

Africa at Cross-Roads in Her Development: The Urgent Need of a Developmental State for Africa

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Abstract

The paper is directed towards addressing Africa Development challenges and making a case for the promotion of developmental states for Africa largely because of the inability of previous development approaches to help the continent in diversifying and transforming its economies, generate steady and sustained high growth rates. In many African countries, the state is the main organ of development. It is, nonetheless, unable to fulfil many development objectives and needs because of what has been referred to as “the paradox of development” in Africa, which makes the state both the promoter and inhibitor of development. The paper which relied on secondary sources of data revealed that the survival of the state rather than socio-economic development has been a major pre-occupation of many African governments. In addition, most states are also “soft” and “weak” because, in addition to their inadequate managerial capabilities and economic problems, they rest on a narrow base of support due to the low level of democratization occasioned by excessive bureaucratization and control over most political and economic institutions. It however, recommended that African states have three major developmental tasks for achieving economic transformation; planning the process, formulating appropriate policies and implementing the plans and policies. It needs to set up (or revive) key planning institutions and give them the power and autonomy to do their work.

Keywords: Transformation, challenges, socio-economic, developmental state, green agriculture, democratization, rent-seeking, institutional-mechanisms, capacity , legitimacy, statist policies ,etc

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Introduction

Development issues have occupied a central stage in virtually all African states since the attainment of political independence after the Second World War. Contemporary discussions have been concerned with the attainment of rapid economic development, which has been differently conceived and interpreted by many observers.

More specifically, Tomori (1995) contended that development has been interpreted in terms of raising the per capita income of the people of the newly independent states through the adoption of development strategies which aimed at fostering the rapid growth of the manufacturing and industrial sectors, with minimal attention given to the primary and service sectors of the economy.

Steady (1995) noted that Africa's social problems are legion and well known. Living conditions are declining all over the continent and poverty, unemployment, famine, disease, illiteracy and malnutrition are now endemic. Poor social services and inadequate infrastructure exacerbate the widespread social problems. These are made worse in some areas by excessive rural-urban migration, refuge flight and the destruction of traditional values which served as promoters of social stability and offered a measure of social welfare and security. Natural disasters and environmental deterioration have destroyed some areas such as the Sahel, rendering them only marginally fit for human habitation.

Over the past several years, the African development question has been a subject of debate among development economists, scholars and experts. As Asante (1995) rightly observed, it has long posed a formidable challenge to decision makers of Africa, academic theoreticians and pragmatic activists of the continent and continues to command the attention of Africa's two major regional intergovernmental organisations: the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). The debate is generally focused on the broad issue of how best to promote development in Africa, or on the correct path towards the socio-economic development of the continent. Significantly, the debate on appropriate measures for improving Africa's economic prospects was dominated by the proposals made at the beginning of the 1980's in the World Bank's agenda for Accelerated Development and in the OAU's Lagos Plan of Action (LPA).

This controversy was intensified in the ECA's preliminary observations-statistics and policies-on the World Bank and UNDP's Report, *Africa's Adjustment and Growth in the 1980s*, followed by the timely publication of ECA's *African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programme for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAFSAP)*.

These exchanges and the current formidable challenges facing the continent according to Asante (1995), have not only brought the debate about "whither Africa?" to the attention of the wider international community but have also necessitated a critical evaluation of the African development question from the perspectives of the leading theoreticians and proponents of the strategies of African development.

While Frank and Todaro, among other scholars, were evolving a radical conceptual framework to challenge the traditional models of development within the context of the Latin American experience, Adebayo Adedeji, somewhat like these radical writers, was also questioning orthodox assumptions within the context of African development experience since political independence. His appointment as the Executive Secretary of ECA in June 1975 fortuitously coincided with the period of rethinking about the question of development. The ECA provided him with an ideal platform for visibility in his sustained and tireless challenge to the traditional model of development as adopted by many African countries after nominal independence. Adedeji's conception of development can be briefly summarized.

First, he has consistently stressed from the very on set that economic and material growth by themselves should not be viewed as sufficient conditions for development, important though they are; growth must be brought about in ways which actively promote the self-reliant capabilities of developing countries in order to be of genuine, lasting value. Hence, he concludes that development "cannot be reduced" merely to capital accumulation, economic growth and economic restructuring. To do so is to conclude what may constitute the basis for development with development itself. Hence his warning; that the conventional macro-economic measures should be handled with great caution when dealing with economies such as those in Africa. For what Africa needs is simply not growth but "complete restructuring and transformation of its political economies from dependent to self-reliant ones".

