



## **Full Length Review Article**

### **FROM THE LAGOS PLAN OF ACTION (LPA) TO THE NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT (NEPAD). WHAT WENT WRONG?**

**\*Eze Chris Akani**

Department of Political Science, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuorlumeni, Rivers State, Nigeria

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#### **ABSTRACT**

It is a common fact that Africa has passed through painful and excruciating colonial indignities. It was believed that with the end of colonialism, political independence would herald a dawn of immeasurable socio-economic development. This belief was predicated on the prodigious natural endowment of the continent. Unfortunately, by the 1960s, when African countries attained political independence, they were confronted with huge problems which were beyond their imagination and have far reaching consequences on their political economy. This paper seeks to examine why LPA and NEPAD have not been able to usher in the expected African renaissance. This is a qualitative research, and method of data collection included primary and secondary sources. These are interviews, discussions, review of existing literature, newspapers, bulletins and magazines. It was discovered that the fragility of African economy coupled with a non-committal leadership have made it possible for African countries to fall prey to neo-colonial forces. We, therefore, suggest that African leaders should be committed to the welfare of their people. They should be Pan African in all their policies and resist every attempt to fall prey to global capital.

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#### **INTRODUCTION**

Africa is a continent of inestimable value. The continent is estimated to be 30,313 million km<sup>2</sup> which is nearly one fourth of the world's land surface. It lies across the equator and extends as far as north latitude 35<sup>o</sup> and as far as south latitude 35<sup>o</sup>, and has vast energy resources which include coal, oil and natural gas (Ochola, 1975:3). It is not surprising that a former US Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, Mr. D. B. Easum described it as a veritable storehouse of mineral wealth (Ochola, 1975:ix). Although, some of these resources must have undergone intense process of exploitation by capitalist imperialist, Africa still remains a place to be exploited. As the second largest continent in the world, it is reputed to be the nodal point of civilization and Human habitation. Regrettably, the momentum to get access to the continent's wealth by imperialists and countries have left a trail of antinomy, underdevelopment and disorder in the continent. Baran (1968:162) noted that the violent, destructive and predatory opening up of the weaker economies by western capitalism immeasurably distorted their development. The forceful disarticulation and destruction of African political

economy has been highlighted by Rodney (2005), Ake (1981), Nkrumah (2004), Okolie (2015) and Davidson (1980). These scholars unequivocally asserted that the historical experience of slave trade and colonialism heightened the suffocation of the continent and its addiction to external manipulation. More devastating was the psychological dehumanization based on prejudice and racial mindset. Indeed, the intellectual presumption of colonialism represented a formulation in negative terms of African identity (Babawale, Aloa, Omidire and Onwumah, 2009:71). These false presumptions facilitated a 'hateful' attitude towards Africa and Africans. The antinomies of imperialist exploitation triggered a nationalist movement which snowballed into political self-governance. There was a rising expectation that the African ruling class that inherited political power would lay a foundation for the rapid transformation of the continent. But this became a false hope. Two things could be responsible for this failure. Before political independence, the colonial State had instituted an economic trajectory that was aligned with the world capitalist economy. This assured an external-orientation for the economies of African countries. The economy was presided over by the ruling class whose comprador disposition made it difficult to ensure a self-reliant and productive economy. In spite of their populist outburst and assurances, they were not differentiated from the ignoble colonial ethos. It was just a

**\*Corresponding author: Eze Chris Akani**

Department of Political Science, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuorlumeni, Rivers State, Nigeria

change of personnel. Some of the rulers even became the policemen of the western interest using all sorts of euphemism to disguise the collusion between the African leaders and their western master (Ochola, 1975:3). The aftermath was that the songs of hope at independence have turned to increasing frustration and disillusionment. Nkrumah (2004) lamented that:

*Africa is a paradox which illustrates and highlights neo-colonialism. Her earth is richly endowed with products that come from above and below, her soil continue to enrich, not Africans predominantly but groups and individuals who operate to Africa's impoverishment.*

The point here is that African political economy has foundered and lost the capacity to initiate growth and human security. Interestingly, many policies and programmes have been initiated to ensure its development. Regrettably, these have not achieved their avowed objective. This paper, therefore, seeks to examine why LPA and NEPAD have not been able to place the continent on the high peak of development.

### **From LPA to NEPAD**

LPA cannot be comprehensively understood without an appreciation of Pan Africanism. It arose out of an urgent need to end the systematic oppression of Africans in the continent and the Diaspora. It was a vision whose aim was to secure for all African races living in civilized countries their full rights and would promote their business interest (Ajala, 1974:4). Bomkie and Michombu (2006:194) defined it as:

*A world view of the supports the oneness of black people by virtue of their common ancestry in Africa and which stresses the need for Africans who live in the Diaspora and on the continent to form social, economic and political links in order to improve their standing in the world.*

