CHAPTER 7

Region or Continent: O/AU Development and Regional Economic Communities

INTRODUCTION

Shortly before midnight on Wednesday, December 11, 1963, Kisoi Munyao, soon-to-be Kenyan citizen and agile mountain climber lowered the Union Jack and raised Kenya’s flag. As the sun rose majestic, a new day, new dawn, new era, was afoot. Kenya’s new ‘majimbo’—federal constitution—was promulgated. Here and in other European colonies, a century of ills that came with colonialism, divide-and-rule, and second-class citizenship were ending. In Elechi Amadi’s words, after the day broke, new Kenyan citizens gathered in small towns, district HQs, provincial capitals and Enkare Nyirobi, the “place of cool waters,” to see Prime Minister, Kamau wa Ngengi, (Jomo Kenyatta) accept the instruments of government and address Kenyans and the world.

Kenyatta identified four urgent issues: ugonjwa, umaskini, ufisadi and ujinga (disease, poverty, corruption, ignorance and illiteracy). Life expectancy was 46.6 years (it was ~ 71 in Britain). British rule did little to

1 Alice Wairimu Nderitu, *Kenya, Bridging Ethnic Divides: A Commissioner’s Experience on Cohesion and Integration* (Nairobi: Mdahalo Bridging Divides, 2018).

2 Erick Wekesa, “Jomo Kenyatta’s Agenda Still Big Enough to Guide Us Today”, *Daily Nation* (February 23, 2018); see also: Clara Momanyi, “Miaka Hamsini ya Ujenzi wa Taswira ya Mwanamke Katika Ushairi wa Kiswahili Nchini Kenya.” In Inyani Simala, Leonard Chacha and Miriam Osore, Eds., *Miaka Hamsini ya Kiswahili Nchini Kenya* (Nairobi: Twaweza Communications, 2014).

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S. M. Magu, *Explaining Foreign Policy in Post-Colonial Africa*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-62930-4_7
improve life expectancy, which today hovers near 70 (and 80 in Britain).³ In 68 years of British rule, Kenya made little, if any progress. Even as HDI indices improved, GNI per capita (ppp) grew anemically from US$100 in 1960 to US$872 today. Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines was 62, today it’s about 30. Percentage primary school enrollment was 62 in 1960, rising to 120 (1980) and settling at 103 today. Around Africa, colonialism’s impact was mixed, but generally, terrible for Africans. At independence, the Congo had meager human resources: “at the time of independence, there were less than two dozen Congolese who were university graduates.”⁴ Ironically, the report held that “under Belgian Government rule [after the Belgian Parliament wrestled the colony from King Leopold II in 1908], the Congo began to prosper economically and became the center of the greatest industrial concentration and the most extensive primary educational system in tropical Africa.”⁵

The report also noted that “although the claimed Congolese literacy rate was high by African standards, there was little secondary education for Black Africans in the Congo until 1954, except for seminarians.”⁶ It was also challenging to conceive of the likelihood of many university graduates given the substandard primary education, particularly when the report appears to imply that education beyond elementary levels was unnecessary.⁷ These challenges surpassed the Congo: forced labor and child labor, accompanied by insufficient educational infrastructure—schools, colleges, universities. India, with 240 million citizens in the 1850s, saw fewer than 3000 accepted into the civil service.⁸ Destruction of indigenous education systems magnified the challenges; as such,

³ The World Bank, “Life Expectancy at Birth, Total (years)—Kenya”, World Bank Data (May 12, 2020). https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.IN?locations=KE&display=graph.
⁴ US State Dept, The Department of State Bulletin, vol. 52, No. 1332, January 4, 1965 (DC: State Dept. 1965), 796.
⁵ State Department, The Department of State Bulletin, 1965.
⁶ State Department, The Department of State Bulletin, 1965, 796.
⁷ Gordon C. McDonald, Donald W. Bernier, Lyle E. Brenneman, Eileen M. Colligan, Wayne A. Culp, Susan R. MacKnight and Michael L. Meissenburg, Area Handbook for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Congo Kinshasa) (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971), 158.
⁸ David Northrup, Indentured Labor in the Age of Imperialism, 1834–1922 (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1995).
education provided merely served the extractive, commercial goals of colonialism, thus the minimal training. Educating Africans ultimately became the purview of the church, which retained nefarious connections with settlers and colonial governments.

Many future African leaders interacted with, learned from and were baptized by the missionaries; they also obtained sponsorship for higher education abroad. But in a historically Lutheran fashion, most educational activities were dedicated to spreading Christianity. “A typical mission station consisted of a school, a church, a hospital and residences of the missionaries” with the core mission being to facilitate reading the bible and conversion to Christianity. “Mission schools” continue to be critical players in education today. Education correlates with better welfare, wealth and health. As independence materialized, poverty persisted; economies remained agrarian, dependent on resource extraction and saw no diversification. Across Africa, adult literacy rate was 9 percent; most tellingly, “Congo enjoyed one of the highest literacy rates in Africa […] rural literacy was as low as 10 percent, but urban literacy rates were […] higher.” Many Africans would study in Europe and the US despite the barriers there too.

**MADE IN EUROPE: IMPOSED BACKWARDNESS**

Shantha Bloemen’s journey in ‘Zambia’s T-Shirt Travels’ is fascinating, not only because of the opportunities (or downsides) of free trade, but also because of the death of manufacturing, the clear imposition of western economic theory on Africa, theories with no chance of success. In the T-Shirt Travels, partly shot in the former Northern Rhodesia, a narrator claims that ‘the hard work and ingenuity of the white (British) man had helped transform a continent defined by poverty, disease and lazy Africans;’ Christianity and missionary education might banish these conditions to the grave of a heathen past. The flipside to this modernity was taxation without representation, forced labor, gulags, involuntary confinement of families to deprive liberation movements of local support,

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9 C. C. Wolhuter, “Education in Sub-Saharan Africa.” In Alexander W. Wiseman, Ed., *Annual Review of Comparative and International Education 2018* (Bingley: Emerald, 2019), 229.

Wolhuter, “Education in Sub-Saharan Africa”, 2019.

11 McDonald, et al., *Area Handbook for the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 158.
divide-and-rule that persisted long after the pseudo-independence, and the expropriation of land once considered by Europeans *terra nullius*, all evidence of their occupation and robust social systems notwithstanding.

Colonialism was costly: in its administration and impact on African traditional systems, institutions even populations. How much Europeans—not trading companies—knew of their countries’ colonial actions was unclear: after the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny that saw Sepoys “blown from a gun” the British assumed full colonial control in India. The indignant Alexandrina Victoria, Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and future Empress of India, decreed that the UK would hence no longer impose their beliefs on others. But HM the Queen was busy elsewhere: post-1885 Berlin Conference convened by the ‘Iron Chancellor,’ she bequeathed Mt. Kilimanjaro to her grandson, Friedrich Wilhelm Viktor Albert (Wilhelm II). But all around, colonial powers’ record of human rights subservient to commerce was atrocious; among the Belgians, Germans, Italians and the Portuguese, perhaps more than any other group.

