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# O C I S C A

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT  
THROUGH A  
UNIVERSAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

A Practical Agenda

by Emmanuel Yenshu

ORSTOM

MINREST



Observatoire du Changement et de l'Innovation Sociale au Cameroun  
Observatory of Change and Innovation in the Societies of Cameroon

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**By Emmanuel Yenshu**

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**Observatory of Change and Innovation in the Societies of Cameroon**

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## Abstract

The development enterprise has undergone a lot of revision. Although the imperatives and concerns have remained the same, the approaches at conceptualizing the paradigms have been shifting. Our concern here is to show that the state-centered, top-down or centre-down approach has been a failure. The enthusiasm with state planning and state capitalism as the panacea in a context characterized by lack of private capital has been proved inadequate. The inadequacy of this paradigm has coincided with the defeat of international socialism or better still transnational communism. This has resulted in a situation characterized by capitalist triumphalism. While recognizing the essential role capital should play the argument is that the essential problems of inequality and poverty inherent in accumulative capitalism remain. The issue then is how can we improve on production and human welfare without creating poverty in the process. The proposed answer is an initiative in which the start off process of rational development is empowering small producers through the promotion of small autonomous production units open to all. It is a solution to the capital obstacle which prompted the state based model. This universal development initiative would require a reorientation of the role of the actors viz. the state, economic institutions and private sector.

*Keywords* : Development, State, Capitalism, Social, Human Development, Collectivism, Universal, Power, Capital, Transnational, Independence.

## Résumé

Les pratiques de développement ont connues de nombreuses révisions. Bienque les contraintes et les questions soulevées soient restées les mêmes, la manière de conceptualiser les modes de pensée a changé. Notre souci ici est de montrer que l'approche basée sur la centralisation, la redistribution à partir du sommet ou du centre a été un échec. L'enthousiasme pour la planification et le capitalisme d'État, en tant que panacée dans un contexte caractérisé par le manque de capitaux privés s'est avéré inadapté. L'inadéquation de ce paradigme a coïncidé avec l'échec du socialisme international, ou mieux du communisme international. Ceci c'est traduit par le triomphe du capitalisme. Tout en reconnaissant le rôle essentiel que se doit de jouer le capital, il faut admettre que les questions essentielles d'inégalité et de pauvreté inhérentes à l'accumulation capitaliste demeurent. Le problème est donc de savoir comment accroître la production et le bien-être social sans générer, dans le même temps, de la pauvreté. La réponse proposée donne lieu à une initiative dans laquelle l'amorce d'un développement rationnel est basé sur la responsabilisation des petits producteurs, grâce à la promotion de petites unités de production autonomes ouvertes à tous. Ceci apparait comme une solution au manque de capital qui a favorisé le modèle de développement étatique. Cette initiative de développement généralisé demandera une réorientation du rôle des acteurs vis à vis de l'État, des institutions économiques et du secteur privé.

*Mots-clés* : Développement, État, Capitalisme, Social, Développement humain, Collectivisme, Universel, Responsabilité, Capital, International, Indépendance.

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## Preface

The Cahiers of Ocisca is a regular series of working papers which presents the results of the surveys and studies undertaken by the Ocisca Program (Observatory of Change and Innovation in the Societies of Cameroun). All topics are related to the reaction and behavior of the various economic actors in the current context of economic crisis and structural adjustment. The research work on various issues of development such as the household standards of living, poverty and vulnerability, social innovation, the social impact of adjustment measures, the devaluation, the design of socioeconomic policies will be discussed in this series.

The Cahiers are designed to provide a medium for those who want to disseminate the informations collected in the various observatories and analyzed in the laboratories. They include the results of rapid surveys, the scientific analysis of survey data and also individual research work. The objective is to inform the policy-makers, and the main economic actors, of the on-going research work and, when feasible, to propose appropriate solutions for some of the issues that they have to solve.

It is within this framework that this ninth issue of the Cahiers raises the general problem of the objective and the substance of development. By referring to the past experiences of state-controlled development, by looking at the emergence of a one-dimensional world, as a consequence to the globalisation and the success of liberalism, the author throws a series of key economic and social questions related to the direction of development, for Africa as a whole, and Cameroon particularly.

A series of state-controlled experiences were promoted in Cameroon, under the leadership of the state, since independence, i.e. self-reliant development, green revolution, universal primary education, Cameroonisation of the labour force, health for all, etc.. These experiences were implemented under the global framework of planned and communal liberalism, an economic development philosophy, more appropriate to Africa, and at the mid-point of capitalism and socialism. This approach was questioned during the economic crisis by the implementation of structural adjustment.

