

How Africa Got into a Mess: Colonial Legacy, Underdevelopment, Corruption and Human Rights Violations in Africa

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Abstract: The political independence that the people of Africa attained over the last four decades was not a gift from the Western colonial powers. It was however the result of the struggles of the African people against foreign domination and exploitation. The political independence of Africa however did not yield good results for African people. The colonial powers having looted the African continent and its rich natural resources left Africa an empty shell. The independence of Africa could not lead to genuine development of the former colonies. To change the state of affairs which Frantz Fanon describes as "The wretched of the earth", has forced African people into a new form of domination, called neo-colonialism in various forms. This new form of colonial domination was defined by the All African People's Conference (AAPC) which took place in 1962 in Cairo as 'the survival of the colonial system in spite of formal recognition of political independence in emerging countries which became the victims of an indirect and subtle form of domination by political, economic, social, military or technical means' (Machyo 1996:35). It was also pointed out that this new form of foreign domination was the greatest threat to African countries and sovereignty. The reason being that the neo-colonial powers had the tendency to resort to 'economic and political intervention in order to prevent African leaders from directing their political, social and economic policies towards the exploitation of their people and their natural resources. The problems of modern Africa in the post-colonial period are a mockery for the so-called independent or liberated Africa. The conditions of the African people are worse than they were in the colonial period. However other problems of Africa were not of colonial design but African design like under-development, corruption and human rights violations. The purpose of this article is to examine the problems plaguing post-colonial Africa.

Keywords: Colonialism, Underdevelopment, Corruption, Human Rights, Violation.

INTRODUCTION

In 1885 the "Scramble for Africa" began with different European nations, namely, Portugal, Holland, Germany, Belgium, France and England, sought to carve up Africa in order as an integral parts of its empires. Europeans at the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 made decisions about which African country belong to which. Colonization became a necessary strategy for control over territories. Article 35 of the Berlin Act, signed during the conference (Uzoigwe 1990:15) stipulated that "an occupier of any coastal possession had also to demonstrate that it possessed sufficient 'authority' there to protect the existing rights, and, and as the case may be, freedom of trade and of transit under the conditions agreed upon. In the history of Africa, the period of colonial rule from 1888s and 1960s was the offensive of colonial rule. Colonialism had a profound impact on the present and future lives of African people. Colonialism as it is often pointed out, not only produced the colonised but also the colonizers (Weiskel: 1980; Comacroff and Comacroff: 1991; Thomas; 1994). The effects constitute a legacy that extends far beyond the historical time when it ended when African countries became independent in the

1950s and 1960s (Stoller: 1995. Walter Rodney (1972) details the oppressive effects of capitalism on African societies, and makes it clear that European imperial capital was nothing without Africa. Colonialism was a form of political domination, economic exploitation and subjugation of a people of a people by an alien people. There are a number of theories of colonialism that attempt to explain this phenomenon. One theory sees economic imperialism as the root cause of colonial expansion. John Hobson in his *Imperialism: a Study* (1902), held that over-production, surplus capital, and under-consumption in industrialized nations stimulated those nations to invest increasing portions of their economics resources in the regions outside their political control. According to Hobson, one the resources were invested, the industrialized nations began a policy of political expansion as to secure their investment and ensure profitable returns. While he believes that there were ancillary non-economic forces at play in imperialism, Hobson insisted that this economic motive was the taproot of the new imperialism. Vladimir L. Lenin, also borrowing from Hobson's view in his book entitled *Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1917). The problems of modern Africa in the post-colonial period are a mockery to so-called independent or liberated Africa. The conditions of the African people are worse than they were in the colonial period. Lenin tied the new imperialism to a certain stage in the development of the

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capitalist economy and society. Over-production and the formation of surplus capital by the cartel of banks and industry, he believed, stimulated a push towards new markets and investment areas lest it should become bogged down in its own excess. The push towards new markets and investment areas, he believed led to the advanced stage of monopoly capitalism, which "is connected with the intensification of the partition of the world. In other words, interests pursued in exporting capital, Lenin maintained, generated an impetus to the conquest of colonies, where it is easier to employ monopoly methods to exploit the market, to eliminate competition and ensure supplies, that is raw material. Lenin's views on monopoly capitalism as the cause of the new imperialism have been criticised by scholars who argue that the imperial powers invested more capital outside their colonies in such places like the United States, South Africa, and Canada. However, it is true that even though that might be the case, labour was cheaper in the colonies and the rate of returns on investments there was corresponding higher. There no considerations for equity and ethics in the colonial period and the colonialists were intolerant of native activities that threatened their profit objectives. Hence they relentlessly crushed native activities and rebellion or civil disobedience. Colonialism was an extractive, generally profitable operation, the objective was to maximise revenue at all costs.

