

CENTRAL AFRICA REGIONAL COOPERATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE LAGOS PLAN OF ACTION: THE UDEAC

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I. — INTRODUCTION

Although economic cooperation, both as an ideology and in practice, is not completely new to African leaders, there has been since independence, a more and more recurrent discussion of the scope and necessity for the formation of regional economic groupings, the potential advantages and costs, the nature of the institutional machinery, the attendant problems and the prospects for their long-run viability and stability. The continuous desire for regional economic cooperation between African States, has arisen from internal as well as external factors and their economic situation and relations.

In regard to internal factors, perhaps the most predominant one has been the awareness by African States that, the relatively small size of their national economies, limited markets and the existing disparities in resource endowments impede individual efforts at the national level towards economic and social development. Consequently, it has been contended by many African Scholars and policy-makers that, if Africa is to achieve self-sustained development and raise its standard of living in the long-run, cooperation in the production and distribution of the basic necessities and strategic goods and services, on at least a regional level, must be regarded by all African States as a necessary condition for the successful attainment of this social and economic objective.

Secondly, the level of industrial activity in most African States is extremely low, and the export of manufactured goods is negligible, despite the existence of excess capacity in many national industries. More disturbing, is the fact that there are few or no linkages between the manufacturing and other sectors of the national economies, such as agriculture, so that intermediate, capital and even some primary materials used in the manufacturing are imported. For this reason, it has been argued that economic cooperation at the regional level in Africa will lead to the efficient allocation of industrial activity, production capacity, encourage the effective use of local raw materials and it will reduce dependence on foreign intermediate capital and even consumption goods.

Thirdly, the long standing vexing problem of little or no intra-African trade which has been aggravated over the years by the inconvertibility of some national currencies; the absence of an adequate intra-African payment system; the rapid decrease of the foreign exchange obtained from the sale of the continent's major primary products; the high cost

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of both imported capital and consumption goods from the developed countries and the differences in the fiscal systems have all hastened the movement towards the creation of regional economic groupings in Africa; with the over-riding objective of altering the heavy metropolitan colonial orientation in the continent.

Furthermore, one of the most important considerations, particularly during the early years of independence, has been the necessity to increase and stabilize the bargaining strength of African States in the various international financial and economic organisations, in the negotiations for the various commodity agreements and recently in the effort to establish a just and an effective new international economic order. All these considerations have re-inforced the interest of African leaders in regional and even continental economic cooperation with a view to presenting a collective African front in those vital issues affecting the economic and political destiny of the sub-regions and the continent as a whole.

At the continental level, the establishment of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was intended partly to increase the bargaining power of African States in important economic, financial and commercial areas. This has been given considerable weight by the rapid growth of national consciousness within many African States and the continuing determination of African leaders to reshape some of the colonial economic, financial and commercial arrangements through the bargaining process in the light of their contemporary economic and social problems, aspirations and needs.

Additionally, the coming into being of the United Nations Development Decade (1960–1970) and the substantial steps initiated by the Economic Commission for Africa, and especially the creation of the African Development Bank, encouraged and sustained the efforts of the various African States towards regional economic cooperation, with a view to pulling national and external resources together for the collective self-reliant development.

Finally, the creation of the European Economic Community, and regional economic groupings like Latin American Free Trade Area, the ADEAN group, etc..., demonstrated both the necessity and possibility of regional economic cooperation in Africa. Although some people may argue that the experience of these regional groupings may have little or no relevance for the African States, there is no doubt that the European and Latin American approaches as well as their institutional framework, have appealed to the developing African Nations, especially with respect to the nature of the objectives and the real and potential problems which can arise from economic cooperation between autonomous States.

Consciously or unconsciously, however, the African Continent is dotted with a multiplicity of regional economic groupings and institutions which are designed to promote economic cooperation between the various African States. Consequently, the challenge, which faces the African governments, national financial and economic institutions and the people of the continent in general, is to ensure that regional economic groupings and the treaties do not remain on the shelves of government ministries and the headquarters of the various organisations.

