



CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA



IJEBU-ODE, NIGERIA

ADEDEJI AT 80: MOVING AFRICA FROM RHETORIC TO ACTION

Ijebu-Ode, Nigeria, 18 – 20 December, 2010

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Introduction

The Nigeria-based African Centre for Development and Strategic Studies (ACDESS) held a high-level Millennium Symposium from 18 to 20 December 2010 in Ijebu-Ode, Nigeria. The Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR), Cape Town, South Africa, participated actively in the meeting.

The seminar focused on strengthening Africa's regional integration efforts and had three important goals:

- To review the continent's socio-economic and political condition and consider the development paradigms that are being implemented in Africa;
- To address commitments made by African leaders to lay the national, sub-regional, and continental foundations for socio-economic and political transformation that will enable Africa's development to outpace that of other developing regions; and
- To assess objectively Africa's security, governance, regional integration, and development challenges.

Former president of Mozambique, Joaquim Chissano, delivered the keynote address, while former Liberian president, Amos Sawyer, and the Executive Director of the United Nations (UN) Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Abdoulaye Janneh, delivered special addresses at this meeting. The seminar coincided with the 80th birthday, celebrated on 21 December 2010, of Professor Adebayo Adedeji, ACDESS's Executive Director and a CCR board member. Professor Adedeji, who has been acknowledged as one of Africa's most illustrious public servants, had earlier announced his retirement from public life at an African Union (AU) summit held in Uganda in July 2010 after five decades of dedicated service to the continent. The high-level symposium provided an opportunity for a review of the key public and intellectual contributions made by Professor Adedeji, who is also widely regarded as the "Father of African integration" after he was instrumental in creating the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1975; the Preferential Trade Area (PTA) of 1981, which later became the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA); and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) in 1983.

Professor Adebayo Adedeji recently announced his retirement from public life after five decades of dedicated service to Africa



PROFESSOR ADEBAYO ADEDEJI

Image source: CCR "Stabilising Sudan" Seminar
August 2010
Photograph by Fanie Jason

1. Economic Development

The Nigeria meeting advised African leaders to draw upon past action plans and blueprints to promote the continent's economic and social development more effectively. Rather than "reinventing the wheel", continental leaders were urged to implement policies such as: the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) and the Final Act of Lagos (FAL) of 1980; the African Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (APPER) of 1985; the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programme for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP) of 1989; and the African

Charter for Popular Participation in Development (ACPPD) of 1990. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) of 2001 remains the blueprint for Africa's development. While Africa has, over the past decade, experienced positive economic growth, the meeting recommended that the continent's development agenda and paradigms needed to be carefully reconsidered. The implementation of past development plans at national, sub-regional, and continental levels could enable Africa to address the critical challenges outlined in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which aim to halve poverty by 2015.

In relation to economic development issues, the seminar focused on the need for African leaders to address the importance of food and agriculture – a sector that remains central to Africa's social and economic transformation, since 70 percent of the continent's population find their major source of subsistence in agriculture. The meeting also analysed what has been labeled as Africa's "development problematique": a coincidence of seven devastating deficits – demography, drought, desertification, dependency, disequilibrium, debt, and destabilisation – that have caused multiple debilitating crises on the continent.

2. Democratic Governance

In relation to governance issues, the meeting recognised that, since achieving independence from colonial rule over the past 50 years, Africa's relationship with democracy has remained ambivalent, despite the fact that 30 African states have signed up to NEPAD's African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) of 2003. Where the APRM, which has been hailed as one of Africa's most innovative instruments for the promotion of "good governance", has been used, it has proved prescient. For example, the APRM's country report on South Africa, which was chaired by Adebayo Adedeji between 2005 and 2007, noted the capacity constraints on South Africa's service delivery efforts and highlighted socio-economic disparities which made the country the world's most unequal society by 2010. The APRM report also gave warning of the scourge of xenophobia. Within a year of the report being released, South Africa witnessed brutal attacks on fellow Africans, in which 62 people were killed and about 100,000 displaced. The Ijebu-Ode meeting urged African leaders to take APRM reports more seriously and to use the mechanism to hold governments more accountable.

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THOUSANDS OF FOREIGNERS SOUGHT REFUGE AT CROWDED COMMUNITY CENTRES IN JOHANNESBURG DURING A WAVE OF XENOPHOBIC VIOLENCE IN 2008.

Image source:
<http://telegraph.co.uk/news/1988930/South-Africa-violence.html>.

The ACDESS meeting also emphasised the need for Africa to move away from short-term, "fire-fighting" plans to the development and implementation of long-term strategies. It stressed that relations between states and their societies should be urgently addressed, and in particular, the gap between elites and masses narrowed. Forms of participation that bring people into the development process should be crafted. The role of the state must be reconfigured, with governments playing a bigger part in service delivery.

