From the OAU to the AU:
Visions of African Development
From the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) to NEPAD

By
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Introduction

A Vision is a mental picture of a desired future – of an individual, a country/nation or a continent. It is often articulated in a few sentences – for example as a preamble to a document. Sometime the future vision is captured in a short simple and catchy slogan. In general however, a vision is often accompanied by a long term strategic plan on how to achieve the desired future.

The theme of this conference is on the various visions on Africa's development propounded during the last forty years, by both Africans and the "externals". Externals vary depending on the specific period and context – from the colonial powers, the former Soviet Union, the Americans, the UN and the Bretton Woods institutions, the "donors", the G8 and now the overused and meaningless term "the international community". In this paper the "external" will be identified in the context of the discussion.

I will argue briefly that (a) In the past there were important differences between the African visions of their future development and the visions of development of the "externals"; (b) the visions of both the Africans and the "externals" emanate from governments and not from the people. In particular the African people generally have very little knowledge of the visions promulgated by their leaders on their behalf; (c) while in the past there were substantive differences between the internal and external visions regarding the nature of development and how to achieve it, recently the development vision of the "externals" has won the day. NEPAD (New Partnership for African Development), which articulates the latest "African vision" has in essence accepted the external vision and articulates it as a consensus African vision and which is hailed by the "externals" – as represented by the G8 countries. The development vision of NEPAD is, essentially the same vision of the same type of development which has been propounded by the "externals" in different language since the time of independence. NEPAD now articulates an approach to development, which is accepted by most African leaders as well as the leaders of the G8 countries.

A History of African Visions

The Pan African Congress and Its African Vision

Since the last century African leaders – both in the Diaspora and in the continent - began to view the continent as a whole instead of as fragmented pieces. They also began to discuss continental development as opposed to piecemeal development of specific countries or a specific region of the continent. These views of the continent were slowly incorporated into the nationalist struggle and eventually received their clearest articulation during the struggle for independence. The Pan-African Congress held in Manchester (in 1945) which brought together African nationalist leaders as well as leaders from the Diaspora, gave the clearest expression of Africa's vision; (a) to achieve independence from colonial rule

throughout the continent so that Africans can rule themselves democratically; (b) to achieve continental unity so that Africa can (i) bring about faster economic growth and development to catch up with the industrialised countries, and (ii) so that Africa can be strong within the international system.

This vision was popularised at the sub-regional level as nationalist movements mobilised the peasants and workers for the struggle against colonial rule. And the nationalist movements achieved their independence on the basis of this vision.

<u>The First OAU Vision</u>

When the OAU was created in 1963 in Addis Ababa, this vision was incorporated in its Charter. Indeed this vision became the subject of a heated debate at the 1963 meeting.

The famous debate cantered on a crucial element of the African vision – namely the political unity of the continent. (a) Should continental political unity be realised immediately, or (b) Should it be a long term objective to be achieved first through the creation and consolidation of independent nation states and then built up unity through sub-regional building blocks. The debate was heated, Nkrumah of Ghana led the side which argued for immediate continental unity, while Nyerere of Tanzania argued for the path of consolidating nation states first. Nyerere won the day and since then nation-building and economic development at the country level was given priority throughout the continent. Nevertheless, the goal of continental unity continued to be a powerful force in the OAU, the Pan-African Movement and amongst a progressive section of intellectuals. Hence forth it continued to be a central element of all continent-wide visions and was restated in all African initiatives for continental development – including NEPAD.

Independent African countries added to the above vision several other elements such as, eradication of poverty and disease, self reliance and equity. It is fair to say that in the 1960s, most African countries proclaimed and propounded this vision.

Yet within the decade of the 1960s, there appeared a major division of African countries into two blocks these are Monrovia and the Casablanca blocks. The Monrovia block adopted a more radical vision of the future, emphasised faster continental political unity, self reliance and equity with socialism being the main path to development. The Casablanca block on the other hand had a less radical vision, that ignored the issues of equity and self reliance but emphased nation-building, and a development path through laissez faire and open market.

During the decade of the 1970s the fierce Cold War going on in the world seriously affected African countries, many of which were forced to take side in the ideological war of the Cold War. While in the 1970s African countries were not organised or associated into blocks such as Monrovia and Casablanca, they were nevertheless deeply divided between those, which were Socialist, Marxist and "Capitalist". The Socialist countries such as Tanzania were heavily influenced by the Social Democratic vision of the Scandinavian countries, the Marxist and Capitalist countries were effectively influenced by the Soviets and American led Western visions of development respectively.

<u>Africa's Economic Performance:1960 – 1975</u>

In 1975 the ECA undertook a four year detailed study of Africa's performance 1960-1975. Although the performance during this period did not meet the targets set by the UN Second Development Decade, Africa as a whole performed well and certainly better than the subsequent 25 years 1975-2000.

During the 1960-75 period, Africa's GDP rate was 4.5%;its export was 2.8% its agricultural growth was 1.6%; and its manufacturing grew at 6%.[1] According to Adedeji, "In retrospect, the period 1960-75 has, tragically, turned out to be Africa's golden era!"(Adedeji 2002, p.6).

By the end of the 1970s decade and despite this reasonable economic performance, there were clear signs that Africa was facing a serious economic crisis. "What is clear to most observers however is that the strong optimism of 60s concerning economic development, slowly gave way, first to hesitation, then to pessimism and by the end of the 70s to a consensus of gloom" (Bujra, A. 1982, p.II).[2]

Late in the 70s (1978) Adedeji had began to make his gloomy predictions and warnings on Africa's economic prospects – predictions which have proved to be very accurate. "Africa, more than the other Third World Regions, is thus faced with a development crises of great portent…..If past trends were to persist………the African region as a whole will be worse off relatively to the rest of the world at the end of this century than it was in 1960".[3]

And three years later (1981), the World Bank was also making similar predictions. Africa, the World Bank states, was facing a "dim economic prospect" in the 1980s – virtually no growth in per capita income, if you are an optimist, and a negative rate of growth (-1.0% per year) if you are not.[4]

It was under these circumstances that Africa came up with its second and very important initiative for an alternative vision of development.

