

Africa's Transformation From Underdevelopment To Development: The Impact of New Partnership For Africa's Development (NEPAD)

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ABSTRACT

This study is an exposition of Africa's transformation from underdevelopment to development, within the context of the new partnership for Africa's development (NEPAD). It is a universally accepted fact that most countries are linked into some kind of world system mostly unequal in relationship. It is for this fact that core Marxists such as W. Rodney, C. Ake, A.G. Frank, J. Ihonvbere, S. Amin etc., argue that the contact with the forces of western imperialism did not only distort, disarticulate and underdevelop the African continent, it also ensured that it is structured and incorporated into peripheralism; as well as confined into the international division of labour. Using the concept of development of underdevelopment by Andre Gunder Frank, the work points out that the whole gamut of underdevelopment of Africa, was masterminded by the European imperialists. The findings strongly establish that the impoverishment of Africa is caused by colonialism. Hence, the study holds the view that Africa can only be developed by Africans and not Europeans.

Keywords: Africa, transformation, underdevelopment, development, partnership, NEPAD.

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary situations of Africa's underdevelopment can be traced to slave trade, colonialism, imperialism and the present Neo-colonialism. During slave trade, Africans supplied the whitemen with human cargo, who were taken to the American plantations to toil in the fields. In return, Africans received guns, gunpowder and silky items that began their process of dependency and underdevelopment. The slave trade was, perhaps, the touchstone of underdevelopment. It occurred as a result of this phenomenon, but gave such a tremendous impetus to it that for all practical purposes it may well be regarded as the real beginning of the process. The slave trade disorganized and devastated Africa on such scale that she was for ever available for domination by virtually any one. According to Rodney (1972:112)

Imperialism whether in its colonial or neo-colonial form, is basically a tool of depersonalization, alienation, exploitation and domination, ...as it is not the nature of man to live comfortably under the yoke, domination and exploitation of another.

Our interest here is to engage in the relative acceptance of the fact that the impact of

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slavery, colonialism, imperialism, neo-colonialism and other variables have accelerated what is today the underdeveloped nature of African continent. It is therefore important to bring out for our understanding how most Africans were before the colonial era. The reason for this is to help us hypothesize the impact of slave trade, colonialism and neo-colonialism and the social relations that formed the basis of economic organization of African continent in the past and present. According to Aboyade (1976) before colonialism, tropical Africa could best be described as:

- i *Thriving agricultural and pastoral communities producing adequate food for their requirements as well as some surplus for inter-regional commerce;*
- ii *An essentially democratic organization based largely on small peasant proprietorship with strong income by factor shares;*
- iii *Impressive indigenous work of art, crafts and artifacts, which are distinctive and could only be products of long settled communities with high cultural values. Expressing an integral part of everyday economic life, religious worship and social order.*

The question that follows is, How did slavery disturb this African social formation? Hence Babangida (1991) opines that:

For about one hundred and fifty years, Africans were caught manacled and shipped across the atlantics to create wealth for their captors in the sugarcane, tobacco and cotton plantations in America. Those who did not die during raids, or were so forcibly transported have been estimated to number anything from 10 million to 30 million.

It is very important to note that Africa was at this point in an agricultural stage of civilization; and had for centuries domesticated cattle, smelted iron, woven cotton, and made soap, glass, pottery and blankets. The enslaved African was taken away from his ancestral home to a strange land, where he was completely deprived of the opportunity to interact with his people; as well as the ability of his social organization to provide succor to him. To achieve development, one essential condition is to make the maximum use of the country's labour natural resources. The imperialists invested their money in plantations and mines and because of cheap labour, were able to make windfall profits. They bought raw materials which were shipped back to the metropolitan countries. They sold their manufactured products to their subjects (Africans) at exorbitant prices.

