

DISCUSSION PAPER 31

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**AFRICA, REGIONAL COOPERATION
AND THE WORLD MARKET**

Socio-Economic Strategies in Times of Global Trade Regimes

Compiled by Henning Melber

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Preface

The European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI) held its 11th General Conference on “Insecurity and Development – Regional issues and policies for an interdependent world” during September 2005 in Bonn. The Nordic Africa Institute, which during the last few years has had a staff member as the elected Swedish representative on the EADI Executive Committee, had organised a panel on “Regional Co-operation in Sub-Saharan Africa: Between Collective Self-Reliance and Global Trade Regimes”. The contributions approached from various perspectives and different but related subject areas the issue of the global market, trade liberalisation and the options for African (counter-)strategies to relate or respond to emerging trends.

Ian Taylor recapitulated the background, emergence and positioning of The New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). The initiative under African ownership managed to occupy a discourse accepted by the G8 and the international financial institutions as an integral part of a shift towards increasingly neo-liberal paradigms. These embrace both the notion of ‘good governance’ as well as the gospel of the ‘free market’ as essentials of democracy. But NEPAD was only the last of a wide range of African plans and projects formulated and propagated as blueprints for development. It shares with its numerous predecessors a top down approach: a survey in Botswana showed that out of 200 persons asked only three had heard about NEPAD and none had a clear idea what it really is. NEPAD was conceptualised by a new elite among African leaders at a strategic juncture and linked to the dominant discourses of globalisation under the WTO. It managed to introduce an acceptable programmatic commitment and thereby helped to secure a favourable response and subsequent collaboration on the part of the donor countries after the end of the Cold War.

Henning Melber presented a critical assessment of the current EU negotiations for Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). As he argued, they lack coherence with the EU member countries’ development policy priorities, which rank support to regional integration high on the agenda. The EPA concept as it currently exists, tends instead to weaken and undermine regional integration. Reciprocal tariff reduction over and above WTO compliance in combination with other (sanitary and environmental) issues puts pressure on both LDC and non-LDC ACP states alike to ensure conformity and compliance with externally defined trade requisites not necessarily in their interest. While the Cotonou Agreement emphasises the need for poverty reduction as an essential goal for an EU-ACP framework, the EPAs lack any conceptual reference to a pro-poor policy. African states feel bullied into the nego-

tiations by a well oiled Brussels based machinery. The EU risks damaging its reputation and should reconsider essential aspects of the EPA concept, as it undermines regional integration instead of strengthening it. Hence there is a lack of coherence with other policy essentials both within the EC development policy and the priorities in development policies of EU member countries.

Michael Brüntrup suggested a re-thinking of protection for agricultural markets in Sub-Saharan Africa with special reference to West Africa and the case of Senegal. As the bottom line he emphasised the “right to protect” as a non-negotiable basic tool for sovereign states as an integral part and instrument of a socio-economic policy. But he also cautioned, that one needs to make a balanced assessment if and when such a right should be applied to achieve defined goals, since protection policies are not a general panacea. Instead, the tool is suitable only in particular cases and constellations. Generally, however, there is no level playing field in existence, since EU and US policy has always discriminated against the interests of African producers. Trade liberalisation came too quickly under the Structural Adjustment Programmes and left rural African producers not enough time to prepare. As a result, there is the tendency to maintain a high degree of protection to meet the interests of African rural economies in the absence of a level playing field to compensate for structural deficiencies. On the other hand, urban consumers in these countries exposed to its negative effects, as well as the part of the elites benefiting from the import business under reduced tariffs, have more political weight than the rural producers and hence can lobby better than small farmers. If strategically (and selectively) used, there is nevertheless limited scope for protection even in times of global trade regimes, as the West African case study seems to suggest.

The focus of this panel complemented earlier analyses initiated and/or published by the Institute. These include the following titles:

- Mats Lundahl (ed.), *Globalization and the Southern African Economies*. Research Report no. 130 (2004);
- Henning Melber, *The New African Initiative and the African Union*. Current African Issues no. 25 (2001);
- Henning Melber (ed.), *Trade, Development, Cooperation – What Future for Africa?* Current African Issues no. 29 (2005);
- , *Regionalism and Regional Integration in Southern Africa*. Discussion Paper no. 11 (2001);
- Raymond Suttner (ed.), *Africa in the New Millennium*. Discussion Paper no. 13 (2001);
- Henning Melber, Richard Cornwell, Jephthah Gathaka and Smokin Wanjala, *The New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD)*. Discussion Paper no. 16 (2002);
- Robert Kappel, Andreas Mehler, Henning Melber and Anders Danielson, *Structural Stability in an African Context*. Discussion Paper no. 24 (2003);
- Patrick Bond, *South Africa and Global Apartheid. Continental and International Policies and Politics*. Discussion Paper no. 25 (2004);

Bonnie Campbell (ed.), *Regulating Mining in Africa. For whose benefit?* Discussion Paper no. 26 (2004).

All these texts are accessible on our web site as electronic publications and can be downloaded free of charge.

Given such a track record, it was an obvious option to publish the (slightly revised) contributions to the EADI Panel in this format to add to an ongoing debate.

Lennart Wohlgemuth, the Institute's director since 1993, has been chairing this panel. He is retiring at the end of 2005. I would therefore like to dedicate this result of our close cooperation to him.

Uppsala, October 2005

Henning Melber

“Partnership” through Accommodation?

African Development Initiatives and Universal Policy Prescriptions

Ian Taylor

The New Partnership for Africa’s Development or Nepad has been enthusiastically pushed by a select number of countries in Africa, as well as by the G-8, as a means to advance the “African Renaissance”. Launched in Abuja, Nigeria, in October 2001, its strategic framework arose from the mandate granted to five African heads of state (Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa) by the then Organization of African Unity (OAU) to work out a development programme for Africa’s renewal.

Nepad claims to be a political and economic program aimed at promoting democracy, stability, good governance, human rights, and economic development on the continent. In other words, it is quite an ambitious project. Equally important, Nepad is said to be “Africa-owned” – in supposed contrast to previous recovery plans.

This paper will look at how Africa’s elites have moved from the Dependency-tinged ideas of the 1970s vis-à-vis Africa’s economic relations with the external world, to today’s Nepad. In doing so, it highlights some contradictions within Nepad as well as flagging the basic acceptance of fairly orthodox (i.e. liberal) policy prescriptions. In contrast to the rhetoric surrounding Nepad, I aim to demonstrate that the programme is far from being African-inspired but rather signals a basic acceptance of the messages emanating from the North i.e. the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and key external actors. In doing so, I hope to demonstrate the growing confluence between Africa’s solutions for its current malaise and international thinking on the matter and suggest that this is reflective of an exhaustion within Africa over its stalled development.

Nepad’s Goals and Prescriptions

According to official Nepad sources (the website, but also numerous other Nepad-related documents), the project is based on the following principles:

- Good governance as a basic requirement for peace, security and sustainable political and socio-economic development;
- African ownership and leadership, as well as broad and deep participation by all sectors of society;
- Anchoring the development of Africa on its resources and the resourcefulness of its people;

- Partnership between and amongst African peoples;
- Acceleration of regional and continental integration;
- Building the competitiveness of African countries and the continent;
- Forging a new international partnership that changes the unequal relationship between Africa and the developed world;
- Ensuring that all partnerships with Nepad are linked to the Millennium Development Goals and other agreed development goals and targets <www.nepad.org/en.html>.

One of the most eye-catching aspects of Nepad is its stated position that if Africa is to begin to emerge from poverty, the continent requires a GDP growth rate of seven per cent per annum and that given Africa's present low saving and investment ratio, the continent would need \$64 billion of resource inflows *every* year, about thirteen per cent of Africa's gross national income per year. As Paragraph 147 asserts, 'Africa needs to fill an annual resource gap of 12 per cent of its GDP, or \$64 billion. This will require increased domestic savings, as well as improvements in the public revenue collection systems. However, *the bulk of the needed resources will have to be obtained from outside the continent*'. As part of this, Nepad proposes that African leaders will hold each other accountable and will practise good governance and in return, the West will commit itself to aiding Africa's renaissance and development through increased disbursements of aid and capital flows.

Nepad openly links development, security, governance and democracy together and reflects a nascent pan-Africanism that has been part of Africa's identity and hopes for decades. Having said that, it would be an exaggeration to claim, as the Executive Secretary of the UNECA does, that Nepad is 'the most important advance in development thinking for Africa in the past forty years' (Amoako 2002:1). Rather, Nepad might be seen as a reaction to and stemming from, an environment in which the West has seemingly disengaged from the continent and from a globalizing world that appears to be leaving Africa behind. This all takes place within the broader context where it appears that 'not only has the international leverage of African leaders been drastically diminished in the globalizing post-Cold War world, they now sail in the largely uncharted waters of eroding norms of sovereignty, dwindling Western concern with Africa's poverty, a vacuum of ideological visions and the growing power of external non-state actors such as multinational corporations, non-governmental organizations, crime syndicates and CNN' (Gerhart 2001:195).

Though we should be most cautious in advancing the idea that Africa is marginalized from the rest of the world, Nepad operates from the essential premise that the countries of the industrialized world, many of them former colonialists, have dodged their historical responsibility towards Africa (Taylor and Williams 2004). Problematically, this position then grants outsiders the role of "rescuing" the continent, with internal actors (very much restricted to local elites) playing a supporting

role, at best. Noting this, critics have cast Nepad as an elaborate attempt to guarantee the continuation of resources to Africa in order to maintain the personal rulerships on the continent, rather than genuine project to reconfigure Africa’s place in the world (Chabal 2002:462).

At the same time, Nepad has cast itself the role of reversing the largely negative perceptions of the continent that currently prevail and which dominate, to varying degrees, the media in the West. As Thabo Mbeki has noted, ‘One of the most important challenges is to address the negative perceptions amongst investors who see Africa as a high-risk area In many instances, the investors get a wrong message from those who do not want Africa to succeed’ (Mbeki 2002a:153). That is why a Nepad report claimed that one of the priorities ‘in the short to medium term’ was to ‘showcase projects and investment opportunities in Africa’, implying that the rest of the world is unaware – or erroneously informed – of the situation in the continent (Nepad Secretariat 2003:14). Whilst promoting Africa is an admirable enterprise, it does however spring from a questionable understanding of Africa’s “image” in the rest of the world:

At best the image-problem theory asserts that Africa is no worse than anywhere else, which is essentially an admission that it is not yet a compelling business destination and needs investment decisions to be made on the basis of charity rather than financial advantage. Further, this theory shows a [distorted] way of thinking, which assumes that conspiratorial states really can control the decisions taken by private industry and that industry makes decisions based on racial agendas rather than profit. Clearly some firms are largely nationalist, but these are not the class of firms that partake in global investment. [The idea] that such multinationals are part of a cabal is to defy common sense and the reality of trillions of dollars of multinational investment around the globe (Herbert 2003:132).

Indeed, the impression that there is some sort of cabal or conspiracy among those ‘who do not want Africa to succeed’ is based on particular assumptions vis-à-vis global politics. Curiously, such sentiments are a return to the sort of attitudes that characterised much of the 1960s–1980s when the initial African recovery plans were first formulated. Thus whilst on the one hand we can trace an evolution in development thinking in Africa, crystallised in Nepad, on the other we have come full circle.

From the Lagos Plan to the New Partnership

Nepad has not, obviously, sprung from a vacuum and indeed there are a host of predecessors to the Partnership that allows observers to place this latest African renewal program within its broader historical and intellectual context. Any evaluation of this wider milieu must recognize that since the early 1980s a philosophical approach to economics and development, one that is broadly in alignment with the orthodox strictures of liberalization, privatisation and the “free market”, has progressively become dominant and that this has gradually but profoundly influenced

pan-African strategies for development, ending in Nepad. In short, the values and norms associated with liberal prescriptions have become the starting point from which African (elite) dialogue with their Western counterparts bases its broad foundations. That understandings of Africa's developmental options based on liberalization are grafted onto highly dysfunctional political and economic systems, is rarely commented upon by the promoters of such "solutions".

At the same time, "alternative" visions for Africa have largely lost credence, particularly outside of Africa but also from within. This, after all, is implicit in Nepad. Yet though Nepad has abandoned the stance popular in the 1970s of seeking to blame all of Africa's predicament on the colonial legacy, the baby has been thrown out with the bathwater – there is now little appreciation of the manner by which the continent has been inserted into the global economy and in particular, how and why this has stimulated and perpetuated neo-patrimonial systems of governance.

The Nepad project itself acknowledges that previous plans have largely failed. Paragraph 42 states that, 'The New Partnership for Africa's Development recognizes that there have been attempts in the past to set out continent-wide development programs. For a variety of reasons, both internal and external, including questionable leadership and ownership by Africans themselves, these have been less than successful. However, there is today a new set of circumstances, which lend themselves to integrated practical implementation'. But, in stating this, the document shows little appreciation or understanding of the true nature of post-colonial politics on the continent. Indeed as Chabal (2002:448) points out, Paragraph 42 raises two important questions. 'The first is whether African leaders, and those who advise them, are willing to study the "variety of reasons" that have hitherto prevented development. The second is whether there really is today a new "set of circumstances" when it comes to the exercise of power on the continent'. As Chabal then notes, 'Unless the lessons of the past are learnt, there is very little reason to believe that the nature of politics in Africa will change simply because of the (admittedly) admirable ambition displayed by Nepad' (ibid.).

The Best Laid Plans ...

Although debate regarding Africa's development emerged before, during and immediately after the decolonization process (most symbolically launched at the Bandung Conference of 1955), it was really in the 1970s that questions pertaining to how and where Africa would "fit" into the wider international political economy became prominent. Most resolutions adopted by African leaders through the OAU in the early years of independence had been aimed at the notion that the economic integration of Africa was a prerequisite for real independence and development. This was the main theme of the declarations from Algiers (1968), Addis Ababa (1970 and 1973), Kinshasa (1976) and Libreville (1977). But from the late 1970s onwards,

Africa became progressively inundated with various plans, frameworks, agendas and declarations all aimed (to varying degrees) at promoting development and, later, democracy. The main programs are listed below:

- Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) and the Final Act of Lagos (1980). Claimed to promote autocentric development and greater cooperation within Africa.
- The African Charter on Human and People’s Rights (Nairobi 1981) and the Grand Bay Declaration and Plan of Action on Human Rights. Spearheaded by African civil society but adopted by the OAU to encourage human rights on the continent.
- Africa’s Priority Program for Economic Recovery (APPER) – 1985.
- OAU Declaration on the Political and Socio-Economic Situation in Africa and the Fundamental Changes Taking Place in the World (1990). Claimed to emphasize Africa’s will to determine its own destiny.
- The Charter on Popular Participation adopted in 1990. Claimed to place ordinary Africans at the “centre of development”
- The Kampala Document (1991). Stipulated that peace, security and stability are inseparable conditions and the basis for development and co-operation in Africa.
- The Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community – 1991.
- The Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (1993). African leaders pledged themselves to promote peace and stability in Africa.
- Cairo Agenda for Action (1995). Claimed to “relaunch” Africa’s political, economic and social development.
- African Common Position on Africa’s External Debt Crisis (1997). Sought to find a common strategy for tackling Africa’s debt crisis.
- The Algiers Decision on Unconstitutional Changes of Government (1999) and the Lomé Declaration on the framework for an OAU Response to Unconstitutional Changes (2000).
- The 2000 Solemn Declaration of the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation. Claimed to establish principles for the sponsorship of democracy and “good governance” in Africa.
- The Constitutive Act of the African Union. Adopted in 2000 at the Lomé Summit (Togo), entered into force in 2001.
- The Omega Plan. Prepared in 2001 by Abdoulaye Wade, president of Senegal and premised on four central pillars, dealing with the building of infrastructures, notably information and communication (ICT), education and human resource development, health and agriculture
- The New Africa Initiative of 2001, promoted by Mbeki, Obasanjo and Bouteflika and the precursor to Nepad.
- The New Partnership for Africa’s Development (Nepad): adopted as a program of the AU at the Lusaka Summit (2001).

In brief, Africa has never been short of plans and programs. However, what arguably has united such declarations has been the fact that the vast majority have been elitist programs drawn up with very little popular consultation. Even a widespread knowledge of their existence on the continent has often been lacking.