According to Curtin *et al.* (1988), the "Belgian Congo was the only colony that paid off to the European government "(p.477). Even then, the profit was realised only by resorting to terrorists and brutal methods. In order to recoup his investments in Congo Independent State, King Leopold turned half of the colony into concessionary companies, which with a small amount of capital, undertook to guarantee the commercial profitability and the mineral exploitation of these areas. The companies brutally forced inhabitants to collect rubber. An Englishman observed in 1884 that: "Everywhere rubber and the murder, slavery in the worst form. The missionaries are so completely at the mercy of the state that they dare not report these barbarous doings" (cited in Baurer 1934:187). European thoughts also of Social Darwinism promoted slavery and colonialism in Africa. European philosophy which claimed to be rational and scientific was racially biased in its conception of the African people. David Hume and Immanuel Kant had a perception that African people by virtue of their dark complexion were even precluded from the realm of reason and

civilization. David Hume said about African people: "I am apt to suspect the Negroes, and in general all the other species of men (for there are four or five different kinds) to be naturally inferior to whites. There never was a civilized nation of any complexion than white." (cf. RH Popkin, "Hume's Racism", *The Philosophical Forum* Vol. 9, no's 2 - 3, Winter-Spring 1977-1978, p 213).

In his book entitled the "*Philosophy of History*", Friedrich Hegel described an African as beyond the pale of humanity proper. Hegel categorically affirmed that Africa "is no historical part of the world; it has no movement or development to exhibit. Historical movements in it - that is in its northern part - belong to the Asiatic or European world" (Hegel 1956:99). As Lucius Outlaw pointed out: This orientation to Africa so poignantly expressed by Hegel was widely shared by many of its earliest European visitors (explorers, missionaries, seekers after wealth and fame, colonizers, etc.), whose travelogues and "reports" served to validate the worst characterization as the European invention of Africa and Africans out of the racism and ethnocentrism injecting Europe's project in its encounter with Africa as a different and black other" (Hegel 1956:99).

European renaissance therefore was not simply about intellectual freedom, but freedom to destroy and plunder the world. African people have been victims of European intellectualism which never respected them as people. Slavery of African people was also a product of European intellectualism as expressed by Hegel: "Africa proper, as far as history goes back, has remained for all purposes of connection with the rest of the world, shut up. It is the gold-land compressed within itself - the land of childhood, which, lying beyond the days of self-conscious history, is enveloped in the dark mantle of night. The peculiarly African character is difficult to comprehend, for the very reason that in reference to it we must give up the principle that accompanies all our ideas - the category of universality. In Negro life the characteristic point is the fact that consciousness has not yet reached the realisation of any substantial objective existence - as for example, God or Law, in which the interest of man's volition is involved, and in which he realises his own being. Another characteristic fact in reference to the Negro is slavery. Negroes are enslaved by Europeans and sold to America. Bad as this may be, their lot in their own land is worse, since there slavery quite as absolute exists, for it is the essential principle of slavery that man has not yet attained self-consciousness of his

freedom, and consequently sinks down to a mere Thing - an object of no value. Among Negroes moral sentiments are weak or more strictly, non-existent" (Hegel 1956: 92). According to Hegel Africans lack the concept of the universality, they are incapable of thought. Africans cannot distinguish between themselves as unique individuals and a universal objective existence, they have no knowledge of God and law (Hegel 1956:93).

Theories like Social Darwinism and Christian missionaries also have been suggested as key to understanding new imperialism. Beliefs and the mind set of Europeans, several of whom espoused a belief in the primacy of the "white race" found expression and support in the nineteenth century Social Darwinism and Evangelical Christianity. Charles Darwin's study, *On the Origins of Species by Means of Natural Selection or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (1859) seemed to provide scientific documentation for the belief in the primacy of the European race. It was therefore used to justify the conquest and colonization of those who were believed to be "backward races" by the "master races". Christianity wittingly or unwittingly is believed to have helped to promote new imperialism. The Christian mission in Africa provoked the following parody in a Gold Coast newspaper:

Onward Christian Soldier unto heathen lands,

Prayer books in pockets, rifles in your hands,

Take the happy tidings where trade can be done,

Spread the peaceful gospel with the Gatling guns (cited in Boahen and Webster 1970:225).