The movement which commenced in 1900 by Henry Sylvester Williams in London, became synonymous with the survival of the black race from the mid 1940s. It was that fifth Pan African Conference of 1945 in Manchester which radicalized the idea, and ushered a confident optimism that accelerated the pace of nationalist struggle. With the attainment of political independence starting from Ghana on March 6, 1957 to the 1960s, the content of Pan African agenda changed from racial discrimination to continental unity as a minimum foundation to free the black race from all forms of foreign domination. Walters (1997:92) stated that:

*Once the African independent movement began to produce independent states such as Ghana, the definition of Pan Africanism changed to one focused on the liberation of the African continent. The implication was that... continental Pan African not racial Pan Africanism was emerging as a significant force and was the major interest of African leaders.*

The need for a continental unity became a necessity with the challenge of the Congo (Zaire), which led to the death of the Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba in 1961 and two of his ministers. This and other constraining factors laid the background for the formation of Organization of African Unity (O.A.U.) in May 25, 1963. Although, it was a compromise

between the two main divide – Casablanca and Monrovia groups, yet the organization in the words of Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia laid ‘for the first time in the continent’s history the basic foundation for unity’ (Ajala, 1974:51). O.A.U. represented the hope and collective aspirations of Africans to free the continent from economic and political thralldom. Bujra (2002:2) asserted that O.A.U. became the instrument of the government (on behalf of the people) to liberate the remaining African countries, and to forge continental political unity. Pan Africanism thus ceased to be a mass movement. It transformed into an ideology giving direction to where Africa ought to be.

From 1960 to 1975, O.A.U. basked in the euphoria and optimism of its commitment to African people. Adedeji (2002:6) noted that this period coincided with the golden era of the continent. This was because of some noticeable positive economic indicators. GDP rate rose to 4.5%, export growth 2.5% and agriculture 1.6%, manufacturing grew by 6%. Unfortunately, this momentum was not sustained because, the post colonial state lacked the ‘will to soldier on self-reliantly’. Apart from the apparent weakness of the economy, the ideological cold war dichotomized the continent into antagonistic camps, such that it became difficult to agree on a common problem. In this scenario, allegiance was paid more to extrinsic forces, and protection of sovereignty was fetishized. More worrisome was that by the 1980s, majority of the Head of States emerged as a result of military coup d’etat, and these constituted the bulk of O.A.U. members. Falola and Njoku (2009:27) declared that between 1956 and 2007, there were 80 successful coups, 108 failed coup attempts and 139 reported coup plots. The aftermath was that the once vibrant organization full of irreducible optimism started manifesting early signs of powerlessness and inertia. Thus, by the end of the decade, when the grim reality of economic crisis manifested, the organization was caught napping. Gradually, it degenerated to a talking club of Heads of State and assumed the negative image of a toothless bull dog. The plummeting of the prices of raw materials necessitated an avalanche of external loans to cushion the rising economic problem. Between 1977 and 1989, the prices of coca fell from \$54 to \$0.94 per kilogram, copra from \$574.1 to \$264.7 per tone and cotton from \$466 to \$190.9 per tone. External debt of sub-Saharan Africa grew in order to ameliorate the harsh economic distress. From \$138 billion in 1987, about 6% larger than the total GDP, it grew to over \$1,078 billion in 1991, nearly twenty-fold increase since 1970. (Akani, 2007:90-91).

*Between 1970-2003 African countries received about \$540 billion in loans and they paid back \$580 billion in debt service, yet the continent is still saddled with over \$200 billion in external debt (Akani, 2007:91).*

The enormity of this crisis and its attendant backlash led to the declaration of the 1980s as ‘a lost decade’. Not even the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank (IMF/WB) dictated Structural Adjustment Programme(SAP) could resuscitate the continent’s collapsing economy. It was against this grim economic prospect that the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) under Prof. Abebayo Adedeji from 1975 to 1991 decided to present an alternative to African development. Adedeji (1978) like other scholars such as Ake (1981), Frank (1975), Rodney (2009) and Mamdani (1999) were convinced that relying on external prescriptions as a basis for African development would deepen the existing

enslavement. They believed as Ake (1996) stated that sustainable development would not begin until the struggle over development paradigm, strategies and agenda is redressed in favour of the people. As Adedeji (1978:75) put it,

*Africa more than other Third World Regions is thus faced with a development crisis of great potent. If past trends were to persist... the African region as a whole will be worse off relative to the rest of the world at the end of this century than it was in 1960.*

This necessitated many conferences and resolutions such as the Revised Framework of Principles for the Implementation of the New International Economic Order (NIEO) in Africa, adopted in Kinshasa in December 1976, the O.A.U. Heads of States and Government issued the Guidelines and Measures for National Collective Self-reliance in Social and Economic Development and the New Economic Order adopted in July 1979 in Monrovia. These conferences produced what became historic resolutions on how to initiate a self-reliant development in the continent. These include:

- The Lagos Plan of Action for the Economic Development of Africa(1980-2000)
- The Monrovia Declaration (1979)
- The Final Act of Lagos (1980)
- The Abuja Treaty (1991)

The Monrovia Declaration was a vision for African development. This would be realized through a 'high degree of self-sufficiency' anchored on democratic etiquette. It would ensure an equitable distribution of the fruits of our efforts and 'facilitate a strong African solidarity.' LPA became an institutional framework that would bring this lofty vision to fruition. It was predicated on six major planks:

- Self-reliance as the basis of development at the national, sub-regional and regional levels.
- Equitable distribution of wealth at the national level as a fundamental objective of development.
- Expansion of the public sector as an essential element of development.
- Direction of external capital to those areas where African capital was most lacking or inadequate such as mining, energy, and large scale enterprises.
- Inter-African economic corporation and integration to be effected as soon as possible.
- Continued fight for NIEO since change in the international economic order to favour Africa and the Third World countries was essential.

