

“AFRICA ARISE”

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**PROF. PLO LUMUMBA,
LL.D, D.LITT. (HC), FCPS (K), MKIM.**

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ABSTRACT

When Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah spoke his famous words, 'seek ye first the political kingdom and the rest will come later', he must have meant that political independence was only a beginning that would enable African Countries to exploit their human and natural resources to realize socio economic growth.

However over fifty years after independence since those immortal words were spoken, Africa still remains in the periphery – great prospect notwithstanding the claim by some that the 21st century is here for the taking. Africa has many challenges and her success requires Patience, Persistence and Perseverance. I am confident that Africa will one day take her pride of place at the dinner table of human development for three reasons: first, the encouraging signs of growth and democracy in Africa itself; second, the constructive role of business investment in expanding Africa's economy; and third the emergence of public-private partnerships in African business and social investing.

Though it is often unheralded, African nations are making headway, socially, economically and politically. If Africa is to release her potential for the benefit of her sons and daughters she must arise and be active in all sectors in the global arena.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The African continent is endowed with enormous resources. There are vast mineral deposits (gold, copper and diamonds), oil reserves that continually pump barrel after barrel of the precious liquid, fertile and well watered plains that can feed the entire world, natural deep harbours along its coastline that can replicate and outdo the ever busy ports of Singapore and Dubai, abundant well educated and hardworking human resource, flora and fauna that continually amazes the entire world¹, a rich culture; in general, everything that can and should have made the Continent the leader in world trade and development.

The fathers of the continent, whom we refer to as the Pan Africanists including the likes of Kwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere to name a few, had a dream for the continent. They envisioned a continent that was united, prosperous, highly developed and peaceful, one that was ahead if not an equal partaker in world business with the rest of the world, a continent with capacity to give aid to other continents.

In a famous speech delivered in 1960, Kwame Nkrumah had this to say about the African Dream:

"We have seen, in the example of the United States how the dynamic elements within society understood the need for unity and fought their bitter civil war to maintain the political union that was threatened by the reactionary forces. We have also seen, in the example of the Soviet Union, how the forging of continental unity along with

¹ On reflection – the European continents growth and development after the industrial revolution was sustained through the exploitation of Africa both human and natural resources through colonization engineered in the misfortune of the Berlin conference – scramble for Africa 1880. The development of the New World (USA) was on the back of slave labour – unfortunately from Africa. This is why the title of this paper is as it is- on the realization that the world has developed through us. We should stop lamenting but ARISE.

the retention of national sovereignty by the federal states, has achieved a dynamism that has lifted a most backward society into a most powerful unit within a remarkably short space of time. From the examples before us, in Europe and the United States of America, it is therefore patent that we in Africa have the resources, present and potential, for creating the kind of society that we are anxious to build. It is calculated that by the end of this century the population of Africa will probably exceed five hundred million. [Now one billion]. Our continent gives us the second largest land stretch in the world. The natural wealth of Africa is estimated to be greater than that of almost any other continent in the world. To draw the most from our existing and potential means for the achievement of abundance and a fine social order, we need to unify our efforts, our resources, our skills and intentions”

That was the birth of the African Dream. Sadly, we can hardly say that we embraced and followed the path charted for us in the dream. Today, Africa bleeds at its “foot” in Zimbabwe. Its “heart” bleeds in the DRC, its “horn” bleeds in the Somalia, its “skull” bleeds in Darfur and its “armpits” sweat blood in Equatorial Guinea and Ivory Coast. In Rwanda, the ethnically instigated genocide of 1994 left over one million people dead. The situation and recent events in the northern countries of Tunisia, Egypt and Libya speak for themselves. Why should my theme be that of Africa Arise!!!.

