
THE AFRICA-EU STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT AND REGIONAL
INTEGRATION IN WEST AFRICA

ERING, Simon Odey¹ and ODOCK, Christopher Nchor²

¹Department of Sociology, University of Calabar, Nigeria.

²Department of Political Science, University of Calabar, Nigeria.

ABSTRACT

Globalization and its consequences have impacted on traditional patterns of North-South development cooperation in many ways, evoking varied responses. This paper examined the response of the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU) to the challenges of globalization in the form of the Africa-EU strategic Partnership Agreement signed in Lisbon (2007). The paper analyses the various instruments designed to drive the implementation of the Partnership, and locating the new agreement in the historical context of Africa's cooperation with Europe. The paper concludes that the undeclared intention of the new partnership to lock out other external actors such as China, Russia, India and Brazil from Africa, may provide very little chance for the strategic partnership to actualize the objective of regional integration in West Africa

Keywords: African Union, European Union, Strategic Partnership.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to Hewitt (1993) the European community and its successor, the European Union, have shown a far greater aptitude inventing new instruments of cooperation in its relation with the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Countries, than the capacity to carefully put into effect or see through previous agreed instruments. Rather the EU and African States represented by the African Union (AU), added yet another instance of cooperation in the December 2007 African-EU Strategic partnership Agreement. This new initiative outlined a number of strategic objectives and principles that are borne out of a new global context and a shared vision (The Council of European Union, December 2007). Also, this new initiative was launched as the negotiations for the conclusion of new regional based Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) between the European Union and the Six ACP were stalled. The failure was as a result of a number of contentious issues, such as the fundamental objectives that the EPAs will pursue; the modalities for establishing new trade areas (FTAS) between the European Union and the ACP regions, and the necessity and the tenor of an Economic Partnership Agreement Development Fund (EPADF). Other areas of disagreements were on the appropriate schedule of trade support and protection for local industry and manufactures, as well as putting in place common regional external tariffs. In a sense, the Lisbon agreement is in line with the

EU tradition of proposing new instruments of cooperation in its relations with the ACP group, rather than faithfully implementing or putting into practice existing instruments.

The Strategic Partnership Agreement could be seen as the EU and Africa's recognition of the historic role played by Portugal in linking Europe and Africa in the first instance. This point is more important when one examines carefully, the context and objectives of the Strategic Partnership Agreement, which could be summarized as the reformation of the historical bonding between Africa and Europe which the emerging powers like China and India have no justification or moral standing for wanting to disrupt them. This paper examines the broad objectives and shared vision which the new Partnership seeks to pursue and the strategies designed to achieve them.

1.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

The events in 1997 and 1998 have contributed to the evolution of a new type of regionalism in Asia. The existing regional integration projects, in particular the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN and AFTA) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) have had a diminished role in the period. Although ASEAN is one of the oldest regional integration projects, and has been in operation for more than three decades, it had nothing to offer in 1997. Instead two ASEAN countries, Thailand and Indonesia had to call the IMF to the rescue. (Higgot, 2000, Camroux, 2001, Roland 2000). The contention in most cases is the partnership between the developed and developing societies only existed to foster the interest of the developed countries.

Increasingly Asian observes a trend to evaluate APEC as a tool of American foreign economic policy. AOEC has not been nor was it ever likely to be successful in creating a joint identity as the basis for further cooperation (Higgott, 2002). There exist a strategic partnership agreement between the defense and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID). The strategic partnership according to Davis, Warner and Houston (2009) was designed with advanced government policies of promoting security and development, good governance and stability in the region. The partnership recognizes the inter-linkages between security and development challenges and the need for clear, shared objectives, across the Australian government to guide planning and response.

Although the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership Agreement is relatively new, it cannot be studied without reference to the general evolution of ACP-EU relations. This can be traced to the Treaty of Rome that established the European Economic Community in March 1957 and ended up with a Special Section Part IV that associated former colonies and overseas territories of France, Belgium and the Netherlands. This association was renewed, renovated and modified several times, with new instruments added, subtracted and changed as the supposed beneficiaries suffered economic decline, stagnation or total collapse from Yaounde I to Yaounde II, Lome I through IV; making it necessary for the European Union to purpose not just the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) in the Cotonou Partnership Agreement of 2000; Odock (2010); Hewitt (1993).

