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THE CRISIS OF DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA AND AFRICA'S SUB-REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTIONS: CASE STUDY OF THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS)

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ABSTACT
This paper studied the challenges of development confronting Africa and the roles of the Africa's sub-regional development institutions at reversing the problems using the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as case study. The research findings which were sourced from secondary data confirmed that Africa's development challenges were caused by four main factors which include the unfavourable historical context of Africa's incorporation into the global political economy, Africa's inadequate capacity for resource identification and optimal utilization, contradiction between policy formulation and implementation in Africa and weak leadership. The ECOWAS has made plausible achievements towards tackling development crisis in the sub-region in the area of provision of social infrastructure, bilateral and multilateral joint development projects and the restoration of relative peace to most trouble spots in West Africa. In spite of these achievements, none of the fifteen member states of ECOWAS has made sufficient progress towards economic integration and sustainable socio-economic development for mutual benefits in the sub-region due to concerts of internal and external factors. With less institutional capacity and more emphasis on the export of primary products, low industrialization and low technological know-how, African countries have benefitted marginally from their sub-regional institutions and are still less competitive in the globalization process to contribute meaningfully to the development process in the continent. With its integration problems largely unresolved, Africa has not and may not be able to generate enough internal resources and the needed internal collaboration and synergy to bring about sustainable development in the region through the sub-regional development institutions.

Keywords: Development, Sub-regional, Economic, West Africa.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past four decades, the desire for the sustainable development of Africa has been the key issue confronting African countries and leaders. The development expectation of Africans, particularly during the early days of independence basically revolved around the improvement of the quality of lives of African people in terms of meeting their basic needs, which include adequate food, water, shelter, security, functional health facilities etc. Many Africans also yearned for the provision of modern infrastructural facilities such as tarred roads, electricity, telephone services, pipe-borne water, modern hospitals and educational institutions, all of which were hitherto limited to few towns and cities under colonialism. Above all, Africans further hoped for a life of reasonable accomplishment, opportunities and dignity, which make life more purposeful, and fulfilling.

These expectations were largely borne out of the realization that many Africans had experienced a repressive trade in human slaves and a colonial experience characterized by brutal exploitation of African resources, the use of brazen force to suppress dissent voices and marginalization of many capable educated Africans from the earlier development agenda of the continent, amongst a host of other deprivations. Africans aspirations for better days ahead were further reinforced by the promises of many African nationalists in the years of the anti-colonial struggle and the campaign promises of many African leaders shortly after independence. In spite of intense efforts by the African leaders, African countries are still deeply immersed in diverse and protracted challenges of development ranging from weak economies, political violence, debt burden and near socio-political disintegration; Egypt, Somalia, Congo Democratic Republic, Mali, amongst others are clear cases of countries in one form of turmoil or the other. The former Nigerian President, Olusegun Obasanjo captures Africa's development crisis this way:

> What is noticeable after almost half a century of independence in African countries is that the continent still remains the World's enduring development challenge, World's most highly indebted region, where poverty is endemic, pervasive and deep, where conflicts and socio-political crises still remain a recurring feature, a region being ravaged by AIDS and tropical diseases...(Obasanjo, 2003).

To buttress the above observation, available statistics shows that African countries have a combined debt burden of about $352 billion which is equal to 56 percent of its GDP as of 2007 (Mucavele, 2007). AIDS infected about 28 million Africans between 1986 and 2006; more than six million of this number has died (Onwuliri, 2007). Only 57 percent of the African population has access to safe water (Onwuliri, 2007). About half of the African population lives on less than $1 per day (NEPAD, 2011). The literacy

level in Africa is about 45 percent while life expectancy at birth is only 56 years (UNDP, 2011). What the above statistics suggests is that the previous efforts at developing Africa by its leaders, have achieved scanty success.

In order to solve the continent's socio-political and economic burdens, African leaders have remained consistent in the task of developing the continent within the paradigms of many internally inspired development strategies part of which place more emphasis on regional and sub-regional cooperation and integration for the socio-economic positive transformation of the region. Though the primary focus of most sub-regional development institutions in Africa is tilted towards functional cooperation and integration to promote sustainable development in the continent, current statistics indicate a partial success of such efforts, especially towards regional integration. For example, intra African exports and imports as of 2010 were 13.6 percent and 11.2 percent respectively as virtually all African countries relied on trading arrangements with their Western trading partners rather than to one another (UNDP,2011). Another emerging problem facing Africa from the regional effort borders on the observation that all the African sub-regional groupings have different origins, different geographical configuration, different needs and aspirations (in spite of the same objective of developing Africa). Each is therefore stressing their peculiar sub-regional development needs to the negligence of other sub-regions. Thus much effort has been concentrated on sub-regional leaning by many African countries so much that this has almost left the African project in a vacuum. In order to address these short comings and in realization of her precarious position in a globalizing and new world order, coupled with multitude of internal socio-economic and political problems, African leaders chose a 34 years development plan to be piloted by the Africa's sub-regional development institutions for the functional integration of Africa's political economy through four major development phases which shall be elaborated further in the subsequent sections. This paper captures the achievements, challenges and the prospects of developing Africa through the sub-regional development institutions using the ECOWAS as case study. The gap to be covered by this work revolves around the observation that previous studies on the performances of the sub-regional development institutions in Africa are largely limited to the examination and analyses of the development agenda of those institutions without an in-depth evaluation of the operational foundations under which the institutions pursues and implements their developmental agenda. Such studies mainly reveals the symptoms associated with Africa's sub-regional development challenges rather than the real cause (s).This study attempts to cover this research gap by linking the causal relationships between the performances of

the African sub-regional development institutions in relation to their operational background and the impact of such prevailing operational environment on their achievements, challenges and the prospects of developing Africa through the institutions.

The research employed secondary data for its investigation. Under this methodology, data in already existing form were largely used, subjecting them to a comprehensive re-analysis. With regard to the latter, the study borrowed from Adetula's conception of re-analysis as:

"Any further analysis of existing data set which presents interpretation, conclusions or knowledge in addition to or different from those presented in the first main report (Adetula, 1996)."

The secondary data examined included data from public sources such as research centres, libraries, documents, books, journals, magazines, and documents relating to the realization of the objective of the research

DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

A proper description of the concept(s) involved in any issue gives an insight into correct interpretation and proper understanding of such issues. Attempt is thus made here to define the basic concepts in this research for proper understanding of the main variables that are under study.

Crisis: State of intense difficulties, challenges, trouble or danger which makes the attainment of an objective very tasking and protracted if not impossible.

Development: In this essay, we define development as an act of improving things by expanding, enlarging or refining. Development here is also defined as being co-terminus with progress and prosperity of the people which is achieved when individuals and society wisely and logically interact with their physical environment to transform the society in which they live for their own betterment and that of humanity at large. We describe development further as the capacity of the people to live a worthwhile existence, full of fundamental opportunities to satisfy at least their basic needs.

Africa's Development: By this concept, we mean a condition of socio-economic progress and prosperity of Africa, which enables its citizens to achieve a life of reasonable accomplishment. This concept of personal development also covers the core-values of development that include the capacity of the African people to live a life of worth-while existence full of fundamental opportunities, dignity and decency. These core values of development are characterized by longer life expectancy and a life that is less miserable and far less battered by forces beyond human control.

Crisis of Development in Africa: This concept represents a period of difficulties

and serious challenges confronting the African leaders and the African people in their collective efforts to promote sustainable development in Africa and thus halt the general state of overwhelming poverty in the continent.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The debate directly relating to the nature and the dimension of the crises of development confronting Africa are basic issues that came up after the end of the second world war in 1945 (Jhingan,1997).During the inter-war years, the colonization projects in many colonized territories concealed the challenges of development in Africa as it was hoped that once African countries have their independence, the principle of "Laissez faire" (Free trade) as practiced during the colonial period would bring about comparative advantage and international division of labour that would assign specific developmental roles to Africa which would automatically lead to a process of economic growth in the then anticipated freed colonies. As the colonized states acceded to sovereignty status after their independence, they soon realized that though political independence actually confered some degree of political freedom and seeming equality between the independent states and their former colonial masters, many newly independent countries were still largely dependent on the latter economically. This development dilemma eventually gave rise to the claim that the new dependant relationship between African countries and their ex-colonial masters were clear manifestations of neo-colonialism. The development imbalance between most African countries and their ex-colonial masters has thus provoked intense academic debate and discourse among development scholars on the causes of development burdens and unequal socio-economic and political relations between Africa and their ex-colonial countries and how to address them.