We get encouraged and nurse our hopes when reflecting on the case of Nkurumah’s Country, Ghana after period of false starts with *coup de tats* – the eventual direction taken after Jerry Rawlings (Ghana) provides hope. One gets encouraged with Uganda after the cannibalism of Idi Amin Dada; the efforts of Yoweri Kaguta Museveni government seems to have set the country on a new positive trajectory. But the greatest hope laid bare by the

example of – Rwanda, this was the only country that had experienced tragedy with the greatest speed ever witnessed. Now a visit to Rwanda over a period of 20 years reveals marked improvement – largely due to President Kagame’s stewardship. I therefore have no doubt that it can be done! It only requires that the sons and daughters of Africa Arise to the challenges of our generation.

The sad reality is that Africa’s wealth has been its curse. The minerals of Democratic Republic of Congo should have been a source of livelihood, wealth and happiness for its inhabitants, instead, the rich gold deposits have turned into fields of mass murders and rapes as different group’s battle for the reserves. The oil of Nigeria should have long turned the country into a developed delta after the likes of “Dubai”, that we see are state oil wells in the hands of, and exploited largely for the benefit of corrupt leaders who stash billions in foreign lands.

2.0 ECONOMIC INTEGRATION IN AFRICA

2.1 Towards Economic Integration in Africa

Since the independence era, virtually all African countries have embraced regionalism to the extent that today there exists more regional organizations in Africa than in any other continent and most African countries are engaged in more than one regional integration initiative. Regional integration therefore appears to be the favored framework for addressing obstacles to intra-African trade. Reducing barriers to intra-African trade will create larger regional markets that can realize economies of scale and sustain production systems and markets as well as enhance Africa’s competitiveness.

The commitment to regionalism ought to be part and parcel of the broader aspiration of continental integration, which had taken its roots from the Pan-African movement of shared values, collective self-reliance in

development and political independence. From the beginning of the decolonization process in the 1960s, the establishment of sub regional economic communities was a significant part of Africa's development strategy. In the period from the 1960s to the 1980s, several intergovernmental economic cooperation organizations were established to promote technical and economic cooperation. These regional agreements in Africa generally sought to expand the growth of intraregional trade by removing tariffs and non tariffs barriers; strengthening regional development, through the promotion of economic sectors, regional infrastructure and the establishment of large scale manufacturing projects; removing barriers to the free movement of production factors; and promote monetary cooperation. During this period, many African countries implemented highly interventionist and protectionist trade regimes, motivated by several concerns, among which were fiscal concern and the protection of domestic industries, in the context of import-substitution industrialization strategy.

The Lagos Plan of Action (LPA), adopted in April 1980 in response to the deteriorating economic situation in Africa, proposed a strategy for shifting Africa towards a sustainable development path that called for a shift from the experience since the 1960s. The LPA encouraged the pursuit of three goals: high and sustained economic growth; transformation of the economic and social structures and maintenance of a sustainable resource base. Regional and sub regional integration constitutes the principal impulse in restructuring the fragmented African continent into more coherent and stronger economic regional and sub regional entities. The overarching objective of the LPA remains the achievement of effective regional integration though national and collective self-reliance.

Today there are eight Regional Economic Communities (RECs) designated by the African union (AU):

Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) comprising fifteen member states, namely: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote D'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo.

Its mission is to promote economic integration in all fields of economic activity, particularly industry, transport, telecommunications, agriculture, natural resources, commerce, monetary and financial questions and social and cultural matters.

Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)

comprising of eleven (11) member states namely: Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Congo, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Chad, Rwanda and Sao Tome and Principe.

ECCAS aims to 'promote and strengthen harmonious cooperation and balanced and self-sustained development in all fields of economic and social activity, particularly in the fields of industry, transport and communications, energy agriculture, natural resources, trade, customs, monetary and financial matters, human resources, tourism, education, culture, science and technology and the movement of persons.

Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) with eight member namely: Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda.

IGAD aims to promote joint 'joint development strategies and gradually harmonize macro-economic policies and programs in the social, technological and scientific fields. More specifically, IGAD seeks to 'harmonize policies with regard to trade, customs, transport, communications, agriculture and natural resources , and promote free movement of goods, services and people, and the establishment of residence.