<u>The Second OAU Vision</u>

According to the ECA, African Governments had three options for facing "the anticipated crises". Firstly to increase "self reliance and self-sustainment" and more effective measures for intra-African cooperation and mutual help. These (measures) "would require vision and statesmanship quite out of the ordinary". "Another option would take the form of a surreptitious surrender of the economy in return for substantial foreign aid, a temptation which might be impossible to resist". "A third option would be to wait and see and hope whilst continuing with conventional measures which avoid creating antagonism" (ECA, 1979-1980, p.6).[5]

The OAU and in collaboration with the UNECA mobilised African intellectual and political resources to discuss the crises (above options) and come up with a vision and a plan of

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[1] Adebayo Adedeji"From the Lagos Plan of Action to NEPAD and from the Final Act of Lagos to the Constitutive Act: Wither Africa?", Keynote Address at African Forum for Envisioning Africa Focus on NEPAD, Nairobi 26-29 April, 2002.

[2] Bujra, A. Editorial Note, Africa Development, Vol.VII, No.1/2, 1982, p.II.

[3] Adebayo Adedeji, Executive Secretary of ECA, "Africa and the Development Crises" in Africa Guide, 1978, p.25.

[4] World Bank, Development Report 1981(NY OUP 1981), Table I.I

[5] ECA, Biannual Report of the Executive Secretary, 1979-1980.

action for getting Africa out of the crises and towards a better future. This serious effort led to the now famous Monrovia Declaration (1979) which articulated Africa's vision of its future and whose strategies were incorporated in the Lagos Plan of Action, and the Final Act of Lagos (1980). These three documents contained respectively (a) the most clearly articulated vision of Africa's future, (b) a practical plan of action on how to achieve faster development towards that vision, and (c) political decisions supporting the vision and the plan of action as well as achieving effective economic cooperation and integration.

The Monrovia Declaration (1979)

It provided the vision and scenario of Africa's future. The Africa of 2000/2020 will "have a high degree of self sufficiency, a democratic national development which will distribute the fruits of our efforts more equitably, will have a strong African solidarity and that Africa will carry more weight in world affairs" (OAU,1979, p.30)[6]

The Lagos Plan of Action (LPA)

It provided the framework and strategies for implementing development programmes. The LPA based its strategies on some important principles which it considered will lead to an alternative form of development and will take Africa out of its crises. These principles are: -

1. **Self reliance should be the basis of development – at the national, sub-regional and regional levels**
2. **Equity in the distribution of wealth at the national level is a fundamental objective of development;**
3. **Public sector is essential for development and it should be expanded**
4. **Outside capital is an unavoidable necessity and it should be directed to those areas where African capital is lacking or inadequate – such as mining, energy and large scale projects;**
5. **Inter-African economic cooperation and integration is essential and should be effected as soon as possible.**
6. **Change in the international economic order to favour Africa and Third World countries is essential and Africa should continue to fight for NIEO (New International Economic Order).**

On the basis of these principles, the LPA gave primacy to the development of Agriculture (first for food and then for export), Industrialisation (to satisfy basic needs), Mining Industries (to recover total and permanent sovereignty over national resources, establish mineral based industries), Human Resources, and Science and Technology.

These principles and the Plan of Action – the detailed Programme – were discussed extensively by Governments, as well as by African intellectuals. The latter were generally critical of the details in the Plan but strongly supported the basic principles behind the LPA.[7]

The Final Act of Lagos (1980) and The Abuja Treaty (1991)

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[6] "What Kind of Africa in the Year 2002?", OAU, Addis Ababa, 1979
[7] Bujra, Abdalla (Editor) "Africa Development", A Quarterly Journal of CODESRIA, Vol.VII, No.1/2, 1982. A special number on The LPA. See Bujra's Editorial, p. I to VI.

The Heads of States and Governments of the OAU passed this special Final Act aimed at achieving an African Common Market by the year 2000. Clearly the issue of economic cooperation and integration was so important to the Governments that they felt the need to pass a special and separate Act. It was argued that without such economic cooperation and eventual integration of the generally small national economies, it would be impossible to achieve any meaningful alternative development as a way out of the crises. More importantly, without such cooperation and integration Africa will not be strong enough to bring about any change, however small, in the existing international economic order. And such a change is crucial if Africa is to have any meaningful space to embark on an alternative form of development and to overcome its crises.

The importance given to economic cooperation and integration by African leaders led them to transform, within ten years, the Final Act of Lagos to the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community in 1991. The treaty lays down in details the process for achieving the Economic Community in successive stages over a period of 34 years. The Treaty clearly states that it takes into consideration the Monrovia Declaration, the LPA and the Final Act of Lagos. More importantly, in conducting inter-state relations, it affirmed adherence of the earlier principles enshrined in the LPA , some of which it lists as:-

Equality and inter-dependence of Member States
Solidarity and collective self-reliance
Inter-state cooperation
Peaceful settlement of disputes
Recognition, promotion and protection of human and people's rights
Accountability, economic justice and popular participation in development.[8]
Clearly the LPA continued to provide the inspiration of all future African visions and initiatives, until NEPAD.

<u>The Third OAU Vision</u>

The 1980 decade has been described as the "lost decade". Africa was going through very serious economic and political crises – negative growth, collapsing economies, civil wars, collapsing states and state structures etc. And, as we will see below, the "international community" became very concerned with the "unending crises" which led to a belief that came to be called "Afro-Pessimism". Implicit in Afro-Pessimism was the core idea that the African people – their societies, cultures, mindset and structures – are incapable of running their states and their economies and therefore they will remain in a permanent state of crises – stagnation and negative growth.

Afro-Pessimism was born outside Africa and the idea was propagated both outside and inside Africa itself, by those who had a vested interest in Africa remaining weak and disorganised for a long time.