Four broad perspectives of scholar's views on African development challenges are captured for review in this paper. The discourse relates to the historical context of Africa's incorporation into the global political economy, the extent of resource identification and capacity for optimal utilization, policy formulation and implementation in Africa and leadership quest for good governance in the continent.

On the issue of unfavourable historical past, Robson (1989) opined that the problems of development in Africa can best be appreciated in the proper development context of the contemporary world political economy which Africa is a poor part, due to the legacies of slavery and colonialism. Through slave trade, Africans were forcefully recruited as labour force to work on the European farms and companies in which not less than fifteen to twenty million strong Africans were taken as slaves (Onwubiko, 1982:38). The scholar catalogued the negative effect of slave trade which included the depopulation of the

African productive force due to the preference of the European powers for the most physically fit and child bearing Africans. The evil trade in humans equally promoted inter-ethnic clashes in Africa for the main purpose of getting prisoner of war for sale into slavery. Slave trade equally prevented Africans from engaging in productive venture outside their immediate environment for fear of being captured as slaves. With slave trade in place, Africa was denied of its vital work force to adequately develop the continent. The profit from slave trade was grossly insufficient to develop Africa as Africans received mere gifts of games and pleasure such as gun and gun powder, tobacco, mirror, gin, salt et cetera in return for slaves sold.. Slavery did not alter production techniques in African economic activities. Besides, imported gin, velvet, mirror et cetera which Africans received as gift were not in themselves designed to improve total commodity production in Africa. They were rather inducements for providing more slaves.

Robert (1989), Mazrui (1993), from the reparationist view point, have argued that Africa is due for reparation from an unjust enslavement by the ex-colonialists. Looking at the damage assessment of over five hundred years of African enslavement by the European colonial powers which has constituted a great challenge to the development of Africa, Mazrui (1993) posits that Africa is over due for compensation from Europe, part of which could be in the form of debt cancellation as a result of centuries of enslavement and economic exploitation by the colonialists. However, the argument inherent in this demand is weakened by many problems (Robert, 1989). First are difficulties involved in getting oral and documentary evidences to support Africa's case of unjust enslavement. Most of the relevant documents that could be used as evidence are in the possession of the European colonialists, while most of the generations that were directly captured as slaves are no longer alive to give oral testimony. Other predicaments posed by reparation quest include the fact that some of the worse colonial powers like Portugal and Spain are presently poorer than some African countries they colonized. Their precarious economic position makes them incapable of paying the reparation debt substantially.

Equally aligned to the dilemma over Africa's quest for reparation is the fact that slave raiders did include African collaborators including some traditional rulers and the kind of reparation to be paid by this group of African middle men in slave also made the reparation issue a subject of serious controversy (Mazrui, 1993). While Mazrui and Robert's position mainly represents a preliminary reflection of the possibility of Africans getting reparation from unjust enslavement. Okunga (2001) observed that the struggle over reparation

represent more than economic agitation .The quests thus by far involved fundamental issues beyond the issue of debt cancellation. The reparation quests are therefore more dynamic and more complex matters that also revolve around legal, moral and political issues apart from economic exploitation. Legally, the issue of unjust enslavement touches on fundamental issues of human freedom, human justice, and human value which violate the right of African ancestors to lives of dignity and decency and the rights of their descendants to live free, full and meaningful lives in their time. The struggle for reparations therefore need an appropriate law compulsorily directing nationals to engage in the debate and mobilization for reparations as against the present trend of leaving the issue to individuals and concerned corporate bodies to pursue.

A more appropriate legal terms and definitions are also needed to be adopted to capture the criminality and real intentionality of the holocaust dimension of the slave trade (Okunga, 2001).As opined by the author, holocaust need to be clearly defined in Africa's agitation for reparations to reveal its criminal monstrous act of genocide that is not only against the African people but which also served as a crime against humanity and the need to reveal the linkages between the genocide effect of slavery to the underdevelopment of Africa. The holocaust experiences explain it self in three basic ways. It represents a criminal monstrous destruction of human life, a destroyer of human culture and a violator of human possibility. In terms of the holocaust destruction of human life in Africa through slavery, estimation runs very high in which between fifteen to twenty million Africans were forcefully displaced (Onwubiko, 1982:38). The holocaust destruction of culture include the destruction of people's ways of life, local products,languages and the local producers, destruction of all forms of artifacts, artworks and the skilled artists who produce them. Another criminal effect of slave trade in Africa which needs to be defined clearly in Africa's reparation quest for curtailing developmental process in Africa according to Okunga (2001) involved the criminal act of lifting Africans out of their own history, making them a footnote and almost a forgotten causality in world history and thus limiting their ability to exhibit their natural talents to develop their region without external domination.

Aboyade (1976) linked the crisis of development in Africa to the agonizing period of colonialism. The primary role of colonialism to the underdevelopment of Africa was to create a condition for capitalist accumulation and to ensure steady and cheap sources of raw materials as well as expanded market for the European products. The colonial interest thus largely borders on the appropriation and subjugation of the sovereignty of the weaker African nations by stronger European colonial powers which included Britain, France, Portugal and Belgium. Wallenstein (1991) identified the

characteristics of the colonial economy to include the promotion of the desired cash crop; palm oil, rubber and cocoa instead of the production of food crop. There was also the monetization of the African economies to replace the initial practice of trade by barter which later made the perennial fluctuation in the World economy to reduce the demand and price of raw materials from Africa. Colonialism was also documented to have protected the colonial multi-national corporation from stiff competition from Africa's competitors through product subsidy and easy access to bank loans while African traders were given negligible access to loan facilities. Rodney (1987) posits that through dubious treaties, the colonial masters also used brazen force and wars to exploit African resources. Such treaties eventually became the primary basis of laying claim of ownership and political control of those places by many colonial masters to prevent rival colonialists from taking over their colonized territories.

One negative effect of colonialism which was given by Thomas (1993) as a reason for Africa's underdevelopment was that the practice disarticulated Africa's path to glorious and sustainable growth and development. Having disarticulated Africa's steady pre-colonial path to development, colonialism incorporated Africa's economy into European capitalist market thus making the African continent a satellite of the metropolitan powers. From cheap supply of labour (slave), Africa became a major supplier of raw materials for the expansion of capitalist industries. One of the identified positive pre- colonial economic profiles which colonialism arrested according to the author is a thriving agricultural pastoral community producing adequate food for subsistence needs and some surplus for inter-regional commerce. Colonial political subjugation through the use of brazen force has also disarticulated fairly complex and highly responsive social and political institutions that defended the communities and kingship ties through the practice of collective security. Many communities were thus fragmented into different colonially created countries. Another ill of colonialism as opined by Onwubiko (1982) was the destruction of an essentially humanist value system which hitherto inherently reconciled material development with moral virtue and social justice and thus replaced it with individual material gains. The author believed that it is the loss of this value system that continues to constitute one of the greatest development obstacles to the search for a meaningful collective approach to the challenges of development confronting Africa as many Africans are much more self-centred now than they were before colonialism.

Also disarticulated by colonialism were the knowledge of African culture, arts, crafts and artifacts of a long settled community spirit that united the people and their replacement with the colonial knowledge of Western Europe (Rodney, 1987).The

penchant for colonial knowledge above the prevailing pre-colonial indigenous knowledge in Africa actually set the tone for African scholar's penchants for adopting Eurocentric views to solving Africa's political and economic problems (Rodney, 1987).

As observed by Gambo (1999), a closer examination of African countries after their colonial experiences indicated a wide development gap between Africa and its former colonial masters. The first set back surfaced shortly after independence when many African leaders discovered that they lack sufficient fund to implement development programmes. Lack of adequate development fund has thus forced many African leaders into seeking development aid from the former colonial masters who in turn have been dictating the unfavorable conditions under which such assistance could be given. Aboyade (1976) observed that whatever the benefits that colonialism may have conferred on Africa, certain residual feature of its legacy need to be underlined in appreciating the magnitude of the development problem faced in Africa as a result of colonialism. One, colonialism expropriated much of the irreplaceable stock of highly valuable natural resources (mineral wealth) which are important foundation of economic development of Africa. Colonialism imposed directly or indirectly price incentives, fiscal and physical coercion, a structure of production and specialization dictated by the demand patterns and strategic requirement which were external to the needs of the African economies and which were beyond Africa's influence. Aboyade (1976) also identified clear disarticulation in the Africa's subsistence economies which is the sector that ought to serve as the primary line of defense to shield Africans from hunger and thus make it possible for Africans to have the required energy to contribute physically and mentally to the development process. For example, international trade as dictated by the colonial policies has distorted the pattern of resource use by gearing development focus to an externally determined engine of growth. This disarticulation has delayed the full realization of Africa's internal development potential and retarded Africa's relative development pace compared with the rest of the world.