Structural adjustment programs, which aim at re-establishing the key macroeconomic balances, liberalisation of prices and trade in order to generate a free market economy that will boost the creativity and economic initiative of the various economic actors. It is based on the neoclassical way of thinking development. It favors capitalism which has proved, in some parts of the world, to be the most efficient way of development, but which has not totally solved the problem of over-exploiting some groups of people, and its linkages to poverty and vulnerability. Besides this it raises the issue of generating national savings to produce the level of capital requested. Moreover the liberalisation and the institution of market economics, in Africa, done under the auspices and financing of the IMF and the World Bank, is still a state-sponsored development operation focussing on external aid to substitute the lack of national capital.

All this raises questions about the best way for Cameroon, the Franc zones, Africa as a whole, to promote a development which could generate growth and reduce the increasing poverty, in connection with a world characterized by the tendency to

globalisation. Answers to these questions are related to the role of the state, as an actor to facilitate development, and to the role of communities, i.e to the share of decision-making power among the various responsible economic entities.

As an answer to this complex situation the author proposes the setting-up of a Universal Development Initiative. This initiative has the objective of giving more responsibility to the communities of economic actors namely the producers. The paper identifies capital in its accumulated and concentrated form as the major obstacle to equitable economic development and prosperity. The author believes that it is only by "democratizing" the access to capital as a factor of production that the challenge of economic development can be met. He also proposes a mobilisation of non-economic factors in the development process, the ultimate aim being to achieve equal chances in the process. The rationale of this approach lies in marching political equality with economic welfare for the greatest number. The major innovation in this paradigm is that it seeks to disentangle capital from the mystique of scarcity and restore autonomy to the individual producer without discarding traditional strategies of a free market economy.

This is an interesting paper for the variety of issues which are reviewed, and the key ideas proposed for a new direction in development policy. In the research for more appropriate development strategies, there is a serious need to bring new proposals to facilitate the birth of new solutions. As a result of the dialogue between economists, academicians and policy makers, a consensus, and maybe a clear direction for action, may arise. In the middle of tremendous changes, with its research for identity and roots-related approaches, the Cameroon society needs new ways of thinking and new insights to be discussed. This proposal based on the role of communities of independant producers is one of them. Let us hope that this paper will generate discussion and answers that will reinforce the role of the Cahiers of Ocisca as a tribune to exchange ideas and build together the economic and social policies of tomorrow.

Jean-Luc Dubois  
Ocisca Manager

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## Introduction

*En Afrique, depuis trois décennies environ, on ne cesse de renouveler les "stratégies de développement", on multiplie les approches dites nouvelles, on reformule les principes qui fondent la pratique afin de tenir compte, semble-t-il, des sphères d'anormalité. Malgré le constant dépoussiérage des idées, presque partout, sur le continent, les promesses de la "divinité développement" s'éloignent des lieux supposés recevoir ses bienfaits.<sup>1</sup>*

### I. THE FAILURE OF STATE-SPONSORED DEVELOPMENT

It is an acknowledged fact that the development enterprise in Africa has failed after three decades of experimentation. The problem seems to be more acute today than it was at independence despite thirty years of effort. This is due mainly to the failure of state direction of development. However, to see the problem strictly in terms of state mismanagement would be misleading: power relations in general have played a decisive role in the evolution of underdevelopment. Such relations operate in a pyramidal structure from the grassroots to the transnational level. The structure of relations between different groups and formations has been crucial in the deployment of effort and funding, as well as in decision-making and implementation. This is evident in the rural power structure, in the rural-urban dichotomy, in the relations between state and society, as well as national, international and transnational relations. The common denominator in the role of these relations was the optimism which they inspired for development planning and practice. This situation can be summed up thus: the leadership was the most competent factor in development. This optimism manifested itself at various levels.

#### 1. Development and Power Relations

The role of power relations was differentially defined at each level depending on the level in the power structure. At the international level the development problem was situated in the context of relations between states. On the one hand, the powerful democracies of the West believed it was their role to provide thinking, the finance, and the aid for development. On the other, these states found the new post-colonial states to be their only credible partners. Hence the question of development was to be determined by the power brokers and not the individual, and certainly not the society. The state is the all-powerful master of development.

At the national level the state has monopolised development planning through ministries of economic planning and regional groupings to the detriment of local grassroots institutions like cooperatives, producer organisations, local credit institutions like mutual aid associations, pastoral cartels, businessmen's associations and indigenous banks. Secondly, the state has subordinated economic operators to its centralised bureaucracy. The state's economic policy pervades all domains of economic activity with legal regulations, multiple taxes and obstacles of all kinds. This centralised model was inspired by the soviet model of state planning, although it pretends or aspires to operate like a liberal, free-market economy. Those who defend this model claim that it is a compromise between communist statism and the liberal free market model. They hope that this compromise would purge

each model of its natural defects. But far from achieving this effect it has resulted in the reinforcement of state power and the impoverishment of Third World economies.