One of the world’s most egregious colonizers, Belgium, finally (in 2002) apologized for “complicity of some Belgian officers in the murder of the first president […] Patrice Lumumba,” and for the Rwanda genocide. There was no apology for “the criminal colonial regime in early twentieth-century Congo.” Estimates suggest “10 million Congolese died ‘during the Leopold period and its immediate aftermath [including] a group of about thirty children of seven or eight years, waiting their turn to receive twenty-five lashes from the whip,’” a punishment that would render an adult unconscious, or the Congolese women who “were often taken as hostages, raped or turned into prostitutes,” or the example of “one Belgian officer [who] kept a gallows in the front of his station and lined his flower bed with human heads.” Calls to address such crimes against humanity are strident; reparations and restitution run into “no

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12 Peter von Sivers, Charles A. Desnoyers and George B. Stow, *Patterns of World History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).
13 Rhoda E. Howard-Hassmann, and Anthony P. Lombardo, *Reparations to Africa*, (Philadelphia: UPenn 2018), 103.
14 Howard-Hassmann and Lombardo, *Reparations to Africa*, 102.
15 Howard-Hassmann and Lombardo, *Reparations to Africa*, 102.
16 Howard-Hassmann and Lombardo, *Reparations to Africa*, 103.
one knows the actual numbers killed, and there was no extermination order [although] the crime did occur within the historic memory of the grandchildren and great grandchildren of the victims.”\textsuperscript{17} This, despite the atrocities occurring during the longest reigning Belgian king, Léopold Louis Philippe Marie Victor (King Leopold II), from whom the current monarch, Philippe Léopold Louis Marie descends.

Granted, there was some conflation of personal and public, including use of European soldiers in colonies—yet Belgium argues that it “is not legally responsible for his [Leopold II’s] actions.” North and east, the Nile waters treaties of 1902 and 1929 continue to haunt the nations at the source of the Nile. There are doubts over whether colonialism shifted resources from Africa: “colonialism was not sufficient to cause western development [but] colonialism did assist that development.”\textsuperscript{18} But even the apologists concede that poll tax and hut taxes drove forced labor from Indonesia to the Kenya Colony. Others argue that European development owed nothing to Africa, that colonies did not even ‘break even,’ and colonial powers should be thanked for bringing civilization, God, decrease in communal violence and slavery, and access to elements of ‘modernity’: education, jobs, government, new traditions, medicine and the like.

No one can credibly claim that pre-colonial African societies did not have challenges; yet colonialism often exacerbated them and imported new problems, such as property ownership. In many countries, three socioeconomic, racial and political classes emerged; Asians (Indians) often found their way into the colonies, business and second-class citizenship. At independence they had built thriving communities, but were also seen as collaborators and benefitting off Africans’ misery. In Uganda, a decade after independence, Amin expelled Asians, while in the early 2000s Zimbabwe, Mugabe repossessed illegally appropriated land. The dispossession Europeans had the presence to demand US$9 billion compensation, respect for the ‘rule of law’ and individual property rights. Tellingly, despite the veracity of the property ownership debacle and wealth gaps here and in South Africa, the dispossessed Europeans found support in the west, despite the admission of the evils of colonialism, and Nhembachena’s most interesting argument;

\textsuperscript{17}Howard-Hassmann and Lombardo, Reparations to Africa, 103.
\textsuperscript{18}Howard-Hassmann and Lombardo, Reparations to Africa, 104.
For colonialists to claim that they developed African land is to effectively claim that colonisation was good for Africans and that the indigenous people must pay for supposed developments emanating from being colonised. This is more like a rapist who claims that the victim benefitted from the rape and therefore she must pay compensation to the rapist.\(^1\)

In the 75-year post-colonial period, questions of land ownership and recompence linger. Colonial injustices remain unaddressed, genocides overlooked and the folly of haphazard states persists. European trepidation at independence was palpable; new majority African rule might avenge, \textit{a la Haiti}. The feared retribution did not occur. Colonialism produced some minimal benefits. Ethnic conflicts fanned by colonialism persist, irreconcilable with modern statehood. European domination extended to post-Colonial institutions, e.g., World Bank and IMF. After colonialism ran Africa into the ground, western nations now controlled major global economic and trade structures. After imposing backwardness and strife, Africa was blamed and ‘shown’ to be unable to govern itself.

\textbf{OAU, IGOs and Economic Development in the Early Years}

Economic development is both necessary and costly for any state. It requires developing human resources, a healthy workforce, infrastructure and related structures of production. However, “at independence, many African countries inherited huge amounts of foreign debt contracted by colonial administrations.”\(^2\) The price for the end of colonialism was shouldering significant future development burdens, being saddled with the kind of albatrosses that would literally bankrupt it. The twin challenges of OPEC’s 1973 oil embargo and devastation of commodity prices left Africa with bills, and no funding sources. Borrowing from the

\(^1\) Artwell Nhemachena, “Anticipating African Economic Futures—Or Is It Time to Look in the Rear-View Mirrors? Land Restitution, Unemployment and the Figure of the Posthuman.” In Tapiwa Victor Warikandwa, Artwell Nhemachena, Nkosinothando Mphofu and Howard Chitimira, Eds., \textit{Grid-Locked African Economic Sovereignty: Decolonising the Neo-Imperial Socio-Economic and Legal Force-Fields in the 21st Century} (Bamenda: Langaa RPCIG, 2019), 71.

\(^2\) Adebayo Adedeji, \textit{Towards a Dynamic African Economy: Selected Speeches and Lectures, 1975–1986} (Foreword by Abdou Diouf and Kenneth David Kaunda) (Totowa: Frank Cass, 1989), 551.
Bretton Woods Institutions was conditioned on economic programs such as the Structural Adjustment Programs and the Washington Consensus. Borrowing from partners and aid providers was predicated on specific programs, and insurmountable debts continued western control.\textsuperscript{21}

Africa soon found that independence was a paper tiger: with little understanding of the colonial conditions and levels of poverty necessitating government investments in social services, global bureaucrats and graduates of western education bought into free trade and liberalized markets; economic development theories that overlooked 75 years’ history permeated. Africans desired their own solutions: their collective desires, especially with development, were reflected in the OAU Charter; Article 2 of its preamble recognized Africa’s dire economic position. The charter proposed ‘harness[ing] natural and human resources’ so as to ‘achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa’ (1b) and harmonizing policies in areas, such as ‘economic cooperation’ (2b)\textsuperscript{22} and by establishing the Department of Economic Affairs,\textsuperscript{23} signaled economic development as a primary goal. OAU’s efforts did not always succeed; Congo’s 1963 and 2013 per capita GDP was almost the same (US$377) despite the intervening 50 years growth, foreign aid, extraction and sale of minerals. Granted, Mobutu Sese Seko allegedly stashed nearly US$30 billion in Switzerland.

The 1963 OAU Summit meeting reached consensus on resolutions on ‘Areas of Co-Operation and Economic Problems.’ A preparatory economic committee appointed to research common external tariffs, protection of emerging industries, stabilization of raw materials and commodity prices, restructuring global trade, floating national currencies, a Pan-African monetary zone, harmonization of country development plans and approval of the World Conference on Trade’s focus on issues of international trade. The OAU faced several regional issues including the role and expansion of residual colonial-era regional organizations.

\textsuperscript{21} Festus Eribo, “African Development and Innovation of Communication Technologies.” In Charles Okigbo and Festus Eribo, Eds., Development and Communication in Africa (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004).