Southern African Development Community (SADC) comprising fifteen member states namely: Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

SADC sets to 'promote sustainable and equitable economic growth and socio-economic development that will ensure poverty alleviation with the ultimate objective of its eradication, enhance the standard and quality of life of the people of Southern Africa and support the socially disadvantaged through regional integration.

East African Community (EAC) with six member states namely: Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda and South Sudan.

EACs objectives are to develop policies and programs aimed at widening and deepening cooperation on political, economic, social and cultural fields, research and technology, defense, security and legal and judicial affairs.

Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN – SAD) with twenty four states namely: Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, The Comoros, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Togo, and Tunisia.

CEN-SAD's main goal is to strengthen peace, security and stability and achieve global economic and social development.

Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) with nineteen member states namely: Burundi, Comoros, D.R. Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

COMESAs vision is to "be a fully integrated, internationally, competitive regional economic community with high standards of living for all its people ready to merge into an African Economic Community.

Arabs Maghreb Union (AMU) comprising five member states namely, Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia whose main aim is to ensure regional stability and enhance policy coordination and to promote the free movement of goods and services among the country members.

During the mid-1980s, African countries at the individual country level started rationalizing and liberalizing their trade regime in the framework of the structural adjustment programs of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the outward-oriented focus of which implied the closer integration of Africa into the world economy.

During this period, the attention of African policy makers shifted from regional integration to the implementation of structural adjustment and economic liberalization programs. Thus, this period stalled the effective working of many regional groupings in Africa. Nevertheless, African countries continued to consider the regional approach as the best tool for their development.

A new chapter in the history of African regional integration commenced in Abuja, Nigeria, on 3rd June 1991. The treaty establishing the African Economic Community (AEC) committed the continent along the path of economic integration. This treaty calls for the establishment of the AEC by 2027, with a common currency, full mobility of the factors of production, and free movement of goods and services among African countries. The year 2001 saw an acceleration of policy discussions on regional integration with the establishment of the African Union (AU) and the launch of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). NEPAD focuses on the provision of essential regional public goods (such as transport, energy, water, information and communication technology, disease eradication, environmental preservation and provision of regional research capacity), as well as the promotion of intra-African trade and investments. The focus is

on rationalizing the institutional framework for economic integration, by identifying common projects compatible with integrated country and regional development programs, and on the harmonization of economic and investment policies and practices.

The commencement of the last decade of the 20th century was distinctly synonymous with the major change in the global state of affairs with the end of the Cold War, following the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Having recognized the significance of this development, on July 11, 1990 Africa's leaders, meeting as the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, adopted an important "*Declaration on the Political and Socio-Economic Situation in Africa and the Fundamental Changes Taking Place in the World*".

The declaration was very explicit about the African agenda which Africa must continue to address if Africa is to take her pride of place amongst the community of Nations. We must therefore recognize Africa's foresight in the climate of uncertainty of the 1990's, caused by the fact that it was impossible to foresee the consequences of the vanishing of the Soviet Union, emergence of Eastern Europe, the rise of the Asian Tigers and Southern American Economies leading to creation of the Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRIC), now BRICS to include South Africa.

Be that as it may, the question that begs an answer is – how far have we advanced towards realization of the aspirations of Julius Nyerere and Kwame Nkrumah to mention just but a few? Your guess is as good as mine, Africa has done very little to bring to fruition the aspirations of our fore fathers. The leadership of Africa governments must increasingly adopt policies to energize markets, privatize state-owned enterprises, reduce trade barriers, cut corporate taxes, and strengthen regulatory and legal systems for these are important first steps to enable a private business sector to emerge. These structural changes will no doubt help fuel an African productivity revolution by helping companies to achieve greater economies of scale, increase investment, and become more competitive.

Africa needs purposeful actions by the governments and peoples of Africa to change their condition in a positive direction, relating to the issues of governance, peace, as well as the important matters of economic policies and practices. This is a possibility because Africa's long-term growth prospects are strong, propelled by both external trends in the global economy and internal changes in the continent's societies and economies. It is incumbent upon Africa and its leadership to do a great deal to turn the African economy round, at least to the extent that what has been done has broken a long period of economic stagnation which had lasted as long as 45 years.