Africa's development challenges have equally been linked to neo-colonialism. According to George (1984), the neo-colonial concept has two important negative dimensions to Africa's development burdens. First, the author argued that in spite of the legalistic formal transfer of political power to African countries, the real exercise of power that affects the direction, management and character of economic development does not reside in the nominal institutions of the supposedly sovereign African countries but outside it. Second, it asserts that even where nationals are in control or influence the apparatus of government, they do so with overt or intense pressure from the developed countries. (George, 1984) cited

the contemporary globalization process as a good instance of neo-colonialism that has further disarticulated Africa's economy by changing the internal dynamics of the development process towards global political economy subordination and internal economic disarticulation. Globalization continues to promote volatile and unstable external stimulus and pattern of resources use to the requirement of an international trade system between two unequal partners, Africa being the junior.

The result of the unequal relations between Africa and the developed world has being the alienation of the African economic structure from functional participation in the global political economy, loss of internal engine of growth and a resignation of many African economies to the helpless uncertainties of unstable income generation for development purposes due to the boom and bust in the national income of many African countries as a result of global economic progression and depression. The pre-occupation of African economies with foreign trade means the diversion of production factors away from goods and services that were substantially of domestic significance, especially the local food that could shield Africans from starvation. It also means that the research and development activities that could have positive impact on internal production have been restricted to export crops that increases real income in the metropolitan economies with negligible attention to research on local commodities for possible diversification from primary to secondary products to earn Africa more foreign exchange earnings in the global market. The sequence, pattern and combination of resources use had little to do directly with their probable impact on the long run development of the domestic economy. Resources were also developed on the basis of their importance, supplementary and complementary impact on the growing industrial metropolitan economies.

The global monetary and fiscal apparatus and policies were set in such an automatic manner to create balance of payment problem as the metropolitan capital determine the prices of the imported goods, and the export raw material (Basil,1987). The unfavourable changes in the internal production structure of Africa has created a pattern of outward consumerist life style, an administrative system geared to external commerce (importer & exporter) (rather than developing the continent's internal production needs) and an elite class which derives its power and wealth from exploitative international market. Furtado (1984) in his contribution to the debate on the development crisis facing Africa opined that the continent can scarcely direct its future growth pace without diversifying its economy from primary to secondary production and without the continent's greater involvement in international trade. The author believed that Africa's development strategy of promoting primary export explains a substantial part of the lagging pace of African economic transformation, compared with a better

strategy of import substitution and export of manufactured goods that other part of the developing world had vigorously pursued over the last five decades which has contributed to their economic development. Ake (1976) and Aboyade (1976) argued that for Africa to develop, the continent must shift the focal point of growth away from the global capitalist economy in favour of inward economic response mechanism. The starting point as noted by Aboyade (1976) is to formulate development issues around the common people whose future is directly affected by the development challenges in Africa. He argued further that the negative unstable effects of growth process that is transmitted only in drops from the side line of the world political economic activities can never fulfill the fundamentals of the social transformation which Africa needs, deserves and can achieve.

On the issue of the extent of Africa's capacity for resources identification and capacity for optimal utilization of such resources, Reginard (1983) opined that development is achieved essentially by a continuous process of generating and more efficiently allocating resources by achieving greater socially satisfying ends. To the author, development process is made up of two basic and interrelated parts; increasing the availability of resources and improving the optimal utilization of available resources. The thesis sub-divided the first component (availability of resources) further into three broad groups; natural, human and financial resources, while the second component (efficient utilization of available resources) is a complex function of social organization, level of technology, efficient management and relevance of public policies.

Efficient management of resources therefore involved the ability of a nation to have the capacity to identify much of the available resources within its jurisdiction and the economic opportunities for their optimal use. This involves some knowledge of the stock inventory of these resources and the ability to give a concrete control analysis over them in terms of their optimum application and effectiveness. However, Reginald (1983) submits that the poor performances of many economies of Africa clearly showed that the continent's knowledge of its available resources for development is seriously defective with respect to magnitude, quality, sources, distribution and immediate economic significant of those resources. What is not in doubt, according to the author, is that the potentials of available resources in Africa are far greater than what the pace of development performance in the continent suggest. Unfortunately, the relative knowledge about available resources of Africa (through research) and the management of such economic resources are being managed largely by foreign experts.

The large gap between the potential enormous resources opportunity and hitherto dismal development performance

in Africa is explained by the motivation of the foreigners who control the allocation of those resources through the exercise of discretionary powers to develop mainly the sector that benefits them most. In terms of expanse of land surface area, Africa is undoubtedly land- rich with an estimate varying seven to eight million square miles (Taylor, 1988). However the scholar opined that development potentials is not basically about the size of the surface area, but rather, it's about the knowledge of its productive capability and the economic quality of the physical environment.

Indigenous in-depth knowledge of African topography is defective in relation to the scanty proportion of the total surface area that is cultivated and the low level extent of mineral exploration that has taken place in Africa for local economic activities. The statistics that are needed for mobilizing objectively, the available resources hardly exists. Thus on the average, many African countries have not sufficiently converted up to 50 percent of the available resources for development purposes because of inadequate knowledge of how to make maximum use of the resources and inadequate knowledge of the most appropriate technology to promote extensive resources extraction (Taylor,1988). While Africa's land surface has not been fully tapped for developmental purposes, the underutilization of African resources noted the scholar is even more pronounced in the areas of space and water power as many of the vital potential development resources in the sea and on the air space[1] are yet to be fully explored for developmental purposes.

However, with improved technology fuelled by the challenges of the metropolitan economies, more and more is being known of the large extent and good quality of mineral and energy resources in Africa (Robert,1989).In the author's opinion, the further knowledge and further depletion of these resources have created challenges of development in Africa in another direction. Since the resources are the exhaustible type and since Africans have benefited marginally from their exploration; in terms of the low income that accrues from it and in terms of the inability of the country leaders to distribute the lean income equitably. This raises the question of how African is going to survive when the exhaustible physical resources are exhausted since research is not been adequately directed to other sectors apart from minerals and oil to broaden the income of many African countries. Even, in the area of mineral resources that has received the attention of researchers; the author opined that potentially, there is five more of every discovered metals and non metallic minerals still under ground that has not been discovered for development purposes in Africa.

From the stand point of human resource utilization, the immediate challenge to Africa is lack of adequate information on the composition of the African population

both in terms of its present degree of occupational participation, competency and its potential for higher productivities (Taylor,1988). The little knowledge that is known about the distribution ratio in Africa clearly reflects the problem of human capacity inadequacy and underutilization in Africa. For example, available statistics shows that about 25 percent are engaged in formal wage employment while about 75 percent of the population is poorly engaged in agriculture which is a primary activity that is largely devoid of modern technology input (Robert, 1989). The rural nature of the African agricultural sector which employs about 75 per cent of the population, the peasant character of its organization and the low literacy content of its production techniques are all reflection that it is only small proportion of the African population that have formal education and thus raises logically, the problem of low human resource development in Africa (Robert, 1989). In the author's opinion, even within the low level of quality of human resource skills which only constitute about twenty five percent of the African population, an increasing amount of Africa's human resource is being wasted through underutilization, defective training and emigration of highly skilled professionals to the developed world due to better conditions of service. There is also poor policy alignment between the educational system and development process reflecting a substantial waste of human resource capacity in form of unemployable graduates.

Douglas (1989) identified financial resource as another development challenge confronting Africa. According to the author, although the availability of finance does not by itself explain development success or failure, it is an important determinant of the pace and pattern of such development because of its direct bearing on capital formation as finance provides the link between potential and actual development. The scholar identified three main sources of financing for developmental purposes these include, a diminishing of previous savings, increase savings from current income and net borrowing .The author pointed that many African countries currently do not have sufficient savings to de-cumulate. Though foreign reserves were built outside the African countries, it was done in the face of over whelming poverty at home. Africa's current development programme is thus financed mainly by a combination of current low national savings and foreign borrowing.