To prevent this undesirable outcome, it is essential that the chosen policy instruments and institutions are capable of making an effective and lasting contribution to the attainment of the many inter-related and often conflicting objectives and goals of the regional economic grouping. To this extent, therefore, the purpose of this paper is to critically examine economic cooperation in Central Africa in the context of the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) with reference to the Central African Customs and Economic Union (UDEAC).

II. – BACKGROUND TO THE CENTRAL AFRICAN CUSTOMS AND ECONOMIC UNION (UDEAC)

With a population of over 12 million people and a GDP of over 660.000 million francs CFA in 1973, the UDEAC comprises Cameroon, Gabon, Central African Republic and Congo. Chad was a member up till 1968 when it pulled out (1). The UDEAC with its headquarters at Bangui (Central African Republic), is a regional grouping of entirely French-speaking African States.

The initial efforts to group the Central African countries into a single regional unit has its beginning in the colonial era. For purpose of easy administration, France created the *Afrique Equatoriale Française—AEF* which comprised the Central African Republic, Chad, Gabon and Congo by Decree of 15th January 1910. The various services established for Togo, Upper Volta and later Gambia grouping ranged from coordination of financial policies, economic affairs, transport to scientific research and teaching (2).

In 1958, when the member States of AEF opted for individual self-government, their leaders accepted to jointly operate the various services which had been set up in 1910. To this end, they established a Customs Union by the signing of the Brazzaville Treaty on June 23rd 1959. The Union was called the Equatorial Customs Union (*Union Douanière Equatoriale – UDE*). The UDE Treaty was later modified by another Treaty signed on 7th December 1959 in Libreville-Gabon. The objectives of the UDE included: the establishment of a common external tariff and import duties, the harmonization of the fiscal systems of the four member states and the coordination of the economic and social development plans (3).

Because Cameroon, under the French Trusteeship, had had the same administrative and Economic influences, it became gradually absorbed into the UDE. By 1961, UDE became «*Union Douanière Equatoriale et du Cameroun*». In December 1964, the Presidents of the five Central African States decided to create the Central African Customs and Economic Union (UDEAC) by signing the Brazzaville Treaty. The Treaty called for the elimination of restrictions on commodity movements between member States, the setting up of a common external tariff against third countries and the removal of barriers on factor movements including some degree of harmonization of national economic policies, particularly in the areas of industrial investment and transportation development (4).

For the running of the Union, three institutions were created. The Council of Heads of States which is the supreme organ of the UDEAC, the Management Committee responsible for examining various UDEAC problems, and making proposals to the Council of Heads of States for Final decisions and the General Secretariat headed by a Secretary-General whose role is limited to general administration and implementation of the decisions of the Heads of States. A solidarity Fund was also set up to help reduce the existing economic and social disparities between the more developed member States like Cameroon and Gabon and the less developed ones, especially the Central African Republic (CAR) and Chad (5).

However, by 1968 it became clear that membership in UDEAC, involved too much sacrifice for the two inland states – Chad and CAR. As a consequence, in early 1968, Chad and Central African Republic withdrew from the Union to form a new economic grouping with Zaïre – (Union des Etats d’Afrique Centrale – Union of Equatorial African States). By the end of 1968, however, only Zaïre and Chad remained in the new economic grouping because the Central African Republic withdrew to rejoin the UDEAC.

UDEAC as of today is made up of Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo and Gabon. Negotiations are however, under way in respect of readmission of Chad. UDEAC is now seventeen years old. Its survival has been accounted for by a number of integrative and sustaining forces which include proximity of member States in respect of easy communications, planning and factor mobility. One very important factor has been that, the population within the UDEAC is to a large extent homogeneous, particularly along the Cameroon – Gabon border (where there are the Fang in Ebolowa (Cameroon) and the Nyem in Gabon); the Cameroon – Central African Republic Border (where there are the Baya in CAR and the Baya-Kaka in the Cameroon (6).

Futhermore, the long standing common colonial experience under France, associated membership in the European Economic Community, Common Currency (The CFA Franc) and monetary zone (Franc Zone); a common official language – French (except in the case of Cameroon where French and English are used); and common inherited administrative and political structure and institutions are all factors which laid the foundation for the formation of the UDEAC and have accounted for its subsequent survival despite a number of withdrawals by some member States (7). It is, therefore, against the foregoing background that the UDEAC objectives and strategies will be examined in the context of the Lagos Plan of Action.

III. – OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES OF THE LAGOS PLAN OF ACTION AND UDEAC

The desire to revert the unfulfilled promises of global development strategies led to the meeting of African Heads of States and Governments in Lagos, to consider, economic problems of the Continent, previously deliberated upon and adopted by African Ministers and Experts, responsible for Economic Development and Planning at the 16th Ordinary Session held in

Monrovia, Liberia in July 1979 (8). In fact, despite the efforts of African leaders and people, Africa remains the least developed with 20 out of the 31 least developed countries of the world.

The over-all poor performance of African economy over the past 20 years has been a source of great concern. The weakness of African agriculture in its globality is well known. Its low productivity and rudimentary techniques have given rise to insufficient agricultural growth especially in food production in the face of rapid population growth, thus resulting in serious food shortages and malnutrition in the continent. The slow rate of industrial development, the dependence of African economies on export of raw materials and minerals, a phenomenon which results in their economies depending on external development, is a source of concern.

Furthermore, coupled with this poor economic performance, the growth rate has been no more than 4.8 %, a figure which hides divergent realities ranging from 7 % growth rate for oil exporting countries and 2.9 % for the least developed countries (9). Paradoxically, however, Africa has a reservoir of human resources, minerals and natural resources. For this reason, African leaders resolved to adopt a far-reaching continental and regional approach to revert this undesirable economic situation.

The Central African Customs and Economic Union was established to achieve specific objectives. These objectives which are spelt out in the Brazzaville Treaty (10) are: —

- (1) To establish a single customs territory, allowing free movement of people, goods, merchandise, services and capital;
- (2) To rationalize tariffs, tax systems, industrialization, transport policies and development plans in order to promote the balanced development and diversification of the economies of the area;
- (3) To establish a convention on investment which will determine among other things, general guarantees, and categories of investments for preferential treatment;
- (4) To establish a Solidarity Fund from which compensations are paid to land-locked member countries for losses suffered as a result of implementation of the objectives of the Union, and
- (5) To determine to promote the gradual and progressive establishment of the Central African Common Market.

Similarity of Objectives and Strategies:

In an attempt to analyse the objectives and implementation strategies of the UDEAC in the context of LPA, there are certain similarities that can be observed. There is the basic realization of poor economic performance, both at the national, regional, continental and international levels which underlies to some extent the establishment of UDEAC and the provisions of the LPA. To this extent, an attempt will be made to examine those objectives which are common to both UDEAC's and LPA.

African leaders and many policy-makers believe that industrialization is the only panacea which will alleviate the economic problems of the continent. To industrialize the continent would mean not totally depending

on the export of raw materials which are the main source of foreign exchange but the ability to ensure that raw materials are processed locally. This will also go a long way to solve the unemployment problems which are prevalent in our economies. To this extent, both the UDEAC Treaty and the special Assembly for the LPA emphasize very sincerely, the call for the harmonization of industrial policies. These industrial cooperation policies are intended to be broad-based – covering all areas of industrial development.

Both protocol agreements emphasize an industrial development strategy which recognizes an industrial development policy which is aimed at achieving harmonised and balanced development. To achieve this goal, policies are expected to be geared in accordance with the major role assigned to industrial expansion or development in each country's development plan, with the view to meeting the basic needs of the population, ensuring the integration of the national economy and the modernisation of the society:

Transport and Communications policies are envisaged to be geared towards effective policy of balanced national and regional development in the UDEAC and the LPA.

Industrial coordination in the UDEAC and Africa is to be ensured with the creation of a single customs union and African market which will enable goods produced within the UDEAC free movement to all member States of the union and to other African nations. It is, however, assumed that these industries will service the whole economic union and the continent. To be able to achieve this industrial development objective, member states of the UDEAC and LPA are expected to mobilize the resources (human, financial, natural) at their disposal and to commit them sincerely to the services of the union and the African continent as a whole. These efforts are all aimed at creating conditions conducive to sub-regional and collective self-reliance, and at the same time providing a framework for strengthening the efforts of each country.