The importance of regional economic cooperation and integration as a means for accelerating and consolidating economic and social development has long been recognized by African decision-makers. Unity, cooperation and integration of Africa were long-standing aspirations of many Pan Africanist thinkers, writers, philosophers and leaders, including George Padmore, W.E.B Dubois, Marcus Garvey, as well as African nationalists such as Kwame Nkrumah who, in his book '**Africa Must Unite**', called for African unity. Hence the call for integration is well-rooted in African history, albeit, as in other regions, the initial aim was more to gain greater political clout and voice in the international arena.

As the challenges of globalization and interdependence made their impact felt on the countries of the African region, including the possible marginalization of the African continent, the imperative of integration took centre stage once again. The formation of regional economic cooperation arrangements serve to provide the underpinnings for the planned AEC. Regionalism in Africa had been pursued for two reasons. The first was to enhance political unity at the pan-African level. The second was to foster economic growth and development. Regionalism, especially regional market integration, had been a way to help solve the structural problems that the African economies were confronted with.

This paper argues that a strengthened intra-African integration is essential for development especially in the face of globalization of markets to help smaller countries absorb the shocks of global integration. Previous regional initiatives in Africa, which mainly focused on political issues, were largely seen as not having delivered much to uplift the economic conditions of its members nor ensured sustained growth. As is elaborated, regional integration, when designed and implemented within a broader development strategy to promote economic diversification, structural changes and technological development, could enhance productive capacities of African economies, realize economies of scale and improve competitiveness and serve as a launching pad for African economies' effective participation in the global economy. Regional Integration may be used therefore to exorcise the bad spirits of the Berlin conference of 1884 (leading to the scramble for Africa through trade opportunities and colonization) - that led to archaic policies of Divide, Rule, Control and Exploit (DRCE).

2.2 Why Economic Integration

It has been largely recognized not only by African countries but also by their development partners that the economic and political tensions confronting Africa are, to a certain extent, the result of the balkanization of the region into over 50 states, with twenty four of them having, at the adoption of the Final Act of Lagos in 1980, less than 5 million people, and some of them landlocked countries. In adopting the Final Act of Lagos, the objective was to overcome the fragmented state of the continent short of political integration, and ensure the mobilization of the region's large potential.

The developments that have taken place since then have highlighted the fact that the fragile character of most African economies is such that they cannot cope with exterior shocks, or with the magnitude of the tasks required for structural transformation for sustained growth and development. Such developments include, inter alia, the irreversible declining trends in primary

commodity prices preventing most African countries –especially the smallest ones – from mobilizing the resources required for development financing; increased dependency of domestic production and consumption of imported goods and services making it difficult to build up a self-sustained socio-economic structure; declining productivity relative to other regions of the world leading to rise in cost of living mainly due to high cost of imports of goods and services. All these have resulted in widespread social upheavals in many countries; including the rich oil-producing countries; as, high levels of foreign debts often require unaffordable servicing obligations in most countries incapacitating countries from sheltering their vulnerable citizens from the shocks of a globalizing and integrated world.

It is only through the collective effort of economic co-operation and integration that the African countries can hope to build the capacity to cope with some of the worst impacts of these external shocks. Indeed, to avert a pending disaster and face the challenge of reversing the above trends, Africa must ARISE and build up viable political and socio economic recovery, beyond the temporary reliefs resulting from short-term structural adjustments. To that end, economic integration is, obviously, the first step, as a means of pooling resources in a coordinated, efficient manner, which can support value addition on Africa's vast resources for the economies and the region to be competitive globally.

2.3 The Drive to Economic Integration

A final structural characteristic of African economies is their external orientation. External factors have a bearing on Africa's domestic structural weaknesses. Indeed, Africa cannot engineer successfully the structural and policy changes required without an improvement in its external economic and political environment.