Africa's current internal savings is grossly inadequate due to dwindling economic performance as a result of the dependant nature of the economies and global economic depression, thus leaving Africa with the alternative option of foreign financing of major development programmes leading to the diversion of the anticipated savings to loan repayment. Empirical evidences showed that the saving gap was not only lowest in Africa but had experienced the fastest decline while saving

is constantly rising in the developed world (Douglas 1989).The author traced the challenge of poor financial base in Africa primarily to the organization of the continent's economic sector under a mixed economy which involves public and private participation in the economic policies of African countries.

The author divided Africa's private sector into three components, these are the subsistence private sector, consisting largely of the many peasant proprietors in the agric sector, the indigenous capitalist sector; small scale industries that are largely concentrated in the urban centre which focuses on urban commerce, services and real estate development and the foreign capitalist private investors that control the growing points of the economy in mining, manufacturing, transport, construction, banking and finance.

Douglas (1989) argued that the concept of mixed economy as applied to Africa is quite misleading in designing the development policies and generating sufficient financial resources because the real issue is not in the role sharing between the government and private investors nor in the degree of mixture of economies, but the main issue is where the real power of moving the economy resides. The form in which the mixed economy operates in Africa is typically one that negates a systematic attempt to mobilize resources for development in Africa. It is thus the foreign private investor that has acquired enormous power in directing the political economy of African countries under the privatization initiative of many African governments. African economic process thus lacks effective public sector power necessary to effectively control the direction of the African economy. As observed by Douglas (1989), since the critical investment decisions are taken by powerful multinational foreign private business, the development process in Africa cannot adequately respond to signals from a weak subordinated public sector. The main discretionary economic powers are thus exercised by foreign decision makers who perceive African growth mainly in terms of supplementary to the steady expansion of the metropolitan economies. Foreign investment in Africa has thus not contributed much to the rapid resources empowerment that is needed for developmental purposes in Africa. Foreign firms have invested in the export of raw materials, shipping, banking, manufacturing to drain out the much needed financial resources from Africa in form of profits. Conversely, the existing economies of the African states were created and operated as if it were subsidiary companies of foreign multi- nationals. The absence of sufficient and necessary countervailing power in the public sector to reverse this external trade and investment dependence is one of the very bases of development frustration that breeds social discontent in Africa.

In many instances, the public authorities of the independent African countries,

especially the small states are no match for the handful of large and powerful foreign companies which not only run the dynamic core of the economy but in some instances also influence the internal political system of who determines government policies. Kuznets (1984) posits further that even when both the government and foreign multinationals are in mutual partnership, there is little doubt that the government in most African countries is the junior partners where the interest and loyalties of the senior partners (the multi-nationals) is focused outside the system and the continent. The author has thus advised that the mobilization of financial resources for development in Africa and its economic organization must start from the ability of the African governments to establish effective control over the generation, inflow and the use of both internal and external resources that accrues to Africa and the effective control of the powerful multinationals by Africans.

Other real issues with Africa's development crisis lie in the fact that a high degree of harmony has not been achieved in the area of relevant policy formulation and programme implementation in Africa (Basil, 1987). The author identified four different but interrelated levels of contradictions in the structures and management of African political economy. These are contradiction between political and economic policies and programmes, contradiction within the capitalist political economy, contradiction between capitalist and socialist ideologies and contradictions between growth and development. The first contradiction between economy and politics borders on African leaders' adoption of economic prescription remedies of global financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank which has largely underdeveloped Africans who gave their political mandate to their leaders with the social contract of understanding that such leaders should adequately improve their socio-economic well-being. For example, while the primary focus of democracy is to promote the socio-economic welfares of Africans, the contradiction involved in such political structure is the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) within the democratic space which has impoverished many Africans. Other forms of political and economic contradictions in Africa are the well designed development projects without adequate financial backing which often lead to project abandonment, sectoral sighting of projects with its attendance obstruction of other sectors such as sighting of a housing projects with obvious obstruction of the power lines. As noted by the author, development can not take place adequately without sufficient policy harmony amongst the development sectors. According to Aboyade (1976), reasons for policy contradictions in Africa include lack of in-depth knowledge of elements of policy design and policy formulation which include inadequate ability of many African leaders to design

clear and objective solutions to development problems, insufficient capacity of African rulers to raise the required financial resources to bring about the much needed transformation and lack of adequate knowledge of the required operational technique to direct development from the initial problem situation to the desired and appropriate solution.

Africa's development challenges are also brought about by contradictions and clash of interest amongst the political leaders and their rivals (Aboyade, 1976). The contradiction in this regard includes conflict of interest between forces of change and reactionary forces leading to policy abandonment of one regime by the succeeding regime no matter how good such policy is. Another development contradiction in Africa's development process as observed by Furtado (1984) arose from the capitalist ideological orientation that has largely influenced Africa's development programmes. This contradiction arises from a form of production relations that sustain the process of private capitalist accumulation leading to conflict of class interest between the bourgeois (the owners of means of production) and the proletariat (the workers). The basis of contradiction is the dehumanizing dichotomy between the individual interest of capitalist ownership and profit accumulation and the neglect of the social welfares needs of the masses owing to the unfair pattern of income distribution, increase unemployment rate and intensified social stratification resulting in general rising social frustration and high intensity of socio-political instability in many African countries. The contradiction and conflict of interest within the capitalist ideology also extends to another form of contradiction between African countries and the capitalist developed world as a result of the dependence of the former on the latter under a subservient relationship. The dependent relationship between Africa and the developed capitalist economy has disarticulated Africa's potential path to development and yet, that very loss was significantly the historical basis for the political and socio-economic progress of the developed world (Furtado, 1984). The poverty and backwardness of Africa arising from its unfavourable relationship with the capitalist Western countries stand in stark contrast to the prosperity of the developed world which in turn continues to constitute a serious threat to Africa and global stability.

Frank (2006) has also observed another development contradiction within the capitalist paradigm between rural and urban Africa. Within this development challenge, the rural area is underdeveloped by the government through the appropriation of its resources and surpluses for the development of the urban centre. This form of contradiction has disarticulated rural economies and impoverished the rural Africans. The contradiction inherent in this

challenge has created the drift of many Africans from the rural to the urban centre in search of a better standard of living, leading to over population, structural congestion, urban decay, urban crime and over dependent of the urban population on limited social facilities. Basil (1987) noted another form of development contradiction in Africa especially in the 60s and 70s between the Capitalist and Socialist ideologies. The author suggested that much of the aid from the developed capitalists countries within the cold war era were meant to lay greater development foundation that is largely rooted in the legacies of the capitalist ideology in Africa while most of the development aid from the then Eastern socialist countries were largely given to contradict and neutralize the positive effect of capitalist approach to development in Africa. The aid from the capitalist countries during the cold war era was equally to destroy socialist influence on Africa. The contradictory policies from the Western and the then Eastern nations led to a development strategy in Africa which discouraged consensus approach to development process among African Countries. While some, like Nigeria, Kenya, Algeria, and Togo adopted capitalist ideology others like Libya, Tanzania, and Ghana (under Kwame Nkrumah), Guinea (under Sekou Toure) adopted a socialist path to development. Within the neo-capitalist space also, Basil (1987) posited that there is a development contradiction arising from a process of structural transformation of the African economy from the trap of satellite capitalism leading to conflict between self-reliant economy as proposed by African leaders and the externally inclined dominating foreign direct investors which has largely dominated the growth process in Africa and which runs counter to African strategy of internally inspired productive economic sector. The influence and the power of the multi-national companies have made it very difficult for African leaders to cope with the necessary socio-political pressure for a full mobilization of national resources for the needed socio-economic development and social changes in Africa.

It is in this unsuitability of colonially inspired development organizational legacies that opens up the fourth contradiction in the African development process, which relates to contradiction in the effective management and control of African national political economies (Aboyade, 1976). The development contradiction here is traceable to the under estimation by African leaders of the magnitude of the disarticulation of the African political economy and the power of the neo-colonial transformation with which African development policies have to contend. African leaders thus lack adequate capacity to effectively control the decision making process and the enabling environment to mould the African development process. There is therefore a contradiction between African political freedom (independence) which is internally inspired to some extent and the economic freedom that is largely dependent on the

dictate and the direction of Africa's Western development paradigms.