This has been so for a number of reasons. First, the free market economy is supposed to be successful only when it is allowed to operate without control. In this way big business is privately owned but serves public ends by providing jobs, social security, and social surplus for the survival of the state. On the other hand, an overtaxed, over-regulated private sector leads to a stifling of the market forces and thus retards economic growth. Secondly, the state has become an investor and thus competes with producers in vital consumer sectors. This is particularly so in the agricultural sector with the creation of agro-industrial complexes, in the industrial and service sector with private entrepreneurship through parastatals, and the monopoly in research institutions. The competition between the state and these development factors stifles progress because of too much intervention and the waste which results in a lack of profit motive. While the state is not obliged to develop managerial techniques, the very involvement of private entrepreneurs in investment implies profitability and therefore growth.

Thirdly, by encouraging super-rich states as distinct from corresponding poor societies the states have been used by elites who to expropriated development efforts. Each strategic resource, for example oil, has been monopolised by the state. The concentration of resources from state investment and from aid sources into the hands of an unaccountable elite has led to abuses and corruption of leadership and authority and to the unbalanced development of infrastructures at the regional level under pressure of tribal imperatives. This has resulted in a situation where development is perceived more as a political priority of social welfare schemes, health facilities, roads, water supply, recreation facilities instead of the transformation of the economy. It has also led to tribal conflicts caused by discrimination arising from development practice. Finally, it has led to the fragmentation of leadership and elites, and a gap between the contented and discontented, depending on inclusion or exclusion from participation in the sharing of national resources. This discontent may assume regional, economic or ideological proportions.

At the local societal level, the same optimism inspired by state-controlled development involves a wide range of power brokers like traditional leaders who are auxiliaries of the post-colonial state, leader of local wings of the single party, was very evident. The support given to this power structure as the only viable and competent agents of development can be in many way. First, all development structures at the regional and local levels were headed by technocratic administrators, directly responsible to the central state, and came under the political elites. Informal organisations were not spared such intervention as approval from administrators, close supervision, restriction to a non-political role, which obstructed mobilisation and subjection to the legal whims of the administrators, including the right of suspension possessed by the latter.

Secondly, the so-called traditional power structure has lost its mobilising role because of its integration into the modern administration and its subordination to the post-colonial state. Although its value initially depended on its traditional role, its legitimacy seems to lie in the willingness to serve the all-powerful state. This is due to intimidation from the post-colonial state which has made it merely a subordinate instrument, its development role being a reflection of the post-colonial state's state-centered development

policy. It remains thus at the base of a pyramidal structure of state-centered development, whose benefits are often monopolised by a coterie of elites.

In the meantime, the rural economy stagnates, the state and its rural political partners being unable to develop it due to its absolutist orientation. This provides an opportunity for the power brokers to increase and consolidate their power.

## **2. A Certain View of Social Development: The Case of Cameroon**

Since independence Cameroon's social policies have been articulated around certain development policy options which cannot be distinctively referred to as social. However these policy options have provided a certain orientation for Cameroon's development. These policy options can be subsumed in the following slogans and projects:

- planned or communal liberalism
- self-reliant development
- green revolution
- universal primary education
- "Cameroonisation" of the labour force
- health for all by the year 2000
- responsible parenthood
- labour legislation within a context of social justice
- the Social Dimension Project of the Structural Adjustment Programme

We will look at each of these options separately to bring out their implications for social development.

### ***a) Planned and Communal Liberalism: the Global Framework***

These two economic development ideologies have been pursued consecutively by the successor regimes in Cameroon as mid points between the dominant post World War Two philosophies of capitalism and socialism. This implied state capitalism and an active participation in the provision of welfare services. This was the African version of a mixed economy. Contrary to expectation, the state came to control most of the economy and the social services in a centre-down perspective. NGOs Trade Unions, communities, religious bodies and the civil society relied on the all powerful state structure which had come to dominate all aspects of society. The twin agents of this scheme of things were the one-party system and the highly centralised administration, with its centre-down approach to development. This approach lasted till the advent of democratic reforms and the structural adjustment programme under the pressure of the economic crisis.