Both UDEAC and the LPA recognize the fact that for the most part, the African countries depend on foreign capital, technology and technical skills for development. It invariably means that the foreign countries which African countries depend on will be in a position to influence the policies of the latter. Faced with these problems of international dependence and aware of the continued deterioration in their terms of trade for their agricultural products, both the UDEAC States and the signatories to the LPA have encouraged import substitution policies.

Having recognized the importance of foreign aid because it is intended to encourage integrative forces among the member countries of the UDEAC and LPA, the signatories have encouraged the flow of total resources available to the Union and to the Continent.

In addition to the above mentioned similarities, efforts towards creating Industrial Development Banks are emphasized. The creation of this Industrial Development Bank in the UDEAC and in the provisions of LPA is aimed at harmonizing fiscal systems to allow free movements of industrial goods. This is important considering the fact that some African currencies are inconvertible and weak in international transactions.

With respect to trade in all commodities, the objectives of UDEAC and those of the LPA seem to synchronize. Emphasis is laid on trade liberalisation which involves elimination of all trade barriers between member States. The overall objective is to promote internal trade with particular attention paid to opportunities offered by rural markets. To this extent member States should endeavour to eliminate all obstacles and grant to themselves most-favoured-nations treatment in inter-regional trade.

Even though the LPA goes further to create an economic community in an attempt to take advantage of the trade creation effect, multinational production corporations should be established as joint-ventures between the member States of UDEAC and between other African countries.

Despite the fact that the UDEAC Treaty does not have provisions specifically applicable to agriculture as is the case with the LPA, the Treaty provides that trade in agricultural commodities among member States should not be subjected to any customs or fiscal barriers. However, in the provisions of the LPA, agriculture policy is extensively examined in view of the fact that agriculture is the mainstay of the economies of African countries. Since agricultural products of UDEAC countries (timber, cocoa, cotton, and coffee) are produced in most African countries, it is assumed implicitly that UDEAC countries will extend the trade liberalisation policies to cater for agricultural expansion.

In the case of development plans, it should be noted that all UDEAC States had formulated their development plans before the signing of the Brazzaville Treaty. Consequently, individual countries development plans do not reflect the development aspirations of the entire sub-region. However, the provisions of the Treaty require the development plans of each of these countries to be revised so as to ensure the harmonization of common development objectives and strategies. In other words the provisions of the Brazzaville Treaty which established the UDEAC as well as the provisions of the LPA, advocate the harmonization of development plans particularly in the areas of industrial and agricultural development.

As concerns energy, it is well known that most African countries spend a greater portion of their foreign reserves on petroleum and other sources of energy. To this extent, it is necessary to explore and develop other sources of energy such as fossil fuel, and increase the utilization of hydro-carbon and nuclear energy. On recognition of this fact, the UDEAC Treaty provided for harmonization of energy policies which include joint ventures to establish refineries in member countries. This provision of the UDEAC Treaty is in line with the provisions of the LPA which, in addition, stipulates that: member countries endowed with abundant petroleum resources should give preferential treatment to fellow African countries which do not have them. This preferential treatment should include ensuring guaranteed supplies and increased assistance for oil prospecting. In addition, both the UDEAC Treaty and the LPA also provide for the exploration of other sources of energy including electricity considering their importance in the development of the industrial sector.

Differences in Objectives and Strategies

It should be recognized that unlike UDEAC, LPA envisages a creation of an African Common Market which will lead to an African Economic Community. The implication of this continental economic union is the need for the harmonization of the objectives of the various regional economic groupings existing in Africa today. Such groupings include, among others, the UDEAC and ECOWAS.

Basically, the provisions of the Treaties setting up the groupings were aimed at achieving one economic objective or the other with emphasis on transforming their economies at the regional level. Nevertheless, these regional goals and objectives in the context of the LPA must have some differences (from those of LPA), arising either from scope of the proposals, the resources involved or the strategies or the implementation machineries of the different groupings.