Most of the pressures that come to bear on the African economy include:

- The collapse in internal prices of primary commodities;
- the structural contraction in world trade, the decrease in official development assistance in net terms;
- Increased protectionism in industrialized countries;
- The volatility in the exchange rates of major currencies resulting in a consistent decline of the value of the United States dollar which is the currency used in paying for Africa's exports;
- High interest rates, high prices of imported manufactured goods and services; and, above all, the high level of Africa's external indebtedness, as major constraints to a speedy economic recovery and sustained development in Africa.

Africa's economic recovery and development therefore will depend heavily on the political will and the selflessness of the African leadership to steer this great continent ahead. In the words of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, in his book *Long walk to freedom*;-

A leader . . . is like a shepherd. He stays behind the flock, letting the most nimble go out ahead, whereupon the others follow, not realizing that all along they are being directed from behind.²

That quote aptly captures the precincts within which a leadership that is change driven ought to be founded and anchored for the sake of social engineering. It cannot be gainsaid that "a proper leadership" however defined or conceived has gained the pride of place as an indispensable tool in the ordering of human affairs.

² Hill, Linda A. "New manager development for the 21st century." *The Academy of Management Executive* 18.3 (2004): 121-126.

2.4 Economic and investment policies in Africa

Economic and investment policies in Africa that recognize and integrate development-environment-climate approaches will likely yield positive development outcomes towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

The Agenda 2063 Goals were set at the beginning of the new millennium to guide Africa's development in the next 50 years and was adopted in June 2015. This is a vision for Africa in which all individuals, communities and peoples work toward the protection and full expression of their human rights; are active participants in the decisions that affect them; share equitably in the knowledge, wealth and resources of society; and are free to achieve their full potential. The African Union is pushing the agenda on the development of Africa in economic, social and political, scientific and cultural societal transformation.

Some African nations are beginning to make headway, socially, economically and politically following this transformative agendas; Millennium Development Goals (MDGS), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS), Africa Agenda 2063 which are comprehensive and they all share common aspirations of structural transformation and sustainable development. A lot still needs to be done to ensure visibility and internalization of these agendas at the common man's level.

With this in mind African Governments and non-state actors have been instrumental in raising awareness about the devastating effects of corruption on governance, service delivery, human rights and socio-economic development. Additionally, numerous campaigns have been organized to influence national, regional, continental and global agendas that seek to demand for systemic change. Despite the strides that have been made towards combating the culture of corruption, corruption still continues to erode people's sense of equity and this is reflected by citizen's

general sense of despair, given the failure of governments to effectively address corruption from its roots.

In recognition of these challenges and the prevailing need to reinvigorate the fight against corruption, the African Union (AU) Assembly has declared 2018 the 'African Year of Anti-Corruption' with the theme 'Winning the Fight against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa's Transformation'.

3.0 CHALLENGES TO AFRICA'S GROWTH

i. Reliance on Primary Commodities.

Statistical evidence ascertains that economic activities in the 1960s and 1970s have been largely dependent on the growth of primary commodity production and exports. Also, since the bulk of Africa's trade has been with developed market economies, Africa's past growth performance was clearly linked to growth in these countries. Such a pattern of primary commodity export-led growth was the major structural cause of the African crisis of the early 1980s. This was the direct consequence of the declining growth performance in developed countries from about 8 per cent in the early 1970s to about 2 per cent or less recently which has led to a declining demand for these primary commodities as well as a decline in their real prices. The overall result was a steady decline in primary commodity production and exports as the engine of growth in Africa; a trend that is likely to prevail over a long period. A basic requirement for economic recovery and long-term development is therefore for Africa to seek an alternative growth pattern.

ii. Food Insecurity.