Secondly, though Adedeji is not of the radical school himself, there is much that he and Frank and other dependency theorists shared in common. He perceived development as a process of bringing about fundamental and sustainable changes in society. Development transcends as well as encompasses growth and embraces such aspects of the quality of life as social justice, equality of opportunity for all citizens, equitable, distribution of income and the democratization of the development process. While a country may achieve economic growth without development, it is not possible for real development to occur without economic growth. Development is a collective responsibility in which all have to share in its labour as well as in its fruits. Like Frank, Adedeji made people, their freedom and human dignity, the focus of his analysis (see Asante, 1995). And again like him, Adedeji scorned the premise that the progress of the developing countries lies in the "the mindless imitation of Western Models". Rather, he finds the salvation of African countries in "an intelligent use of local resources", a view which is elaborated in the ECA's Revised Framework, the LPA and the AAF-SAP earlier highlighted.

Finally, it is within this context that Adedeji argued that development refers fundamentally to human being, "to every man and woman, to the whole man and the whole woman". For development is a human experience synonymous with the fulfilment of individual "mental, emotional and physical well being", and not just the growth of things, which are merely means. In other words, development is not merely a transformation of the structures and material attributes of society. Authentic, self-reliant processes of development inevitably result on the transformation of the people who bring about the change – their culture, their attitude to work, their saving and investment habits, concepts and skills and their systems. The genuine self-reliant development of an economy, brings in its trail, this process of self-transformation of the people. And when the choice is reduced to self-reliance, when the people become both the end and a means of development, their interest, values and aspirations necessarily determine the content, strategies and modalities of development.

Africa remains the least developed region of the world and contains many of the poorest nations. Many of such countries are not only stagnant but are in deep crisis. This is particularly so when it is realised that the GNP growth rate is lower than the growth rate of the population. Against this background, the paper looks at the current and emerging development issues in Africa.

Current and Emerging Development Challenges in Africa

Despite concerted efforts by many African countries, their development objectives have remained largely unrealised. Poverty has increased in many of these countries and they have continued, particularly since the 1980's, to experience persistent retrogression in virtually all areas of economic and social endeavours. The socio-economic crisis facing African countries is manifested in the disintegration of the productive sector, accompanied by deterioration in the physical and social infrastructures. The consequences of all these are seen in the considerable fall in the living standards of a vast majority of the people and the decline in production and productivity.

According to Steady (1995), indicators such as life expectancy, infant mortality, maternal morbidity, maternal and child health-care services, ratio of population per physician, clean water supply and sanitation, adequate housing, control of endemic diseases, education and environmental security suggest an urgent need for social development in Africa.

On trade performance and trade negotiations, the Economic Commission for Africa (2011) contended that Africa's share of world merchandise trade rose to 3 – 2 percent in 2009, despite the sharp fall in total trade due to the global crisis. Similarly, the continent's share of world trade in commercial services increased to above 3 percent for the first time. However, the structure of Africa's exports remains undiversified, focusing on primary commodities. In 2009, the major exports components were fuel and mining products (64 percent), iron and steel (19 – 2 percent) and agricultural products (10 - 2 percent). As fuel and mining products were hit the hardest by the global recession (with a 36 percent decline in value), Africa's exports fell by 2 percent in 2009. Africa's heavy dependence on natural resource exports poses difficult and persistent problems. These arises from the characteristics of the natural resources such as exhaustibility, negative externalities associated with their extraction and consumption as well as price volatility. Effective management of the production and export of natural resources often requires a leading role for the state.

This role is also crucial in trade negotiations. The Doha Round does not have a specific remit for diversifying African exports. The existing non-reciprocal preferential trade arrangements focus on perpetuating the existing structure of African exports. In principle, neither completion of the Doha Round nor existing preferential trade arrangements will do much damage to Africa's future trade prospects. The real dangers lie with the Economic Partnership Agreements that are being negotiated, since the reciprocity involved in them will force African countries to liberalize too rapidly, with a bias towards Europe and against continental integration. They may also work against the strategic goals of promoting industrialization, economic diversification and structural transformation in Africa.

On development financing, the Economic Report on Africa 2011 also noted that African countries have made little progress in mobilizing domestic resources for development since the monetary consensus of 2002. Gross domestic savings as a proportion of GDP remains below 20 percent and are therefore inadequate to finance the investment necessary for maintaining solid GDP growth. Boosting government revenue to fill the gap requires considerable reform in many African countries. The global crisis too, put considerable strain on international resources for African development. External capital inflows and trade financing have generally declined after the crisis (but not official development assistance). It is expected, though, that sustained recovery of the global economy in 2011 and beyond will result in a strong rebound of capital inflows.

