

Rethinking the idea of independent development and self-reliance in Africa

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Abstract

From the standpoint of this paper, a central problem of development in Africa is the fact that the very norm of development, as a people's aspiration, is not conceived of at the African level, but at the international level, by institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Furthermore, the strategies for Africa's development are also not thought out and initiated at the African level, but at the international level, via Western-directed foreign aid and external trade schemes. This paper argues that, for Africa, external trade and foreign aid are not the panacea for attaining genuine development but that, on the contrary, they are rather instruments of dominance, manipulation and exploitation. Western conceptions and strategies of development should be offensive to Africa's sense of sovereignty; and they have failed, and will continue to fail, to bring genuine and autonomous development to the continent. Africa's development must, therefore, be conceived by Africans to focus, not on growth but, on human beings and the concern for their well-being. The paper concludes that the path to follow in achieving a dignified African model of development is self reliance.

Keywords: Africa; Independent Development; Self Reliance; External Trade; Foreign Aid; Growth.

1. Introduction

One of the central problems of development in Africa is the fact that the very norm of development, as a people's aspiration, is not conceived of at the local, or national, African level, but by the international community, by institutions such as the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. It should be obvious that this situation contradicts our sense and notion of sovereignty and that something needs to be done about it. Moreover, the strategies for attaining development are also not thought out and pursued at the local, or national, African level but at the international level, via, for example, foreign aid and external trade schemes (Nwoke, 2010).

Against that background, I wish, in this paper, to argue that these foreign development measures have failed and that we will be better off pursuing an independent path to development and working for self-reliance in Africa. I begin by posing and answering the question: "What is Development?", in order to put in perspective my own understanding of the term.

2. What is Development?

In the late colonial and early post-colonial period, the social science literature in Africa was preoccupied with "development", which was then understood largely in the context of Western-type "modernization". In particular, development was conceived largely in economic or instrumentalist terms, as a process of increasing national productivity or per capita gross domestic product (GDP) of the nation.

This growth-based understanding of development was premised on the idea that the growth of the economy would benefit the whole society, either through market-driven "trickle down" effects, or by state-driven social policy. However, it soon became clear that the benefits of "growth" did not necessarily trickle down to the poor as the inequality gap between the rich and the poor widened not just within Africa but globally (Cobbinah, *et al.*, 2011).

In other words, the strictly economic conception of development did not capture the true meaning of development because it failed to consider the well-being and living condition of human beings. It gave little consideration to factors such as inequality, poverty, hunger, malnutrition and the social well-being of Africans.

In the 1970s, the focus of development shifted from economic growth and GDP to "basic needs", whose central component included concerns for

education, food, nutrition, health, sanitation, employment, etc., for the poor. This new focus of development rightly emphasized the quality of human life and conservation of the natural environment for “sustainable development” (Cobbinah *et al.*, 2011).

The 1974 Cocoyac Declaration in Mexico symbolized this basic needs focus: Our first concern is to redefine the whole purpose of development. This should not be to develop things but to develop man. Man has basic needs: food, shelter, clothing, health, and education. Any process of growth that does not lead to their fulfillment or, even worse, disrupts them, is a travesty of the idea of development. (Cocoyac Declaration, 1974,n.d.)

The 1980s saw the shifting of the centre of gravity in development thinking from the United Nations organs, such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), to the Bretton Woods Institutions (the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank). During this period, the focus of development shifted to the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), which emphasized the neo-liberal tenets of liberalization of trade, elimination of government deficits, reduction of exchange rates, privatization, etc. SAP was seen as intended to correct errors of earlier government-centered development policies, which had led to bloated bureaucracies, unbalanced budget and excessive debts.

It was soon discovered, however, that SAP’s market-oriented reforms even led to greater inequality and hardship for the poor. In fact, in a certain sense, the lingering crisis that has bedeviled most of Africa’s development projects for the past two decades can be seen as a hangover from the neo-liberal policy impositions of SAP.