However, the transition from the unified Cotonou Partnership Agreement to the regionally based Economic Partnership Agreements with the ACP groupings proved more difficult than anticipated and therefore the stop gap solution of Interim Economic Partnership Agreements with some ACP regional groupings in the Caribbean and Pacific basins was put in place to overcome the time lag; (Bilal and Stevens 2009).

In continental Africa, the insistence by the AU at the highest level that the new regional Economic Partnership Agreements add some real development value to ACP-EU relations meant that the negotiations opened in 2002 could not proceed at a faster rate, even as the economic condition of many sub-Saharan African countries continued to experience severe

crises, along side with persistent national regional and other conflicts that fed on the economic crisis.

It appears that this is the origin of the inspiration to add one more level of cooperation between Africa and Europe, but unlike the Partnership Agreements that were nationally and regionally focused, the Strategic Partnership will be continentally driven; that is the joint strategy will be a bilateral arrangement between the European Union based in Brussels and the African Union with its headquarter at Addis Ababa.

In his analysis of the EU's relationship with Africa, Mangala argues that from the perspective of Europe, these relations could be seen as "expressing classical realist tendencies of member states that seek to secure and presence their interests; or as a reflection of the EU's liberal integration project which "Mangala (2010, p.48) emphasizes interdependencies ...". While recourse to realism and liberalism might be useful as possible theoretical approaches to the study of Africa's relations with it is our own position that realism is deficient because of it's emphasizes on power as a goal in itself that is pursued by actions, whereas the deployment of power is often as a means to attain other goals. Similarly, liberalism cannot be a reliable basis of an actors foreign policy because it could serve as a rationalization for selfish interests. Hence the need for a more concrete and reliable frame of reference in the study of Africa-EU relations. Maria da Costa Ferreira (2008) in her doctoral thesis presented to the University of Lisbon on the title: *The Joint Africa-Europe Partnership Strategy: From Cairo to Lisbon from an EU strategy for Africa to a Joint Africa-EU strategy sought* "to identify dominant EU motives and forces in shaping a Joint Strategic Partnership between the two continents, and its importance for the EU's positioning in the World". The author came to the conclusion that "EU Africa policies must be seen in a wider political context in which the EU aims to project itself in the world as a significant international actor with the power to actively influence world politics ...". This assessment of the EU-policy in initiating and pursuing the Africa EU joint strategic partnership appears to us an appropriate evaluation of the agreement. It is a useful policy instrument for the Europe of 27, and not necessarily an instrument of African development.

This point could be substantially reinforced if we give careful consideration to the modalities and actual implementation of the JAES. For example in her paper presented at a finish in October 2012, Annemarie Peen Rodt raised several questions about the effectiveness of the Africa. An EU strategic partnership if this is restricted to the bilateral relationship between the seat of the European Union in Brussels and the headquarters of the African Union in Addis Ababa, to the exclusion of a regional economic organization, and civil society organizations? This question is obviously very important from the African perspective. If the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership and the JAES function largely at the level of the two continental bodies located in Brussels and Addis Ababa, how can it lead to development in respective African countries and regions? How can ordinary African citizenry claim ownership of a partnership that effectively operates over their heads? It is interesting that this writer also relates the development of the Africa-EU strategic partnership to the EU's search to bring the different strands of its relations with African countries under a common umbrella.

However, in order to underscore the point that the Joint Strategic Partnership between Africa and the EU is an EU game and not necessarily Africa's own game, it is interesting that while the EU is striving to ensure that its continental partnership is able to fly, it has at the same time entered into another strategic partnership with the Republic of South Africa due to its strategic importance for Europe. If as Helly (2012) has noted: "the Partnership remains rather modest on global governance issues". The question to ask is why the EU seeks to develop a second partnership within the wider continental partnership. The obvious answer is that South Africa is of greater importance to the EU than several other countries and regions in Africa. In such a context it is more beneficial to the EU to pursue a double track partnership in Africa.

Probably as a consequence of not just the normative framework of European cooperation for development with Africa but also as a result of the EU's inclination to use its relations with Africa to meet its own policy goals, some young European authors have highlighted the need for the EU to significantly reexamine its cooperation with African countries in the light of the challenges arising from the growing Chinese present in Africa, (Grauls and Stahl 2010).