Early post-colonial economic proposals were generally motivated by the desire (at least rhetorically) to surmount what were regarded as problems emanating from the legacy bequeathed by colonialism. Thus stress was laid on accelerated projects to develop infrastructure and education whilst import-substitution, encouraged at the time by development agencies and international financial institutions (IFIs), was meant to stimulate industrialization (Anyang'Nyong'o and Coughlin 1991). This strategy fell apart before the twin problems of the collapse in the price of primary commodities and the debilitating effect of malgovernance eroded the resources and capacity of a great many African states to pursue such policies.

By the late 1970s, African development had begun to manifestly stall on a continental level and solutions and explanations for the emerging crisis of development were required and necessary. Crucially, reflections on how and why this disastrous situation had arisen came at the tail-end of the push for a New International Economic Order (NIEO). This "NIEO moment" in itself was influenced by Dependency Theory (Cardoso and Faletto 1979; Frank 1967, 1975; Wallerstein 1974, 1979 etc.) which broadly argued that the South's relationship to the North was historically contingent and that its status of impoverishment and dependence was rooted in the process by which it had been integrated into the capitalist world economy during the colonial period, a theme that drew its intellectual heritage from Lenin. Although originally drawn up by Latin Americanists, African scholars (or scholars working on Africa) soon applied the theory to the continent, arguing that Africa had been integrated into the world economy at a subordinate position in the emerging global division of labour (see Rodney 1972). Much of the intellectual oeuvre within Africanist academia at the time broadly supported the Dependency position (see Gutkind and Wallerstein 1976).

The NIEO as applied to Africa was supposed to address the various issues surrounding the ongoing global trade and investment regimes that were felt to hinder the continent's development. Promoting an ideological mix of global Keynesianism heavily influenced by Dependency Theory, the NIEO called for a restructuring of the perceived external and structural constraints on development (Singer 1984:14–17). One of the most forceful African advocates at the time of both the NIEO and the broadly *dependencia* position was Adedayo Adedeji, then Director-General of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). Adedeji was to become a leading figure behind the push for both the Monrovia meeting and the later Lagos Plan of Action (see Adedeji 1989).

The Lagos Plan of Action

Initially meeting in Monrovia, Liberia, in July 1979, African leaders advanced the idea that the continent’s development could not be contingent on simply waiting for benefits to accrue from the types of special relationships crafted with Europe through the Yaoundé and Lomé agreements, nor could Africa progress without actively tackling the legacy of underdevelopment left by Africa’s insertion into the global capitalist economy by colonization. Autocentricity and the continued demand for a NIEO were intrinsically wrapped up in this thrust (Mathews 1989:52–57). The Monrovia meeting determined that a number of strategic tasks were necessary in order for Africa to develop and overcome the impasse that the continent was experiencing by the mid-1970s. Amongst other resolutions, Monrovia pronounced that the creation of national and regional bodies was necessary to pursue autocentricity and that Africa had to develop self-reliance in food production whilst engaging in developmental-oriented planning. The lofty aim at the time was to create modern and developed, or at least discernibly developing – if economic growth rates are measured – economies by the year 2000. Borrowing from the Europeans, a Common Market was deemed necessary to be in place by 2025. The Monrovia Declaration closed with the decision to direct the OAU’s Secretary General and the Executive Secretary of the UN-ECA to formulate a program to stimulate such development.

This process continued in July 1980 with the Second Extraordinary Session of the Heads of States and Governments, which was held in Nigeria and produced the much-vaunted Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act (OAU 1980). Essentially, the Lagos Plan of Action was a clarification of the broad philosophy that Monrovia had indicated and was a document that sought to arrive at strategies that might promote growth on a continent that was disengaged and less influenced by the vagaries of the global market (Onwuka et al. 1985). An emphasis on inter-African trade and investment through regional co-operation was central to the LPA, in spite, or perhaps because of the fact that, ‘by 1980 – when the LPA was adopted – almost all the economic co-operation schemes optimistically launched in the 1960s – the halcyon days of African integration – had become largely moribund’ (Asante 1985:82). The reduction in external debt, import-substitution policies and a general goal of auto-centric development further underpinned the Lagos Plan.

Perhaps unsurprisingly given both the Dependency approach that provided the framework for its analysis and (and this is perhaps the most important) the fact that it was African elites themselves conducting the exercise, the LPA’s conclusions were ‘a classic dependency interpretation of the African condition. It exonerated African leaders and blamed the historical injustices suffered by the continent and the continued dependence on external forces for the crisis’ (Owusu 2003; 1657). Certainly, the LPA went out of its way to absolve the post-colonial elites of any responsibility for Africa’s predicament. Indeed, the LPA quite explicitly stated that ‘despite all efforts

made by its leaders, [the continent] remains the least developed' (OAU 1980:7). In other words, and this seems rather remarkable from the vantage point of today, the LPA failed to generally consider the broad issues of malgovernance and accountability but rather focused on the external as the source of all of Africa's woes, a situation that had frustrated 'all efforts'. In general, 'the tendency of the Lagos Plan was to list the problems that African countries were facing, suggest [solutions] without even a vague hint of how these could be financed, and then recommend the creation of numerous international institutions to help African countries' (Herbst 1993:139).

That the LPA failed is incontrovertible. Based on faulty assumptions about Africa's economic condition, and ignoring systematic malgovernance, its prescriptions were described as 'economically illiterate' by Clapham (1996a:176). Primarily, the LPA strategy was based on a continuation of import substitution and hinged on three conditions that Africa simply did not possess. The assumptions made by the LPA were that, 'the actual surplus extracted from the agricultural sector is, in fact, invested in the industrial sector, where it will be converted into additional manufacturing capacity Second, peasants must continue to produce – indeed expand production – despite conditions that clearly work against them. Third, certain (heavy) industries need specialized manpower and relatively large markets to be efficient and viable. None of these conditions were really met in Africa' (Ergas 1987:309). Indeed, 'why these measures should be taken and what priority should be given to them [was] never stated because the Lagos Plan [did] not suggest how the agrarian crisis the African states [were] facing originated' (Herbst 1993:139). To do so, it is suggested, would have involved apportioning degrees of blame, which would have inevitably led to African leaders having to take their fair share of it, something which was scrupulously avoided and dodged by the Plan and its architects.

The Era of Structural Adjustment

A year later, in 1981, the World Bank responded to the LPA with its own analysis. Entitled *Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: An Agenda for Action* (also known as the "Berg Report" after its main author, Professor Elliot Berg), the Bank came out strongly against most of the LPA's positions, in particular the notion that the state should be the main engine of growth and the absolution by the LPA of the malevolent role played by African elites in their continent's demise (World Bank 1981). Meddling by the state in the supposed free running of the market was particularly criticized and was seen as a main reason for Africa's declining growth record, coupled with malgovernance (Arrighi 2002:5–35). The perceived over-ambitious targets of the LPA, such as a pan-continental Common Market à la European Community, were also critiqued. But 'such analyses challenged the evidently self-serving perceptions of African elites and their sympathisers [captured in the

LPA] and aroused the hostility of institutions such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa' (Clapham 1996b:811)

In essence, the Berg Report was a rebuttal of the Dependency-tinged, NIEO-informed LPA and the opening salvo in a decade-long campaign to shape developmental discourse in Africa along lines favoured by the key global economic players (Browne and Cummings 1985). In this regard it should be noted that the Monrovia Declaration and the LPA were launched on the eve of the election to government of conservative neo-liberals in Britain and the United States, and the Plan of Action in particular advanced a vision at sharp variance with the gathering thrust of global capitalism and the views of key elites in the developed world. Indeed, separate from the failure of African elites to really do anything about Africa's declining situation, the demise of the Plan's vision played itself out as an integral part of the reassertion of Western-centred hegemony – 'America's quest for supremacy [over] the Third World' as Augelli and Murphy (1988) have put it. This was coupled with the steady demise, though not outright extinction – as the initial position of the ANC in the early 1990s in South Africa demonstrated (Taylor 2001) – of a protesting voice in Africa's relations with the developed world.

Although various adjustment packages had been implemented in Africa before the 1980s, the Berg Report was to usher in a new era in African politics and development, the era of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). Just as the LPA had skated over the behaviour of African elites, the Berg Report remained relatively uncritical of donor activities. The Report advanced a dual strategy for the continent: privatisation and liberalization. Reform packages that were rolled out in the 1980s by all the main creditors as well as donors contained these two basic elements as essential conditionalities for disbursements. A structural adjustment package, granted in 1981 to Côte d'Ivoire and soon to become the first of what would eventually become 26 SAPs to that country, captures the basic ingredients:

The reforms envisaged by the program are designed to improve the level of public savings and the efficiency in the use of public resources; restructure the agricultural planning system and associated development institutions so that an expanded, well-designed investment program yielding high returns can be mounted in the sector; reflect the costs of providing public services to the sector; assure that rational prices and world market conditions would guide decisions to invest and produce; restructure public enterprise, management, financing and accountability to ensure efficient market oriented operations; restructure incentives, to promote efficient export-oriented industrial investments (World Bank 1981).

These elements staked out both an economic and political project and came at a historical juncture when financial indebtedness and economic mismanagement were acting to drastically undermine the continent's development trajectory. At the same time, leaders within Africa began to realise that agreeing to the ongoing restructur-

ing process as promoted through SAPs, even if their commitment was only rhetorical, was necessary for political survival (Van de Walle 2001).

The means to overcome Africa's crisis were identified (even if unconsciously) as a return to two old theoretical approaches: neo-classical economics, and Modernisation Theory (Mengisteab and Logan 1995). Within SAPs was an implicit echoing of the modernizers' argument that the "fundamentals" had to be in place to assure economic development. Not bringing such "fundamentals" into place was blamed for the lack of success of SAPs in many African countries (Harvey 1996). Indeed, the failure to implement SAPs has been held to be a contributing factor in explaining Africa's continued demise even after SAPs were introduced (Van de Walle 2001). In other words, there was a considerable disparity between rhetorical and practical commitment to economic and political reform. In fact, new loans disbursed by the IFIs as part of a SAP were often seen simply as new sources of largesse to distribute to supporters and clients, with minimal intention to fulfil signed commitments. Yet, the pretence that both donor and recipient were engaged in serious reform was often played out for public consumption. As Van de Walle (2001:224) noted:

Meetings between the government and its creditors, UN summits, and the annual meetings of the IFI were replete with communiqués and announcements "commending" African governments for the "hard work" they had demonstrated. Governments complained about the austerity that was demanded of them and complained of the sociopolitical difficulties involved with implementing reform programs. The impression was given that adjustment was a kind of favour that governments were extending to the West, at tremendous cost.

However, the supposed "one-size-fits-all" approach which characterized much of the SAPs generated a counter-reaction in the form of the UNECA's Priority Program for Economic Recovery 1986–1990 (APPER). Later transformed and repackaged as the *United Nations Program of Action for Africa's Economic Recovery and Development* (UN-PAAERD), the aim of both initiatives was to ostensibly attempt to work with SAPs through projects that might allow African states to connect with the global market through "shared commitments" and joint efforts (OAU 1986). Essentially, the debt issue and the scant levels of domestic investment were seen as major stumbling blocks to any successful implementation of the SAPs (rather than elite resistance and obstruction) and thus, echoing Nepad's prescriptions some twenty years later, an injection of capital was deemed necessary if the continent was to be developmentally kick-started and if the SAP-affected countries were to be cushioned from the more negative effects of the programs. Thus assisting African states to put into practice policy reforms in line with the SAPs was deemed essential to the whole recovery project.

The impact of SAPs on Africa and African elites' positions, particularly as glasnost and perestroika made Africa's strategic position less and less clear, resurfaced in July 1989 with the UNECA's *African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjust-*

ment Programs for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP) (OAU 1989). The Framework sprang from studies by Adebayo Adedeji and other African economists, frustrated at the perceived sidelining – by both African elites and their industrialized partners – of their LPA.¹ The AAF-SAP started out from the basis that ‘Up to this day, this blueprint [the LPA] contains a valid analysis and the right prescriptions for African countries to transform their economies’ (OAU 1989:3). Thus the AAF-SAP maintained that huge capital investment in Africa was necessary to spur economic growth whilst questioning the insistence by donors that Africa should increase its exports as a means of escaping the crisis of development. Rather, the AAF-SAP asserted that a change in consumption patterns to favour locally or regionally-produced goods over imported products was required whilst internationally, the Framework demanded that the donors should support programs designed and implemented by African governments themselves and aimed at tackling specific national problems, rather than seeking to impose the perceived blanket programs associated with SAPs. In other words, the AAF-SAP in effect demanded increased flows of aid but with little control by the donors on how this was to be spent, arguing that African leadership was best placed in deciding how to spend such resources.

Yet, the assertion that there should be some sudden change in consumption patterns, without addressing the fundamental problem of rapacious elites (who were the main source of such distortions) was bound to fail as was the idea that capital resources should be simply handed over to African leaders to spend as they saw fit. Certainly, ‘the claim that no changes were required in the management of African states themselves was unsustainable’ (Clapham 1996a:176). In fact, the AAF-SAP ‘was especially critical of reliance on foreign experts and managers in national economic decision making in Africa. Indeed, it seemed to blame the presence of foreigners more than ... external factors such as the debt burden for Africa’s crisis’ (Herbst 1993:141). This suggests that the AAF-SAP was perhaps little more than a nationalist counter-reaction against SAPs.

Indeed, the AAF-SAP’s understanding of the African crisis was limited in scope, ‘dangerously simplistic’ as Herbst (1993:143) puts it, and largely restricted itself to commenting that ‘the crisis that struck Africa in the 1980s had many causes. The drought resulted in one of the worst famines Africa has known this century. The fall in the prices of Africa’s major commodities made foreign exchange become very scarce and very expensive’ (OAU 1989:12). Thus, just as the LPA did, African leaders effectively absolved themselves from any responsibility, finding in the weather, foreign experts and external factors such as falls in commodity prices, alibis for the continent’s demise. Problematically, the AAF-SAP ‘seem[ed] not at all concerned about the performance of African states even though over the last two

1. The choice of the word “their” is deliberate. The AAF-SAP was seen in many quarters as very much Adedeji’s project and an attempt to defend and justify his LPA – consider Asante 1991 for example.

decades, all evidence suggest[ed] that this performance ha[d] been abysmal' (Herbst 1993:145).

The AAF-SAP of 1989 was however adopted by the UN General Assembly, which voted in favour of it. A resolution invited the General Assembly to consider the Framework as a basis for "constructive dialogue" and "fruitful consultation". This, despite the observation that it was 'a warmed-over version of the Lagos Plan of Action with vague and contradictory, largely statist, policy proposals that could not be implemented under the best of conditions, all of which [were] linked to renewed demands for substantially increased external resource flows and debt relief' (Callaghy 1991:55). However, like almost all previous plans in Africa, the AAF-SAP never got off the ground, primarily due to the lack of commitment by both those African leaders who had signed the Framework (thus echoing the fate of the LPA) and the IFIs and Western governments. After all this, Zimbabwe adopted an IMF-tailored SAP within a year of African finance ministers rushing to pledge support for the AAF-SAP and supposedly rejecting SAPs!

Interestingly, just as the Lagos Plan had been followed by the Berg Report, the AAF-SAP was rapidly followed by a new World Bank document in 1989, *Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth*. This report argued that sound incentives and a decent infrastructure were required to construct an enabling environment for African growth to develop. The Report also however argued that 'African governments and foreign financiers (commercial banks and export credit agencies as well as donor agencies) must share responsibility [for the continent's crisis]. Foreign financiers and suppliers promoted capital exports with attractive credits, and poor coordination among donors caused duplication and waste' (World Bank 1989:27). The Report also touched on malgovernance as a major cause of Africa's impasse, asserting that 'foreign aid has greatly expanded the opportunities for malfeasance exacerbated by the venality of many foreign contractors and suppliers' (World Bank 1989:27). But, somewhat signalling a shift from its previous hard-nosed stance towards the role of the state, the report asserted that human resource development was required (a role that the state could perform) and that a social safety net was also needed. Broadly, an acceptance of the normative principles of neo-liberalism, whilst advocating ameliorating policies to cope with the effects that such policies have on vulnerable groups, at the same time as sharing the blame between endogenous and exogenous factors, now emerged as defining principles, something which has been maintained to date and which informs to varying degrees Nepal's own prescriptions.

