

Notes for Presentation of Paper From the OAU to AU and from LPA to NEPAD

A. Pan-Africanism

1. Pan-Africanism has a long history going back to the 19th Century. But its most important expression was at the Manchester Conference in 1945 when both Diaspora and African leaders. Their vision of Africa was

(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 popularized and became a vision of the people/the masses at the sub-regional level through the nationalist movements which mobilized the peasants and workers for the struggle against colonial rule. And the nationalist movements achieved their independence on the basis of this vision.

B. The Formation of the OAU in 1963:

The Pan African vision of the masses and the nationalist movement was taken over by the states through the OAU

The Central Concern of the OAU was the anti-colonial struggle of the remaining countries under colonialism and this was carried out through the OAU Liberation Committee.

C. (i) Africa's Economic Performance: 1960-1975

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).

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.

C. (ii) Deterioration of African Economies: from late 1970s

By the end of the 1970s decade and despite this reasonable economic performance, there were clear signs that Africa was facing a serious economic crises. “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.

D. The OAU Vision and Strategies of Economic Recovery and Development: 1979-1995?

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 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

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.

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.

D. (i) 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

D. (ii) 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

⁶ "What Kind of Africa in the Year 2002?", OAU, Addis Ababa, 1979

generally critical of the details in the Plan but strongly supported the basic principles behind the LPA.⁷

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

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

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.

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).

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.

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

D. (iv) 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”;

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).⁹

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).

⁹ OAU, Africa’s Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990. Published by FAO, 1985.

D.(v) The African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programme for Socio-Economic Transformation (AAF-SAP) – UNECA, Addis Ababa, 1989

During this period, the UNECA (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa), under Professor Adedeji acted more like an economic commission of the OAU rather than of the UN.

And in consultations with the OAU, produced AFSAP which was heavily criticized by the WB and the IMF – because it provided an alternative strategy to that of the WB/IMF.

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

Needles to say the AAF-SAP was strongly opposed and often roundly condemned by experts of the WB/IMF as well as those of the 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.

D.(vi) The African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation, Arusha, 1990

Once again the OAU and the ECA worked together to produce this Charter.

“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).¹⁰

¹⁰ African Charter for the Popular Participation in Development and Transformation: Arusha, 1990

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.

The Charter continued the fight started by AAF-SAP against the Breton 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 conditional ties, organised labour and organised professional associations, were being systematically destroyed so that labour will not have the power to negotiate with owners of enterprises. 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 Breton 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.

D. (vii) 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 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)¹¹

**D.(viii) The Cairo Agenda for Action, OAU, 1995
The OAU Relaunches Africa’s Economic and Social Development:**

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 rationalisation 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

¹¹ 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, July 1990.

- (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.

(D.(ix) The African Union (Sirte, 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 2000¹² 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 was later adopted as a programme of the AU.

NEPAD's goals are to promote accelerated development, to eradicate poverty and to halt the marginalisation 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*

¹² OAU, Constitutive Act of the African Union, Addis Ababa, July 2001.

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.”

It is not surprising therefore that NEPAD is drawing criticism especially from Civil Society Groups.

NEPAD has been criticised by African scholars on more substantial grounds. The African scholars meeting in Accra (CODESRIA-TWN , April 2002), stated in their Declaration that:-

“The most fundamental flaws of NEPAD, is that it reproduces the central elements of the World bank’s *Can Africa Claim the 21st Century* and the ECA’s *Compact for African Recovery*. . The scholars then listed seven major objections to NEPAD.

But 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), 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) – these 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;....¹³

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!

¹³ CODESRIA-TWNAfrica Declaration on the Challenges facing Africa, Accra, April 2002.