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

We agreed substantially with Peppetta (2010) that there exist several theories of international relations grouped into distinct categories such as realism, liberalism and critical theories. These are further subdivided into smaller groupings, although not all of them have equal explanatory power. Mangala (2012) has however noted that over the decades, many theoretical approaches have been offered to explain the Euro-Africa Strategic Partnership agreement, including the three alternative approaches suggested by Ferreira (2008) namely liberal inter-governmentalism, social constructivism and critical discourse analysis. Interesting and useful as the above named theoretical frameworks may appear, this paper will not be found wholly on any of them. Rather, in view of the historical nature of the relationship between Africa and Europe, and the fact that these relations have been explained largely in terms of dependency; Uche (1994), Collective Clientalism, Ravenhill (1984); and the new scramble for African resources Eze and Anigbo (2010). For this study we would employ two approaches identified by Starling-Folker (2006) under the rubric of historical materialism and Wall System Theory for the analysis of the Africa – Europe strategic partnership Agreement for a number of related reasons: highlighted by the author under reference.

In her view, these two theoretical approaches although differing in some ways, they share a number of assumptions that make them very useful, especially in relation to the study of countries and groups of countries that belong to different levels of economic and technological development. Two among the shared assumptions include the following: (a) The contemporary global economic system is the result of the dominant capitalist mode of production; and, (b) one notable aspects of the contemporary international system including economic disparities among nation-states and the willingness of the economically advantaged to resort to violence, or exploitation by other means in order to maintain those advantages are the result of dominant capitalism.

Finally, this whole system is sustained by complementary ideological and political institutions for world governance. The changes and modifications of the Yaounde Conventions, the Lome Conventions and eventually the Cotonou Partnership Agreement all signify the continuous transformations in the global economic system, with the European partners constantly in search of a new formula that will keep the African countries in permanent liaison with Europe. The Strategic Partnership Agreement between Africa and Europe can be seen from the above.

3. METHOD AND MATERIALS

The paper relied on the extensive use of desk research, that is, we depended on secondary data on the subject matter. A number of strategic reports and economic cooperation with Africa-EU and specifically as they relate to West Africa were reviewed. These provided the basis for the recommendation for enhanced regional cooperation.

4. DISCUSSIONS

4.1 THE GOALS OF THE AFRICA-EU STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

The Lisbon Declaration sets up the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership identified three critical elements that defined the context of the new partnership: These include the many bonds that unite the two continents, such as history, culture, geography, a common future, as well as an affirmed community of values over respect for human rights, freedom, equality, solidarity, justice, the rule of law, and democracy. Apparently the two sides did not see any contradiction in the fact that among the signatures of the Declaration, were some of Africa's longstanding dictators like the ousted Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, the late Omar Bongo of Gabon and Mugabe of Zimbabwe. The second defining element of context of the new partnership was the continued transformation and repositioning of the two Continental Unions of Africa and Europe. The African Continental body had undergone a significant transition from the Organization of African Unity (OAU) into the supposedly more coherent and effective body, the African Union, which was perceived as able to relate more functionally with the European Union, which also succeeded the European Economic Community and now an expanded membership of twenty seven from the original six. It is in the light of these reciprocal institutional changes and strengthening that Africa's cooperation with Europe, it was asserted, needed to develop to a higher level.

However, what is not stated as part of the new context of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership appears to weigh more than the three points stated above: that is the rise of emerging economies such as China, India, Brazil, Russia, which were actively contesting European pretext or claim to exclusive privilege in Africa. This new contest justified the need for a strategic partnership to checkmate the new pretenders. The vision of the partnership is provided in article 4 of the Lisbon Declaration:

The purpose of this Joint Strategy is take the Africa-EU relationship to a new, strategic level within a strengthened political partnership and enhanced cooperation at all levels. The partnership will be based on a Euro-African (that expression again) consensus on values, common interests and strategic objectives. This partnership should strive to bridge the development divide between Africa and Europe through the strengthening of economic development and the promotion of sustainable development in both continents, living side by side in peace, security, solidarity, prosperity and human dignity.

This is obviously a very lofty vision and no reader will have difficulty keying into the expressed aspirations. But any student of Africa's relations with Europe in the five decades preceding the Lisbon declaration, will no doubt also agree that the text of the Cotonou Partnership to the four Lome' Convention's goals that were no less lofty in their expression of intent. But several decades after, where has been the power of implementation? The question, however, is this; can the principles in the new partnership make any difference between it and the failed ones of the past? It is interesting to note that the new partnership will be guided by "the fundamental principles of the unity of Africa" and by "strengthened political dialogue, co-management and co-responsibility in our bilateral cooperation." While these two principles could be major enhancers of the Strategic Partnership, the second one raise unique problems of its-own. As we argued in another context, will the envisaged strengthened political dialogue, co-management and co-responsibility not totally obliterate the traditional distinction between the domestic and foreign policies of African States? Second, what is the guarantee that the

