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From State Back to the State: Lessons for ECOWAS Countries

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Introduction

The essence of all activities of a state and across states is to ensure human development; that is, to guarantee a process through which peoples' choices and the capacities to make such choices are enlarged. This is because of the understanding that capacities to make such choices will ensure long, healthy life, positive standard of living and create conducive environments for people as individuals and as groups to develop their full potentials and have appreciable life chances that would make existence worthwhile. Interestingly, this is a win-win situation for all-rich or poor, the ruled and the rulers, north or south or whatever the dichotomy is. Ordinarily against this background, development should be easy. And it should be desirable. Unfortunately, while human development is desirable for many in sub-Saharan Africa, the region is mostly in discourse for its scandalous underdevelopment. According to Bofo-Arthur (2003), the region hits international news headlines only in the context of natural disasters, conflicts, wars, poverty and *maladministration* (emphasis ours). Regrettably, everyone becomes a development expert where the issue of Africa's development is concerned. The orientation relative to African sub-Saharan development debate is that 'we all do development'. Everyone assumes development orthodoxy relative to the region, making the region a confused, suffocating and ineffective development laboratory.

This is why Juma, in his paper presented at the 2006 Hilton Lecture of the Royal Academy of Engineering, maintained that 'development is easier done than said' (p.3). That was the first statement in the thought-provoking paper. Juma (2006) inverted the old maxim to reflect the end of an era in which sub-Saharan Africa's development was defined as an issue for public discourse rather than accomplishment. The call in the contemporary development circle is thus practical solutions to a

challenging problem. Attention must of necessity shift from familiar discourses to radical approaches, to galvanize needed development in the region. Hitherto, most of the ideas, policies and efforts to jumpstart development in sub-Saharan Africa, with particular reference to the ECOWAS states, were from without; such that policies and ideas were formulated, implemented and supervised from the West and by the West. The Western 'experts' foisted development ideas and policies on sub-Saharan Africa's governments, even military ones, and they enforced such policies with debilitating sanctions.

Attempts to decorate the policies to have local content or to appear to have originated within Africa, for the benefit of the Africans, did not help either. Critical reasoning would clearly show that the fundamental ideas behind the policies were from without and were principally for the benefit of the North. It is therefore not surprising that those policies largely failed in Africa and left the people poorer than they were prior to the implementation of the policies but not until they had enriched the initiators. The arrowhead of these imposed development paradigms was the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP hereinafter). SAP was all about rolling back the state to accelerate development of the states in Africa and elsewhere. It however succeeded only in creating more poverty and generalized underdevelopment. In fact, the gains and accelerated development in the immediate post-independence era in West Africa, like in most African countries were either *traded-off* or stagnated while despondency replaced hope as various countries are still struggling to come to terms with the hydra-headed consequences of SAP (Boafo-Arthur 2003) (emphasies ours).

Although disparity in growth rates and development indicators in the West African region continually generates debates on the actual level of development of member states, the fact of the matter is that no country in the ECOWAS region today is close to being categorized as developed as each country faces one debilitating development problem or the other. The problems member states face include expensive democracy, weak governments, compromised infrastructures, large-scale and life threatening corruption, wicked political elites, wars and over-dependence on external influence. The only signs of potential development viability in the ECOWAS region today are the gradual return to democracy and fairly stable governments. The overall success in the long run will, however, depend on the sustainability of even the positive signs; but time will tell as this is not the first time such signs have emerged in the region.

The traditional drive of SAP is that state influences must be replaced with free markets, deregulation and privatization, to ensure development. Experience has, however, shown otherwise. This is, first, because it has now been shown by the situation in the different states that SAP has failed its adopters. Second, it is because SAP is still being implemented in Africa under various guises. Reforms that are variants of SAP are still being implemented in states like Nigeria at a time when Venezuela is indigenizing its already privatized critical sectors. Hence, Nigeria is currently implementing privatization of its electricity, telecommunications and oil sector, just to mention a few, while Venezuela is forcefully, taking over already privatized public utilities when necessary, even against western condemnation and

heavy propaganda. Radical approaches like those of Venezuela are discredited by neo-liberal apologists, but the failure by developing economies to jettison their dependence on the West could mean condemnation to underdevelopment and acceptance of the popular There is No Alternative (TINA) construct (Olutayo, Olutayo and Omobowale 2005; Boafo-Arthur 2003).

The aim of this chapter is to examine the development model of SAP relative to other models with implications for the development of West African states. Drawing from the lessons learnt from the trajectories of SAP in sub-Saharan Africa, the chapter suggests an alternative approach to achieving sustainable development in the ECOWAS region.

A Survey of the SAP Topography

The need for models and frameworks to engineer development can never be over-emphasized. Models guide state activities in achieving development. This is more so if such models have performed creditably well in other socio-economic, cultural and political jurisdictions. Against the performance considerations, most of such models are even adopted without painstaking operational content evaluations, while possible local options compliant with local dynamics are often supplanted under ideological barrage. Often, needed critical model and policy considerations are trivialized and reduced to rhetorical discussions and guided diplomatic discourses often designed by international development ‘experts’ marshalled by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (the popular Bretton Woods institutions). Real and extensive development models and critical frameworks have been sidelined to the margins of international development over the years while the prescriptions from the Bretton Woods organizations have been adopted to the point of overdose and have taken the centre stage, as in the case of SAP.

