed by increasingly competitive world market. Thus, the African Union (AU) was born in the South African Port City of Durban in July 2002, to replace the Organization of African Unity(OAU), with the aim of accelerating the political and socio-economic integration of the continent. Before the exit of the OAU and the emergence of AU, the African leaders had on 11th July, 2001, received a document at the Summit of Heads of State and Government in Lusaka, Zambia, which provided the vision for Africa, a statement of the problem facing the continent and a Programme of Action to resolve these problems in order to reach the vision (African Union at Ten, 2012).

The document was called NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) and it was enthusiastically received and

unanimously adopted in the form of Declaration 1 (XXXVII) as Africa's principal agenda for development, providing a holistic, comprehensive integrated strategic framework for the socio-economic development of the continent, within the institutional framework of the African Union.

Having given a general background to the formation of NEPAD, this study aims at critically assessing and examining the historical formation, impact, challenges and future prospects of NEPAD, which is the latest Africa's development initiative. The study will also draw attention to the intellectual and philosophical roots of NEPAD, its driving principles and the objectives it seeks to attain. To achieve this aim, the study will be divided into sections. With this introductory overview, we shall discuss development initiatives in Africa prior to the emergence of NEPAD, the study will also examine what Africa must do to benefit from integration mechanisms through NEPAD before it concludes with policy recommendations.

Assessment of Africa's Previous Development Mechanisms (LPA, UNPAARED, AAF-SAP)

The Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) was initiated in 1980 in Lagos, Nigeria. The development plan came after shocking findings of the African economic performance from the reviews carried out by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA or ECA) FROM 1975 to 1979. The evaluation of Africa's macro-economic performance over the period from 1960 to 1975 found that the macroeconomic aggregate performance was below the targets set by the UN Second Development Decade. The GDP annual growth rate was 4.5 percent instead of the 6.0 percent; the export was 2.8 percent instead of 7.00 percent; the agricultural growth rate was 1.6 percent instead of the target rate of 4.00 percent; while manufacturing grew at 6.0 percent instead of the target 8.00 percent.

The only macroeconomic aggregate the performance of which exceeded target was

import, with an actual growth rate per annum being 10.0 percent exceeding the target of 7.0 percent (Adedeji, 2002). The assessment according to Jolly (2009), showed falling rates of GDP growth and declines in agricultural output and commodity exports. It therefore laid the foundation for the subsequent Monrovia Strategy and Lagos Plan of Action, which together defined a self-reliant strategy for Africa and the priorities for achieving it. The Lagos Plan of Action for the Economic Development of Africa 1980-2000 was agreed first by a meeting of Ministers in Addis Ababa in April 1980 and then the Lagos Summit of Heads of State. In brief, the key points agreed upon were:

- ❖ The importance of domestic, sub regional, and regional markets
- ❖ The imperative need to build upon Africa's natural resource base
- ❖ The need for economic planning in terms of multiple objectives
- ❖ The need to strengthen intra-sectoral and inter-sectoral linkages in agriculture, industry, mining, transport, communications, energy, science, and technology.

The plan according to Jolly (2009) was reinforced by several visionary pledges by Heads of State: to achieve self-sufficiency in food production and supply, to implement a UN programme for a transport and communications decade in Africa, as well as to cooperate in industrial development, natural resources exploration and extraction, and in the preservation and protection of the environment. Government leaders also looked to the eventual establishment of an African Common Market leading to an African Economic Community.

These commitments were spelled out in the thirteen chapters of the Lagos Plan of Action, which covered the seven major strategic sectors -- food and agriculture, industry, natural resources, human resources, transport and communications, trade and finance, and energy - and crosscutting issues such as the environment, science and technology, gender, and the

least developed countries. According to LPA, the State was the leading, if not the sole, economic actor. It should bear the burden of elaborating the social, economic and cultural policies that enable the mobilization of the resources and capabilities of the country. The plan also emphasized the role of the state in the distribution of both developmental burdens and benefits to ensure their fair distribution.

Although it did not explicitly discuss the role of the state in development, the state was the main player in the LPA; it was part of the development crisis and the main agent for its resolution. The successive strategies adopted by African states were, according to the plan, responsible for the economic crisis. African states should, then individually and collectively, bear the responsibility for that crisis (Lagos Plan of Action, 1980). Although the plan provided the bases for African integration, it did not adequately address the crucial elements for African development such as; capacity autonomy and partnership.