European collaborators will only be part of the solution, and not also part of the problem of development in African Countries at the same time? (Odock 2001). The activities of Belgium in post-colonial Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC, do not provide any reason for us to think otherwise. Meanwhile, the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership identified four main objectives that the Partners agreed to pursue on a long term basis. These can be summarized as to;

- Reinforce and elevate the Africa-EU political partnership to address issues of common concern.
- Strengthen and promote peace, security, democratic Governance and human rights.
- Jointly promote and sustain a system of effective multilateralism with strong representative institutions.
- Facilitate and promote a broad-based and wide ranging people-centered partnership.

It is arguable that these objectives reflect both international contexts in which the partnership has developed as well as a conscientious effort to transform the longstanding cooperation between Europe and Africa from a government to government based relationship to a person centered one, with multiple mass-based linkages. The Strategic Partnership further outlines a series of new initiative. These range of forging a new cooperation based on equality, to the building of a successful experience of the past and rebranding of the images of each other held by both sides. The ultimate success of the partnership is anchored on evolving new methods and instruments of cooperation; adopting a common position on global issues and fostering popular ownership of strategic interests by all relevant stakeholders. A question that begs for an answer reading through the long list is; how can two unequal partners suddenly transform their relationship from one of inequality to one of equality? Similarly, to what extent can the European powers forego the privileges which the maintenance of exclusive zones of influence confer upon them in Africa? Without attempting to answer to provide any definitive answers to these important questions, which have been the subject of much debate in Africa's relations with Europe, we note that the slow pace of progress of African integration and development has, among other things, been significantly reinforced by adverse European influences.

4.2 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK OF COOPERATION

As provided by the Lisbon Declaration, the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership Agreement has four broad objectives around which specific strategies of cooperation will be designed and put in place to facilitate their accomplishment. These are: Peace and security; Governance and human rights; Trade and regional integration; and, Key development issues. These four objectives were translated into eight thematic priorities that needed to be implemented in the first two years, 2008-2010; and eventually 2013:

- Africa-EU Partnership for Peace and Security;
- Africa-EU Partnership on Democratic Governance and Human Rights;
- Africa-EU partnership on trade, regional integration and infrastructure;
- Africa-EU Partnership on the millennium development goals;
- Africa-EU Partnership on Energy;
- Africa-EU Partnership on Climate Change;
- Africa-EU Partnership on Migration, Mobility and Employment; and
- Africa-EU Partnership on Service, Information Society and Space.

A rational or justification was provided for each of the thematic partnerships, following by two or three priority actions that are to be taken by the two parties to enhance the realization of the envisaged objectives and expected outcomes. Each priority action also has stated

objectives, expected outcomes, and a range of recommended activities to achieve them. Finally, a number of sources were identified for funding each of the prescribed activities, usually comprising African and European institutions and organizations. The rest of chapter focuses on the possible implication of the Africa-EU Partnership on trade, regional integration and infrastructure in West Africa.

4.3 LOMÉ ANTECEDENTS OF THE NEW PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

ACP-EEC Trade (and subsequently ACP-EU trade) was the subject of periodic review and reports mainly in the *Courier* magazine and its successor. In July 1978 for example, the *Courier* in its 52nd edition published a dossier that revealed many tendencies in the evolution of ACP-EEC trade in the first five years in the Lomé' Convention.

One conclusion from the report is that in terms of total world trade, EC commerce with the ACP Countries is relatively insignificant. During the 1972 to "1977, between 3.0 and 3.7 percent of world exports came from the ACP and between 3.1 and 3.6 percent of world imports went to the ACP", EEC exports to the ACP Countries stood at 7.6 percent while total imports stood at 7.3 percent for the year 1977. If we take the average figure for the period 1972-1977, the total share of EEC trade with the ACP Countries will stand at 7.3 percent of imports and 6.3 percent of the Community's export trade. The conclusion from these statistics is that neither the first Lomé Convention on trade cooperation nor the longest standing commercial ties between the two partners were sufficient to significantly boost trade between them. This conclusion was confirmed by another special study of ACP-EEC trade relations published in 1986. Titled "ACP-EEC trade the Kiel Study", also identify some "EEC trade-policy induced barriers to ACP export growth and export diversification", as well as ACP policy barriers to ACP export growth and export diversification include:

- Product coverage in ACP trade and preferences and preference redundancy;
- GATT tariff cuts-induced erosion;
- Origin rules and their impact on ACP export;
- Domestic added content: implication for ACP Countries;
- Effect of the donor country content rule;
- Implication for ACP exporters.