The colonizers therefore proclaimed themselves their mission as a "civilizing mission" to carry civilization, including Christianity, education, and development to the colonized people. Colonizers accorded no respect and legitimacy to the values, and social institutions of the African people. Instead the cultures of the African people were denigrated as inferior and were made for them to assimilate African people into the culture of the colonizer. Rodney also analyses the interrelationship between Christianity, colonial education, and administrative systems. Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*

analyses the colonial relations of production -- and the economic and political contradictions that produced Africa's underdevelopment and continue to plague Africa today. Rodney, who describes colonialism as a "one-armed bandit," claims that colonialism, more than anything else, underdeveloped Africa. According to him, colonialism laid the roots of neo-colonialism in Africa by creating Africa's economic dependency on the international capitalist system. The introduction of capitalist relations of production and distribution, -- for instance, the International Trade Commodity (ITC) exchange systems and values -- created such dependency Rodney (1976) asserts that "previous African development was blunted, halved and turned back" by colonialism without offering anything of compensatory value. And while these efforts practices were effected, the primary objective was economic, and these practices became political tools to affect them.

THE CONDITIONS IN AFRICA AFTER COLONIALISM

As Nyerere observed in his Preface to a book by African scholars significantly sub-titled, 'Beyond Dispossession and Dependence': Africa's history is not only one of slavery, exploitation and colonialism' it is also a story of struggle against these evils, and of battles won after many setbacks and much suffering.

(Adedeji ed. 1993: xv). The main struggle in Africa after independence was first and foremost an assertion of the humanness of the African people after centuries of domination and humiliation of the slave trade and colonialism. According to Tom Mboya, the struggle for independence was the 'rediscovery of Africa by Africans' while Amilcar Cabral described it as the 're-Africanisation of minds' or 'rebecoming Africans'. National development became the passion of politicians and the 'great expectation' of the people. In the vision of the more articulate nationalist leaders like Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, the independent state had a double task, that of building the nation and developing the economy. The state in Africa, Nyerere argued, preceded the nation, rather than the other way round. Thus the national project was from the start, top-down, and statist. The colonial economy and society were anything but national. In the scramble for Africa, the colonial powers had divided the continent into mini-countries where boundaries cut through cultural, ethnic and economic affinities. This was made worse by the policy of divide and rule, leaving behind uneven development in an extreme form. Some regions were

more developed than others. The colonial economy was typically disarticulated, almost tailor-made, for exploitation by colonial capital, linked to the metropolitan trade and capital circuits. Extractive industries like mining predominated. Plantation agriculture existed side by side with subsistence peasant cultivation, all concentrating on one or a couple of crops for export according to the needs of the metropolitan economy.

Different colonial powers left behind different forms and traditions of public administration, culture, cuisine, dance and education, elementary as it was, all concentrated in towns. The urban and the rural were literally two countries within one; one alien, modern, a metropolitan transplant barred to the native – while the other stagnating and frozen in the so-called tradition or custom. But neither the modern nor the traditional were organically so. Both were colonial constructs. Africa as opposed to other continents has suffered much destruction of its social fabric through foreign imperial domination. Africa faced two conditions after independence. Firstly, to underline the fact that the nationalist project faced a formidable task on the morrow of independence. Secondly, to highlight an even more formidable reality, which was that the state that was supposed to carry out the twin tasks of nation-building and economic development was itself a colonial heritage. The colonial state was a despotic state, a metropolitan police and military outpost, in which powers were concentrated and centralized and where law was an unmediated instrument of force and where administrative fiat was more a rule, than the rule of law. The nationalist vision thus called for a revolutionary transformation not only of the economy and society but also the state. A few nationalist visionaries attempted, but none succeeded.

The post-independence international context was no more propitious than the colonial. Independence found Africa in the midst of Cold War and the rising imperial power, the United States, for whom any assertion of national self-determination was “communism”, to be hounded and destroyed, by force if necessary, by manipulation and deception, if possible. The early story of the gruesome assassination of Patrice Lumumba and the overthrow of Kwame Nkrumah, and the continuing story of military coups, assassinations, and resistance to national liberation wars and civil strife in Africa, in most of which imperialism had a hand, bear testimony to what the former colonial powers and the rising imperial power could do to retain their collective global hegemony.