Such broad tendencies were not simply confined to the discussion around Africa's specific problems, but also played themselves out on a wider level where the debate on what constituted development was more and more influenced by the collapse of the socialist bloc, the emerging New World Order and the overarching prescriptions of neo-liberalism. Indeed, with the Cold War now over and the "triumph" of

the alleged “Western way of life” (i.e. liberal economics and politics) apparently in ascendance, civic organizations on the continent began to argue that Africa needed to face up to the governance problematique; dictatorships and corruption could no longer be ignored with reference to the fight against communism (or equally, the fight against capitalism). Thus, the UNECA convened the Arusha conference on Popular Participation for Democracy in Africa, subsequently issuing *The African Charter for Popular Participation for Development* (1990). The conference (in contrast to the later genesis of Nepad) was a collaborative endeavour between African NGOs, African governments and UN agencies and sprang from the call by NGOs that emanated from the 1988 mid-term review of the UN-PAAERD. Indeed, given the later Nepad’s lack of consultation with civil society it is curious that nothing was learnt from the Arusha conference, where over five hundred participants from a diverse array of NGOs, grass-roots organizations and associations were in attendance.² But perhaps because it was heavily influenced by ordinary African people, the Arusha conference asserted that Africa’s problems sprang from a ‘political context of socio-economic development [which] has been characterized, in many instances, by an over-centralization of power and impediments to the effective participation of the overwhelming majority of the people in social, political and economic development’ (African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation 1990).

At the same time the African Charter demanded that African governments respect ‘freedom of association, especially political association’ and the ‘presence of democratic institutions’, whilst it called for the ‘rule of law and social and economic justice’ and ‘political accountability of leadership at all levels’. In other words, contra to Nepad promoters’ claims to its uniqueness and path-breaking vision, the African Charter was demanding much the same elements for African renewal as Nepad, but over ten years earlier and with a particular emphasis on elite accountability. Ordinary Africans, through their grassroots involvement in the African Charter, had for the first time expressed the notion that democracy and accountability was central and that the blame for Africa’s demise could be sourced to a large degree (but not, obviously, exclusively) from within Africa – or rather, from within the palaces of African presidents. In this context, the UN moved to bring into being its *New Agenda for Development of Africa* (UN-NADAF 1991).

Like so many other previous agendas and plans, the UN-NADAF was produced mainly because, unfortunately, a previous program (in this case, the UN-PAAERD) had not reached its objectives or been implemented in any meaningful way. The UN-NADAF asserted that a basic precondition for economic development was political and social stability. No longer was there a pretence that governance had nothing to do with poor economic performance or that Africa’s woes were all exogenous,

2. I am aware of the limitations of the civil society concept and its applicability to Africa – see Bayart 1986; Makumbe 1998.

as the much-vaunted LPA had tried to assert. Essentially, the rapid evaporation of the optimism associated with the end of the Cold War and its supposed implications for an Africa now free of East-West rivalry meant that a new analysis of Africa's predicament was deemed necessary, building on the African Charter. But again, the UN-NADAF included ingredients that were to re-emerge with Nepad. For instance, the Norwegian Minister of Development Co-operation (Nordheim-Larsen 1995) saw in the UN-NADAF a message asserting that:

A foundation for economic development can only be found in societies where the political stability is based on the democratic participation of the population, respect for human rights and an equitable distribution of income. The international community has a clear responsibility to help foster such a development and channel development assistance to where it is conducive for good governance.

This last element is now replicated in the notion of Nepad's peer review and the \$64 billion in new investment and assistance to "good" African polities. At the same time, market access for African economies, in particular the ability to export to the developed world, was identified as crucial and that measures to enable this should be implemented as a matter of urgency within the framework of the World Trade Organization (WTO). In this understanding, the UN-NADAF saw the WTO as having strengthened a rules-based trading system and that furthering liberalization opened up opportunities for sustainable development and growth if African countries seized the occasion *and* if they reformed themselves.

With this apparent breakthrough in the involvement of civil society, the Africa Leadership Forum, a pan-continental organisation led by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, in discussion and partnership with the OECD, ECA and the OAU, organised a number of meetings which ended with what became known as the Kampala Forum of May 1991. This conference, attended by some 500 participants from Africa, adopted a proposal (known as the Kampala Document) to establish a Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Co-operation in Africa, (CSSDCA).

The background to the CSSDCA was that in the early 1990s, a gathering of African statesmen, academics, and civil leaders from throughout the continent had met to put together a comprehensive plan to make the continent become less dependent on the rest of the world and prepare it to compete in the global economy. Those who gathered to write what would come to be known as the Kampala Document envisioned an organization which would succeed where the OAU had proven ineffectual. This CSSDCA was aimed at providing a forum for the debate on democratisation, security issues, and sustainable development (Deng and Zartman 2001). Its aim was thus to set up a normative framework that would make up and lay out yardsticks which states might be able to measure themselves against. In theory, the CSSDCA represented a site where the advancement of certain shared values might progress.

Importantly, and echoing the later evolution of Nepad, mechanisms to make certain that decisions adopted by adherents were actually implemented was part of the project. The Report of the First Ministerial Meeting of the CSSDCA (held in Abuja in May 2000) was endorsed by the OAU/AEC Summit in Lomé 2000.

African Economic Community

As the growing consensus on what was wrong with Africa – namely a lack of democracy and excessive state interference in the economy – emerged, confrontation with the developed world over the evils of a dependency generated by the global capitalist system gave way to “dialogue”. This actuality was confirmed with the formulation of the African Economic Community (AEC) in 1991. The AEC was established by the Abuja Treaty at an OAU Summit in June 1991, but only came into force in May 1994 after the requisite numbers signed up for ratification. Its main aim was to establish a pan-continental economic community by 2025, predicated on the bynow standard fare of ‘the gradual removal, among Member States, of obstacles to the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital’ (Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community 1991).

So far, like many other African plans and declarations, the Abuja Treaty has failed to meet its stated objectives. Even taking 1994 and not 1991 as its starting point, the Treaty has thus far failed in meeting the target of its First Stage (1994–1999) which was to be the strengthening of existing regional economic communities within a period not exceeding five years. It is unlikely, judging on the evidence so far, that its Second Stage (1999–2007), of stabilizing tariff barriers and non-tariff barriers, customs duties and internal taxes within a period not exceeding eight years will be met. Time will tell whether all its other Stages will follow the same fate. The specific objectives of the AEC are:

- To promote economic, social and cultural development and the integration of African economies in order to increase economic self-reliance and promote an endogenous and self-sustained development;
- To establish, on a continental scale, a framework for the development, mobilization and utilization of the human and material resources of Africa in order to achieve a self-reliant development;
- To promote co-operation in all fields of human endeavour in order to raise the standard of living of African peoples, and maintain and enhance economic stability, foster close and peaceful relations among Member States and contribute to the progress, development and the economic integration of the Continent;
- To coordinate and harmonize policies among existing and future economic communities in order to foster the gradual establishment of the Community (African Economic Community 1991).

Many of these ideals are now replicated by Nepad. Interestingly, the AEC Treaty includes punishment for states not adhering to its conventions, something that Nepad promoters have, as various “test cases” such as Zimbabwe have demonstrated, shied away from. After all, the AEC Treaty states quite clearly that ‘Any Member State, which persistently fails to honour its general undertakings under this Treaty or fails to abide by the decisions or regulations of the Community, may be subjected to sanctions by the Assembly’ (African Economic Community 1991). Among such general undertakings are the ‘recognition, promotion and protection of human and peoples’ rights’ and ‘accountability’. So, the idea advanced by Nepad promoters that its peer review mechanism and the notion, sold to the G-8, that censure and action against miscreants were part of the “uniqueness” of Nepad is once again somewhat misleading.

Towards the African Renaissance

All of the above plans, declarations, frameworks and programs provide the broader context of what was to develop in the late 1990s—a concerted attempt by a select few African presidents to re-package and exclusively define the question of Africa’s development to the wider world. It is important to provide the above detailed context to demonstrate that not only did Nepad not emerge from a vacuum, but also to show that Africa’s history is replete with previous initiatives and in this light there is a danger that Nepad might simply be another one added to the list. The failure of the previous plans is largely due to the lack of capacity and resources *and* a systematic lack of political will on behalf of African leaders to seriously attempt to implement what they have signed up to. This is not to arbitrarily dismiss the very real exogenous constraints placed upon African manoeuvrability nor overlook the debilitating effect the debt burden has placed on African budgets. Certainly, African agency has been inhibited to an unusual degree. But, it remains true, seventeen years after it was written, that:

[S]lavery and colonialism ... exacted an extremely heavy toll in sub-Saharan Africa and that the international exchange system does not always function to the benefit of [developing countries]; but African governments did have some room to manoeuvre, to bring about more development; they have, in the final analysis, proven to be notoriously deficient in that respect (Ergas 1987:308).

It is that context (and to a degree, realization) that the “African Renaissance” sought to address. Certainly, the genesis of Nepad, aside from the plethora of above-mentioned projects, can be sourced to Thabo Mbeki’s “vision” of an African Renaissance. Since late 1996 when Mbeki started to play a more active role in the formulation of South Africa’s foreign policy, the idea of a continental renewal has developed momentum within Mbeki’s thinking. Mbeki formally introduced the idea of a Renaissance in an address to an American audience in April 1997. Also in

1997, a document entitled *The African Renaissance: A Workable Dream* was released by the Office of South Africa's then Deputy President (Mbeki). It suggested five areas of engagement with the African continent: the encouragement of cultural exchange; the 'emancipation of the African woman from patriarchy'; the mobilization of youth; the broadening, deepening and sustenance of democracy; the initiation of sustainable economic development (Vale and Maseko 1998:274). As part of this, Mbeki (1999) asserted that 'political organizations and governments in all African countries should be mobilized to act in furtherance of the objectives of the African Renaissance'.

Intriguingly, 'whereas the Renaissance in Europe was a process that occurred independent of any program designed to deliver it, Mbeki suggested that a renaissance could and should be consciously induced in Africa' (Barrell 2000:3). Thus having interpreted the European Renaissance as a sort of willed project that motored Europe into modernity, rather than an amorphous process that went in many directions, Mbeki sought to place South Africa at the forefront of solving Africa's problems through his advocacy of the renaissance concept and active diplomacy. This culminated in the birth of Nepad.

In an address at the United Nations University in April 1998, Mbeki expanded on some of the core elements that formed the substance of his vision. Amongst these were included the need to establish and maintain systems of good governance; to introduce new economic policies which seek to create conditions that are attractive for the private sector; to reduce the participation of the state in the ownership of the economy and to build modern economies; to establish regional economic arrangements to lessen the disadvantages created by small markets; to introduce policies that would ensure access to good education, adequate health care, decent houses, clean water and modern sanitation (Mbeki 1999). In spite of the impassioned rhetoric, the essential features of the African Renaissance and how to encourage its development remained vague: 'high on sentiment, low on substance' (Vale and Maseko 1998:277). Furthermore, in light of the various plans previously advanced on the continent, they were not particularly original. Indeed:

They amounted to little more than a list of objectives of the kind that any democrat might formulate if he was intent on good governance and sound economic management in order to achieve a better quality of life for his compatriots in an African context. By presenting them as the sufficient conditions for a renaissance in Africa, Mbeki was doing little more than giving a set of fairly ordinary policy objectives the luster of a grand cause (Barrell 2000).

Whilst their advocacy by the President of the most developed country in Africa was of note, it must be said that Mbeki's pronouncements constituted little more than an endorsement of the existing prescriptions vis-à-vis development, albeit presented in Africanist terms. Indeed, much of Mbeki's pronouncements was couched as contemporary commonsense and broadly fitting with Mbeki's own domestic economic

program (Taylor 2001). In fact, it was admitted that Mbeki's version of the African Renaissance acceded to orthodox notions of what constitutes "best practice" and "good" economic policy. One leading South African government official for instance conceded that the 'attempt on our part to attract investments [and] the tendency ... for us to start behaving (without being derogatory) like beauty queens on a catwalk, with a judge based in Europe or in the Americas who will say "yes, beautiful" and therefore we will invest or we will provide aid' is real (Netshitenzhe 1999). In return for such restructuring, Mbeki and other leaders – as Nepad was to later demonstrate – expected a quid pro quo from international society, in particular, a concerted international effort to provide debt relief for Africa; the introduction of measures to encourage larger flows of capital into the continent; reasonable trade policies, to provide for market access to African products; an assurance that Africa can eventually occupy 'her due place within the councils of the world' (Mbeki 1999).

Mbeki's definition of the African Renaissance was thus based upon the expressed desire to promote the liberalization of markets, free trade and liberal democratic institutions across the continent. In this sense, the latest version(s) of Africa's recovery plans have settled quite comfortably into a post-Cold War era where the hegemony of the market has been reasserted. Mbeki's prescriptions reflect the orthodox view in both contemporary development discourse and international relations. Indeed, according to Cheru (1997:239), they reflect the arguments made by 'the World Bank and other donors who would like to see South Africa take the leading role to facilitate collective economic liberalization across the region by improving conditions for a more active role by private agents'. However, the strategic juncture which elevated Mbeki et al.'s plans above previous declarations was the evolving state of affairs at the international level, a subject I turn to now.

The Strategic Juncture

The debacle at the WTO meeting in Seattle in December 1999 meant that a new realization dawned on the world's elites i.e. after Seattle concerns over the direction that globalisation was taking threatened to overturn the global trading regime as defined by the WTO (Melber 2004). Indeed, South Africa's Minister of Trade and Industry, Alec Erwin, argued that after Seattle, Pretoria 'had been able to convey to them [the USA] that if they wanted a deal with the WTO, they would have to see certain things from the perspective of developing nations' (*Financial Mail* (Johannesburg) June 9, 2000). Essentially Erwin was arguing that if the United States, and by extension other Western developed countries, wished to pursue further liberalization within the WTO, then the concerns and interests of the (elites of the) developing world would have to be accommodated. Seattle had demonstrated quite clearly that without such consent, the WTO process could be quite effectively – and very publicly – stopped in its tracks. The later meltdown at Cancun in 2003

proved this to be the case, particularly when it was combined with the concerns of domestic constituencies in the West who could vote in elections. It was thus seen as strategically preferable by the West’s elites to engage with reformers of Mbeki’s and Obasanjo’s credentials, who are essentially relatively “moderate”, than risk allowing a process to develop whereby all sorts of “unreasonable” demands reminiscent of the NIEO might be put on the table (Melber 2004).

In the light of this opening, South Africa exerted a great deal of energy in constructing a nascent bloc of initially developing but later specifically African countries from which a broadly orthodox but reformist agenda could be launched to reinvigorate Africa and which could place on the table concerns about the global trading regime and Africa’s stalled development. In Cairo in March 2000 South Africa met with Brazil, India, Nigeria and Egypt to launch a developing nations trade bloc to challenge the G-7 in the post-Seattle round of WTO negotiations and it was at that time that it became apparent that a troika of reform-minded African leaders, namely Thabo Mbeki, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo were joining together in a variety of multilateral initiatives to push their agenda at every opportunity.

South Africa, enervated by the idea of an African Renaissance, emerged as the pivotal state in trying to forge a common strategy and approach to global trade and development. Foreign Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma claimed that South Africa and selected like-minded countries would ‘form a nucleus of countries in the South that can interact [with the North] on behalf of developing countries’. This ‘is a serious priority for SA’, she went on to say (*Financial Mail* (Johannesburg) February 18, 2000). Also, the profile of Mbeki was raised at international fora, particularly with his so-called ‘Mbeki Global Initiative for Africa’ being touted as the foundation for the continent’s renewal by Western leaders, principally those who styled themselves as adherents of the kinder “Third Way” (Blair, Schroeder, Clinton, Chretien etc).