The Africans however generally had a different view of their crises – its causes, its continuation and the way out of the crises. While most Africans acknowledged that there were "internal" factors which had contributed to their crises and even its maintenance,

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[8] OAU, Treaty Establishing The African Economic Community, Abuja , Nigeria, June 1991.

they nevertheless put more emphases on the "external" origin of their crises and particularly their inability to get out of the crises. They argued that:

(a)   Colonialism had created the basic conditions of the crises – dependant economies, distorted structures, artificial boundaries/countries, divided people, undeveloped human resource and weak undemocratic state structures.
(b)   The international commodity market, financial system, the dominant role of the Western TNCs, and the "five monopolies" enjoyed by the West (Amin, 1995,p.47)[9], were, and still are extremely formidable barriers which weak African governments – individually or collectively – were and are unable to overcome.
(c)   Given these conditions, in which the international system continuously reinforced African countries economic dependence, to maintain their distorted structures, and to encourage the chaotic political systems inherited from the colonial states - given this situation – African countries found it very difficult to economically develop, create nation states, and develop their human and natural resources.
(d)   The direct intervention by the Bretton Woods institutions and the Donor countries in African economies through SAPs, ostensibly to help Africans overcome their crises, simply perpetuated the unequal and exploitative relationship between Africa and the global system.

Given this general African perspective of their crises, they invariably came up with initiatives which started with basic strategies and appeals to change this unequal and harmful (to Africa) relationship. And the new approach to an alternative form of development, were clearly enunciated in the LPA's basic principles of development (see above).

Thus since 1980, all African initiatives (from the OAU and up to 1990 from the ECA), accepted the vision, framework, strategies and principles enshrined in the LPA. And to repeat the vision behind the LPA and the Final Act, were articulated in the Monrovia Declaration (see above).

OAU: Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, 1986-1990: Addis Ababa, July 1985

And when in 1985, the OAU came up with its "Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, 1986-1990", it clearly stated that "While reiterating our full commitment to the principles and objectives of the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos, which are more valid today than ever, we have focussed…" on a five year programme which consisted of:-

 "measures for an accelerated implementation of the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos";
"special action for improvement of the food situation and rehabilitation of agriculture"; Emphases to be on overcoming drought.
"measures to alleviate Africa's external debt";
"measures for a common platform for action at sub-regional, regional, continental and international levels";

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[9] Amin, Samir "Africa and the Global System" in Bujra, Abdalla (Guest Editor) of African Development Review (ADB), A Special Number on Africa and the Future; December 1995.

and "measures for action against the effects of the destabilisation policy of South Africa on the economies of Southern African States".

It is to be noted that there is no mention of FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) at all in the document. The issue of Aid is clearly discussed and gratitude expressed to the Donors and the UN System. However the OAU urges more Aid to Famine Relief

This document which was passed by the Assembly of Heads of States and Governments of the OAU in July 1985, clearly blames the external environment for the crises in Africa. In particular they blame the debt burden and the apartheid government of South Africa.

"The dramatic increase in the volume of Africa's external debt and the heavy debt burden is another source of our profound concern …".

"We are aware of the fact that shortcomings in development policies have contributed to the present debt crises. However, it is evident that the major causes of our country's debt servicing problems are external ones and such causes are unfortunately beyond our control. These include, inter alia, the deteriorating terms of trade and the consequent reduction in export earning for debt servicing, unprecedented rise in interest rates, sharp exchange rate fluctuations, deteriorating terms of borrowing and the reduction in the flow of concessional resources, the combined effects of which resulted in net capital outflow from most of our Member States. In this regard the 26 African LDCs have been most seriously affected"(OAU, 1985.p.5).[10]

Incidentally this "Africa's Priority Programme…." of 1985, was discussed and approved by the UN General Assembly in 1986 and was renamed as the UN-PAAERD – 1986 (United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, 1986-1990).

<u>The African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programme for Socio-Economic Transformation (AAF-SAP) – UNECA, Addis Ababa,1989</u>

The "lost decade" of the 1980 was marked with two fundamental characteristics: Firstly the widespread economic and political crises in almost all African countries. Secondly the strong intervention by the Bretton Woods institutions with the now discredited Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). These SAPs were forced on African governments with the aim of restructuring Africa's economies. Strong armed tactics were used (by the WB/IMF) to force African governments to accept the SAPs. The African people were of course never consulted – particularly by their Governments. The implementation of SAPs inflicted serious disruption on African countries economies and caused extensive immeseration of the African people. There was considerable opposition to SAPs from the people and African intellectuals. The situation is aptly described in the ECA's AAF-SAP.

"Of course as we look back at the 1980s, very few of us can doubt that we were, in one way or another affected by SAPS that many of our countries have been pursuing. In some cases the impact of such programme has led to riots because of the tremendous suffering they imposed on the people: loss of jobs, reduction in social services, impossible increase in prices, generalised poverty and the constant threat of destabilising society as a whole.

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[10] OAU, Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990. Published by FAO, 1985.

Indeed, these programmes continue to be formulated and implemented as if people do not matter" (ECA, AAF-SAP, p.v).

The UNECA (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa), under professor Adedeji and acting more like an economic commission of the OAU rather than of the UN, reacted to the generalised African crises and the very widespread criticism and attack on SAPs, by producing a detailed document arguing for an Alternative Framework for Development. This was an alternative to SAPs and takes the Bretton Woods programme point by point countering them with alternative policies which, it was argued, would take Africa out of its present crises. The central issue in this document is not only that the Alternative Framework and policies were considered to be very relevant to the African situation, but that SAPs were essentially perpetuating the African crises by forcing a linkage of weak crises ridden African countries to the powerful global system on terms which gave total advantage and dominance to the global system and nothing to African countries.

Needles to say the AAF-SAP was strongly opposed and often roundly condemned by experts of the WB/IMF as well as those of Donor community in general. A popular version of The AAF-SAP was produced – first printing was 20,000 copies. Despite this effort and the strong support the document received from both governments and African intellectuals, the AAF-SAP was marginalized and eventually followed the fate of previous African initiatives.

The African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation, Arusha, 1990

As the Title of the Charter implies its basic objective is the democratisation of the development process in order to enable people's participation in the production process. The Charter came out of an International Conference organised by the ECA. The Charter was later adopted by the OAU.

"The Charter calls for the emergence of a new era in Africa – an Africa in which democracy, accountability, economic justice and development for transformation become internalised and the empowerment of the people, initiative and enterprise and the democratisation of the development process are the order of the day in every country. It delineates the action that are required by all concerned – the people and their organisations, governments, African and non-African NGOs and the international community – to achieve the aforesaid objectives and also proposes national and regional mechanism to monitor and report on the progress made in the implementation of the Charter" (Charter, Arusha 1990, p.1 and 2).[11]

The core objective of the Charter is to inject a different approach in development thinking – that the actual participation of the people in the development and production process, is expected to bring about quicker economic growth, economic justice and general development. However this can only be done and actualised if there is genuine democracy at all levels – at the grass roots, at the level of various organisations, enterprises and governments.

