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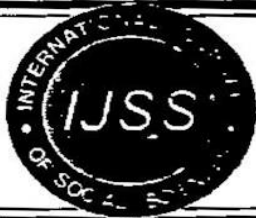
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The Workability of the New Partnership for Africa's Development as a Strategy for the Emancipation of Nigeria

Ibrahim Otu King

*African Centre for Strategic Research and Training,
National Defence College
Abuja, Nigeria*

e-mail: otuking2007@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT - Building on the existing theoretical formulation of political economy scholars which states that every seemingly economic milieu is intertwined with political considerations and variables, this paper proceeds to do the following. The thesis of this paper is that the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is not a better cum alternative development strategy for Africa, Nigeria in particular. This averment is predicated upon the lack of the political will to carry out drastic or radical economic policies, lack of state autonomy and lack of political capacity amongst others. An analysis of a wide spectrum of literature and the situation on ground indicates that NEPAD is intrinsically bound to fail. The main conclusion *inter alia* is that African countries should take certain mediatory measures with a view to making the objectives of NEPAD realizable.

Key words: Emancipation, development, partnership, strategy, Africa

INTRODUCTION

Suffice it to say that the African continent is in a dire economic situation, as a result of a myriad of variables. The economic problems of Africa has defied a number of policies which were geared towards its amelioration. Consequently, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) recently appeared in the socio political and economic lexicon of Africa as a potential panacea.

Some writers have painted a gloomy picture of the African condition which encompasses Nigeria. According to Akinrinade (2003:2) Africa is "the poorest, the most technologically backward, the most debt distressed, and the most marginalized region of the world, with 12.5% of the world's population, the region produces only 3.7% of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and accounts for only 1.5% of the global trade in goods and services, despite exporting no less than 20% of its GDP annually. In part, the low volume of business transacted in Africa is a reflection of infrastructural deficit. In virtually all parts of the continent, there is "substantial infrastructure decay" and "quantitative deficiency". In a continent where transportation systems are dominated by roads, less than 30% of surface roads are in good condition, even as ports are either under-performing or non-functioning. The telecommunications and power supply systems are grossly inefficient, as they rely on outdated and inadequate equipment. The infrastructure deficit produces major bottlenecks to the production and export business and hinders FDI flows to the continent".

According to NEPAD Document (2001:8) "In Africa, 340 million people, or half of the population, live on less than US \$1 per day. The mortality rate of children under 5 years, only 58 percent of the populations have access to safe water. The rate of illiteracy for people over 15 is 41 percent. There are only 18 main line telephones per 1000 people in Africa, compared with 146, for the world a whole and 567 for high-income countries".

Akinrinade (2003:3) added that "the economic growth rates for the decade averaged only 2.1% per annum, a figure less than the population growth rate of 2.8%-producing an actual per capita income decline of 0.2% and, more importantly, considerably less than the 7% growth required to reduce by half of the proportion of the African population in poverty by 2015, the internationally agreed target. More than 50% of the people of sub-Saharan Africa live on less than US\$1 a day"

The World Bank's assessment of Africa stated that "sub-Saharan Africa will be falling further behind the rest of the world, based on realistic projections of current policies and Africa's current depressed per capital income level, while other developing countries and high-income countries will see their average income levels triple by the year 2030. Sub-Saharan Africa's per capita income will probably be only US\$400 by the year 2030, that of the developing countries as a whole will probably reach US\$2,500. Ihonvbere (1997:289).

One could continue *ad infinitum* to show that Africa is marred by serious economic problems. The reason for this situation is not far fetched. The continent has passed through colonial subjugation and that has stifled the entire spectrum of human endeavours. Besides, colonialism and imperialism are serious problems in addition to lack of technology and skilled manpower and the control of the trading

and financial systems of the world by the big powers. All these have the potency for retarding the economic development of Africa. This situation represent a problem which needs to be addressed through research .

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

Some of the concepts which are germane to an understanding of this paper are discussed below. The concept of political economy is crucial in this regard. Mclean (1999:381) viewed it as “that branch of the art of government concerned with the systematic inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations, although it is now often used loosely to describe political aspects of economic policy making”.

The political economy approach as elucidated by Anifowose and Enemuo (1999:19) is that “the mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life, the political economy framework, thus requires the analysts to take cognizance of the mode of production which refers not only to the state of technique but to the way in which the means of production were owed and the social relations between men which resulted from their connections, with the process of production.”

And in the view of Shively (1999:88) political economy “focuses on how the state and the economy interact. A large part of this subfield involves analysis of economic policy, in which we look at how the state’s government influence the economy”. To Eboh (1991:1) “Political perspective of economic development deals with the interplay of political variables and societal structure with economic policy and outcomes. It is about the mechanics and impact of the structure of a country’s politics on macro economic policy formulation, policy reform (re-formulation), policy sustainability and overall national development. It is concerned with the determinants of economic policy that are outside of economic realm. Political economy analysis of development studies the anatomy and impact of the politics of competitive bidding by various interest groups and the mediating role of government whose objective usually is to maximize tenure”.