\textsuperscript{22} African Union, “OAU Charter”, https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/7759-file-oau_charter_1963.pdf.

\textsuperscript{23} Owodunni Teriba, “Regional and Subregional Perspectives.” In Adebayo Adedeji, Patrick Bugembe and Owodunni Teriba, Eds., The Challenge of African Economic Recovery and Development (New York: Routledge, 2013).
For example, the French West Africa community used the French CFA franc, created in 1945, as common currency. After independence, its use continued even as CFA membership split into two.\textsuperscript{24}

Parallel to OAU’s formation, new ideas on economic development through RECs were coming online, and the 1960s saw many initial RECs formed. They differed: some had official start dates, charters, administrative structures and secretariats, funding mechanisms and physical spaces. Nations with ideological, historical and experiential histories and sympathies convened, including the Non-Aligned Movement.\textsuperscript{25} The Non-Aligned Movement “was neither officially established, nor, much like the G7 (much smaller in terms of membership), does it have a founding charter or official statutes.”\textsuperscript{26} It had no permanent secretariat until 1994. Nehru, Tito and Nasser expounded on the purpose of non-alignment “as active neutrality which did not keep quiet and passive in international politics, but strive to interfere and serve as mediators in the service of the UN Charter.”\textsuperscript{27} NAM held meetings infrequently but saw a steady increase in membership from 47 attendees of its first, official 1964 meeting in Cairo to 53 in its Lusaka meeting, the final tally rising to 120 members and 17 observer countries.\textsuperscript{28}

The second was the Group of 77 (or G77). It comprised of 77 nations considered part of the Third World. Of the founding 77 members, 33 (or 42 percent) were African nations. The G77 first convened on the sidelines of the first meeting of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, (UNCTAD). G77 was described as “a means for developing countries to promote their collective economic interests, to enhance their joint negotiating capacity on all major economic issues within the UN system, and to encourage economic and technical cooperation between these states.”\textsuperscript{29} UNCTAD and G77 were intricately

\textsuperscript{24}Teriba, “Regional and Subregional Perspectives”, 2013.

\textsuperscript{25}Jürgen Dinkel, \textit{The Non-Aligned Movement: Genesis, Organization and Politics (1927–1992)} (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

\textsuperscript{26}Dinkel, \textit{The Non-Aligned Movement}, 4.

\textsuperscript{27}Nataša Mišković, “Introduction.” In Nataša Mišković, Harald Fischer-Tiné and Nada Boskovska, Eds., \textit{The Non-Aligned Movement and the Cold War: Delhi—Bandung—Belgrade} (New York: Routledge, 2014), 7.

\textsuperscript{28}Dinkel, \textit{The Non-Aligned Movement}, 2019.

\textsuperscript{29}Jan Wouters, Cedric Ryngaert, Tom Ruys and Geert De Baere, \textit{International Law: A European Perspective} (New York: Hart, 2018).
connected; “the history of the Group of 77 (G77) is so intimately bound up with the history of [UNCTAD] that it is hardly possible to narrate the history of the one without also narrating the history of the other.”

UNCTAD is considered the actualization of G77’s economic goals; its agenda was closely linked with OAU efforts. The G77, now expanded to 135 members, regularly tasked the Nigerian and South African presidents to re/present the G77’s concerns at the G7/G8 meetings.

The New International Economic Order (NIEO) was founded in 1974 and was structured around the UN (NIEO membership closely tracked the G77). During the 1973 OPEC oil crisis, the OAU launched the Declaration on Cooperation, Development and Economic Independence; it was a precursor to the UN’s Sixth Special Session in Algiers in 1974 which launched NIEO. NIEO aimed for an “institutional framework that enables different nations of the world to work and grow together cooperatively; to achieve their maximum potentialities in economic objectives like development, trade, employment, eradication of poverty etc.; [an effort expressing] their demand for restructuring of international economic setup to reduce global inequality.” NIEO challenged an insular global system built on core-periphery dynamics. It sought to change domination of global political economy by the north, fostering “the acquisition of and development of a new set of answers for dealing with the new economic, political, social and cultural situations.”

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30 John Toye, “Assessing the G77: 50 Years After UNCTAD and 40 Years After the NIEO.” In Thomas G Weiss and Adriana Ethal Abdenur, Eds., Emerging Powers and the UN: What Kind of Development Partnership? (New York: Routledge, 2016), 11.

31 Chinedum Igbokwe, History Maker: The Sule Lamido Regime, Radical Populism, and Governance in Jigawa State, vol. 2 (Bloomington: Xlibris, 2017).

32 Monica Juma, Ed., Compendium of Key Documents Relating to Peace and Security in Africa (Pretoria: Pretoria University Law Press, 2006).

33 Guy Arnold, Ed., Guide to African Political and Economic Development (London: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 2001).

34 P. S. Narayan Prasad, “The Long and Arduous Road Towards a New International Economic Order.” In K. C. Reddy, M. Jagdeswara Rao and S. Chandrasekhar, Eds., The New International Economic Order Perspectives: The NIEO Perspectives (Towards a Global Concern) (New Delhi: Ashish, 1991), 7.

35 Mircea Malitza and Ana Maria Sandi, “The NIEO and the Learning Processes of Society.” In Jorge Lozoya and Haydee Birgin, Eds., Social and Cultural Issues of the New International Economic Order (New York: Pergamon, 1991), 45.
The fourth group was the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific States (ACP), founded in 1975. Beginning April 2020, after revision and adoption of the 2020 Georgetown Agreement, it became the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS). Its headquarters are in Brussels, Belgium, though none of its 48 sub-Saharan Africa, 16 Caribbean and 15 Pacific states are in Europe—although the ACP-EU trade cooperation and the EU’s HQ points to a potential explanation. ACP’s secretariat was convened 3 years after its founding. The charter, structures, agreements and protocols, all binding, were quickly and successively drafted, voted upon and entered into force. It was evident that African states would continue trading with Europe, sentiment captured by Yakubu Gowon “We must of necessity trade with Europe and the rest of the world. But we also want the world to know that it is fiction to speak of a free trade area between developed and developing countries.”

Nonetheless, if ACP-EU was part of global free trade requiring reciprocity envisioned by GATT, there were doubts. The Guyanese Foreign Minister rejected “the idea that ‘the talks should proceed on the concept of a free trade area.’” The apprehension was reasonable: economic conditions in the Caribbean and Pacific mirrored Africa’s. Still, formal negotiations to establish the ACP took place in Brussels in October 1973 and Wenike Briggs, Nigeria’s Trade Minister was appointed spokesman. The Lomé Convention (Lomé I) was signed in Lomé, the capital of Togo, in 1975. It was a binding ‘partnership,’ rather than the less favorable ‘association.’ The convention was “proclaimed as politically neutral, which permitted it to be opened up to Marxist countries such as Ethiopia, Angola, and Mozambique, as well as liberal capitalist economies like Cote d’Ivoire and Kenya.” It gave the appearance of equality between ‘partners.’

36 Kaye Whiteman, “A History of the ACP-EU Relationship: The Origins and Spirit of Lomé.” In Annita Montoute and Kudrat Virk, Eds., The ACP Group and the EU Development Partnership: Beyond the North-South Debate (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 38.

