

NEPAD: Continuing the Disconnections in Africa?

by

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ABSTRACT

This paper relay on the history of developmental economics in Africa and will discuss NEPAD in the light of Africa's experience in development initiatives. Here, our position is floated on the logic that capitalism is a market driven principle based on price mechanism that thrives on open/free competition among overt profit seekers. At the micro level, this is expressed among competing entrepreneurs, and at the macro level its expressed among nations; hence the importance given by nations to the 'balance of payments', 'terms of trade' and the value exchange rate of competing national currencies in the world market. What is Africa's position? Where is Africa's development space? NEPAD? The position put forward here is that any developmental programme that alienates the African elite and populace and does not send the African workforce into production (from self-sustenance into commercial purposes) or challenge her intellectuals and local entrepreneurs to connect for the purpose of providing the superstructure for local self-development is bound to leave Africa where it has been. Indeed, NEPAD, the way it is now, will bury Africa deeper in her unbecoming grave; unless it is further indigenised both in its conception of what 'development' should be in Africa, and the pragmatics to 'development'.

NEPAD: Continuing the Disconnections in Africa?

The African state in its present form needs to be reformed. But state reform under the NEPAD process is rather general, leaving out its specifics such as its nature and scope ...*because the state is central to the accumulative process, and will remain so for a long time to come, it needs to reorient itself across all the various groups that it encompasses. This orientation should be one that makes people, instead of wealth, the centre-piece of development; one that places a high priority on the need to develop local productive forces rather than promoting an exchange economy; and one that encourages local private capital to engage in real production, not in merchandizing.*¹

– Daniel A. Omoweh

Daniel A. Omoweh, “The New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD): A Preliminary Evaluative Analysis.” *Nigerian Forum: The Nigerian Institute of International Affairs* (NIIA), July/August, vol. 23, nos. 7-8, 2002, p. 258.

Slavery, colonisation, capitalism/socialism, structural adjustment programmes, liberalisation, etc. (and now New Economic Partnership for Africa Development?) are a few obstinately designed Euro-American principles or models of socio-economic control and dominance over the less-developed economies of African states and people. Unfortunately, these ‘*philosophies*’ that are being paraded as economic policies/programmes, blueprints/initiatives or measures are also instruments of exploitation. This may pass for what is today called ‘Afro-pessimism’, but the apostles of NEPAD say that what they are offering in NEPAD is ‘*new*’ and different from the past. Is this so? Can this be so?

Previous development policies for Africa implemented by African leaders shared a common family semblance; they are Western initiatives, often mounted to stall self-driven indigenous developmental programs by Africans. As with their forebears, they are incapable of achieving any good purpose for Africa, and once these policies have done the jobs for which the initiators installed them, or if they are perceived as not serving the interest of their initiators, they are dismantled without apologies, hence the goals of such policies (which the Asians did not get themselves fooled about) operate to (1) make the African economy subservient to the Euro-American economy; (2) cause socio-economic-political dislocation in Africa; and (3) disconnect African self-reliant resources (human and natural) from sustainable development.

Background to Discourse

History points to the fact that NEPAD's committed disciples are those who have come to terms with the reality of paying socio-economic restitution to the deprived, abused and raped African homeland although the sociology of the West to Africa has not changed; the reason and motive of the West for coming to the continent is to civilise and help the continent, and not to use her as a means to service the interest of Europe. This claim has not changed even though only the West and her cohorts can defend it when only the methodologies have changed (i.e., the garments Europe wear each epochal tide). Thus Europe has always found a useful service for myopic African leadership whose assessment of the local African he/she governs is ironically no better than that of a sheep that cannot but look up to a shepherd until it is systematically, lovingly pastured to death.

Africa is not a home for the European, but simply a place Europe has come to do business. For example, the current case in the Niger-Delta region in Nigeria makes a good case study. In spite of the enormous crude oil wealth the Dutch and the British are raking from this region, they are 'not known' by the locals of this area. Like their slave-trading, legitimate-trading, exploring, missionary, colonising and trans-national business forebears, these new economic rapists choose to 'remain strangers' even in places where they do 'mutual businesses.' Their immediate families are in Europe; they come into the areas in 'caravans,' and in turns. And this is on the basis of 'a roaster' known only to them, even when it is believed that they are largely Christians, they are never found in the churches of the locals that are also largely Christian in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria.

This is true of all African societies, either the loving European in Africa are not Christians or they do not find it worthy to worship/share religion with Africans. Their immediate families cannot be part of the impoverished communities in which they do business; they cannot attend the local schools (are there really schools in Africa?). Has this mentality changed for one that is directed at a 'new' (mutual?) development partnership of equals? African governments are partners to these people in and out of their criminality, and only the locals are to blame. In short, Bukarambe informs us that *"... this slow pace [of the quest of economic, socio-political independence of African States] reflects the determination of the imperial powers not to lose control and privileges associated with it. This is because historically, the imperial conquest and colonial rule grew out of European drive for industrialisation and the pressures of expanding population. Europe needed outlets for commerce and the resettlement of excess population. Imperial conquests, acquisition of vast foreign lands and settler colonialism (such as in Algeria and Southern Africa) enabled Europe to establish the international imperial order and solve those problems.*

By the independence era imperial conquests and resettlement might have become out of date; but the quest for economic dominance and industrial primacy remained intact (Bukarambe 2002: 191)". And our question becomes, have all this changed, and will NEPAD ultimately change it?