At the heart of the LPA was the idea of collective economic development through regional integration. According to Mukamunana (2006) the ultimate goal of the LPA was to form a united African economic bloc with common tariffs, parliament, and eventually common currency. The rationale for regional integration in Africa was that integrating national economies would provide larger markets and economies of scale for investment and production, with combined or complementary resources, and would provide effective frameworks within which to correct disarticulated and ineffective economic structure. However, it should be noted that the LPA emerged during the time when the structural adjustment policies (SAP) of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank were imposed on poor countries, including Africa. The SAPs focused on production efficiency and market signals by paying attention to such elements as macroeconomic stability, balanced fiscal accounts, tax reforms and trade liberalization and deregulation (Williamson, 2000).

Under structural adjustment, the core principles according to Mukamunana (2006) of increasing economic and technical efficiency were the guiding principles and objectives of the development process. They became the early priorities for economic reforms in Africa. Clearly, the development approach of the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWI) under the structural adjustment policy was in conflict with the people-centred approach advocated by the Lagos Plan of Action. Development scholars note the struggle for the development agenda between the BWIs and African policy makers. Thus Ake (1996) asserts that development donors expressed their rejection of the plan by ignoring it and refusing to fund it. The African development agenda lost the battle to the Western structural programmes, as only policies and reforms in line with SAPs were funded. Thus, given their weakness and dependent position, African leaders abandoned the LPA and started implementing structural adjustment reforms crafted by the BWIs.

Although the LPA was abandoned by the African leaders, we have to observe that LPA itself had some fundamental weaknesses. For instance, while concentrating on sectoral programmes, the Plan did not adopt a detailed plan for building the capacity of domestic institutions in African countries. The Plan also dealt with the African development predicament as a dominantly, if not purely, economic crisis. Corruption and clientalism were not, thus, a major concern for LPA. One can, then argue according to Tawfik (2014) that it was not only the lack of external support that led to the less successful implementation of the plan and which affected its contribution in eroding African development crisis, but also the internal flaws in the orientation of the plan itself.

It was as a result of these contradictions that Adedeji (2002) admitted that the LPA was universally criticized for lacking a pragmatic blueprint of how to achieve its admirable objectives, a timetable for doing

so, and a price tag. Nonetheless, Adedeji (2002) added that the LPA was a genuinely historic document, representing the first continental effort by Africans to forge a comprehensive and unified approach to the economic development of Africa. Eyoh (1998) agrees with Adedeji that the Lagos Plan of Action was a classic plan for development by way of greater integration in the world economy. Whatever the deep contradictions, short comings and naiveties of the LPA, Eyoh wrote, it was more realistic, less ideological and even more soundly scientific (notwithstanding the inadequacies of its methodology) than the virtually skimmed work of the World Bank. But the powers that be in the world exchequer are such that the Lagos Plan, far from being a point of departure, was soon buried, while the World Bank's language became the leitmotiv of official policies.

The African Alternative Framework to the Structural Adjustment Programme

The shortcomings of the LPA led the African leaders to adopt the United Nations Programme of Action for Africa Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD) during the twenty first Ordinary Summit of the OAU in July 1985. The programme emphasized the central role of the state in the development process but added the need for building the capacity of state institutions to enable it to perform its role. According to the UNPAAERD (1986), African governments recognize that genuine efforts must be made to improve the management of the African economies and to rationalize public investment policies, particularly since the public sector will have to continue to play an important role in the development of the region. Such efforts would require, inter alia, improvement of public management systems, institutions and practices, improvement of the performance of public enterprises; reforming the public services to make them more development oriented services; greater mobilization of domestic savings; improvement of financial management, including debt and development aid, fiscal administration and control of public expenditure with a view to

promoting the efficient use of resources and cutting wastage and resources misallocation, reduction of foreign exchange leakages.

At the end of the 1980's the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) mobilized its intellectual resources to design "*The African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programme (AAF-SAP)*". The African Alternative Framework to the Structural Adjustment Programme (AAF-SAP) emerged in 1989 as a reaction to the hardship resulting from SAPs and the persistent frustration of Africa's efforts to bring about fundamental socio-economic structural changes since the Lagos Plan of Action. The AAF-SAP was not only a critique of the IMF and the World Bank structural adjustment but was also an alternative development agenda. It was the comprehensive plan covering issues from the root causes of poverty and development crisis in Africa to policy recommendations to solve the crisis.