The main conclusion of the Kiel study – and it is a disappointing one to have to reflect – is that the performance of ACP Countries in World trade in general and in EEC trade in particular has been poor over the past fifteen years and this despite relatively generous preferences. Both growth rates of export and the speed of their diversification have tended to lag far behind those of non-ACP developing Countries. "The Kiel Report tended to suggest that the greater responsibility lay with poor ACP countries rather than EEC. However such a view was far from correct in so far as it overlooked the disastrous effects of the EEC Common Agricultural Policy CAP or the import of Phytosanitary standards on ACP exports. A careful reading of the objectives of the Strategic partnership Agreement shows that it seeks to overcome these obstacles to Africa and ACP trade expansion. Also, while improvements in market access can make things easier, the definition and actual implementation of new economic policies by the ACP Countries is the only way to success".

4.4 REGIONAL COOPERATION UNDER THE LOMÉ CONVENTION

It is interesting that as far back as November/December 1988, the *Courier* had published a dossier on "Regional cooperation and its prospects in the three main regions of the ACP GROUP": Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific Ocean. In the specific case of Africa, the

East African Community (EAC) predated the signing of the Lome' Convention, while the creation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in May 1975, prompting some observers to say that its creation was influenced by the success of North-South cooperation, (Odock 1989). While it is not necessary to pursue this debate any further, we must note the fact that the ACP-EEC Lome' Convention recognized the necessity and importance of using the institutionalized cooperation just established to promote regional cooperation among the ACP Countries by allocating 10 percent of the proposed envelope to regional cooperation efforts in the ACP Countries.

Tincani (1988) carried out a study of the evolution of the regional cooperation provisions of the (first) three (Lome') Conventions, which is very interesting and revealing. According to him, "Regional Cooperation was given prominence in the second Lome' Convention where a whole chapter was devoted to it", alongside with the added objectives of strengthening ACP regional organizations and specific measures for landlocked and island Countries. Two indicators that can help us grasp the significance of regional cooperation in the Lome' Conventions are the constant progression of the percentage of the total EEC financial assistance that was allocated to regional cooperation in the three Conventions, as well as some of the objectives that were to be promoted by the funds. Lome' 1 for example, provided that 10 percent or 300m units of account were to be a second Convention covering the period 1980-1985 doubled the total sum to 600 million units of account or 14 percent of the aid envelope. The third Convention, 1985-1990, retained the 14 percent of the aid extended to the ACP but raised the actual amount to 1000 units of account. On the sectors that were targeted; transport and communication for example, received 22 percent of Lome 11 Convention under the title under consideration and 17 percent of the funding under Lome' 11. Also, rural development was allocated 7 percent of funding under Lome' 1 and 17 percent of the regional cooperation envelope under Lome' 11. Other sectors that benefited from the regional cooperation funds include: training, health and water supply, 12percent under Lome 1 and 13 percent under Lome 11; technical assistance and miscellaneous received 5 percent of the Lome 1 funds and 4 percent of the Lome 11 respectively. Finally, the third Lome Convention for example specified that the 1000 units of account allocated to regional integration be used to finance a range of activities that include complementarities, maximization of resource use, acceleration of economic diversification, the promotion of food security, etc. since transport and communication top the list of regional cooperation projects, it is interesting to note that road and highway construction as well as telecommunications infrastructure was the most prominent projects financed under this title.

Under "Main African Road Projects" the Courier 58, March-April 1979 not only examined some of the most important trans-African highways under construction at the time, but also discussed the role of the European Development Fund (EDF) in the development in those highways; in where (Berrens 1978), gave a summary of the five major trans-African highways three of which have received EDF funding as: Lagos to Mombassa; the Trans-West African highway: Dakar to N'Djamena; and the Trans-West African Coast Road: Lagos to Nouakchott. In an update published twelve years later, the road situation in the ACP Countries had evolved very significantly, with the emphasis being placed not so much on new construction, but on proper maintenance of existing infrastructure (Capitania, 1991).

