# LESSONS FROM PAST PAN-AFRICAN POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC VISIONS OF DEVELOPMENT
## An analysis of Agenda 2063 implementation

*From the African Community of Practice on Managing for Development Results at the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF)*

**Case Study N° 39**

## SYNOPSIS

In Africa, various development visions have been propounded during the last fifty years by both Africans and externals. Not only, these visions had important differences whether they were from Africans or externals, they had not also emanated from the people. Then, they resulted in insufficient achievements concerning the development of the continent. Fifty years after the implementation of such visions, there was a need to revise them and plan a new continental development vision that takes into account the needs of the African population for the coming fifty years. This was achieved through the definition and promulgation of the AU Agenda 2063. However, in order to avoid past errors, it is necessary to look back and learn lessons that can guide the successful implementation of the new agenda. Hence, the analysis of the outcomes guided the recommendation of policies towards African leaders through "what to do" and "what not to do" for succeeding in AU Agenda 2063 implementation. This case study is worth sharing with African leaders to help them confront current challenges Africa is facing. Also, it inspires African capacity building institutions like the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), in assisting African countries in designing and monitoring relevant policies that fall in what to do by African leaders to succeed in AU Agenda 2063 implementation. Finally, such institutions will help promote a results-based culture that is recommended for ensuring an effective transformation of the continent.

## Introduction

According to Sooksan and Gayle (2010), a vision is a mental picture of a desired future that an individual, a country/nation or a continent has. It is often articulated in a few sentences, for example, as a preamble to a document. Sometimes the vision is captured in a short, simple and catchy slogan. In general, however, a vision is often accompanied by a long-term strategic plan on how to achieve the desired future. In Africa, various visions on development have been propounded during the last fifty years, by both Africans and externals[1] (Bujra, 2004). And, there were important differences between Africans' visions of their future development and the development visions that externals had for Africa (Bujra, 2004; Ukeje, 2005).

[1] According to Bujra (2004), externals vary depending on the specific period and context – from the colonial powers to the former Soviet Union, the Americans, the UN and Bretton Woods Institutions, Donors, the G8, and now those described by the much overused term the International Community.

According to these authors, the visions of both Africans and externals have emanated from governments and not from the people, because African people generally had very little knowledge of the visions promulgated by their leaders on their behalf. Moreover, there were substantive differences between internal (African's visions) and external visions regarding the nature of the development expected and ways of achieving it. Thus, every attempt by Africans to forge their future and craft their own development strategies and policies has been pooh-poohed by the international financial institutions with the support, or at least the connivance, of the donor community (Adedeji, 2002).

Fifty years after the implementation of past development visions, there was intensive debate over the appropriate future development strategy for Africa (Gambari, 2004; Asuk, 2011). Then, it became important to revise past development visions and plan a new continental vision of development that takes into account the needs of the African population for the coming fifty years. This was achieved through the definition and promulgation of the AU Agenda 2063. But, in order to avoid past errors, there is a need to analyze past visions and learn from them in order to successfully implement the new agenda.

This case study aims to learn from the past pan-African political and economic development visions as to suggest what to do (The Dos) and not to do (the DON'Ts) for succeeding in AU Agenda 2063 implementation. It will first analyse the past development visions of Africa from the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) to the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). Then, it will pass through the external development visions and analyse the main observed results on the continent until now. Finally, it will bring out the DOs and the DON'Ts for successful implementation of AU Agenda 2063.

## Presentation of the case study

### 1. A history of African visions

#### 1.1. The Pan-African Congress and its African vision

According to Bujra (2004), since the last century, African leaders – both in and out of the continent – have begun to view the continent as a whole instead of as fragmented pieces. They also began to discuss continental development, as opposed to piecemeal development, in specific countries or regions of the continent. Thus, Pan-Africanism is more of a movement which had its common underlying theme thus the struggle for social and political equality and the freedom from economic exploitation and racial discrimination (Biswalo, 2011). Its purpose was essentially a recognition of the fragmented nature of the existence of Africans, their marginalization and alienation whether in their own continent or in the diaspora (Murithi, 2008). These views of the continent were slowly incorporated into the nationalist struggle and received their clearest articulation during the struggle for independence which they achieved during the Pan-African Congress held in Manchester, in 1945. Africa's development vision was then expressed in the following terms: (a) to achieve independence from colonial rule throughout the continent, so that Africans can rule themselves democratically, (b) to achieve continental unity so that Africa can experience faster economic growth and catch up with the industrialized countries, and assume a strong position within the international system.