Making clear how "Monopolization of economic activities by colonial imperialists perpetually underdeveloped Africans. Nevertheless, it is pertinent to say that it was in a bid to solve Africa's Development problems that five African presidents, Olusegun Obasanjo, Thabo Mbeki, Abdoulaye Wade, Abdelaziz Bouteflika and Hosni Mubarak, put in place the New partnership for Africa's development (NEPAD), to eradicate poverty and place Africa on a path of sustainable growth and development. With the NEPAD initiative, a new approach was set in motion. Development needs and objectives were identified and defined by African countries, thus reflecting their vision and development goals. In proposing partnership, Africa recognizes that it holds the key to its own development. Therefore, this work espouses the transformation of Africa from underdevelopment to development with particular emphasis on the new partnership for African development (NEPAD).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Our analysis of Africa's "Transformation from underdevelopment to development: The impact of NEPAD" shall be based on a world where the domination of one country by another in order to economically exploit the dominated which brings about unequal relationships. The theory of Development of underdevelopment, therefore, will be our framework for an understanding of the theme of our study. The concept asserts that it was the very efforts to transform poor countries that had caused their poverty-underdevelopment. Andre Gunder Frank, a Chicago trained economist, is regarded as the leading proponent of the development of underdevelopment theory as a tool of interpreting and explaining how the advanced capitalist States perpetuated the underdevelopment of the third world. Other notable scholars of the concept are Baran, Paul and Amin (1974); Frantz (1963), (Rodney, 1972 and Hoogvelt, 1992). In a series of trenchant attacks on modernization theory, put forward a wholly different interpretation. Rather than seeming efforts of these overcoming poverty, he argues that it was the seemingly efforts of these capitalist countries to transform the poor countries that had caused their poverty. His most important argument was that poverty in the third world countries was not an original condition, but one that had arisen through the spread of world capitalism. Rather than assuming that the "traditional" world would have been poor anyway the overriding assumption of most modernization writers. Frank cited in Gilbert (1992) argues that:

Many areas had previously been prosperous. As European powers expanded their influence into far flung parts of the globe, these areas were rapidly absorbed. The third world countries became poor and Europe became rich, the development of the first world was financed by the surplus extracted from the third world.

Baran and Paul's article on "the political economy of Backwardness" (1957) has argued that imperialism has had tremendous impact on the development pattern of the third world (Szymanski, 1981). Baran argues that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer because of the monopoly position of the rich in world trade and their dominance in overseas investment process that result in the actual transfer of wealth from the less-developed to the more developed capitalist economies. Furthermore, according to Szymanski (1981) argued that:

...the western European visitors rapidly determined to extract the largest possible gains from the host countries and took their loot home, seizing and removing tremendous wealth from the places of their penetrations ... the underdevelopment world as a whole has continually shipped a large part of its economic surplus to more advanced countries on account of interest and dividends.

Offiong (1980) specifies three basic principles that order the relations between the less-developed and the developed capitalist countries: first, the expropriation of the economic surplus by the metropolis, second, the polarization of the world capitalist system, and third, the continuity of the fundamental structure of the capitalist system. Offiong observes, that underdevelopment is a direct consequence of the capitalist development of the

metropole. He explains more explicitly, that it is the metropolitan- controlled monopoly structure which has predominated since the fifteenth century, that is responsible for the direction of net capital flow toward the advanced capitalist countries thereby under developing third world countries (Offiong, 1980). This partnership will not work, for an old habit is hard to drop, the west will not develop us instead they will underdevelop us. We should think of internal efforts of developing ourselves, and desist from the call for assistance from the G-8. The link NEPAD is into will further increase the socio-economic exploitation and political/ideological domination of Africa thereby under developing the continent. With this NEPAD initiative, the G-8 and their agencies will marginalize Africa in global affairs. NEPAD protagonists should understand that, Africa in global develop, so long we remain linked to the metropolis for manipulation. The philosophy of NEPAD is that Africa should take their destiny into their hands. The regional initiative emphasizes that, development is a participatory process involving the people; and that development is about empowerment and self-reliance. Therefore, Africans must be the architects of their development.

ORIGIN, PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVE OF NEPAD

The mandate for the New Africa partnership for Africa's development (NEPAD) had its genesis at the Organization of Africa Unity (OAU) now Africa Union (AU) extraordinary summit held in Sirte, Libya, in September, 1999. The summit mandated Thabo Mbeki of South Africa and Abdulaziz Bouteflika of Algeria to engage Africa's creditors on the total cancellation of Africa's external debt. Following this, the south summit of the Non-Aligned movement and the G-77, held in Havana, Cuba during April, 2000, mandated Mbeki of South Africa and Obasanjo of Nigeria to convey the concerns of the south to the G-8 summit in Okinawa, Japan in July, 2000 and to the Bretton woods institutions (Omowch, 2002). Realizing the correlation between the two mandates and the fact that debt relief forms but one critical aspect of overall development agenda for Africa.

