

# **States of Sub-Saharan Africa in the Age of Globalization: the Possibility of the Breakthrough**

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**Abstracts:** The paper devotes to the problem of the determination of the place of States of Sub-Saharan Africa in the Global World. The author comes to a conclusion that during the postcolonial history of Africa the governments of African States have undertaken a number of attempts in order to ensure the sustainable growth of their countries. But all such attempts finished by the strengthening of the dependence of African countries from the well developed nations which pursued their strategic interests on the Continent. That's why it becomes evident that it is necessary to change something in the relationship between African countries and their Western partners. The author argues that despite all efforts undertaken by African governments the idea of the establishment of the new system of the relationship between the Global North and the Global South has failed. So nowadays the only chance to reduce the dependence of African states from Western countries is to intensify the intra-Global south cooperation. Thus the author evaluates both the significance of such unions and their ability to ensure the sustainable economic growth of the Continent.

**Keywords:** Sub-Saharan Africa, Globalization, Dependence, South-South cooperation

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## Introduction

Nowadays in the age of globalization when a number of different globalized processes cause radical transformations not only in the economy and social life but also in the consciousness of the human being which changes the structure of its personality one should think about whether States of Sub-Saharan Africa would be able to find their own self-reliant place in the Global World or they remain the world periphery dependent from the financial and technological aid coming from the West.

The Globalization as a process has both positive and negative features. From the one side there is taking place the process of integration of the market of goods and services, finances which causes the free floating between countries and regions. But critics of modern globalized processes suppose that the globalization would make the world space a homogenous one which may cause the situation where the vast majority of countries would lose their cultural identity and the entire World would be arranged according to the Western pattern of the development.

We can conclude that nowadays in Africa they very often substitute the word "modernization" by the word "westernization": "westernization is modernization" [Adamu, 2007]. And today Western countries and Western financial institutions such as World Bank and International Monetary Fund have so strong positions in the region that give them an opportunity to dictate main features of economic reforms in Africa which take a character of the full liberalization of almost all main sectors of the economy of African countries.

Let's take for example the African ICT-sector which is under construction. Initially, African countries stated for the policy that all national telecommunication companies should remain the property of the State. But very soon when they've began to think about the modernization of their technological facilities they were forced to declare the privatization of those companies in order to attract investments required for the upgrade of their telecommunication industry.

Thus French Telecommunication Corporation *France Telecom* has become a major shareholder of the Kenyan national telecommunication company *Telecom Kenya*. The same situation has happened in Senegal where the French company *France Cables Radio* which is also a branch of the *France Telecom* has become a major shareholder of the former national corporation *Sonatel*.

So it is the financial and technological dependence from well-developed Western nations which can cause the fact that all national strategic plans of the national development elaborated by African countries are mostly related to the necessity of the creation of favorable conditions for the activity of foreign (especially non-African) private investors in the region.

In current circumstances, it is very difficult to say whether States of Sub-Saharan Africa would be able to find their own place in the Global world. During the postcolonial history of Africa, the governments of African States have undertaken a number of attempts in order to ensure the sustainable growth of their countries and to reach the level of the development of their more developed Western partners. But all such attempts finished by the strengthening of the dependence of African countries from the well developed nations which pursued their strategic interests on the Continent. That's why it becomes evident that it is necessary to change something in the relationship between African countries and their Western partners and to think about how to increase South-South cooperation.

## **South-South Cooperation: the Dream or the Reality?**

The idea of the South-South cooperation is not a new one. We'd like to remind that even the first generation of African leaders, inspired by the success of the European integration, stated for the creation of "regional entities capable of promoting regional cooperation and integration" [Schraeder, 2013]. Finally, those ideas were transformed into the special document which had been elaborated by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and has been published in the year 1981. This document was entitled "Lagos Plan of Action for the Economic Development of Africa, 1980-2000" and "proposed the establishment of an African Economic Community that would be based on an African Common Market. The guiding logic of the Lagos Plan of Action is that the creation of intergovernmental economic organizations in each of Africa's five major regions – North, East, West, southern, and central Africa – is the best means for ensuring the ultimate creation of a continent-wide African Economic Community" [Schraeder, 2013].

But when analyzing the practical implementations of those initiatives we can say that they won't be realized in full. And it was one of the reasons for the

crisis of the Organization of African Union (OAU) which mostly resembled a “talking shop” but not an effective integration unit which was able to ensure a real (not only on the paper) unity of African countries. Finally, in their attempts to reconsider the intra-African relations in the year 2002, the OAU was replaced by the African Union.

At the same time, another initiative has been launched by African countries - Programme of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) which was adopted in the year 2001. To our opinion, the NEPAD represents quite a realistic point of view on the development goals and real opportunities of African countries. For example, they recognize that they can do nothing without foreign aid and foreign investments. But at the same time, African countries put frameworks on the activity of western investors. And it is the NEPAD which “aims to bring African states and external partners together to improve both the continent’s economic and political performance. Attempting to manage their own development strategies, the NEPAD states have pledged to work towards ‘good governance,’ attempting to attract development aid and foreign investments as a result” [Thomson, 2010].