The Final Act of Lagos and the Abuja Treaty were envisioned to usher in the much needed African common market by the year 2000. This will facilitate economic corporation, integration and solidarity among African states. It was envisaged that with a strict adherence to the programmes, particularly LPA, the expected revolution of solidarity, inter-state cooperation, peaceful settlement of disputes, unalloyed promotion of human freedoms and accountability would begin to materialize in the continent. These progressive ideas prompted Ake (1996:22) to assert that:

*The Lagos Plan of Action stemmed from the disappointment of African leaders with the continent's*

*economic progress and their conviction that the inadequacy of exogenous development strategies contributed importantly to Africa's poor development record a view succinctly expressed in the preamble.*

In fact, LPA was a classic work in African development strategy (Ake, 1996). The preamble noted that the effect of unfulfilled dreams of global development strategies has been more sharply felt in Africa than in other countries of the world. This resulted to unsatisfactory index of general well being for decades. Hence, a commitment and resolve to attempt a far-reaching regional approach based primarily on collective self-reliance. The authors of LPA were fed up with the externally - determined strategy of development in post independent Africa, and its inability to place the continent on the human development trajectory. With this inward perspective, it was not surprising that LPA was often described as Africa's economic Magna Carta. LPA was hardly radical yet clearly not orthodox – an African vision of internationalist social democracy – the Lagos Plan of Action at least offers one escape – a 'willed future form continental' crises and dwindling fortune.' The LPA was anchored on a Pan Africanist vision which strongly believe that African problems must be settled by Africans. It also stated that the perennial crises in the continent are traceable to long years of colonial distortion and de-industrialization. This is a re-echo of the speech of General Murtala Muhammed, Head of the Federal Military Government at the O.A.U. extraordinary meeting on January 11, 1976 in Adis Ababa. General Muhammed whose speech was captioned 'Africa has come of Age', noted that 'the history of modern Africa is replete with shameless exploitation, brutalization, repression and downright denial of the humanity of Africans'. For him, therefore,

*Africa has come of Age. It is no longer under the orbit of any extra continental power. It should no longer taker orders from any country, however powerful. The fortunes of Africa are in our hands to make or mar. For too long were we kicked around, for too long have we been treated like adolescents who cannot discern their interests and act accordingly (Wilmot, 1980:186).*

Therefore, LPA emerged to prove that Africa has past the adolescent stage and capable of handling its fortunes without recourse to directives and needless instructions from external 'experts'. More interesting is the fact that, for the first time, the people are called upon to own the programme through their participation. This is underscored by the fact that:

*The foundation of progress lie with the people, and that 'until the destiny of Africa is assured to be in the hands of the people through democratization of African society and the mobilization of popular participation in the development process... economic progress will continue to elude Africa and every recovery will prove a will-of-the wasp (Adedeji, 1989).*

As a broad vision on which other development strategies would revolve, its importance cannot be overemphasized. These strategies which emerged between 1985 to 1991 had as their reference point the fulfillment of the broad vision of LPA. They are:

- The African Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (APPER) 1986-1990 in July 1985 in Adis Ababa – Ethiopia.

- The African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programme for Socio-economic Transformation(AAF-SAP) in 1989 at Adis Ababa – Ethiopia.
- The African charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation (ACPPDT) in Arusha, Tanzania (1990).
- The O.A.U. Declaration on the Political and Socio-economic situation in Africa and the Fundamental changes taking place in the world – 1990.

Let us briefly examine these strategies

APPER was a vision for African socioeconomic recovery within 1986-1990. The five year strategy was aimed at bringing the continent out of development stasis. Hence, it noted 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 are confined on a five year programme which consisted of:

- Measures for an accelerated implementation of the LPA and the Final Act of Lagos.
- Special Action for improvement of food situation and rehabilitation of agriculture with emphasis to 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 measure for action against the efforts of the destabilization policy of South Africa and the economies of Southern African states.