### ***b) Self-reliant Development***

This policy-turned slogan became popular in Cameroon in the 1970s as a result of its popularization in international circles. It implied the mobilisation of resources by concerned communities to cater for their own welfare needs. Its derivatives are the "*Action Communautaire*" approach in Francophone Cameroon and "*Community Development*" in Anglophone Cameroon. These strategies attributed to communities projects, especially in

rural areas, which could be implemented with indigenous resources, and, which were less sensitive in terms of political leaning. This level of freedom in community initiative has enabled communities to provide themselves with utilities such as water, primary and secondary school infrastructure, roads and health services of an elementary nature (Health Post and Health Centre). The ideological contradictions of this slogan were clear when one had to question its feasibility within the context of dependence and international division of labour, and the resultant inequality.

#### *c) Green Revolution*

Cameroon, as most African and Third World countries, obtained independence as underdeveloped countries largely dominated by a rural sector. It was thus normal to stress the importance of agriculture. The policy of Green Revolution was therefore aimed at stimulating farmers to get involved in Agriculture as an income generating activity. Government assisted farmers by providing them with subsidies and credit facilities to enable them embark on this policy. A rural bank, the Fund for Rural Development (FONADER), was created to cater for the specific needs for farmers. Tools, fertilizers and seeds were provided within the scope of this policy. It has only been interrupted by the fall in agricultural commodity prices and a close down of the stabilization fund (the National Produce Marketing Board).

#### *d) Universal Primary Education*

The ambition was to achieve universal literacy for all youths. The state created primary schools in all communities, took over schools from religious bodies and even subsidized schools run by non-governmental organizations and individuals. The initiative of introducing schools into all areas was actively lauded and assisted by the interested communities. Secondary schools were also established in every division and subdivision. The approach is successful to the extent that it can provide schools to each area but its political implications in a context of scarce resources are enormous. They have come to be interpreted, at times, as proof of state, or party-state largesse, in a context of political competition. At times, communities have to scramble for the attribution of educational infrastructure, this resulting in conflicts.

With a reduction in the budget and as a result of a fall in state income, such ambitious schemes are difficult to realise nowadays. Normally the government is unable to subsidize lay private and mission schools. Most of the state-sponsored schools are becoming more dependent on the contributions of parents/teachers associations, while the state is finding it difficult to recruit, train and keep new teachers in the numerous state schools.

#### *e) Health for All by the Year 2000*

This policy has been dictated by global decisions in health adopted by multinational organizations such as WHO and UNICEF. The state has created curative and preventive health services in most administrative areas. The policy is for there to be a hospital per division or subdivision, a health centre for a community and a health post for a hamlet or ward. The state has trained nurses and medical doctors to man these services which are provided at state subsidized rates.

Example of mass grassroots strategies adapted by the government of Cameroon are the Expanded Programme on Immunization, the Alma Ata Declaration on Primary Health Care and the Bamako Initiative.

*f) "Cameroonisation" of the Labour Force*

At independence most of Cameroon's high and mid level civil servants were expatriate. One of the ambitions of the new state was to create a labour force which would progressively replace the expatriates. This policy has been actively pursued by the successive regimes. The state took upon itself to train and employ an indigenous labour force under the best social security conditions. Its ambitions were, according to the Higher National Council of Education of 1982, to " ... aim at reaching all the population at the age of schooling ; by its structure , to cover all disciplines which implicate or involve the evolution of the employment market in the modern or the traditional economy." Training schools were created which trained Cameroonians free and on a subsidized stipend. Even University studies up till 1991 were free with scholarships provided to most of the students. Due to the crisis most of these professional training schools have been closed down and employment halted. The concentration of employment in the public sector also led to a highly redundant civil service and highly qualified unemployed graduates.

*g) Responsible Parenthood and Population Policy*

This is Cameroon's official Family Planning (FP) or population policy. This policy encourages couples to match family sizes with incomes or resources. It is flexible and leaves decision making in the hands of couples. This policy is promoted through seminars, workshops, studies and training in artificial and natural FP methods. It is non-cohesive and its evaluation can only be made through an assessment of voluntary contraceptive use and visits to FP services. For now use of these services is still very low.

Non-governmental organisations such as churches are also involved in the promotion of their own population policies. For now a global population policy does not yet exist. The National Population Commission has so far only submitted proposals for a policy.

*h) Social Dimension Project of the Structural Adjustment Programme*

Since 1988 the Government of the Republic of Cameroon (GRC) embarked on a structural adjustment programme. The reforms to be carried out within the scope of this programme imply a change from a public sector dominated economy to a free market economy. The measures to be taken will affect the lives of certain categories of Cameroonians adversely. In 1990 the GRC launched a social dimension project to alleviate the ill effects of this adjustment. This project was to comprise a health, population, women, education, employment and community development components. The aim here was to give new reorientations to these components as well as protect priority areas. A clear cut population policy will be defined and a national consensus obtained before its implementation; the employment market will be restructured to live up to demand especially with the creation of the National Employment Fund; the modalities for the participation of the woman in development will be defined; and a community development project set up.