Following global agitations against SAP, and for a better conception of development, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in 1990, produced a welcome, and broad-based, concept of “human development”, which, thankfully, focused on the general well-being of people, even including their civil and human rights. The UNDP properly defined development as a process that goes beyond the expansion of income and wealth and focuses on the human condition. This human-centred conception of development overcame the limitations of the earlier economic growth-based concept of development, which viewed income as “an end” in itself, instead of as “a means to an end”. (Cobbinah *et al.*, 2011).

In particular, the UNDP’s Human Development Index (HDI) is a very useful instrument used today in comparing and ranking nations on the basis of a wide-

range of carefully identified indices of the development of the human condition. In 2018, my great country, Nigeria, the giant of Africa, was ranked 157 out of 189 countries studied! And yet, during the same period, our GDP growth rate was said to be 5.30 percent.

The point is simply that growth is not equivalent to development. You can have 10, 15, or 20 percent growth without development. But you cannot have development without growth. Growth is, at best, a sub-set of development.

Development is about the welfare of the human being, not about the artefacts of living, namely, about things. Development must, therefore, be centred around man. In other words, development must integrate our beliefs (culture and religion), our search for, and acquisition of knowledge (science and technology), our mode of production, distribution, consumption and investment (economics), our relationship with our fellow man (politics), and with our environment (communication). It is this quintessential human aspect of development that underlies all other objectives that we will have to pursue, be they economic, social, cultural or political (Okigbo, 1997, p. 15).

Above all, development has to be engineered and sustained by the people themselves through their full and active participation. In other words, development is not something that should be undertaken for, or on behalf of, the people, but should be the organic outcome of a people's value system, their perceptions, concerns and endeavors.

If we accept this conception of development as true and correct, we should not have any difficulty rejecting the provision of foreign aid as an instrument of genuine development in Africa.

3. Foreign aid is an instrument of dominance and manipulation, not of development

Foreign aid, which is the core development implementation paradigm of the Western "donor" countries and their international institutions, arises from the warped idea that the development of societies is something that can be externally-driven or generated.

The key recommendation of the United Nations Millennium Project, and of the Blair Commission on Africa, was to boost aid to the poorest countries in the world. Foreign aid was also the cornerstone of the strategy envisaged to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Aid has been top in the agenda of the various meetings of the leaders of the world's eight richest countries

(Nwoke, 2010). But aid has failed to work; it has not proven to be the panacea for redressing Africa's development crisis.

Several decades of aid and billions of dollars of development assistance to African countries by mostly Western countries and international development finance institutions have failed to provide any significant development impacts in aid-dependent African countries, which are even poorer today than they were half-a-century ago.

Whereas aid is not essential, African leaders have been led for decades to believe that it is an engine of development and the path out of poverty. While aid, whether as a grant or low-interest loan, may appear to be free, the costs of aid for African countries are really huge.

Foreign aid crowds out potentially sustainable local industries and suffocates local entrepreneurial initiative and self-reliance in aid-dependent African countries. Foreign aid creates an absence of self-respect in aid-dependent countries; and aid-recipient countries would tend to lose the respect of donor-countries and international organisations. Foreign aid has created a mental laziness in many African countries that have the illusion that they really do need foreign assistance. Foreign aid prevents development because it tends to base calculations of resources available to aid-recipients largely on external aid flows, rather than creatively looking inwards for efficient means of internally generated revenue. Foreign aid cannot move poor people out of poverty (Moghalu, 2013).

The Asian success cases, Singapore and Malaysia, which had similar experiences with colonialism, just like African countries, did not become developed and emerging market countries that they are today through reliance on foreign aid. They delinked and looked inwards and produced economic policies that created thriving industries, trade and services (Amin, 1985).

Moreover, foreign aid is not borne out of donor altruism. Rather, it can be a tool for projection of world views, of power, dominance and influence. As Harry Magdoff observed:

...the energetic extension of loans to weaker nations by bankers of core capitalist nations has long been an important component of Western expansionism, providing stepping stones either to outright colonial occupation or to the kind of economic and political penetration that laid the foundation for, or contributed to, the enduring condition of dependency of peripheral nations on the centres of imperialism (Magdoff, 1986, p.1).