Another major characteristic of African economies is the neglect of the food sector over the last two decades, which has resulted in an unprecedented

food crisis of the period 1984-1985. While in the 1960s per capita food output was increasing at only 0.35 per cent per annum, the situation deteriorated in the 1970s with an average annual decrease of 1.2 per cent. There is no doubt that the droughts in Africa have contributed to the worsening of the overall domestic food supply situation. However, it has been repeatedly emphasized that there are basic structural factors that have negatively affected food production. These include, inter alia, a bias against agriculture in government policy; high population growth; fast reduction in arable land and harvested area; and a lack of the technological change to increase agricultural productivity.

Agriculture, and especially food production, has suffered from the low priority given to the sector by most African countries. It is not only unrealistic pricing policies have constituted disincentives to producers, but that the agricultural sector has, over the years, been lacking adequate investment in irrigation, research, training and extension services. Such policies resulted in shortage of inputs such as seeds, fertilizers and pesticides; shortage of agricultural tools and implements; inadequate storage facilities leading to increased food losses, lack of spare parts etc. It has also resulted in the stagnation of the irrigated land area in Africa. The food crisis, resulting from inappropriate policies and adverse climatic conditions, has also been exacerbated by the mounting pressures of population growth, which resulted in a parallel rise in demand for food. The trend of 3 per cent average annual growth of the African population through the 1970s and in the early 1980s has worsened the population food-imbalance, especially in view of the fact that the urban population, which is not involved in food production, has been increasing at an even faster rate of over 4 per cent, in the average, reaching 5.8 per cent and 7 per cent in West Africa and East Africa respectively. The decline in agricultural output in Africa, especially food, stems also from the sharp reduction of the arable land area. This is mostly due to rapid desertification, and the land tenure system, which reduces soil fertility and result in soil erosion, reduced rainfall etc. Inappropriate agricultural techniques are also a major obstacle

to increasing agricultural productivity in Africa, above the present subsistence level. The cultivation techniques and technologies employed by African farmers are such that they impose limits to crop output and yield. It is clear from the above review that rapid economic recovery which will result in the building of a solid foundation for sustained long-term development in Africa requires a radical change in policies towards the agriculture sector and particularly the food subsector.

iii. **Poor Infrastructure**

The lack of adequate infrastructures constitutes another basic characteristic of African countries. The inadequacy and poor conditions of Africa's transport and communications infrastructures coupled with the inefficiency of the related services is a major impediment to the expansion of economic activities within and among African countries. Lack of internal transport and communications infrastructure has been a major impediment to the movement of goods (especially agricultural commodities), and people, and to the harmonious distribution of industrial production facilities within the countries. The networks of trans-continental highways are yet to become full realities. Yet these are essential prerequisites for promoting intra-African trade. In the 1960s, most African countries have devoted substantial resources in building up the necessary institutional infrastructure for supporting their development plans and programs and managing their economies. However, not only were such structures not quantitatively adequate, but most of them have seriously declined in the quality of their work. Thus, central ministries, public agencies, parastatal organizations, and even state universities and scientific research institutions have lost the capacity to carry out their tasks. Indeed, they impede rather than promote productivity and overall development. It is therefore evident that structural changes in the economy must go hand in hand with institutional reform in the context of Africa's efforts for economic recovery and long-term development.

iv. **Fragmented Industrial Sector**

Enclaved and fragmented industrial sector is another challenge to the realization of the African dream. The failure of the industrial sector in Africa to become a complementary or alternative engine of growth to agriculture and mining is another major challenge for the economic recovery of the region. The sector is small and enclaved. As indicated earlier, it accounted for only 27 per cent (10 per cent for manufacturing) in 1980, of GDP. Moreover, it is made mostly of import substitution industries for goods that are consumed mainly by urban minorities, and of export promotion industries for semi-processed raw materials. A major structural weakness of the industrial sector has been the neglect of intermediate and capital goods industries and of industries for large scale consumption.