As a 'development' blueprint, NEPAD is not the first in the African continent that has been initiated and/or 'supported' by European partners. This brings into question the 'newness' that NEPAD claims.³ Apart from the first decade of gaining independence from the imperial powers, African state economic programmes were anything but self-reliant and self-sustaining, and since the 80s been Western loan-driven economies. And as Bukarambe notes, "...*this fact became too evident once African states began defaulting on accumulated loans and needed to negotiate concessionary repayment terms, [as] Western strategic values quickly asserted themselves.... The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) became instruments through which the West imposed a series of economic measures known as the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) on cash-needy and defaulting African states.*" He goes on to list: (1) the Lagos Plan of Action for Economic Development of Africa, 1980-2000 and the Final Act of Lagos, 1980; (2) Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (APPER), 1986-1990; (3) The African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programme for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP), 1989; (4) A Three Year Priority Programme for Survival, Rehabilitation of African Economies, 1986-1989; (5) The African Charter for Popular Participation for Development, 1990; and (6) the Compact for African Recovery, 2000 as failed and/or abandoned programmes as 'NEPAD's progenitor.

It is instructive to note that all the above were conceived between the 80s and this day, a period Africa can be rightly qualified as in political and strategic terms in a situation that led to a significant reduction of sovereignty and independence wherein considerable number of African states are now tagged as 'failed states' who have only the legal status of sovereignty but lacking in the effective attributes of a state in terms of physical exertion and provision of security, law, order and development with political weakness, financial and debt related stress, enhanced economic dependencies by the turn of the century obliterating any debates about the survival of neo-colonialism and continue Western domination. And in fact, neo-colonialism has been restored as amply demonstrated by how African leaders are currently required to abide by dictated economic and political conditions (Bukarambe 2002: 201).

What NEPAD Says

The main goals of *The New Partnership for Africa's Development* are “to help eradicate poverty in Africa and place African countries ... on the path of sustainable growth and development and thus halt the marginalisation of Africa in the globalisation process.” According to the NEPAD document issued in October 2001, the requisite conditions towards achieving these lofty goals include ‘selecting’ ‘urgent priorities’ that ‘would have catalytic effect for the intervention in other priority areas in the future.’ This will include factors such as “infrastructure, capital accumulation, human capital, institutions, structural diversification, competitiveness, health and good stewardship of the environment.”

NEPAD is conceived to be a long-term developmental plan floated on short-term reinforcing goals, and envisaged as a long-term vision of an African-owned and African-led development programme (section IV, paragraph 60). Here, ‘the strategy for achieving sustainable development in the 21st century is set out.’ For the purposes of its short-term goals, NEPAD’s target is the International or Millennium Development Goals set for 2015 goals (section V, paragraph 68) to: (1) achieve and sustain an average Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate of above 7 per cent per annum for the next 15 years; (2) ensure that the continent achieves the agreed International Development Goals; (3) reduce the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by half between 1990 and 2015; (4) enrol all children of school age in primary schools by 2015; (5) make progress towards gender equality and empowering women by eliminating gender disparities in the enrolment in primary and secondary education by 2005; (6) reduce infant and child mortality ratios by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015; (7) reduce maternal mortality ratios by three-quarters between 1990 and 2015; (8) provide access for all who need reproductive health services by 2015; and (9) to implement national strategies for sustainable development by 2005, so as to reverse the loss of environmental resources by 2015. Thus, the expected outcomes of the strategy are “economic growth and development and increased employment, reduction in poverty and inequality, diversification of productive activities, enhanced international competitiveness and increased exports, and finally, to increase African integration” (section IV, paragraph 69).

NEPAD's Three Faces

The overall success of NEPAD is anchored on three human factors, thus: (1) leadership, good governance and accountability; (2) foreign Western partners; and (3) African people. These factors, the designers, i.e., African leaders, 'development partners,' and the 'African people' constitute a language and appeal that are 'rightly' different, however we shall consider each one and draw out the implications of their involvement.

NEPAD is an up-down leadership inspired document drawn, ratified and agreed upon for immediate implementation with little or no in-put from the African informed elite, civil society or people. Debates on the document are ongoing and perhaps the thinking is that emendations could be made in the course of implementation, so as noted above, the "New Partnership for Africa's Development 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 ... on the path of sustainable growth and development, and at the same time to participate actively in the world economy and body politic." Consequently, the leaders have a duty to sell NEPAD to the African people and to convince Africa's partners that they are ready 'to participate in world economy and body politic.' This last phrase would include globalisation, democratisation, liberalisation, free trade, and the war against terrorism. Hence our question is, in what ways NEPAD can be made acceptable to African peoples, and how leaders must be seen to be agents of a good governance, democracy and accountability?

And it is mainly for the purpose of achieving this that "A Heads of States Implementation Committee composed of five Heads of State, promoters of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and ten others, (2 from each region) will be appointed for the implementation" consisting of: (1) identifying strategic issues that need to be researched, planned and managed at the continental level; (2) setting up mechanisms for reviewing progress in the achievement of mutually agreed targets and compliance with mutually agreed standards; and (3) reviewing progress in the implementation of past decisions and taking appropriate steps to address problems and delays (VII: 202-203).