37 Whiteman, “A History of the ACP-EU Relationship”, 38.

38 Whiteman, “A History of the ACP-EU Relationship”, 40.
Membership in these institutions produced the occasional overlap in jurisdictions and terms. There were ambiguous terms and definitions, cross-purposes and complications. For example, the prohibition on dumping hazardous waste in, or accepting it from African countries to other African countries as a result of progressive Lomé Conventions meant that “Kenya (ACP) must prohibit waste imports from Egypt (non-ACP), what (sic) would contradict the OAU Bamako Convention permitting intra-African TMHW [Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes].” ACP-EU was plagued by “serious attempts to undermine its coherence from the European side” that included “a Franco-Belgian military intervention” as a result of the so-called Shaba affair in Katanga. Even economic interdependence couldn’t get in the way of European neo-colonialism.

The OAU and the African Economic Community

Efforts to achieve African continental economic cooperation greatly interested the Casablanca group. Now, in the 1970s and 1980s, the issue was revisited. In 1991 in Abuja, OAU members signed the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community (AEC). AEC was the result of global trends toward regional economic blocs, e.g., EAC, SACU, ECCAS and ECOWAS. The OAU had a “long-term plan to create a pan-African common market,” with anticipated net positive effects on trade, industrialization and economic integration. There were questions about benefits of trade, especially since most African economies were agrarian or services, such as tourism. This made the prospect of trade with Europe more useful than intra-African trade.

The 1980s were trying times; the economic shock from OPEC’s control of oil production, Structural Adjustment Program (SAPs) that

39 Barbara Kwiatkowska and Alfred H. A. Soons, “Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal: Emerging Global and Regional Regulation.” In A. C. Kiss Lammers, Ed., Hague Yearbook of International Law/Annuaire De LA Haye De Droit International, vol. 5 (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1992), 113.

40 Whiteman, “A History of the ACP-EU Relationship”, 40.

41 Whiteman, “A History of the ACP-EU Relationship”, 40.

42 Guy Arnold, Ed., Guide to African Political and Economic Development (London: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 2001).

43 David MacKenzie, A World Beyond Borders: An Introduction to the History of International Organizations (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Inc., 2010), 96.
drastically cut aid, and natural calamities—drought and hunger were widespread particularly due to the effects of El Niño and La Niña led to major reductions in government spending. Globally, the convergence of geopolitical changes showed the need for a more effective OAU. Besides OPEC’s ‘imperium,’ US and UK leadership (Ronald Reagan and UK’s Margaret Thatcher) saw government as the problem and did everything to shrink it, favoring market-driven economies, reduction in social welfare spending and government divesting itself of entrepreneurship. Soon, Bretton Woods Institutions adopted demands for market liberalization and free trade. African countries found themselves unable to borrow or procure aid. Structural Adjustment Programs and the Washington Consensus became the bane of most African countries. These changes provided impetus for the OAU to re-imagine itself, its purpose.

The journey to the AU (actualized by the Sirte Declaration, 2002) was long, winding and preceded by the AEC, (May 1994, Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community) adopted in June 1991. This capped off a 10-year desire to focus on economics and transform the OAU into the AU. The AU’s goal was “accelerating the continent’s socio-political and economic development. Hence, the theme […] being ‘Peace, Development and Prosperity: The African Century.” The AU intended to see the African continent “play[s] its proper role in the global economic and international negotiations.” It was cognizant of slow progress, mounting challenges to economic growth, persistence of poverty, deleterious effects of misuse of foreign aid and loans by such lenders as the IMF, World Bank and the so-called Paris Club of Donors.

44 Karen Merill, “Oil.” In Akiya Iriye and Pierre-Yves Saunier, Eds., The Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History: From the mid-19th century to the present day (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

45 Diana E. Kawenda, Legal reception and regional economic integration in Southern Africa (Hamburg: Anchor, 2017).

46 Alan Matthews, Regional Integration and Food Security in Developing Countries (Rome: FAO, 2003).

47 Kwamina Panford, “The Transition from the Organization of African Unity to the African Union.” In Kwadwo Konadu-Agyemang and Martin Kwamina Panford, Eds., Africa’s Development in the Twenty-first Century: Pertinent Socio-economic and Development Issues (Burlington: Ashgate, 2006), 69.

48 Steven C. Roach, Martin Griffiths and Terry O’Callaghan, International Relations: The Key Concepts (New York: Routledge, 2014), 4.
There was growing recognition of increasing restlessness as elites accrued more wealth, poverty increased and wealth gaps rose.

The OAU and AU address(ed) the continent’s foreign (external) debt; its impact on Africa and underdevelopment is more impactful than perhaps any other issue. The advocacy is loud: NEPAD has made it a key issue and recurs at O/AUs Ministerial and summit meetings. “Africa is unable to point to any significant growth rate or satisfactory index of general well-being”\(^49\) in part due to its other obligations, primarily debt. African countries will likely never repay the debts and even addressing it usurps inordinate resources. Direct debt forgiveness lobbying efforts have targeted different stakeholders “ranging from the UN to the IMF, World Bank,”\(^50\) and the ‘Cairo Agenda for Action.’ The lack of progress during colonialism leads to suspicion that Europe and the west might root for failure to justify the ‘challenges’ they experienced. Some countries do defy ‘expected outcomes’: in Cape Verde, “more was achieved in half a dozen years of independence than in four centuries of colonial rule.”\(^51\) Botswana is another example of Africa’s success story.

\textbf{OAU and the UN: Commissions, Funds and Cooperation}

The UN has been Africa’s key economic development partner through principal organs, programs, regional activities and targeted actions. The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has been focused on Africa’s economic development. Although the UN’s goal was to ‘end the scourge of war,’ Global South nations oriented the UN toward tackling economic growth and poverty issues. By 1950, India’s population was \(~400\) million and China’s \(~500\) million. Both were considered Third World Countries (TWC). Afield, Africa’s population was \(~200\) million. That a principal UN organ (ECOSOC) was dedicated to economic development was forward-thinking; in April 1958, ECOSOC’s Resolution 671A (XXV) was adopted, establishing the Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). UNECA owed its existence to advocacy by Africa’s independent countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Libya, Morocco, Sudan,

\(^49\) Crawford Young, \textit{The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective} (New Haven, CT: Yale, 1994), 4.

\(^50\) Vijay S. Makhan, \textit{Economic Recovery in Africa: The Paradox of Financial Flows} (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 211.

\(^51\) Basil Davidson, \textit{Modern Africa: A Social and Political History}, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 1983), 238.
Tunisia and the UAR and ironically, the UK. Resolution 671A (XXV) articulated UNECA’s goals as, to “participate in measures for facilitating concerted action for economic development in Africa,” study economic and technical issues, sharing results and advisory functions.\textsuperscript{52} UNECA would collaborate with supportive bodies and functions, limit membership to continental Africa, Madagascar and African islands. On account of their “territorial responsibilities in Africa,”\textsuperscript{53} Belgium, France, Italy, Portugal, Spain and the UK were included.