v. **Poor Human Resource Capacity**

Inadequate development and utilization of human resources greatly impede the grand march to the promised land of the African dream. The high population growth rate in Africa would not have had the present negative impact if the actions called for in the Lagos Plan of Action had been implemented, to the extent that Africa would have achieved a satisfactory level of self-reliance in trained and technical manpower. Instead, there is a dramatic shortage of skilled manpower especially in key areas essential for economic recovery. At the same time, there is a high rate of unemployment, especially among university graduates. And so is the brain drain phenomenon, which, in some countries, has negatively affected the functioning of key development institutions and services. Such a situation reveals two basic deficiencies. First, there is inadequacy between the requirements in human resources in key sectors on the one hand, and the supply of skilled manpower by the training institutions on the other hand. Secondly, available and skilled technical and managerial manpower is not adequately and fully utilized while a high proportion of total investment of the region is expended on the services of foreign expertise. Efficient

development, planning and utilization of human resources and the full and effective participation of the African people in the development process are therefore essential requirements for African economic recovery and development.

The fact that the African economy has enormous potential for growth thanks to its abundant natural resources cannot be gainsaid. Population growth and urbanization point to domestic and intra-African markets as the most promising areas for stimulating medium- to long-term agricultural growth. Several countries have opportunities for expansion into high-value labour-intensive products for both regional and international markets. The strong potential of agriculture in Africa is welcome news: agriculture is the backbone of overall growth for the majority of countries in the region and essential for poverty reduction and food security. But, as pointed out by the 2008 World Development Report, failure to exploit this potential has significantly compromised the role agriculture could play in reducing poverty. The positive prospects for Africa's growth will not materialize without concerted, sustained and purposeful policy action. Many challenges need to be overcome, including the widening technology divide, slow development of input and output markets and associated market services, slow progress in regional integration, governance and institutional shortcomings in some countries, conflicts, HIV-AIDS and other diseases.

A fundamental challenge in achieving productivity growth in Africa is the variety of agro-ecological environments and farming systems (also a result of weather variability and dependence on rain), and the large number of staples it produces. Under such conditions possibilities for application of existing yield-increasing technologies or the massive application of new ones is limited. However, success stories of technology generation (NERICA rice for instance) do exist and lessons should be drawn from such successes. Yield gains associated with high-yielding varieties have been much lower in sub-Saharan Africa than in other regions, partly as a result of the inadequacies of input and output markets and extension services and poor

infrastructure. This in turn has resulted in a low use of irrigation, fertilizers, advanced seeds and pesticides. Despite the much higher need for agricultural research, particularly research into adaptation to climate change, Africa has not been investing significantly in agricultural research and development. Some experts advise that Africa should look at ways of taking advantage of the potential possibilities that may be offered by biotechnology, including transgenic crops that are proved to be safe, while recognizing the existence of legal, economic, social and political barriers to the development of genetically modified crops. Conservation Agriculture could constitute a viable option given the infrastructure, capital and labour situation in parts of Africa.

Africa's failure to grow as rapidly as the rest of the developing world has left a legacy of poverty and hunger. Sub-Saharan Africa has seen a huge increase in the number of people living in absolute poverty – from 214 million in 1981 to 391 million in 2005, with only a small decrease in percentage terms over the same period, from 53.7 to 51.2 percent. Low growth has not only reduced domestic resources available for investing in infrastructure, agricultural development, health, education and nutrition, but it has also aggravated the HIV/AIDS crisis, which involves a vicious spiral of poverty and disease. In rural areas the fight against HIV and AIDS is lagging badly and needs to be intensified with expansion of HIV and AIDS services to rural areas and major improvements to social safety nets.

State institutions in Africa are particularly weak due to lack of decentralized and bottom-up processes which are often in stark contrast with the heterogeneity of agro-climatic conditions and technology needs that require specific solutions derived through a participatory process. Institutions are needed that strengthen the functioning of national and regional markets (regulatory, risk management, information, a framework for organizations and cooperatives) and those for the management of climatic and other risks. Political stability and peace are still issues that require attention.

While the twenty-first century has witnessed sustained demand for Africa's natural resources — oil, minerals, and other raw materials — the continent continues to lack effective institutional capacity to manage these resources sustainably. Added to the continent's vulnerabilities to climate change, Africa's ongoing sustainable development efforts must, as out of necessity, link the environment (nature), economic growth (wealth) and governance (power) as the essential elements in poverty reduction strategies.