4.5 DEVELOPMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS IN THE ACP COUNTRIES

The most fundamental point to note about the development of telecommunications in the ACP regions after the entry into force of the first Lome Convention was the felt need to redress the near absence or skewed nature of telecommunication systems in those countries that made it impossible for a citizen of one African country to communicate with, or visit another

African country without first going through London, Lisbon, Paris or Madrid, as the case may. Thus for the West African sub-region cooperation in Telecommunication meant the utilization of funds provided by the Lome Conventions to install telephone and radio communication among the Member States. The programme has to overcome the challenges associated with the rapid changes in technology from simple analog to digital systems, to the global mobile systems, etc. the annual report of the ECOWAS Executive Secretary for 2004 highlighted some of the activities being undertaken in the telecommunication sector with the “main objective (being ... to establish a common liberalized telecommunications market within the community” (2004 annual Report of the Executive Secretary). The report went on to list a number of planned activities designed to achieve the said objective. What is interesting is the fact that the regional telecoms project relied heavily on donor support including the EU.

4.6 AFRICA-EU PARTNERSHIP ON TRADE, REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

This is the third of the eight sectoral partnerships that Africa and the European Union entered into in 2007. The Rationale of this aspect of the partnership is given as follows: that enhanced trade and deeper regional integration are essential contributions to development; economic growth and employment; and ultimately the eradication of poverty. It is also to enhance the African integration agendas, both at the regional and Pan-African levels, and to strengthen African capacities to meet rules, standards and quality requirements which are essential to enable effective access to regional and international markets. Africa has adopted socio-economic and political integration as a key development strategy. The Partnership specifies three related priority actions to be taken by the strategic partners, each of which had objectives, expected outcomes, the key actors that need to engage in the recommended activities and some suggested mode of financing.

The first priority action in this area is given as “Support for the African Integration Agenda”, whose priority action is to achieve “the socio-economic and political integration of the continent in line with the treaty establishing the African Economic Community (Abuja Treaty). The Partnership is no doubt ambitious and lofty. However given the multiple emphasis which all the priority actions place on the AU/NEPAD, individual African states, the EU and the Member States of the EU who are also the major contributors to the EDF and EIB that exist alongside the AfDB and the various RECs, we can hypothesize that the success of the Africa-EU strategic partnership in this priority area will depend to a large extent, on how these sundry actors actually assume and execute their assigned responsibilities on the one hand, and on the other, for the effective implementation of the Economic Partnership Agreements between the various RECs and the EU. The next section briefly reviews the progress made at these two levels in the implementation of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership.

4.7 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFRICA-EU STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

It is significant to note that the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership Agreement of 2007 envisaged a number of priority actions that needed to be carried out by Africa and the EU in the first Action Plan in the period 2008 – 2010. With respect to trade, regional integration and infrastructure, the focus of this chapter, three priority actions were envisaged:

- Support the African Integration agenda;
- Strengthen African capacities in the area of rules, standards and quality control;
- Implement the EU-Africa Infrastructure Partnership.

In November 2008, the Africa-EU Ministerial Troika which met in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital, released a joint progress report on the Implementation of the Africa-EU Joint Strategy and its first Action Plan (2008 – 2010). This is what the report had to say about trade, regional integration and infrastructure:

Within the Partnership on Trade, Regional Integration and Infrastructure, initial progress have been made. With regard to the African integration agenda, Africa's key priorities are amongst others the implementation of the Minimum Integration Programme, the harmonization and rationalization of regional economic communities (RECs). In this regard, significant progress has been made in the advancement of a free trade area and customs unions and specific attention is being given to training on regional integration.

From the perspective of boosting both intra and inter-regional trade in Africa and globally, it is instructive to highlight the findings of the EU-Africa Ministerial Troika in the field of norms, standards and quality control. The November 2008 meeting identified four types of activities that had been in progress since the partnership was launched. These include:

- Providing Africa wide trainings on SPS (Better Training for Safer Food Initiative);
- Strengthening the capacity of the AUC officers on SPS issues through intensive trainings (e.g. on harmonization issues) and exchange programmes);
- Creating a platform to share information and to enhance participation of African countries in the EU standard setting process;
- Improving knowledge on food and feed inspection services; and
- Initiating discussions on the rehabilitation and modernization for laboratories for plant and animal testing and certification on production such as fisheries or leather.