It is interesting to note that China is a relatively new player in the debt trap problem, as it is now strategically exploiting Africa's development deficit in order to keep the continent's future under its control. There are reports of talks between the Zambian government and China on handing over Zambia's national electricity company, ZESCO, to the Chinese due to Zambia's inability to meet its loan repayment obligations. Meanwhile, China is already in control of Zambia's broadcasting company, ZNBC! There are fears that the new airport in Lusaka could be China's next target. The greater fear is that Zambia is not the only African country that is about to be swallowed up by China.

In other words, the aim of international donors, whether at the bilateral or multilateral level, is to promote certain geopolitical or economic self-interests, to influence the domestic policies of recipient countries for the donor country's commercial benefit, to obtain diplomatic support at international forums, and to spread ideologies (Moghalu 2013).

Foreign aid always has strings (or conditionalities) attached to it, strings which constrain the freedom of choice and action of recipient countries. It would be pretty difficult to be an aid-recipient and also insist on following the principles of non-interference and independence in foreign policy. As a condition for receiving aid, you may be given conditions that are linked to good governance and human rights in your country. Or, you may be required to give an undertaking to purchase certain critical equipment with the aid funds, from the donor, and through a foreign consultant appointed by him, an arrangement that one scholar has rightly described as “aid industrial complex” (Moghalu, 2013) which mimicks the better known military industrial complex idea.

The IMF and the World Bank often attach trade liberalization conditions to grants and loans and offer liberalization-biased advice to poor African countries. Such gimmicks have torn down several of the poor African countries' barriers already. The saddest aspect of all of this is the fact that the so-called aid effectively flows in reverse order. In other words, through several clever and illegal methods, rich countries are draining more funds from Africa than they bring into the continent. Thus, it can be said that rich countries are not developing poor African countries; but that it is poor African countries that are rather developing rich nations.

Such funds drainage is accomplished through inflated contracts and several other dubious methods, including, for example:

- i. Capital flight from Africa in order to avoid risk or to earn higher profits abroad;

- ii. Stolen or looted funds being taken to secret foreign bank accounts or investments; and
- iii. What Bade Onimode called “trade-faking adjustment”, which is over-invoicing of imports and under-invoicing of exports, to avoid local taxation, e.g., on transnational profits (Onimode, 2000).

Aid has failed to produce development in Africa; it has, instead, given rise to unproductive consumption. Between 1970 and 1998, the poverty level in Africa rose from 11 percent to 66 percent, during a period when aid flows were said to have risen to the highest level (Moghalu, 2013). Contrary to foreign aid-pushers, foreign aid has not led to independent development, wealth and prosperity in Africa.

Foreign aid may be beneficial as a palliative, when targeted at specific, narrow objectives, such as malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, small pox, diarrhoea. At best, aid can finance useful public projects. But what foreign aid cannot do is to kick-start or sustain independent development in Africa (Nwoke, 2010). And neither can international trade, whose shortcomings as an instrument of autonomous development, I will now turn to.

3. Limits of international trade as an instrument of independent development

Considering the basic developmental priorities of African countries, liberalization, and other rules of the global trade regime, will not resolve the challenges impeding the continent’s progress.

First, we must not ignore or downplay the inequality and injustice that exist in the world trade regime, where the advanced powers are both players and umpires. They make the rules and have arrogated to themselves the right and authority to interpret the rules and to punish perceived recalcitrant and errant members.

The rules for integrating African countries into the world economy not only reflect little awareness of the continent’s developmental priorities, they are often completely unrelated to sensible economic principles. As Dani Rodrick once observed about WTO rules:

World Trade Organization rules on anti-dumping, subsidies and countervailing measures, agriculture, textiles, TRIMS and TRIPS, are utterly devoid of any economic rationale beyond the mercantilist interests of a narrow set of powerful groups in the advanced countries. The developmental payoff of most of these requirements is hard to see (Rodrik, 2001, p. 15).

Second, for African countries, integration into the world economy is no longer just a matter of liberalization, removing trade and investment barriers. In fact, trade liberalization now entails much more than just removing tariff and non-tariff barriers; it now includes demands, by the world trade regime, that Africa complies with a long list of stringent, non-trade-related, requirements, including governance conditionalities (Nwoke, 2010).