Gerald (1986) linked Africa's development challenges to the contradiction between growth and development in many African countries, as much of the little growth rate generated in Africa has not been adequately transformed into sustainable development. This negative tendency was attributed primarily to foreign exploitation, especially by the Multinational Corporations. Their preferred area of domination in many African countries is the extractive sector, especially in the area of mining and oil exploration which account for close to 90 percent of export and foreign exchange earnings in some African countries. 75 percent of major companies in the extractive industries are thus foreign owned. The unhealthy domination of the development process by foreign controlled enclave sector has led to a situation where more than 50 percent of the domestic income and proceeds from foreign exchange earnings accrues to non-nationals in the form of payments to foreign factors of production; expatriate profits, dividends, interest, and expatriate salaries.

Thus, the relative growth of the external trade surplus is thus largely wiped out almost as it accrues by those large factor payments abroad. Apart from the heavy outflow of remittances obligation to foreign private investors, virtually all African public sectors pay a lot of foreign exchange to liquidate a heavy burden of debt obligations. There are also several internal leakages to national resources brought about by a combination of incompetent staff and outright collation of audit department in the auditing of the records of the finances of the Multinationals who are able to repatriate a lot of undeclared profits back home. The pattern of income distribution from the little portion of income growth that remains is highly skewed in favour of the member of the small minority ruling class in Africa, who control political power and ensure that Africa's economic system is run in line with the requirement of foreign capitalists which is anti-people and anti-development in most instances. To turn growth into development in Africa, Gerald (1986) advised that the dominant role of foreign economic discretionary power must be considerably reduced to a manageable level.

Dudley (1997) also submitted that the contradiction in policy formulation and development process in Africa manifests more in other forms of contradictions which include, poverty in the midst of enormous potential resources, surplus land and yet hungry people, rising export earnings along intense deprivation and frustration amongst the African populace, expanded education along expanded unemployment and economic nationalism that results largely in external dependence.

Development crisis cannot be adequately tackled in Africa without a dedicated leadership that is both committed and knowledgeable. However, Africa's

development challenges are in part as a result of poor leadership quality (Ake, 1976).As noted by the author, African leaders often combine wrong development policies and implement good policies sometimes in confusion. Other leadership problems in Africa include corruption, nepotism and outright dictatorship which have brought about decades of post-colonial development failure in Africa.For Africa to develop, opined the author, the continent needs a development design that could harmonize the various development sectors into one coherent and comprehensive strategy through bold and imaginative leadership. Such strategy the author opined must have strong institutional strategy that can make the best use of small number of available highly professional talents to maximize the opportunity for mobilizing local real resources and closely relates the cherished social value into credible development platforms. The design of such policy, posits the author is the task of a credible leadership in African political economy which still remains a challenge in the African development process.

Ogidi (2003) traced the problem of leadership in Africa to three defective factors which include defective leadership foundation, defective super structure and defective apex. The support base (foundation) for leadership is characterized in the main by the peasant poor and the largely deprived that have lost their sense of values, morality, honesty and integrity, fairness, justice and dignity owing to long years of deprivation, excruciating poverty and neglect by the leadership. It is from this defective foundation that much of African leaders have emerged and from where they gather political support. Such foundation is weak and could not adequately confront the excesses of the political leadership who often bribe their way through vote buying and outright manipulation of the election results with the connivance of the representatives of the peasants often called the community leaders. There is also the defective of political super structure which consists of the middle class; academics, professionals, associations, civil society groups and the industrialists. These groups are being largely undermined by the leadership through black mail, arrest, "settlement" and intimidation. The defective apex consists of the African leaders that are largely recruited from these earlier identified defective foundations. The earlier engagement of many of these leaders in their youths in acts of "thuggery" and other delinquent tendencies such as bodyguards to many "god fathers" (which thrive on the periodic dole out of financial and material gains by the god fathers) destroys their leadership qualities. Thus the operational dynamic of these negative forces has built into the political culture of Africa, which instead of making virile African youths good leaders and agents of national growth and development, has built into such leaders the culture of violence that is characterized by riotous form of livelihood in many facets of

public life. It is also difficult to make good future leaders out of many African youths who have imbibed the culture of wild life, political imperfection, bribery and different forms of political manipulation. Africans, noted Mazrui (1993), have not benefitted maximally from the current defective political structure in Africa.

To arrest governance failure in Africa, Ogidi (2003), has suggested a mental revolution that could remove the complacency of Africans in the face of bad leadership. This change can come from patriotic leadership through credible socio-economic and political reforms, because they (the leaders) have the authority, power and the means to guide, direct and manage the society and its resources for the benefit of Africans. Given that the leadership may not be able to bring about the desired change due to their parochial interest, changes for better leadership must therefore come from the middle class who have the repository of the ideas that change the thinking of the society. It is therefore the primary responsibility of the middle class to hold the leadership accountable for their actions. However, Okunga (2001) posits that Africans are not adequately ripe yet for mental revolution to change the leadership style in Africa in favour of the people because, mental revolution means positive and radical change of Africans' attitude to work, politics, and religion and social habit. Africa's political horizon is however still narrow and beclouded by ethnicity, religion and geographical affiliation amongst other forms of parochial interest.

Ogidi (2003) identifies the type of leadership quality that is needed to bail the continent from its development challenges to include integrity, patriotism, perseverance and reasonable level of intelligent. The author suggested that leadership should be able to learn fast, assess other people's idea intelligently and have the ability to study the situation positively.

From this comprehensive review of literature we discovered that Africa's development challenges, though many, were caused by five main factors which included the unfavourable historical context of Africa's incorporation into the global political economy, Africa's inadequate capacity for resources identification and optimal utilization, Africa's adoption of irrelevant development theories into development process .Other key challenges are contradiction in policy formulation and implementation in Africa and weak leadership. The scanty success of the previous efforts at developing Africa which was clearly reflected in our review made this study highly justified. In linking Africa's development crises to the seeming dismal performances of regional development institutions in the continent ,it's quite clear that right from the outset of their establishment, the sub-regional development institutions have operated from defective and weak development

foundations as there were no strong social, political and economic development institutions on ground in Africa upon which sub-regional institution's development agenda could be sufficiently consolidated .Thus their seeming poor performances have weak development profile occasioned by legacies of unfavourable historical past.

AFRICA AND ITS SUB-REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTIONS

Before the creation of Africa's contemporary sub-regional institutions in the early seventies as plausible development platforms for the region, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) had earlier stood out as the foremost and the highest level of continental platform for the promotion of Africa's development agenda. Politically, the OAU became an important collective African diplomatic instrument to prosecute the corporate interest of African nations in the international fora especially in the United Nations Organization (UNO). The OAU which was created on the 26th May,1963 (Akingbola,1999) galvanized and coordinated common African actions, positions and unity in international development struggle for the benefit of Africa, especially in the area of the promotion of unity and solidarity amongst members, eradication of colonialism and apartheid. Furthermore, the OAU provided a socio-political and economic Platform and a wider forum from which many African countries prosecuted most of their foreign policy objectives, amongst others.

An evaluation of the defunct-OAU shows that some measures of achievements were recorded by the organization. These achievements include settlement of border disputes among members (e.g. Between Somalia and Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Chad and Libya other achievements of the defunct organization include financial assistance to African national liberation movements, such as the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa, through the liberation committee of the OAU. The organization also mediated in the internal disputes of some member states such as witnessed in Nigeria during her civil war between 1967 and 1970. The defunct- OAU further mediated in the dispute between Chad and Libya over the Aouzu Strip in 1992. From a few independent states at the time of its formation in 1963, all the African countries are now free from colonialism and apartheid regime partly because of OAU's effort. The organization also created the African Development Bank (ADB) to help member states obtain loan for their developmental programmes.

However, in spite of OAU's development efforts, the defunct organization was not able to achieve much. According to Thomas (1993) the LPA achieved limited success partly due to non-equal commitment to self-reliance and different option of disengagement from the international capitalist system amongst African states. For instance, some African countries depend mainly on foreign aids with their draconian conditionality for survival

against the self-reliance initiative of the LPA. Furthermore, the OAU as a continental development platform essentially focused on the collective interests of the African countries without adequately taking care of their immediate peculiarities, national and sub-regional diversities.