UNECA admitted ‘associate members’ without voting privileges; they included Gambia, the Federation of Nigeria, Kenya, Zanzibar, Sierra Leone, (Italian-controlled) Somaliland, Tanganyika and Uganda. UN Specialized Agencies representatives and observers could also attend meetings without voting privileges. UNECA liaised with NGOs, adopted rules and procedures could conduct periodic self-evaluations, determine meeting frequency, annual reporting, headquarters (Ethiopia) and the (5) and location of sub-regional offices. Its Executive was appointed by the UN Secretary General, and financing was from the UN Budget. UNECA continues to focus on economic and social development, fostering intra-regional integration and promoting cooperation for Africa’s development.\textsuperscript{54} All 54 sovereign African nations are members. In 1963, it secured a ‘permanent cooperation’ agreement with the OAU, facilitated by U Thant, then UN Sec. Gen.

UNECA’s Addis Ababa location meant AU ministerial and summit meetings could coordinate together with the ADB, increasing prospects for cooperation.\textsuperscript{55} The 1971 ECA Conference of Ministers’ 1st meeting produced ‘Africa’s Strategy for Development in the 1970s.’ The OAU, ECA and ADB later convened the ‘African Ministerial Conference of

\textsuperscript{52} ECOSOC, \textit{United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (1958–10)}. TOR of the Economic Commission for Africa: resolution 671 A (XXV) adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its 1017th Meeting held on 29th April 1958 and amended by the council at its twenty sixth session. Addis Ababa. UNECA. http://hdl.handle.net/10855/16002.

\textsuperscript{53} United Nations, “Economic and Social Council; United Nations. Economic Commission for Africa (1958–10)”, 3.

\textsuperscript{54} United Nations, “Overview,” United Nations Commission for Africa. https://www.uneca.org/pages/overview.

\textsuperscript{55} Rita Kiki Edozie and Keith Gottschalk, \textit{The African Union’s Africa: New Pan-African Initiatives in Global Governance} (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2014).
Trade, Development and Monetary Problems resulting in the ‘Addis Ababa Declaration of 1973.’ Today, UNECA focuses on two ‘pillars’: ‘promoting regional integration in support of the African Union and its priorities,’ and ‘meeting Africa’s special needs and emerging global challenges.’ It focuses on five thematic areas: regional integration, trade and infrastructure development, meeting the MDGs/SDGs, poverty reduction, growth, sustainable development and gender equity, good governance and participation, ICT, Science and Technology, evidence-based science, evaluation, monitoring, statistics and statistical development, while utilizing member states’ capacities, partnerships, technical assistance, communication and the sharing of best practices. It also supports ‘sub-regional activities,’ primarily through Africa’s eight RECs: AMU, SADC, COMESA, EAC, IGAD, ECOWAS, CEMAC, ECCAS and UEMOA.

**OAU and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**

UNDP is one of the most consequential UN agencies working in 177 countries today. It emerged from an unusual advocate; in 1949, Harry Truman proposed a ‘Point Four’ agenda for a global assistance program to ensure, jointly and separately through the UN, the provision of “technical assistance for economic development.” Truman asked Congress in 1949 to authorize “an expanded programme of technical assistance for such [underdeveloped areas of the world] and an experimental programme for encouraging the outflow of private investment beneficial to their economic development.” Following talks including with the Organization of American States (OAS), “in 1950, at the initiative of the United States, the UN General Assembly established the Expanded Program of Technical Assistance (EPTA) to supplement and

56 Teriba, “Regional and Subregional Perspectives”, 2004.
57 UNECA, “About ECA—Overview of the ECA.” [http://www.uneca.org/about_eca/overview_of_eca.htm](http://www.uneca.org/about_eca/overview_of_eca.htm).
58 UNECA, “About ECA”, n.d.
59 Digambar Bhouraskar, *United Nations Development Aid: A Study in History and Politics* (Delhi: AF Inc., 2007), 41.
60 (Bhouraskar, “United Nations Development Aid”, 2007, 41.)
expand the work of the growing number of agencies focused on development.”61 Funding came from the US (~60%) and voluntary member states’ contributions. EPTA was present everywhere: it gave food assistance in Palestine, Europe and other countries. UN agencies stepped in; for example, FAO pursued food security in Palestine.62 However UN agencies, “which are identified as being of a technical assistance in nature,”63 e.g., the ILO, UNESCO, WHO and IAEA, saw a lot of duplication.

In 1949 and through the 1950s, establishment of a UN fund for economic development gained increasing support. Given global polarization, it would provide the resources needed by developing countries with no strings attached, work independently and withstand influence and manipulation. One proposal was a Special United Nation Fund for Economic Development (SUNFED). Developed countries were opposed, considering it duplication of World Bank’s work.64 SUNFED would “provide resources for nonliquidating projects that could not meet World Bank loan criteria.”65 As proposed, SUNFED would be a “large scale UN capital aid fund,”66 offering developing countries control and use of procured resources.67 Western countries were unconvinced of SUNFED’s necessity. In 1957, the US Senate was advised that “the Special United Nations Fund is parallel in every respect with the United Nations program

61 Robert F. Gorman, “United Nations Development Program.” In Thomas M. Leonard, Ed., Encyclopedia of the Developing World, Volume 1, A-E Index (New York: Routledge, 2006), 1606.
62 Amy L. S. Staples, The Birth of Development: How the World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization, and World Health Organization Changed the World, 1945–1965 (Kent, OH: The Kent State University, 2006).
63 US Department of State, Intelligence Report, Issue 8228 (March 22, 1960) (Washington, DC: DOS-BIR, 1960), 7.
64 Francis Adams, The United Nations in Latin America: Aiding Development (New York: Routledge, 2010).
65 Stephen D. Krasner, Structural Conflict: The Third World Against Global Liberalism (Berkeley: UC Press, 1985), 185.
66 Johan Kaufmann, The Diplomacy of International Relations: Selected Writings (Hague: Kluwer, 1998), 103.
67 Krasner, Structural Conflict, 1985.
of technical assistance”68; the US position thus objected to the formation of SUNFED.69

The United Nations Special Fund (UNSF, 1959)70 was the compromise outcome. It was authorized by UNGA’s Resolution 1240(XIII).71 UNSF had modest ambition and funding priorities, limited to “training, research and the formulation of national development plans.”72 UNSF also did not administer funds—this was channeled through other UN agencies, an outcome far from what SUNFED supporters envisioned. US opposition to SUNFED was overt and its vow not to contribute to the fund put SUNFED’s viability in question.73 Outside these power plays, Africa’s efforts to illuminate the urgency of development got a boost: three years later, UNSF and EPTA merged. In November 1965, the UN Development Programme (UNDP), under the UN’s Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), was born.74

Since its 1965 inception, the UNDP has grown in size and scope. It has five Regional Bureaux: Latin America & Caribbean, Arab States, Asia Pacific, Europe and CIS and Africa. Predictably, the Africa Bureau is headquartered in Addis Ababa, alongside the UN Office for South-South Cooperation. The UNDP became—and continues to be—critical in promoting sustainable development, eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities, foster inclusion, and develop capacity, policies and partnerships.75 Successes include increasing life expectancy and literacy rates (43% to 60% in 1985), increased income, halving child mortality rates and continues the pursuit of broad socioeconomic programs to reduce poverty, improve