Judging from the nature and scope of the LPA, certain areas can be observed which are not covered in the UDEAC Treaty. More specifically, the commitment of the African leaders to transform the economic structures of the African continent is quite outside the scope and focus of the UDEAC. Notably, while UDEAC focusses on the economic policies which will improve the lots of the citizens of the member countries, the LPA emphasizes the total liberation of the African continent from external economic and political dependence.

Consequently, the UDEAC Treaty places more emphasis on those areas which can enhance regional trade and industrialisation. Such areas include the Single Tax System, industrial location and industrial cooperation, among others; whilst the provisions of the LPA go further to recognize those measures which can improve and make possible realization of certain goals.

These goals are: Self-sufficiency and Self-sustainment; reinforcement of social and economic intercourse; protection and improvement of natural environment; and the development of indigenous technology, among others.

We shall now examine the various areas of differences with special reference to the provisions in respect of policies at the national, sub-regional and regional levels;

The necessity to place greater priority on agricultural development cannot be over-emphasized in Third World economies. The UDEAC Treaty in its entirety ignores the role of agricultural development and therefore has no special provision for its development; although trade in agricultural commodities is intended to adopt a Common Customs and fiscal tariff applicable to other goods. The provisions of the LPA lay special emphasis on the development of agriculture in all its ramifications, assuming that, agriculture is the sustenance of the African economy. Moreover, improvement of agricultural productivity will also improve the living standards of most african countries through increased supply of food, increased earnings in foreign exchange, etc. To this extent, therefore, necessary institutions

and policies which can improve agricultural production, fisheries, livestock, incomes of farmers are provided for in the LPA as against the UDEAC Treaty. Agricultural research and monitoring bodies in the national, and regional levels have also been provided for in the LPA to achieve the above objectives.

Secondly, although most of the provisions in the LPA and UDEAC Treaty with regards to industrialization seem to overlap, there are certain provisions which are necessary, effective, and proper to industrial take off but which do not appear in the UDEAC Treaty. It can, however be observed that the provisions in the LPA in respect of the preparation of sub-regional and regional plans for the creation of major industrial complexes whose costs and production capacities would exceed national, financial and absorptive capacities are not provided in the UDEAC Treaty.

Furthermore, despite the need for effective participation of the various governments, the implementation procedure with regard to the LPA, is charged to specialized bodies under the supervision of the Economic Commission for Africa and the Secretariat of the Organisation for African Unity whereas the provisions of the UDEAC Treaty do not provide for adequate and effective implementation. In the particular case of the LPA, policy implementation and monitoring centres are proposed to be established so as to strengthen the existing institutions. These Centres include: The African Regional Centre for Technology; The African Regional Centre for Engineering, Design and Manufacturing; and the African Industrial Development Bank.

Research and development into indigenous technology is envisaged in the LPA. The objective is to develop adequate techniques suitable to the African environment so as to reduce the extreme dependence on foreign technology. However, the UDEAC Treaty does not provide for cooperation in the area of technology.

With reference to mineral and natural resources and apart from the fact that note has been taken of the raw material-base in the location of certain industries, no special provisions in the UDEAC Treaty are made as regards formulating policies which will help in the proper exploitation of the region's minerals and natural resources. On the other hand, the LPA explicitly defines the exploitation policies, the development and utilisation of the minerals for the benefit of the entire continent. It goes further to make it possible to carry out geological surveys so as to determine the mineral inventory of the continent.

In addition to the provisions to promote trade and industrial development, the UDEAC Treaty does not emphasize those areas which are necessary for sustained economic growth such as rapid industrialization which is the basis of the development of indigenous technology. The LPA makes provision for creating institutions such as research centres to train Africans in the basic crafts which are necessary to sustain the industries and the development process.

The involvement of the youths, the need to cooperate at the national, sub-regional and regional level in the preservation and protection of the natural environment, the reflection of the socio-cultural values in plan-

ning, the overall act of achieving a rapid socio-economic transformation of our states are quite outside the scope and provisions of the UDEAC Treaty.