Mbeki’s profile received a boost at the G-77 meeting in Havana in April 2000 when the body adopted a resolution that agreed with Mbeki’s vision of a united South within global trading bodies such as the WTO. At the same meeting, it was clear that Mbeki’s approach was shared by key African leaders, such as Obasanjo and Algeria’s Abdelaziz Bouteflika, who reiterated the position that the developing world was being excluded from global decision-making mechanisms and processes, resulting in the perpetuation of inequitable relations. Indeed, the G-77 summit was cast as the starting point of a collective process, which would come to reconfigure the future of the global system. Obasanjo said the G-77 was sending ‘a clear message to the developed countries that their reluctance to reform the international financial system is a major threat to international peace and security’ (*Business Day* (Johannesburg) April 14, 2000). The G-77 agreed to form a Directorate to drive this

process and Mbeki was included, along with Obasanjo and Mahathir Mohamed of Malaysia (*Financial Mail* (Johannesburg) April 21, 2000).

Within Africa, the three most active Presidents in the calls for renewal and reform (Bouteflika, Mbeki and Obasanjo) requested from the OAU the mandate to draw up a new plan for the continent's development. This was granted at the OAU's Extraordinary Summit held in Sirte, Libya during September 1999. The three leaders then engaged in a flurry of diplomacy, with the mandate for drawing up a recovery program being extended by the G77 at the summit in Havana in April 2000. These trips, dominated by Mbeki, included flying visits to the United States, Britain, Germany and Denmark. During the visit to Washington in late May 2000, Mbeki won the backing of President Clinton for a supposed far-reaching package of measures to address Africa's problems, including proposals on debt relief, world trade rules, the restructuring of international financial institutions and investment promotion for Africa. The proposed plan or program of action was the first specific elaboration of Mbeki's call at the EU-Africa summit in Cairo in April 2000 for a new global system. At this time it seemed that Pretoria was emerging as the de facto acknowledged "leader" of Africa, something which will be discussed elsewhere in this book. But this position was seemingly recognized when the EU invited Mbeki as the sole "special guest" to a two-day EU summit in Feira in northern Portugal in June 2000. The EU regarded Mbeki's presence as 'a mark of the warm and growing relations between the EU and South Africa', and saw it as reaffirming the commitments given at the first-ever summit between Africa and the European Union, held April 2000 in Cairo (European Union 2000).

A month after Feira, the OAU Summit (in Togo, July 2000) mandated the three leaders (Bouteflika, Mbeki and Obasanjo) to enter into discussion with the North on behalf of Africa in order to develop more details regarding the proposed "partnership" for the continent's rebirth. That same month, Mbeki and Obasanjo had addressed a summit of the G-7 in Okinawa, Japan. Earlier, Mbeki had met the leaders of the Nordic countries to set out a shared vision for Africa. The Skagen Declaration of June 2000 agreed on the need to review the global economic system as well as the 'global financial architecture' to ensure a significant transfer of resources and capital, from North to South in the form of long-term capital flows and direct investment. Mbeki's stance that globalisation should concomitantly lead to expanded access to markets and technology transfers for Africa was also accepted. Importantly, the Skagen summit found the Nordic prime ministers willing – rhetorically at least – to join Mbeki in working towards more agreeable terms of trade for Africa during the post-Seattle round of WTO talks. Overall, 'the Nordic Prime Ministers agreed on the need to actively support Africa's participation in the New World Economy' (*South African Press Agency* (Johannesburg) June 8, 2000).

Following the raising of the issue of a "partnership" with the leaders of the G-7 at their summit in Japan, work on developing the Millennium Africa Recovery Plan

(MAP) began in earnest and a process of engagement on a bilateral and multilateral level was pursued. The first concept paper was drawn up by Mbeki and his advisers and was quickly accepted by the other two presidents (Boutefilka and Obasanjo) in September 2000 with a Steering Committee being set up to work out a comprehensive agenda. The MAP sought to be the ‘declaration of a firm commitment by African leaders to take ownership and responsibility for the sustainable economic development of the continent. The starting point is a critical examination of Africa’s post independence experience and an acceptance that things have to be done differently to achieve meaningful socio-economic progress’. In return for this critical introspection and a pledge for better governance, the Plan demanded wealthier countries commit themselves to substantially increase aid and investment to Africa. The MAP introduced the idea of ‘a constructive partnership between Africa and the developed world’, later the cornerstone of Nepad, and was ‘a pledge by African leaders based on a firm and shared conviction that they have a pressing duty to eradicate poverty and to place their countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development’ (Department of Foreign Affairs 2001). From this base, the MAP avowed that ‘the priority areas’ any renewal project would cover included:

- Creating peace, security and stability, including democratic governance, without which it will be impossible to engage in meaningful economic activity;
- Investing in Africa’s people through a comprehensive human resource strategy;
- Harnessing and developing Africa’s strategic and comparative advantages in the resource based sectors to lead the development of an industrial strategy;
- The diversification of Africa’s production and exports;
- Increasing investments in the Information and Communication Technology sector, in order to bridge the digital divide;
- The development of infrastructure including transport and energy;
- Developing financing mechanisms (ibid.).

According to the MAP, ‘participating African leaders would form a Compact committing themselves to the Program’ and ‘every attempt will be made ... to be inclusive of all countries that agree to the elements of the Compact’ (ibid). Mention of a “Compact” was of note as at the same time that the MAP was being touted, the UNECA was promoting its Compact for African Recovery, which had been initiated by the Executive Secretary, K.Y. Amoako. In a speech made by Amoako, to the Eighth Session of the ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance in November 2000, Amoako had called for a Compact by which the developed world would increase aid, grant debt relief and open up markets in return for African states implementing political reforms that would, so Amoako asserted, ensure economic take off.

In short, the Compact was based on the notion that enhanced partnerships with the developed world, mutual accountability and peer review, were central to development. This would be overseen by a “Forum of African Leaders” who would make decisions about sub-programs and review progress on the Compact’s implementation. The genesis of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) can be seen to spring then from the Compact, as well as the Kampala Forum. After all, the Compact stated that ‘the quality of governance [was] critical for poverty reduction’ as ‘poor governance leads to [a] vicious circle of impoverishment, conflict, and capital flight’ which, ‘in a globalizing economy [where] international capital seeks secure, rule governed, countries’, would undermine development. In response to Amoako’s speech, the finance ministers requested that the UNECA develop the Compact for consideration by the Joint ECA Conference of Ministers of Finance and Ministers of Economic Development and Planning, planned for May 2001 in Algeria. However, the MAP and Omega Plan (see below), later to be merged, subsumed the Compact, although taking on board elements of the UNECA’s ideas.

Returning to the MAP, the whole program was predicated upon an ‘important prerequisite’, namely ‘a partnership with the rest of the world, especially the developed countries, multilateral institutions and (global and national) private sector players’. In this, ‘the focus of the MAP is not increased aid but increased investments in viable infrastructure and business opportunities’ (ibid.). As a result, ‘substantial consultations with the leaders of developed countries and multilateral institutions are also taking place’ (ibid).

As part of the rhetoric, something which was to continue in the run-up to the launch of Nepad and something which Mbeki and his allies have sought to continually emphasize, this new initiative was said to ‘offer a historic opportunity for the advanced countries of the world to enter into a genuine partnership with Africa, based on mutual interests and benefit, shared commitment and binding agreement, under African leadership’ (ibid.). This would ‘mark the beginning of a new phase in the partnership and cooperation between Africa and the developed world’.

A presentation on MAP was made by Mbeki to the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland in January 2001. At this Forum, Mbeki went to greater lengths to explain the degree of consultation that he and his colleagues had gone to:

During the year 2000, we spent some time meeting the political leadership of the developed world—the North. Accordingly, in May we met Prime Minister Blair and President Clinton in London and Washington D.C., respectively. We also met the then Governor George W. Bush in Austin, Texas. In June, we were part of the Berlin meeting on progressive governance In the same month, we visited to participate in and addressed the meeting of Nordic Prime Ministers. Again in June, we addressed the meeting of the European Council held in Portugal, which was attended by all heads of government of the EU. In July, together with Presidents Obasanjo and Bouteflika, we met heads of state and governments of G7 in Tokyo, and had the opportunity to hold bilateral discussions with the Japanese Prime Minister, Yoshiro Mori. While in Tokyo, we also met the Presi-

dent of the World Bank, Jim Wolfensohn. Later, in Pretoria, we also held discussions with the Managing Director of the IMF, Horst Kohler. In September, we addressed the UN Millennium Summit and had an opportunity to meet President Putin of Russia, among others. Before this, we had also interacted with the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, who committed the UN to co-operate with us as we worked on the MAP (Mbeki 2001).

Indeed, Mbeki went out of his way to claim legitimacy and support from the developed world. As he remarked, ‘we [i.e. Mbeki] mention all of these meetings because they enabled us to present to these political leaders the imperative of addressing especially the challenges of African development [It was] very inspiring to hear the entire political leadership of the countries of the North express firm commitment to the idea of a new and concerted effort to address, among others, the challenge of African poverty and underdevelopment’ (ibid.). Yet, all of these meetings took place without any feedback to African civil society and no interaction or debate with actors outside of the narrow confines of the MAP initiators and ministerial meeting rooms. It is thus barely credible that Mbeki should later boldly state that Nepad was ‘the outcome of [an] independent African process to confront the particular challenges of our day’ (Mbeki 2002b) or that the Executive Secretary of the UN’s economic Commission for Africa should claim that Nepad is an agenda ‘with plans prepared through participatory processes, giving voice to [the] people’ (Amoako 2003:25). Indeed, the lack of dialogue within Africa, contrasted with the activist approach to getting Western approval, provoked President Jammeh of The Gambia, to remark:

If it is an African project, why take it to the Westerners to approve it? Was it necessary to take it to the G-8 Summit? That is why I am sceptical about it If the problem is an African one, what I believe is that before talking to the G-8 . . . we should have brought it to Africa, and each country should have gathered its intellectuals and allowed them to debate it – as we did with the African Union project (quoted in *New African* (London), issue 410, September 2002:18).

Although then still in its embryonic stage, Thabo Mbeki, announced that the advocates of the MAP would seek to enrol like-minded elites across the continent: ‘participating African leaders would form a compact committing them to the program and a forum of leaders who would make decisions about sub-programs and initiatives’ (*Citizen* (Johannesburg) January 30, 2001).

The contents of both the MAP and Nepad (which effectively replaced it) can be seen as recycled elements from previous plans and statements that have marked out Africa’s post-independence experience at regular intervals. As one commentator framed it, ‘there have been a number of African initiatives . . . to deal with its [the continent’s] problems, and agreements and instruments have been approved, signed and even ratified, without being used effectively to deal with wars, human rights’ violations, genocide, and also with prevailing under-development and poverty’

(*Mmegi* (Gaborone) February 2–8, 2001). This conundrum is an obstacle facing Nepad's credibility. In other words, given the large number of initiatives, and their rapid consignment to the history books, why should Nepad be different?

Meanwhile, the so-called "Omega Plan" was being touted by Senegal's President Abdoulaye Wade as another recovery plan. The Omega Plan was first presented at the Franco-Africa Summit in Yaoundé, Cameroon in January 2001 and was then showcased at the OAU's Extraordinary Summit in Sirte in March 2001. The MAP was 'designed to present a common front when Africa deals with the developed world, seek aid and investment in return for good governance, and unite African countries against social and economic problems like AIDS. On the other hand, the Omega Plan, drawn up by the Senegalese president, set goals and define[d] financial means to narrow infrastructural gaps' (*This Day* (Lagos) July 23, 2001). Only hard bargaining managed to prevent Wade's Omega Plan from sabotaging African unity before it had even begun, particularly when Wade began claiming that his plan was 'a practical initiative for overcoming Africa's economic difficulties' whilst asserting that the MAP was 'more of a manifesto' (*Daily News* (Gaborone) June 28, 2001). Of note, and highly revealing, the South African Department of Foreign Affairs admitted that 'the three original MAP Presidents [only] became aware of the Omega Plan for the first time at the World Economic Forum in Davos on 30 January 2001' (Department of Foreign Affairs 2003).

Yet, Wade's plan was highly problematic. It involved obtaining repayable treasury bonds from the developed world to finance what was essentially a pan-continental infrastructure scheme which, Wade readily admitted and advertised, would advantage Western contractors and businesses. As Wade asserted, 'I will show how the West will benefit. To carry out all this infrastructure work we will need foreign and European firms, which are technically more advanced than ours and which can build roads much faster than we could do ... two-thirds of the resources I'm talking about would go to Western companies to carry out the work' (quoted in 'Interview with Abdoulaye Wade', February 8, 2001, <www.allafrica.com>). However, because, according to Wade, 'it was inconceivable to appear divided in front of the international community [Africa] had to speak out in a single voice. Therefore, after 48 hours of long and intense discussions in Pretoria, on July 2 and 3, 2001, [it was] agreed to combine the two projects' [Omega and MAP] (Wade, 2002). This meeting, attended by the five core MAP Steering Committee countries (South Africa, Nigeria, Algeria, Senegal and Egypt) and also involving the UNECA Executive Secretary and representatives from the OAU, developed what was known as MAP Final Draft 3 (b).

The New Africa Initiative

The MAP Final Draft 3 was presented to the OAU Summit in Lusaka, Zambia (9–11, July 2001) as *A New African Initiative: Merger of the Millennium Partnership for the African Recovery Program and the Omega Plan* (NAI) and was adopted in the form of Declaration 1 (XXXVII) of the OAU Summit. This gave the NAI indispensable political legitimacy and – at least in principle – pan-African buy-in. At the same time, the endorsement made the NAI (what is now known as Nepad), at least on paper, a subsidiary of the pan-continental body, though the selectivity that must necessarily go with Nepad’s strictures on good governance and democracy means that Nepad will be (or rather, should be) more discerning. This is because, as various commentators have noted, any plan dependent on or subjected to the whims of the diverse membership of the African Union will likely die a very quick death indeed. After all, the AU is a body made up of ‘53 sovereign states that still owe the OAU R400 million in back dues [approximately \$66 million], are constrained by economies typically no bigger than a US city of 60,000 and insist that virtually all decisions be by universal consent’ (*Sunday Times* (Johannesburg) July 7, 2002). Progress from such a body will, undoubtedly, be excruciatingly slow. This paradox, of being officially a pan-continental initiative but one that is by its nature bound to be discriminatory if it is to be taken seriously, is a weakness of the Nepad that will remain ever-present.

Returning to the naissance of Nepad, after endorsement by the pan-African body, the NAI promoters went about garnering international support, beginning with the UN’s Economic and Social Council (UNECOSOC) Ministerial Meeting on 16 July in Switzerland, the G-8 Summit in Genoa, Italy on 20 July and the SADC Summit in August 2001 in Blantyre, Malawi. Tellingly, and in a perhaps unintentional – but still damning – indictment of the G-8’s track record on priorities, Italian foreign minister Renato Ruggiero claimed that ‘the G-8 is, *for the first time in its history* [emphasis added] dealing with the questions of poverty [and] access of the commodities from the developing south to international markets’ (*Business Day* (Johannesburg) July 24, 2001). But equally, as one commentator put it, ‘it was inevitable that [the NAI] would be well received by the G-8 since it was spot on in terms of timing and political correctness. When you have rioters trashing Genoa in the name of kinder Third World treatment, no politician is going to say it is a bad idea’ (*Mail and Guardian* (Johannesburg) July 27–August 2, 2001).

The first meeting of the Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSIC) of the NAI met in Abuja, Nigeria on 23 October 2001. This HSIC was made up of Algeria, Botswana, Cameroon, Egypt, Gabon, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tunisia, Ethiopia, Rwanda and São Tomé and Príncipe. One of the key achievements was to change the name from the NAI to the New Partnership for Africa’s Development or Nepad. The HSIC also

settled the management structures of Nepad, in particular mandating the Implementation Committee to meet three times a year and reporting back to the AU's annual summit. Maintaining the momentum, the Nepad HSIC endorsed at its March 2002 summit in Abuja the Draft Report on Good Governance and Democracy as well as the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). The Democracy and Political Governance Initiative (DPGI) as it has subsequently become was planned to be the basis for settling which states could take part in, and at what level, in Nepad. The DPGI ostensibly established a set of norms, values and standards by which African leaders taking part in Nepad would hold each other accountable to. The APRM on the other hand stressed the need to spawn the essential will by political leaders to maintain the key commitments and obligations of Nepad.