These were then the initial conditions, so to speak, within which African nationalists had to realize their dream of nation-building and economic development and to answer their people's ‘great expectations’. Invariably, the agency of change was the state since there was virtually no social class which could shoulder the task of national development.

POLITICAL CONFLICTS IN AFRICA

One of the most serious problems facing Africa in the post-colonial period is the series of political conflicts which have plagued the continent since independence. Some of the conflicts have colonial origins as are evidenced by the involvement of ex-colonies. Ex-colonies though not directly involved in conflict have been implicated of supporting either side of the conflict. These political conflicts have contributed largely to Africa's underdevelopment. According to Prah: “Africa has experienced innumerable coups or palace revolutions since the onset of the independence era. It started with the Zanzibar revolution of 1964 which overthrew the Sultanate and the Arab oligarchy. The Nigerian coup of 1965 was quickly followed by the Ghanaian coup which overthrew the Nkrumah regime. Over the years Africa has seen as many coups as Latin America. But the coups represent intra-elite changing of the guards. None of the coups that have taken place in Africa can in any serious sense be said to be emancipatory as far as the broader sections of the population are concerned. The first Nigerian coup led directly to the commencement of the civil war. The civil wars have been testing the political assumptions and foundations of the colonial state (Prah 1999:51).

This situation of permanent conflict has turned African leaders' attention from developmental issues. A lot of time and resources have been lost in the process. This level of political instability and unpredictability on the continent is also a major cause of low investment as foreign and local investors continue to regard Africa as a risk. The leadership that emerged after independence ‘was characterized by pretentious, megalomaniacal venality’ (Ayittey 1992:101). It embraced foreign revolutionary ideas, and misperceived the process of development. Democracy, freedom for which African leaders fought was sacrificed. As Anyomi, wrote: “In almost three decades of independence, Africa can hardly boast of an instance where the incumbent government or leader has been removed peacefully via the ballot box. Hence the “bullet” rather than the “ballot” has become the only effective means of removing many an inept and

undesirable ruler. But as we march towards the 21st century, Africa's youths are saying enough is enough. The old rulers should give way to the more dynamic and progressive younger men. After all the throne is not the personal property of any ruler "(c.f Ayittey 1992:101). The African leadership dismantled little of the oppressive colonial administrative machinery. In fact what they did was to strengthen and centralize much of it. They used the same instruments of coercion and tyranny the colonialists had widely used to suppress the aspirations of African nationalism. In 1990, in Zambia, for instance, twenty six years after independence, a state of emergency was still in effect, the very measure the colonialists used to suppress any resistance from the Africans. In addition to the problems of post-colonial Africa brought about by the African leadership, the military exacerbated the situation. The military personnel who booted out the corrupt politicians or government considered it their professional duty to inject discipline into their government and administration. However they also resorted to brutal undemocratic tactics. They turned their guns on the very same people they were supposed to protect. To address these problems of conflict in Africa a new conflict resolution management system must be created to deal effectively with conflicts and preventing others from existing. African Renaissance at political level must enable Africans to resolve their own problems. Developing a political culture which is viable and stable in Africa still remains a serious challenge. Democracy remains the only political framework within which African leadership can create a tolerant and viable political culture. The fear however of some African leaders, of being rejected at the polls and the fact that many African countries do not fulfil all the necessary conditions for free and fair elections remains a recipe for political conflicts in Africa. Though most of the African problems have colonial origins others are her own creation.

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN THE POST-COLONIAL AFRICA

Although most African countries have human rights bills in the constitution and have signed the United Nations' Declaration of Human Rights as well as the African Charter of Human Rights drawn up by the OAU, respect for human life and property is non-existent. The repression is severe in Africa, not just under military regimes but also civilian regimes. Military brutality, vandalism, arbitrary rule, constant harassment and arrests of civilians are the constant norms in Africa. In Liberia, the military regime of the late Samuel Doe was