The organization of African Unity (OAU) now Africa Union summit held in Lome, Togo, in July, 2000, mandated the three presidents to engage the developed North with a view to developing a constructive partnership for the regeneration of the continent. Following from this, the three presidents raised the issues of a partnership with leaders of the G-8 at their summit in Japan in July, 2000. The work on developing NEPAD at that stage referred to the millennium partnership for the African recovery programme (MPA) then began in earnest and a process of engagement on a bilateral and multilateral level was pursued. Those who conceived this programme come from three leading African nations-South Africa's Thabo Mbeki, Nigeria's Olusegun Obasanjo and Algeria's Abdulaziz Bouteflika.

Another leader who has his idea about the way to address the African crisis is president Abdoulye Wade of Senegal whose "Omega plan" calls for stronger emphasis on the infrastructure and educational gaps that are impeding the continent's progress. During the 5th Extraordinary summit of the O.A.U., now A.U. held in Sirte, Libya from 1st to 2nd march 2001, Obasanjo made a presentation on MPA, while President Wade of Senegal presented the OMEGA plan. The draft copy of the millennium African Recovery Program, (MARP) was presented by the South African government at the conference of ministers

of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in Algier, 8-10 May, 2001. At this meeting, Wade of Senegal presented his “Omega plan for Africa” and the UNECA a Compact for African recovery (Okunade, 2002). It was at the Algiers meeting that it was agreed that the documents should be tabled and the merged version submitted at the O.A.U. Summit in Lusaka, Zambia, the Map and the OMEGA plan were fused into the New African Initiative (NAI) which the Heads of State finally adopted. At that meeting too, an implementation committee of Heads of State was constituted with President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria appointed as Chairman, President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa and President Wade of Senegal as members. The inaugural meeting of the implementation committee was held on 23rd October 2001, Abuja, Nigeria, and it was at that meeting new name, New Partnership for Africa’s development (NEPAD), was agreed to replace the New African initiative (NIA). The philosophy underlying the NEPAD programme is a pledge by African leaders, based on a common vision and a firm and shared conviction, that they have a pressing duty to eradicate poverty and to place their countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development, and at the same time to participate actively in the world economy and body politics. The programme is anchored on the determination of Africans to extricate themselves and the continent from the malaise of underdevelopment and exclusion in a globalizing world (Osuntokun, 2002).

Across the continent, Africans declare that we will no longer allow ourselves to be conditioned by circumstance. We will determine our own destiny and call on the rest of the world to complement our efforts. (Olukoshi, 2002). The philosophy of the NEPAD programme also centres around African ownership and management. Through this programme, African leaders are setting an agenda for the renewal of the continent. The agenda is based on national and regional priorities and development plans must be prepared through participatory processes involving the people (Mbeki, 2002).

Objectives of New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD)

NEPAD long-term objective as contained in (NEPAD Document, 2001:15-16) are to:

- i Eradicate poverty in Africa and to place African countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development;
- ii Promote the role of women in all activities.

Short and medium Term objectives include:

- i Strengthening mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution at the sub regional and continental levels, peace.
- ii Promoting and protecting democracy and human rights in their respective countries and regions, by developing clear standards of accountability, transparency and participatory governance at the national and sub national levels;
- iii Restoring and maintaining macroeconomic stability, especially by developing appropriate standards and targets for fiscal and monetary policies, and introducing appropriate institutional frameworks to achieve these standards.
- iv Instituting transparent legal and regulatory framework from financial markets and the auditing of private companies and the public sector.

- v Revitalizing and extending the provision of education, technical training and health services, with high priority given to addressing the problems of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other communicable diseases.,
- vi Promoting the role of women in social and economic development by reinforcing their capacity in the domains of education and training, by developing revenue-generating activities through facilitating access to credit;
- vii Building the capacity of the States in Africa to set and enforce the legal framework, and to maintain law and order,
- viii Promoting the development of infrastructure, agriculture and its diversification into agro-industries and
- ix Giving impetus to Africa's development by bridging existing gaps in priority sectors in order to enable the continent to catch up with developed parts of the world.