Except for the National Employment Fund component, this SDA project has not even taken off and was recently canceled.

### **3. Problems of Power-reliant Development**

The excessive belief in the positive role of the state in development was not accompanied by an understanding of the nature of power. Many questions remained unanswered. What type of power was development subjected to? What was the real potential of this power in development management? How relevant were the models from which lessons were drawn? Nobody seems to have asked and answered these questions.

Moreover the changing relations between state and society were ignored. It was not realised that the role of development agent would increase the powers of the state to the detriment of the society. The blind belief in the "super-competent" state ignored the fact that revolutions and positive change require a shift from the state toward the society. States as self-sufficient structures cannot be relied upon to initiate change which would imply a reduction in their power.

More recently the preoccupation with liberalisation and the shift to a market economy has come to be interpreted as essentially a state affair and resituated at international level (IMF, World Bank, transnational corporation, etc.). In the developing, or underdeveloped world, the state has single-handedly conducted the liberalisation process so much so that it is tantamount to abdication. In its under-estimation of the role of the civil society, the state feels that privatisation cannot contribute to the development of an indigenous entrepreneurial class. It has come to focus on the transfer of transnational capital. Development is therefore continued to be understood exclusively as the operation of development aid. This is the error of the present development initiative.

What does this imply? As an activity which lays stress on the economy, this approach carries with it the age-old illusion that the growth is the making of the prince. This inaccurate view of the dynamic of history has in earlier instances led to a decline of society. For example, development stopped at the height of absolute monarchies and feudalism. More recently, the Soviet model has led to a stagnation of economic development in one of the most rationalised state structures. It is thus a paradox of state control that it may lead to a step backward. This encourages us to give some chance to the non-statist model.

## **II. DEVELOPMENT IN A ONE-DIMENSIONAL WORLD**

All recent events seem to confirm the view that the world is evolving into a one-dimensional global politico-economic sphere. These are the dislocation of the Eastern block and its phasing out from the international scene, on the one hand and the disintegration of the Soviet Union as a strategic superpower on the other. This has marked the end of half a century of global bipolarism and balance of terror. The most visible sign of this unidimensionality is the unanimity with which a coalition of NATO allies seconded the United States of America to defend its economic interests in Kuwait in the name of

international justice<sup>2</sup>. It is confirmed by the single handedness with which this remaining superpower is conducting world affairs in the aftermath of these events (beginning with the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict)

(see also ARKOUN, 1992). The most important consequence of this situation has been the streamlining of an economic ideology, the capitalism, and its confirmation as the principal basis for economic development and global imperialism. The question that lingers on is that of the sustainability of a victorious capitalism as a world structure. Can development, which enjoyed some level of autonomy during the East-West entente (BUARQUE 1993:45) have any more chances in the present situation? In attempting to answer these questions, we will look at the development of the world capitalist system, the place of the Third World, and especially Africa, in it, before looking at the prospects for a viable development.

## 1. The World Capitalist System and Transnational Domination

Capitalism as a national phenomenon refers to the philosophy of liberties:

- liberty of entrepreneurship i.e. undertaking economic activity towards the aim of satisfying private and public wants;
- the free deployment of means of production (finance, labour, tools) towards this aim;
- the free circulation of goods produced from the enterprise within a market liberated from public constraints.

This system looks very natural and has indeed been promoted since the reign of *laissez faire* economics. The basic difference between this ideal construct and the modern capitalistic system is the concentration of the means of production and management within the latter system in a neutral public space. Max Weber highlighted this when he showed that one of the basic principles of capitalism was the separation of the enterprise from the household.<sup>3</sup> The liberation of the enterprise from the household first took place in the national economic framework. Capitalism is therefore essentially a national phenomenon. It was within this framework that competition amongst concentrated economic units was allowed. Competition therefore guaranteed growth which remained within the hands of the entrepreneur i.e. a class of individuals. This growth in competition, exploiting labour, therefore gave birth to a capitalist class which wielded power through property. Historically franchise, which was the right to political decision through the vote, was tied to property, and it was not after a long time that universal suffrage was achieved. This explains the rule of capitalism at national level.

Capitalism has since ceased to be a national phenomenon. Although the cradle of capitalism is the nation, its expansionist spirit has transformed it into a global phenomenon. This brought about competition between nations, as crucibles of economic production, and the production formations, such as enterprises, in their quest to dominate the market place. This was only made possible with the transformation of all national markets into international markets and national production formations, such as corporations, companies,

etc., into units with an international character and vocation. Hence the denomination of the latter as multinationals or transnationals.