#### 1.2. The first OAU vision

After meeting many times, many ideas for regional combinations developed out and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) emerged as the culmination of efforts by Africans and people of African descent to redeem themselves from the yokes of colonialism, exploitation and social subjugation and bring the African people much closer together (Biswalo, 2011). When the OAU was created in Addis Ababa, in 1963, the Pan-African vision was

incorporated in its Charter. This vision became the subject at the 1963 meeting of a heated debate which centered on a crucial element of the African vision, should the political unity of the continent (a) be realized immediately, or (b) be a long term objective to be achieved through the creation and consolidation of independent nation states first, and then built up through sub-regional building blocks (Gattamorta, 2005; Herbst and Mills, 2003). In this debate, nation building and economic development at country level had been given priority throughout the continent with the aim to pursue the goal of continental unity (Bujra, 2004).

After that, studies on Africa's economic performance revealed that, despite reasonable economic performance during the period 1960-1975, Africa was facing a serious economic crisis (Adedeji, 1978; World Bank, 1981; Bujra, 1982). It was under these circumstances that Africa came up with its second and very important initiative for an alternative development vision.

### 1.3. The second OAU vision

According to the Economic Commission of Africa (ECA, 1981), African governments had three options for facing the anticipated crises which they discussed and came up with a vision and a plan of action for getting Africa out of the crises. This serious effort led to the famous Monrovia Declaration of 1979 which articulated Africa's vision of its future, the strategies of which were incorporated in the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) and the Final Act of Lagos of 1980.

But, the issue of economic cooperation and integration was so important to the governments that they felt the need to pass a special and separate Act (Abuja Treaty in 1991); which they did within ten years (Bujra, 2004). As a consequence, the 1980s decade had been described as the lost decade because Africa went through very serious economic and political crises (Baah, 2003).

### 1.4. The third OAU vision

The lost decade of the 1980s was marked with two fundamental characteristics. First, widespread economic and political crises in almost all African countries. Second, strong intervention by the Bretton Woods institutions with the discredited Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) that were forced on African governments, with the aim of restructuring Africa's economies (Bujra, 2004). Then, the ECA reacted to the generalized African crises and the widespread criticism and attack on SAPs, by producing a detailed document arguing for an Alternative Framework for Development. Thus, the objective of the framework, which was adopted by the OAU, was the democratisation of the development process in order to enable people's participation in the production process which would bring about quicker economic growth, economic justice and general development (ECA, 1989).

### 1.5. The fourth OAU vision

In 1990, the OAU heads of States and governments argued that the main cause of the deepening African crises laid in the way Africa related to the international system – a relationship totally detrimental to Africa. The concerns of the OAU were about two related aspects of the African crises: (a) deteriorating African economies, (b) the increasing number of internal conflicts – particularly armed conflicts and civil wars (Adedeji, 2002). Then, they made a declaration stating clearly the determination of African governments to pursue development on the basis of self-reliant, human-centered and sustainable approaches based on social justice and collective self-reliance to achieve accelerated structural transformation of African economies (OAU, 1990). Thus, without changing the previous alternative Framework for Development, the heads of States and governments, for the first time, extended the scope of the OAU to intervene in internal conflicts of member states. Secondly, the OAU declared a commitment to democracy, thereby making for the first time, a choice on the type of political system preferred by its sovereign member states (Bujra, 2004).

Despite this declaration and the establishment of the mechanism to resolve the conflicts, conflicts continued to spring and the economies of most

African countries continued to deteriorate in the 1990s (Baah, 2003). Therefore, the OAU came up with another initiative.

### 1.6. The fifth OAU vision

In 1995, the OAU heads of States and Governments met in Cairo in an extraordinary session, to seriously review, analyse and reassess the root causes of economic and social problems in Africa. The meeting, however, noted that for many years, the OAU had adopted many plans, strategies and programmes for the development of the countries, individually and collectively. Unfortunately these plans were not adequately implemented by the majority of the countries (Bujra, 2004; Baah, 2003). While the meeting reaffirmed OAU's commitment to the LPA, it called up on African countries to rectify this situation by adopting the Cairo Agenda for action for re-launching Africa's economic and social development (OAU, 1995).

### 1.7. The sixth OAU vision

While still being in the process of creating political continental unity and the African Economic Community, the heads of States and governments created the African Union in Sirte (Libya) in 1999 and adopted the Constitutive Act of the African Union in Lome (Togo) in July 2000 (OAU, 2000). This was a major achievement of the African leaders and a triumph for Pan-Africanism. Amongst the new principles of the African Union (AU) were: the right of the Union to intervene in matters relating to democratic principles, human rights and good governance, etc. which led to the new policy framework named NEPAD – The New Partnership for Africa's Development) – (Aluko-Olokun, 2002).

