

**REPORT OF THE CODESRIA/ECA CONFERENCE OF
DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH
INSTITUTES AND POLICY-MAKERS ON THE
THIRD UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT
DECADE, THE MONROVIA STRATEGY
AND THE LAGOS PLAN OF ACTION:
ADDIS ABABA, MARCH 1-4 1982.**

**PART I —THE GLOBAL CONTEXT OF THE MONROVIA STRATEGY
AND THE LAGOS PLAN OF ACTION.**

The international context of the Monrovia Strategy and the Lagos Plan of Action was discussed at great length during which many serious issues were raised. Amongst these were:

- a) The 3rd UN Development Decade, like the previous ones, is unlikely to produce effective and positive results for Africa. The reasons for this pessimism were analysed and clearly stated or rather repeated, since these reasons are well known to both Governments and researchers.
- b) The fundamental idea enunciated in the UN resolution on the NIEO and in the Brant Report concerning a massive transfer of capital from the North was lauded as a good but idealistic idea, since the North is massively against it. Again the reasons for this resistance from the North are well known and need no repeating here.
- c) Since the S.N. dialogue concerning the creation of NIEO has bogged down because of the resistance and negative attitude of the North, it was argued that Africa should pursue a strong S/S dialogue in order to bring about effective but mutually beneficial trade, financial and technological relationships and linkages. African countries should use and expand existing S/S linkages whether on a bilateral, multilateral basis or through the UN system.
- d) The question of whether development within the continent should depend on internally generated accumulation of capital or «a massive transfer» of external capital into Africa was discussed extensively. Firstly there was unanimous agreement that the creation and use of internally generated capital, whatever form it takes, must be given absolute priority as a strategy of development. Secondly, it was also agreed that autarky, whether at the national, sub-regional or continental level, would be detrimental to any form of development in Africa. Hence the involvement of external capital — both from the West and East should be accepted as a necessity for any development process in Africa — at all levels. However, acceptance of external capital for development purposes, must be seriously and strictly negotiated with the following objectives in mind:
 - (i) Foreign capital should be directed to those areas of development where indigenous resources are inadequate or incapable of undertaking such development e.g. in the fields of energy, mineral resources and other areas which necessitate advanced technology etc...
 - (ii) Indigenous resources — manpower and capital should always be involved in all areas where external capital is used, with the aim of eventual takeover of management and equity.

(iii) The process of negotiation for obtaining external capital must be well prepared. Hence the creation of high quality expertise and accurate information must be given priority.

- e) The Monrovia Strategy clearly expresses the point of view of the African people on development and the principles which should underlie the process of development. The very strongly stated idea of self-reliance (at national or collective level) is considered to be important and compatible with economic cooperation amongst African countries and the eventual creation of a continental common market. However, the economic prescriptions of the Lagos Plan of Action, when placed within the framework of the Monrovia Strategy, are seen to lack overall coherence – intersectorially as well as within each sector. Hence further detailed work is needed in order to make the plan more logical and consistent by integrating and reworking the economic measures and policies prescribed in it.
- f) Despite these detailed shortcomings, the Lagos Plan of Action was considered to have laid down the correct orientation and framework for development in Africa. The correct orientation and therefore significance of the Lagos Plan of Action is clearly highlighted when it is contrasted with the World Bank Report. The orientation of the two «Plans» are opposite and contradictory, the Lagos Plan of Action advocating a form of development which would benefit the African people whereas the World Bank Report clearly and unambiguously represents the interest of foreign capital. The World Bank Report specifically expresses a very negative and demeaning attitude on the ability of African leadership and African institutions. The two documents must therefore be seen as representing sharply opposing points of view concerning African Development.

PART II – SECTORIAL SECTION – COMMITTEE A

1. FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

The committee noted that while the Lagos Plan of Action rightly puts emphasis on self-sufficiency in food production, we must not lose sight of the fact that the performance of export crops, in countries where food crops have been doing badly, has not been that much better. This is because what Africa faces is a general agrarian crisis and not simply a food crisis. Nevertheless, the food crisis as recognized by the Lagos Plan of Action is real and manifests itself both in the rural and urban areas. We must therefore resist the temptation of narrowly defining the crisis in terms of the availability of marketed food, which largely affects the politically articulate urban crisis or affects the availability of foreign exchange.

The committee recognized that the thrust of the Lagos Plan of Action's recommendations for agrarian reform puts emphasis on peasant production and organized cooperatives. The objective reality, however, is that an increasing number of African governments and other actors such as the World Bank are directing their attention, to «progressive farmers» and are offering various incentives to transnational corporations to engage in farming. But while it is possible that these new actors in African agriculture – domestic

agrarian capitalists and TNCs – solve the problems of food self-sufficiency and possibly enable foreign exchange savings to be made, reliance on them is contrary to the spirit of the explicit option of the Lagos Plan of Action for development with equity.