The fact is that the WTO's imposed strategies of liberalization would tend to crowd out alternatives that may be more development-oriented in Africa. While several of the institutional reforms being imposed on Africa for integration into the world economy may be desirable for individual African economies, these requirements do not necessarily coincide with the priorities of a full-fledged independent development agenda (Nwoke, 2010).

The limitations of international trade as an instrument of Africa's independent development can be appreciated from the analysis of some controversial issues that have characterized the WTO negotiations in the contemporary era of globalization. These issues include: false promises to grant poor countries easy access to the markets of Europe and America; trade in services; trade-related intellectual property rights; traded-related investment measures; and the multilateral agreement on investment (Onimode, 2000).

3.1. False market access promises

The international trade system is full of inequities, hypocrisy and double-standards. Despite the calls by Western powers for world-wide liberalization and removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers, the same industrialized countries are imposing import tariffs that tend to be higher in the areas that are of most strategic interest to African countries (such as textiles and agriculture). Moreover, these tariffs are escalated as the level of processing of the products increases, thereby frustrating industrialization in poor African countries.

As a Malawian Minister of Commerce and Industry once lamented in an article entitled "Policy made on the Road to Perdition": "We have opened our economy. That's why we are flat on our back" (Mphasu, 2003, p.3).

International trade negotiations lack transparency and would often exclude African countries from important decisions. Moreover, African countries lack both the financial, technical and political resources required for making effective use of the WTO's negotiation platform and dispute settlement procedures to their benefit. In other words, it is only the powerful Western states that can

access and maximize the potential benefits from international trade and that can get justice and equity under the WTO system of liberalization and free trade (Nwoke, 2010).

The advanced countries are guilty of grand scale hypocrisy. While they maintain their own protection, especially, in agriculture, which is today of most strategic importance for primary resource African economies, they arm-twist African governments into scrapping their own protections and barriers. The tragedy is that this forced “freeing” or “liberalisation” of trade has already set poor African countries’ development projects back a generation, in view of the very visible collapse of their livelihoods that has resulted (Nwoke, 2010).

But, one may rightly ask: why do sovereign African nations appear not to have done anything to prevent highly subsidized goods from the industrialised world from flooding their markets and driving domestic producers out of business? And why have they not produced their own competitive industries in order to compete on a stronger footing in the future?

The answer to those questions is precisely that, over the past decades, the West, and the international economic and financial organizations, have been putting all manner of pressure on poor African countries to open up their markets, to deregulate and privatize industries. Christian Aid has explained the situation as follows:

Through a combination of ideological dogma, conditions attached to aid and loans, and straight-forward bullying, poor countries have been convinced, forced and threatened into accepting that free trade is their only option. In pursuit of free trade, the principle of governments intervening to safeguard peoples’ livelihoods and to set their own course for growth and development – something that has worked in the past for almost all of today’s developed countries – has been wrongly abandoned (Christian Aid, 2005, p. 3).

While the protection of infant industries by African governments has been branded heretical by the apostles of free trade in advanced countries, there are hardly any examples of countries that have developed without such protection. The success stories of globalisation, including South Korea, Malaysia, Vietnam, India, China and Mauritius have all developed industries that could compete in global markets. But, while doing so, each of them also carefully nurtured and protected them while they grew (Nwoke, 2010).

3.2. Trade in services

Several people had wondered why services were suddenly included as a trade issue in WTO negotiations soon after the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) metamorphosed into the WTO. What is clear is that the services sector is an area that is already dominated by the advanced countries. And African countries have very limited capacity in the modern services sector. Liberalization of the sector will, therefore, only enhance the dominance of the advanced countries to the detriment of poor, African, countries, making them to remain import-dependent and non-competitive.

Through trade in services under the WTO, the advanced countries have maintained the existing asymmetry in the sector via free and unfettered access to the economies of African countries for their service providers in areas such as telecommunications, maritime, and banking services. This situation will certainly impede Africa's efforts to develop capacity in these services areas (Khor, 2000).