68 US Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and Senate Committee on Armed Services, vol. 2 (DC: GPO, 1957), 708.
69 United States Congress, Congressional Record: Proceedings and Debates of the 84th Congress, Second Session, Volume 102, Part 6, April 27 1956 to May 21, 1956 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1956).
70 Jussi M. Hanhimäki, The United Nations: A Very Short Introduction, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
71 Üner Kirdar, Structure of United Nations Economic-Aid to Underdeveloped Countries (Dordrecht: Springer, 1966).
72 Krasner, Structural Conflict, 1985, 116.
73 Kirdar, Structure of United Nations Economic-Aid, 1966.
74 Krasner, Structural Conflict, 1985.
75 Nicholas A. Ashford and Ralph P Hall, Technology, Globalization, and Sustainable Development: Transforming the Industrial State (New York: Routledge, 2019).
governance, manage crises, improve resilience, be good environmental stewards, use clean and renewable energy and achieve gender empowerment and equality.\textsuperscript{76}

In 1990, the UNDP commissioned the Human Development Report (HDR). It defined development as “a process of enlarging peoples’ choices,”\textsuperscript{77} especially life expectancy where Africa’s lags by 10 years.\textsuperscript{78} The UNDP helped draft and implement the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000. These have often been critiqued as elitist foreign to those they target.\textsuperscript{79} In 2015, the MDGs sunset; the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) became the NKOTB, with a proposed 2030 sunset. The UNDP coordinates, cooperates and works closely the O/AU, but also in bilateral and multilateral forums, undergirded by a 1964 UN resolution by proclamation, to cooperate with the OAU, and mutual, reciprocal collaboration with UN’s agencies.\textsuperscript{80} The overlap of O/AU membership and the UN makes cooperation necessary, since “UN technical assistance to Africa is channeled through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).”\textsuperscript{81}

\section*{O/AU and Global Trade Regimes: From GATT to WTO}

Trade and development are co-dependent and rely on economic development, evident in Modernization Theory. UNDP and GATT (WTO, 1995) have regularly worked with O/AU members to utilize trade and technical expertise in their own countries and through UN-supported institutions and programs. The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was ratified in 1947 and entered into force in 1948. GATT was

\textsuperscript{76}Hanhimäki, \textit{The United Nations}, 2015.

\textsuperscript{77}UNDP, \textit{Human Development Report 1990} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 10.

\textsuperscript{78}Frances Stewart, Gustav Ranis and Emma Samman, \textit{Advancing Human Development: Theory and Practice} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

\textsuperscript{79}Stephen Browne, \textit{Sustainable Development Goals and UN Goal-Setting} (New York: Routledge, 2017).

\textsuperscript{80}Wellington Winter Nyangoni, \textit{Africa in the United Nations System} (Rutherford: Associated University Presses, 1985).

\textsuperscript{81}Edmond Kwam Kouassi, “Africa and the United Nations since 1945.” In Christophe Wondji and Ali A. Mazrui, Eds., \textit{Generale History of Africa: Africa since 1935} (Paris: UNESCO, 1993), 895.
always ‘provisional,’ the ultimate goal to form the International Trade Organization (ITO). The Havana Charter for the International Trade Organisation (ITO) drawn up in 1948–9. 82 It served major economies seeking to expand markets, increase trade volumes, and reduce tariffs. Both GATT and ITO objectives were taxing: as states joined GATT, select tariffs on external goods rose, barriers and protectionism persisted.

GATT’s goal was to increase trade and cooperation, to improve citizens’ welfare, prosper, gain peace and stability and reduce conflict potential arising from labor, markets and resource competition. 83 “GATT’s purpose is to promote liberal trade (trade as free as possible) as a means to provide economic growth” 84 while reducing tariffs and protectionist non-tariff barriers (NTBs). Protecting vulnerable industries was allowed, but any MFN status given to one member should be extended to all GATT members. 85 Soon, communist, developing and newly independent countries were invited to join GATT. 86 It quickly became clear that GATT’s rule-making had not factored their participation, that reciprocity and free trade required opening their markets and competing against their recent colonizers 87 given that GATT’s 23 founding members were all developed countries, besides Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. GATT was simply continued western dominance. “With the IMF and World Bank, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) became the third pillar of the liberal international economic order.” 88 The O/AU soon conceded, stating that “the African Union (AU) is made up of its

82 Adam Szirmai, The Dynamics of Socio-Economic Development: An Introduction (Cambridge: Cambridge, 2005).
83 Francine McKenzie, GATT and Global Order in the Postwar Era, Cambridge (Cambridge University Press, 2020).
84 U.S. Congress’ Office of Technology Assessment, Trade and Environment: Conflicts and Opportunities, OTA-BP-ITE-94 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992), 22.
85 Robert E. Hudec, Developing Countries in the GATT Legal System (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
86 McKenzie, GATT and Global Order, 2020.
87 John Croome, Reshaping the World Trading System: A History of the Uruguay Round (The Hague: Kluwer, 1988).
88 Adam Szirmai, The Dynamics of Socio-Economic Development: An Introduction (Cambridge: Cambridge, 2005), 527.
African regional cooperation efforts continued, although RECs, by definition a form of MFN, threatened to contravene GATT rules. RECs and proposed customs unions potentially violated GATT’s rules, although were exceptions such as “article 24, which allows for customs unions and free trade areas” in developing and LDC countries. GATT-OAU relations faced more practical issues: South Africa and Rhodesia were founder members and for African states, that was a red line. After the British severed ties with Rhodesia and notified GATT, Rhodesia remained in GATT. In response, OAU members used a bevy of economic tools to right the wrong: pressure, embargoes, shaming, denial of over-flight, landing and docking rights, and trade boycotts against countries funding or trading with colonial powers, including Israel, South Africa and Portugal. Although GATT preceded the AU, for practical and legitimacy reasons, Africa could not be ignored; it was necessary to keep OAU in GATT. The OAU was even urged to consider whether Namibian goods, diverted from or produced in South Africa, could be subjected to boycotts and exclusion from GATT rules.

As GATT prepared to transition into the WTO, it helped African countries to negotiate better particularly through the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) and the Washington Consensus, given the tanking of HDI indices. The Joint Integrated Technical Assistance Programme (JITAP) was a GATT facility for OAU members to help build capacity (institutional, human, technical) to negotiate better trade deals before the Uruguay Round of Agreements. Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Tunisia and Uganda were the first 8 JITAP

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89 Fatima Haram Acyl, “African Union Priorities at the WTO.” In Patrick Low, Chiedu Osakwe and Maika Oshikawa, Eds., African Perspectives on Trade and the WTO: Domestic Reforms, Structural Transformation and Global Economic Integration (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 15.

90 James J. Hentz, South Africa and the Logic of Regional Cooperation (Bloomington: IUP, 2005), 132.

91 The Commonwealth, Commonwealth Survey, Volume II (London: Central Office of Information, 1965).

92 United Nations, The UN-OAU Conference on Southern Africa, Oslo, 9–14 April, 1973: Papers and Documents (Uppsala: Nordiska afrikainstitutet, 1973).

93 David F. Luke, “Trade-Related Capacity Building for Enhanced African Participation in the Global Economy.” In Bernard M. Hoekman, Aaditya Mattoo and Philip English,
beneficiaries that improved their positions, mitigated WTO effects and maximized export goods capacity.\textsuperscript{94} African countries highlighted harms arising from free trade, difficulty competing with stable economies, protections from dumping and competition against SMEs. WTO’s protections often fell short of RTAs’ and RECs’ provisions services, labor mobility, investments, competition and facilitating trade.\textsuperscript{95} OAU’s affiliated RECs argued for flexibility to reach agreements beneficial to their members given possible tariff reductions and removal of barriers (e.g., SACU). If WTO rules were enforced, these benefits could be claimed by developed WTO members.