known for barbarism, often including dismemberment, the mutilation of bodies and cannibalism. (Ayittey 1992:141). In Nigeria, the military regime allowed thousands of prisoners to die of scabies and other diseases. Even the food meant for prisoners was often deviated for private use by the prison officials (Ayittey, 1992:143). Hundred also died in prisons in Lagos. In August 1988 the Zaïrian military, now called the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) killed several peasants and merchants in the Eastern Zaire. There were also reports of school girls being raped by the soldiers. The African leadership dismantled little of the oppressive colonial administrative machinery. In fact what they did was to strengthen and centralize much of it. They used the same instruments of coercion and tyranny the colonialists had widely used to suppress the aspirations of African nationalism. In 1990, in Zambia, for instance, twenty six years after independence, a state of emergency was still in effect, the very measure the colonialists used to suppress any resistance from the Africans. In addition to the problems of post-colonial Africa brought about by the African leadership, the military exacerbated the situation. The military personnel who booted out the corrupt politicians or government considered it their professional duty to inject discipline into their government and administration. However they also resorted to brutal undemocratic tactics. They turned their guns on the very same people they were supposed to protect. To address these problems of conflict in Africa a new conflict resolution management system must be created to deal effectively with conflicts and preventing others from existing. African Renaissance at political level must enable Africans to resolve their own problems. Developing a political culture which is viable and stable in Africa still remains a serious challenge. Democracy remains the only political framework within which African leadership can create a tolerant and viable political culture. The fear however of some African leaders, of being rejected at the polls and the fact that many African countries do not fulfil all the necessary conditions for free and fair elections remains a recipe for political conflicts in Africa. Though most of the African problems have colonial origins others are her own creation.

Many horrific things have happened in Ethiopia, Somalia, Ruanda, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Swaziland and many other African countries. Even in the independent Africa, there are still political prisoners, political exiles, political assassinations all characteristic of the colonial rule. Brutality in Africa has been carried

out in the name of protecting the freedom achieved, anti-colonialism and national unity. African leaders have oppressed their people worse than the colonialists as Ayittey wrote: The African story is indeed a tragedy of one betrayal after another. When black Africa asked for its freedom and independence from white colonial rule, it did not ask black neo-colonialists and military despots to impose another alien rule on Africa that would destroy its indigenous institutions and slaughter its people. Nor did it ask "Swiss-bank socialists" to plunder its treasuries. Africa's experience proves unequivocally that military solutions to political and economic problems do not work. In fact, they exacerbate the problems. More Africans are now awakening to the ineffectuality of military solutions (Ayittey 1992:154). In addition to human rights, the most crucial of all rights is freedom of expression. In Africa since independence there has been a systematic strangulation of the right to freedom of expression. African leaders since independence took over newspapers on grounds that they should advance their policies. Thus they curtailed freedom of expression or disallowed a descending voice. Any newspaper or individual who expressed a different opinion was branded a foe of government and jailed or killed. The press which is supposed to be the watchdog of any civil society has not been tolerated in Africa.

CORRUPTION IN AFRICA

Any study of Africa's post-colonial problems will be incomplete without any reference to corruption. In as much as there was exploitation in the colonial period, the real exploiters of post-colonial Africa are the African leaders themselves. It is a well-known fact in Africa that African leaders have been exhorting commissions on foreign loan-contracts and deposit them in overseas banks. The very people who are supposed to defend and protect the poor people's interests have been responsible for the institutionalized looting of Africa. Corruption has been institutionalized in Africa with some leaders being richer than their countries. Corruption has been prevalent in many African countries, Ivory Coast, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Ghana, Mali, Libya, and Sierra Leone. Corruption is not a unique vice to Africa. There is corruption in one way or another in all Western countries. However corruption in Africa had detrimental effects on economic development. Ayittey explains: "It decreases the efficiency of the civil service and its ability to formulate and implement government development policies, and it robs the country of vast sums of foreign exchange needed for investment. Second, the seriousness of

corruption is relative. Developed countries can afford the embezzlement of a sum that would spell economic disaster for a developing country. Third, it is relatively easy for corruption to get out of control and become self-reinforcing because the administrative, political, and constitutional institutions of a developing country may possess insufficient checks to deal with the problem effectively. Witness the African political system whereby a president can confer upon himself such titles as "president-for-life", can manipulate the constitution, and can embezzle millions of dollars for deposit in Swiss bank accounts, with impunity. Fourth, a corrupt government loses its legitimacy and its subjects' respect, making it difficult to elicit the sacrifices, initiatives and enterprise necessary for development "(Ayittey 1992:262f). Corrupt governments in Africa have not been able to manage the economy efficiently. Even though African countries have obtained in the past a lot of foreign aid, corruption has rendered such aid useless. An attempt therefore must be made to recover African monies banked in foreign countries by corrupt African leaders.