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[11] African Charter for the Popular Participation in Development and Transformation: Arush, 1990

The Charter, (whose conference was organised by Adedeji, Executive Secretary of the ECA and the driving force behind the AAF-SAP) continued the fight started by AAF-SAP against the Bretton Woods approach to development through SAP. The Charter was taking up a political issue with the WB/IMF and their SAPs. The political argument of the Charter is that firstly the economic framework being forced on African governments was undemocratic and does not allow people to participate in the economic and development processes. In fact under SAPs and their conditionalities, organised labour and organised professional associations, were being systematically destroyed so that labour will not have the power to negotiate with owners of enterprises. This was an essential demand and condition of foreign investors. Secondly the manner in which the economic reforms were forced on African governments was extremely undemocratic. Hence the Charter insists that the democratisation of the development and productive process by enabling the people to participate was not only essential, but was contrary to the Bretton Woods philosophy of development and its programme of economic reform. The Charter therefore logically argues that, the democratisation of development and production process, is an alternative approach and is more likely to take African countries out of their present crises than the SAPs.

The Fourth OAU Vision

The OAU Declaration on the Political and Socio-Economic Situation in Africa and the Fundamental Changes Taking Place in the World. Addis Ababa, 1990

This is an important Declaration that also reacts to the continuous crises facing African countries. The Declaration clearly articulates OAU's views on the changing nature of the international environment and the position of Africa in this environment. The OAU Heads of States and governments were seriously concerned with the negative impact of the international system on African countries. Like previous OAU Declarations and Initiatives, this 1990 Declaration argues that the main cause of the African crises lies in the way Africa relates to the international system – a relationship which is totally detrimental to Africa and therefore the cause of its deepening crises. The concern of the OAU are on two related aspects of the African crises: -

(a)   the deteriorating African economies
(b)   the increasing number of internal conflicts – particularly the armed conflicts and civil wars.

The declaration pointed out that "throughout the decade of the 1980s, most of our productive and infra structural facilities continued to deteriorate. The per capita income of our people fell drastically…. There has been a sharp decline in the quality of life in our countries…. And this contrasted sharply with the alarming rise in Africa's external debt .. which shot up from about US$50 billion in 1980 to about US$257 billion by the end of 1989". The intervention of the WB/IMF with their SAPs raised alarm bells with the OAU. "Most of our countries have entered into SAPs with the international financial and monetary institutions, mostly at heavy political and social cost… We are very much concerned that … there is an increasing tendency to impose conditionalities of a political nature for assistance to Africa" (OAU, Declaration, 1990, p.2)[12]

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[12] OAU, Declaration of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU on the Political and Socio-Economic situation in Africa and the Fundamental changes Taking Place in the World, Addis Ababa, July1990.

The Declaration stated clearly the determination of the African governments to pursue development on the basis of "self reliant, human-cantered and sustainable development on the basis of social justice and collective self reliance so as to achieve accelerated structural transformation of our economies". Furthermore, the governments are also "determined to rationalise the existing economic groupings in our Continent in order to increase their effectiveness in promoting economic integration and establishing an African Economic Community".

These are objectives we set for ourselves in the LPA in 1980. We reaffirm their continued validity as well as the fundamental principles of the Lagos Plan of Action and Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, including the sectorial priorities contained in them in particular, the urgent need to attain self-sufficiency in food production, to promote science and technology for development and to establish a viable industrial base on the Contentment. In this connection, we commit ourselves to the pursuit of sound population and environmental policies conducive to economic growth and development of our Continent"(Declaration, 1990,p.3).

It is important to note here that both the objectives and the sectorial priorities of the Declaration are very different from those of the SAPs.

In addition to this strong statement on the nature of the economic crises and the role of the Bretton Woods institutions in its perpetuation, the OAU's Heads of States made two important decisions on two internal political issues which were of great concern in the Continent – namely resolving all types of conflicts and supporting democracy. These decisions were: -

1. "We …renew our determination to work together towards the peaceful and speedy resolutions of *all* the conflicts in our continent".
2. "We …assert that democracy and development should go together and should be mutually reinforcing". "It is necessary to promote popular participation of our people in the process of government and development".

Thus without changing the OAU Charter, the Heads of States and Governments, for the first time, extended the scope of the OAU to intervene in internal conflicts of member states.

Secondly the commitment to democracy is also very important since the OAU, again and for the first time, made a choice and preference on the type of political system of sovereign member states.

The importance of this Declaration lies in the assertion that the OAU has to deal with the political problems of conflicts and democracy as a necessary precondition to progress in economic development. It was after this Declaration that the OAU established in 1993 the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. Almost all the conflicts that the OAU was dealing with at the time, were internal conflicts within member states – a departure from previous practice of dealing only with inter-state conflicts.

Despite this Declaration and the establishment of the Mechanism to resolve conflicts, conflicts continued and the economies of most African countries continued to deteriorate in the 1990s. Hence the OAU soon came up with another Initiative.

The Fifth OAU Vision

The OAU's Relaunching Africa's Economic and Social Development:
The Cairo Agenda for Action, OAU, 1995

In 1995 the OAU Heads of States and Governments met in Cairo in an Extra-Ordinary Session, to seriously review, analyse and reassess the root causes of economic and social problems with a view to recommending remedial measures and lasting solution that should be taken by African governments and peoples, with the support of the international community.

The Meeting however, noted that for many years the OAU had adopted many plans, strategies and programmes for the development of the countries, individually and collectively. "Unfortunately these plans were not adequately implemented by the majority of the countries…". The Meeting therefore called on African countries to rectify this situation.

Firstly people should be the centre and object of development

Secondly governments should ensure the involvement of the people in the conception, implementation and monitoring of development plans, programmes, and projects;

Thirdly special attention should be paid to the full involvement of women in the social and economic development efforts.