To complement the efforts of OAU at developing the African sub-regions which have different needs, diverse hopes and different aspirations, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) recommended the idea of a sub-regional cooperation and integration in 1967 as a viable development option for Africa. Making a case for a sub-regional cooperation and integration in the continent, ECA in its 1967 report (ECA, 2009) spotted some basic problems facing African economies. These include isolationist pattern of development by each African countries leading to small national markets. This negative development in many cases has led to fragmented and uncoordinated markets all over Africa. Another non-integrative problem in Africa borders on the dominance of subsistence sector which focus on low value added primary produce in most Africa economy owing to low-level production technique and technology. Such low profile sector has led to low foreign exchange earnings and by extension low development profile in Africa. Non-complementary and similarity of production in the African economies due to similar climatic factors is also a limit to adequate integration in Africa because since such similar primary produce does not complement one another for raw material needs for the industrialization of Africa, many African countries sells virtually to the same foreign buyers of such primary products which drives down their prices simply because the supply is greater than the demand. There was also the problem of non-trade liberalization leading to less than six percent (6 percent) of intra-African trade and excessive dependant and external orientation of African economies which is sometimes affected by the boom but largely by the bust in the global economies. With such dependant economic profile, the development process in Africa has not been firmly rooted as an evolutionary sustainable development process but a largely borrowed development burden. Such borrowed foreign paradigms have not adequately harnessed and systematically augmented the internal productive capacity of vast majority of Africans to successfully drive the development process. The non-evolutionary patterns of development in Africa have thus created a basis for an opulent and consumerist lifestyle which is largely dominated by consumption (especially of foreign goods) rather than production. Other pitfalls of adequate integration in Africa includes non-harmonization of administrative and regulatory procedures to quicken the implementation of joint agreements and treaties, low production base, under utilization of production capacity and poor infrastructural base, amongst other problems.

In view of these development challenges in virtually all the African sub-regions, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) thus recommended the idea of a functional approach to African development programme to create sub-regional cooperation and integration in Africa. The strategy was designed to encourage inter African trade through a layer of community markets which is aided by an estimated population of six hundred million people who could serve as potential consumers (Thomas, 1993). ECA's integration strategy was to achieve rapid and balanced development all over Africa.

Africa's response to ECA's recommendation became manifest later, especially in the 1970's when contemporary sub-regional cooperation started springing up with economic integration as the main objective.

Table 1: Notable Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in Africa

S/No	REC	No. of Members
1	Arab Maghreb Union (AMU)	5
2	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)	20
3	Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)	11
4	Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)	15
5	Southern African Development Community (SADC)	7
6	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD)	12
7	Community of Sahel-Saharian States (CENSAD)	8
8	Union Economique Et Monetaire Ouest Africaine (UEMOA) Known As The West African Economic And Monetary Union	8
9	Mano River Union (MRU)	3
10	Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC)	6
11	Economic Community of Great Lake Countries (CEPGL)	3
12	East African Community (EAC)	3
13	Indian Ocean Commision (IOC)	4
14	Southern African Customs Union (SACU)	5

Source: *compiled from UNECA (2002), Magbagbeola (2003) and the Internet*

In Southern Africa for instance, the Southern Africa Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) was created in 1980 (Sing, 1997). The Organization was later changed to Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) in 1992. The Economic Community of Central African State (ECCAS) was also created in 1984. The first East African Community (EAC) was initially created in 1920 and collapsed in 1977, the Organization was however revived in 1999 when three East African Countries: Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania signed a new treaty, which formally established the EAC. The main focus of all the sub-regional organizations is basically on socio-economic cooperation and integration in Africa to promote development in the continent. while many of these organizations has made relative achievements in their efforts at developing their specific area of institutional mandates, such efforts have not been sufficient enough to promote credible cooperation and integration in Africa. In Southern Africa for example, although the South African government says it is committed to regional integration, other member states have their doubts. They complained that South Africa runs a "two tiers" SADC by giving preferences to its Southern African's Customs Union (SACU) partners: Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, and Swaziland. But even these four countries also complained of being marginalized. Citing the fact that South Africa entered into trade agreement with United States and European Union without bringing them on board. The Southern African agreement on free movement of people, goods and services has not been adequately implemented. (Sakyi-Addo, 2005).

In East Africa, the renewed quest for the East African cooperation among Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda is being threatened by suspicion and apathy. For Tanzania who emerged from a socialist past, the biggest challenge associated with the (EAC) is the task of putting in place an appropriate capitalist structures that could best fit into an earlier regulated economy now turned to deregulated economy. She is equally worried about the inequalities that a more aggressive market economy could generate. Uganda is worried about the possibility of EAC becoming another source of conflict in the region as each country compete with one another to gain upper hand in the union. Being the biggest economy, the only optimistic country was Kenya who viewed the EAC as one big market for her goods and services. Her only concern was how to become a bigger and more powerful player in the region, an attitude that concerns her neighbor who fears Kenya's political dominance of the sub-region. In North Africa, the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) virtually remains in limbo since its creation. For instance, the Organization's only summit was held in 1994 (Sakyi-Addo; 2005). The reason for this progressive setback in integration was partly due to political wrangling among members. Mauritania accused Libya of

planning to over throw her president. Algeria and Morocco have failed to resolve their long standing differences over the territorial status of the oil rich Western Sahara, which is under Moroccan control, but seeking self-determination. In spite of the development limitations confronting Africa's sub-regional development institutions, African leaders through the instrumentality of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) chose to reinvigorate the sub-regional institutions for functional cooperation, partnership and synergy to drive the development process in Africa into a glorious sustainable integration (Anonymous, 2002). The NEPAD which was created in July 2001 in Luzaka (Zambia) has intensified regional economic integration in Africa as one of its core development agenda (Anonymous, 2002). The NEPAD regional development strategy sought the harmonization of fragmented national economies of most African countries into a single and viable continental markets. The primary purpose of the economic integration is to encourage an intra- African trade through the pursuance of a very viable single community market from the earlier trend of fragmented markets and export orientation of African products which has primarily generated enormous resources and raw materials for the Western nations with marginal benefits and spatial complementarily of products to promote adequate integration in Africa. The NEPAD seeks to correct this negative development trend through credible collaborative efforts and synergy amongst African sub-regional groupings (Mucavele, 2007).A potential consumer population of about 640 million Africans is aiding the integration efforts in the region.

Africa's strategy of using sub-regional development institutions to transform African economies into a single national market is to be achieved in six phases (Magbagbeola, 2003). The approach covers a thirty-four years transition period and it is expected to terminate by 2025. The first phase (Covers five years) centre on the strengthening of the existing sub-regional economic communities in Africa through institutional reforms, and departmental restructuring to promote better service delivery, and recruiting of staff in critical areas while also expanding sources of funding for the RECs apart from membership dues. The first phase is also concerned with establishing new Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in any region where none exists. The second phase (covers eight years period) deals with consolation and harmonization (within each REC) of tariff and non-tariff barriers in the area of custom duties. Member countries are expected to lower trade barriers amongst themselves through the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) and trade liberalization amongst members. However, each RECs member is still being allowed to work out its own trade policies with non-members of its RECs. The second phase is also expected to focus on the strengthening of sect oral integration at the sub-regional and continental level especially in the area of commerce,

agriculture, finance, transport and communication to enable African sub-regions to come up with harmonized sect oral development policies (Anonymous, 2002).

The third phase (to last for ten years) focuses on the establishment of a Free Trade Area (FTA) and a Custom Union (CU) by each REC. This is to be achieved through the adoption of a common export and import tariffs. The strategy entails the removal of all the restrictions on the movement of goods and services amongst the participating states, while each state retains trade restriction with non-members. The fourth phase (of two years period) co-ordinates and harmonizes the tariff and non-tariff systems amongst the various RECs with a view to establishing a Custom Union (CU) at the continental level. Under this plan, Africa would establish a common external trade and tariffs on goods entering the region. The fifth phase (of four years strategic plan) establishes an African Common Market (ACM) through the application of the principle of free movement of persons, goods and services and the right of residence amongst Africans. The sixth phase (for five years development plan) enthrones an Africa Economic Union (AEU). The AEU was expected to be the highest level of economic integration in Africa. The strategy involved the monetary and fiscal unification and virtual transformation of separate national economies into a single economic entity through the adoption of common currency, common Central Bank, Common monetary and exchange rate, pan-African parliaments and a quasi-government leading to a complete and practical take-off of the African Union (Magbagbeola, 2003).