Thus the NEPAD represented both the new strategy of the further development of the continent and the new platform which should form the backbone of the relationship between African countries and their more developed Western partners. Finally, the NEPAD should become a “working instrument of the African Union” [NEPAD and the future of Economic Policy in Africa, 2008].

“The goals of NEPAD were stated as the promotion of accelerated growth and sustainable development, poverty eradication and ending Africa’s marginalization in the context of globalization. The sectorial priorities are defined as bridging the infrastructure gap, human resource development, agriculture, the environment, culture, and science and technology platforms. The vision of resource mobilization covers capital flow and market access” [Adesina, 2006].

The programme NEPAD differs from the vast majority of similar documents by the point that African countries must play the key role in the solution of all problems of the continent. So there are African countries which should elaborate different strategies of the development of the continent, Agendas and Plans of Action and finally take a responsibility for the development of the continent.

On the web-site of the Programme NEPAD, one can find a slogan: “NEPAD: obligations of African leaders based on the common understanding of the problems of the continent” [The New Partnership for Africa’s Development]. But it is evident that it is not enough just to get the common understanding of the problems of the continent. African countries understand that they won’t solve all the problems of the continent without financial aid coming from the West. So they rely that the NEPAD would be supported by their more developed Western partners.

Western countries are ready to help African States in the realization of the goals mentioned in the programme NEPAD but on their conditions which are aimed at the strengthening of Western influence in the region.

That’s why the content of the programme NEPAD represents the simple enumeration of the most important challenges the final overcoming of which strictly depends on the aid of global community.

But the problem is that when elaborating the pattern of all the economic reforms African countries mostly follow the recommendations coming from the international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank which impedes the possibility of the independent development and puts a serious obstacle to the establishment of equal characters of mutual relations. So taking to the account African realities there suits very well the following statement: in Africa there is the only worst thing than the presence of foreign investors - the lack of them.

Unfortunately nowadays in Africa there dominates the point of view that “We (Africans) need Europe to rescue from the poverty”. Such statement we have heard from the president of Ghana John Mahama in his speech on the opening ceremony of the Global convention on African studies which was held at the University of Ghana in October 2013. And as soon as one can hear such statements from heads of African countries it is completely impossible to estimate an independent development of States of the region.

So it is evident that despite all efforts undertaken by African governments the idea of the establishment of the new system of the relationship between the Global North and the Global South has failed.

Nevertheless, African countries pretend to play the key role in the determination of the main features of the further social and economic development of the continent

and to find solutions of the most significant problems of the region. Western countries have supported such initiative and agreed to support different agendas, plans of action and strategies elaborated by the African States. But as one can see from the history all those initiatives which are adopted by African countries represent the simple implementation of the recommendations elaborated on the "G8 Summits" and other meetings initiated by the well-developed Western nations. This means that Africa still waits when the world community would find the appropriate solutions of the main problems of the continent. And it is the great mistake.

We'd like to remind that if African countries pretend to play a significant role in modern political processes they should leave the solution of African problems to the Africans themselves. But the question is how to solve all these problems without money and technologies? And there is the only solution to this problem – through the intensification of the intra-Global south cooperation.

There are two sides of this process. First of all speaking on the South-South cooperation we mean the penetration of BRICS on the continent, especially after the accession of South Africa to this alliance. But we can't say that nowadays BRICS has a kind of a common policy on the Continent. And it is really very difficult to evaluate whether countries which form the BRICS are partners or competitors. China has its own interests on the Continent. So does India, Brazil, and South Africa. The intensification of African stream of their foreign policy from the one side reflects very positively and is able to put the end to the hegemony of Western countries in the region. But from another perspective, it may cause the change of the existing structure of the dependence of African societies but it won't help to overcome it.

So to our opinion, the sustainable and independent development of the region is possible only in case of the intensification of processes of internal African integration. We'd like to remind that the idea of the achievement of the real unity of African states in order to solve the most significant problems of the continent and to ensure an independent development is not a new one. Initially, it belongs to Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana who dreamed about the unity of African countries. In a great number of his speeches, he stated that "Africa must unit" [Nkrumah, 2007]. This statement has been made in the 1960s but we can't say that it has lost its topicality today.

Thus it is evident that the solution of almost all problems of the Continent lies in the real Pan-African integration where all African countries join their forces in the face of common challenges. But at the same time, almost all Sub-Saharan African countries have a great number of nationalities with their own values and expectations. And it is very difficult to achieve the real, not only on the paper, unity of such different societies. To our opinion nowadays there is in Africa the only more or less effective regional alliance – the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA).