Thus, it is within this framework that mechanisms as peer review could be appreciated via 'African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)'... "an instrument voluntarily acceded to by African members of the African Union for the purpose of self-monitoring that will foster the adoption of policies, standards and practices and lead to political stability, high economic growth, sustainable development and accelerated regional integration in the continent to ensure that the APRM is independent, effective, professional and credible" (NEPAD's Italy Communiqué, June 11, 2002).

One thing that we cannot deny, the NEPAD document is overt in its acknowledgement that the bane of Africa's development over the years has been mainly that of poor, incompetent and corrupt leadership, as well as European/US exploitation of African resources. Given this context, the document states that "...colonialism subverted hitherto traditional structures, institutions and values or made them subservient to the economic and political needs of the imperial powers. It also retarded the development of an entrepreneurial class, as well as a middle class with skills and managerial capacity... [thus] post-colonial Africa inherited weak states and dysfunctional economies aggravated by poor leadership, corruption and bad governance in many countries.

These two factors, together with the divisions caused by the Cold War, hampered the development of accountable governments across the continent...[and] many African governments did not empower their people to embark on development initiatives to realize their creative potentials..." (II: 21-23).

Constructively, the second face of NEPAD attempts to appeal to the West rather than confront her in efforts aimed at Africa's development, knowing Africa will need support from the West in the forms of the infusion of resources (human and capital), investment and aids, and to achieve this, the West is reminded that: (1) Africa recognises the centuries-old historical injustice and the need to correct it; (2) the global technological revolution needs an expanding base of resources, a widening sphere of markets, new frontiers of scientific endeavour, the collective capacity of human wisdom, and a well-managed ecological system; (3) Africa offers a vast and growing market for producers across the world; (4) Africa provides a great opportunity for investment, prospects for creative partnership between public and private sector in agro-industries, tourism, human resource development, etc.; (5) Africa's biodiversity is an important global resource in combating the environmental degradation posed by the depletion of the ozone layer and climate change, pollution of air and water by industrial emissions and toxic effluents; and (6) the expansion of educational and other opportunities in Africa would enhance the continent's contribution to world science, technology and culture, to the benefit of humankind, etc (IV: 174-185).

And last, the third face of NEPAD is directed at the 'African peoples', hence NEPAD's tune is different here, and its words cautiously phrased. It is this section (IV), titled "Appeal to the People of Africa", a section of utmost concern to us here, two words are instructive to note.

The opening paragraph (57) calls NEPAD ‘The African Renaissance project’, and acknowledged in paragraph 52 that Africa has been impoverished by slavery. Interestingly, these two terms did not appear in the section that appealed to the West, only in the section that attempt to mention *Renaissance* and slavery, passively which clearly affirms that “The New Partnership for Africa’s Development will be successful only if the African people, united in diversity, own it” (IV, 51).

These two terms, renaissance and slavery are crucial to NEPAD in two ways, first the use of renaissance cannot but be a hang-over from the original intention of what was transformed into NEPAD, i.e. President Thabo Mbeki’s initial idea of an ‘African Renaissance’, hence a crucial question only President Mbeki and the originator of NEPAD may be able to answer as we ask (1) what was the stillbirth African Renaissance about; (2) is it the same as NEPAD; (3) can it still exist along side NEPAD; and (4) doesn’t Africa as a continent, far bigger than Europe, deserve mutual, but competing development blueprints. Thus, despite its academic or comparative purposes, there is a compelling need for President Mbeki to bring his idea of African Renaissance to light, and also applicable to a host of other development plans such as “the Omega Plan” proposed by President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal considering that “NEPAD is an outcome of the marriage between the Millennium Partnership for African Recovery Programme (MAP) developed by Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria and Hosni Mubarak of Egypt with the ‘Omega Plan’ proposed by President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal, previously called the New African Initiative”.⁶

Problematic within this paradigm is thinking that all the initial development plans were perceived to be authentic plans never depended on Europe bound conceptions with NEPAD as an African birth, but to the contrary, and Africa is thus painted as a continent that can never develop unless her development programmes are dependent on, as well as intrinsically linked to Euro-America connections. Perhaps, what one may add is that this is a wrong approach, as Africa is capable of developing a programme that is not antithetical to the world’s economy and progress, yet is pivotal to her development. And obviously, those who are foisting NEPAD on the continent did not put all the cards on the table. Nevertheless, this does not diminish the basis for any fruitful discussions on the document, especially, given that civil society and the professional and academic classes were never part of the initiative, until completion and subsequent implementation.

At the international level, even within Africa, much is still required to make NEPAD acceptable to a host of African states. It is clear that most African states engulfed in wars and armed conflicts are necessarily not a full part of the ongoing NEPAD processes. Perhaps, the promoters of NEPAD would say that they are, since Africa is involved in peace efforts in these conflict zones, yet it is doubtful if all African states are being carried along, or if they are convinced on the initiative. For one, it is run along an elitist-club line, and it seems that less important states would be required to qualify for membership as required in the case of the European Union, but is this not a case for those initiating states that hold an over-bloated impression of their actual status. For example, Omoweh reports that: *As a regional agenda, NEPAD is still seeking recognition both within the continent and globally. Its origins...excluded the majority of African leaders, which is why it is regarded as an elitist project. Even some member-states of the G8 like Germany expresses fear as to the internalisation of the regional document in Africa. Ushi Eid, special adviser on NEPAD to Germany's Chancellor Gerhard Schroder, in a meeting on 'The NEPAD Initiative and the G8 Action Plan' held in Berlin in May 2002, wondered why Ghana, a more relatively stable country with longer period of civilian government than Nigeria has not shown much interest in the document.... [and] members of Parliament from Uganda, who the author met and interviewed at a meeting in Berlin, said their country was more interested in AGOA than in NEPAD because they had just heard of the initiative [with] ...indications that the document is still seeking for recognition within the continent.*⁷