"Africa is a resilient continent and is a continent in transition. It has immense human resources. With a strong will, more determination, planning and vision, we can make Africa an economic power that it ought to be". And while the Meeting reaffirmed OAU's commitment to the LPA, it adopted the Cairo Agenda for Action for Relaunching Africa's economic and social development. The Agenda for Action recommends: -

(a) Democracy, Governance, Peace, Security, Stability and sustainable Development. These could be achieved through promoting national unity, promoting good governance, through a policy of regionalisation and decentralisation, through clarifying the role of government and the private sector in development, through measures to eradicate the causes of refugees and displaced persons, and through maximum political and financial support of the OAU Mechanism for conflict Resolution.
(b) Food Security
(c) Capacity Building and Human Resources Development
(d) Structural Transformation of African Economies – but once again reaffirming very different strategies and policies from those of SAPs.
(e) Effective Mobilisation and Efficient Utilisation of Resources
(f) Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration

Each of these areas were dealt with in greater details with important suggestions on policy options. Most of these areas recommended for action and the policy options, are, with slight variation, similar to those in the 1985 Africa's Priority Programme, and the Lagos Plan of

Action of 1980. However the ECA's AAF-SAP differs from the others in that it discusses specific polices and their implications as realistic alternatives to the then policies being implemented by SAPs.

The Sixth OAU Vision

The African Union (Sirti, 2000, Lusaka 2001) and NEPAD Lusaka, and Abuja, 2001

The creation of the African Union in Sirte (Libya) in 1999 and the adoption of the Constitutive Act of the African Union in Lome July 2000[13] was an important milestone in the process of creating political continental unity and the African Economic Community. It was a major achievement of the African leaders and a triumph for Pan-Africanism. The AU will be a much stronger organisation than the OAU.

Amongst the new principles of the Union are – the right of the Union to intervene in a Member State, respect for democratic principles, human rights and good governance, promotion of social justice and promotion of gender equality. Its development focus are similar to those of the LPA. Yet nowhere in the Constitutive Act is NEPAD mentioned.

NEPAD is a merger (done in July 2001) of the Millennium Partnership for Africa's Recovery Programme (MAP) and the Omega Plan. The New Africa Initiative (NAI) was born out of the merger. NAI was then approved by the OAU Summit of Heads of States and Governments in Lusaka, July 2001. NAI was then edited and its policy framework was finalised by the Heads of State Implementation Committee which then became NEPAD.

NEPAD's goals are to promote accelerated development, to eradicate poverty and to holt the marginilisation of Africa in the global process.

NEPAD claims to be:-
* A holistic integrated strategic framework for the socio-economic development of Africa;
* It is a plan which has been conceived and developed by African leaders
* It is a commitment that African leaders are making to the African people
* It is a commitment that African leaders are making to accelerate the integration of the African continent into the global economy
* It is a call to the rest of the world to partner Africa in her own development

However spokesman for NEPAD are far from being modest as this statement testifies: "Before NEPAD the African landscape had been littered with failed initiatives, development plans and programmes of action. Of note were the regional initiatives of the Lagos Plan of Action (early 80s) and the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community (early 90s). For a variety of reasons including lack of capacity, lack of political will, outside interference and lack of resources these past initiatives were unsuccessful. However, fortuitous convergence of circumstances, both within and outside the continent, has created the opportunity for the latest initiative"[14]. Given the fact that the document of this quotation aimed at explaining NEPAD to a large and distinguished African gathering at the African Development Forum, in Addis Ababa on March 7 2002, it was rather

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[13] OAU, Constitutive Act of the African Union, Addis Ababa, July 2001.
[14] Amb. I. Aluko-Olokun, The New Partnership for Africa's Development, Head, Niigeria NEPAD Team, Addis Ababa, March 2002.

overstating the possibility of NEPAD succeeding where others have failed. And without explaining what the "fortuitous convergence of circumstances" are which will make NEPAD succeed where others have failed. It is not surprising therefore that NEPAD is drawing criticism especially from Civil Society Groups.

Adedeji points out that NEPAD has not been mentioned in the AU's Constitutive Act, nor does NEPAD mention the AU Act. Both the Act and NEPAD have similar development sectors to focus on. "Are both intended to work along parallel lines? The impression is given, perhaps inadvertently, that although the AU is the supreme body – having replaced the OAU – NEPAD is special and is not to be integrated into the AU. It has its own organs which are quite different from those of the AU…. How will the NEPAD Implementation Committee of Heads of States relate to the AU Executive Council? Will the NEPAD Secretariat now being set up not in Addis Ababa but in Pretoria remain a separate and independent entity? Will it be absorbed by the Commission of the Union ..? There are indeed many substantive issues where reconciliation and clarity is needed in the relationship between the AU and NEPAD"(Adedeji, Nairobi, April 2002)[15].

Apart from NEPAD's status, it has been criticised on more substantial grounds. The African scholars in Accra, stated in their Declaration, the following critique of NEPAD: -

"The most fundamental flaws of NEPAD, which reproduces the central elements of the World bank's *Can Africa Claim the 21st Century* and the ECA's *Compact for African Recovery,* include:

(a)   the neo-liberal policy framework at the heart of the plan, and, which repeats the structural adjustment policy packages of the preceding two decades and overlooks the disastrous effects of those policies;

(b)   the fact that in spite of its proclaimed recognition of the central role of the African people to the plan, the African people have not played any part in the conception, design and formulation of the NEPAD

(c)   notwithstanding its stated concerns for social and gender equity, it adopts the social and economic measures that have contributed to the marginalisation of women,

(d)   that in spite of claims of African origin, its main targets are foreign donors, particularly in the G8,

(e)   its vision of democracy is defined by the needs of creating a functional market;

(f)   it under-emphasises the external conditions fundamental to Africa's development crises, and thereby does not promote any meaningful measure to manage and restrict the effects of this environment on Africa's development efforts. On the contrary, the engagement that it seeks with institutions and processes like the World Bank, the IMF, the WTO, the United States Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, the Cotonou Agreement, will further lock Africa's economies disadvantageously into this environment;

(g)   the means for mobilisation of resources will further the disintegration of African economies that we have witnessed at the hands of structural adjustment and WTO rules;

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[15] Adedeji, Adebayo; "From the Lagos Plan of Action to the New Partnership for African Development and from the Final Act of Lagos to the Constitutive Act: Whither Africa?" Kenynote Address to the Conference on African Forum for Envisioning Africa Focus on NEPAD, Nairobi, April,2002.