One of the main arguments according to Tawfik (2014) of the Alternative Framework was to debunk the ingredients of SAPs especially those that defend the minimal role of the state. For the Alternative Framework, the role of the private capital is highly skeptical. Privatization has failed as a reason of the lack of an efficient, robust private sector in most of the African countries and the danger of the domination of foreign capital over African economies. Four imperative categories or blocs should be applied, the Framework stated, in order to pursue the path of adjustment with transformation. These are: strengthening and diversifying Africa's production capacity, improving the level of people's incomes and the pattern of its distribution, adjusting the pattern of public expenditure to satisfy people's essential needs and providing institutional support for adjustment with transformation (AAF-SAP 1989).

While many African scholars celebrated AAF-SAP for its severe critics of SAPs, and its trial to elaborate an alternative plan based on mobilizing national resources and

supporting regional integration, others did not regard it as a real alternative framework and criticized it for being state centered plan that calls for the domination of the state. This argument was denied by Adebayo Adedeji, the architect of the AAF-SAP and the General Secretary of UNECA at that time, who stressed that the framework is drawing a balanced non-ideological vision which neither calls for a strict intervention of the state nor promotes a total reliance on markets (Onimode, 1995). Like the LPA and other previous development strategies, the AAF-SAP failed to produce the anticipated results.

The effort of elaborating an alternative framework to SAP was completed by the Arusha Conference on Popular Participation in Development in 1990 which adopted the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation (ACPPDT). The charter, according to Tawfik (2014) introduced a mode of partnership between state and civil society for promoting development based on popular participation in the continent. Civil Society Organizations can, according to the charter, mobilize African masses to effectively, participate in negotiating and debating development policies. These organizations can also serve as an oversight tool that review the extent to which the state is committed to implementing its development policies (African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation 1990; articles 9-13). Organizationally, the charter proposed establishing a dialogue forum between state and civil society organization in every African country to institutionalize this partnership (African Charter 1990; article 23).

To sum up this discussion on the earlier development plans in Africa before the emergence of NEPAD, one will notice that African development plans of the eighties and nineties concentrated on establishing an alternative development strategy to SAPs, a strategy in which states played central role leading the process of development. Some of them realized that for that to happen, there should be an adequate reform for

public management systems and a capacity building for state institutions, others drew a partnership project between state and civil society. To be sure, all the development plans of the African states in the eighties and nineties lacked implementation mechanism, therefore, development was rolled back in Africa while other continents moved forward. Before we discuss the challenges of socio-economic development in Africa, we shall briefly examine the origin and formation of NEPAD which is the latest in the series of Africa's development initiatives.

NEPAD and the AU: The New African Development Paradigm

At the dawn of the 21st century, the challenges of globalization, increasing poverty and marginalization of Africa in the world politics and economics have made African leaders realize the need for sturdier frameworks, within which their most pressing problems and needs can be effectively handled. African leaders have initiated a number of new projects, including the creation of the African Union and NEPAD which are considered to be fundamental institutions or instruments for the political and socioeconomic transformation of Africa (Mukamunana, 2006). Thus, in July, 2002, African leaders gathered in Durban, South Africa, to replace the Organization of African Unity (OAU) by the African Union (AU). The most remarkable difference between the OAU and the AU is that African leaders had decided to move away from the “non-interference” principle, which for a long time has protected dictators and bad leaders in Africa. Article 4 (h) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, Act of 2000, provides the right to intervene in member state in cases of grave circumstances, such as war crimes, genocide, and crime against humanity. This clause according to Mukamunana (2006) is a major shift in the politics of the continent, which if implemented may contribute to the building of a peaceful and prosperous Africa.

On the economic front, the African Union launched a new development plan

called NEPAD at its first Summit in Durban, South Africa, in July, 2002. The primary objective of NEPAD is to champion the challenge to eradicate poverty in Africa, to establish stable peace and security conditions, and to promote sustainable economic growth and development, and thus enhance Africa's effective participation in global political and economic affairs (AU Commission, 2004). In fact, NEPAD according to Mukamunana (2006) claims to be unique, an African-owned document for the rebirth of the continent. Of course, the crucial question to be answered given the history of African development plans is to know if this time around African leaders are determined to pursue a hard but necessary African development model, which breaks away from the dependence mentality? Does the NEPAD present a paradigm shift in development policy and strategy? These and many related questions are easier posed than answered especially as many African people do not know much about the relationship between AU and NEPAD.