Indeed, the threats to the success of NEPAD are real, and it does not seem to be a priority of President Robert Mugabe or Zimbabwe (at least for now) despite the question of acceptability, but also contending proposals and development blueprints that were discarded (and a good case in point is the 'Lagos Plan of Action') which signals no merging of words with actions already being evidently displayed with the '2015 IDG's' target near with very little achieved vis-à-vis the promises of NEPAD.

However, in terms of concrete on-the-ground achievements, the leadership of NEPAD via Nigeria, South Africa, Senegal, Algeria and Egypt has been good examples of cooperation within their states and NEPAD which politically credit their leaders for their international showmanship, and sometimes their failures. Hence, Joy Ogwu rightly points out that "... for NEPAD to succeed, the African people must be its centerpiece"¹, as we ask, how is this achievable?

The Mistruths of NEPAD

Before answering the above question, we shall review a few mistruths scholars have spotted in the NEPAD's document. For example, according to Adebayo O. Olukoshi these 'myths' have been installed in order to 'market' NEPAD even though they may serve short-term ends because they represent a fundamental, sometimes even deliberate misreading of Africa's recent history. "As they begin to gain the status of truths because they are repeated often, the myths represent a lost opportunity to build on past achievements, as well as learn from the mistakes that were made."⁹ This underscores an earlier point that we have made, that is, NEPAD should interface other development programmes of Africa that preceded it. Indeed, there exists a few National Development agenda in some African States that ought to be useful to NEPAD. Here, we may recall Nigeria's "Vision 2010." For our purpose, let us list a few of the mistruths paraded in the NEPAD's Document - as pointed out by Olukoshi – as follows:

- *The idea that 40 years of independence in Africa has been characterised by a universal and uniform dismal socio-economic record that the initiative is now designed to correct once and for all. This is a false statement as the 60s and 70s recoded growth. The problem of declined commenced in the 80s to date.*
- *The claim that NEPAD represents the first comprehensive programme to emerge from within Africa for resolving developmental problems of the continent.*
- *The claim that it is the first truly African-owned framework for redressing the socio-economic and political difficulties of African countries.*
- *NEPAD has been presented as the first truly market-friendly initiative to have emanated from African leaders.*

The above excludes the position proffered by Olukoshi that a mechanism like the APRM and the prerequisite African self-imposed 'conditionality' of NEPAD are nothing but indigenising the hitherto supervisory role of international creditors as embedded in programmes foisted on Africa by the Bretton Woods institutions.

...NEPAD is not without its own self-prescribed 'conditionality.'... They are considered as prerequisites both for the successful implementation of the goals of the programme and for the long-term sustainability of the development process of Africa. And unlike the conditionality of the IMF and the World Bank, these prerequisites for the success of NEPAD are presented in spite of their uncanny resemblance to the 'political conditionality' and governance reform which Western donors devised following the end of the Cold War – as self-identified and self-imposed by African leaders...¹⁰

The strong point of Prof Olukoshi's critique is that he substantiated his position with points that are counterfactual to the claims made in the NEPAD document. For example, Like the Berg Report, which served as the basis for the launching of the structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s and 1990s the authors of the NEPAD document painted a tendentious picture of economic despondency, which does not correspond to the actual performance of African countries in the 1960s and 1970s. Indeed, whether it be in the area of economic growth rates, savings or investment, or with regard to the progress that was made in expanding access to the social and physical infrastructure integral to the goal of improving the life chances and opportunities of the citizenry, African countries [in the 60s and 70s], recorded performances that were above the global average.¹¹

There is the need for NEPAD's promoters to build it on truth and reality. Africa needs a comprehensive development blueprint that should provide the plank and framework for the development of Africa. It does not matter if it is called NEPAD.

But what is new in NEPAD? Olukoshi, for example, sees it in NEPAD's 'governance managerialism' that is based on its wholesome adoption of 'neo-liberal political economy.' This is true. But one should add that NEPAD is a clear admittance of the fact that undue wholesome 'economism' over the past 40 years has failed Africa in terms of her development dreams. Indigenous African economic experts have been 'regurgitates' of Western economic theories and policies that they have accepted as full-proof panacea of the continent's pitiable situation.

If the results of the economic policies that our economists have defended over the years is anything to qualify, then economics – at least as it applies to Africa – is a ‘failed science’, or at best, a quasi or pseudo science. Our economists have been much more precise and dexterous in offering reasons why policies fail in Africa, than in proffering economic solutions to our problems.

NEPAD has tacitly accepted this in very audible and clear language. No doubt, NEPAD tends to imply, by its language, that politics and leadership play a great role in a peoples’ development. Unfortunately, the language of NEPAD is still full of the errors of ‘economism.’ Fiscal policies have their limits. How has past fiscal policies been able to solve the food problem in Africa? Africa requires pragmatic approach to most of its problems. This requires the inputs of African agricultural experts, scientists, philosophers, historians, and others.