Accomplishing these measures, and achieving the dreams of LPA would be a mirage without a drastic reduction of the external debt. Over the years, huge external debt burden have assured the continent’s economic doldrums, with its debilitating effect on human development. In spite of the write off of the sum of \$40 billion debt owed by the 34 Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) in Africa during the 98 Summit in Gleneagles, July 2005, the total external debt of African countries still remains close to one trillion dollars. This has necessitated a high debt service of \$13.5 billion every year to foreign creditors (Nwonwu, 2008:26). Considering the importance of APPER to African development, particularly on external debt, it was approved by the United Nations General Assembly in 1986 and later renamed the UN Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1999 (UN-PAAERD). By 1989 African leaders under the auspices of O.A.U. responded to what seem to be a western version of LPA. This was the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) for Socio-Economic Transformation (AAF-SAP). The AAF-SAP was necessitated by the introduction of SAP as a strategy for African development. The essence of AAF-SAP was to reiterate and reinforce the fact that the alternative framework for African development can only be based on self-reliance and popular participation as enunciated in LPA. It went on to lament that:

*Of course as we look back in the 1980s, very few of us can doubt that we were in one way and another affected by SAPs that many of our countries have been pursuing. In some cases, the impact of such programmes has led to riots because of tremendous suffering they imposed on the*

*people, loss of jobs, reduction in social services, impossible increases in prices, generational poverty and the constant threat of destabilizing security as a whole. Indeed, these programmes continue to be formulated and implemented as if people do not matter.*

It must be stated that SAP was a neo-liberal strategy introduced by the IMF/WB to counter the rising acceptance of LPA. It emanated from the report of WB’s African strategy Review Group headed by Elliot Berge. The Berge report as it was later known noted that the basic problems of Africa include slow economic growth, sluggish agricultural performance, rapid rate of population increase, balance of payment and fiscal crisis stemmed from a combination of internal and external factors, exacerbated by ‘domestic policy-inadequacies (Peet and Hartwick, 1999:54). The ostensible remedy the report noted was to reduce trade barriers, switch the economy’s focus to exports, and compete vigorously in world markets (Peet and Hartwick, 1999:56). In a nutshell this is the kernel of the Washington Consensus (WB, IMF and the US Treasury). The economic policies that Washington urges on the rest of the world may be summarized as -prudent macro-economic policies, outward orientation and free market capitalism (Peet and Hartwick, 1999:52). The main ingredients of SAP is trade liberalization, reduction in public expenditure, fiscal discipline, privatization of enterprises, financial liberalization and encouragement of foreign direct investment. These were stated in the WB *Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa. An Agenda for Action* (1981). A summary of the Berge Report is that, Africa would receive accelerated development if the economy is externally-oriented and directed by market forces. The Berge report was not only a counter to LPA (Akani, 2007:19), but part of the modernization strategy to keep Africa within the asymmetric of global economic orbit. Its mission and prescriptions are not only theoretically inadequate, but empirically untenable and policy-wise ineffective (Okolie, 2015:14). It is not strange that SAP received unprecedented protest and unreserved condemnations from many African scholars, including students and civil society groups. SAP was seen as an imposition from outside. They contended that multi-lateral institutions should accept greater responsibility for failed programmes in the continent, that adjustment programmes must be nationally designed to fit into local conditions. They also emphasized the fact that the current African crisis to a considerable degree has its origins in the international economic environment (Bujra, 2002:7).

In spite of the groundswell of condemnations against the Berge report, it became more popular and accessible than the LPA. It must be stated unequivocally that SAP was completely at variance with all the progressive O.A.U. visions, especially the ACPPDT and LPA. ACPPDT emphasized the fact that development would remain an intent if there is a systematic destruction of its pillars and lack of social insurance. The charter envisioned a new Africa moderated by democratic norms and incorporation of the civil society in the development agenda:

*The charter calls for the emergence of a new era in Africa – an Africa in which democracy, accountability, economic justice and development transformation become internationalized and the empowerment of the people... It delineates the action that are required by all concerned people and their organizations, governments, African and*

*non-African NGOs and the international community to achieve the aforesaid objectives and also proposes national and regional mechanisms to monitor and report on the progress made in the implementation of the charter (African Charter, Arusha, 1990:1-2)*

The Charter concludes that the democratization of development would lift the continent from the SAP-induced crises in the continent. The African Charter was preceded by the O.A.U. Declaration on the policy and socio-economic situation in Africa and the fundamental changes taking place in the world. The Declaration noted that in spite of the existing strategies of development, African economies are still deteriorating with incessant wars and arms proliferation. Within this period, external debt grew from about \$50 billion in 1980 to about \$257 billion by the end of 1989 (Bujra, 2002:13). By 2000, it was \$206.1 billion. The Declaration placed the cause of these crises on SAP because of its social costs. While it rejected the increasing tendency to impose conditionalities of a political nature, it unequivocally affirmed the relevance of LPA and APPER in promoting development on the basis of 'self-reliance, human-centered and sustainable approaches based on social justice and collective self-reliance to achieve accelerated structural transformation of our economies'. Regrettably, these admirable visions did not achieve their stated goal. By the 1990s which coincided with the exit of Pro Adedeji as Executive Secretary of UNECA to the new Millennium, Africa was bedeviled with fratricidal wars of unprecedented dimension, militarization of the continent and consequent proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs). A new strategy for African development became a necessity.