However, Adedeji (2002) pointed out that NEPAD did not make any mention of the AU Constitutive Act, just as the AU Act made no mention of NEPAD. Yet, both the AU Act and NEPAD had similar development focus and had been criticized on more substantial grounds.

### 2. The external visions

#### 2.1. Colonial visions at independence

According to Herbst and Mills (2003), since the colonization of the continent, externals have had the upper hand in all matters to do with the economies of African countries. In the first place, the colonial powers laid down the modern economic structures of African countries. At the beginning, half way and towards the end of the colonial period, African economies were specifically designed to benefit metropolitan countries. At independence, politically independent African countries found themselves tied to the metropolitan economies and the international economic system which former colonial powers and their allies – western European countries and North America (USA and Canada) – dominated. In addition, the West controlled most of the small industries they had started in African countries, including companies engaged in the exploitation of mineral resources (Gambari, 2004). According to the latter, they controlled commodity markets and set the prices for all commodities produced by African economies. They further controlled the financial system and set interest rates and other conditions for African borrowing. Finally, the West controlled services e.g. insurance companies, and at the same time, provided the expertise and personnel to help African countries with highly underdeveloped human resources.

Moreover, according to Adededji (2002), they advised African governments not to disturb this established economic structure and to continue with the inherited relationship with the international economic system. After all, this was the "natural" division of labour in the world and any attempt by African governments to change their economic strategies and policies to reorient the relationship to their advantage was quickly stopped by various instruments Western countries wielded, and still wield.

### 2.2.  The World Bank's Berg report

Externals – mainly Western countries – were alarmed by the anti-western language of the LPA and the radical ideas it proposed. In October 1981, the World Bank came out with a report called Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: An Agenda for Action (Berg, 1981) which, it claimed, was prepared at the request of the Bank's African Governors to pull out African countries from the crises they had sank into and experience accelerated development (Bujra, 2004).

But, according to Bujra (1982), the Berg Report (a) did not address the most crucial issues spelt out in the LPA, (b) advocated for increased (foreign and local) investment and a reduced public sector role, this being in direct contrast to the LPA which argued for an expansion of the public sector, (c) it gave scant and peripheral attention to important areas of development such as industrialization, control and use of mineral resources, economic cooperation and integration. In fact, the issue of economic cooperation, a central concern of the LPA, is not mentioned at all in the Berg Report.

## Outcomes and overall assessment

After, the deep analysis of past pan-African political and economic visions of development from the colonial period until now, some outcomes came out.

➢ **Although Africa's performance during the 1960-1975 period did not meet the targets set by the UN Second Development Decade, Africa as a whole performed well and certainly better than in the subsequent 25 years from 1975 to 2000:** According to Bujra (2004), in the 1960s, African economies were doing quite well. They generally had relatively plentiful foreign currency reserves and the emerging class of African businessmen accumulating wealth through the state institutions was very optimistic about the future. This emerging class favored the pursuance of policies recommended by colonial advisors and the continuity of economic structures that prevailed under previous colonial rule, without any radical change. Where some African governments tried to adopt some radical approach to development and to change the existing economic structure through nationalization and diversification of external economic links, there was immediate and strong media reaction, diplomatic isolation and economic pressure to halt such a "move to the left" which was essentially perceived as economically disruptive. In response to this, the second half of the 1970s saw the economic crisis intensifying all over the African continent. According to Adedeji (2002,): "In retrospect, the period 1960-75 has, tragically, turned out to be Africa's golden era!"

➢ **The second OAU vision was the very important initiative of African leaders for an alternative vision of development:** Clearly, the LPA provided the inspiration of all future African visions and initiatives, until NEPAD. For example, the Abuja Treaty clearly stated that it takes into consideration the Monrovia Declaration, the LPA and the Final Act of Lagos. More importantly, in conducting inter-state relations, the treaty affirmed adherence to the principles enshrined in the LPA (OAU, 1991). Some of which were listed as:

- Equality and inter-dependence of member States;

- Solidarity and collective self-reliance;

- Inter-state cooperation;

- Peaceful settlement of disputes;

- Recognition, promotion and protection of human and people's rights;

- Accountability, economic justice and popular participation in development.

Thus, since 1980, all African initiatives, accepted the vision, framework, strategies and principles enshrined in the LPA (Adedeji, 2002).