And the African scholars having made substantive critique of NEPAD, proceed to list strategies and policies which need to be pursued by African Governments instead of those suggested by NEPAD. What the African scholars are calling for are essentially contrary to the fundamental philosophy and assumption behind NEPAD. For example, they call on: -

(i) with regards to external environment – they call on action towards stabilisation of commodity prices; reform of the international financial system (to prevent debt, exchange rate instability and capital flow volatility) as well as of the WB and IMF an end to IMF/WB structural adjustment; fundamental changes in the existing agreements of the WTO regime ….

(ii) at the local, national and sub-regional levels, development policy must promote agriculture, industry, services including health and public education – must be protected and supported through trade, investment and macro-economic policy measures. A strategy for financing must seek to mobilise and build on internal and intra-African resources through imaginative savings measures; reallocation of expenditure away from wasteful items, military expenditure, corruption ….etc.

(iii) these measures require, above all, the reconstitution of the developmental state: a state for which social equity, social inclusion, national unity and respect for human rights form the basis of economic policy;….[16]

It is clear that the African scholars were not only critical of NEPAD but had definite alternative ideas (such as those above and others which we have not listed). And these ideas, twenty years later, and by a younger generation of African scholars, are a repeat of those in the Lagos Plan of Action. Ironically, many of those younger scholars who attended the conference and made the above declaration, may not have seen the Lagos Plan of Action document. How some ideas persist!

<u>The External Visions</u>
Since the colonisation of the continent, the "externals" have had the upper hand in all matters to do with the economies of African countries. In the first place the colonial powers laid down the structures of African country's modern economies. At the beginning, half way and towards the end of the colonial period, the African economies were specifically designed to benefit the metropolitan countries. This is irrespective of whether the resource base of a given African country was mineral resources, agriculture, land to be populated by colonial settlers or a combination of any of these resources – the result was the same; an economy which was outward oriented to suit the metropolitan countries.

And at independence, the politically independent countries found themselves tied up to the metropolitan economies and to the international economic system which the former colonial powers and their allies – western European countries and North America (USA and Canada) – dominated. This essentially meant that almost all technologies and industrial products of all kinds were produced in the Western countries who had monopoly over these, and who set the price for the African buyers. In addition they controlled most of the small industries which they started in African countries, including the control of the mineral resources by their companies. They controlled the commodity market and therefore set the prices for all commodities produced by the African economies. They further controlled the financial system and set the interest rate and other conditions for all African borrowing etc. Finally they controlled the service industries – insurance etc – and

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[16] CODESRIA-TWNAfrica Declaration on the Challenges facing Africa, Accra, April 2002.

at the same time provided the expertise and personnel to help African countries whose human resources were highly underdeveloped. Needless to say they advised the African governments not to disturb this economic structure and to continue this inherited relationship with the international economic system. After all this was the "natural" division of labour in the world. Any attempt by African governments to change their economic strategies and policies in order to restructure or reorient this relationship to their advantage was quickly stopped by various instruments, which the Western countries had, and still have over the African countries. These instruments varied from the manipulation of the financial system against African countries, manipulation of commodity prices, withdrawal of technical assistance, of investment, and sometimes direct sanctions. In the face of this formidable power, most African countries continued their economic policies and "development" in the way established by the colonial powers. By the end of the 1960s the economies of African countries began to slow down from their rapid growth and their foreign currency reserves were becoming exhausted.

As the Cold War intensified and ideological war of converting African countries heated up in the 1970s, the number of externals increased beyond the former colonial powers. The Americans (on behalf of the West), the Soviet Union (on behalf of the Communist East), The Scandinavian countries on behalf European Social Democracy and China, on behalf of Third World Communism. All these powers played their parts in trying to influence both political and economic development of African countries. And the story of this internal struggle (the struggle amongst the externals) over African countries is known only superficially. Yet the struggle was important with serious impact on most African countries.

What is of interest to us here is that this serious political and military struggle for African countries, was accompanied by a heated ideological debate over alternative paths to development. This debate was not just confined between Capitalism vs. Marxism, but included several new ideas on the possibilities of different development paths in Third World countries. The Dependency School from Latin America, the Social Democratic experience in Scandinavia, the Chinese experience, the Cuban experience and even some of the woolly ideas behind the UN Development Decades. Added to this mixed pot were the call by African and Arab political leaders for African and Arab Socialism. In the end, what filtered to the rarefied atmosphere of the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and governments were Declarations which contained a mild form of socialist ideas and a strong dose of nationalism – support for a strong role of the public sector side by side with the private sector, some basic social welfare system, self reliance and economic cooperation in order to reduce excessive dependence and to strengthen the bargaining power of African countries. And these principles were to provide the framework for the strategies and policies to develop the country's economies – agriculture, industry, development of human and mineral resources, science and technology etc.

Thus by the end of 1970s when most countries were going through serious economic crises, the well trodden path of economic policies intensified after independence, became the obvious target of blame because it was believed that these policies did not bring any serious development except the crises. And when the African government began seriously to think of what to do about the crises, the strong temptation was therefore to (a) reject the ongoing inherited economic policies and (b) to welcome and accept, as an alternative, the mixture of mild socialist and nationalist ideas which had a strong presence in the intellectual circles and the circles of some influential political leaders.

Hence 1979-1980, saw the mobilisation of African intellectual and political resources which produce the three landmark Declarations and documents – The Monrovia Declaration (1979), the Lagos Plan of Action(1980) and the Final Act of Lagos(1980). As pointed out earlier, since these critical Declarations were made, all future African Initiatives were made within the frameworks of these Declaration – except that the new Initiatives simply added more details regarding the nature and causes of the economic crises and policies to be perused in order to overcome the crises.

The World Bank's Berge Report: 1981

The "externals" – mainly the Western countries – were rather alarmed by the ideas being proposed by the LPA and also by its anti-Western language.

In October 1981, the World Bank came out with its Report, which it claims was at the request of the Bank's African Governors. The Report was called "Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: An Agenda for Action"[17]. The Agenda in this report was clearly meant to be an improvement in the policies advocated by the Western countries in Africa. According to the World Bank, if African countries followed the development strategy proposed in the Report, Africa will pull itself from its crises and will experience "accelerated development". The Report's core strategy for accelerated economic development was that African governments should adopt a strategy based on export-led growth and the liberalisation of foreign trade. This strategy, according to a seminar report of the World Bank's Economic Development Institute, "has few adherents"[18].