Since international relations were marked by strategies of domination, codified as doctrines and philosophies of spheres of influence, capitalism as an international phenomenon was transformed into an instrument of domination. Hence colonization and the military conquest of the rest of the world by Western Europe, and the United States of America, was both a political exercise and an economic enterprise. Thus while national capitalism was used as means of achieving better living conditions at home, international capitalism was used as an instrument of domination, exploitation and alienation. The East-West tensions and the ideological competition between the international socialist movement and transnational capitalism excluded any independent initiative within the Third World.

## 2. The Place of Africa within the Transnational Capitalist Structure

There has been hyperbolic epistemological illusion about the African position within the status quo ante. Placed within a Marxist geopolitical perspective Africa has been presented as a dominated and exploited entity. While it is very true that Africa has been dominated for nearly a century by Western Europe it would be exaggerating to present this continent as exploited. It is but a reserve of luxury raw materials (cocoa, coffee) (MAZRUI: 1986). On the contrary it is not an important reserve of essential raw materials. At least it is not the attention of the world. Other areas of far greater importance are the Middle East with its energy reserves, South America with its mineral wealth, South East Asia because of its rising industrial development and recently Eastern Europe with its developed market and technological capacity (NGOY, 1993: 35).

Only some isolated cases have been of strategic interest to the developed world. These are:

- South Africa because of its economic potential and its underground resources;
- Zaire with its vast reserves of essential minerals;
- We can add the Maghreb region and North Africa in general because of its oil reserves but this is doubtful. The interest in this region may tie in more with the Western world's policy of containing radical Pan-arabism and Islamism, social movements viewed with suspicion and countered by confrontation ( cf. also ARKOUN, op.cit.)

This differential attitude towards Africa has created a distinction between Maghreb Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa, a distinction which is tantamount to a dichotomy between Arab Africa, which at certain moments is not considered African *stricto-sensu*, and black or coloured Africa.

What therefore is the policy towards the resultant classification and identification of Sub-Saharan Africa? It is based on a geopolitical perception of this group. It is perceived as not falling into the scope of international capitalism because:



- it does not constitute a developed market;
- it does not possess the skilled labour necessary to exploit capital and resources; (NGOY, *ibid*).
- it does not possess the resources necessary for exploitation. Cash crops for luxury or entertainment seems to constitute the only export products for some countries while others do not even possess any marketable produce, like the Sahelian countries (MAZRUI, *ibid*).

The resultant policy has been an attitude of neglect and alienation. Africa has never succeeded to have an honourable position on the global scene although it maintained umbilical ties to the former colonial Western Europe. This attachment served as a wedge in the ideological struggle against communism. The last thirty years of political independence have almost been spent in shifting adaptations to transnational struggles. Systems of government were developed which would serve as permanent bulwarks to Communist incursion while economic development models were fashioned in a way as to avoid hurting the conflicting ideologies (African Socialism, Planned Liberalism, Communalism, Communal Liberalism, etc.). Even the politics of independence were often compromised within the perspective of this struggle. It was less the destiny and development of the peoples that mattered but under which sphere of influence they territories fell. As such the territorial imperative was more important than the human imperative.

The primacy of this territorial imperative has gone a long way to maintain a certain conception of Africa that is prevalent in certain conservative circles in the Western capitalist world. This is the view that Africa is a naive virgin fit to be introduced into civilization only by a more capable technologically advanced society. At worst Africa is a worthless part of the world important only as a touristic site. The deterioration of the socio-economic situation, with the failure of several development strategies experimented within the past decades, has in turn given rise to a disaster vision of Africa, what is commonly referred to as afro-pessimism. The continent is perceived as one of refugees, debt ridden states, hit by disasters of all sorts. It is also a crippled Africa unable to embark on self-government, prone to dictatorships and allergic to the concept of democracy. This is the basis of Western paternalism towards the African countries.

### **3. Prospects for an Honourable Position on the Global Scene**

Faced with such a situation the African countries - and indeed all the Third World states - have resorted to the most superficial and simplistic of solutions. The most common of such solutions is the hypocritical condemnation of this dis-equilibrium. The paradox is that while there is official condemnation, lobbying for aid is the real practice, and the reluctance to create conditions for prosperity is the real attitude to the question of underdevelopment in Africa. The priority accorded to the elites seems to be the consolidation of power, even at the expense of negotiating it with the sovereignty of the people.