Implications for Regional Cooperation in the UDEAC

As indicated earlier, differences exist to a certain extent between the provisions of the UDEAC Treaty and those of the LPA. In the light of the provisions of the UDEAC Treaty, and the poor implementation of some UDEAC projects, such as the highway which was supposed to link the member States, it will be necessary to widen the scope of the UDEAC Treaty to incorporate additional economic objectives and other areas of cooperation, if greater success is expected in the near future.

For economic development to be sustained, certain basic and overall growth elements must be present. These growth elements depend to a large extent on the nature of economies concerned. For fragile economies such as those of African countries characterized by peasant agriculture with low productivities, emphasis must be laid on effective agricultural planning with a view to increasing output. In this case the UDEAC Treaty must not only emphasize trade in agricultural goods but agricultural development in its entirety. After all, more than 60 % of the trade carried out in Africa is in agricultural products and raw materials.

Secondly, Industrial development, closely followed by human resources development and training, and technological development can be more meaningful than excessive dependence on foreign technicians and spare parts. Provisions in respect of the importation of industrial technology must be closely followed by adequate training of indigenous manpower. Monitoring and other bodies responsible for implementation should also be provided for in the UDEAC Treaty.

On the other hand, the historical factors associated with the establishment of the UDEAC and the scope must be taken into consideration. The establishment of the Central African Customs and Economic Union (UDEAC) was strongly an idea from France to make her administration easy within the sub-region (11). In the light of this awareness, it will be necessary for member countries of the UDEAC to refine their objectives to be in line with their contemporary social, cultural, political and economic problems.

IV. — THE NEED TO REVISE THE UDEAC TREATY IN THE LIGHT OF LPA

A closer and critical examination of the nature of economic cooperation existing in UDEAC countries shows the attempt by the Colonial Masters (French) to make the administration and trade within the region easy (12). This also made for the easy manipulation of social, political and economic policies.

In Addition to these manipulations and given the provisions of the UDEAC Treaty, the implementation of the planned programmes was very difficult since no special bodies were set up to monitor and execute the

Union projects. For instance, the proposed inter-State transport and communications harmonization proposal has not been fully implemented due to lack of supervision.

Moreover, an appraisal of the inter-State trade reveals that foreign trade has dominated the region. On the other hand, trade between the English-speaking provinces of Cameroon and Nigeria and the unrecorded trade with Chad has not been checked. All these and other deficiencies have made it quite difficult for a complete achievement of the goals of UDEAC.

It is necessary to point out that, essentially, time is already overdue for the Central African States to coordinate their investments, research and specialized manpower training efforts. This is possible not only through regional economic cooperation, but also at some inter-governmental level like the OECD. Obviously, limitations exist politically and otherwise as to the extent to which this can be done.

Consequently, it is necessary to revise the UDEAC Treaty so as to reflect the essential objectives of the LPA. Such objectives include among others: the creation of a common market which will lead to an economic community at the continental level and which can serve the industries whose capacities are above those existing in the individual countries or the regional grouping.

Furthermore, there is the objective of self-sufficiency and self-sustainment at both national, sub-regional and regional levels. UDEAC, for instance, is very concerned with her links with Europe, particularly France. The continuous existence of these links will make self-sufficiency and self-sustained development difficult. The continued dependence on foreign experts and imported technology in addition to lack of training of local manpower, will pose problems in the management of the local industries.

The proposal in the LPA to improve the quality of labour and human resources and put science and technology to the service of development is unique. This calls for concerted efforts in developing indigenous technology. Further efforts are geared towards natural resources control, exploitation, extraction and use for the over-all developing African continent in LPA. On the realization of the complexities and demanding nature of such actions there is, therefore, a need to set up appropriate institutions. Consequently, institutions charged with these responsibilities which include monitoring and implementation should be set up under the UDEAC Treaty. Such institutions should include a Technology Research Centre and Training Institutions, among others.

To ensure an improved food situation, minimization of post-harvest losses and effective agricultural revolution in Africa, there is need to channel increased volume of resources to agriculture through the formulation and implementation of policies which will induce farmers and members of agricultural cooperatives to achieve higher levels of productivity. It is a well-known fact that, apart from few oil-rich countries, most African countries derive some 80 % of their foreign exchange from agriculture. It is therefore important for the UDEAC to lay special emphasis on agricultural

production not only to earn foreign exchange but to provide raw materials for the planned industries. Of course, industrial planning should take into consideration first, the processing of local raw materials. Such efforts seem to be lacking among UDEAC countries and also in the Treaty.