Even with JITAP facilities, transition from GATT to WTO, was not smooth; it hid deep discontent that culminated in riots 1999 WTO Seattle Round of negotiations. Skewed world trade benefits favoring the west and the influence of Transnational/Multinational Companies (MNCs/TNCs) while railing against government subsidies elsewhere are rife. A hypothetical one-country-one-vote is used to reach decisions at WTO; most are reached by consensus, though one director general referred to it as ‘consensus by exhaustion.’\textsuperscript{96} Agricultural production has been one area of great African countries’ dissatisfaction given they are mainly agrarian. Per Badejo:

rich countries […] tell African countries they cannot subsidize their farmers or industries, but the rich countries themselves, including those in Europe and the United States … African trade ministers have opposed the U.S. payments of subsidies to American cotton farmers, lowering the world price of cotton and driving African cotton farmers out of business.\textsuperscript{97}

Rumor holds that French cows are subsidized at €3 per day; but the irony is aptly captured in other areas. “The EU subsidizes sugar-beet

\textsuperscript{94}Supachai Panitchpakdi, Statement by Mr. Supachai Panitchpakdi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD, JITAP event at the 6th WTO Ministerial Conference, Hong Kong, China, December 14, 2005.

\textsuperscript{95}OECD, \textit{Regionalism and the Multilateral Trading System} (Paris: OECD, 2003).

\textsuperscript{96}Tamar Gutner, \textit{International Organizations in World Politics} (Thousand Oaks: CQ Press, 2017).

\textsuperscript{97}Diedre L. Badejo, \textit{Global Organizations: The African Union} (New York: Chelsea House, 2008), 79.
farmers, even though it would be cheaper to make sugar from African sugarcane." The issues that Africa objects to are myriad, but they are also especially basic, including possible loss of preferential trade through the 1999 AGOA act, the EU-ACP Lomé Convention and Cotonou Agreement, and that they are essentially running a race with hands tied behind their back given colonial experiences. Further, “the GATT/WTO has been seen as a status quo institution, acting on behalf of transnational business and their governments [...] as potential or actual agents of a neo-colonialist project aimed at exploiting their resources without adequate compensation.”

African arguments and objections run into existing rules built into GATT/WTO; in the 1950s, France demanded special (preferential) treatment for its African colonies while the Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) by the European Community, first applied to Africa, was a key component of the EU-ACP.

African countries have disadvantages galore: Bretton Woods Institutions are controlled by OECD nations, also GATT/WTO founders. Apprehending the benefits and exemptions built into GATT that required JITAP assistance to even negotiations, OAU members had to borrow from IMF/World Bank, allowing them to build conditionalities favoring them and forcing reforms through SAPs, Washington Consensus, free trade, market liberalization, removal of tariffs and government divestment even with new corrective programs, e.g., the Poverty Reduction Strategy. OAU/AU did build bigger coalitions: the G90 brings together AU, LDCs and ACP states to advocate for developing and LDC concerns at talks, e.g., the 2001 Doha Round which ultimately aborted.

2020 ushered in COVID-19; its effect on global trade and economies is unknown. Most may revert to meeting Maslow’s physiological needs

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98 Badejo, *Global Organizations*, 79.
99 Sherry S Marcellin, *The Political Economy of Pharmaceutical Patents: US Sectional Interests and the African group at the WTO* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), 128.
100 Daniela Sicurelli, *The European Union’s Africa Policies: Norms, Interests and Impact* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010).
101 Said Adejumobi, “The African Experience of Popular Participation in Development.” In Said Adejumobi and Adebayo Olukoshi, Eds., *The African Union and New Strategies for Development in Africa* (Amherst: Cambria, 2008).
102 GAO. *World Trade Organization: Limited Progress at Hong Kong Ministerial Clouds Prospects for Doha Agreement* (Washington, DC: GAO, 2006).
(food, shelter, clothing, reproduction) and then reconfigure the life we know anew. Long into the pandemic, COVID-19 has ruined the global economy worse than the 2008–2009 global recession, 1997 Thai Crisis, World War II, perhaps even the Great Depression. Countries may recover and exceed pre-pandemic levels, powered by a world weary of no-contact, by globalization and interdependence. COVID-19 has elicited cooperation in vaccine research (and likely vaccine nationalism) and might lead to coordinated disease surveillance, perhaps even increase economic cooperation to recover quickly. It may drive new protectionism and tariffs as countries seek to protect local industries’ recovery. However, it pans out, COVID-19 will have long-term impacts. Because AU members mirrored the shut-downs down to stop transmission, weaker economies may require more time to recover. Conversely, given Africa’s 3% share of world trade and 4.98%, or US$6.6 trillion of the US$128.7 trillion GNP PPP, lower global presence may prove a blessing in disguise.

After RECs and OAU/AU Comes Beast Mode: AfCFTA

As a continental and foreign policy achievement, the nascent Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) appears to be the achievement, after 50 years, of one of OAU’s founding goals: a free-trade continental area with political federation ambitions. AfCFTA came into being in Kigali, Rwanda, in 2018. COVID-19 outbreak did AfCFTA no favors, halting global interactions and slowing trade at a near standstill. AfCFTA is less about AU foreign policy than it is ‘African domestic policy,’ but given the challenges of global free trade, RECs policies and MFNs, one anticipates furious negotiations to resolve issues arising in the future. For the 55 African countries, a ~1.4 billion population, a US$2.5 trillion (per The Economist, US$3.4) or US$6 trillion GNP, PPP economy and especially the participation of major African economies, inking AfCFTA was notable, COVID-19 notwithstanding. Rwanda, the site of this signing, was notable considering that 25 years before, the 1994 genocide was raging; despite many conflicts in Africa, Rwanda portends the possibilities available in all of Africa.

Initially, 44 countries signed the AfCFTA agreement. Others signed the Kigali Accord rather than the agreement while Nigeria and South Africa, opting to stay out at first; this initial fence-sitting almost robed the agreement of one of its most significant stamps of approval. If Africa’s leading economies were not on board, what did that bode for
AfCFTA? Ratification by the minimum required (22) countries took place in July 2018 and AfCFTA was officially running. UNECA predicted that by 2020, AfCFTA would increase intra-African trade by more than 50 percent. This, however, was before the great destroyer that is COVID-19.\textsuperscript{103} When South Africa and Nigeria signed on in July 2019, major African economies were now on board.\textsuperscript{104}

AfCFTA and the Action Plan for Boosting Intra-African Trade propose tariff removal on 90 percent of goods traded, free access to goods, services and commodities, create a single, liberalized market, remove restrictions on capital and people, establish a customs union, ensure sustainable growth and gender equality, increase global competitiveness, achieve industrial, agricultural development and food security and resolve dual REC membership issues.\textsuperscript{105} The latter is critical: as Nigeria signed onto AfCFTA, Muhammadu Buhari explained non-participation in the ECOWAS-EU Economic Partnership Agreement, arguing that “our industries cannot compete with the more efficient and highly technologically driven industries in Europe.”\textsuperscript{106}

AfCFTA aims to “provide momentum towards the consolidation of regional economic communities and the Tripartite Free Trade Agreement, with more communities having to align themselves to the provisions and obligations in the […] AfCFTA agreement.”\textsuperscript{107} Activities, practices, policies, and protectionist trends that dampen intra-Africa trade by ~6 percent, including tariffs non-tariff barriers, will diminish. AfCFTA’s impact on governance, decreasing corruption, dumping and diversion of goods is expected to be positive.