### **Emergence of NEPAD**

It was expected that the towering plans of O.A.U. in the 1980s would enable Africa lift off stage of economic growth (Asante, 2013:5) and development. But by the 1990s, these became a mere dream. Majority of African rulers either did not comprehend the implication what they have sworn to do or where taking advise from 'experts' outside the continent. The result was that there was a confusion of Agendas (Ake, 1996). This was compounded by the incidence of needless wars and conflict which drained a greater chunk of national budget and resources. Williams (2002:1) stated that in financial terms, these wars have cost Africa well over \$700 billion in damage since 2000 alone. This invariably led to the declaration of the 1990s as 'a decade of despair' by the United Nations Human Development Programme (UNDP) in 2003. With the new challenges facing the continent, a new strategy and approaches to development became imperative. This was how the New Partnership for African development (NEPAD) came into existence. Bostan (2011:3) noted that NEPAD's programme of action signaled a post-nationalist path that highlights instead a Pan Africanist view of renewal in the continent. NEPAD is an amalgam of three programmes.

- The Millennium African Renaissance programme (MAP) later the Millennium Partnership for African Recovery Programme.
- The Omega Plan
- The Compact for Africa Proposed by UNECA.
- The major players behind NEPAD were former Presidents of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and Chair of G77 Summit April

2000 in Havana, Cuba, Abdulazziz Bonteflika of Algeria and Chair of O.A.U. at the time.

The G77 was used to negotiate a debt cancellation for Third World countries, particularly in Africa. At the G8 meeting in Okinawa, Japan in July 2000, the three Presidents were also in attendance, and they canvassed for debt relief for developing countries. The aftermath of this meeting was a demand by the G8 for a workable plan as the basis of the compact (Adesina, 2002:6). Before this time, Mbeki had developed his Millennium Africa Renaissance Programme which was presented at the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos on January 28, 2000. He declared that African Renaissance was a declaration of a firm commitment by African leaders to take ownership and responsibility for the sustainable economic development of the continent (Melber, 2002:1). It was a Pan Africanist effusion aimed at 'defeating the negative psychological, morally, and intellectual impact of 2000 years of institutionalized racism of a settler colony and apartheid (Adesina, 2002:7). MAP became a platform to make African leaders (who) would form a compact committing them to the programme and a forum of leaders who would make decision about sub-programmes, and initiatives and review progress on its implementation (Adesina, 2002:7). At the O.A. U. summit in July, 2009 in Lusaka, MAP, the Compact and President Abdulaye Wade's OMEGA Plan were merged to form the New African Initiative (NAI) and later NEPAD. While MAP and the OMEGA Plan arose from different sources, their conclusions favoured a neo-liberal growth trajectory. Adesina (2002:8) noted that:

*While different in origin, both MAP and OMEGA Plan share a common approach to overcoming Africa's development challenge. As Africa's strategy for globalization, OMEGA Plan shares the same understanding of sources for finance and private sector led approach. While the Plan is considerably woollier than MAP in the coherence of its arguments, MAP and subsequently NEPAD suffer from related problems.*

Considering the lack-luster attitude of O.A.U. leaders, it became clear that it was not in a proper and competent pedestal to confront the increasing problems of the 1990s. This was why NEPAD was applauded as a blue print for the continent's renewal and promote democracy, human rights and good participatory governance (Asante, 2013:5).

*It 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 make their countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development, and of the same time to participate actively in the world economy and body politic. The programme is anchored on the determination of Africans to extricate themselves and continent from the malaise of under development and exclusion in a globalism of world (Bond, 2005:95-6).*

Aware that the emerging challenges confronting the continent in the 21st century cannot be talked with exclusion from global affairs, participation in the global economic system became an essential prerequisite. Hence, NEPAD noted that:

*African leaders have learned from their own experience that peace, security and democracy, good governance*

*management are conditions for sustainable development. they are making a pledge to work both individually and collectively to promote these principles in their countries, and sub-region and on the continent (NEPAD, 2000: Para 7).*

NEPAD lamented the rate of extreme poverty in the continent were more than 340 million people live on less than \$1 per day, with high children mortality under 5 years of age of 140 per 100, and life expectancy at birth put at 54 years. It asserted that:

*Across the continent, Africans declare that we will no longer allow ourselves to be conditioned by circumstances. We will determine our destiny and call on the rest of the world to complement our efforts. There are already signs of progress and hope of democratic regimes that are committed to the protection of human rights. People-centered development and market-oriented economies are on the increase (Bond, 2005:98).*