The Implementation procedures with respect to industrial development strategies as contained in the LPA need to be mentioned. The planning strategy of short, medium and long-term development targets aimed at achieving a particular level of continental output is quite outside the perception of UDEAC Treaty. At the national level, industrialization policies aimed at effective industrial development are laid down. These policies which include laying down priorities, targets, human and financial resources, institutional training and research are lacking at the national planning levels in UDEAC Countries.

At the Sub-regional and Regional levels, the industrial harmonization policies of the UDEAC Treaty have not stressed the creation of major industrial complexes. More so, the industrialization policies of the UDEAC in relation to foreign countries cannot be clearly defined. It can only be assumed that the usual aid, both technical and financial, will be expected from the traditional sources. Such aid in most cases is tied aid and is made for specific projects.

To sum up this section, it would appear that an attempt to develop a sub-region should involve those policies and strategies which will easily fit into the natural environment and reflect adequately the socio-economic and cultural values and reinforce its cultural identity. What this tends to emphasize is the necessity to involve Africans in the development of their environment and to be protected by them. This will also check the overdependence on foreign experts in the development of our economy. For this reason, therefore, there is need to revise the existing UDEAC Treaty with a view to creating a greater scope for a more viable and more beneficial economic union.

V. — CONCLUDING REMARKS

An examination of the provisions of trade liberalization, industrial cooperations and harmonization, financial, monetary and fiscal harmonization and free mobility of persons and citizens in the UDEAC Treaty and LPA has revealed a lot of complex and challenging economic problems. Many policy measures have been suggested to handle these problems especially in the LPA. As a concluding note to this paper, it is necessary to discuss the prospects of LPA and UDEAC in the context of the provisions of the agreements establishing them.

At a glance, the creation of a continental economic union seems beneficial to the countries concerned. However, the question still remains as to whether the regional groupings are ready to forgo their already established economic, financial and commercial ties, especially in the case of the UDEAC.

As African development policies are being increasingly coloured by Pan-Africanism, by more or less longing for greater unity and cooperation

at all levels, to influence and participate in world affairs, especially resisting neo-colonial economic, financial and commercial controls, it has become necessary to form a Continental Economic Union.

Secondly, the existence of smaller economic groupings within larger ones (for example, CEAO within ECOWAS) poses a problem of greater affinity within the smaller units at the expense of the larger ones. This type of problem is expected at the continental level especially in trying to harmonize all their policies to reflect a single line of action. This problem may however be overcome if the bigger states could use their influence to effect certain changes within different economic groupings.

In the case of regional economic groupings like UDEAC, the possibility of a Continental Economic Union rests to a large extent on the success of those regional groupings. Moreover, in the formation of a Continental Economic Union, there is still a need to strengthen the regional economic groupings especially with regards to the creation of Regional Centres for Science and Technology, Research and Training, etc.

Furthermore, coordination at the regional level is quite easier to manipulate, and it can be a spring-board for the eventual success of a Continental Economic Union. However, care must be taken of the possible interference of former Colonial Masters in the policies of the groupings.

Finally, the numerous complex problems of the dominance of the primary sector, limited inter-state trade, poor communications, poverty, etc, which constitute considerable drawbacks in the realization of an effective economic cooperation in Africa calls for sustained and concerted efforts by African leaders and peoples themselves.

The deciding factor must be the existence of a political will of African leaders themselves to unite economically since it is one of the most important pre-conditions for successful economic cooperation in the African continent. This must be demonstrated by the preparedness of all African States to give up some of their sovereignty over the management of their national and regional economies. The short-term costs of such an action could be considerable. However, the long-term benefit of effective economic cooperation among them could, other things being equal, overshadow the costs.