When condemnation fails, these countries have resorted to seeking the most prestigious positions within the United Nations structure (Secretariat and affiliates such as

UNESCO, UNICEF, UNIDO, etc.). This policy has been of little help because besides aggravating the brain drain, there are no guarantees that international civil servants, within the United Nations structure, can influence decisions concerning their own countries. It is actually doubtful what help they can obtain even if they could. It is often forgotten that behind these structures there are transnational political and economic interest which these officials can hardly modify.

A more radical vision, which is coming from the civil society, is that of the payment of reparation for centuries of exploitation of the African continent by the Western Capitalist economic interest. Examples are provided by the Japanese reparations for crimes committed during their colonization of Korea. Unfortunately official circles have not yet been converted to this view. Even if the reparations were paid this would constitute an insufficient means of coming out of the present disaster situation.

The paucity of these proposed solutions should however not imply an end to hope. We can attempt to propose certain points which would serve as guidelines for a formulation of a viable foreign policy. These should be based on the following:

- the development of a new independent economic initiative based on genuine self-reliance;
- the revision of political, economic, military and cultural relations with the developed world.

This will imply the modification of bilateral accords, treaties and ententes, whose success will depend on radical and democratic nationalist governments. The conditions for internal prosperity will be discussed in the section on the universal development initiative. The second point is going to be dependent on the development of negotiating potential by the acquisition of economic independence. These two points are therefore inextricably linked.

### III. BEYOND ACCUMULATIVE AND COLLECTIVIST MODES OF DEVELOPMENT IN DEFENSE OF A UNIVERSAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

The failure of international socialism has reawakened the problem of a viable mode of development. In its habitual triumphalism, the capitalist world has interpreted and celebrated its survival from several decades of competition with the collectivist mode of economic organisation as a sign of vitality and viability. However the problem of inequality in the market regulated economy raised by Marx about a century and a half ago still remains unanswered. If Marxism has failed to provide an answer to this question, this does not mean that the problem has lost much of its pertinence especially in the Third World. The main question is: how can we submit to a free market economy without falling in the snares of inequality? Our argument is based on the solution proposed by the universalization of franchise. Political inequality was abolished with the institution of universal suffrage. We feel that if economic inequality persists it is because this principle was not equally applied to the economic domain. Equality, whether economic, political or social, can only be

achieved with the institution of the universality of chances, possibilities and rights. It is neither by concentrating all initiative in a public instrument, viz. the state, nor leaving the function of redistribution to a conservative social welfare system. We hereby propose a universal development initiative which matches economic chances and opportunities with political rights and equality. We will briefly look at the inequalities that stand as an impediment to the present development initiative, review some of the collectivist initiatives *en vogue* and then spell out some of the general guidelines of the universal development initiative.

### **1. The Aftermath of the Collectivist Initiative**

The dismantling of the Soviet style collectivist economic system in Eastern Europe brings us to one fact: inequalities are confirmed as a standard evil of the world economic system at all levels. The former are felt at both international level, such as the state, economic blocks, transnational/multinational cartels, and national level, between citizens. The essential causes are:

- the accumulation and concentration of capital and the means of production within a few hands;
- the control of finance by a cartel of banks;
- the centralization of investment in the capitalist centre, i.e. Western Europe, Japan and North America;
- the arbitrary superevaluation of capital as the prime factor of production in the modern era. It is often considered as the sole indispensable and only scarce factor of production. It is therefore priced highest and made the exclusive preserve of a few.

Production has been capitalized and thus excludes/marginalizes the other factors. The subordination of all other factors, especially the human component, to capital consequently subordinates everyone to the owners of capital. It is important to note that no meaningful development can take place while the ownership of capital excludes the majority; in short, so far as capital has subjugated technology, labour and material resources via the market.

### **2. The Future of Pseudo-collectivist and Sectoral Alternatives**

Faced with the domination of the capital factor and the coming under the pressure/competition of transnational socialism, the capitalist world launched its own piecemeal collectivist initiatives.

The likes of these slogans are community development, social development and human development. A close look at these concepts would cast doubts on their suitability to the present predicament of the Third World.

Community development was designed as an adjunct to global economic inequality in the hey days of colonialism, in the manner of social welfare within the capitalist centre

(POSTON, 1962). As a peripheral and residual concern it had no equal in the centre (MINICLIER, 1960). The genitor of this approach, Britain, only started its own Community Development Project two decades after the concept had been proposed to the colonies (CRAIG 1987: 166). Even then it resembled in no aspect the colonial model. While the United States of America had no parallel to this approach, she was ready to graft it unto the context of the Cold War, and then use it as an ideological tool (POSTON, 1962). It was even considered as America's "democracy's social technology" in the manner of Karl Popper's social engineering (MEZIROW, 1963).