With regard to industrial standards and normalization, the two sides will initiate discussions to identify priorities for cooperation which will include, amongst others, a support programme to develop the capacities of firms and agencies. These actions will take into account on-going programmes at the regional levels. Finally some developments were noted in the area of the Africa Infrastructure Trust Fund which has already received the sum of \$146 million from 11 EU Member States and the 9th EDF. On paper the summary of progress achieved in the area of trade and regional integration looks impressive. However, we have to take into consideration the reality that Africa is a continent that is made up of 53 independent states grouped into six regional economic communities, with a total population of over one billion people. Thus when all these factors are taken into consideration, the net impact of some of the measures listed above becomes less than spectacular. For example, if we look at the current contribution to the Africa Infrastructure Trust Fund of \$146 million, how does that compare to the actual infrastructural needs of some of the large African states like Nigeria, Sudan, Congo DR and Ethiopia? It is obvious that the Trust Fund as well as other training programmes provided to African countries in the EU are at best, only palliative for specific African regions and countries such as West Africa or Nigeria.

4.8 THE AFRICA EU STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN WEST AFRICA

If the key issues in contention are resolved in favour of ECOWAS, the strategic partnership will serve as an accelerator of regional integration in West Africa. However, if key issues such as the institution of a common external tariff (CET) for ECOWAS, and a fund to

support the productive sectors as well as the schedule of liberalization are not resolved in favour of ECOWAS, then the EPA will have a negative impact on the economic integration agenda of West Africa.

The Africa-EU Partnership on Infrastructure was launched in 2007, before the adoption of the joint strategy, and implementation began in 2008. It aims to substantially increase EU investment in African infrastructure, thereby contributing to the inter-connectivity of Africa. It uses various financial instruments; NIPs/RIPs (10th EDF), which will support regional transport, energy and communication corridors, the energy and Water Facilities, and the Infrastructure Trust Fund, which allows the blending of grants and loans. The Trust Fund has already received \$108 million from the 9th EDF – more funds are expected under the 10th EDF - \$38 million from 11 EU Member States. The European Investment Bank and other donors have also announced loans to the Trust Fund in excess of \$250 million. Finally, a \$10 million support programme will help the AU Commission to formulate and promote policies and actions to respond to African infrastructure challenges.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper examined Africa and the EU Partnership that was established in 2007. This new strategic agreement was designed mainly to synchronize the multi-dimensional relations of the EU with different African regions. The paper located the evolution of the Africa-EU strategic partnership agreement in the theoretical framework as suggested by Ferreira (2008), of Europe search for a global identity in a rapidly changing contemporary international system marked by the emergence of competitive economies in China, India, Russia and Brazil by renovating its engagement with Africa. As seen by many of the writers cited in the paper, Africa and the EU we argued that there is a need to reinvent this cooperation or significance improve it to enable it become a real instrument of African development and to be owned by African regional groupings and citizens. For a better and sustained Economic partnership, we made the following recommendations.

The Africa-EU Joint Strategic Partnership has a potential to foster African development if it is pursued with the requisite zeal and resources it deserves; the emphasis on trade, regional integration is appropriate as this would facilitate the achievement of other thematic goals; and, the normative framework of the JAES should be reviewed and reduce the institutional and bureaucratic expenses of implementing the strategy.

REFERENCES

- Andrew Linklater (2005) "Marxism" in *Theories of International Relations* edited by Scott Burrell, Andrew Linklater, Richard Deutak, Jack Donnelly, Matthew Paterson, Christian Reusmith and Jacqui True, Third Editor, London and New York, Palgrave Longman pp. 110-136.
- Annemaris Peen Rodt (2012) *from Plan to Action? The Joint Africa-EU Strategy* Draft Paper to be presented at Arsmode 2012. Dansk Selskab for Statskundskab, Vejle, 25-26 October 2012.
- Bekiwe Peppetta (2010) "Chapter 1: Introduction and theoretical framework" M.A. International Relations Thesis, Whitt Watersrand, University.
- Berrens, A. (1979), "Trans-African highways and the EDF" *The Courier* no. 54, pp. 76-79.
- Camroux David (2001) *Die HSEAN Vor deur End*. *Le Monde*. Diplomatie, Feb., 2001, p.7.
- Capitiano, (1991) "The EDF and African Roads" *the Courier*, no. 125, pp. 60-63.