Faced with the challenge of environmental sustainability, transformation according to Economic Commission for Africa (2011) entails the reconfiguration of the structures of production, distribution and consumption of goods and services in ways that can build a solid foundation for future growth and development. Achieving such change requires a departure from the previous approaches to economic growth and development that failed to take full account of the role of natural and social capital in wealth creation. Africa has the potential for diversifying its economy while greening its agricultural, industrial and service sectors. Greening agriculture must be a priority for many African countries, in view of its critical role; despite recent improvements, African agriculture still falls short of meeting the continent's food demand, yet evidence shows that green-farming practices can increase yields on small farms. Global markets for organic foods and drinks are substantial and increasing rapidly.

They represent new opportunities to expand trade and raise the incomes of farmers. Africa also abounds in agricultural biodiversity resources, which can be significant sources of income as agriculture diversifies and develops.

The continent's transformation will require industrialization to be greened, including efficient use of resources and alternative energy sources. This will enable Africa to realise its potential for renewable energy power generation as a means of establishing and then sustaining its international competitiveness. Otherwise, energy – intensive and carbon – intensive industrialization would not only add costs but also lock Africa into inefficient and uncompetitive production modes. Greening industrialization will increase energy and material efficiency, thus yielding significant economic gains while reducing ecological and climate -change risks.

Two major issues, the impacts of conflicts on Africa's development and the issue of leadership (a major source of conflict) must be critically examined. Conflicts have undoubtedly undermined the ability of African countries to harness all the resources that are available to them for development. Otubanjo (1994) observed that while people are busy destroying the few things that they have, they also seem to think or believe, that they need the West, which disparages from time to time, to sometimes help us acquire weapons and rebuild after the wars. One can imagine the kind of devastation that has taken place in Liberia, Sudan, Burundi, Nigeria, Congo Democratic Republic (DRC), Rwanda, Somalia and Ethiopia. Otubanjo further noted that one problem Africans must contend with, relates to the political arrangements that allow leaders who are not very sensitive to their people's needs to be in power. Leadership is a problem that currently plagues African nations: nation's ability to properly determine their leaders without undue interference is the source of the problem.

In Africa, corruption has had several negative implications for development and governance (ADB, 2001:123-5). It has hindered proper resource management, undermined efforts to enhance growth and poverty alleviation and has obstructed sound and sustainable growth in the private sector. In many African countries, corruption has had a crippling impact on development for it has undermined laws and weakened the foundation of national institutions, which constitute the pillars of economic development.

Widespread corruption has reinforced existing economic and social inequalities and has undermined the credibility of government and public institutions. Unless corruption is effectively combated in Africa, the vicious circle of rising poverty, poor governance and corruption will continue unabated.

Another major threat to development in Africa is rapid population growth. In 1974, the World Bank based the importance of population on the concept of human development when it observed that "the effect of population growth on the quality of development – as measured by the social indicators as the number of people who are adequately fed, become literate, share equitably in income growth and are productively employed – is more important than its effect on income growth" (see Ojo 1987:80). The trend of population growth has social implications for human development issues such as education, health and nutrition, employment and housing. It is generally held that underutilizing labour (unemployment and underemployment), which is a major cause of poverty and inequality, can in itself be primarily attributed to excessive population growth (Ojo, 1981). Excessive population growth has been prominent in most African countries, being 3 percent or over in some countries in 1999; e.g CDR and Mali (3 percent each). Population growth in other countries exists as follows: 3.1 percent in Niger, 3.3 percent in Somalia and 3.4 percent in Liberia (ADB, 2000:251). The average annual population growth for sub-Saharan Africa is 2.8 percent (1.6 percent for the whole world) higher than the percentage of growth for any other region in the world.

In virtually, all African countries, population pressure has led to a "bulge" in the demand for education at all levels. However, a lack of adequate facilities has caused many citizens to be denied the right to education while enrolment growth rates have been recorded at the expense of quality education. The population explosion in Africa has also meant that the labour force has been growing at about 2.5 to 3 percent per annum; this has not been matched by the employment generating capacities of the national economies.

Perhaps no condition better depicts the current circumstances of Africa's development than the pervasiveness of poverty on the continent. Poverty in Africa has become so severe that even in comparison with other less developed countries in other continents, poverty is evidently rising.