Concluding Remarks

This then is the origin and context of Nepad. Unlike the LPA and many other plans and frameworks, Nepad – at least on paper – addresses what it sees as an issue in Africa's developmental malaise, namely the poor levels of governance and the role of African leaders, whilst at the same time calling for globalisation to benefit Africa. But what really sets Nepad apart from similar previous endeavours is the fact that it contains the African Peer Review Mechanism, which seeks to monitor and advise governance issues. This is a considerable move forward for the continent, particularly as any attempt to apportion “blame” – or even suggest that malgovernance might be a problem – manages to generate considerable debate and controversy. Even today, well into Africa's fourth decade of independence, there are those who still cast Africa's problems as an exogenous problem against which African leaders battle hard to implement real reforms and development, only to be frustrated by hostile (nameless) external forces. A recent comment by Adebayo Adedeji (2002) captures this mentality:

[E]very attempt that has been made by the Africans to forge their future and to craft their own indigenous development strategies and policies has been pooh-poohed by the international financial institutions (IFIs) with the support, or at least the connivance, of the donor community. While African leaders can be faulted in many ways, they have made a series of heroic effort [sic] since the early 1970s to craft their own indigenous development paradigms in the light of their own perceptions.

... Unfortunately, all of these were opposed, undermined and jettisoned by the Bretton Woods institutions and Africans were thus impeded from exercising the basic and fundamental right to make decisions about their future.

But is it really true that African leaders made a series of ‘heroic efforts’ to implement Africa's development programs? The Senegalese President does not think so: ‘The previous projects were made to be put in drawers! There wasn't even an attempt to implement them. Not even the slightest attempt!’ (Wade 2002).

Like virtually all other previous plans and programs, with the exception of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, Nepad is fundamentally a project initiated and drawn up by state leaders. This perhaps is one of the main weaknesses facing the successful implementation of Nepad – the divorce between rhetoric and action. As one commentary put it, 'African Governments have largely failed to act on Africa-initiated programs and plans. They have failed to act on the decisions reached at different levels of their own continental meetings, including summit conferences' (*Food Security*, no date). Problematically, the democracy advanced as a solution to Africa's problems refers to a system by which elites that promise "reform" and "liberalization" are largely entrenched and where popular involvement in decision-making is limited to periodic leadership choices via carefully managed elections, organized by contending elites (Robinson 1996). In other words, the formulaic type of democracy which is practised has served somewhat to soothe social and political pressures created by SAPs, but amounted to little more than 'low intensity democracy' (Gills et al. 1993). By its very nature, such democracy dissipates much of the energies of the marginalized into parliamentary procedures that in themselves are acted out by political fractions whose power and prestige, not to mention access to resources and patronage, rapidly have become dependent on participation in parliamentary politics, however "really" democratic such exercises have turned out to be. Indeed, the promotion of such democracy has been 'instrumental in some cases (e.g. Zambia) in disempowering the poor by introducing the multiparty mantra as a new political panacea, while it [has] entrenched a new, rather exclusive elite in reality' (Liebenberg 1998:5). As one analysis (Moyo 1998:11) put it:

The assertion that the majority of African governments are now democratic is premised on contentious notions of democracy with external origins. Apart from this, the assertion has no empirical basis. It is true that multiparty elections are now common in Africa, but this truth does not describe a fundamental development. The change is strategic, not substantive. Multiparty elections have not led to new power relations in Africa. Just look at Zambia and Malawi since the fall of Kenneth Kaunda and the late Kamuzu Banda.

In such formulations, the call to end corruption and mismanagement (a welcome call by any standards) and the push for democratic accountability (again, something which can be fully subscribed to) have become linked to a rather narrow understanding of democracy. Thus whilst many African states have undergone "democratisation", such projects have largely been short-lived and/or contained what can only be regarded as a democratic façade. One need only think of the type of transitions that have occurred in states such as Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia to acknowledge that there has been scant concrete progress for the average person.

Indeed, the very logic of personal rule and neo-patrimonial politics on the continent has meant that whilst there have been "democratic transitions", there has been only a limited change in the political structures in most of Africa. Because political power grants one access to resources (customs revenues, foreign aid, possibly taxa-

tion and often, parastatals), elections on the continent are about much more than simply the chance to be the head of state and are almost life-and-death struggles for the ability to maintain oneself as a Big Man. Political slogans for “democracy” and an end to corruption are useful mobilizing devices and may even be believed by many ordinary people, but having captured political power, the new incumbent’s clients will invariably anticipate and demand material benefits for their support: ‘Out of self-interest many actors may support demands for democracy precisely because access to the state and to its resources will then become easier. Once democracy has been achieved, however, their behaviour is not conducive to its consolidation. The characteristics of the patrimonial system reassert themselves’ (Callaghy 1986:45).

Problematically, as Chabal and Daloz note (1999), neither the voters nor the political competitors appear to be intrinsically opposed to such patronage systems. Rather, the aim is to be on the winning side and even if the profits from such a system are unevenly circulated, those inside the loop and who gain from such arrangements do not complain – it is only when they slip out of the charmed circle that grievances and criticism against corruption generally emerge. Structural, rather than simply agential, explanations as to the persistence of patrimonial regimes are thus necessary. The “democratic transitions” of the late 1980s, rather than entrenching democracy on the continent, have instead amplified the pressure on political actors to disperse patronage. Elections are an opportunity for the Big Man to show that he is more munificent, more of a father figure, than his opponent and once elected, he must reward his supporters. As Kourouma (2003:221) wryly notes in his remarkable fictitious treatment of an African president: ‘the president] must appear to be the wealthiest man in the land. There is no future, no influence to be had in independent Africa for he who wields supreme executive power if he does not parade the fact that he is the richest and most generous man in his country. A true, great African leader gives gifts, ceaselessly, every day’.

But, even after political changes, the entrenchment of democratic values remains relatively shallow and compromised, even if such transitions have allowed a greater space for different voices to be heard these days, compared to the one-party era of the 1960s and 70s. As such, Nepad’s fixation on a \$64 billion “reward” in return for practising “democracy” cannot be seen as a serious attempt to “fix” Africa’s problems. Rather, it is actually a recognition by Africa’s leaders that orthodox liberal prescriptions are *de rigueur* and that rhetorical pronouncements on matters pertaining to development must fit accordingly. But, given that many (perhaps most?) African leaders are a source of the continent’s problems rather than the solution, can the Nepad gain legitimacy by advancing these same elites as the source of the way out? Whilst a move away from the Dependency idea of the 1970s is certainly apposite, the failure to confront the realities of Africa’s deep-rooted problems means that the Nepad is unlikely to be the answer to the continent’s malaise – even if it does receive the North’s seal of approval.

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The EU and Regional Integration in Africa

A critical appraisal with special reference to the Economic Partnership Agreements

Henning Melber

Under the paradigm of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) a newly structured economic reality is gaining momentum. It organises trade relations in a way, which requires questioning the direction and effects. This paper – based in parts on a similar previous effort (Melber 2005b) – summarises some recent concerns that current trends in the EU trade policy towards African countries as manifested in the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) could undermine future efforts towards regional collaboration without really posing the decisive question beforehand, whether this is an intentional and desirable avenue to pursue. An earlier intervention (Melber 2005a) had provoked the public disapproval of the former Director-General for Development at the EU Commission, who “had a bone to pick” with the author and did “not at all like the way that Melber calls the EU’s development-friendly and contractually negotiated EPA policy ‘anything but helpful’” (Frisch 2005:272). It is indeed necessary to discuss the substance and relevance of such arguments and concerns further.

Hence here is another effort to present a critical overview, which simply compiles and articulates in a hopefully concise way the reservations expressed by agencies and stakeholders in the current process, who tend to disagree with the view and approach of the trade department in Brussels. They reflect that despite the former EU official’s expressed trust in the “development-friendly and contractually negotiated EPA policy” others involved in the process draw markedly different conclusions. These deserve to be taken as seriously as the affirmative views – also and in particular by those who consider and advocate (if not even propagate) the current EU initiative as a step in the right direction.

Trade Liberalisation: A way out or a cul-de-sac?

The New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) has recently emerged as the socio-economic blueprint for African development. It claims African ownership and has been adopted internationally (both by the G8 and the United Nations) as the relevant strategic framework for collaboration (for a critical summary see Bond 2004a, Melber 2004a and 2004b). It claims its agenda is “based on national and regional priorities and development plans”, which ought to be prepared “through participatory processes involving the people” (para. 49). The blueprint emphasises sub-regional and regional approaches under a separate sub-heading and stresses “the

need for African countries to pool their resources and enhance regional development and economic integration ... to improve international competitiveness” (para. 94). But the crux of the matter lies there: the emphasis on international competitiveness comes at the expenses of strengthening the local economies and people. As Patrick Bond (2002:134) points out, integration in Africa should as a priority “meet the socio-economic and environmental needs of its citizenries” instead of seeking to turn even more into an export platform.

NEPAD defines the strengthening of African regional markets as a point of departure to greater integration into the global economy but not as a goal in itself. It hence fails to acknowledge that “what Africa needs is a regional integration strategy which is neither defined by liberalisation nor market mechanisms, but which nurtures first and foremost a policy, institutional and instrumental framework which will allow the regional market to function” (Hayman 2003:8f.). Instead, the NEPAD document advocates through its market access initiative an external orientation, identifying a need for negotiations with the WTO for “more equitable terms of trade for African countries within the WTO multilateral framework” (article 188). This is turned by NEPAD into “an historic opportunity for the developed countries of the world to enter into a genuine partnership with Africa, based on mutual interest, shared commitments and binding agreements”, as stated in the concluding paragraphs (article 205) of the document.

Some observers share the view that “there is tremendous potential for economic gains from specialisation and trade within Africa which might, in turn, open up new export possibilities to the world”, provided that the required harmonisation of trade rules and a much improved transportation infrastructure are achieved (Loxley 2003:122). But critics are more concerned that African goods are by unfair practices and regulations restricted in their competitiveness and excluded from other markets by means of high tariffs and by quotas. The question is, how this challenge should be met and what strategies should be pursued to overcome (or at least reduce) the obstacles.

The complexity of trade constellations certainly requires a larger amount of homework than the protagonists of trade liberalisation seem to have done. This can be documented with reference to a more liberalised world sugar market as a particularly striking example. The abolition of protective clauses – as Goodison and Stoneman (2004b) point out – would negatively affect several vulnerable economies (in Southern Africa particularly Swaziland, but also Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe). The specifics of the preferential sugar regime show upon a closer look “a complex geography of winners and losers” (Gibb 2004:585). If the spatial implications and variations of agricultural liberalisation are examined properly, “in both the short and medium term southern Africa will, in fact, lose significantly” (ibid.). Already now, under a so-called reform of the ACP/EU Sugar Protocol and the Agreement on Special Preferential Sugar, necessitated by a WTO

tribunal ruling in favour of a petition submitted by Australia, Thailand and Brazil (who were excluded from the Sugar Protocol), Southern African sugar exporters to the EU market have to adapt to “new market conditions”. According to a spokesperson for the Swaziland sugar industry, the country’s biggest export earner is expected to lose more than US\$ 23 million in 2005/06 and more than US\$ 39 million in 2007/08 as a result of the price cuts imposed.¹

EU’s New Role: WTO, EPAs and regional integration

The EPAs negotiated between the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states and the EU not only seek to modify the Cotonou Agreement entered into with all ACP countries as a collective entity by means of separate sub-regional negotiations (which would even allow for bilateral agreements with individual countries instead) but also aims towards compatibility between EU–ACP trade relations and the World Trade Organisation (WTO).² But while the Cotonou Agreement, which was ratified in April 2003 and replaced the Lomé Convention, allows for negotiating alternatives to the EPAs, the EU Commission continues to pursue the one-track avenue EPAs stand for. It is helpful to be reminded, as a team from the German Development Institute (GDI) did, of the original objectives for EPAs from article 1 of the Cotonou Agreement, namely to honour that cooperation should “be centred on the objective of reducing and eventually eradicating poverty consistent with the objectives of sustainable development and the gradual integration of the ACP countries into the world economy”. As the GDI study pointed out: “trade liberalisation does not translate automatically into benefits – especially not in least developed countries, let alone for the poor – if this is not actively supported by and embedded in a whole range of other policy matters. How trade liberalisation can be made pro-poor is not outlined in the ‘EPA concept’” (Qualmann et al. 2004:50).

Bond (2004b:226) warns that the emerging regime of harsher “reciprocal liberalization”, suggested and pursued under the EPA negotiations in stricter compliance with the WTO than its statutes would actually require, will replace the close trade links existing through “preferential agreements that tied so many African countries to their former colonial masters via cash-crop exports” and “what meagre organic African industry and services remained after two decades of structural adjustment will probably be lost to European scale economies and technological sophistication”. The EU is accused of using the EPA negotiations to push through agreements on a number of sensitive matters (such as investment, procurement and competition

1. UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, IRIN News, Southern Africa: EU compensation to sugar producers “inadequate”, 28 September 2004. See on the tricky aspects of an EU sugar-sector reform in combination with the EPAs especially Goodison (2005:173–175).

2. Interestingly enough, the draft European Constitution makes no reference to cooperation with African, Caribbean and Pacific states. It is only fair to assume that the EU enlargement shifts interest even further away from the neighbouring continent towards more collaboration closer to Brussels (see also Olsen 2005:604 f.).

policy) that were rejected by developing countries at the WTO negotiations during 2003. In addition, EPAs are about much more than only the suggested reciprocity within a narrowly defined WTO compliance: “Non-tariff barriers, such as environmental standards or sanitary and phytosanitary provisions (EU consumer protection policy) are crucial issues in the negotiations” (Grimm 2005:25). If such agreements were entered upon, it would reduce the policy space for African governments (Ochieng/Sharman 2004:3). It does not help that even a high-ranking EU official³ recognises “the right of countries, or rather regions, to regulate economic activity in their territory” and accepts the “idea of a preference in favour of local competition”, whilst adding at the same time “provided it is not to be a discretionary one” (Falkenberg 2004:3).

The negotiations on future EPAs introduce serious implementation problems and a negative impact on regionalism within the ACP group and its African member states. Hurt (2004:165) has warned that regional organizations within Africa would be likely to have capacity problems when entering the negotiations. The matter is complicated further by the fact that all these regions present a mix of LDCs and non-LDCs.⁴ A likely result is the further fragmentation of the process of regional integration and a division of ACP states into regional groups, which has been suspected to “enable the EU to target its trade restrictions more effectively on products that it chooses not to liberalize” (Hurt 2004:166).

As no surprise, even at a recent high level Conference on European Development Cooperation at The Hague, which discussed extensively the EU links to the South, concern surfaced about the EU position on trade liberalisation. As the summary report stated: “Everybody supported the call for a high level of flexibility in the EPA negotiations. Room should be created for asymmetrical trade relations, meaning that developing countries should be allowed to protect their markets against foreign competition on a temporary basis” (Bieckmann 2005:3). But as experiences so far suggest, the EU trade commission seems anything but reluctant to pursue its course further.

The results of the current WTO related EPA negotiations might well be a “shrinking of development space” (Wade 2003). To avoid such inegalitarian pseudo-partnerships, Wade argues, a shift in balance is required “from the drive to homogenize trading commitments to other states towards granting states reasonable scope to choose appropriate levels of national protection” (ibid.). A development strategy would therefore have to operate in a zone where internal and external integration

3. European Commission Director/Trade Directory General, Directorate C – Free trade agreements, Agricultural trade questions, ACP, Bilateral trade relations II.

4. The 14 SADC member states in 2004, for example, included six non-LDCs, seven LDCs and South Africa as a so-called emerging economy with middle power status and orientation, as reflected in its own Free Trade Agreement with the EU negotiated for years and finally ratified at the end of the 1990s – with rather destructive (political and economic) effects on the neighbouring countries.

reinforce rather than undermine each other. Instead, issues of internal integration (including issues of regional integration) have largely dropped out of the development agenda as the gospel of the free trade paradigm dominates the discourse, while the opposite should be the case in pursuance of a development agenda.