The Berg Report as it came to be known, was definitely a response to the LPA and its aim was to provide an intellectual basis for the intervention of the WB to initiate adjustment programmes to African economies ostensibly in order to take the countries out of the crises and to lead them to accelerated development.

According to Bujra (1982), the Berg Report (a) does not address itself to most of the crucial issues spelt out in details in the LPA;(b) while the Report advocates increased investment (foreign and local) and a reduction in the public sector, the LPA advocates *expansion* in the public sector; (c) important areas of development (industrialisation, control and use of mineral resources, and economic cooperation and integration) are given scant and peripheral attention in the Report. Indeed the issue of economic cooperation is not mentioned at all in this Report. Yet these issues are of central concern in the LPA.

Despite the shortcoming of the Berg Report, in relation to the LPA, the WB/IMF began in earnest to implement their Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) in African countries immediately after the Berg Report.

The World Bank and IMF have been informed, in no uncertain terms, by both government officials and African researchers of the inappropriate assumptions behind the SAPs and of the negative impact of SAPs on African countries. In 1987 and 1988, the Economic Development Institute of the World Bank organised five senior policy seminars on structural adjustment in Africa. Participants of the seminars were composed of ministers,

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[17] World Bank, Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa", Washington, 1981.
[18] Cadman Atta Mills, Structural Adjustment in Sub-Saharan Africa, an EDI Seminar Report Number 18, Washinton,1989.

governors, permanent secretaries, senior advisors and a significant number of senior technical staff of central banks and the core ministries of finance and planning as well as spending ministries such as agriculture and industry. Twenty seven countries participated in the seminars. The strong and critical voice of the participants of the above seminar was expressed in a very polite and diplomatic language of the Bank in one of its Reports (EDI Policy Seminar Report No.18, Washington, 1989). The critique of African participants in these Seminars are couched as main observations and lessons emerging from the seminars. These are: -

1.   Most participants perceived adjustment programs as imposed from outside;
2.   Adjustment must be seen in a broader context as involving medium and longer –term policies in addition to immediate (stabilisation) measures;
3.   Basic Social services must be protected;
4.   Current adjustment programs have yet to successfully reconcile demand management with supply-enhancing measures;
5.   The promotion of sub-regional or regional trade and coordination of development plans and strategies – a main objective of the LPA –have not received the attention they deserve;
6.   Significant social cost are associated with adjustment;
7.   To be sustainable, an adjustment program must be nationally designed and /or designed to fit local conditions;
8.   For many reasons – including the weak bargaining positions of African governments and their lack of indigenous capacity for policy formulation – international organisations currently set the agenda for policy reforms. This had a number of unfortunate consequences;
9.   A long-term strategy based on export-led growth and the liberalisation of foreign trade has few adherents;
10.   The current African crises, to a considerable degree, has its origins in the international economic environment;
11.   Negotiations can be better handled to reduce the tension between conditionality and national sovereignty;
12.   Multilateral institutions should accept greater responsibility for failed programs[19].

The African critique of SAPs was loud and clear from the beginning of the introduction of SAPs in the early 1980s. The fact that by 1988 the WB articulated these criticism openly meant that the Bank had known these criticism from a much earlier period. Yet despite Bank/IMF knowledge of these criticism from African officials, the SAPs continued to be implemented with hardly any of the above criticism taken into account.

In spite of the above critique SAPs have continued to be implemented, with slight technical modifications here and there. The serious and negative impacts of the SAPs are now well known and the strong reactions of African officials and intellectuals against SAPs are also well known. The most important formal response to the SAPs was the ECA's African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programme (AAF-SAPS) in 1989. This response has been discussed above as part of the African Initiatives. And amongst the many sharp and serious critique of SAPs from African intellectuals (starting from its genesis with the Berg Report), is Thandika Mkandawire's edited book *"Our Continent our Future"* **(1999).**

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[19] Ibid, p. *vii and viii.*

By the end of the 1980s and throughout the 1990s, the external's perspective and strategy for development had become the dominant, if not the only one directing development policies and programmes in almost all African countries. Indeed the practical power of the WB/IMF and the Donor community (collectively often referred to as the international community) to intervene and direct detailed plans, programmes and actual decision making of African governments had become established and accepted in government circles.

In the meantime in 1989, the WB came out with another report – the Long Term Perspective Studies (LTPS) in which it proposed a global coalition of Donors and Africans to effectively direct the intellectual framework and strategies of long term development in Africa. The Global Coalition for Africa was thus established as an organisation – an institution – which is still operating until today. However soon, in the 1990s, the international community began to intensify their coordination at many levels – without the participation of Africans. The WB/IMF, the EU, the DAC, individual Donor countries, the Paris and London Clubs etc. their strategies and policies with regards to loans, debt, aid, trade, technical assistance etc. became increasingly highly coordinated and standardized insisted on African governments to accept essentially the same conditionalities. These conditionalities now turned out to be those of SAPs (revised and elaborated) as well as political conditionality of Good Governance. The latter conditionality was also adopted by the UN System as a whole – but particularly the UNDP.

Thus during the 1990s and the new millennium, African economic and political development was being diplomatically but firmly guided by the "international community". At the more formal level of treaties, the EU continued with its Lome now Cotonou Conventions (renewed/renegotiated every several years) which guided the unequal trade relations between African countries and the EU countries. More recently the Americans came with their own Programme – Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). And more interestingly, the British and French (the two largest and most powerful former colonial powers) recently decided to synchronise and coordinate in details their African policies to the extent that their African Ambassadors hold joint meetings annually/biannually?

And once again, in the year 2000, the WB in association with its partners (mainly from amongst the "international community") came up with yet another document – this time in the form of a book – "Can Africa Reclaim the 21st Century?"[20] This book essentially articulates the long term strategies of African development from the perspective of the WB and the rest of the Donor community. It is expected to provide the intellectual inspiration to African policy makers when they formulate their development strategies.