FOOTNOTES

1. Chad's decision to pull out was a consequence of the growing disparities between itself and the more developed members of the Union. Discussions are however underway for the re-admission of Chad into the UDEAC. Chad will for the most part be treated at least in the analytical sense as if it were a member of UDEAC already.
2. For a historical introduction to the development of AEF up to 1958, see V. Thompson and R. Adolff: *The Emerging States of French Equatorial Africa*. London 1960.
3. Louis Sohn (ed.) *Basic Documents of African Regional Organizations* (New York Oceanic Publications Inc. 1971) p. 263.

4. UDEAC: *Traité Instituant une Union Douanière et Economique de l'Afrique Centrale* (Brazzaville 1964).
5. UDEAC: *op. cit.*, Article 1 and 2.
6. UDEAC: *op. cit.*, Article 38.
7. See André Anguille; G. and Jacques David F.: *L'Afrique sans Frontières* (Monaco: Paul Bory, 1965) pp. 28–35 and Williams Hance, *Population, Migration and Urbanization in Africa*. New York, Columbia University Press, 1970.
8. *Lagos Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Monrovia Strategy for the Economic Development of Africa*: Lagos 28–29 April 1980, p. 3.
9. *Op. cit.*, p. 7.
10. UDEAC Treaty, p. 2.
11. W. A. Ndongko: *Regional Economic Organization in Africa: Origins, Problems and Prospects*, p. 150.
12. *Op. cit.*, p. 150.

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RESUME

Dans cet article l'auteur fait un examen critique de la coopération économique en Afrique Centrale dans le contexte du Plan d'Action de Lagos en prenant comme référence l'Union Douanière et Economique des Etats de l'Afrique Centrale (UDEAC).

Avant de faire une analyse comparée des objectifs et stratégies de l'UDEAC et du Plan d'Action de Lagos (PAL), partie dans laquelle il étudie la nature des objectifs, la similitude et la différence entre les objectifs et les stratégies de l'UDEAC, il nous livre brièvement les facteurs internes et externes qui, selon lui, ont contribué à la création de groupements économiques régionaux en général et de l'Union Douanière et Economique des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest en particulier.

Un examen des objectifs et stratégies du PAL et de l'UDEAC permet à l'auteur de faire remarquer qu'il existe des cas de similitude dans la manière d'aborder et de résoudre les problèmes relatifs à l'harmonisation des politiques industrielles, au transport et politiques en matière de communication, aux politiques de substitution d'importation, à la création de Banques de Développement industriel qui puissent aider à l'harmonisation des systèmes fiscaux pour permettre la libre circulation des biens industriels. Ces mêmes similitudes peuvent être notées au niveau des efforts à faire pour éliminer les obstacles au commerce inter-régional, de l'harmonisation des plans de développement économique et social ainsi que des politiques énergétiques.

En ce qui concerne les différences entre les objectifs et les stratégies, l'auteur note que du point de vue des politiques de développement tant au niveau national, sous-régional que régional, on peut retenir les différences suivantes :

a) Le PAL accorde un intérêt particulier au développement agricole alors que l'UDEAC n'en fait pas cas. Il n'y est mentionné que le commerce des produits agricoles avec comme objectif la mise en place de tarifs fiscaux et douaniers communs applicables aux autres produits.

b) Le PAL prévoit, dans le cadre de la préparation de plans à l'échelle sous-régionale et régionale, la création de grandes unités industrielles dont le coût et les capacités de production dépasseraient les capacités financières nationales alors que le traité de l'UDEAC reste silencieux dans ce domaine.

c) Ces mêmes différences peuvent être notées au niveau des corps chargés de l'exécution des décisions arrêtées dans les deux documents, de la recherche sur le développement des technologies autochtones, des ressources minières et naturelles, des moyens à mettre en œuvre pour une exécution correcte des différents plans.

Compte tenu de ces similitudes mais surtout des différences entre ces deux approches, l'auteur pense que le traité de l'UDEAC devrait être révisé à la lumière du PAL pour qu'il puisse refléter les objectifs fondamentaux du PAL qui comportent entre autres aspects la création d'un marché commun qui conduira à une communauté économique au plan continental et qui pourra servir les industries dont les capacités dépassent celles qui existent actuellement dans les pays pris individuellement ou même au niveau du groupement régional.