In what seem to be a mission statement, NEPAD unequivocally stated that Africans must not be wards of benevolent guardians, rather they must be the architects of their own sustained upliftment (Melber, 2001:13). It is against this background that NEPAD is seen as a vision, philosophy of development, movement and an evolving process. Indeed, its primal objective is to eradicate poverty and place Africa on the path of sustainable growth and development (NEPAD Issue 94; June 10, 2005). One of the important institutions for the implementation of NEPAD vision is the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) headed by Dr. Bernard Konassi as the Executive Director. APRM is considered as one of the continent's most innovative and challenging experiment in African governance landscape today (Asante, 2013:1). It emerged on March 26, 2002 due to the efforts of Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC) of NEPAD. Its declaration on democracy, political, economic and corporate governance stated that states participating in NEPAD believe in just, honest, transparent, accountable and participatory government and probity in public life (Asante, 2013:6). APRM would promote adherence to and fulfillment of the commitments contained in this Declaration (Asante, 2013:7). The chair person of APRM is Marie-Anglique Bavane. However, participation to APRM by countries is voluntary including implementing its decisions. Apart from APRM, the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development (CAAD) was launched as a strategy to end poverty and ensure food sufficiency. It noted that:

*We believe that agriculture has the key to our home grown wealth and we therefore, are firmly committed to the successful implementation of CAAD. We know that in addition to the need for financing agriculture, complementary policies which support agricultural growth are also necessary (NEPAD Issue 99, July 15, 2005).*

NEPAD will need the sum of \$17 billion per year to implement CAAD. Considering its importance to Africans, African leaders declared that 'we renew our commitment to help build this partnership, particularly Africa where more than 200 million people remain threatened by famine or food security, we support fully NEPAD and the principles and goals set out in the CAAD' (NEPAD Issue, June 25, 2004). During

the G8 Summit at Gleneagles (UK) in 2005, African leaders called on them to:

- Provide increased budgetary allocation for the peace and security programme of the African Union on a predictable multi-year basis.
- Double development assistance in the 3 years and schedule thereafter further increases to ensure that Africa meets the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.
- Establish an AU/NEPAD Development Fund of US \$20 billion at African development Bank (ADB) by the end of 2005. The fund would finance the NEPAD infrastructure projects and other NEPAD priority programme including agriculture, health, water, sustainable and skill development.

NEPAD is an omnibus project that will require an annual sum of \$64.0 billion, facilitate a 12.75% gross national income per annum, and push the continent out of the bondage of unending suffering and economic misery. This is why Mbeki in January 2002 asserted that:

*NEPAD is unique in African history in that African leaders have pledged to corporate and be accounted to one another and their people in terms of development strategy, plans and delivery programmes (Melber, 2001:11).*

Regrettably, fifteen years to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Africa has almost lost steam, NEPAD is gradually waning in the consciousness and sensibilities of Africans and their rulers.

### **What went wrong?**

NEPAD is part of the corpus of African strategies since the 1980s to place the continent on the trajectory of accelerated development. Sadly, sixteen years to the twenty-first century, the programme has lost steam, almost forgotten by most African rulers. What went wrong? A careful study of NEPAD will reveal that it is a neo-liberalist project, completely excluding the core values of neo-liberalism. Apart from jettisoning the self-reliant imperative of the LPA it depended solely on the benevolence of G8 and western financial institutions for its triumph. Curiously, these were the institutions that assiduously worked to send the LPA to irrelevance and dwarfed its progressive potentials. Obviously, this piqued many concerned African scholars. Adedeji (2002:8) warned that:

*The protagonists of NEPAD should never forget that it was this model that exacerbated the dependency syndrome of the African economies and at the same time led to mass pauperization and deprivation of the African people. this means that we must have another look at the clamour for a marshal plan for Africa.*

In no uncertain terms, he averred that NEPAD should aim to loose the continent from the noose of multilateral and bilateral institutions, rather than tighten their grip on African economies. Scholars like Bond (2005) and Adesina (2006) also noted that its goal is at variance with the self-reliant policy and accelerated development philosophy of LPA and other strategies. NEPAD is generally seen simply as a class project that is rooted in the Post-Washington Consensus of the Wolfenson Comprehensive Development Framework type ...

(Adesina, 2006:4). This conclusion is based on the fact that the programme is a top down type, imposed on the people without their contributions, especially during the planning stage. Bond (2005:95) asserted that:

*During the formation of NEPAD, no civil society, church, political party or other potentially democratic or progressive forces were invited to Pretoria. Only in April 2002 that the congress of South African Trade Union was consulted.*

But the NEPAD document was subjected to the scrutiny of WB/IMF in November 2000 and February 2001, Transnational Corporations, Western leaders at Davos in January 2001, European Union (EU) in November 2001, G8 in Tokyo in July 2000, and Genoa in July 2001. It is strange that throughout this period of scrutiny and consultation, no African university, research institute or civil society group was consulted for a critical appraisal. The aftermath of all these 'consultations and expert advice' was that:

*NEPAD proposes the same set of policy implementation that have extensively damaged the continent in the last two decades. Its proposition that Africa should strive to develop into a net exporter of agricultural products reveals a considerable lack of understanding of the logic of failure of a policy that African countries have pursued since the 1960s. Indeed, in making market access, such an integral aspect of its mode of partnership with global capital, NEPAD reinforces a false debate (Adesina, 2006:13).*

The lack of understanding of the logic of failure in Africa is glaring. It stated that 'the challenge ahead for Africa is to be able to raise the required funding under the best condition possible. We call on our development partners to assist in this endeavour'. It sounds ridiculous to expect the so-called 'development partners' to provide part of the \$64 billion annually to fund NEPAD. This is to engage in a voyage of illusion, and tighten the grip of western exploitation on African economies. With its overt outward-orientation and lack of capacity building provision, Tawfick (2008:65) noted that, there is a danger that NEPAD may gradually drift into being little more than a series of routine meetings and celebrative gatherings that accomplish little and do not attract the attention of many. NEPAD favours a private sector development paradigm which upholds market orthodoxy and most importantly advocates a State with a minimalist orientation in human development. This is the core of neoliberal growth trajectory which in all ramifications does not favour emancipatory politics.