- Christopher N. Odock (2010); ACP –EU-EU Search for Development Cooperation: From Treaty of Rome to EPAS, Calabar, University of Calabar Press.
- Commission Of The European Communities (2008), “Communication from the Commission to the Council of Parliament One year after Lisbon: The Africa-EU Partnership at work.” (Brussels)
- Council of The European Union (2007), “The African-EU Strategic Partnership: A joint Africa-EU Strategy.” Lisbon, Press Office.
- Damien Helly ESP European Strategic Partnership Observatory (2012) “The EU-South Africa Strategic Partnership: Changing gear” Policy Brief 7th October, 2012.
- Economic Community Of West African States (2004), “West African Integration Perspective – Searching for a new Development Model”, Abuja, ECOWAS Secretariat.
- Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (2004) “West African Integration Perspective Searching for a New Development Model: 2004 Annual Report of the Executive Secretary Dr. Mohammed Ibn Chambas”, Abuja, Executive Secretariat.
- Hewitt, A. (1993) “ACP and the Developing World” in Lodges J (ed.) Europe and the Wider World, London Routledge.
- Higgott, Richard (1998) The Asian Financial Crisis. A study in the International Politics of Resentment; New Political Economy, Vol. 3, NO.3, pp. 333-356.
- Higgott, Richard (2002) “Training Economics, Emboldening International Relations: The theory and Practice of International in Stephanie Lawson (ed) The New Agenda for International Relations, from Polarization to Globalization in *World Politics*; Cambridge Polity, 91-108.
- Jack Mangala (2010) “The European Union and Africa: Old Partners in a Changing World”.
- Jennifer Sterling-Folker (2006) “Historical Materialism and World System Theory” in: Making Fence of International Relations Theory, Boulder and London, Lynn Rienner Publishers.
- Karl K. (2012), “Economic Partnership Agreement – hopes, fears and challenges” *Courier ACP-EU* no. 195, pp. 21-24.
- Luke Uka Uche (2004) “Some Reflections on the Dependency Theory” *Africa Media Review*, Vol. 8, No. 2. Pp.39 – 55.
- Maria da Costa Ferreira (2008) “From an EU strategy or Africa to A Joint Africa EU Strategy” PhD dissertation presented at the University of Lisbon.
- Mazrui, A. (1998) “Africa in Political Purgatory: The cross road between collapse and Redemption” *Governance*, Vol. 1 No.1.
- Odock C. N. (2004) “Nigeria and ECOWAS: the restructuring of a Sub-Region.” *Calabar Journal of Politics and Administration*, Vol: 2 No. 1& 2, pp.61-83.
- Odock C.N. (2001) “The Fiji Convention and ACP-EU Cooperation: the experience of Lome’ 1-4”, *Nigerian Journal of Social and Development Issues*. Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 179-191.
- Odock, C. N. (1989). *Le Nigeria et les Conventions de Lome*, Contribution á l’étude des relations Nigeria – CEE, 1975-1986, These de Doctorat, Etudes Africaines University of Bordeaux I, Passim.
- Perry A. (2010) “Africa: China’s New Continent” *Time Magazine* Vol. 176 No. 1 pp. 45.
- Perry A. (2010), “ACP-EU in Search of Development Cooperation; From Treaty of Rome to Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAS), Monograph prepared for NIIA, Lagos.
- Roland, Jurgen (2000) ASEAN and the Asian Crisis: Theoretical Implications and Practical consequences for South East Asian regionalism; *The Pacific Review* Vol. 13, No. 3, pp. 421 – 451.

Sarah Grauls and Anna Stahl (2010) European Development Policy towards sub-Saharan Africa: Challenges of the growing Chinese presence” Emulations Dossiers Thematiques Vol.7 2010.

The Africa-EU Joint Strategic Partnership has a potential to foster African development if it is pursued with the requisite zeal and resources it deserves.

The emphasis on trade, regional integration is appropriate as this facilitate the achievement of other thematic goals.

The Interim Economic Partnership Agreements between the EU and African states: Contents, challenges and prospects, Edited by Sanoussi Bilal and Christopher Stevens, (2009) European Centre for Development Policy Management ecdpm.

The normative framework of the JAES should be reviewed the reduce the institutional and bureaucratic expenses of implementing the strategy.

Tincani, A. (1988), Regional Cooperation under Lome’: Experience and Developments, the *Courier* no. 112, pp. 73-76.

© 2010-2013 Sacha International Academic Journals,
Meridian Centre, 258 Kingsland Road, Hackney, London E8 4DG, England, United Kingdom.
In Compliance with the Standards Approved by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council

Abstracting and Indexing in:
IndexCopernicus USA, British International Libraries,
Social Science Research Network Worldwide, Econlit (USA), Open-J Gate
For the Advancement of Knowledge to the World. www.sachajournals.com