The committee observed that past agricultural programmes have failed largely because of lacks of implementation and inconsistent agricultural policies. Political rhetoric was not matched with public investment in agriculture. In some countries it was noted that previous plans had shifted the emphasis from small scale farmers to large scale commercial farmers. This has necessarily implied the diminution of the flow of resources and sometimes the complete neglect of the small scale farmers even though they still account for the bulk of agricultural production and most particularly almost all of the foods production. It is clear however, that the implementation of the Lagos Plan of Action requires putting emphasis on the organization of peasants and the strengthening of the cooperative sector. Member states must be urged to closely monitor the activities of a new emergent class of farmers and government officials – who ultimately could cause the disappearance of the small scale farmers through large scale intensive farming. Member states should be urged to channel enough resources to the needs of small scale farmers and to ensure equity in food distribution in rural and urban areas.

The committee felt however, that in addition to agrarian reform and measures and to increase resource flows to small scale farmers veritable agrarian transformation will require a whole host of actions and policies which are of necessity of broad scope and as such cannot be strictly defined as agricultural. Among these, the improvement of the infrastructural and communication network, is one that readily comes to mind. More fundamental however, is the establishment of an industrial base capable of supporting the process of modernization in agriculture.

2. *INDUSTRIALIZATION*

The committee noted that in view of the role that industry must necessarily play in the process of agrarian revitalization, the emphasis placed by the Lagos Plan of Action on :

- a) the satisfaction of the basic needs of the population ,
- b) the establishment of a basis for the development of other economic sectors ;
- c) the creation of the basis for assimilating and promoting technological change ;
- d) the exploitation of local natural resources (within the context of regional and sub-regional collective self-reliance) to reduce external dependence, is extremely well placed.

Without question the two most important themes running through the chapter on industrialization are the establishment of links between industry and other sectors as well as between various sub-sectors to promote interdependence and harmonized industrialization and the selection of socially suitable technology which is compatible with resource endowments in order to reduce Africa's dependence on external technology.

The committee further noted that to date the industrialization strategies followed by African countries have either been based on repressive labour processes (low wages) or have led to inequalities. In the former case, domestic demand and hence the need to ensure adequate purchasing power was never the basis for success to industrialization. In the second case (i.e. important substitution industrialization) while the strategy did not need low wages within the industry itself (in fact employment generation is usually limited and concentrated on a limited number of highly skilled and highly paid workers), it required sizeable and continuing surplus extraction from other sectors for its existence and viability. This (among other reasons) led to the conclusion that the strategy is biased against the equitable distribution of income.

The committee pointed out, however, that if, as it is explicitly stated by the Lagos Plan of Action, the future industrialization of Africa is to be harmonized, autonomous and primarily oriented to internal demand and mass needs, then the latter has to be translated into real effective demand, with all that this implies in terms of the social relations of production, the nature, the character and the role of the state in the industrialization process as well as the political decision-making process. These very important pre-conditions are likely to be undermined by the call in the Lagos Plan of Action for a massive transfer of resources from developed countries to finance industrial projects and free access to developed countries markets for the industrial products of African States. For this call would suggest an industrialization strategy based on the transnationalization and transfer of capital (on a massive scale) for an export oriented strategy.

The committee concluded that a harmonized autonomous and mass needs oriented industrialization in Africa must be pursued with deliberate action and cannot be expected to evolve naturally. In this task the role of foreign capital must be marginal and not massive. In the final analysis the industrialization of Africa must rely on the exploitation of African's mineral, energy and raw materials not only to meet mass consumption needs but to support the process of modernization of other sectors, especially small scale agriculture.

3. MINING INDUSTRIES

The committee observed that Africa is rich and her minerals are well diversified. However, although Africa's share, in the world production of minerals is quite substantial, the consumption of minerals in Africa is insignificant. For example, Africa (excluding South Africa) on an annual average consumes only 0.9 % of the world consumption of 14 major minerals, while she accounts for 9.9 % of the world's population. This is an alarming situation because mineral resources are exhaustible as well as critical for Africa's future industrialization, conservation measures are clearly indicated for the sustained exploitation of minerals.

The Monrovia Strategy and the Lagos Plan of Action have underlined the following three objectives for the future development of mineral resources in Africa :

- a) the recovery of total and permanent sovereignty over national resources ;
- b) the establishment of mineral based and related industries ,
- c) the need to develop national capacity through the development of human resources.