Liberalization of services entails an imbalance in the protection of capital, which is relatively abundant in advanced countries, and the exclusion of labour, which is relatively more abundant in Africa (Onimode, 2000). However, Africa's labour is usually subjected to hostile immigration restrictions, including imposition of racist and exploitative transit visas, and now the building of walls, by the advanced countries to ward off immigrants.

Under the WTO's General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), there are areas, such as cross-border supplies and presence of natural persons, to which African countries are denied market access. The advanced countries are quite reluctant to enter into agreements that would allow free and unhindered access to labour in particular areas, such as where services may be provided by natural persons (Eze, 2004).

3.3. Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS)

TRIPS, one of the new WTO issues, involves measures that accord the advanced countries monopolistic and exploitative property rights over technology. These rights permit the use of, among others, patents, copyrights, and trademarks to restrict the transfer of technology to African countries. In other words, TRIPS is intended to strengthen transnational corporations' monopoly of technology, which is obviously detrimental to the development of African, and other Third World, countries (Onimode, 2000). TRIPS will aggravate the desperate technological dependence of African countries on the West.

3.4. Trade-Related Investment Measures (TRIMS)

By opposing clauses that require that countries maintain certain minimum levels of national content in production, including maintaining minimal levels of export, the WTO rules on TRIMS tend to promote the monopoly of Western transnational corporations in local African markets. TRIMS is, therefore, an anti-development measure, which has the effect of restricting African controls on Western transnational corporations' foreign investments (Onimode, 2000).

3.5. Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI)

The imposition of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment on poor African countries is, according to Onimode, an undisguised recolonization agreement in the WTO system. Under this agreement, foreign investors are guaranteed several rights, including: 100 percent equity ownership, and the same operating conditions for foreign investors as for African nationals; rights of foreign investors' entry and establishment in all sectors; freedom of capital and profit flow; and right to property and changes in tax and company law (Raghavan, C., 1999).

3.6. The Neo-colonial Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)

Africa's sad experience in the WTO is not different from the continent's neo-colonial relationship with Europe in the so-called Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). Notice how Charles Soludo, a mainstream scholar, described, from the African perspective, the EPA's destructive liberalization scheme:

...in order to continue to have access to European markets (on terms that it had enjoyed for more than three decades) Africa [was] required to eliminate tariffs on at least 80 percent of imports from the EU; in some cases, abolish all export duties and taxes; in others, countries can retain export taxes but not increase them or introduce new taxes; eliminate all quantitative restrictions; and meet all other kinds of intrusive and destructive conditionalities that literally tie the hands of African governments to deploy the same kinds of instruments that all countries that have industrialized applied to build competitive national economies (Soludo, 2012, p.45).

Soludo was correct to worry that Europe was set to underdevelop Africa again:

Africa is in trouble, its future is once again on the table, and it is Europe that holds the ace. Unlike the Berlin Conference in 1884 to 1885, which balkanized Africa among 13 European powers as guaranteed sources of raw materials and markets, the current contraption under the EPA, spear headed from Brussels, is the modern day equivalent of the Berlin conference. At issue in both Berlin and Brussels is whether or not Africa can be allowed latitude to conduct trade, industrial and development policies for her own development or for the development of Europe.

A major difference is that the “agreement” will now be signed by free people, under supposedly democratic regimes, and in contexts where the African people again have neither voice nor choice (Soludo, 2012, p. 45).

With respect to the damaging impact of the EPA, Soludo continued:

There is abundant evidence that the EPA would be damaging. Africa’s nascent industrial sector, and agriculture (which is the mainstay of the poor) would be damaged by the new import armada and dumping thereby exacerbating unemployment and poverty. In some countries, imports of sugar, dairy, poultry, rice, vegetable oil, etc., have already increased four-fold ... what is worrying is that it is difficult to point to any significant net [developmental] benefits of EPAs to Africa (Soludo, 2012, p.45).

In summary, foreign aid, effectively a tool of dominance and manipulation, has failed to bring genuine development to Africa; and external trade has been intended largely to recolonize the continent.

Should we not, therefore, seek to move towards independent development and self-reliance in Africa?

4. Towards independent development and self-reliance in Africa

In several African countries, even though their development blueprints may claim to be aimed at self-reliance, what they have in practice is far from being self-reliance.