On its own part "the guiding norms of social development" are quite vague and general (HAAS, 1980). This is equally true of the latest of these slogans, human development. The distinction as human development is indicative of the persistence of the malaise that characterizes the development problem. The problem is that of the distribution of this development within and between human communities. Since we are looking for development of the greatest number of humans we prefer to apply the qualitative, *universal*, to development.

### **3. The Universal Development Initiative (UDI) as a Viable Initiative**

The universal development initiative is a shift, from the logic of accumulation of capital as a power instrument, to that of the redistribution of capital as a means of the survival and enhancement of the greatest number of people. Drawing inspiration from the concept of universal suffrage, this concept advocates the restitution to everybody of the means of production especially capital. The aim should be the ownership and control of a production unit by each adult individual. The target is transforming the whole population into community of independent producers, with the capacity to satisfy the whole market.

### **4. Some Orientations for a Universal Development Initiative**

We believe that the Universal Development Initiative can only succeed if certain economic orientations are adopted. These are namely:

(i) The complete liberalization and privatization, with priority accorded to indigenous small savings and holdings.

(ii) The establishment of a financial market adapted to and commensurate to the dimensions of the economy. A veritable rural bank should be developed from the credit unions; a Stock Exchange should manage the transition from a public sector structured economy to a free market economy; the development of indigenous banks adapted to an increasingly informal sector dominated economy.

(iii) Liberalization of investment legislation: ease restrictions on investment and conditions for operation. Duties, taxes, dues should be lightened or lifted for producer goods.

(iv) Priority should be given to production, as against consumption, in the transitional period. For example, it should be easier to import a tractor, a textile mill, machinery for a shoe factory, a computer, etc., than to import a luxury car or marble for a

building. Restrictions on public servants investing should be reviewed and revised to allow for the redeployment of earnings and savings in productive activity. Such restrictions hitherto diverted the bulk of individual earnings from the public sector.

(v) Set up an industrialization plan in 3 following phases:

- acquisition of producer goods for the short term production of consumer goods;
- acquisition of producer goods with the aim of developing indigenous technology and producer goods;
- indigenous production of producer and consumer goods.

(vi) Integrating the sectors of the economy. Having attained food self sufficiency we could seek to produce for regional markets - hence the necessity to move from small size holdings and production units to medium size units (farms, workshops, transformation plants, spare-part factories). There should equally be a shift from an economy dominated by agriculture and the services market, such as trade, insurance, entertainment, etc., to a balanced integrated ensemble with possibilities for inter-sectorial exchanges. This will open up opportunities for everybody in all the sectors if all of them are fully developed.

(vii) Paramount to the success of this approach is the reorientation of the educational system. There should be a shift from the policy for culture sake to that of functional training. It should strive to :

- ensure a continuity of moral values and the transmission of socially and economically useful skills;
- ensure autonomy and initiative among the young generation;
- absorb and exploit skills acquired through learning and research in the development of the economy. Indeed there should be a shift from the call for the transfer of technology to the development of technology.

(viii) The state's role should be critically raised. The legal protection of individual property and the guarantee of the right to it as an essential human right should be the basic preoccupation of the state. In this last aspect the state will guarantee the provision of initial capital for both public and private institutions to beginner entrepreneurs, supervise the deployment of funds into productive activity, and guarantee reimbursement of loans by the debtors.

The successful application of these principles will guarantee political freedom in a context of economic emancipation.

## Notes

1. Traore, Mamadou Balla. "Le développement-modernisation: Miroir et écran. Contribution à l'étude des structures anthropologiques du développement" in IFDA Dossier 80. January-March 1991.
2. The international court of justice at the Hague was not given the chance to examine the matter, the all powerful dominant instrument of the United Nations, the Security Council having usurped that right. It has continued to do so in the Libyan case.
3. Cf. Max Weber's "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism".

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*Cahier NO.2*, "Du passé re-composé au futur improbable: les observatoires ruraux d'Ocisca comme mode opératoire d'une recherche impliquée" by Georges Courade, March 94, Ocisca, Yaounde, 31 p.

*Cahier NO.3*, "1991 - 1993 : Évolutions majeures dans la zone cacaoyère" by the Yemessoa Observatory Team, April 94, Ocisca, Yaounde, 35 p.

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*Cahier NO.8*, "Le secteur vivrier sud-camerounais face à la crise de l'économie cacaoyère" by A. Bopda (to be published).

*Cahier NO.9*, "Human Development through a Universal Development Initiative: a Practical Agenda" by E. Yenshu, August 94, Ocisca, Yaounde, 25 p.