Steps toward making NEPAD work

The first essential thing to do and this has been mentioned earlier, is to build NEPAD on truth. Due recognition must be given to other developments blueprints. This is not a call for verbal recognition. The contents of these past documents must be studied so that their positive aspects can be adopted, adapted and built into NEPAD. To put this other way dialectically, it is also essential, for the success of NEPAD, for its promoters to attempt to answer questions such as: Why did other African and Western foisted development agenda fail Africa? What is in these past failed programmes that NEPAD is not avoiding? To answer these questions, and indeed make the answers relevant to solving the problems of NEPAD, requires more than speculative analysis. Empirical studies would need to be carried out on all previous development programmes for Africa. Indeed, these past documents should be regarded as areas of NEPAD’s strength.

For example, Said Adejumobi notes that:

After Nkrumah, a major step taken by African leaders to combat the problem of underdevelopment was the economic blueprint of the Lagos Plan of Action for the Economic Development of Africa (1980-2000) and the Final Act of Lagos of 1980. The Lagos Plan of Action enunciated the goals of self-reliance and self-sustaining development based on the creation of integrated and dynamic national, sub-regional and regional markets. The five main pillars on which the Lagos Plan of Action rested, as Adebayo Adedeji,¹² a major actor in the development of the Plan noted are:

- i) *The deliberate promotion of an increasing measure of self-reliance;*
- ii) *The acceleration of internally located and relatively autonomous process of growth and diversification and the achievement of a self-sustained development process;*
- iii) *The democratisation of the development process;*
- iv) *The progressive eradication of mass poverty and unemployment and a fair and just distribution of income and benefits of development among the populace; and*
- v) *The acceleration of the process of regional economic integration through cooperation.*¹³

Adejumobi goes on to point out why the LPA failed on two grounds as follows:

Two major issues conspired to undermine the LPA. First, the LPA was a victim of international economic politics. The western nations and its agencies, especially the World Bank, viewed the LPA as a radical choice that must be stalled. The Plan repudiates the whole logic of liberal economic theory about the efficacy of international trade and external markets, and talks about the state control of natural resources as against the role of markets and private entrepreneurs...

The second factor that conspired against the realisation of LPA was the festering economic crisis in Africa during the period. Most African countries in the throes of economic crisis of debt burden, serious trade deficits, rising unemployment, industrial collapse, and social upheavals had little chance of manoeuvring than to turn to the International Financial Institutions (IFI) of the World Bank and the IMF for support. The conditionality of IFI were quite antithetical to the goals of the LPA.¹⁴

There is also a general assumption among African scholars that colonialism constitutes the major source of underdevelopment in the continent. It would be foolish to deny this vis-à-vis the continent's plight. But is the negative impact of colonialism as enormous as scholars have claimed? There is great need to have a fundamental re-look at the hypothesis that colonialism is the real bane of Africa's development. Africa is not the only colonized territory in the world. The Asians, and in fact the United States of America were also victims. What is it that was in Africa's colonization that has made it almost near impossible for Africa to live above its devastating effects? Perhaps, there is more to it than colonization! One should proffer that slavery is the real root cause of the African plight.

Unlike other peoples, only Africa had the negative effects of modern slave trade and slavery as a continent. It dislocated the people from their land and halted the productive processes of the continent. It decimated the human, and consequently, the material resources of the continent. Psychologically, it brought mutual distrust among neighboring African communities. A post-slave trade/slavery Africa ought to have been one that should have focused on reconnecting Africans into productivity; it ought to have been one that should develop a reoriented human resources for the continent; it ought to have rebuild trust and 'confidence-to-produce' rather than 'fear-from-the-slave-hunter.' All this was not done. Rather, along with others, Africa was subjected to another long period of exploitation and colonization.

The repairs on the continent ought to have factor-in this reality by being much more backward looking far into the period of slavery. Slave trade and slavery are what Africa experienced that others did not. Perhaps, now that Africa is ready for real development, it is appropriate for the 'Blydens' to be re-read. Edward Blyden (1832-1912) says,

*There is now more thinking, writing, learning and talking about Africa than ever before. Still the notions of European are extremely vague about the Man. On two points only they seem to be clear, viz., first, as to the irrepressible or inextinguishable character of the Man – that he will not fade away or become extinct before Europeans, as the American and Australian aborigines have done; and secondly, that in any calculations looking to the material improvement or aggrandisement of his native home, he cannot be wisely ignored. Further than this, all is dark to the European mind. Only the Negro will be able to explain the Negro to the rest of mankind.*¹⁵

It is to this ‘African’ that African leaders must connect if NEPAD and any other development initiatives are to succeed in the continent. The African should be recalled from where slavery had driven him, and colonization worsened. He should be made to see the institutions of ‘governance’ as bodies that are manned and run by his fellow brothers for the larger ‘communal’ benefit rather than one whose occupiers are none but those who service the interests of the West. And consequently, to use the words of Blyden, “...that there is no other destiny for Africa than to be the hunting-ground for unprincipled men of all other countries, and no other destiny for the Negro than to continue in servitude to the man-hunter and their abettors.” But as Prof Olukoshi clearly notes,

*...The anti-colonial nationalist coalition was held together by the promise of freedom, unity and development. In this sense, the promise was at the core of the post-colonial social contract that linked state and society in the post-independence period.*¹⁶

At this point, it is necessary to establish a very important point on the adverse effects – that have been glossed over by contemporary development scholars, who only imagine colonization as the real remote and sometimes even immediate cause of Africa underdevelopment - of slavery on contemporary African society. Let us refer to Blyden for this purpose.