*The rise in the hegemonic profile of neo-liberalism with its focus on market led growth created an imminent bias towards the private sector society. NGOs are the private sector, at least not the public sector. The interesting switching of the argument about democratization also created a perception of the need to reinforce the 'civil society' (often) as the antithesis of the state (Adesina, 2006:11).*

It is amazing how a continent that has undergone a perilous and horrendous colonial experience, with an economy that is systematically peripheralized, perverted and exuding a development of underdevelopment syndrome can develop under a market logic. This is to consign the continent to

another years of misery, erosion of human capital and primitive accumulation of wealth. As Tawfick (2008:63) put it, *Reducing or diluting the state's role cannot be the end of the reform story. Even with more selectivity and greater reliance on the citizenry and on private firms, meeting a broad range of collective needs more better. For human welfare to be advanced, the state's capability - defined as the ability to undertake and promote collective actions efficiently, must be increased.*

This is the whole essence of a State with a developmentalist ideology. Perhaps, this was why UNPAAEAD in July 1985 emphasized that 'the central role of the State in the development process'. This presupposes 'the need for building the capacity of state institutions to enable it to perform its role'. In the same vein, the Arusha Conference on Popular participation in development in 1990 which adopted the African charter for Popular Participation and Transformation – the Arusha Charter of 1990. Identified the peculiar role of the State and the civil society in human development. To neglect the State in development is to portray a limited historical horizon about Africa. While NEPAD expressed a wish for 'a democratic Africa that will become one of the pillars of world democracy, human rights and tolerance', its hidden mission of is to encourage an African bourgeois class, riding on the platform of African Renaissance. President Mbeki, one of the architects of NEPAD was convinced that to incubate a black bourgeoisie in South Africa that was destroyed and alienated Africans from the country's political economy because of Apartheid, would require a strong partnership with western capital. The Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) programme, lowering corporation taxes from 48% in 1994 to 30% by 1999 were part of the official policies to attract the partnership of global capitalism (Bond, 2005:105). Indeed, his abrupt withdrawal from the Communist Party of South Africa(CPSA), one of the tripod of South African independent struggle is also part of the grand design to impress western capital, and to be adjudged ideologically fit and clean to partner with the G8 and their allies.

*The specific location of South Africa within the cotenant and the extent to which its trade policies are driven by actors with strong commitment to existing mechanisms for governance of global capitalism, explains the enthusiasm of the NEPAD document for the world trade organization, even as other African countries are skeptical and often hostile to the power based nature of the organization (Adesina, 2008:13).*

It is against this backdrop that Melber, Cornwell, Gthaka and Wanjala (2002:10) noted that critical assessments of NEPAD have pointed out that it blends nicely into the neo-liberal globalization mainstream and fully in the line with present South African government's economic strategy of seeking closer integration into the dominant structures of world economy. It is therefore not strange that Uschi Eid, the German Junior Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development and Chancellor Schroder's appointed advisor on NEPAD. In May 2001, Eid declared that NEPAD was a groundbreaking for African leaders to propose that undemocratic governments and despots be isolated by means of the O.A. U and joint programmes (Melber et al., 2002:11). President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, Frederick Chiluba of Tanzania and

Abdulaye Wade of Senegal, did not deviate from the Mbeki vision which accounts for the paucity of mass participation in the NEPAD vision. The United Nations Resolution of 57/7 requires African countries to establish NEPAD national offices with responsibility to meeting and implementing NEPAD programmes. But this received minimal adherence. For instance, in Nigeria, the NEPAD Head was Chief (Mrs) Chinyere Asika, Special Assistant on NEPAD to the President was located in Abuja. Its effect was felt more on the pages of newspapers and flamboyant conferences far removed from the civil society, students and the general public. By the time President Obasanjo left in 2007, NEPAD became a forgotten and moribund project. This can be said of other African countries. The democratic frontiers and respect for human rights which NEPAD claim to advance was only an aspiration. Most of the protagonists of the programme continued to breach with impunity human freedoms, addicted to executive lawlessness, ostentations and lavish lifestyles that belie their much-vaunted commitment to poverty eradication through CAADP. Their fixation with political power, and the fallacy of electoralism have given rise to what is often called Third Termism as in Nigeria, Burundi, Rwanda, Cameroon and recently Jammeh's Gambia. The rulers of these countries are more interested in the logic of force, rather than the force of logic. One wonders how leaders with such undemocratic credentials can advance even the minimum requirement of NEPAD. Most interesting is the fact that NEPAD immediately lost momentum and appeal as soon as its pioneers left office. Ake (1987:1) noted that:

*We are never going to understand the current crisis in Africa much less contain it as long as we continue to think of it as an economic crisis. What is before us is primarily a political crisis, its economic consequences are serious as we know only too well that they are nonetheless incidental. Not only is the crisis essentially political in character, it is also political in origin.*

It is important to state that, the exit of Prof Adedeji as the Executive Secretary of UNECA in 1991 created a vacuum in the African development discourse. It also deprived the continent the needed intellectual capital that would have projected the self-reliant development strategy of LPA. This was why the troika Mbeki, Obasanjo, and Wade cashed in with NEPAD. They refused to see clearly the neo-colonial intent of the so-called 'development partners', and believed in the sincerity of partnership with global capitalism. But we must understand that:

*as long as the objective of the developed countries is to maintain economic progress along the present lines, the relations between the North and South in general and Africa in particular will continue to be characterized by a domination of the strong over the weak, a drain of resources from the poor nations to the rich, and appropriation of increasing share of the world's resource by those who are already prosperous. This is travesty of cooperation, partnership and interdependence. This is aptly described as feudo-imperial partnership and interdependence.*

Today, some of the lofty ideals of NEPAD such as APRM, deepening human rights, poverty reduction and development have witnessed twilight. Indeed, some of the leaders are beginning to sing a discordant tune. Indices of pain, revolution

of rising frustration, suffering and underdevelopment are signposted in all corners of the continent.

## Conclusion

It is obvious that African rulers have over the years made concerted efforts to make the continent a development-oriented one; a continent that can be able to feed its people and enhance their capacity to explore their natural potentials without external inhibition. Unfortunately, this vision has not materialized, ostensibly because of a lingering lack of commitment to the ideals of development, the widening dichotomy between the rulers and the ruled and the false hope of depending on western prescriptions and aid for the development of the continent. The vision of the LPA was dampened because it was considered antithetical to the core values of Western Capitalism. The Berg report which was completely against the self-reliant strategy of LPA, advocated a development paradigm that would make the continent a supplier of raw materials to the West and deepen the externalization of their economies. This was the whole essence of SAP and the Washington consensus which brutally subjected African economies to the dictate of neo-liberalism and the modernization theory. In spite of efforts to popularize LPA, the Final Act of Lagos, the Monrovia Declaration and the Abuja Treaty, African rulers gradually succumbed to the manipulations of Western Capital dictated by WB/IMF. By the time Prof. Adedeji, Executive Secretary of UNECA left in 1991, African resistance to neo-liberal forces was weakened. By the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a set of African rulers desirous of having a partnership with Western Capital in their effort to build an African bourgeois class emerged.

NEPAD became the institutional platform to bring this vision to reality. Although, NEPAD harped on the common vision to place Africa on the pedestal of accelerated development, but it out rightly rejected the inward looking and self-reliant policy of LPA. Instead, it depended wholly on the capitalist-oriented 'development partners', to finance the NEPAD project that was expected to eradicate poverty, bring about sustained improvement and strengthen the continent's capacity in the global community. Gathaka and Wanjala (2005:17) noted that without a strong capital base of its own and weak, if not nonexistent corporate investment, the government relied mainly on foreign loans. The macroeconomic goal (of NEPAD) was economic growth and modernization. Africa at this point does not need economic growth anchored on modernization, but human development based on a self-reliant strategy. Cornwell (2009:29) pointed out that for Africa to gain equitable access to the global market, certainly requires that the dominant players forego some of the extremely unfair advantages they currently enjoy. These unfair advantages are embedded in the economic growth and modernization policies which have been the bane of African backwardness. It is therefore not amazing that NEPAD gradually lost its momentum when its architects left the political scene. They refused to mainstream the NEPAD vision in the daily discourse of the masses, and even alienated it from the African Union (UN). Bostan (2011:3) opined that:

*NEPAD enjoying a lot of supports and attention, especially from abroad to the obvious exclusion and detriment of the AU. It is important to void a situation where NEPAD and the AU are played off against each other, the AU is*

*Africa's premier continental and Pan-African body and should be strengthened, not undermined.*

Considering the dependence on the benevolence of Western Capitalism for the success of NEPAD and the lack of capacity for mass participation, it is not surprising that the project has been christened a 'partnership of unequal partners, inundated with 'capacity deficits'. In conclusion, therefore, any development strategy in Africa must not overlook the historical experience of the continent. This is because the current problems plaguing the continent cannot be divorced from the socio-political experiences which systematically programmed it to fail. The failure of NEPAD is traceable to this fact. Therefore, the LPA remains a veritable and indispensable platform to place the continent on the path of revival and transformation. Its emphasis on collective self-reliance should be vigorously pursued. In this process, the State cannot be an onlooker but should be at the forefront of development initiative.

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