EU Policy and SADC: A case in point

The negotiations by the EU aim at separate accords with each region, and no country may negotiate in more than one bloc. As such, SADC is reduced to seven countries (half of the member states) under the EPA negotiations. It is not far-fetched to see that there is an inbuilt conflict between regionalism as it exists and the negotiations of new multilateral processes. Countries might differ regarding the advantages between benefits from the continued protection of regional arrangements or the creation of individual preferential access within other trade agreements. As Gillson and Grimm (2004) argue: “regionalism may actively serve to undermine the multilateral process, since regional agreements establish margins of preference for members over non-members. As such, for members of a preferential trade agreement, multilateral liberalisation can have costs associated with erosion of preferences”. But if regionalism is considered as a problem or obstacle towards further global harmonisation under the WTO, it stands little chance of being a viable point of departure for strengthening the South – or any Least Developed Country (LDC) – within the global trade arrangements.

The EU–SA free trade agreement, negotiated during the second half of the 1990s, has already had a highly divisive effect on the Southern African region. The EU entered into a preferential trade relationship with one country⁵ and thereby enhanced differences resulting from existing conflicts of interest among the national economies within the region. South Africa herself, the monetary zone, the South African Customs Union (SACU) and SADC are already not in harmony at any one time and less so given the effects of the free trade agreement on regional economic matters. Hence the EU intervention adds more friction and the beneficiary effects of the FTA for South Africa cannot be used as a convincing argument in favour of more free trade policy with other – less industrialised – countries. Instead, as Bauer (2004:23) concludes, “if the EU-SA FTA proves to be of positive net benefit to SA, it will be precisely inasmuch as SA has a relatively developed and diversified industrial sector”. South African interests and benefits, however, are not identical with regional ones. Regional integration would have to include the interests of the junior partners in the neighbourhood. The political economy of such regionalism is a constantly negotiated arrangement, with shifting boundaries and changing coalitions of interests. But it clearly has to aim beyond the immediate gains of the sub-imperialist

5. The fact that this directly affected the “satellite states” in the customs union (Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland) was initially overlooked and understandably so the initial non-consultation of these countries was anything but a confidence building measure.

centre, as which South Africa is not only perceived (Nyirabu 2004) but as which it is, at least economically, acting in fact under an aggressive expansion into wider Sub-Saharan African markets (Bond 2004a and 2004b).

The EPA configuration process does not seem to strengthen an alternative route, re-focussing on regional consolidation as a first step. SADC members had to make a choice to negotiate either within the East and Southern African (ESA) bloc or as the SADC Group. Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland and Tanzania opted to negotiate with the EC under the SADC configuration.⁶ South Africa – which had entered the FTA with the EU in 1999 as Trade, Development and Cooperation Agreement, since it was not considered as an ACP member country due to its more advanced economic status – participated in an observatory and supportive capacity. SADC – EC EPA negotiations were officially launched on 8 July 2004 in Windhoek in the presence of EC Commissioners Danuta Hübner and Poul Nielson. Botswana's Trade Minister acted as SADC coordinator. A Joint Roadmap was adopted, but criticism of the divisive EC approach (subdividing the countries of the sub-region into different SADC and ESA blocs) and the efforts to eliminate preferential trade clauses, which exist under the Cotonou Agreement for the LDCs, has been increasingly articulated since then.

Meyn (2004:50) warns that implementing EPAs as currently designed “violates the originally formulated requirements of the EU according to which ACP countries should have been treated depending on their different development status. This principle was already disregarded when negotiating the EU-South Africa FTA, where the EU locked in BLNS countries in the same tariff structure as South Africa, without granting them improved market access”. She sees the risk that EPAs imply a loss for LDCs “when opening their markets without receiving anything substantial in return”. Interestingly enough, even South Africa's Minister of Finance Trevor Manuel – known as a strong key player within the current trade liberalisation schemes – summarised the scepticism among Southern African countries in a lecture at the University of Sussex on 2 December 2004, when he stated: “Greater transparency of intentions would also be helpful – the EU's request for Africa to divide into groups to negotiate ... does little to help Africa coordinate its trade policies – thereby reinforcing the legacy of our colonial economic relationships.”

Goodison and Stoneman (2004a and 2004b) have shown that “it would be an act of foolish optimism to expect integrity or honesty in the EU's trade policy towards southern Africa and the wider ACP group” (Goodison and Stoneman 2004a:734). Instead, as Ochieng and Sharman (2004:3) summarise, the EPA initiative during its initial negotiations “has created new regional groupings that are inconsistent with,

6. The problems for many among the ACP states being a member of several regional bodies are illustrated in an exemplary way by an early case study on Tanzania (Qualmann et al. 2004). It is revealing that the recommendations were then based on the assumption that the country would negotiate in the East African block alongside Kenya and Uganda. Meanwhile, Tanzania ultimately decided to join the SADC configuration. So much for the “obvious” choices.

and undermine, existing African economic and political blocs. Reducing regional integration to trade liberalisation undermines the broader socio-economic and political objectives of existing bodies”.

EPAs, Regional Integration and Policy Coherence

For many, the outcome of the combination between NEPAD and EPAs seems not to be encouraging. Referring to the likely effects for African economies, Margaret Lee (2004:6) warns: “Anticipated costs include revenue losses, possibly resulting in the worsening of the regional debt situation; de-industrialization; increased unemployment; increased poverty; fragmentation of export and tariff regimes; loss of export competitiveness; undermining of local agriculture and industrial production arising from US and EU dumping; more trade diversion than trade creation; and undermining existing regional economic integration strategies.” And an IDS briefing paper comments upon the argument that EPAs will foster regional integration: “that there will be a significant effect – but a negative one” (Stevens and Kennan 2005:4).

Notwithstanding such a bleak prognosis, external support towards further positive regional interdependence remains possible by means of both uni- and multi-lateral forms of cooperation. As a study for the Swedish development agency Sida, exploring possible gains for LDCs under the emerging world trade regime, pointed out: “it is important that EU’s future policy for free trade agreement regarding developing countries within the ACP group, does not work counter to or hinder regional economic cooperation and integration, which can provide better preconditions for regional trade including the LDCs of each region” (De Vylder et al. 2001:161). But – as Kivimäki and Laakso (2002:176) summarise – this requires more than merely the opening up to the global economy. More so, it would have to re-visit matters of regional economic collaboration and seek involvement of the majority of the African population in these countries. The current initiative by the EU under the WTO offers little to no promise to contribute to such a desirable tendency, neither in SADC nor elsewhere.

The challenge is to offer the African partners a globally more conducive environment to secure them a fairer share in the world economy and the international policy making processes. Taking such a responsibility seriously, the G8, the EU and other OECD countries would have to do their own homework first, namely bring to an end their protectionist trade policies in the first place. Agrarian subsidies and other distorting interventions in the economic spheres should come to an end as an initial contribution towards a more competitive general environment. It remains to be seen, if this is already achieving some acceptable degree of improvement in the grossly unequal power relations and resulting structural constraints. Only on such a basis, can scenarios for fair partnership be discussed, negotiated and entered. They

would then not damage the interests of regional integration. It has been suggested by Hurt (2004:171) that the currently dominating trade liberalisation is to a large extent compatible with the interests of a political elite as well as an outward oriented faction of capitalism both within the EU and (though to a lesser extent) in African states and that the international environment makes it more difficult to redefine African-European relations positively (cf. Kössler and Melber 2003). On the basis of the evidence emerging, it is not easy to convincingly counteract such a conclusion.

A report tabled by Actionaid International diagnoses that “EPAs threaten African fiscal stability and public spending. They introduce investment agreements ... that would undermine African policy choices. EPAs threaten African regional integration and lack an independent dispute settlement mechanism” (Ochieng and Sharman 2004:32). The authors therefore demand that “European Union member states must revise the European Commission’s EPA negotiating mandate to withdraw the demand for reciprocal trade liberalisation” and to stop “negotiations on investment, competition policy and public procurement”. They furthermore urge the European Parliament to “launch an investigation into the European Commission’s approach to the EPA negotiations and to exercise effective oversight over the Commission’s negotiating mandate, tactics and processes” while beginning “to immediately examine all possible alternatives to EPAs” (ibid.).

If support to regional integration as a building stone towards enhanced international cooperation between partners is more than mere lip service – with the aim of ultimately operating from a basis of less discrepancy in terms of power and marginalisation – such policy advice ought to be taken seriously. If the partners in the South should fail to utilise regional cooperation as a step towards more emancipated international relations to the benefit first and foremost of their local populations too (and not primarily for the further privileges of a local fragment of the trans-national elites), this is another matter. EU policy should not assist and enhance a widening gap. In contrast, it should aim at reducing it. The irony of the current trade regime scenario emerging through the EPAs is that it seems to enter the trap, a study had warned of earlier: “While EU, through its enlargement, is collecting the European states into an increasingly strong unit, EU’s African policies may have the opposite effect” (De Vylder et al. 2001:161).

Conclusion

It is intended that the critical analyses presented here will return to the words of caution expressed at the beginning of the paper. It might be considered as “anything but helpful” to question “the EU’s development-friendly and contractually negotiated EPA policy”, as Dieter Frisch (2005) has put it. But it reflects the view of a variety of stakeholders in and observers of the current process, who would not agree with the label “development friendly” without further convincing evidence and results

pointing in that direction. Instead, they wonder if the EU trade commission under Peter Mandelson offers a “new start or old spin” (Goodison 2005) – and tend for the moment to conclude the latter.⁷ As a recent assessment by a British advocacy group summarised: “for more than 20 years, ACP countries have been forced to liberalise their markets to such an extent that many now have economies that are more open than Europe’s. They are already integrated – often harmfully – into the world market. So any new trade agreement between ACP countries and Europe must both help them to improve and diversify what they produce and export, and allow them to protect themselves from imports in the meantime. EPAs in their current form will do neither” (Christian Aid 2005a:2).

The EU trade bureaucracy and its representatives would be well advised not to dismiss such concerns lightly. After all, they would not like to be conceived as an integral and active part of a new scramble for Africa, in which the EU competes with the US and China to gain access to and/or secure control over markets and resources primarily for their own interests, while the partnership talk serves as the necessary cosmetics and lip service. While some believe that ACP countries have in essence “nothing to gain and everything to lose from the EPA negotiations” (Brown 2005:9), the EU also has more to lose than to gain – at least in terms of reputation and acceptance concerning its Africa policy, if the current EPA strategy is pursued as uncompromisingly as it has been advocated so far. In the absence of a capacity among the ACP countries to meaningfully negotiate the EU proposals vis-à-vis the “well oiled trade negotiation machinery of the EU” (Grimm 2005:24), many among them felt not only insecure but also forced into a process they actually resisted.

The EU-ACP process unfolding with the EPA negotiations in its current format offers neither convincing evidence for claims not to ignore the interests of the ACP countries, nor is it meeting the criteria for coherence with other fundamental principles of development paradigms and policies of the EU and its member countries, such as support to regional integration as a priority. In times of an intensified rivalry between the haves among the countries of this world to consolidate their particular interests within the regions of the have-nots, EU policy risks a loss of positive image established and consolidated during various rounds of Lomé treaties earlier on. The Cotonou process leading to the EPA initiative as the at present last round of negotiations is currently resulting in a growing loss of credibility earned before.

To illustrate the case, one only needs to take note of the speech the Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa delivered on 31 August 2005 at the headquarters of the African Union, in which he explicitly took EU policies to task and warned of the devastating consequences of further globalisation and added: “I urge African lead-

7. The leaked documents from the Brussels headquarters of the EU trade department, which showed that Peter Mandelson had initiated a public relations campaign in response to the British government’s critical position on the current format of the EPAs with the aim to counteract the “major and unwelcome shift” in the UK approach, did anything but eliminate such reservations. For a detailed report on the embarrassing disclosure see the newspaper article by Elliott (2005).

ers to think afresh about the place of our continent in a rapidly globalising world”.⁸ – Governments and officials of EU member countries sharing responsibility for “the economics of failure” (Christian Aid 2005b) as it currently unfolds under the label of EPAs pursued by the trade directorate in Brussels ought to do the same.

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8. Quoted from IRIN Africa English reports, circulated electronically on 1 September 2005 by the United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN). Interestingly enough, according to another source, Mkapa also suggested that the trend indicating that China and India are emerging as investors in the African continent ought to be embraced and new forms of South-South cooperation should be sought (Teklu 2005).

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Rethinking Protection for Agricultural Markets in Sub-Sahara Africa

Michael Brüintrup

This paper argues that although there are good reasons why poor countries in Sub-Sahara Africa (SSA) should support their agricultural sector, applicability of protective policies in the agricultural sectors of SSA is limited by various legal, economic, social, political and administrative reasons. The remaining scope, however, could be used to develop prospective agricultural sub-sectors for growth, poverty alleviation and food security, while protection should be embodied in comprehensive development strategies. These strategies must address the problems of low price transmittance of border measures and high transaction costs (in the largest sense) for agricultural products and particularly the limited supply capacity of small scale producers.

Legally, trade policy in the case study country Senegal as well as in many other SSA countries is restricted much more by regional trade agreements than by the World Trade Organisation. This is a formal and political reason why the protective part of such inward-oriented integrated strategies must be defended and implemented at the regional level. Other reasons to plan, negotiate and implement further specific elements of these strategies at the regional level are the lock-in effect of commitments in order to protect them against *ad hoc* decisions of national politics, as well as economies of scale and scope in supportive policies, in supply and in demand. These specific elements, such as research, standard setting, quality control or strategic public-private partnerships, should be complemented with other more general elements of regional integration which are less sector-specific, e.g. infrastructure, transport, information, trade, finance or regional trade facilitation.

In this way, regionally oriented agricultural policies can profit from wider regional integration and at the same time support it. A note of warning is finally expressed that regional solutions have high political and administrative costs and should only be stressed where advantages clearly outweigh these.

1. Arguments for Protectionist Agricultural Policies in SSA

In the last few years, there seems to have been a revival of discussion of the need for protection of agriculture in developing countries. The clearest indicator of this revival is the strong emphasis that developing countries place on less ambitious tariff reductions and special and differential treatment (SDT) concerning protection of developing economies in the agricultural negotiations of the ongoing Doha-Round

of the World Trade Organisation (Keck and Low 2004). A special negotiation group (G33) has been formed around the SDT-demand for Special Products (SP) and Special Safeguard Measures (SSMs) which are long-term structural and short-term stabilising protective instruments, respectively (ICTSD 2004:7). Other WTO negotiation groups such as the African Countries or the G90 strongly support this demand. The most influential negotiation group of developing countries, the G20, is officially also in support, but it is most probably a conflictive issue since it divides countries with predominating export interests (e.g. Brazil) and those with predominantly import interests (e.g. India).

There are at least two historical developments that explain the renewal of interest for protective policies in agriculture after the era of the 1980s and 90s, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).

First, there is a weakening of the so-called Washington Consensus of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. It emphasised deregulation, liberalisation and privatisation of markets, institutions and policies, in short – “getting the prices right”. It was the economic backbone of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) in many SSA countries which enforced such policies against fresh credits. They almost always included unilateral opening up of trade barriers. Although there is little doubt that a structural adjustment process was necessary, the outcomes are not as positive as was hoped for. In many countries the economy did not recover, and even where growth rates are satisfactory the impact on poverty often remains weak. Particularly the agricultural sectors, in which most of the poor work in and live, experienced a mix of policy effects which often did not add up to a positive impact (Friis-Hansen 2000). On the positive side were currency devaluation, the liberalisation of internal trade and the dismantling of many corrupt and inefficient parastatal marketing companies. On the negative side were a reduction of Government services such as inputs, extension services, credit and infrastructure investments, which were often not replaced by the private sector. In many cases farmers were exposed to sudden competition from imports of agricultural goods through tariff reductions, abandoning of import licenses and price policies without time to adjust. Therefore, today “there is increasing skepticism about the positive effects of a too-rapid opening up of poor countries’ markets to full international competition. [It] ... requires a carefully synchronized policy of raising the competitiveness of producers, improving rural infrastructure, and strengthening rural and trade-promoting institutions” (Heidhues et al. 2004).