In such countries, “self-reliance” would be interpreted to mean the flooding of the economy with foreign capital to establish industries that utilize local raw materials. For such countries, self-reliance would include the ownership of farms by expatriate capital so that the country may approach self-sufficiency in food production and increase the local raw materials content of its manufactures. And such countries would interpret self-reliance to mean allowing transnational capital all manner of access to penetrate, unhindered, their economies. It should be clear that what such countries are aiming at is not really self-reliance but some measure of self-sufficiency and, perhaps, solvency, which simply means that there is available to the countries the physical and financial means of meeting their demand, irrespective of who owns and controls those means (Toyo, 1987).

Properly conceived, however, self-reliance is inseparable from economic independence, which connotes the ownership and control of a country’s economic resources by its own nationals and their capacity for auto-development. In other words, self-reliance, is the road that leads to economic independence, which involves relying as little as possible on foreign operators and financiers (Nwoke, 1986).

Self-reliance is, therefore, defined by independence, meaning the desire and ability to think, decide, and act without the help or influence of outsiders. It is the very opposite of *dependency*, the sick act of relying on others to make decisions and act for us.

It should be obvious that if we are aiming at a people-oriented, and human-focused, development, as earlier defined, one that is based on equality of status, one that guarantees equality of opportunity, human rights and basic needs, then only a genuinely conceived self-reliance is capable of taking us there.

So, what is the way forward, if we accept self-reliance as a worthwhile and necessary developmental aspiration?

I will now identify several issues, which I consider basic and necessary ingredients of self-reliance that we need to embrace.

- i. Committed leadership:* African countries need to be governed by people who are not stooges or collaborators of metropolitan powers; people who do not gain from personal business links with foreign enterprises and who do not depend on imperialist political support to retain themselves in power.

The self-seeking, self-serving, self-centred and self-perpetuating groups of desperate power seekers who are mostly in governance positions today but whose interests are more aligned to those of imperialism cannot grow authentic self-reliance in their economies. They should be replaced by a leadership that is fired by the spirit of African nationalism, one that has a sense of committed mission and vision of a liberated Africa.

- ii. Intellectual re-orientation:* African leaders must liberate themselves from their rigid intellectual orientation, informed by the received wisdom of mainstream, Western, development ideology, which is preoccupied with the fetishism of the market, reckless and mindless liberalization, deregulation, privatization, the erosion of role of the developmental state (Nwoke, 2013).

We should recall that the remarkable transformation in the economies of South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, China, India, was possible mostly because they rejected the orthodox, neo-liberal, structural reform agenda that was imposed on them by global market forces. Those Asian countries instead adopted independent, creative, and sometimes, heterodox policy innovations.

Africa's development strategies should not be different. Africa's development should be conceived by Africans, and tailored to address Africa's unique development needs, considering Africa's innate strengths and weaknesses.

- iii. *De-link*: African countries' economies need to be de-linked from imperialist contacts by imposing informed and well-calculated limits on international economic and financial institutions in the areas of aid, trade, investment, etc.; as well as by ensuring state control of the critical sectors of the African economy (Nwoke, 2007).
- iv. *Food security*: African governments must devote great attention and resources to ensuring that their people have food security, the ability to feed themselves. We must discontinue the colonial type concentration on production of cash crops mainly for export to Europe. What is needed now in African agriculture is adequate financing with greater emphasis on food production, through the application of science (Toyo, 1987).
- v. *Basic needs approach*: African countries' development should follow the basic needs approach, which focuses on tackling poverty. The basic needs approach includes satisfying minimum levels of material needs, such as food, shelter, clothing, and access to public services such as clean water, sanitation, cheap and affordable public transport, health, and education. Basic needs should also include non-material needs, such as human rights to freedom of expression, movement, etc., security and democratic participation (Toyo, 1987).
- vi. *Develop competitiveness*: In the contemporary era of globalization, and trade liberalization, Africa's inordinate focus on securing market access from the global North would seem ill-advised since African countries generally lack competitiveness, which is the capacity to meet production targets in the metropolises, in terms of quality, quantity, standards, delivery-time, etc., as well as to diversify the product mix.