According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Developments, "Lest-Developed Countries 2002 Report," the proportion of people in 29 African countries living below \$2 per day increased from 82 percent in the late 1960s to 87.5 percent in the late 1990s. For those living in extreme poverty (those making less than \$1 per day), the increase was from 55.8 to 64.9 percent. In absolute figures, the number of Africans living in extreme poverty rose from 89.6 million to 233.5 million over the same period of time. Furthermore, the United Nations classified 49 countries worldwide, as less developed countries. They were assessed on the basis of GDP, human resources and economic diversification. Out of this number, 33 of the countries are located in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Poverty is aggravated in Africa by additional burdens that saddle the continent. The crisis created by debt alone ensures that Africa maintains a marginal position in the world. At the moment, there are about 41 Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) in Africa. Out of these countries, 32 of them are Severely Indebted Low-Income Countries (SILICS) while 25 of them are in SSA. The total debt of the SILICS which was \$58.1 billion in 1980 stood at \$211.2 billion in 1997 (Ajayi and Iyoha 1998). The extent of the debt problem is further demonstrated by the present value of the debt which exceeded 220 percent of exports in 1993 in 27 of 37 countries in SSA. Moreover, debt service due exceeded 25 percent of exports in 22 countries. Additionally, 12 countries had debt service that equated to more than 50 percent of their exports. Debt rescheduling was arranged for over 28 countries and some countries have gone through such arrangements up to 16 times since 1980 (World Bank, 1995).

Africa's development problems require an appropriate diagnosis with clearly defined objectives. The development of Africa lies with the Africans themselves. Development ought to be from within rather than from without. A significant part of the human and material resources necessary for development should emanate from Africa more than before. Africa's learning from the experiences of others should be with the aim of modifying their development strategies to meet its needs and realities. Concern for social justice and democratic norms should be part of the strategy for the attainment of sustainable development. Genuine efforts must be made to integrate the needs and interests of the vulnerable groups into the development process.

Since sustained development has eluded many of the Sub-Saharan African countries, there has been a clamour for a re-thinking of the concepts and philosophies of development relevant to the countries. It is against this consideration that the paper takes a look at the option of a “development state” for Africa.

The Imperatives of a Developmental State for Africa

The “state” in Africa has a crucial role to play in facing various current and emerging development challenges. A “developmental state” can be defined as one that has the capacity to deploy its authority, credibility and legitimacy in a binding manner to design and implement development policies and programmes for promoting transformation and growth as well as for expanding human capabilities. Such a state according to the Economic Commission for Africa (2011) takes as its overall socio-economic goals, the long-term growth and structural transformation of the economy, with equity. Developmental states in Africa should be inclusive and operate through a democratic governance framework, which is necessary to ensure socio-political inclusiveness. This in turn enhances the legitimacy of the state and its institutions, giving the state greater authority in managing disputes stemming from transformation.

Economic Report on Africa (2011) contended that the primary goal of the African developmental state is to overcome the continent’s inherent development challenges, focusing on high and sustainable economic growth rates through diversification and transformation. The key mechanism is a comprehensive development framework that steers social and economic policies to work in a complementary manner. The developmental state provides guidance in constructing this framework, in defining the overall national development goals and in implementing the relevant macroeconomic, sectoral, microeconomic and social policies. The impact of these policies will inevitably create winners and losers among various economic agents both as producers and consumers and indeed; all segments of society may be called upon to make short-term, socio-economic sacrifices for society’s long-term benefits. Hence the development framework must contain incentives and sanctions, so that economic agents who meet targets are rewarded and those who fail are penalized. This system accords the state a large role in designing and implementing appropriate conflict-management arrangements.

Since free market forces will not drive economic transformation on their own, the developmental state must play a central role in resource allocation and in efficient coordination of crucial economic activities. This is particularly relevant to developing infrastructure, human capital, the financial market and setting up production facilities in the agricultural and industrial sectors. Issues of market failure abound in this area, requiring the state's positive intervention (see Economic Commission for Africa, 2011).

From examining the historical experiences in the East Asian miracles, come the concept of the "developmental state". The idea of the developmental state is most closely associated with Chalmers Johnson's analysis of Japan's highly successful post-war reconstruction and reindustrialization. The core of Chalmers thesis, is that Japan's industrial miracle was neither a fluke (or historical accident) nor inevitable but rather, the results of a "plan rational" or "Developmental State (DS)." The main characteristics of a plan rational developmental state include the following:

- Determined influence on the direction and pace of economic development by state direct intervention rather than relying on market forces;
- Setting social and economic goals and target to guide the development effort and mobilizing the nation around them and
- Using the market in these mobilizing efforts.