Second, the promised economic boost for developing countries through the outcome of the Uruguay-Round of the WTO, which for the first time explicitly included the agricultural sector, did not materialise. Industrialised countries hardly improved the market access for developing countries, using “dirty tariffication” and other manoeuvres (Tangermann 2001, FAO 2003). The experience of high volatility of international prices for agricultural goods was detrimental for many develop-

ing countries in varying contexts. The price boost of 1995–98, provoked through the Asian boom, put a strong burden on food importing countries without the assistance promised in the Marrakech Decision of the WTO being made available. In addition, it became obvious that specially the poorest countries, most of them located in SSA, had difficulties in profiting from better market access e.g. through improved trade preferences and higher prices due to structural and supply-side problems. Later, agricultural prices plummeted in the wake of the Asian crisis and led to problems for exporting countries, which industrialised countries could afford to compensate their farmers for whereas developing country farmers came to suffer the full effect (WTO 2001, UNDP 2003:109ff).

These experiences underline and are compounded by “old” arguments for protection of agricultural markets:

- a. Protectionism and subsidies in industrialised countries will not stop, despite WTO agreements. This is due to the strong political lobby of farmers which seems to be inverse to their economic and demographic importance, but also due to the importance for backward and forward linkages such as banks, input suppliers and agro-industries which are often regionally concentrated and therefore politically particularly sensitive. In addition, the non-production services of agriculture for preserving landscapes, biodiversity and cultural heritage are increasingly accepted as motives for support, particularly as modern agriculture no longer provides them as free by-products. Industrialised countries will shift support from openly trade distorting to direct income transfers which, however, continue to create unfair competition by reducing income risks, ease investments and keep land in production. Protection will decrease, but not radically and least for sensitive products which often means for the largest markets. In addition, the accumulated capital and continuing technical progress and productivity growth, fostered by an ongoing concentration of farms, will make this industrial agriculture ever more competitive. And higher standards and regulations for food safety, demanded by risk-averse consumers and willingly promoted by protectionist politicians, will increasingly keep small scale farm products from developing countries out of these markets.
- b. More advanced developing countries will follow the pace of industrialised countries in supporting their agricultural sector and farmers. It is in the logic of economic development that a sector with low demand elasticity and high productivity growth will lose in relative importance, income per person and attractiveness relative to the other sectors. However that structural change towards industry and services takes a very long time during which the state will try to buffer social hardship as much as (politically) accepted through protection and subsidies for the relatively shrinking agricultural sector (in addition to strategic objectives such as assuring food self-reliance). Increasing wealth generated in

- modern sectors provides the scope to do so, because a) expenditures for agricultural products decline in relative importance for private households, thereby reducing the impact of protection on their purchasing power, and b) increasing government revenue meets a reduced number of farmers, which means that higher subsidies are feasible (Anderson and Hayami 1986, Anderson 1995).
- c. Apart from the structural evolution of agriculture in a growing economy, there are factors that make agricultural markets particularly volatile: dependence on weather, plagues and other natural conditions, perishability of products, high transport and storage costs, sector wide effects of individual food scandals etc. Price fluctuations on national and world agricultural markets are therefore high, provoking strong income shocks for farmers and subsequent needs and claims for protection.
 - d. Many very poor countries exhibit a highly undiversified export economy, depending on one or a few, often agricultural commodities. Thus, their foreign exchange earnings are volatile and their entire economies prone to external shocks. If a country with such an export structure relies on imports for meeting food requirements, it experiences food risks from two sides: it is prone to shocks in export earnings (both in production and world market prices) and in import prices (Diaz-Bonilla et al. 2000). The risks for food security are particularly large when, as is generally the case in SSA, there is low use of feedstuff in animal production and a low share of commodities in final food prices, both of which can serve as a buffer for total food consumption expenditures.
 - e. In a structurally changing economy with growing urbanisation and food habits, agriculture and agro-industry are also challenged to change. They have to turn from the classic provision of staples and living animals with low standards for uniform quality, sanitary and phyto-sanitary standards and regulations to new products and higher standards, often more demanding in production, transportation and storage (Weatherspoon and Reardon 2003). This means that for a structurally changing food industry there is a strong case for infant industry arguments.
 - f. Risks in food security are socially and politically sensitive. If historically the starvation of rural populations was not a great threat for undemocratic regimes, this changes with increasing democratisation and therefore voice for farmers. In addition, the international community is increasingly considering starvation as political failure (Drèze and Sen 1991). In contrast, urban starvation has always been a dominant political issue. Most people in SSA still live in the rural areas and will do so for a long time to come despite accelerated urbanisation, and most of these have their principle sources of income and employment in agriculture or directly related sectors and services. Even in urban areas, many people make their living from agriculture, either by producing in urban agricul-

tural systems such as gardening or livestock or through investing in agricultural activities in the countryside (Owuor 2003). Since industrialisation in SSA is a very cumbersome task given low educational and professional levels, a lack of an entrepreneurial track-record and structural problems, there is pressure to support and stabilise agriculture in order to support the livelihoods of the majority of people, besides facilitating the structural change in other sectors.

- g. Agriculture as the largest sectoral user of important natural resources, notably natural vegetation, soil and water, determines the status of these resources to a large extent. Whereas in industrialised countries this linkage means reducing the intensity of production, in SSA it is extensity which is the largest threat since low-input agriculture mainly depends on natural soil fertility and nutrient extraction (Henao and Baanante 1999). Coupled with ever-increasing populations, this agriculture leads to land degradation, deforestation and desertification. Even high urbanisation rates will not reduce the absolute human pressure on lands (Hazell 2005). No matter whether intensification of land use happens through higher mineral fertiliser application and/or more intense use of labour-intensive natural biomass management – without increased investment in land and labour productivity the extraction and exploitation of nature will continue (Ruttan 1994). Increased intensity without more remunerative and particularly stable product prices and/or fertilizer subsidies is hardly imaginable in SSA since availability of technologies alone will not induce farmers to use them in such risky environments (Ellis 2005).

2. Limitations to Protective Agricultural Policies in SSA – The Example of Senegal

The arguments listed in section 1 made the case for more support of agriculture in SSA, including for price support. Given unstable and continuing low world market prices for agricultural products, the high costs of direct supporting measures for poor farmers and the few financial resources available for governments, increasing trade barriers seems to be a logical demand to improve the internal terms of trade in favour of agriculture. However, as will be shown in this section, there are many political, administrative and economic costs and problems associated with protection in any single case of a major product and for agriculture as a whole, and in reality the scope for protecting agriculture in SSA is limited.

In the following, these limitations are unfolded for the case of Senegal. A case study of two important markets – rice and vegetable oils – in this country served as a first empirical basis for the arguments (Brüntrup et al. in preparation). In order to understand the context and avoid undue generalisations for a region as large as SSA, it is appropriate to look at some major features of the country.

Senegal is basically a Sahelian country with low and erratic rainfall. Therefore, in general the agricultural potential is limited. The main food crop is millet, in the

south maize, manioc and rice are found in rainfed agriculture, in the north rice under irrigation. The dominant cash crop is groundnuts on which the country's economy strongly depended for several decades. In addition, cashew nuts and vegetables are increasingly being produced, and in the south some cotton. Livestock production is important, particularly in the central and northern areas. The country suffered under the drought of the 1970s which resulted in a permanent reduction of rainfall, exacerbated by overuse of natural resources due to population pressure, exploitative land use systems and deforestation (Reardon et al. 1996).

In an African context, Senegal is a relatively advanced country in several aspects: urbanisation (about 50 percent) and industrialisation (agriculture accounts for less than 20 percent of GDP) are relatively advanced, concentration takes place around the capital Dakar. Imports of agricultural products exceed exports by the factor of four, which is much more than most African countries although in general they have converted from net exporter to net importer in recent decades. In Senegal, imported rice has displaced millet as the most important staple. In addition, large amounts of milk products, vegetable oil, meat and other agricultural products are imported. Major exports include fish (mainly under the form of fishing licenses for the European Union), phosphate, groundnuts and groundnut oil, livestock products and some industrial goods (WTO 2003).

However, about 50 percent of the population is still rural, and about 70 percent of the work force has agriculture as its main source of income. 77–88 percent of the rural population are considered poor according to the Senegalese income standard, against 44–59 percent of the urban population. Despite growth rates of 5–6 percent since about 1994, poverty has declined by only 4 percent points (République du Sénégal 2002). This means that Senegal, even as an African leader in structural change, still shows strong dependence on agriculture. In many SSA countries growth has been spurred in sectors with little direct poverty relevance and the states are unable and/or unwilling to distribute the proceeds.

In this context the case study looked at the opportunities for and limits to implementing higher import restrictions for agricultural products which could potentially foster agricultural development and food security and alleviate rural poverty.¹ This requires products with important national markets and consumption and prospects for increasing prices and production through protection. The choice of products fell on rice and vegetable oils for several reasons: consumption is high as well as imports, they compete with local production, productive capacities are important. They are

1. These are the conditions of the July 2004 WTO-package for introducing SP. Most probably, they will require reduced and prolonged tariff reductions (Ruffer 2003, ICTSD 2004). However, the study analysed the developmental conditions of protection, not the technical issues. For Senegal in particular, the concept of SP is not relevant because Least Developed Countries (LDC) country status, which Senegal obtained in 2001, will not be required to reduce its WTO-bounded tariffs at all. In contrast, within a regional trade union which also encompasses non-LDCs it is not clear how the concept of SP is to be handled, nor whether a country can claim new SP when graduating out of LDC-status.

also among the products envisaged by national and regional agricultural development strategies (ECOWAS 2005). A distinction between the two products motivating their choice is the fact that the tariff rate for rice is as low as 12 percent, whereas for vegetable oils it is above 60 percent and, thus, one of the highest in Senegal. This is due to the history and political economy of the two markets which it is important to know in order to understand the respective sub-sector policies and the scope for protective policies:

- Rice production and commercialisation were almost completely liberalised under SAP until 1994 (Sène 2002, UNEP 2003, Brüntrup et al. 2005). The major commercial rice production takes place under irrigation along the Senegal river in the north, a region which received almost 60 percent of all investments in the agricultural sector in recent decades. In contrast, a large proportion of rice subsistence production is found in the south.
- The imports of vegetable oil form part of a government controlled sector policy for groundnuts (Freud et al. 1997, Cadre Intégré 2003). A parastatal company imports crude vegetable oil at intermediate tariffs, refines and sells it on the highly protected internal market. This transformation under protection a) generates revenues which are merged with the results (often losses) from groundnut oil exports in order to stabilise and support raw groundnut prices paid by the company to farmers, and b) supports the groundnut sector as a whole which is heavily politicised and has strategic importance for the entire economy, and particularly for the central groundnut basin where most of the Senegalese small farmers live.² After more than a decade of strong pressure from the World Bank and the IMF the parastatal is finally being privatised, though the conditions were not yet publicly known at the time of the field research.

Without going into more depth in the analysis of the two sub-sectors, the following results concerning the scope of protective agricultural policies can be reported.

Legal limitations

The freedom of Senegal to decide on trade policy issues is strongly limited. Far more restricting than international trade agreements within the World Trade Organisation is the regional trade policy agreement of which Senegal is part. Since 2001, trade policy is almost entirely under the authority of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU). It has a maximum tariff of 20 percent plus some 2.7 percent for diverse administrative and regional duties. A few instruments had been designed to permit additional protection, some for the entire community, some at the national level, but most of them have expired or are close to expiring or being declared illegal under WAEMU legislation. Only one instrument, a time-constrained combination of a safeguard and an anti-dumping measure, provides scope

2. It is worth noting that the importance of the agricultural sector is often underrated when expressed as its share of the national Gross Domestic Product, since value added in backward and forward industries is taken into account in the industrial (e.g. processing) and service (e.g. credits) sector shares.

for a further protection of 10 percent, but only as long as no definite WTO-conforming special safeguard measure is adopted. In addition, this instrument seems to be, at least in its present permanent use, against WTO law.

However, the maximum applicable tariff according to WAEMU is lower than the permitted maximum tariffs that any of the member countries had bound in the Uruguay-Round of WTO in 1994. The lowest bound tariffs have been declared by Senegal with 30 percent,³ other WAEMU countries, bound tariffs are much higher. Thus, it is WAEMU that determines the highest possible protection, not WTO.

A relaxation of this limitation is possible but may be difficult. Paragraph XXIV of GATT restricts the tariff levels of a regional trade agreement: the fixation of protection towards third countries must not exceed the combined former level of protection of the individual countries. Since this rule applies to bound tariffs and not to lower applied tariffs, this may be less constraining in the case of WAEMU. Much more importantly, a change of the protection regime and even of a single product requires the common decision of WAEMU members. This is politically very difficult to attain, given the often conflicting interests of countries with different natural environments, economic developments and trade philosophies. Complicated procedures within the community and with trade partners and pressure from major donors add to that difficulty.

A window of political opportunity for increasing the scope for protective policies, by increasing the bound rate or by introducing special protective instruments, is the enlargement of the trade union towards ECOWAS. It is to be formulated by the end of 2005. There are some countries, notably giant Nigeria, which have traditionally employed more protectionist policies and could defend such an interest in the new community. In addition, unlike WAEMU a common agricultural policy had already been elaborated within the ECOWAS before negotiations on the trade regime started. It states as a specific objective *to reduce dependence on imports by giving priority to food production* (ECOWAS 2005). Whether this includes protection is not clear. However, there are signs of willingness to adopt a rather open common market, and there is also strong external pressure to do so, particularly on the part of non-EU countries who fear that they will be excluded from these markets in favour of the EU which is negotiating reciprocal free trade Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs).

Economic limitations including distributional aspects

Classical welfare theory asserts that any protection reduces national welfare. Although its ideas on welfare economy and the underlying hypotheses may not be

3. Additional "other duties" of 150 percent had been added to the WTO country schedule. The legal status of this right, however, is not clear.

shared by everybody,⁴ hardly anyone will contradict that above a certain level of distortion the resulting economic biases and resource allocation failures will aggravate the situation to such an extent that they become definitely harmful to the economy. Rodrik (1998) places such a threshold level at about 40 percent. In addition, high tariffs create rents and scope for rent seeking behaviour that is certainly detrimental to market efficiency (see below).

Below the general welfare economic considerations, the implications of protection on producers and consumers have to be looked at. Two central concerns of the impact of import restrictions on the producer side are import substitution and supply elasticities, in other words whether tariffs can indeed produce the intended shift in demand from imported to local products, how much price change is necessary to produce such a shift, and whether the price shift increases producer incomes via the price effect alone or also by increasing single product and overall agricultural output.

The case study gave important insights into which kind of factors influence these two issues:

- With regard to import substitution, imported rice is mainly broken rice, highly appreciated in Senegal where it nowadays fits the consumption habits perfectly.⁵ Local rice production is either a) high quality whole rice which is preferred by and affordable for only a small better-off fraction of the population, or b) rice of heterogeneous size, difficult to cook and with lower quality attributes (colour, variety homogeneity, dirt) and a bad public image dating from the time of state-controlled rice production. Thus, a substitution of the imported broken rice is not easy. The rural population would most probably switch (back) to millet or other local staples, whereas the urban population would probably stick to broken import rice. In the case of vegetable oil, the opposite is true: there is a preference for local groundnut oil over imported oils often from rape or soya.
- Concerning supply elasticity, both sectors will have problems producing significantly higher amounts. Major bottlenecks are agricultural credit, extension of sustainable production methods, marketing and in some cases input supply. Particularly quality groundnut quality seeds are in short supply and difficult to produce. The interlinked groundnut price – input credit systems are in profound disorder, their rehabilitation questionable, makes a restart almost from scratch necessary. The marketing system is also still in disarray, the system

4. For instance classical welfare economics neglect considerations of the impact of risk and uncertainty on investments and productive resources, assumes factor mobility that in poor countries cannot be taken for granted and does not provide arguments on what to do with politically biased world market prices.