AFRICAN LEADERSHIP MUST CHART ECONOMIC DIRECTION IN AFRICA

It is clear that political independence did not bear any fruit for African people due to poor economies or lack of economic power. Babu sums up obstacles that blocked the way to Africa's economic prosperity:

- dependence on the developed world to help our development;
- excessive use of our socially necessary labour time in the production of useless goods for export, instead of producing useful goods for our own human and development needs;
- continued deterioration of commodity prices which weakens our capacity for capital formation.
- unproductive use of borrowed money (and the corruption that entails) and the consequential debt-servicing at very high and unjustified rates.
- poor energy policies that make our countries heavily dependent on oil imports for our needs thus depleting our meagre foreign exchange earnings, and
- an irrational world economic order which cannot change from a position of weakness (Babu 1996:97)

African leaders must change the economic structure from its present imperialist orientation. Africa must develop an independent, self-sustaining economy from the current IMF and the World Bank destabilizing economic policies. The IMF and the World Bank's economic policies have benefitted the West by ensuring a steady flow of wealth from the poor African continent with effect of debt-servicing. Africa therefore has no choice except to find an alternative way of starting the capital accumulation process, which includes stopping such massive wealth leaving the African continent. The net outflow to the value of 200 million dollars from Africa alone to the Western world, if retained can enrich this continent. African leaders need to discard an illusion that development is only possible through foreign aid. Africa has capacity to accumulate wealth and capital from within her shores. The only problem that retard such accumulation is the hostility of the IMF and World Bank to those operating outside their debt schemes. It is true that we live in the global and interdependent world. However it is the interdependence of the exploiter and the exploited, whereby only one section benefit. African participation in the global economy has not been on the precondition of her benefit and prosperity but that of the imperialists. This economic imperialism in Africa must be stopped. M Babu said: "We made a fatal mistake right at independence. We had a choice then between siding with the merging world socialist movement and (mercifully), being cut off from the capitalist 'world economy', or remain junior partners in an economy dominated by the US and the ex-colonies powers from whom we had just emerged from colonialism. In Asia, only China, North Korea, Laos and Vietnam chose to join the world socialist movement which sought to bring about a completely new world order, a socialist world. In Africa none went that way, although we invented various forms of 'socialisms' (African socialism in Tanzania, 'worker' or 'people' republic in Guinea, Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique, Somalia etc.) to fool the masses while we were putting them more firmly under the grip of Western domination." (Babu 1996:116).

Modern economic order to which Africa is a slave was designed to wage war against socialism and to provide alternative to socialism especially in poor countries. Providing International military stabilisation was not the only objective of the IMF and World Bank but also to strengthen the Western grip on the world economy. African countries became the members of those institutions after independence. Three decades after independence, Africa as AM Babu asserts has "been demoted from the status of independent and

honourable members of these institutions to that of their 'obedient' servants" (Babu 1996:117). It is disappointing that African leadership is still insisting on these systems even though they never worked for Africa. Africa is the richest continent in natural resources, which could have long propelled the continent to the level of an economic colossus. The end of colonialism in Africa it seems left Africa without a significant pool of managers, and administrators. There was only an over-supply of politicians, who immediately assumed positions for which they were unsuited. Instead of building on the economic foundations laid down by the colonialists and adjusting them to suit the needs of their people, they depleted whatever they found in their treasuries by overspending on military equipment and other useless projects. The ordinary African people did not benefit from foreign borrowing. The loans of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank could not produce modern infrastructure such as housing, schools or hospitals. Those in power, their relatives, and cronies were the sole beneficiaries of the resources meant to benefit the downtrodden. Therefore Africa was not just the victim of circumstances beyond their control but also self-inflicted corruption and greed of its leadership. Since independence Africa has suffered from lack of honesty, committed and responsible leadership. Those in power have always served their own interest instead of the interest of the people. Coups, one-party states, life presidencies and centralization of power must all be understood against this background. It is in such atmosphere that plundering the economy of a country occurs, without any sense of shame. For Africa therefore to prosper from present position corrupt and greedy leadership will have to be discarded. Only competent leadership is vital for successful economic reform. African leaders cannot improve the conditions of their people without understanding how their economies are run. When an economic crisis emerges in Africa, the African leadership usually fail to acknowledge that the problem is both internal and external. Rather, they insist that the causes are neo-colonial and imperialist conspiracies. To succeed in repairing Africa's economy the African leaders will require not only economic competence, but capacity to change when things are obviously wrong and not working.

NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA (NEPAD) AND ITS CHALLENGES

The new partnership was born on October 23, 2001, in Abuja, Nigeria. The implementation Committee of Heads of state, chaired by president Obasanjo of

Nigeria, adopted the revised NEPAD document (October 2001 edition) as the original text “embodying the philosophy, priorities and implementation modalities of the initiative (Kanbur: 2002). The Name of the initiative, hitherto called the New African Initiative (NAI) was changed to NEPAD. NEPAD is the new initiative and official commitment by the African Heads of government and friends of Africa in the international community to redress the marginalization of Africa in the globalization process and to ensure political stability and economic prosperity of the continent. The programme which is the initiative of African leaders, has the support of world leaders, particularly the G-8 nations, who are now committed in principle to support the primary aims of NEPAD, which are:

- to eradicate poverty; and,
- to place African countries individually and collectively, on the path of sustainable growth and development.

July 2002, the Durban AU summit supplemented NEPAD with a Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance. According to the Declaration, states participating in NEPAD ‘believe in just, honest, transparent, accountable and participatory government and probity in public life’. Accordingly, they ‘undertake to work with renewed determination to enforce’, among other things, the rule of law; the equality of all citizens before the law; individual and collective freedoms; the right to participate in free, credible and democratic political processes; and adherence to the separation of powers, including protection for the independence of the judiciary and the effectiveness of parliaments.

NEPAD assumes a development consensus on Africa in which Africa and the international community will put past differences behind them with regard to the kind of development policies Africa really needs and, agree on common development policies and approaches. The euphoria and excitement that greeted the birth of the NEPAD jointly midwived by Presidents Thabo Mbeki of South Africa and Nigeria’s Olusegun Obasanjo gave the impression that Africa now has discovered the magic wand with which to transcend her problems. Major capitals in Africa, including the unseen hands in London, Paris and Washington, cheered ceaselessly, applauding the ingenuity and vision of the initiators of NEPAD. This is particularly so in that NEPAD is expected to ultimately reverse the painful decline in the economic fortunes of the continent given

the wholesale acceptance of the body by the generality of African states and their governments as evidenced during its inaugurating. With obvious lofty and applaudable objectives, NEPAD’s envisaged success is anchored on the enabling sign post of the utilization of regional and sub-regional approach to development. The new body is aware of African potentials but took greater care in recognising the role of outsiders to the survival of Africa. To this extent, it carefully lifted neo-liberal development blue prints as panacea to the African development crisis (Cometh, 2002).

NEPAD, touted as autonomous and Africa-driven, has been hailed as the appropriate path to the realization of long-term development but it is also an open admission of the failure IMF/world bank development initiatives with its neo-liberal agenda in Africa (Cometh, 2002). It is also touted as a fresh impetus to the attainment of sustainable development and capacity to reverse the trend of abject poverty and the total pauperization of the citizenry.

NEPAD’s self-imposed and self-identified conditionalities and pre-requisites carries a verifiable semblance of conditionalities often placed on debtor states by western donors. Although NEPAD’s objectives appear applaudable given its theoretical basis and framework, it strikes as worrisome the seeming coincidence of the underlying principles of NEPAD and the widely known doctrines of neo-liberalisation associated with western financial institutions and their governments. (Cometh, *Ibid*). The failure of neo-liberalism as contained in the World Bank/IMF programmes in Africa and other victim states elsewhere painfully brings forth questions relating to the possibility of attaining the lofty objectives of NEPAD for sustainable local level governance. This is because these policies have failed severally to lift Africa and other victim regions from the quagmire of poverty. Thus, it makes it doubtful whether any initiative built on the same framework would succeed. It is necessary to put into NEPAD perspective that apart from the fact that it is not the first initiative created in this direction, cannot, also be the first, aimed at tackling the problems facing Africa. Besides, it cannot be seen to be African in nature right from its genesis, conception, content and execution as claimed by its architects. The initiative derives its impetus from outside Africa and smacks of falsehood to foist originality on this new-colonial contraption. Africa-driven development initiatives were all killed by the same forces that are today encouraging the NEPAD scheme (Akindele, Gidado and Olaopa: 2001).