The interrelatedness of economics and politics was further underscored by Nnoli (2003:255) thus, the “involvement of the state in economic development underlines the fundamental link between politics and economic life. No economic problem of any magnitude is purely an economic or technical problem. Almost every important economic act undertaken in a society has, in greater or lesser measure, an inevitable impact on social and political processes. On the other hand, the very solution of many economic problems, including those connected with the prospects and goals of the country’s development, acquires an acutely political character and depends on the correlation of class forces, on the interaction or conflict of political groupings and so on”

Another concept which requires due attention here is the concept of development. To Bello-Imam (1997:4), development is “a process by which a continuous increase in a system’s efficiency produces the condition which results in general upliftment. Such upliftment could be material and quantitative while it could also be psychological and hence qualitative. The physical and psychological elements of development mutually reinforce each other to bring about the desired general upliftment which is measured by the general improvement in man’s living conditions”.

The advent and purpose of NEPAD

NEPAD is an OAU/AU mandated process which was intended to offer Africa a historic opportunity to showcase a new development strategy. It is no gainsaying that many development strategies predated NEPAD. The initiation of NEPAD is an acknowledgment of the demise of previous developmental paradigms and modules. There were some important development proposals amongst others from different sources. Three sitting Heads of government, President Bouteflika of Algeria who was the then Chairman of the OAU, President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria who doubled as the chairman of G77 and President Mbeki of South Africa who was the then chairman of the Non Aligned Movement were asked to harmonize their proposals at the July, 2000 OAU summit which took place in Lome, Togo. The Omega Plan of President Wade of Senegal also took the centre stage in 2001. It was at the July 2001 Lusaka, Zambia OAU meeting that these proposals were fused to become the New African Initiative (NAI) which was approved as an official document.

A committee of Heads of State was set up to carry out its implementation with President Obasanjo as its chairman and Presidents Wade and Mbeki as members. The committee met at Abuja, Nigeria in October, 2001 and adopted NEPAD as the new name of the initiative. The primary and long term objectives of NEPAD according to Adeniji (2004:34) are “to eradicate poverty in Africa, to place African countries both individually and collectively on a path to sustainable growth and development, ‘to halt the marginalization of Africa in the globalization process, to enhance its full and beneficial integration into the global economy and to accelerate the empowerment of women. While the principle of partnership with the rest of the world is equally vital to this process, such partnership must be based on mutual respect, dignity, shared responsibility and mutual accountability”.

The intendment for which NEPAD was initiated is best encapsulated in the NE PAD document (2001:3) thus “This 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, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable

growth and development, and at the same time to participate actively in the world economy and body politics. The programme is anchored on the determination of Africans to extricate themselves and the continent from the malaise of underdevelopment and exclusion in a globalizing world”.

As a corollary, the NEPAD document (2001:6) stated further that “The New Partnership for Africa’s Development seeks to build on and celebrate the achievement of the past, as well as reflect on the lessons learned through painful experience, so as to establish a partnership that is both credible and capable of implementation. In doing so, the challenge is for the peoples and governments of Africa to understand that development is a process of empowerment and self-reliance. Accordingly, Africans must not be wards of benevolent guardians, rather they must own sustainable upliftment”

The objectives of NEPAD are as follows:

- a. To eradicate poverty;
- b. To place African countries both individually and collectively, on a path of suitable development.
- c. To halt the marginalisation of Africa in the globalisation process and enhance its formal integration into the global economy;
- d. To accelerate the empowerment of women.

The Principles of NEPAD as stated in a NEPAD leaflet (2007) are:

- a. Good governance as a basic requirement for peace security and sustainable political and economic development.
- b. African ownership and leadership, as well as broad and deep participation by all sectors.
- c. Anchoring the development of Africa on its resources and resourcefulness of its people.
- d. Partnership between and amongst African peoples;
- e. Acceleration of regional and continental integration;
- f. Building the competitiveness of African countries and the continent;
- g. Forging a new international partnership that changes the unequal relationship between the development world; and
- h. Ensuring that all partnerships with NEPAD are linked to the Millennium Development Goals and agreed development goals and targets.

NEPAD PROGRAMME

The NEPAD Programme or Action is a holistic, comprehensive and integrated sustainable initiative for the revival of Africa, guided by the aforementioned objectives, principle focus.

The priorities of NEPAD are:

Establishing the conditions for sustainable development by ensuring:

- a. peace and security;
- b. Democracy and good political, economic and corporate governance;
- c. Regional co-operation and integration;
- d. Capacity building

Policy reforms and increased investment in the following priority sectors

- a. Agriculture;
- b. Human development with a focus on health, education science and technical development
- c. Building and improving infrastructure including information and communication technology, energy, transport, water and sanitation;
- d. Promoting diversification of production and exports, particularly with respect to manufacturing, mining, mineral beneficiation and tourism.
- e. Accelerating intra-African trade and improving access to markets of developed countries.
- f. The environment.