5. Indeed the politically fostered import of broken rice over many decades has modelled the present food habits. The imports date back to French colonial times, when low quality rice was shipped from Indochina to West Africa. This mainly served to facilitate farmers' specialisation in groundnut production by reducing and buffering the price of food, particularly millet which competes with groundnuts. In addition, rice (some rice varieties are endogenous) generally enjoys a high reputation in West Africa, and the preparation of rice is better suited for low energy cooking and urban food preparation than millet and sorghum.

is not able to deal with logistics, payment for deliveries and particularly with the strong annual variations of supply, despite several reform attempts. In the case of rice, although impressive progress has been made after liberalisation in the core production regions concerning productivity, major expansion of the irrigation surface will be constrained by high investment costs for irrigation infrastructure. Parts of the older systems have already significantly deteriorated. The official credit systems are not operating efficiently and therefore hardly enlargeable, microfinance systems are gaining momentum but are not (yet) able to finance a substantial boost of production.

In addition, in both sub-sectors it is doubtful whether high prices would benefit *poor* producers, the main justification of agricultural protection policies, under the present structural conditions. Among the commercial rice growers there is a strong concentration of larger farmers and an influential fraction of former government and parastatal agents who have left public functions during structural adjustment. Other rice production under rainfed agriculture in the centre and south is mainly for subsistence and would hardly be touched by higher prices unless assistance is provided to commercialise this production type.

In the case of vegetable oils, maintenance of high prices runs the risk of being absorbed by the parastatal and not being passed through to farmers. But it is not only a numerical question whether cross-subsidies to groundnut producers from protecting oil processing outweigh the institutional inefficiencies. It is also a question of whether a constructive break-up of the price and marketing regime would not give new impetus into other elements of the sub-sector, such as credit, improved seeds and other inputs and services which for the time being are strongly interwoven with trade and price policies in an economically unhealthy way. However, the risks also have to be taken into account that the whole groundnut sector would break down, with unacceptable consequences for a very large number of rural livelihoods.

Agricultural products, particularly staples, are not only important to producers but also to consumers. Agricultural protection that raises food prices especially hurts poor urban households for whom food expenditures constitute a major share of their entire consumption basket (about 70 percent), rather than richer households. Rice has a share of more than 50 percent in cereal consumption in urban households. In Senegal, not only urban but also rural poor have adopted a diet pattern in which regular rice consumption is included: rice constitutes 25 percent of cereal consumption in rural households. Thus, import restrictions have large scale negative effects on the poor.

Apart from this direct price impact on consumer poverty, it must also be considered that higher food prices increase the minimum wage level that households can accept, since they absorb such a large percentage of the income. With higher wages, the international competitiveness for non-agricultural, particularly labour intensive,

sectors is threatened, thereby reducing the chances of industrial growth which a country without major natural resources badly needs in the long run.

Political limitations including international considerations

Closely linked to distributional economic aspects of protectionist policies are political issues. Protective policy is creating winners and losers, and accordingly these try to influence trade policy in their policy to their own advantage. In Senegal it seems that the large parastatals had a very important influence. Both the rice and the oil marketing and processing entities were able to trigger strong protection for their sectors, even to the detriment of urban consumers who are usually considered to be the decisive factor with regard to cheap food policy (Walton and Seddon 1994). Protection was abandoned or reduced along with privatisation. In contrast, for some other products with a strong lobby of medium and large producers and processors such as cigarettes, sugar or vegetables, import protection continues at a high level.

In the case of rice, imports have been taken over by large private traders with a strong religious-economic-political link to the supreme political class. For the time being they have successfully lobbied for the very low protection of rice. Rice producers try to organise the increasingly powerful farmer and rural associations in order to pressure for protection. But in the meantime rice consumption has become an extremely important pillar of food security and consumption baskets. The most important lesson is that the protection of food markets must come at an early stage of import dependence.

There is also an important international economic and political implication around agricultural import protection. In both cases, imports come mainly from other developing countries: rice from Thailand, India and Vietnam, vegetable oils from South America (soya) and Asia (palm oil). Though the world market prices for agricultural products in general may be under some pressure through international subsidies and protection policies, these influences are certainly not dominant for the two case study products. In the case of rice, broken rice is a by-product of the entire rice production, its costs of production and price formation are only loosely dependent on whole rice markets. Concerning vegetable oils, there are subsidies in the US and the EU, but the dominant consumer oil, palm oil, comes mainly from Malaysia and Indonesia and is hardly subsidised, whereas soya (oil) exports from Argentina are even taxed.

These product origins have several implications: a) cheap imports are not necessarily dependent on international agricultural policy biases, at least not on an individual product to product base; b) import restrictions will find a very inelastic supply response, the price is flexible because production costs are distributed across several linked products, allowing exporters to easily reduce their price in order to maintain sales; c) import barriers handicap South-South trade, creating political

tensions and less willingness to facilitate market access for Senegalese exports (cf. UNEP 2003, Ruffer 2003).

Administrative limitations

Though administrative limitations seem to be less fundamental than the other areas discussed, they can severely impede the successful implementation of import restriction. For instance, if protection is not relieved in the case of a bad harvest or high world market prices, the effect can be the opposite to what was intended – hurting the many farm-households who are temporary purchasers of food. Therefore, an effective import policy requires a quick and predictable administration and political decision making. In Senegal as in many other SSA countries, this may not be the case:

- Governments need good information on the structure and actual trends of internal and external markets, on the distributional effects of protection and on potentials of national agriculture if they want to selectively support markets. For many markets such information is not available or inconsistent, particularly a realistic medium-term productivity estimate for national products under ordinary (not research) conditions.
- Some instruments such as flexible safeguards require quick information on material flows and/or prices. These systems are not yet working well in Senegal (and elsewhere in SSA) even for official imports, even less for national production or black markets. If customs are not able to inhibit smuggling, protection will not lead to the intended higher prices but mainly to rents, rent seeking behaviour, corruption and finally economic inefficiency. “For some commodities, like livestock and grain, unofficial exports to neighbouring countries can exceed officially licensed trade by a factor of 30 or more” (Little 2005).
- Even if data provision is quick and reliable and customs sufficiently effective, the same must be the case for the (political) interpretation and the decision making process with respect to flexible trade policy measures. In a highly personalised, neo-patrimonial and unreliable political system such as exists in Senegal, it is hard to see discretionary trade policies being implemented in a predictable way.

3. Conclusions on the Role of Protective Agricultural Policies in SSA

Having found many limitations that reduce the viability of protective policies in Senegal does not mean that they should be excluded as a policy option in the support of agricultural development. It cannot be a satisfying situation for very poor countries with a very shallow and vulnerable export base to rely to a large extent on imports of food which cannot be produced in the country, when at the same time more than half the population can hardly produce anything other than agricultural products for which access to the world market is limited. Indeed, several of the large agricultural products such as animals and meat, manioc and yams or peas can be considered as non-tradable at the international level due to different cultural and

food habits or food safety standards which cannot even be satisfied by much more advanced countries. The share of traditional crops for local markets is about 70 per cent of the total agricultural output (Hazell 2005).

Thus, growth in this sector is much more important than growth in export crops, both for overall growth and for poverty alleviation and food security. Even for internationally tradable products, some world markets continue to be flooded by cheap agricultural goods from industrial and more advanced developing countries through political support and boosts of productivity. At the same time, the development of realistic merchandise exports is blocked by large and highly performing Asian exporters, particularly China that has the additional feature of an artificially depressed exchange rate which promotes exports.

Thus, without denying the importance of export-oriented growth, there remain good reasons to support production of local food crops including by using protective policies. That is also the path that many Asian developing countries have taken. Where successful, protection took place within careful overall economic policies of exchange rate, trade finance and sector selectivity (Dornbusch 1998, Timmer 2005). Thus, due consideration must be taken of the limitations discussed which partially refer to governance and structural problems that are special to SSA countries. Some of the implications are:

- Substitutionality between imported and local products must be carefully analysed. Food preferences are very subtle, and food habits change very slowly, in the direction from local to imported goods but also vice-versa. Preferences for imported goods can be difficult to change in the short term, thus the official support for such preferences (as has been the case in Senegal) is short-sighted. Better than import-substitution are forward looking strategies which anticipate changing consumer needs and develop products and supply chains accordingly. If an import substitution policy is envisaged, it is important to orient supply to consumer needs through research and extension, commercialisation, appropriate standards and quality setting and surveillance. Many of these activities contain elements of public goods – at least under the conditions of SSA – but they must be carried out in close cooperation with the private (trade) sector.
- Protection should not exceed a reasonable value. In order to limit growth reducing macroeconomic effects, protection should be limited for important staples and inputs into forward industries. From a distributional point of view, the ideal products for protection are those where many poor producers can produce for a few rich consumers who at present buy imported goods with a low price elasticity of demand. These products are typically higher value transformed products such as from intensive animal rearing or gardening. For bulk products it has to be recognised that protection is limited once a certain dependence of poor populations on imports has been attained. High protection should be therefore exceptional and selective, for instance through the introduction of the concept of Special Products and a restrictive selection process. This selection must take possible long-term competitiveness into account as well as reasonable assumptions of paths toward such competitiveness, including necessary

investments in research, extension, processing and commercialisation. A credible announcement on the long-term phase-out of protection is also essential. Stabilising protection through safeguards is even more important than permanent protection but also more difficult to implement.

- Customs services must be improved (reliable, quick, indiscriminate) to implement any effective protection policy. For safeguards this is particularly important. Customs improvements for import must meet at least partially the efforts to improve export oriented strategies.
- Problems of markets must be tackled that prevent farmers from perceiving price signals, such as high infrastructure, communication and other transaction costs as well as lack of competition at the national and local level. But also policy induced price fluctuations must be limited.
- Supply-side constraints of farmers are overwhelming in SSA, particularly if individual products are not considered but the aggregate supply of farmers who, for many reasons, generally produce multiple goods, and if sustainability of natural resource use is to be assured. To assure that protection does not only trigger increased income for farmers through price effects but that it induces intensification of production and increases aggregate supply, supply-side constraints have to be tackled simultaneously with (or even prior to) border measures. This includes improvements in technology (research, extension), taking into consideration natural resource management and long-term sustainability, and improving input, credit and probably risk markets. Where processing is an integrated part of providing substitution for imported goods, adapted storage and processing technologies must be addressed as well.

In view of the complexity and limited resources in SSA, such integrated strategies must concentrate on a few selected sub-sectors with high prospects for achieving pro-poor growth and long-term competitiveness. Competitiveness is an issue since poor countries simply cannot afford to support their largest sector for a longer period. In SSA, it cannot be expected that the private sector can develop such strategies alone: the private sector is strongly limited, many markets are not working properly, market coordination is lacking, the farm sector has few resources, and therefore a large part of success depends on the provision of public goods. Thus, the public sector has an important role to play in facilitating the private sector engagement but also in active support of some elements. A thoughtful combination of private and public partnership is needed.

4. The Potential Role of Regional Integration in Agricultural Development Strategies

As presented in section 2, in WAEMU (and soon in ECOWAS) protective policies can basically be implemented at the regional level. This means automatically a certain inertia for trade policy changes – a common decision by countries with different resource endowments, development levels, macroeconomic policies and interests can only be found by long negotiation processes including several agricultural

sub-sectors and non-agricultural sectors where gains and losses can be equilibrated (Schiff and Winters 2003). Often, a certain distribution of tax revenues (particularly between coastal and landlocked countries) is necessary as well (ECA 2004). This is clearly a limitation for regional bodies in employing trade policy as an active tool for shaping agricultural development.

However, the inertia can also be valuable for trade policy in the political context of SSA. Policy decisions in individual SSA countries often exhibit more the character of *ad hoc* decisions than of being part of a strategy. Neo-patrimonial and personalised politics, coupled with a lack of strong administrations and unequal organisation and representation of interest groups, facilitates such arbitrary decisions (Bates 1998, Azam et al. 2002).⁶ The history of the two analysed sub-sectors in Senegal provides several examples of arbitrary *ad hoc* trade policy and other interventions, sometimes even with good intentions but overall negative outcomes.

Once certain policy competences on the larger regulative framework have been effectively transferred to a regional authority,⁷ strategic planning means on the one hand very high coordination costs but on the other hand it can assure more discipline and thorough analysis because of peer review of proposals, as well as more commitment because of real costs to be accepted at least in the form of mutual commitments and overcoming internal political pressure. By handing over competences (and sufficient and reliable financial means which are crucial to implement strategies, ECA 2004) to regional bodies which are partially beyond the influence of national interests such strategies can be given more perseverance and thereby provide more stable economic conditions for involved actors which is crucial for long-term strategies.

By enlarging the area considered from the national to the regional level, the potential agricultural supply elasticity to price signals can be improved and regional comparative advantages and specialisation effects can be exploited. One of the major disadvantages of SSA countries is their small size, particularly if measured in terms of purchasing power of consumers (Schiff 2002). Regional supply is also more stable compared to national since several regions with imperfect covariation of natural and other risks as well as seasonal fluctuations are integrated. Economies of scale and stabilisation are also effective on the demand side. Selective protective policies at a reasonable regional level (in West Africa that is certainly ECOWAS rather than WAEMU which has too many uncontrollable frontiers) would certainly increase the often deplored low intra-regional trade.

Internal trade creation is potentially at the detriment of external suppliers (trade diversion), but at least in the case of the emerging ECOWAS, trade creation seems

6. This is certainly one of the reasons why the transfer of effective policy control towards a regional body is so difficult, particularly in East Africa.

7. It is widely acknowledged that this is a crucial point: "Existing regional integration schemes in Africa function in an 'intergovernmental' rather than 'supranational' mode, and the actual sharing of sovereignty is minimal" (Lavergne 1997).

to be clearly larger than trade diversion, also in comparison with other African regional agreements (Musila 2005). This is probably due to its much clearer delimitation and its moderate tariffs.

Agriculture trade in SSA is already partially regional.⁸ Indeed, several of the large agricultural products, which are considered as non-tradable at the international level are tradable at the regional level. The volumes and benefits from regional trade can certainly be greatly increased and stabilised for farmers, consumers and traders, by reducing internal barriers to trade such as transport and communication costs, personal travel requirements, simplifying internal rules of origin and certification procedures, common trade laws and harmonizing product classification, and particularly red tape in the control of such regulations.

Several of the specific supportive instruments and policies of integrated agricultural strategies (see section 3) are also, at least in principle, best provided and implemented at a regional level due to strong economies of scale and a lack of resources at the individual national level: this is the case for basic research, standards and norms, pesticide and input markets, intellectual property rights. These areas of integration go beyond the narrow concept of economic integration (Lavergne 1997, Schiff 2002).

It must be reiterated that external trade barriers in agriculture can only play a selective, not a substantial role in regional integration in SSA because of the limitations analysed in section 2. Other areas than trade policies must play the major role, e.g. infrastructure, transport, communication, standards, information, trade finance and financial markets, regional trade facilitation and market development. They support the trade and production volume (and therefore the profitability) of specific regional agricultural policies advocated in this paper, but are also useful in themselves, as long as cost-benefit considerations are respected. In particular the regional food security could be improved – the present Niger food crisis proves the non-functioning of regional food markets (OECD/CILSS 2005). On the other hand, integrated regional agricultural strategies in SSA also seem worthwhile without supporting protective policies, although the latter would greatly facilitate market development particularly in the early phases.

The governance problems of regional initiatives are highly visible and need particular attention, but similar problems at the national level and the leverage of regional scale economies make attempts clearly worthwhile. The active cooperation

8. The extent of informal regional trade is not really known but is substantial. Hashim and Meagher (1999) estimate intraregional trade in ECOWAS at 20 percent of exports based on studies on Nigeria (including oil exports). Other estimates of illegal border trade in SSA are much higher (Little 2005). Meagher (1997) argues that most of that informal trade is carried out in order to exploit differences between national economic policies such as price or trade (border) policies. Therefore, informal actors will often be against regional integration which would reduce rents. This argumentation provides another rationale for a common external trade policy and a reduction of internal barriers along with a harmonisation or, better, abandoning of certain diverging economic policies. Local products would certainly profit from this policy.

between the public and private sector is an imperative. There are many attempts at wider regional integration on such issues in WAEMU, ECOWAS and at the continental scale (Lavergne 1997, ECOWAS 2005, ECA 2004), but more can be done. This is both an issue of political will of member governments as well as of willingness and appropriate instruments of donors who often sponsor an important share of the overall investments and expenditures in these domains at the national level. It requires coordination and programme based approaches at the regional level.

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