

**ToR, ORGANISATION AND AGENDA**

# **Symposium**

## **Emerging from under-development: what new prospects for West Africa?**

### **I BACKGROUND**

The problem of development analysis and consequently the formulation and implementation of development policies remains the subject of current discussions especially on the African scene. It is necessary to go back a little in time to note that these issues are not entirely new. Already, the period from the end of the Second World War to the end of the fifties marked the emergence of the first studies devoted to the issue of development. One therefore seeks to understand the factors responsible for the backwardness and gaps observed between industrialised and developing countries.

Several development concepts and approaches - inappropriate as these have been - have been advanced by African leaders and intellectuals from independence to the present time. They include:

- ➔ **décennie 1960** : sous-développement ;
- ➔ **1960s** - under development concept/approach;
- ➔ **1970s** - emerging or developing country, technology transfer;
- ➔ **1980s** - notion of environment with the World Summit in Rio in June 1992;
- ➔ **1990s** - several concepts appeared all the same time: sustainable development, democratising the State and society, the Rule of Law and good governance
- ➔ **2000 decade** - fight against poverty, globalisation of the economy, etc.

These different approaches have produced development models like:

- Divide and rule and hegemony (colonial period)
- Neo colonialism and the supporting development concepts resulting in growth without development

- Neo liberalism of the 1980s seen in the structural adjustment programmes which destroyed societal equilibrium and caused the unparalleled development of poverty,
- Globalisation of the economy which brought about the democratising of the State and society and acute socio-political crises in the sub-region,
- The current financial crisis and the failures of the neoliberal approach.

Today, development analysis seems to focus almost exclusively on factors for accelerating growth and modernising economies. During the 60s and 70s, there was a rapid awareness in Africa and Asia that political standing on the world scene could only be built if development follows economic growth and allows for the creation of a flow of abundant wealth, guaranteeing the well-being of all people.

Agreeably, these economies must then be involved in an industrialisation process which increases production. Particular emphasis is placed on internal structural obstacles and factors which must be mobilised in these economies in order to trigger a self-sustained process of growth.

The convergence of studies in favour of massive transfers of financial capital from developing economies is explained by the fact that the different theories are supported by the example of developed countries where industrial development played a decisive role and the accumulation and mobilisation of physical capital appear as vital factors. Meanwhile, the results of industrial development have remained modest. Strategies for achieving industrialisation by substituting imports which were put in place were poorly linked with the agricultural sector. On the whole, the performances have proven to be disappointing.

If traditional economists since A Smith had been concerned with growth and development issues, development economics itself appeared as a new branch of economic science in the 1950s when several countries in Africa and in Asia were gaining independence. One witnesses thus the emergence of the Third world, which explains the revived interest for the study of development economics.

The work of “pioneers” take in two directions: some consider that under-development is in fact a delay in development (W. Rostow, R. Nurkse, A. Lewis) while others, the structuralists, view it as a historical phenomenon linked to the disarticulation of productive structures (R. Prebisch, F. Perroux, G. Myrdal, A Hirschmann). The solutions advocated are rather interventionist and form the basis of self-centred development projects, based on import substitution strategies.

The Bandung Conference hastened the process of setting up new international institutions responsible for implementing the development model defined by industrialised nations. Thus we have in:

- 1956, the creation of the International finance Corporation to foster private investment;
- 1958, the creation of a United Nations Special Fund for Economic Development which in 1965 will merge with the UN Expanded Programme for Technical Assistance set up in 1949 to form the United Nations Development Programme.
- 1964 and 1966, the establishment of regional development banks for Africa and Asia.

In 1962, the United Nations General Assembly announced the first United Nations Decade for Development. It was stated specifically in the report of the Secretary General that “development is not simply synonymous with economic growth; it is economic growth accompanied with change” (“United Nations Decade for Development, Proposed measures, Report of the Secretary general, New York, 1962, quoted by G. Rist op cit. pg. 149). In spite of the nuance, it must be stated that in this report, growth remains the core of development.

In the 1960s, the framework in which the actions fostering development would take place was put in place. The 70s and 80s witnessed the flourishing of several experiments and proposals sometimes diametrically opposed, which were more or less echoed on the international scene. These include the self-reliance (or self-reliant development) of Julius Nyerere, the New International Economic Order and the structural adjustment programmes.

In the 60s and 70s, the third world movement will benefit from the relative failure of these experiments to advance the idea that under-development is the result of domination by capitalist developed countries over third world countries, making it impossible to close the development gap. It is during this period that dependence theories were made based on a centre-periphery analysis (C. Furtado, S. Amin, P. Baran), and the neo-marxist theories of Unequal Exchange (A. Emmanuel). The slackening of the economy in 70s following the capitalism and the debt crises largely provoked by the changes in monetary policies and financial liberalisation, will jeopardise the heterodoxical approaches to development. Thus at the beginning of the 80s, a liberal veering off could be seen.

After more than half a century of development policies, the third world is hardly in an enviable situation. For example, there are still 2.9 million people who live on less than 2 dollars a day; the seven largest fortunes of the world put together amount to more than the total GDP of the group of 49 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) where 650 million people live. At the current rate, UNDP considers that another 130 years are needed to eradicate hunger in the world.

To the failure of all these so-called development decades, which fell short of their objective of meeting basic human needs, is added the numerous environmental disasters occurring due to the dynamics of a world economy guided solely by the need for immediate and maximum profit.

Faced with this double social and environmental disaster, several reactions are today emerging from opposite horizons.