As Mosley rightly points out, slavery is the basis of the inhuman low esteem with which Africans are treated all over the world.

*Throughout the world, from ancient to modern times, those enslaved have been a living symbol of social impotency...The racist justification for the enslavement of Africans, Native Americans, and other aboriginal people portrayed them as inferior varieties of the human species, if not lower species altogether, which could be used much as beasts of burden to achieve the ends determined by the higher races. The African become a living example of Aristotle's definition of the natural slave, and it was considered right and natural for the African to be held as property, exploited, and treated as a thing. Africans who did not become slaves, who escaped the kidnappings and raids, were contaminated by their blood ties to those who had been subjected, and for the most part were still considered naturally inferior to the European, and subject to European domination.*¹⁷

The adverse effects of slavery as pointed out by Blyden include the following:

*It brought about the 'satirical disparagement of the Negro' by Euro-centric scholars even to this day as a people with low mentality and subculture. "Learned reviewers, masters of style, and apparently the ablest minds, do not think it an unworthy amusement to rail at the Negro – to make him the object, if not always of energetic vituperation and invective, of satirical humor and practical jokes."*¹⁸

*All Negroes are the same; having no class difference or should be treated as such. "The cruel accidents of slavery and the slave-trade drove all Africans together, and no discrimination was made in the shambles between the Foulah and the Timneh, the Mandingo and the Mendi, the Ashantee and the Fantee, the Eboe and the Congo – between the descendants of the nobles and the offspring of slaves, between kings and their subjects – all were placed on the same level..."*¹⁹

The perception that Africa is in the same line of development with Europe; only that Africa remains at the rear of the line. “The mistake which Europeans often make in considering questions of Negro improvement and the future of Africa, is in supposing that the Negro is the European in embryo – in the undeveloped stage – and that when, by and by, he shall enjoy the advantages of civilization and culture, he will become like the European...”²⁰

The above are just a few of the disastrous effects of the slave trade and slavery most which still persist in Africa in the way Blyden says, “has introduced waste and disorder into Africa, and prevented the progress of the people.”²¹

Slave trade and slavery made Africans to relocate, in order to avoid slave-hunters, to new lands. This altered Africa’s economic and technological development. For a very long period, mastering the act of catching slaves, living-as-slaves and/or avoiding being caught was the preoccupation of the thought and action of the entire black race. This was not corrected, but replaced by another destructive system, colonialism. The internal hatred and suspicion that Africans mutually share among themselves, as individuals and tribes, between Tutsis and Hutus, between Ijaws and Itsekiris, Egbas and Ijebus, between Isokos and Igbos, Asantis and Fantis, etc. cannot be dissociated from this reality of African history called slavery. This gory past have to be revisited and corrected along side with colonialism.

NEPAD in the Eyes of its Promoters

If we go by the eulogies of ‘experts’ who support NEPAD then in the next few years the known woes of Africa will become historical propositions. In 2004, Prof Joy Ogwu, the Director-General of Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), states that: “I want to reiterate that NEPAD is a programme of cooperation, not dependence. NEPAD is an aspiration for self-reliance. NEPAD is an idea whose time has come. Indeed, the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) is the key to Africa’s engagement with the world’s power in a highly competitive and globalizing world. This is imperative if our continent, Africa is to develop in ways that benefit our people.”²²

Prof Ibrahim A. Gambari notes, “NEPAD is predicated on the twin principles of ownership and partnership – partnership between African government and their people, and partnership between Africa and the rest of the world.”²³ Strengthening his argument of ownership further, Gambari notes, “...some commentators and analysts point out that there is a contradiction between NEPAD’s emphasis on African leadership and ownership, on one hand, and international support on the other. Historically, while nations have strongly asserted their right to self-determination, they have also recognized that economic cooperation with other countries is vital to their economic development.”²⁴

Prof Gambari also hinges the success of NEPAD on African leadership’s ability to avoid two things. “The first is the ‘begging bowl’ syndrome, which refers to the tendency of African government to sign on major initiatives, they either under fund or make no budgetary outlays for such priorities... The other tendency is the ‘broken promise’ syndrome, which refers to the tendency of Africa’s development partners to deliver less on pledges of support.”²⁵

Prof Kwame Asante in his inaugural lecture (November 3, 2005, of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Science) points out that the real challenge to NEPAD is that of implementation. For him this is a crucial factor that will differentiate NEPAD from other development initiatives; even though he locates the newness of NEPAD in the fact that it is, unlike other development initiatives, ‘an African product.’ Indeed, in what he termed ‘myth’ Prof Asante states as follows:

*It has become increasingly necessary to dispel the erroneous notions and misrepresentations that have been associated with NEPAD in order to generate public confidence in the NEPAD agenda. One key myth, that NEPAD is a programme orchestrated by the West to once again enslave Africans is ...untenable. NEPAD is an African owned and designed document... The role of the international partner is to support this process and to assist in scaling and accelerating implementation.*²⁶