Viable social contracts between leaders and citizens should also be developed. The economic transformation of Africa depends on the establishment of effective local governance at the grassroots level. Citizens should be empowered, and political processes to enable the full participation of all sectors of society should be strengthened. The meeting considered how to redress male dominance and traditional patriarchal practices. Given that women typically constitute 50 percent of national populations in Africa, traditional leaders must address the need for greater female participation in local structures. With about 70 percent of the continent's population typically aged 30 years or younger, the key role that African youth can play towards the continent's renewal was highlighted, as well as the need to encourage greater involvement by young people in development strategies. Furthermore, the effective management of diversity can provide the building blocks for local governance based on indigenous institutions, and can help to promote economic integration at the sub-regional and continental levels, enabling Africa to create sufficient social capital and to achieve economies of scale.

It was noted that elections do not necessarily guarantee democracy. Politically, many African attempts at electoral processes have been flawed in recent years, for example, in Nigeria (2007), Kenya (2007), Zimbabwe (2008), and Côte d'Ivoire (2010). However, Africa has also witnessed some notable successes over the past five years, for example, in elections in Liberia (2005), Sierra Leone (2007), Ghana (2008), and Mauritius (2010).

“Democratisation in Nigeria and elsewhere could build social and national cohesion and enable progress towards effective delivery of services that benefit African citizens”



A BUSTLING MARKET IN LAGOS, NIGERIA, AFRICA'S MOST POPULOUS COUNTRY.

Image source:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject_Nigeria

3. Regional Integration

From a sub-regional perspective, Nigeria has played an important role in leading economic integration and peacebuilding efforts in West Africa over the past 40 years. However, unless strong domestic structures are established, West Africa's hegemon will continue to be weakened by its internal politics and economics. Nigeria, which has consistently placed Africa at the centre of its foreign policy since 1960, was more able to launch regional interventions under its unaccountable former military regimes. By contrast, civilian regimes have to take account of parliament, press, and public opinion before embarking on such interventions, which are often not popular at home.

Nigeria's development process must be urgently democratised if it is to have a broad impact. Such democratisation in Nigeria and elsewhere could build social and national cohesion and enable progress towards effective delivery of services that benefit African citizens. In general, strengthening the capacity of states to fulfill their core functions is essential to reducing poverty. Sustainable development requires a strong and effective civil service. African states must restore meritocracy, just as the "Asian Tigers" – Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan – have done, in order to modernise public services. Capable and effective states are essential to development.

“Africa must continue to engage with the UN in order to craft effective strategies to meet the Millennium Development Goals”



THE EIGHT MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Each of Africa's regional economic communities (RECs) has its own interests and agendas, which can obstruct effective cooperation within and between these bodies. Most African states belong to more than one regional economic grouping, exacerbating implementation of key political and economic deals and processes, such as trade agreements, at the sub-regional level. An audit report of the African Union in 2007, which was chaired by Adebayo Adedeji, highlighted the many capacity challenges that African states still face, including funding and human resource problems, as well as inadequate planning. There is an urgent need to rationalise Africa's RECs and to focus on the eight bodies recognised by the AU: the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU); the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa; the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD); the East African Community (EAC); the Economic Community of Central African States; the Economic Community of West African States; the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD); and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

On the issue of borders, African states are now formulating and implementing policies in support of the AU's Border Programme of 2007. Efforts must focus on increasing and strengthening cross-border interactions to ensure that regional integration initiatives are successful at promoting trade. The issues of boundaries and regional integration are interlinked; borders, instead of being seen as barriers, should be viewed as bridges between member states; more focused research is needed to explore the potential that boundaries hold for promoting peace and cooperation between and within states, as well as for facilitating regional integration. Africa should also learn from both the positive and negative experiences that can be gleaned from the process of creating the 27-member European Union (EU), which remains the world's most successful effort at regional integration.

4. External Actors

On the international stage, attention should be focused on the United Nations reform process of 2004/2005, which created the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council, neither of which has so far been particularly effective. Africa must continue to engage with these bodies in order to strengthen them and craft effective strategies to meet the Millennium Development Goals. In the short term, UN Security Council reform is unlikely to occur soon, leaving Africa and Latin America as the only major regions in the world without a permanent seat on the 15-member UN Security Council.

In relation to development efforts, particular concern was expressed about Africa's "brain-drain" after almost two decades of inappropriate advice received by African governments from the Bretton Woods institutions – the



World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) – to reduce spending on education and health. As a result, Africa’s research output ranks as the world’s lowest. The continent must urgently address its research, scientific, and technology gap. Human capacity should also be fostered by providing home-grown and people-centered approaches to training and the development of youth leadership.

Concern was also expressed about the weakness of Africa’s trade, which continues to suffer overall. Africa’s share of world trade has declined from 5.6 percent of the total global figure in 1980 to just 2.1 percent in 2010. Trade must thus be prioritised on Africa’s regional integration agenda.

Finally, the global financial crisis of 2008/2009 has damaged Africa’s development prospects, and could reverse the gains that the continent has made towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals. Africa should take the lead in its own development agenda and should learn from the failure of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) of the World Bank and the IMF initiated in the 1980s. The continent must also take on board lessons from Asia’s development. In addition, Africa should increase its leverage towards its Western and other partners – including China, India, and Brazil – by clearly defining its own interests while engaging these external actors.