Igun (2010) averred that the developmental state has ideological and structural components. In terms of ideological, it is "developmentalist" with the mission of ensuring economic development defined as high rates of accumulation and industrialization. This is operationalized into;

- Sustained and steady high rates of economic growth;
- Positive structural changes in the productive system domestically and in relationship to the international economy;
- Ideological hegemony which produces voluntary adherence of key national actors to the defined development project;

The structural components include the following;

- Capacity to implement economy policies sagaciously and efficaciously, (institutional, technical, administrative and political)
- Relative autonomy (state strong enough from control of key social actors) – embedded autonomy and
- Strong social anchoring (to prevent the state from using its autonomy in a predatory manner).

The Possibility / Inevitability Thesis for Africa

Following the spectacular successes of Japan and its Asian acolytes, Taiwan and South Korea in particular and the other Asian tigers, the claim according to Igun (2010), has emerged that the “developmental state”, is an essential component of successful development. Using historical records, scholar such as Ha-Joon Chang (2002) has argued that the developmental state played central crucial role in all countries that have experienced successful economic development. Chang points out that both UK and USA who appear now to be epitome of free market, actually enjoyed developmental state features such as protection of infant industries in their initial industrializing phase. He argued that such policies which also benefited Japan; still remain prerequisites for successful indigenous industrialization.

At the core of the inevitability thesis, Igun (2010) argued rather robustly that no successful socio-economic development is possible without the involvement of a developmental state, whatever the actual configuration it takes on particular instances. In order words, socio-economic development invariably, inevitably and necessarily involve some form of developmental state (even if different variants). The inevitability arguments can be summarized as follows;

- All states are developmental because government policy is designed to encourage economic growth (Beeson, 2003)
- Historically, successful economic development has been reliant on the actions of a developmental state (DS) with effective state capacity and the willingness to use it in pursuit of development goals (Beeson, 2003)
- Policy activism on the part of domestic governments through such instruments as investment incentives; subsidies, tariffs’ credit, direct finance, monetary policy, monopoly grants, quantitative restrictions, licensing, tax privileges, regulation of

foreign investment and foreign capital inflows, provide the critical catalyst for the developmental process.

- It is impossible in the modern world for any society to make a speedy and successful transition from poverty without a state that is in some respects corresponds to the model of DS (Beeson, 2003)
- Nations who do not possess the type of state capacity and leadership which characterize the “developmental state” will most likely remain in subordinate positions in the global economy.

The Impossibility for Africa Thesis

The recent Asian financial crisis and in other parts of the world has triggered a second more critical look at the developmental state. The crisis has unleashed forces of new conditionality around the developmental state. These forces of new conditionality constrain the ability of the developmental state in designing independent strategies for industrialization and foreign trade (Adelman and Yeldan, 1999). In particular the emerging analysis raises doubt about the applicability of the developmental state model for development in Africa. The central position in the emerging literature is that what has obviously worked in other “late industrializers” cannot work in Africa (Mkandawire, 2006). In other words, it is suggested that the replication of the Asian experience in the use of developmental state is somewhat impossible for Africa. The reasons usually advanced for this position include:

- Dependence
- Lack of ideology
- “softness” of the African State and its proneness to “capture” by special interest groups;
- lacks of technical and analytical capacity;
- changed international environment which does not allow the protection policies used by the Asian Developmental states; and
- Past poor record of performance / weak institutions.

In our views, the most important of the reasons adduced above, are lack of technical and analytical capacity; softness of the state, making it prone to capture; and the changed international environment.

Lewis (1996) in his discussion of the replicability of the Asian Developmental State in Africa, argued that while some aspects of the models could be replicated in Africa; the extensive coordinated economic interventions are beyond the administrative abilities of most African governments. Similarly, Callaghy (1993) argued that African states do not have the capacity to pursue the statist policies utilized by the Asian Development State (DS) because the African states are weak and operate weak markets.