Connecting Africans and the Communities

Our interest in NEPAD is not that of condemnation. We have set out to place it in its right perspective in order to share the above hopes. It is commendable that Africans have realized the need to 're-draw' a development blueprint. This is no doubt a product that is aimed at averting a revolution of revenge that is already rapidly brewing in Africa. The act of leadership has become difficult, if not impossible, due mainly to corrupt leaders that are sustained in power by Western interests. The debt burden and collapsed economy have not helped matters. Already, a good number of African States are engulfed in one form of conflict or another. The issue of 'failed States' is prevalent in the continent. Not many Africans, except African governments, believe that they are indebted to any Western creditor since most of these so-called debts were not only given to corrupt Western-backed African leaders, but the monies ended up in their private accounts in European Banks. These are perceived to be the real 'Development' Partners that Euro-America have in Africa. It is hoped that NEPAD would make all this change for the better.

One immediate requisite step towards addressing the issue of poverty in Africa is to move government policies and indeed, governance from States' capitals and industrial cities to the African peasant agrarian poor communities. How do we convert the African atomistic family land ownership system into a modern and commercial industrialized large-scale plantation-farming system or schemes? This question is premised on the realization of the fact that it is in the entrails of agriculture that lays the solution to the problem of unemployment, poverty reduction and underdevelopment in Africa. How do we transform Africa from being a begging continent into one that feeds humankind?

This question is premised on the facts that Africa, being a bed of raw material, since Africa commenced humankind's civilization on the basis of commencing agriculture along the banks of the Nile valley, since its human resources were ignobly engaged in the first ever large-scale farming of a monumental scale in the new found lands of the West Indies and America as slaves, has a historical role of occupying its place as a 'civilized' and 'developed' continent on the ground that it feeds the world. The basis of Africa been recognized as a world power should be dictated by the what Africans take to be their meaning and standard of development, not on one imposed on her by the West. How can Africa preserve the products of its agrarian effort?

The answers to these questions do not solely lie within the province of econometrics – this has not been of much help! But in putting the requisite political will to work and in discussing with the African. Of course the structures and facilities for this should be put in place. This includes developing the rail and energy sectors. Establishing the requisite formal and informal educational system and capital should not be underestimated as a precondition.

The history of the African agricultural sector shows that it is mainly that of a subsistent and nuclei land ownership farming. This is the case in fishing, crop cultivation, and even for so-called cash crops. This has made the engagement of modern techniques of farming very difficult. Local farmers, under this type of regime, do not see the need to secure loans from the banks. The system, on the long run, is not only more expensive, it also allows for waste as it is less useful for industrial purposes since the farm produce are not delivered to manufacturers at the right time, quality and quantity. What is the way around this problem?

Here, we shall offer pragmatic solutions. It the duty of government to regulate the way citizens engage a nation's resources. Government is also duty bound to create the enabling environment as well as provide its citizens the wherewithal that will guarantee them a decent living. This explains why farmers are given subsidies in the West. Here in Africa, the first step will be to call on African governments to set up 'communities centers (CC).' Each CC should have a structure that should be a visible symbol of the States' presence. It should house a 'CC postal agency', a 'CC medical centre/maternity home', a 'CC agriculture and development bank (CC-ADB)' and a 'CC technical and advisory office (CC-T&A).' This should be the minimum standard. It could be better. For example the postal agency could have ICT facilities, the CC technical and advisory office could have a radio (FM) station for the purposes of education, information and entertainment on the goings on of government, agriculture, medicine, etc. in local languages. This is the first step if African governments must connect with the 'African Man' in order to cover the alienating spaces created by the slave trade and slavery, and worsened by colonization. Let us elaborate on two aspects that call for such. These are the CC-ADB and CC-T&A.

Today, it is pragmatically impossible for African governments to give her farmers subsidies. But African farmer could be encouraged and mobilized into large scale and long-term farming. Governments should put seed monies into the CC-ADB banks. Through the supervisory roles and counsel of the CC-T&A offices, members of a given community could be organized as individuals or on family basis into cooperative societies. The land owned by each family can be inspected, demarcated and reserved for specific cash crop farming purposes. Based on experts' advice and supervision, a land that is best fit for whatever crop should be so engaged. Once this is done, the CC-ADB will work out the cost of cultivating and supervising plantations over a period of time, of course, doing so with the partnership of the locals and the CC-T&A. It may even be possible to have livestock – goat, sheep or cattle - farms in such plantations. Some communities may be fit for fish/pig/poultry farming.

All this can be organized without disrupting the people's subsistent farming culture. The idea is to make the people separate subsistent from commercial farming. Problem of sales, quality control, preservation, etc are aspects the CC-T&A would be found useful. The cost of maintaining these offices and other short-term costs are to be regarded as 'subsidies' to the African farmers. It is hoped that on the long run each community will be able to attract the requisite investors' market for their agricultural purposes. With an organized banking and bookkeeping system introduced under the supervision of the CC-ADB and CC-T&A, and education and enlightenment provided by the various CC-FM Radios, partnering with the various local institutions, traditional, age group and religious bodies, will also usher in a better and effective tax system.