There is a need, therefore, to address, as a matter of urgency, the supply-side constraints inhibiting Africa's ability to competitively produce and trade into world markets (Nwoke, 2007).

- vii. *Knowledge-based planning*: In preference to blind and spontaneous market forces, there must be disciplined planning of the economy based on scientific knowledge, especially in view of today's knowledge-driven and globalized world.

Planning, based on scientific knowledge, means that great emphasis must be placed on the acquisition of advanced knowledge in science and technology, through popular and advanced education and by creating experts. In other words, it is indigenous African researchers and innovators that Africa should have, not dependent operators of imported hardware (Toyo, 1987).

viii. *Mineral resource-based strategy*: Because Africa's misfortune in the global economy has arisen mostly from its role as a guaranteed source of mineral resource supply to the metropole, there is urgent need to articulate and adopt a strategic plan on how to neutralise minerals-based international exploitation of African countries. Such a plan should include: the localization of staff and assumption of 100 percent national ownership, control and management of Africa's minerals sectors; the processing of Africa's mineral resources before export; mobilization of Africa's mineral resources for aggressive domestic industrialization (Nwoke, 2013).

ix. *Production-based regional integration*: Julius Nyerere had admonished us on the need for unity when he reminded us that:

None of us has achieved economic liberation. And none of us can do so in isolation. We need each other, we can help each other, and we must help each other (Nyerere, 1987, pp. 11-12).

African countries must be serious about uniting to develop effective regional integration schemes, with the focus being on production, rather than trade, as it is difficult to reach and maintain agreement on trade gains. Moreover, there cannot be much trade among African countries whose individual exports are still dominated by one or two primary commodities exports to the global North (Nwoke, 2013).

x. *South-South cooperation*: African countries must also make maximum use of opportunities offered by South-South cooperation, which must, again, consist mainly of production rather than trade exchanges with the subsidiaries of foreign transnational corporations (Toyo, 1987). South-South cooperation should also focus on various kinds of inter-continental mutual aid agreements targeted at providing, without strangulating conditions, not only consumer goods but capital and intermediate goods.

And, considering the general financial weakness of most African, and global South, countries, the South-South strategy should evolve around direct, state-to-state, transactions among global South countries, in order

to bypass the foreign transnational corporations and facilitate structural integration among global South countries (Nwoke, 2007).

5. Concluding remarks

My argument so far in this paper has rested on several planks.

First, I maintain that, for Africa, development must be conceived to focus on human beings and the concern for their well-being, including concerns with their poverty, their health, food and nutrition, education, shelter, security, as well as their individual liberties and freedoms. In other words, we must move away from equating growth of inanimate indices with development of the human condition.

Second, Africa's developmental aspirations must be original, home grown and independent, that is, not dependent on foreign ideas, policies and strategies.

Third, foreign aid, rather than succeed in bringing development to Africa, has been used essentially by the global North as a tool for the continued domination and manipulation of African countries. We should, as much as possible, avoid that path.

Fourth, similarly, international trade has failed to be the engine of Africa's development, contrary to mainstream and conservative Western wisdom. From the standpoint of African countries, the international trade regime is characterized by dominance, rigged rules, hypocrisy, double-standards and injustice. For African countries, there is nothing that is free in free trade, where they remain hewers of wood and drawers of water.

Fifth, African countries must, therefore, aspire to establish authentic and independent (not dependent) development models. And self-reliance would be the ultimate mark of Africa's economic independence.

But, a word of caution is necessary at this point.

The success in implementing the above strategies of self-reliance will be problematic, if we were to look up, for their implementation, to the present entrenched African leadership classes, constituted mostly by non-patriotic, corrupt and compradorial elements. That would require that they themselves should change the status quo of their selfish governance structure, which has so far serviced mainly their greed and kleptomania.

But they are not likely to commit class suicide; it, therefore, behoves the majority of African people themselves to exercise their popular power (which

is the ultimate guarantor of genuine development) to put in place the kind of leadership that will set in motion the above strategies of independent development and self-reliance.

Biographical notes

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