But the committee noted that in all these three areas Africa's achievements have been very modest at best. This is because for national sovereignty for example, to be real, governments must have at least majority of shares, be able to *control effectively* different phases of production as well as the competence and authority to take basic decisions concerning exploration, mine development, production and marketing. Sadly, many governments rarely satisfy any of these conditions regarding ownership, control and basic decision making. This constitutes an obvious lack of political will since national capacities can easily be created in the plan for training of skills, management with the aim of gaining control over the country's resources.

The challenge facing Africa now relates to how best to control the exploitation of her mineral resources and to ensure that their utilization will serve the purpose of advancing autonomous industrialization and development in Africa. Among areas to be researched are the possibility for mineral based industrialization strategies and the mobilization of the financial potential of minerals and their transfer to other economic sectors. In this regard the committee noted that similar industrial infrastructure used in mining could also be used in other economic sectors and that it is possible for some mineral based industries to supply other related industries and sub-industries.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES, DEVELOPMENT AND UTILIZATION

The Lagos Plan of Action deals with the difficulties of the planning of human resources. It was recognized that the allocation of human resources is very difficult in terms of planning. This difficulty is even aggravated by the lack of reliable data and information as well as what is meant by human resources utilization in both the formal and the informal sectors. Even if these data existed they are aggravated and published very often later than the planning process. It was suggested that an effort should be made to integrate national planning agencies at all levels. Education is viewed as a central variable in the development of human resources. Unless an effort is made to readapt the educational systems the imbalance between human resources and the level of their utilization will always persist in African countries. As far as the agricultural sector is concerned it was noted that small-scale farmers have often been ignored in previous development plans while they still occupy the central position in agricultural production. Any attempt to increase agricultural production should deal with the mobilization of farmers whose need should be considered. This can be achieved within the framework of integrated rural development programs. With regard to professional staff there was a concern about the minimal use of african experts to solve african problems. Efforts must be made to permit the use of indigenous professionals as experts and consultants. The Lagos Plan of Action recognized the role of woman in the development process. However, there was no clear indication of how women can influence this process. The role of women is still perceived as residual while the committee noted that actually women provide about 80 per cent of

the total food produced in Africa and consumed in rural and urban areas. In addition, no provision was made of how to protect women against increasing intensive farming in the agricultural sector. It was suggested that in the implementation of the Lagos Plan of Action more quantitative attention should be devoted to the role of women as housekeepers, mothers and wives. Also it was recognized that due attention should be given to women in social and political affairs and that it is necessary to give more positive view of the role of women in the development process.

5. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The committee observed that there is a risk of contradiction between the objective of self-reliance, which the Lagos Plan of Action rightly puts emphasis on, and the Plan's strategy for science and technology. For whether it was meant to be the case or not the Lagos Plan of Action puts a great deal of emphasis on the importation of technology and the popularization of these techniques in the countries educational systems. There is silence on the creation of technology presumably because self-sustaining technology «would be expensive». The issue of technological dependence is not adequately addressed. The committee therefore felt that the implementation of the Lagos Plan of Action on science and technology was more likely to accentuate technological dependence than to lessen it.

It is imperative, however, that African countries from now on seek to control all national activities vital for science and technology advancement. In this regard the role of the masses in general and labour in particular in influencing the areas of development and the very choice of technology would be seen to be crucial for it is only in this context that self sustaining and socially suitable choices of technology can be made. There is furthermore a clear need to link up science and technological research currently being undertaken in our research institutes and the actual management or policy choices involving technology.

The committee stressed that there is a pressing need for the development of national engineering framework not only to promote the development of socially suitable technology but also to control the transnational corporations and to contain and neutralize their activities. This can be done in addition to the concerted effort at the development of self-sustaining technologies, through the diversification of the source of technology. Technologies from socialist countries, from small western countries and even from other Third World countries are avenues that can be explored to break the monopoly of transnational corporations in the transfer of technology and to reduce Africa's technological dependence.

PART III – COMMITTEE B NATIONAL ECONOMIES, REGIONAL CO-OPERATION AND THE LAGOS PLAN OF ACTION

Committee B of the conference discussed the national economies of specific countries (5) as well as the question of regional cooperation of existing groups – ECOWAS, CEAO, UDEAC, SADEC and the former EAC.

1) The National Economies

All existing national economies have been inherited from the colonial past and are therefore distorted. During the last 20 years economic planning of most countries have been oriented towards expanding existing national economies-export of agricultural commodities and import of industrial products mainly consumer goods to and from the developed countries. Little regard was paid to inter-African trade and to plan for economic complementarity between neighbouring countries. Given this fundamental characteristic of the national economies, it was clear that serious restructuring of individual economies is not only essential but will entail crucial economic decisions for almost all the countries.