The economic phase of the African integration is expected to lead to efficiency in production and distributions brought about by the law of comparative advantages. The African Union is expected to achieve economic integration and to promote the needed political unity, solidarity and co-operation, which is the primary functional foundation of any credible integration. The political dimension of the African integration was also to aid good and corporate economic governance and better conflict management to provide the accurate peaceful development atmosphere in Africa. Notable existing RECS that are being used as avenues to prosecute the NEPAD projects include the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of the West African States (ECOWAS) the Arab Magreb Union (AMU), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the East African Community (EAC) amongst 42 others. Giving the desire to reinvigorate the RECs as a source of promoting sustainable development in Africa NEPAD obtained a grant of $10 million from the Africa Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) for the strengthening of RECs (Mucavele, 2006). This sum was allocated to the Economic Community of

Central African States (ECCAS) because the institution is one of the least empowered RECs in the continent to implement integration programmes in Africa. According to Singh (1997), of all the efforts at regional integration in Africa, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), established in May 1975, was perhaps the most successful, hence the efforts in this paper to study the achievements, challenges and the prospect of the institution at promoting sustainable development in the West African sub-region through integration.

THE ORIGIN OF THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS)

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was formally established on May 28th 1975 through the Lagos treaty signed by sixteen West African Countries (Atlas Map of Africa, 2005). The community's headquarters is located in Abuja, Nigeria. With the withdrawal of Mauritania in 2000, the remaining ECOWAS member countries are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cave Verde, Cote d 'Ivoire,Gambia, Ghana,Guinea conakry, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. Out of the above mentioned fifteen member countries of the ECOWAS, five are Anglophone (English speaking) while nine are Francophone (French speaking) and the remaining two are Lusophone (Portuguese speaking). The sub-region has a geographical areas of about 6.5million kilometers with an estimated population of about 217 million people as of 2004 (Atlas,Map of Africa, 2005).The West African sub-region is richly endowed with mineral resources such as iron ore, bauxite crude oil, gold, diamond tin, amongst others. Some of the countries in the sub-region like Nigeria and Ghana derive their foreign exchange earnings from oil and mineral resources. The West African sub-region's agricultural exports include cocoa, coffee, groundnut, palm products, rubber, cotton, timber (Hodder, 1979). However, Nigeria easily qualifies as the core state in the ECOWAS and the West African sub-region in terms of population and economic size. With about 115 million people (Atlas Map of Africa, 2005) the country has the largest population and the largest market in the sub-region. The Topography of West Africa consists of densely tropical rain forest in parts of Nigeria and Benin, and arid and semi-arid zones of Niger and Chad. The occupation of the people are largely farming and fishing which are largely based on subsistence economic organization. Other professional occupations of the people include craft and metal work, wood carvings, dying, trading and public servants. Though oil and mineral resources have generated greater income to the sub-region, subsistence agriculture and pastoral farming still provide income to the people, especially those in the rural areas. The Cape Verde Islands that is located in the Atlantic Ocean also provides large quantity of rice for the West African people. The official languages of the sub-region include

English, French, Portuguese and Arabic.

The aims and Objectives of ECOWAS include the following:

(a) To promote co-operation and development in all field of industry, transport, telecommunications, energy, agriculture, natural resources, commerce, monetary and financial issues, social and cultural matters, for the purpose of raising the standard of living of its people and fostering relations among its members as well as contributing to the progress and development of the African continent;

(b) To eliminate custom duties and other charges in respect of the importation of goods between member countries;

(c) To abolish administrative restrictions on trade among member states; to establish a common custom tariff and a common commercial policy towards third world countries;

(d) To abolition all obstacles towards the free movement of persons, goods, capital and services;

(e) To harmonize the agricultural policies and the promotion of common projects within the members states, notably in the fields of marketing, research and agro allied industrial enterprises;

(f) To implement schemes for the joint development of transport, communication, energy and other infrastructural facilities as well as the evolution of a common policy in these fields;

(g) To establish fund for co-operation, compensation and development among other objectives.

THE ACHIVEMENTS OF ECOWAS

In pursuance of its objectives, ECOWAS made some progress and these include building a reasonable and invaluable measure of unity amongst the Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone divides. This measure has created a regional solidarity, community spirit and a sense of belonging to a common cause irrespective of past colonial experiences. There was also a reasonable level of the implementation of the policy of free movement of ECOWAS citizens within member states for a stretch of three months without the need for visa. The ECOWAS equally recorded notable achievements on the development and modernization of trans-West African high way networks linking many ECOWAS state capitals by road. An example of this effort is the repair of the road network from Nigeria through Benin and Togo to Ghana.

The community established the West African parliament and ECOWAS Court of Justice to replace the existing Tribunal in order to enforce community decisions in order to tone down inter border conflict amongst members. On peace and security, the conflict induced human's tragedy (death, torture, displacement etc) in West

Africa, especially in Liberia and Sierra Leone would have been severely aggravated but for the ECOWAS which set up the ECOWAS Military Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to curtail the wars. In the area of transportation, there is the Trans-African transport and road network linking all the sub-regions of Africa, under the auspices of the United Nations Transport and Communications Decade for Africa (UNCTADA). ECOWAS regional road network rehabilitation amongst Nigeria, Benin, Togo, and Ghana has been completed. ECOMARINE has also been established by ECOWAS as a veritable means of water transport.

In the social sector, many ECOWAS member states shares similar institutional and legal histories. They tend to use the same colonial language, while there is the intensification of both French and English in the Anglophone and Francophone countries to promote better trade relations. The academic qualifications awarded by many educational institutions in West Africa are broadly compatible. There are relatively few social and cultural barriers to migration, intermarriages and other forms of socialization in West Africa e.g., ECOWAS member states enjoy similar music and home video. There are much more integration in the informal economy of the sub-region than the formal as large chunks of goods and services are imported and exported within Africa without any formal dues and tariffs.

In the financial sector, there was the establishment of ECOBANK (an ECOWAS Bank in Togo) to finance sub-regional trade. Five ECOWAS countries: Nigeria, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea and Sierra Leone have adopted ECO (a common currency) whose effective date keeps shifting.

In spite of these relative achievements which are all geared towards the integration of the sub-region, none of the fifteen member states of ECOWAS has made sufficient progress towards economic integration and sustainable socio-economic development. For instance, fragile political transition programme are often threatened by social upheavals in some ECOWAS countries. Four of such conflicts were recorded in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote d' I vore and Guinea-Bissau. The community has also failed to achieve a sizeable regional trade flow as less than six percent of intra-ECOWAS trade relations exist amongst members as of 2001 (Okunga,2001).Trade barriers and non-trade liberalization still lingers on, as many members have refused to remove tariff due to fear of loss of revenue from custom duties. Non- payment of dues regularly by member states also makes it difficult for the organization to carry out its programme effectively.

Production output of some ECOWAS countries are not even large enough (Nigerian for example) for national markets talk less of exporting such produce to other ECOWAS countries while internal socio-

economic conditions such as the rise in the overhead cost of production and cost of raw materials have made it impossible for most ECOWAS member countries to produce massively for external markets. Language barrier is another problem as these complicate community efforts towards proper digestion of messages amongst member states. Other reasons for ECOWAS limited successes include cumbersome national legislation procedure of many member states which delays the domestication of ECOWAS agreement and treaty into reality. Another major integrative defect in the ECOWAS development strategy borders on faulty perception of integration needs of the West African sub-region, thus leading to faulty strategies to provide adequate responses to such needs. For example, much emphasis was placed on the liberalization of trade amongst ECOWAS members through the integration of markets rather than the integration of the production processes. At least ECOWAS need to produce adequately before looking for market for its products.

