

SYMPOSIUM THEMES

To this end and in the light of past experiences, this Symposium will propose for discussions these different notions of development. It will also attempt to respond to the following questions which will each constitute the theme for a session:

1. Crisis of the development model: reject or remodel economic theories on development?

Economic theory has made considerable progress capable of contributing methodologically to understanding and boosting development. Approaches in terms of endogenous development, the theory of institutions, factoring imperfect information in the new macroeconomics and microeconomics are illustrations of this.

The poor results of political adjustment, rise in poverty and structural rigidities make it possible to realise on the one hand that other objectives are needed besides simple GDP growth. On the other hand, the development of Africa requires profound changes which cannot be dependent on the simple requirements of short-term reforms.

How can the development model used up to this point be criticised without falling into cultural relativism? Conversely, how can a new Universalism which will not be a new version of Occidentalism be built? How can plural experiences be fostered at the local, national and regional levels while preserving the autonomy of each people? What do we make of attempts to have alternative constructions in developing countries, aimed at ridding themselves of the domination of international financial institutions and Western countries (actions of G3, G22, the Cairns group, attitude of Argentina and Brazil to the IMF, WTO, etc.). Has aid contributed to endogenous development? What type of partnership can lead to better aid effectiveness in the multi-polar context of financial resources?

2. Growth and development

The aim here is to reflect on the relationship between growth and development. Modern theories of endogenous growth have established that economic growth rate is much correlated to the type of economic policies in place, level of technological advancement and knowledge and the quality of governance institutions.

As it concerns technology and its link with research, Africa does not appear to have found suitable solutions for the private and rural sectors, preventing growth from being sufficiently strong to improve the wellbeing of the people. The presentations must draw on the experiences borrowed from the continent and beyond, particularly the business and research clusters in Asia.

For some studies, the problem of growth in Africa is linked to bad economic policies, inadequate basic infrastructure and physical capital, low levels of social capital, absence of political rights as well as lack of trade openings. There is also a lack of human resources and the dependency on aid constitutes a major obstacle. For other studies (World Bank 2000), only the implementation of urgent measures aimed at improving governance, ending conflicts, investing in people, increasing

competitiveness, diversifying economies, reducing dependency on external aid and strengthening different partnerships can help Africa in boosting its development.

Is growth a prerequisite for development? In this case, what should be the substance of this growth and how will it be justified? In case of the contrary, is the deceleration of growth acceptable and if yes, under what conditions? Can we accept the “sustainable development” theme while it increasingly serves as a screen for the constant pursuit of economic growth which has simply been interspersed with environmental preservation activities? In addition, how can technology be developed on an endogenous basis and/or be acquired by programmed technology transfer?

3. Development and poverty reduction: Which development vision is behind which strategy?

In response to growing criticism and after observing the recurrent failure of the PAS, the Breton Woods institutions reviewed their approaches in developing countries. They replaced the Washington Consensus - an approach based on the most orthodox liberalism - with a new strategy which includes as priorities the reduction of poverty, the fight against corruption and inequality as well as the need for good governance and stronger democracy.

The improvement of human well-being, supposedly the objective of development, is in the process of being replaced by poverty reduction strategies. Considerable resources have been mobilised for studies on poverty. What is the degree of relevance of the profile assessment of poor people? Does the research carried out to measure well-being with other indicators rather than GDP (Human Development Index, Genuine Progress Indicator, Social Health Indicator, Economic, Social and Environmental Wealth Indicator, sustainable development indicator, inequality and poverty threshold, etc.) offer an alternative for taking into account, designing and promoting activities capable of creating wealth that is socially and environmentally sustainable?

4. Social Capital (physical, human) and development: the role of Civil Society and networks

The concept of human capital refers to a people whose capacities have been improved through education and healthcare. It is necessary to clarify a little more the justification for investing in human capital. It has now been established that in a market where the products, capital and technologies move and are freely traded, it is the human resources which differentiate the performances of the different countries. Consequently, investment in education is one of the essential components of economic policy. It is thus established that for a given level of per capita GDP, the countries with a high enrolment rate recorded a higher level of growth than countries with low enrolment rates.

This is why UNDP, PRSP, the MDGs and NEPAD give priority to the use of social capital accumulation as a factor in growth charts. What is the contribution of human resources, the economy of knowledge and innovation in the development of ECOWAS countries? What role can civil society play in development? What is its capacity to influence decision making without the risk of an identity crisis?

5. Development through integration

The acceleration and intensifying of regional integration is an absolute necessity in a multi-polar globalisation made of high competition blocs. In this context, regional integration is a tool enabling African countries to achieve progress. For it to be effective, it must be part of a global development strategy. It must allow African countries to collectively take the responsibility for their economic development and deal with exogenous shocks.

Integration must no longer be a leitmotiv. It must draw on projects which take into account the interest of people at the grassroots. This construction of integration will promote a strategic process that will replace an emotive integration which only makes reference to cultural and historical values. This integration must not be a pretext for self sufficiency for States which pose obstacles to the process of building a common market by protecting their fiscal revenues. It should also not fail to take into account the globalisation process.

For Member States of the Community, is integration not the surest and most viable basis for sustained development? In this case, what are the economic, political, institutional challenges confronting the region in its search for economic and monetary integration in view of accelerated development? How can the development objectives be redefined so that they further fit into the integrationist process?

6. Institutional and Political approaches to development

This involves discussions on democracy and the role of the African State in development, management of conflicts and land settlement. The African state is at the heart of the division and can be held hostage by interests groups looking for private income. Such a situation leads to an ineffective political market where few charismatic men venture given the risk and high cost involved.

What are the types and typology of African States? What reforms to be implemented for a more effective State? How does one fight corruption? What type of democracy is compatible with the African State?

7. Other themes which must be redefined will be studied such as:

- Endogenous approaches: what are the possible prospects for development? What is profit worth compared to equitable sharing? Is African solidarity not built on equitable sharing? (Example of the Lobi society located between Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana where the agricultural surplus of the farmer is given to the village to support the poor. This act gave rise to the expression "give up the throat".
- The mechanisms and forms of mobilising development actors: employers of all nature, civil society organisations, producer unions, institutional actors
- The role of endogenous financing in development: links between financial development and growth.

Each theme will form the subject of a Session in which all presentations and their recommendations for action and research will be discussed.