- **For many years, the OAU had adopted many plans, strategies and programmes for the development of the countries, individually and collectively but these plans were not adequately implemented by the majority of the countries:** Yet, at country level, most political leaders found it extremely hard to reject prevailing economic policies because (a) the cost of disruption resulting from such change was too great, (b) the power of the emerging African economic elite within the existing political and administrative structures was too strong and favored continuity of previous policies, and (c) the power and influence of the externals was also very strong and, allied with some local groups, threatened to disrupt the economies of African countries in the event continuity (Bujra, 2004). As a result, it was easier for heads of States to continue with the inherited economic policies and strategies at the country level while, at the same time, endorsing radical alternative economic strategies and policies at the OAU level.

## Conclusions, lessons learnt and policy implications

Fifty years after the first thirty-three independent African states gathered in Addis Ababa to form the Organisation of African Unity, now the African Union, the continent is looking ahead towards the next fifty years (AU Agenda 2063). Thus, it is important to build on past experiences for suggesting the way forward. Therefore, in order to succeed in implementing such agenda, the following DOs and DON'Ts are recommended.

**The DOs: what to do by African leaders:**

- **Leadership and political commitment in all fields and at all levels including politics, business, industry, science, religion, education, and culture.** Experiences from across the world indicate that success comes from a political leadership that has vision, commitment and capacity to implement it. Political stability is critical for nation building, participatory and

inclusive growth, planning, and sound macroeconomic policies, engaging the private sector and creating a good investment climate. For instance, for effective regional integration in Africa there is a need to embark and rethink for a kind of African education system across the whole continent enriched by traditional education systems, local content, and modern technology as well as cautioning African Union and Africans on the danger of promoting the foreign culture, content and over-dependency on foreign aid as the solution and way forward to attain what is for Africa (Hartzenberg, 2011; Biswaro, 2012).

- **Democratisation of the development process in order to empower and enable people's participation in the continent's transformation.** In all cases where structural transformation has succeeded, the citizens have played a crucial role in the process. Indeed, with empowered citizens and a responsible civil society, people can actively participate in the development debate and the attainment of the development objectives. Also, national institutions need to be strengthened to mobilize the populations around a common agenda and ensure that resources are committed to achieve it. In this way, the African continent would be accountable and responsive to the needs of its populations.

- **Active involvement of the diaspora for financing Africa's economy.** It has been recognized that the amount of money transferred by the diaspora to the continent approximately equals to the development aid. This is a key indicator that implies that the diaspora can be actually mobilised to finance the economy of the continent through investment, expertise and general political, cultural and social solidarity. As a consequence, the continent could reduce its economic dependence on western countries for an effective Africa's transformation.

➢ **Powering strategic planning and linkage between national, sub-regional and Agenda 2063.** One of the past weaknesses of the past initiatives was a lack of linkage between national, sub-regional and continent plans. Thus, even well-defined at the continental level, visions are not implemented at national levels. The first batch of solutions is to capacitate the States in strategic planning by increasing more people in this domain. Then, with adequate resources, these capacities will serve the countries in linking national plans to sub-regional and continental ones. These solutions may also be effective with the support of African capacity building institutions that are experienced in working for a transformational change.

➢ **Promoting a results-based culture on the continent.** One of the key challenges in measuring the development is to define specific indicators that can help evaluate the level at which an objective has been achieved. The AU Agenda already made the effort to sort targets in each specific goal at national level. It then comes to African leaders to encourage a results-based culture for monitoring the achievements. African capacity building institutions are also worth associating to African visions in order to promote such a result-based culture on the continent.

**The DON'Ts: what not to do by African leaders:**

➢ **Behaviors that create conflict, instability and insecurity.** In the past 50 years, countries in all Africa's regions have experienced varying degrees of conflict and insecurity caused many factors including lack of pluralism, poor management of cultural diversities, etc. Although many African countries are much stronger today, the threat of State fragility lingers on with strong potential to spill over to neighboring countries; hence the necessity to avoid it.

➢ **Encouragement of social, economic and gender inequalities.** Social, economic and gender inequalities are major sources of political, social and economic risks. These gaps are real and of alarmingly high in some countries. Therefore, African countries should work to bridge the existing gaps in order to avoid conflicts.

➢ **Waiting for external shocks before making previsions:** In the context of a 50 years' time frame, changes in the global economic environment such as a collapse of commodity prices, financial crisis or some other developments in the political, social and environmental fields could derail Africa's development trajectory. So, African leaders should avoid waiting for these shocks before making previsions. Instead, they should support regular previsions about potential shocks in order to quickly counteract early. The support of regular previsions can also help in designing public policy responses and actions to counter the most disruptive economic, social and environmental changes facing Africa.

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