For instance, Boston (2011) claims that there is a little relationship between NEPAD and AU. Thus, Boston alleges that Thabo Mbeki and other initiator leaders of NEPAD tried to separate the two at the institutional level because they were afraid of the former Libyan President, late Gaddafi's influence on the AU may cause the G8 and OECD leaders' resentment. On the other hand, there is a symbolic difference too. AU's Secretariat is based in Ethiopia and NEPAD Secretariat in South Africa showing the country's influence on the initiative. Landsberg (2002) also feels that NEPAD is enjoying a lot of support and attention, especially from abroad, to the obvious exclusion and detriment of the AU.

It is important to avoid a situation where NEPAD and the AU are played off against each other; the AU is Africa's premier continental and Pan-African body while the NEPAD was created to address the development problems of Africa using a new paradigm developed by Africans, and that uses African resources. However, there are also structural differences between NEPAD and the AU. De Waal (2002)

mentions them by the following: "while the OAU/AU is a club with no criterion for membership other than existence upon African soil, participation in NEPAD's enhanced partnership is subject to meeting certain standards of governance and economic management.

Key Achievements of NEPAD

Since ratification in 2002, NEPAD has initiated according to UN-RCM-Africa (2007) various programmes to achieve its core objectives, to build peace and security, improve economic governance and public administration, invest in priority areas, including infrastructure and human development. It has also been successful in bringing African development problems to world attention, generated international support for Africa and galvanized African leaders to change their thinking about what comprises good governance and sustainable development. For instance, in the areas of democracy and good governance, there is strong evidence that the NEPAD is yielding dividends. Democratic transitions and competitive politics are gradually taking root in Africa. Already, a number of countries, such as Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Zambia and others have had democratic changes in government in free, fair and competitive elections.

The AU and NEPAD principles played a leading role in the restoration of peace in DRC, Liberia, and other African countries. It is instructive to note the pivotal role that AU has played in preventing unconstitutional changes of government in African countries, such as in Togo. In general, NEPAD has been a positive catalyst for peace and security as well as for movement towards democracy in African countries. The NEPAD principles have led to the launch of a series of activities to increase the quality and efficiency of economic and public management. These activities include the African Management Development Institute Network set up in August, 2005 funded by EU, Governance and Public Administration supported by Nordic development partners, and Senior Budget Officers Workshops in support of

NEPAD. In addition, the German Government has funded a series of conferences on State Capacity development in post-conflict areas (UN-RCM-Africa, 2007).

Criticisms against NEPAD's Activities

Mistry (2005) notes that foreign aids policy has been a custom for almost every project on Africa's development. He alleges that Africa received 1 trillion dollars of aid between 1965 and 2004. NEPAD is no exception. Aid from G 8 and OECD countries are accepted to be the main source of Africa's economic renewal and NEPAD actually desires to foster and regulate this system. On the other hand, analyses based economic parameters bring an opposition to the idea of staking Africa's future on foreign states. Scholars according to De Waal (2002) suggest that instead of aid from donor states, Africa needs development assistance, opening international markets of African products, reduction and write-off of debt, increase of domestic savings and fairer trade. For instance, Gambia's former President, YahyaJammeh voiced out his resentment by declaring that:

People are sick and tired of African beggars. Nobody will ever develop your country for you. I am not criticizing NEPAD, but the way it was conceived to be dependent on begging (De Waal 2002).

Oshita (2010) cynically called NEPAD a "KNEE PAD". According to him, NEPAD invokes the image of Africa with a knee pad, kneeling and seeking economic succor from the industrialized countries. This is a playback of the nude image of a malnourished African child with swollen belly, large head, and tiny limbs signifying abject poverty, hunger, disease, and war, usually depicted in western media. Neo-liberal politics of NEPAD are also criticized according to Akokpari (2005) on the grounds that previous efforts for Africa's development failed because of their neo-liberalist economic politics. Its neo-liberal framework is accused of being patterned

along textbook economics which are not written for economies in decline such as in Africa. Critics, instead support social oriented economic paradigm and a regional and sub-regional integration that mobilize domestic resources and minimizes dependence on the international market.

However, in as much as we may not claim that NEPAD satisfies all the previous requirements, it can be safely argued that NEPAD offers the general framework of such a paradigm. African scholars should according to Tawfik (2014), move to the next step by specifying the features of that paradigm and how it fits every African state.