There are certain objectives in economic planning which are common to almost all African countries – namely self-reliance, expansion of agriculture with the aim of self-sufficiency in food, expansion of the industrial sector, expansion of physical institutional infrastructure etc... But the implementation of these common economic objectives have resulted in deepening the inherited distorted national economies, thereby militating against the emergence of any serious inter-African economic co-operation. Hence the recommendations of the Lagos Plan of Action that individual countries should restructure their economies towards the creation of an African Common Market will face serious difficulties at the level of implementation. In particular it was noted that there was no serious discussion (in the Lagos Plan of Action) on the criteria and mechanism for the restructuring of the national economies. Furthermore the uneven development within and between countries as a major impediment to inter-African economic co-operation has not been dealt with seriously. The Lagos Plan of Action simply misconceptualises the problem by categorizing countries into «less developed» and «least developed» and even then it makes no suggestions as to what should be the relationship between the two categories of countries.

2) Sub-regional Groupings

It was observed that formally a great deal of similarity exists between the objectives and strategies of existing groupings and those of the Lagos Plan of Action and that some of the recommendations of the Lagos Plan of Action have already been initiated.

The demise of the EAC was discussed with the aim of trying to understand the fundamental causes for its break-up. It was observed that in this particular case narrow national and foreign interests as well as specific political factors inter-acted to bring about the demise of the EAC. Similarly internal national and foreign commercial interests have been and still are playing a key role impeding the development of a healthy economic co-operation and integration within UDEAC. On the other hand it was noted that a strong political will for economic co-operation is an important factor in the case of CEAO, ECOWAS and SADEC.

Detailed discussions of these sub-regional groupings highlighted a number of important issues. Despite the strong political will for economic co-operation, the following issues need further thought and discussions amongst

member states in order to work out detailed criteria and mechanism for the implementation of sub-regional economic groupings :

a) Harmonization of national economic politics in order to eliminate unnecessary duplication of production and at the same time foster complementarity in different fields of production.

b) Serious sub-regional planning to create complementary transportation and communication networks as well as other institutional infrastructures.

c) Co-ordination of financial, institutional, monetary currency and trade policies.

d) Co-ordination of policies in education, technology, training and the free movement of labour.

e) Harmonization of the legal framework, standardization of the statistical and technical nomenclature and improvement of the system of official and technical communication system in terms of languages.

The committee noted that despite the signing of Protocols and Agreements on various issues between the member states of for example ECOWAS, there has been an undue delay at the implementation stage owing to political hesitation as well as bureaucratic inertia amongst the member states. The committee felt that member states should pay serious attention to such obstacles which arise at the implementation stage.

CONCLUSION

The hypothesis of a self-sufficient and self-sustained growth of the African economies require a favourable socio-economic and political climate within every country and between the various countries. It is necessary to undertake a detailed analysis of social, cultural, political as well as economic conditions within these countries for the implementation of the Lagos Plan of Action.

The mobilization of human resources is a very important ingredient in the Lagos Plan of Action. Therefore there is a need to re-orientate the educational systems not only in order to eliminate the inadequacy of training, but also for a better utilization and exploitation of african resources. The massive external financing which the plan calls for, in order to achieve its broad goals, can be contained by a more rational management of internal financial resources and the creation of appropriate financial institutions. In the area of economic integration, it is recommended that in instances where obvious discrepancies and omissions exist between member states, the economic sub-regional groupings should revise their treaties to reflect the essential objectives of the Lagos Plan of Action and should set up appropriate institutions for the implementation and monitoring of the provision of the Lagos Plan of Action. This calls for a sound data base and indicators to monitor the progress of the implementation of the objectives of the Lagos Plan of Action. It is recommended that the ECA through various research institutes, undertakes decennial agricultural censuses to provide the necessary information for planning the agricultural sectors. In the industrial sector ECA and UNIDO should, as part of the industrial development decade of 1980–1990, support national research institutes to undertake

national industrial surveys to provide the data base with which to monitor the progress of the plan. The member states which do not have national industrial policies were also urged to formulate such policies together with the perspective programme for the exploitation of the nation's natural resources. In each member state a systematic analysis of the economies over the last two decades must be undertaken to determine the causes of the poor economic performances in agriculture and industry. It is hoped that the result of this effort would be the emergence of a theory of economic development based on the objective conditions of the individual countries and the continent as a whole. Finally the implementation of the Lagos Plan of Action requires a strong political will on the part of all governments.

To conclude, the conference substantively discussed 28 high quality papers and made many constructive suggestions and at the same time laid down the foundation of an immediate follow-up and a framework for a longer term collaboration between Research Institutes, CODESRIA and the ECA.