And indeed according to the CODESRIA-TWNAfrica's recent Declaration,[21] NEPAD, the latest African vision and initiative for African Development, derives its intellectual inspiration and its strategies for African development from the above World Bank book "Can Africa Reclaim the 21st Century?" Similar arguments and statements were made in

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[20] World Bank, Can Africa Reclaim the 21st Century?, Washington, 2000.
[21] CODESRIA-TWNAfrica Declararion of a Conference on "Africa's Development Challenges", Accra, 26 April 2002.

another conference of African scholars held in Nairobi at about the same time (26-29 April, 2002)[22].

It is clear that internal and external vision for African development have existed since the early years of independence. These visions differ fundamentally with regards to their development strategies. However the present dominance of the external vision on African development, simply reflects the reality – that of the weakness of Africa and the strength and power of the "externals".

<u>**Concluding Remarks**</u>

The first major OAU Initiatives on *economic development* started with the Monrovia/LPA 1979/80. Before then OAU was mainly concerned with inter-state relations and the politics of decolonisation.

We must at this point ask the simple question as to why OAU Initiatives were and still are different from those of the externals? And secondly why do Heads of states sign up to radical development approaches at the OAU level but fail to implement these approaches at the national level? The answer to these questions are complex but here are some brief explanations: -

(i) **During the first 15 years of independence there was a strong presence of former colonials powers in African countries – technical personnel, aid and strong political links between the former colonial governments and the African political leadership. The influence of the Metropolitan governments on African countries and their economic policies in particular, was essentially direct.**

(ii) **Secondly, in the 1960s the economies of African countries were doing well; they generally had healthy foreign currency reserve; the emerging class of African business men which was accumulating wealth through the use of state institutions, was very optimistic about the future and therefore favoured continuity of policies recommended by colonial advisors and continuity of same economic structure without radical change. Where some governments (eg. Tanzania) tried some form of radical approach to development and therefore tried to change the existing economic structure through nationalisation and diversifying its external economic links, there was immediate strong media attack, diplomatic isolation, and economic pressure to stop such "move to the left" – moves which essentially disrupted the economy. This happened in Tanzania, Guinea Conakry, Ghana (under Nkrumah), then Congo Kinshasa (under Lumumba), Benin, Somalia, Uganda (under Obote I) etc.**

(iii) **The second half of the 1970s saw the economic crises intensifying all over the continent. There were serious rumblings amongst the populations and especially the military. In fact the military did take power in many countries which led to worsening of the economic and political crises in those countries. The OAU therefore began to take up economic development as part of its mandate and soon initiated discussion on development issues. Similarly the UNECA began to be more active than before. As has been mentioned earlier, all this took place in the context of a strong ideological debate of the 1970s regarding alternative paths to development and which was taking place in all African countries. Hence the OAU debates on development absorbed some basic ideas from the ongoing debate, ideas which tended to reinforce the strong**

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[22] African Forum for Envisioning Africa Focus on NEPAD, Organised by Mazingira Institute, African Academy of Science and the Heinrich Boell Foundation, Nairobi, 26-29 April 2002, Nairobi, Kenya.

continental nationalism which is at the root of the OAU's very existence. Hence the OAU language and perspective of development contained strong nationalist language and easily leaned towards alternatives to the existing approaches.

(iv) The political leaders themselves found it easier to accept such alternative approaches to development because they also saw on the ground in their countries the drawback of the approach inherited from the colonial powers.

(v)   Yet at the country level, most of the political leaders found it extremely difficult to debunk or reject existing economic policies because (a) the cost of disruption would be too great, (b) the power of the emerging indigenous economic elite within the political and administrative structure was very strong and favoured continuity of existing policies, including shortages and other economic difficulties from which some groups amongst the elite gained economically; and (c) the power and influence of the "externals" was also very strong for continuity; the external's power derive from their threat of disrupting the economies of the countries and in their alliance with the local groups which wanted continuity. Hence it was easier for Heads of State to continue the inherited economic policies and strategies at the country level while at the same time talking and approving radical and alternative economic strategies and policies at the OAU level. Schizophrenia became a standard political behaviour of political leaders – between their countries and the OAU.

(vi) Given this situation, the more the crises deepened in African countries, the more the countries became indebted, the easier it was for the externals to ensure that the traditional economic strategies and policies inherited from the colonial period continued and expanded. Indeed as the crises deepened, and African countries became very week, the externals had a unique opportunity to intervene strongly at the country level and essentially direct economic strategies and policies and often literally manage and administer key institutions of the economies. This happened during the 1980s and some would say continues to the present – at least in many of the small countries.

(vii) However this strong interventionist role of the "externals" had to have an ideological and intellectual basis. And this was essentially provided by the WB and IMF through their various strategic reports (at the country level) and intellectuals output in major publications on Africa – such as the *Berg Report (1981),* the *Long Term Perspective Studies (1989), Adjustment in Africa (1994)* and more recently, *Can Africa Reclaim the 21st Century (2000).*

(viii) It is necessary at this point to point out (even at the cost of repetition) that there is a fundamental difference between all the pre-NEPAD African Initiatives (especially since the Monrovia/LPA –1979/80) and the NEPAD of 2001/2002. The difference is that all pre-NEPAD African initiatives had, at the core of their Plans/Agendas the following principles, which needless to say, are absent in NEPAD:-

(a) Self-reliance as an organising principle of economic and other forms of development

(b) Equality as a fundamental principle and goal of economic development

© Strong role for the Public Sector

(d) The continuous interrogation of the present international economic order and the continuous fight by various methods for a NIEO.

(e) Much stronger efforts towards economic co-operation and integration than in NEPAD

From the perspectives of the externals, these principles obviously make African initiatives radical and "ideological" – leftist. More importantly, if African countries followed these principles in their economic policies, they would make African

economies difficult to exploit and to bring under the hegemony of those countries driving globalisation. Hence the opposition of the "externals" to the African initiatives. And since NEPAD has dropped these principles, it is therefore not surprising that the G8 have welcomed NEPAD with open arms and have so far given it moral support.

(ix) Finally, and needless to say, the African people and indeed even the people of the "externals" are nowhere to be seen in this struggle for the development soul of the African continent.

Internal and External Visions of African Development:
Are they Compatible?
From the OAU to the AU
And From the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) to the New
Partnership for African Development (NEPAD)

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