One of the most developed arguments in the impossibility thesis, is that which involves around autonomy, more specifically, "embedded autonomy". This argument revolves around the Weberian notion of how the rational pursuit by individuals of their interest lead to lack of autonomy of the states in Africa and result in their capture by interest groups. The essence of the argument is that whereas market failures are associated with non-performance in developmental economics and "government failure" with neo-classical economics; in the discussion of non-performance of African economies, these are replaced by "societal failure" which is more debilitating and recalcitrant (Mkandawire, 2006). This "social failure" is evidenced by:

- Lack of "social capital"
- Termite – like spread of African primordial and patrimonial relationship into the core of the edifice of modern administration rendering it weak and incoherent (a threat to the macro-economic ambitions of either capitalism or socialism).

Constructing an African Developmental State and the way Forward for it

To usher in an effective developmental state requires – beyond a set of crucial institutions and mechanism – a democratic socio-political environment that endows it with legitimacy and authority. This environment also provides stakeholders with the voice of representation that enable them to have a sense of ownership of the country's national development programme.

As rightly observed by the Economic Commission for Africa (2011) the capacity of the developmental state for formulating and implementing such a programme has two component parts.

The first consist of a political leadership that is committed to national development goals; and that can motivate and guide the planning process. The second is a competent and professional bureaucracy that has the autonomy and power to implement the programmes and respond swiftly to rapidly changing local and global conditions. Its personnel must be recruited solely on merit, well trained and adequately rewarded.

At the larger socio-political level, the developmental state needs to be assisted by strong developmentalist coalitions. These are made up of groups that share a common developmentalist vision and can sustain dialogue with the political leadership; a means of broadening the support base for designing and pursuing crucial policies. At the operational level are the consultative and deliberative institutions (see Economic Report on Africa, 2011).

When they function well, these developmentalist coalition and the institutions can help to enhance the efficiency, and equity – of resource allocation and promulgate citizen's greater oversight of the state, thereby promoting greater accountability. The enhanced "ownership" of the development process contributes to its credibility and legitimacy. At a technical level, the exchange of information and prospective, enhances bureaucratic decision-making.

The case for promoting developmental states in Africa largely rests on the inability of previous development approaches to help Africa diversify and transform its economies, generate steady and sustained high growth rates. Developmental states are constructed around a government with the political will and legitimacy to perform specified developmental functions, a professional bureaucracy that implement established national development strategies and policies and interactive mechanisms allowing stakeholder groups to be involved in designing and carrying out policies.

Finally, developmental state's effectiveness in pushing through economic transformation derives from its ability to promote more equitable and efficient resource allocation, its capacity to design and carry out policy as well as its close coordination of institutions. Although this approach is inherently vulnerable to risk running from state intervention, it also has some built-in institutional mechanisms for avoiding regulatory capture, corruption and rent-seeking, though these need to be nurtured.

Conclusion

One important impulse for change in African economies, is the desire of African leaders, apparently shared by their followers for development. The desire according to Ake (2005) for development might be described with equal accuracy as a passion or an ideology. The informal and formal pronouncements of African leaders give one the impression of an unshakeable commitment to the idea that they must try to achieve development, perceived as the primary condition for their own welfare, the legitimation of their leadership and the well-being of their countries. They are convinced that there is a link between the underdevelopment of their countries and the most fundamental problems which plague their states; such as poverty, the high incidence of disease, unemployment, ignorance, technological backwardness, short life-expectancy, social disorganisation and the high incidence of political instability. They see development of their economies as the necessary condition for dealing decisively with these problems. That is how development has come to be an obsession in Africa, even though few are clear what development is.

African states have three major development tasks for achieving economic transformation; planning the process, formulating appropriate policies and implementing the plans and policies. Economic transformation in Africa demands the state to play a central role; using a comprehensive development framework – in planning, articulating and implementing policies aimed at ensuring efficient allocation of resources. But the state must have the capacity to this, as well as the institutions to link the bureaucracy with key stakeholder. Crucially, it must have the legitimacy to mobilize all stakeholders around a nationally owned development framework, including its vision and targets. In other words, transformation in Africa will require a developmental state.

The study of the unhappy development experiences in independent Africa since the late 1950s has continued to command the attention of African leaders and thinkers, of academic theoreticians and pragmatic activists and especially of Africa's premier regional intergovernmental organization, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). The analysis is generally focused on the broad issue of how best to promote development in Africa or on what 'correct' path there is, towards the economic development of the continent.

Enduring interests in this topical subject has been considerably heightened by what is now generally termed the 'continental Africa development crisis', which has been intensifying over the last decade with profound implications for the satisfaction of the people as well as political stability. Here lies the concern of this paper in promoting a case for a 'developmental state' for Africa largely due to the inability of previous development approaches to help Africa diversify and transform its economies, generate steady and sustained high growth rates in the continent.

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