The 1980 Lagos-Plan of Action (LPA) scripted by African Heads of state advocated collective self-reliance and placed emphasis on the mobilization of internal resources to promote development. There was also the Africa's priority programme for Economic Recovery (APER) established between 1986-1990 as well as autonomous African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programme for Scio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP) both, established by African Heads of State. The central theme of these African initiatives were killed by the World Bank engineering "Berg Report" which contradicted every prescription for genuine development as contained in LPA (Cometh, 2002). Whereas the LPA advocated collective self-reliance, the "Berg Report" which is today the NEPAD initiative "emphasized monetarist responses and placed before African economies and opens them up to foreign domination and exploitation" (Ibid). To this extent, NEPAD, like the "Berg Report" is less African than the African initiatives and may likely not make any difference to the African condition.

The political environment of African countries also poses another challenge on their ability to develop and the use of the same as a flimsy excuse by the western countries who are interested in the initiative. Africa is still being seen as a high-risk environment by the international financial market (Adeniyi: 2002) consequently, development and financial resources inflow is largely influenced by the implementation of IMF and World Bank Moderated economic programmes. Unfortunately, however, African governments are fast losing faith in the IMF and World Bank programmes, because despite the Structural Adjustment Programmes moderated by these institutions over the past two decades, Africa has not received any development dividend in terms of sustainable growth, general price level moderation, foreign investment inflow, capital accumulation and improved standard of living generally.

The reality is that in the globalised private sector-led world economy where aids are disappearing for foreign direct investment, poor African nations are not attractive destinations of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) (Ibid). Furthermore, foreign private investment is not usually directed to financing developmental and poverty alleviation programmes of infrastructure, health care, education, water supply etc. which are beneficial to the people at the local level, they are rather channelled to sectors with short payback and high returns such as oil and gas, energy, telecommunication

etc. and to such countries richly endowed with opportunities in these sectors. The implication of the above is that the banking system in Africa will not have a capacity to finance large development and economic projects and whose physical and fiduciary impact will be felt across the whole local level of the African continent. This is so in that sub-regional financial integration has not been able to achieve the desired impact and amounts to economic waste for Africa because of the duplication of efforts and resources at solving Africa's common problems at various sub-regional levels. Thus, the financial services sector in Africa as presently constituted cannot fully support the objectives of NEPAD due majorly to its fragmentation, shallowness and the lack of market infrastructure (Cometh: 2002)

CONCLUSION

It must be stated categorically that the West is not responsible for assisting Africans to clean up their mess. Africans must clean their own mess. It is the West that has contributed to Africa's economic disaster. Therefore the best thing that the West can do is to leave Africa alone. At the moment Africa is not ruled by Africans but by the West through its international bodies and multinational cooperations. Though the West has always championed itself as a model of democracy in Africa, the democracy it pursued was a hindrance to Africa's development. The West never understood the complexities and nuances of African problems. America has been the worst with the tendency to prescribe. As Ayittey argues: "It would be helpful if Westerners would listen to what Africans themselves have to say about their own problems. But the arrogant "we-know-best" attitude of some Westerners stands in the way. Even when the West chooses to act, it is hobbled by colonial, racist, and imperialist baggage that renders its help suspect and ineffective. It is annoying when Westerners cannot denounce African dictators for reasons of "racial sensitivity" but then stand in the way of true African democrats who want to get at these hideous tyrants." (Ayittey 1992:348).

Foreign aid in Africa also seems not to be working for Africa. Foreign aid has become a Western instrument of subjugation with a baggage of conditions fitting Western interest. It has become a means to control the local affairs of Africa with threats of withdrawal of such aid where such control is resisted. In fact the West has used foreign aid, diplomatic channels and economic leverages to twist the arms of

poor African countries. Hence the West has been responsible in Africa not just for economic disaster but also for maintenance of dictatorships in Africa for its own interests. Its economic interest in Africa has prevented it from condemning black tyranny. In view of Western hindrance of progress in Africa, it would be best if Africans make their own case for reform. Internally generated reform usually has a better chance of lasting success. Essentially it is up to Africans to decide which political and economic systems are most workable for Africa. As Stuart Fowler asserts: "The simple reality is that there are no philanthropists in the world of international politics and economic relations. There are only hard-headed political realists who, at best, may do some good for others provided it also serves their own interests." (Fowler 1992:122). Any Western involvement is always portrayed solely in terms of humanitarian aid selflessly given to help the victims of poverty and barbarity in Africa. This is the picture that is good for Western ego, but in reality hides the real intentions of Western involvement. It also needs to be remembered that neither the IMF nor the World Bank exists for economic justice. They were designed to maintain a stable environment for international economic order that is dominated by the industrialised nations of the West. Even ethical considerations played some part but in reality decisions will always give priority to the interests of the dominant nations that control these institutions.

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