Although the linkages between Africa's socio-economic development and the continent's natural, ecological, and climatic factors have been examined in relevant development literature, this discourse has also identified the need for the continent to develop effective, accountable and transparent governance institutions to manage these complex development-environment-climate linkages.

vi. **Civil War and Aid**

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute,

'Africa is the most conflict ridden region of the world, and the only region in which the number of armed conflicts is on the increase.'
*During the 1990s there were seventeen major armed conflicts in Africa alone, compared to ten (in total) elsewhere in the world. Africa is also the region that receives the largest amount of foreign aid, receiving more per capita in official development assistance than any other region of the world.'*³

Dambisa Moyo introduces her book 'Dead Aid' by highlighting that the notion that aid can alleviate systemic poverty, and has done so is a myth. Millions in Africa are poorer today because of aid: misery and poverty have not eluded but have increased.

In the words of Dambisa Moyo (*Dead Aid* p58, 59);

'An aid-driven economy also leads to the politicization of the country-so that even when a middle class (albeit small) appears to thrive, its success or failure is wholly contingent on its political

allegiance. So much so, as Bauer puts it, that aid ‘diverts people’s attention from productive economic activity to political life’, fatally weakening the social construction of a country.’

In the Book ‘Making Africa Work’ p193 Greg Mills, Olusegun Obasanjo, Jeffrey Herbst and Dickie Davis propose five steps for success in mobilizing resources

- Foreign Aid can help, but investment will come from the private sector; it is therefore critical to adopt a business-friendly mindset
- Creating stability and certainty in the policy, legal and regulatory spheres is key to a successful investor energy
- Aid will not overcome weak governance. Improved state performance and delivery have to be locally generated and owned
- Chinese engagement should be embraced but care should be taken to ensure value for African people rather than the enrichment of elites
- Aid must be aligned to national plans and tailored to reducing the cost along doing business

4.0 CONCLUSION

The performance of regional integration arrangements in terms of trade, investment and migration reflects the evolution of the economic situation of the continent. The onus is on us to take advantage of the opportunities therein to increase the developmental impact of regional integration in Africa. Regional integration is not an end in itself; it should be seen as a stepping stone towards Africa’s competitiveness in value addition, attractiveness to investment and export to aid the generation of surpluses above the consumption needs.

The African dream must therefore depart from her mythical conclave of merely an unattainable mirage and proceed to the precincts of a reality that can be achieved if only each one of us did what is required to sow the seeds, nurture the dream, talk the talk and walk the walk of a developed integrated

Africa. The African dream envisages a continent thriving on the cardinal creed of peace, democracy, development, which is at par with or even above the rest of the world in human and economic development.

The beginning point towards realization of this dream involves the identification of the threats that stand in the way of the dream including corruption, bad leadership, greed, and general apathy; which in turn breed violence in hearts of men and chaos, turmoil and war in the societies as a whole. Only then can we chart a workable road map to the promised land of hope and prosperity.

All of us must ARISE, roll up our sleeves and be in the forefront of efforts towards establishing an Africa we all yearn for. This is because we all have a lot of stake in the present as well as the future of this continent for the sake of the present and future generations. We must never be silent and allow a few selfish leaders who have no regard for tomorrow to destroy Africa's livelihood. After all we are not the cradle of Humankind in vain, we innovated the FIRE, We must reclaim of innovation and restore our dignity.

In the words of Martin Luther King Junior,

**“In the End, we will remember not the words of our enemies,
but the silence of our friends”.³**

God bless you all.

Prof. PLO – Lumumba, Ph.D

³ Mamlin, Burke W., and Paul G. Biondich. "AMPATH Medical Record System (AMRS): collaborating toward an EMR for developing countries." *AMIA Annual Symposium Proceedings*. Vol. 2005. American Medical Informatics Association, 2005.