The above calls on African governments to take up the challenge of developing good rail and road networks, providing stable and constant electric power, mounting the required infrastructure and training for appropriate manpower needs. African governments should also be foresighted enough to know when to encourage the establishment of industries that will absorb the products of the farms, be they palm produce, cotton, ground nuts, maize, meat, oranges, etc.

Concluding Propositions

Our interest in NEPAD is a simple one. It is a call that NEPAD should be accepted on the ground that Africa requires a development blueprint. This acceptance should not be uncritical. NEPAD must not be regarded as a finished and closed document that cannot accommodate the high points other pan-African and national development blueprints. Our suggestions point out to one problem NEPAD is bound to face. NEPAD has wholesomely and uncritically adopted 'neo-liberal democracy' cum Keynesian free market political economy. But Africa requires more of a social democracy, especially those practiced in States that were challenged with the task of revamping their economies and putting themselves on the path of development. Germany is a good example in this light.

No development is possible in Africa except majority of its people - who are rural dwellers and have been historically disconnected from the State and indeed production - are reconnected to these institutions and functions. Today, the African productive class is one that is unemployed, a hawker and loafer in the city, or one who is seeking to escape to Europe, the United States of America or some other developed societies. NEPAD is the appreciation of the fact that undue 'economism' has failed to deliver in Africa for over 40 years.

The success that is called Europe, over the years and today, is not so much due to the superior quality of its economic theories over that of other people, but Europe-in-problem have always discussed and listen to her philosophers and sages – Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Voltaire, Karl Marx, Adam Smith, Jacque Maritain, Bertrand Russell, etc. If Africa were Europe in poverty, war, disease and misery, the question Europe will ask is, 'what will be Plato's answer to these problems if he is existing and confronted with these problems?' For example, in tackling the problem of terrorism, the USA and Europe are not relying so much on textbooks' theories and solutions. But they do so strictly when they are 'recommending' solutions for African States' problems. Africa is their 'human laboratory.' Did I hear somebody ask why African Universities are still floating courses like philosophy, history, classics, etc., that are responsible for graduates' unemployment in Africa today? What a way of denying Africa what Europe is amassing for her self?

Notes

¹ Daniel A. Omoweh, "The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD): A preliminary evaluative analysis." *Nigerian Forum: The Nigerian Institute of International Affairs* (NIIA), July/August, vol. 23, nos. 7-8, 2002, p. 258.

² Bukar Bukarambe, "Historical overview of Africa's development efforts: problems and prospects of NEPAD." *Nigerian Forum*, *ibid*, p. 191. Emphasis mine.

³ Adebayo O. Olukoshi, "Governing the African Development Process: the Challenges of the New Partnership for Africa's Development." NIIA Lecture Series No. 82, August 22, 2004. This is one of the most honest appraisals of NEPAD. Professor Olukoshi debunked most all the claims made about NEPAD by its promoters, and went on to proffer NEPAD's real challenges and prospect. We shall rely on him in our section on 'Mistruths of NEPAD.'

⁴ Bukarambe, *op cit.*, pp. 199-200.

⁵ Bukarambe, *ibid*, p. 201.

⁶ Osita Agbu, "Nigeria and the NEPAD initiative." *Nigeria Forum NIIA*, vol. 23, Nos. 7-8, July-August, 2002, p. 212.

⁷ Daniel A. Omoweh, "The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD): A preliminary evaluative analysis," *Nigerian Forum, NIIA*, vol 23, nos 7-8, July-August, 2002, p.254.

¹ Joy U. Ogwu, "Partnership for human development in Africa." *NIIA Lecture Series* No. 82, *op cit.*, p. 3.

⁹ See Adebayo Olukoshi, *op cit.*, pp. 15-21.

¹⁰ Olukoshi, *ibid*, p. 8.

¹¹ Olukoshi, *ibid*, p. 16.

¹² See also Adedeji, "The Monrovia Strategy and the Lagos Plan of Action: Five Years After." In A. Adedeji and T. Shaw, eds., *Economic Crisis in Africa: Perspectives on Development Problems and Potentials* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers)

¹³ Adejumobi, "The challenges of globalisation and Africa's development agenda." *Proceedings of the 7th Annual Conference on the Challenges of Globalisation to Democratic Governance in Africa: What Role for the Civil Society and other Stakeholders?* Addis Ababa: Development Policy Management Forum, December 2002, p. 100.

¹⁴ Adejumobi, *ibid.*, pp. 101-2.

¹⁵ Edward W. Blyden, "Africa and the African." In Albert G. Mosley, ed., *African Philosophy: Selected Readings*, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1995, p. 10.

¹⁶ Olukoshi, *op cit.*, pp. 21-22.

¹⁷ Mosley, *Loc cit.*, p.1.

¹⁸ Blyden, *op cit.*, p. 21.

¹⁹ Blyden, *ibid*, p. 20.

²⁰ Blyden, *ibid*, p. 22.

²¹ Blyden, *ibid*, p. 2.

²² Ogwu, 'Introduction.' NIIA Lecture Series No. 85, p. 2.

²³ Ibrahim A. Gambari, "The New Partnership for Africa's Development: Challenges and Progress in Organizing International Support." NIIA Lecture Series No. 85, 2004, p. 5.

²⁴ Gambari, *ibid*, p. 8.

²⁵ Gambari, *ibid*, pp. 9-10.

²⁶ Ashanti, Daily Graphic, November 10, 2005.

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