As a result of the above highlighted economic problems in the ECOWAS, the prevailing economic performance at the sub-regional level was very scanty. For instance, the performance of ECOWAS as of 2011 was very dismal and the following statistics gave credence to this position. The external debt of West African countries increased from twenty six billion dollars ($26 billion 1980 to $109 billion in 2011 (UNDP, 2011:3). Twelve out of the fifteen members of ECOWAS were ranked among the highly indebted poor countries in the world, (World Bank Report, 2010). The inability of many ECOWAS members to meet the basic needs of the majority of their citizens has resulted in social tension and violent conflicts, which now constitutes one of the foremost challenges to Africa's development especially in the Northern part of Nigeria, Mali, Guinea Bissau. The above economic indices have also reduced the standard of living of many West Africans compared to its counterpart in the developed world. For example, the per capital income of an average West African in 2006 was nine hundred and fifty six dollars ($956) as against East-Asian's four thousand and ten dollars ($4,010) (Onwuka,2006).

Plausible reasons for the insignificant trade volume and value amongst ECOWAS member countries include lack of adequate implementation of agreed protocols on trade. For instance, in spite of ECOWAS protocol to liberalize all forms of trade amongst members', majority of traded items amongst members are still banned. Other major integrative problems in the community include high volume of smuggling activities (which reduces official income), very low-income level and low saving capacity to generate enough funds for trading activities. Low level of industrialization which promotes low level of production for sufficient trade to take place has also contributed to poor trade performance of ECOWAS. The taste of

many West African citizens for foreign goods have equally affected integration process negatively as many goods and services produced in West Africa does not attract sufficient patronage.

The security volatility in many West African countries makes it difficult for many to relax their protocol in favour of movement of persons, goods and services. Efforts of the ECOWAS to achieve adequate integration are equally curtailed by external constraints. As noted by Ogwu (2001), economic integration is difficult for many member state of the ECOWAS because, they are poor, cash strapped and their economies are largely dependent. Many ECOWAS member states thus rely more on exporting primary products to earn foreign exchange rather than focusing more on sub-regional industrial production which is very cumbersome to achieve due to lack of adequate funds and human capacity inadequacy.

Even though there are some achievements in Africa in the continent's RECs programme articulation (which are in six phases as earlier identified) its practical outcome may not achieve much due to six strategic flaws. One, most African RECs members are prosecuting their integration agenda through overlapping membership, by belonging to more than one RECs at a time. Many members cannot manage effectively nor fund adequately many of the RECs they belong and this has brought about lots of financial hitches to the communities concerned. In the ECOWAS for example, some membership outstanding dues as of 2003 are as follows: -

Liberia has not paid her membership dues for 20 years, Gambia 11 years, Sierra Leone, 11 years, Cape Verde, 10 years, and Guinea Bissau 10 years. Mauritania before her withdrawal in 2000 had not paid her due for 16 years (Chambas, 2002). With the continuation of this trend, many RECs have run into logistic and financial problems to implement their development projects.

Secondly, many RECs depend on foreign funding for many of their development projects due to weak internal income generation. Most of them are thus looking towards the same donors for assistance. This has always led to stiff competitions amongst African RECs, resulting in dwindling and fragmented resources to implement their projects. Thirdly, there is the problem of faulty perception of integration priority by many African RECs, which has led to faulty strategies of achieving integration in Africa. For instance, much effort have been concentrated on the integration of African markets rather than focusing on the integration of adequate production, lack of adequate production thus lead to a negligible integration of African market. The continent needs to produce adequately first before thinking of how to market those products.

The adoption of a single common currency

by many RECs at the first phase of integration is also an abnormal strategy for development. Even within the context of elementary concept of economics as a course of study, the primary function of money is to serve as a medium of exchange and measure of value. This concept presupposes that there must be sufficient goods and services to be generated and exchange through trade first before RECs adopt a common medium of exchange. With less than 10 percent trade linkages, the idea of a common currency is an exercise in near futility as many countries still largely rely on their local currency to transact business. Another major obstacle to African integration is a psychological one. For instance, the process of integration starts first in the mind. The idea of vast majority of African people thinking first as African before their countries (say as an African before being a Nigerian) is a herculean task. The fact that each REC is being used to address its own peculiar sub-regional problems without substantially carrying other RECs along is also a testimony to the existence of problem of integration in Africa.

CONCLUSION

What this study clearly revealed in conclusion is that the marginal successes recorded by the African sub-regional development institutions cannot be understood outside the continent's internal development contradictions owing to concerts of internal and external factors as earlier reviewed and the specific weak state of the continent production forces which largely promotes global political economy subordination and internal socio-economic disarticulations. There is also the problem of structural defects in social relationship amongst Africans owing to the fact that the resources generated from sub-regional groupings and the benefits accruing from it are unevenly distributed, especially between the leadership and the followership. With this unfavourable materialistic interpretation of history, it becomes a lot easier to understand in a more comprehensive manner the origin of the marginal performances of the sub-regional development institutions in Africa, particularly in the area of improving the socio-economic well-beings of Africans which is the central focus of their development agenda. Linking the dismal performance of sub-regional groupings in Africa to the unfavourable historical past which is largely characterized by slave trade, colonialism and neo-colonialism, the research findings reveals that the economies of most African states which are the unit member of the sub-regional groupings in Africa are externally oriented without adequate capacity for internal growth due partly to the earlier colonial disarticulation. Such disarticulation has limited the capacity of the member countries of the sub-regional groupings to focus largely on the production of primary products (due to low industrialization, low technology and low technological know-how) instead of the production of secondary and value added goods and services that

could generate sufficient foreign exchange earnings. With dwindling income from primary commodities, the emphasis of many sub-regional development institutions is the integration of their local or national markets essentially for the benefits of the Western countries from where most traded goods in Africa are imported. For instance, Cotonou in the republic of Benin serves as a satellite sales deport and platform for the integration of the Western automobile markets where most German, India and Japanese "second hand" cars are sold to other African countries instead of the country promoting the sales of its abundant coconut as a vital raw material for Ghana's fledging oil industry. The bulk of gains from the integration process in Africa thus find their ways to the Western world that have the original patent rights to most goods and services that are promoted in African markets under the integration policies of many African sub-regional development institutions. The integration policies of many African sub-regional organizations are essentially rested on the theoretical import of the developed world which has different empirical bases, different historical situation and different socio-political settings. Such theoretical postulations as adopted in Africa have become antidotes that come from a process of rationalization of foreign historical conditions that are largely unfavourable to Africa's integration process. For instance, the primary aim of integration in Africa is rooted in the interdependence theories which encourage trade liberalization believing it has mutual benefits for all the countries involved in the global integration process. Though, many developed countries have benefitted immensely from the process because of they are highly industrialized and advanced in technology ,conversely, African countries have benefitted marginally from the globalization process because of structural development defects owing to many internal development contradictions. Structurally, African countries are characterized by primary produce, low industrialization, low technology and technological know-how and external debt burden amongst others. Such continent cannot compete favourably in the globalization process in spite of the inherent benefits from the process. It is no wonder then that 38 African countries from different sub-regional grouping affiliations have posted unfavourable balance of trade and balance of payment in 2012 (UNDP,2012) in spite of their efforts at credible market integration. In relation to the link between crisis of contradiction in policy formulation and credible implementations and the dismal performance of sub-regional groupings in Africa, its quite obvious that though many institutions have embarked on sub-regional agreements and protocols that are weakly implemented or not being implemented. For example, in spite of free movement of persons, goods and services amongst the members of the ECOWAS, the Nigerian government which is the largest market in

the sub-regional organization has ban the import of many goods like textiles ,rice, juice drinks, amongst others while some other members of the ECOWAS have imposed high tariffs on the import of foreign goods and services even from other member states to discourage import or to generate more revenue thus contradicting the earlier agreements and policies on the free movement of people, goods and services. Many African countries still parade bad leaders who still engage in massive looting of the much generated resources and suffocating brutality, leading to intra- communal conflict and other new sets of development challenges confronting sub-regional groupings in Africa. The case of Mali where fragile democratic government has just been put in place partly by the ECOWAS after a protracted conflict is a good example of the new challenges confronting sub-regional groupings in Africa. Many member states of sub-regional groupings in Africa still lack highly skilled human resource that could optimally make use of the huge natural resources that are located in the continent.

With less institutional capabilities and more emphasis on primary products, low industrialization and low technological know-how, amongst others, Africa's sub-regional institutions are still less competitive to contribute meaningfully to the development process in Africa. With its integration problems largely unresolved, Africa has not and may not be able to generate enough internal resources and the needed internal collaboration and synergy to bring about sustainable development in the region through the sub-regional development institutions.

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