Maybe it is too early to speak of foundation of an effective multipurpose Pan-African alliance but it is quite possible for African countries to try to join their forces when solving problems which are common for all of them, for example, the problem of the construction of self-reliant information society.

So we can come to a conclusion that the necessity of the development of information technologies and the elaboration of the joint strategy of the creation of information society would become the common idea which would consolidate the vast majority of African States.

Probably African countries should start from the creation of regional integration forms – on the West under the aegis of Nigeria and Senegal, on the South and the East under the aegis of South Africa, Mauritius, and Botswana, on the North under the aegis of Egypt and Morocco. The above mentioned states have achieved a comparative level of the development of their ICT-industry and they can help their less-developed African partners in the creation of their national information and telecommunication systems which would become a part of Pan-African information and communication infrastructure.

And we can come to a conclusion when analyzing African realities that today they start to use the necessity of the development of the ICT sector as an instrument which could initiate the process of real Pan-African integration.

In Africa, a programme for the development of fibre-optic communications was adopted in 2003. This programme actually consists of two aspects. The first is the development of fibre-optic communications in East and South Africa, and the second is the development of broadband Internet in western, central and northern parts of the continent. They were going to build more than 25,000 miles of fibre-optic lines all over the continent.

The decision of the development of high-speed communicational system in East and South Africa was adopted on July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2004 in Johannesburg (South Africa) at the conference organized by the NEPAD E-African commission.

And finally, on August 29, 2006, in Kigali (Rwanda) there have been signed a special protocol concerning the future mutual cooperation in the sphere of ICT. Initially, this protocol has been signed by Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Below are the main purposes of the protocol [NEPAD E-Africa Commission]:

1. Ensure the development of optic-fiber cable system in Eastern and Southern parts of the Continent;
2. Further the attraction of private investments to the development of information and communication infrastructure of the region;
3. Promote the integration of national information networks of African countries which already exist into the single Pan-African one;
4. Survey legal, political, bureaucratic obstacles on the way of creation of the Pan-African optic-fiber cable system and elaborate suggestions for African governments how to overcome them;
5. Further the creation and usage of the well-developed information and communication infrastructure of the region in order to ensure the trans-border exchange of information;
6. Ensure the creation of the information and telecommunication infrastructure which would be conducive to the strengthening of processes of economic, social and cultural integration of African countries;
7. Promote the access of Internet-providers to international transcontinental optic-fiber cable systems.

The appearance of such agreement indicates that countries of Eastern and Southern regions of Africa try to elaborate the common strategy of the development of information technologies on their territory and to join their forces when creating a common information and communication space of East and

South Africa. So the Kigalian protocol could become a document which would promote the intensification of integration processes in South and East Africa.

And what about Western and Central parts of the continent? We'd like to mark that all attempts of countries of West and Central Africa to elaborate a kind of joint "road map" concerning the development of the ICT sector have failed. In June 2005 in Dakar (Senegal) there took place an international symposium where they have decided to develop optic-fiber cable system in the region. But due to the lack of financial and technological resources this forum didn't elaborate any practical recommendations. To our opinion, it was rather predictable because it was the Central part of the continent where there have been situated the poorest countries of the region. And it was evident that it would be very difficult to include such countries into the global information and communication space.

That's why in order to promote the development of the ICT sector on the continent as a whole; countries of Eastern and Southern Africa have decided to give an opportunity for African countries of Central and Western parts of the continent to join the Protocol. The appropriate resolution has been signed on October 15 of the year 2007 in Johannesburg (South Africa) at the meeting of Ministers of countries which have signed the Protocol. On this meeting, they have underlined that the Kigalian protocol doesn't concern the development of optic-fiber cable system only on the South and East Africa. Any country can join the Protocol. That's why the Kigalian protocol could become, in the future, a document which would initiate the process of real Pan-African integration and the cooperation between all African countries. To our opinion it is rather possible. This document is aimed on the solution of the common problem of every African country. Taking to account the scarcity of the realization of the project of the development of optic-fiber cable system in Africa from one side and the limited financial and technological base of African countries from another, it is evident that the most realistic way of the creation of the well-developed information and communication infrastructure in Africa is to join forces by African countries. That's why the words of the first president of Ghana nowadays are still actuality. It is obvious that only the real unity of African countries can ensure an independent self-reliant development of the Continent under the face of challenges common for all African countries. Otherwise States of Sub-Saharan Africa will remain on the periphery of the world political processes and finally lose their identity.

## Conclusion

To conclude we'd like to point out that unfortunately African countries are still waiting when international community finds an appropriate solution of almost all main challenges of the continent. But even if such solution would be found it would mean the global solution of the global problem but not an African solution of an African problem. And it is a great difference because this approach means the final assignment of African countries to the world periphery and impedes the preservation of the self-reliant pattern of the development in the age of globalization.

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