CONSEQUENCES OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT ON AFRICA

In demonstrating the consequences of underdevelopment on Africa, Aboyade, Offiong, Ake, Babangida, Ihonvbere, Gilbert, point at the following as some of the consequences of underdevelopment these are the creation of an unstable and unhegemonic state, creation of a decadent, dependent and largely unproductive bourgeoisie; a dependent private sector dependence of African States on the production and exportation of a narrow range of cash crops for foreign exchange earnings, and dependence on cash crops. Also, they identified other vulnerability to price fluctuations largely the precipitate of the manipulative action and action of multinational corporations and their home governments, Scientific and technological backwardness, dependence on foreign aid to sponsor development projects and reliance on foreign "exports" domination of the various economies by vertically integrated and profit seeking transnational corporations, and a deepening process of rural-urban migration, rural decay and urban dislocation, among others the conversion of the continent into a theatre of war by the super powers or/ and their proxies and peripheralisation in the world capitalist system, infinitesimal contribution to world production and near total irrelevance in world politics. These conditions, taken together with others, show that Africa is today the poorest, most underdeveloped and powerless continent in the world.

Substandard education and illiteracy are the direct consequences of colonial imperialism and Neo-colonialism which carefully made it difficult for Africa to developed. No nation can make much headway by way of development with the bulk of its population remaining stark illiterates (Ihonveber, 1992). President Olusegun Obasanjo remain unbent in effecting the policy. This was as if what the Universities dons did by going on strike is illegitimate. He fails to know that we are talking of professionals whose jobs are very demanding for the country development, people who impart knowledge, and appreciate the fact that countries like Japan, Germany, Canada etc. accord education a priority attention. In 1999, when Abdulsalami presented his budget, he allocated 6.5 per cent to education. When Obasanjo came, it was reduced to 6.1 per cent in 2000. It was further reduced to 5 per cent in 2001 and in 2002 it was reduced to 3 per cent and 2003 it was 1.6 per cent.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study dealt with the concept of “Transformation Africa’s from underdevelopment to Development: The impact of NEPAD”. Specifically, in the background to the study, the contemporary situation of Africa underdevelopment was traced to trade colonial, imperialism and the present Neo-colonialism. It was said that the impact of these variables have accelerated what is today the underdeveloped nature of African continent. It was in a bid to solve Africa problems that Africa’s leaders put in place the NEPAD programme. The statement of problem of the NEPAD transforming Africa from underdevelopment to development and the benefits that will accrue to Africa from the G-8 in the proposed partnership.

NEPAD protagonist fails to seek the input of generality of Africans in terms of participation in drawing up the NEPAD initiative, this has alienated the people from the programme, hence the NEPAD initiative cannot transform Africa from its underdeveloped nature. The effective machinery for growth and development are still lacking in Africa and the continent’s leaders failed to encourage the use of the continent raw materials for the production of simple, intermediate and capital goods for development. So long as corruption has come to stay in Africa due to absence of accountability couple with non-committed leadership the continent will not have the needed fund for the financing of its Development Plan due to channeling of available resources to private bank accounts rather than development purposes. What the G-8 is after is the continuation of the slave master relationship between them and Africa. They want the dependency of Africa a life time issue, hence they are not interested in debt cancellation for Africa. It is a known fact that the premature incorporation of Africa into the metropolitan economic as an unequal partners has been the basic cause of Africa impoverishment and underdevelopment. With this past experience, the present market access drive initiative under NEPAD by Africa’s leaders to the metropolitan countries economy will increase the exploitation of Africa of Africa by the metropolis. No meaningful growth and development can be based on AIDS/GRANTS-Oriented Partnership. Over forty years of development assistance and aid Africa, has not been able to develop for understandable reasons.

In view of the forgoing problems of NEPAD we shall consider and recommend the following solutions; for NEPAD prospect. As noted from our empirical evidence that NEPAD protagonist failed to incorporate the generality of Africans in the formulation of NEPAD initiative and this has alienated the people from supporting the initiative. On this view we therefore recommend that first step in planning for development in Africa should be placing value on the people rather than the method. For African leaders to stop to over reliance of the continent on the industrialized countries for development the architects of NEPAD should be refocus to mobilize resources from the continent to put its economy on path of recovery and development, other than relying on the G-8 and other international. Agencies for development. NEPAD protagonist should put in place Democracy and good governance built upon transparency and accountability; such democracy should be the very type that will make our leaders to be committed to duties.

Empirical evidence in this study reviewed that Africa's debt burden has pose great problems to Africa in its search for development. And the G-8 is not ready in cancellation of Africa debt. NEPAD protagonist embraced Debt reduction strategist which is equally harmful to Africa. It is our suggestion that Africa's leaders should empower their people to embark on development initiatives to realize their creative potential. Africa should cut off its market link with the industrialized countries and make good use of the continent Agricultural products for the production of simple, intermediate and capital good for development within the continent.

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