Mobilizing Resources by:

- a. Increasing domestic savings and investments;
- b. Improving management of public revenue and expenditure;
- c. Improving Africa's share in global trade;
- d. Attracting foreign direct investment; and
- e. Increasing capital flows through further debt reduction and increase ODA flows (<http://www.nepad.org/2005files>)

AN ANALYSIS OF THE WORKABILITY OF NEPAD

The conception and implementation of NEPAD is no doubt a laudable step. Be that as it may, NEPAD is fraught with some questions and pitfalls. Some of the potential hindrances to its workability are analyzed below. This is with a view to bringing vividly to fore the thesis of the paper that NEPAD does not represent a breakthrough as a development strategy.

(i) The nature of the initiative

Enlightenment about the initiative has been very inadequate. Civil society organizations which are more in touch with the grassroots are being sidelined by NEPAD. It is being perceived as a neo-liberal initiative at its best. This averment is anchored on a plinth of NEPAD being modelled after Bretton Woods institutions with their patently unequal treaty

provisions. NEPAD is not afrocentric in its conception and contents and that presents a problem for its workability.

(ii) Lack of state autonomy

Mcfaul (1995:215) defined state autonomy as the “state’s ability to define independent preferences”. Polidano (2001:524) referred to it as “the ability of states to act independently of the wishes of non state actors”. Non state actors include but are not limited to societal interests groups which are partisan, sectional and particularistic. They may be ethnic, religious or ideological in nature. It is difficult for Nigeria to engage in the kind of partnership which NE PAD purports because it is still a weak state. Some authors, (Omeje, 2004, Ake, 1986, Ukiwo, 2003 and Onyeoziri, 2002) have argued that Nigeria lacks autonomy due to a combination of domestic and external forces at play.

(iii) Lack of extractive capability

Nigeria is indebted to both domestic and foreign concerns. It is deficient in key economic development indices. The performance of numerous obligations to the people is grossly inadequate. The ability of the Nigerian state to raise revenue is also questionable. It is being argued by some scholars that since Nigeria lacks the necessary.....” Capacity to raise revenue” (Cummings & Norgard, 2004:692) consequently lacks the capacity to enter into a partnership such as NEPAD. In a nutshell, it is doubtful if NEPAD can achieve its objectives given the lack of extractive capability of the Nigerian state.

(iv) Lack of technological capability

Onyeoziri (2005:6) making references to Cummings and Norgard (2004:688) stated that technical capacity could be described as “.....the intellectual and organizational resources owned by a state such as internal or external expertise or experience that may be brought to bear on policy making process so as to design coherent, viable and politically feasible policies”. The argument that NEPAD may only generate negative outcomes or largely be hindered is best buttressed by Onyeoziri’s (2005:6) paraphrase of Mkadawire (2001:294) that “African countries cannot replicate the positive role the state played in the Asian development experience... because they lack the necessary technical and analytical capacity”

(v) Lack of administrative capability

Onyeoziri (2005:6) citing Grindle (1996) defined administrative capacity as the “ability of states to deliver goods and services such as public health, education, provide physical infrastructure and carry out normal administrative functions of government. Effective service delivery is a

key component of administrative capacity which in turn will be the product of the quality of state institutions- their efficiency, the robustness of their bureaucracy, and the absence in them of corruption and red tapism (Englebert, 2002:26)". The kernel of the analysis here is that a state which is deficient in administrative capacity is likely to be unable to enter into a partnership of the magnitude of NEPAD.

(vi) Lack of control over the rules governing the global economy

It is no gainsaying that the rules governing the global economy are determined by the capitalist cum imperialist powers. These rules operate regardless of the desires of the less developed countries to which Nigeria belongs. In sum, the paper submits that NEPAD is subject to the whims and caprices of the highly advanced countries which determine the rules of the game of international economic relations.

(vii) The debt crises

Most African countries are highly indebted to the world powers and some lending institutions. Nigeria recently exited partially from the debt crises by settling the Paris Club with 18 billion U.S. dollars in 2006. The debt overhang is so burdensome that it is capable of turning economic programmes such as NEPAD meaningless and unworkable. These debt crises do not provide the necessary enabling environment for NEPAD to work. The debt problem is therefore a definitive clog in the wheels of progress of NEPAD

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Drawing from previous works on political economy which showed the linkage between economics and politics, it was argued that NEPAD may be unworkable due to a multitude of political and other problems. Specifically, it was shown that debt overhang, lack of technological were-withal amongst other factors are capable of jeopardizing the laudable intentions of NEPAD. The history of NEPAD and its aims and objectives were presented with a view to grounding the analysis properly. The article ends with the following recommendations:

- (i) The Nigerian state should build its capacities in the areas identified and discussed.
- (ii) The NEPAD document should be reviewed to make it more Afrocentric. There should be more publicity so that the people become more acquainted with NEPAD thereby ensuring popular participation.
- (iii) The various African governments should muster the necessary political will to implement the programme.

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