\textsuperscript{103} Kingsley Ighobor, “Africa Set for a Massive Free Trade Area,” Africa Renewal Magazine—UN Blogs (August–November, 2018). https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/august-november-2018/africa-set-massive-free-trade-area.

\textsuperscript{104} Kim Cloete, “Africa’s New Free Trade Area Is Promising, Yet Full of Hurdles”, World Economic Forum on Africa (September 6, 2019). https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/09/africa-just-launched-the-world-s-largest-free-trade-area/.

\textsuperscript{105} African Union, “Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area”, The African Union. https://www.tralac.org/documents/resources/cfta/1963-agreement-establishing-the-africa-continental-free-trade-area-consolidated-text/.

\textsuperscript{106} Ighobor, “Africa Set for a Massive Free Trade Area”, 2018.

\textsuperscript{107} United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Economic Development in Africa Report 2019: Made in Africa Rules of Origin for Enhanced Intra-African Trade (Geneva: United Nations, 2019), 36.
**AEC or US-Africa: The RECs Highway**

Kwame Nkrumah’s vision of a United States of Africa decades ahead of realities has prospects of achievement through RECs. Fostering cooperation between the Maasai of Kenya/Tanzania, the Somali in Kenya/Somalia/Ethiopia and the Luo of Kenya/Acholi of Uganda evoke greater prospects for cooperation than those across the continent. Uniting Africa across huge distances is more feasible through RECs rather than continental apparatus. As the OAU transitioned into AU, it was inevitable that there was “established seven (later eight) Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to help coordinate the economic and monetary cooperation and integration of African states.”¹⁰⁸ Some of the pillars just required strengthening, others were more advanced. ECOWAS was pursuing a monetary union, stymied by Francophone vs. Anglophone contests and suspicions.

Even in RECs with greater harmony, members regularly undermine progress. Tanzania is often accused of slow-walking the integration efforts of EAC II members, fearing domination by the more ‘capitalist’ members of the bloc. Some integration efforts are considered antithetical to *ujamaa* philosophical traditions. In West Africa, CFA Franc members continued use of the CFA even as ECOWAS promulgated the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) in 1994. ECOWAS now had two monetary zones. The West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ), comprising of non-CFA/non-WAEMU members (Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Guinea), was formed post-Accra Declaration in 1999, committing to integrating the monetary union with its ‘rival’ by 2004,¹⁰⁹ and to establish the Eco. In 2020, the tiff between the WAMZ and WAEMU became public; WAEMU moved to rebrand the CFA into the Eco rather than fold into a common monetary union.

RECs, AU pillars, face a delicate (im)balance of regional, continental and residual colonial influences. ECOWAS, more than any other REC, suffers inordinately. The extent to which France influences former African

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¹⁰⁸ Terry M. Mays, *Historical Dictionary of International Organizations in Africa and the Middle East* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 3.

¹⁰⁹ Paul R. Masson and Catherine A. Pattillo, *Monetary Union in West Africa: An Agency of Restraint for Fiscal Policies*, IMF Working Paper, WP/01/34 (Washington, DC: IMF, 2001).
colonies evokes Francophone subservience is staggering, making English-speaking ECOWAS members chafe. Francophone countries “agree[d] with France to rename the CFA franc currency the eco”\textsuperscript{110} sixty years into independence. With regard to the CFA-Eco debacle, the “Central Bank of West African States will no longer be required to keep 50 percent of its foreign reserves in the French Treasury”; in addition, “there will also no longer be a French representative on the West African central bank’s board.” Renaming versus integrating WAMZ and WAEMU monetary union threatens to derail ECOWAS’ next logical accomplishment.

There are many areas of collaboration, but also of ideological conflict. The WAEMU-France romance is a barrier to strengthening ECOWAS, while Tanzania’s evident reluctance to commit to greater integration points to other issues. Such disagreements are not unique to Africa; the Maastricht Treaty establishing the Euro/zone led to heated debates and defections. Achieving pre-monetary union baselines can be challenging. For West Africa, they include reducing budget deficits to below 4 percent of GDP, keeping inflation rate less than 5 percent, holding reserves equal to 5 months of GDP, keeping Central Bank advances to under 10 percent of tax revenues and other governance related issues\textsuperscript{111} that would harm economic development, reduce FDI and cause instability to spill over to the adjacent countries.\textsuperscript{112} Other issues affecting REC integration and development of monetary unions across Africa include political instability (seen in a recent Mali coup d’état), ethnic conflict (South Sudan), state intervention (Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda military activities in Somalia), multiple memberships and duplication of administrative structures, meeting financial obligations, etc. Nonetheless, RECs are changing debates around trade, security and other key global issues

\textsuperscript{110}Madden Foresight Africa launch, “Africa in Focus”, The Brookings Institution, January 18, 2020. \url{https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2020/01/18/africa-in-the-news-waemus-eco-implementation-sahel-security-update-and-foresight-africa-launch/}.

\textsuperscript{111}Masson, and Pattillo, \textit{Monetary Union in West Africa}, 2001.

\textsuperscript{112}IMF, \textit{West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU): Recent Economic Developments and Regional Policy Issues; and Public Information Notice on the Executive Board Discussion} (Washington, DC: IMF, 2003).
and functioning as envisioned by neoliberal institutionalist theory, holding members accountable and in instances, changing behavior.\textsuperscript{113}

\textit{Africa’s Economies, Trade Regimes, RECs and the Future}

Africa’s fortunes have been historically tied to and influenced by relations with other countries and regions and by economic issues, including colonization for resources. After independence, improving citizens’ welfare relied partly on trade. They followed different paths, often making decidedly unsustainable choices such as Kenya’s attempt to manufacture cars. Many have not broken the agrarian basis of their economies and continue to be dependent on the Global North. More than this, global systems were designed without Africa’s participation or input, and most of the last half century has been spent trying to change debate, rules and outcomes through IGOs, RECs, unilateral and bilateral compacts. Simultaneously, they have formed RECs and most recently, AfCFTA, a step toward economic and political federation of Africa.

African countries have also been adept at organizing, bloc voting and utilizing new and old institutions to force changes to global economic arrangements, even as the World Bank, IMF and GATT/WTO were dominated by western countries. Programs such as SUNFED and UNDP, the New International Economic Order (NIEO) and the use of ECOSOC have ensured that Africa continues to advocate for changes in global (economic) order. The development of African Regional Economic Communities (RECs) now recognized as more plausible paths toward eventual continental unity through regionalism, and AEC/AU/UNECA African integration pillars was another (not necessarily) original or innovative idea, but one that has had useful outcomes from constraining war, to increasing intra-African trade, to allowing for greater cooperation and solutions to African problems in an African way.

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