- The first is that of international financial institutions. These institutions carried and are continuing to carry out liberal adjustment policies and try to dress these policies up with the pseudo-paradigm of “good governance” which the apparent object of “fighting poverty”.
- The second is that of international political institutions, especially the UNO and its agency, the UNDP, which have succeeded in making the concept of “sustainable development” accepted as the new global objective, to the point that not a government, institution, large corporation fails to take it into account. It is hard to see an NGO or representatives of social movements who do not do the same. This questionable unanimity seems to prove

that there is need to clarify the concept and that for the time being, it lacks the substance that will really set it apart from past failures.

- The third is that of a trend originating from several sources and which taking into account the double failure mentioned above, is positioned in the perspective of a rejection of development. This is on the grounds that development, born in the West, can only be an expression of economic, political and cultural domination of the West over the rest of the world. Consequently, it is necessary to look beyond to “post-development”.

All of these considerations but especially the profound crisis of the neoliberal system require that the development approaches be revisited and current paradigms be reviewed. Is neoliberal ideology not synonymous with recurrent crises? What is profit worth when compared against equitable sharing?

### **GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

The general objective is to allow academics and researchers, professionals in development, political decision makers and regional integration actors and intellectuals re-evaluate the concept of development 50 years after the Independences and all review its economic, social, cultural and political implications in Africa. To this end, it is necessary first of all to clarify the concept, its meaning, forms, and mode of operation by drawing on the theoretical frame of reference and practical experiences in Africa and the world.

### **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

The Symposium is expected to allow for multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and indeed cross disciplinary small study groups and research groups to be formed around issues of development and sub-regional integration with a view to:

- i) Helping decision makers through open discussions on all issues capable of promoting development in an international setting beset with doubt and risk;
- ii) Facilitate the use of research outcomes in decision making,
- iii) Contribute to putting in place a regional think tank with the involvement of the Diaspora to further enlighten decision making and promote integration as a lever for development.

### **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 risking 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.

## **V. ORGANISATION OF THE SYMPOSIUM**

### **VI.I Genesis**

The hope for economic and social development was born for millions in formerly colonised countries a little more than 50 years ago. This hope is still as big for the African people as was socialism for the proletariat in Western countries. Political decision makers, technicians, elites and the civil society interiorised development and presented it to the people as the ultimate solution to their problems. The average results obtained, although contrasted, of the development of sub-Saharan Africa, calls for the re-examination of the concept of development and all its implications in the reference framework of the ECOWAS region. Is it a crisis of development or a crisis of development theories? Economists have for a long time argued, prepared strategies and policies, constructed robust abstract models and in spite of all, the results of development remain modest.

Professor Bamba N'galadjo Lambert, Commissioner in charge of macroeconomic policies in ECOWAS, has instituted a working group presided by Professor Moustapha Kasse, honorary Elder and member of the Academies for the scientific and technical preparation of this great event. It is made up of academics and researchers, development professionals and research officers of the Macroeconomic policy department, with a view to assess the Development Concept and all its implications within ECOWAS by organising a symposium for three days in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) between February and March 2010.

This working group transformed into a Scientific Committee has the responsibility to:

- Approve the ToR of the Symposium;
- Validate the scientific content of the symposium;
- Request for presentations and select articles;
- Prepare the agenda and organise the symposium;
- Manage the discussions of the symposium so that the discussions can lead to useful recommendations for decision makers and researchers;
- Process contributions and recommendations.

## **V1.2 Composition of the Scientific and administration committee of the Symposium**

This scientific committee is composed of eminent researchers from the region and the Diaspora. It is chaired by Professor Moustapha Kasse, honorary Elder of the Faculty of Sciences and Management at UCAD, Dakar (Senegal) and is made up of the following notable personalities:

1. Professor Cadnan Atta-Mills, Advisor at the Presidency, Ghana
2. Professor John Igue, Geographer, Former Minister of Education of Benin, Expert in space, State and territorial policy issues;
3. Professor Adebayo Olukoshi, Former Director of CODESRIA and IDEP Director;
4. Professor Ebram Sall, CODESRIA Director
5. Professor Gervasio Semeo, Vice President of the Study and Research Group on International and European Cooperation (GERCIE) at the University Francois Rabelais Tours (France).

In addition, this group will comprise Professor N'galadjo Lambert Bamba, ECOWAS Commissioner for Macroeconomic policy, Dr Kalilou Sylla, his Director of Cabinet and Dr Koffi Simeon, Head of Research and Development Division. This committee can be expanded based on need. The two colleagues of the Commissioner will coordinate the Secretariat. A web site is in the process of being created to facilitate communication.

## **V1.3 Thrust of the Symposium**

This symposium will bring together researchers from the sub-region and the Diaspora as well as decision makers. Plenary sessions, parallel workshops as well as roundtable meetings with the specialised press will be organised in order to better engage all components of the West African Community in discussions on integration and development.

The six contributions presented in the plenary will launch the discussions which will be further developed in the workshops. Each presentation shall be followed by comments from an expert, and

then open discussions with participants. The comments will come from the following sectors: academic, political, journalistic and the civil society.

## **VII. OUTCOME**

At the end of the symposium, the following outcomes are expected:

- A reference work and symposium document presenting the status of the development crisis in West Africa and proposing new prospects for development to be made available;
- A cooperation framework between researchers from West Africa, the Diaspora and decision makers to be created;
- The measures to be taken to make this framework permanent.