What Africa must do to make NEPAD a viable Regional Development Organization

The African nations are yet to achieve success in the experimented development strategies they have adopted whether home developed or packaged by the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWIs). According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in 2003, Sub-Saharan Africa's share in world trade was estimated at 1.5 percent falling from about 6 percent in 1980. In comparison with other developing regions, Asia's share of world trade is estimated at 24.3 percent; and Latin America about 5.5 percent. Similarly, the foreign capital inflows to Africa have been insignificant despite the continuing increase of foreign direct investment (FDI) to developing countries. In 2004, inflows to Africa were estimated at US \$20 billion. This compares to \$166 billion into Asia and the Pacific, and \$69 billion to Latin America and the Caribbean (UNCTAD, 2005).

Apart from the global index figures on Africa, recent research by the African Development Bank (2018) shows that intra-African trade is the lowest of all global regions at approximately 15%, compared to 54% in the North American Free Trade Area, 70% within the European Union and 60% in Asia. Clearly, Africa's economic performance stands in stark contrast with the unprecedented prosperity that the rest of the world is enjoying today. The question is: what must Africa do to benefit from

regional development through NEPAD?

There are factors that helped other continental and sub-regional organizations such as European Union (EU) and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to successfully integrate their economies and achieve prosperity for their citizenries. In the case of the EU, after it was battered by the Second World War, Europe established an economic community that made war unthinkable and materially impossible. Integration worked perfectly well in Europe because of the institutionalization of good governance, accountability and transparency in government business coupled with a highly diversified economy. In Southeast Asia, the region had benefited from integration mechanism more than Africa, even though the two regions have similar experiences. Both emerged from colonial rule with predominantly rural economies, some of them heavily dependent on the export of primary agricultural products.

Unlike Africa whose major exports are oil and other primary commodities, Southeast Asian countries have succeeded in developing other exports and diversifying their economies into manufacturing, agro-industries, value-added services, and other activities that enable them to move up the value in the global economy. Donge, Henley and Lewis, (2010) found out that state-led rural and agricultural development, leading to higher incomes for peasant farmers, has been crucial to Southeast Asia's success, and that its absence has also been crucial to Africa's failure. Therefore, Africa must ensure that its NEPAD framework on agriculture called Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) which aims at helping African countries reach a higher path of economic growth through agriculture-led development through the allocation of 10 percent of public expenditure to agriculture and expected 6 percent annual agriculture productivity growth rate are sustained and maintained. CAADP aims at increasing the resources governments devote to agriculture; reducing hunger, increasing food

production, improving rural infrastructure and marketing, and boosting agricultural research.

Conclusion

In this study, we argued that the early development in Africa was stifled by the institutionalization of slavery and later colonialism; thus, Africa emerged from colonialism with a great and high hope of turning the continent to an industrial hub. However, individual African nations' efforts and expectations of being economically viable and self-reliant were not realized, thus, the continental platform became a veritable alternative. The study thus, assessed and investigated all the development mechanisms Africa had engaged in, starting with the Lagos Plan of Action of 1980 to the latest mechanism – NEPAD. The study also examined the role of the continental organization OAU and its transformation to AU. Although the AU is seeking to move from norm-setting to implementation, by making its development body – NEPAD – more comprehensive and focused with international recognition.

However, the major challenges AU and NEPAD have are excessive dependence on foreign partnership and donor agencies for execution of major projects which in turn lowers the African claim of ownership. Again, there is little or occasionally no relationships among the various components of NEPAD, member states and the sub-regional economic communities which to a large extent make aggressive implementation of decisions difficult. Moreover, most people in Africa do not know much about AU and NEPAD, two initiatives that their architects argue will transform the African society. This according to Babarinde (2007) is worrisome that even among academics of African descent, most of those whose disciplines are outside of the social sciences know very little about both the AU and NEPAD, unlike EU with their philosophy of Europeanism geared towards making every European citizen think European. If African academics have fuzzy understanding of the

AU and the NEPAD, what then can we expect of the average Africans?

For African development to be robust and sustainable through the instrumentality of NEPAD and AU, the African leaders should communicate NEPAD's aims and activities to ordinary Africans to increase their sense of ownership and the NEPAD's guiding principles; the private sector and the civil society organizations should be involved as a great stakeholders in decision making and implementations. NEPAD should ensure that sustainable development is maintained by putting support mechanisms and strong institutions in place, reducing graft and corruption, building capacity, linking education to labour market needs, and refocusing health care from curative emphasis to prevention (UN-RCM-Africa, 2007). If all the factors we identified that helped Europe and Asia to successfully integrate their economies can be nurtured by the African leaders, then, a glorious start might have taken place in Africa, and NEPAD's theoretical framework will be practically turned into reality.

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