The development experiences of South Korea and Taiwan formed the fundamental bases upon which the SAP was built by the World Bank and others (Taylor 2001). The two nations are commonly referred to as the twentieth century miracles and development success stories. Both countries shared identical experiences as underdeveloped nations and emerged as very close to the developed nations on important development indices of health, education and industrialization. On negative terms, development scenarios (underdevelopment), both nations commenced the 1950s with absolute poverty of most of their citizens, life expectancies were 56-60 years and both were encumbered with problems as colonies of Japan all through the first half of the century (Taylor 2001). Their success stories were, however, noticed with growth rates of 6 per cent to 8 per cent in their per capita Gross Domestic Products (GDPs) from the early 1960s to the 2000s.

More importantly, as against the development of the BRIC nations (Brazil, India and China), the development of South Korea and Taiwan had a trickle-down effect on the average people as the citizens enjoyed wage increase and appreciable living standard improvements with an equitable distribution of income identical to those of Japan, Holland and France. This is why these nations have often been described as

bold, confident, resolute, daring and worthy of emulation in the global search for development. These characteristics have earned them such names and accolades as Asian Dragons, Asian Tigers and Contemporary Development Miracles. As already mentioned above, the Asian Tigers' experience largely informed the SAP thrust in developing countries in West Africa, as their development paths were carved in gold for other developing nations. These were strongly prescribed by the World Bank and the IMF. The implementation of SAP in sub-Saharan Africa was particularly easy because the economic situation in the region was precarious. SAP was thus introduced in the region in the 1980s. During this period, many African economies witnessed serious economic disruptions (Ayadi, Adegbite and Ayadi 2008) traceable to oil crises, poor commodity pricing and generalized negative effects of global shocks.

These resulted in collapsed currencies, external debts complications (Ayadi, Adegbite and Ayadi 2008) and aggravated imbalances in Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs). The background dynamics sent the vulnerable countries to the international organizations for assistance. Unfortunately, the international organizations required economic reforms in the toga of SAP as preconditions for financial assistance and bail. This was certainly punishment for looking without, rather than within, for solutions. In line with the Modernization Theory that proffers the development tracks of early developers to later ones as sure ways to development, SAP was foisted on African nations with little or no options, *ab initio*. SAP was offered by the Bretton Woods organizations as sure economic recovery initiative designed to rescue Africa from the doldrums of economic abyss it seemed to be sinking into (Olutayo and Omobowale 2005). If it was really to rescue Africa socioeconomically, SAP should be welcomed as a messianic development by all (Olutayo and Omobowale 2005); but this was not to be, as the socioeconomically debilitating effects were crucifying.

The SAP was implemented in the African countries to restructure and diversify the productive base of the economies to reduce dependency on the oil sector and imports, achieve fiscal and balance of payment viability on the medium term and to promote non-inflationary economic growth. Against these broad objectives, African nations designed policies to achieve development within the SAP framework. For example, in order to legalize the agenda for reforms in Nigeria, the federal government promulgated the Privatization and Commercialization Decree No. 25 of 1988 and the Programme for the Implementation of the Provisions of the decree was initially coordinated and supervised by the Technical Committee on Privatization and Commercialization (TCPC), now the Bureau for Public Enterprises (BPE) (Ibeabuchi, Essien, Appah and Idowu 2003). Against public outcry and criticisms, the Decree No. 25 of 1988 and the general SAP framework, in Nigeria like other states in the region, had the following objectives:

- Reducing the size and scope of government through restructuring and rationalization to lessen the dominance of unproductive investments in public enterprises.
- Refocusing the enterprises slated for privatization to enhance performance, viability and overall efficiency, promoting a favourable climate for domestic

investment and creating a positive attitude towards private investment for both local and foreign entrepreneurs.

- Promoting equity ownership among employees of privatized businesses in order to motivate them towards higher productivity.
- Providing consumers with improved services, better product quality, wider choices, new products and lower prices.
- Improving the profitability of the privatized firms through competition (Ibeabuchi, Essien, Appah and Idowu 2003).
- Strengthening of hitherto strong and relevant demand management policies.
- Adoption of measures to stimulate domestic production and broaden the supply base of the economy.
- Setting up of a Second-Tier Foreign Exchange Market (SFEM) to ensure ‘realistic’ exchange rate to guarantee efficient resources allocation and promote domestic balanced production and non-oil exports.
- Industrial diversification.
- Liberalization of external trade and payments system fluidity as well as prices, trade and exchange control elimination.
- The elimination of price controls and commodity boards.
- The decontrol of interest rates.

The SAP implementation policy arrangements adopted by all West African states are largely identical. From the above policy lists, ECOWAS member states fit in excellently as they wiggle through the burden of SAP. States mostly approached SAP through a total reform of the economy; and they took on too many reforms at the same time beyond their capacities, within a short time under poor policy guidelines supervised by the many international experts. The combined effects of poor policy, weak guidelines, negative governments and states’ capacities, corruption, policy reversals and poor infrastructures consequently created more development problems for the African nations than were could be solved *ab initio*. Although the question of whether SAP has been a blessing or a curse to African development is still a subject of controversy in some respects, the position is that it made a nonsense of the Africans and did considerable damage to the socio-economic existence of the people. The standard of living of the people plummeted as currencies were devalued, jobs trimmed, careers destroyed, public utilities privatized/commercialized, local industries exposed vulnerably, governments became irresponsibly insensitive and corruption skyrocketed.

Rural economies were assaulted and robbed as agriculture lost its value and commodity farmers were pauperized. Largely, SAP as adopted in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly West Africa, damaged state confidence and sovereignty, and compromised material and non-material wellbeing of the majority of Africans. Foreign institutions and personalities in form of ‘experts’ dominated local experts, institutions and policy environments, which had negative implications for national psyche and national security. These situations led to national/regional/continental priority misplacements

as Bretton Woods organizations bombarded nations in the region with stringent conditionality. In Nigeria, for instance, the SAP era is fondly remembered for dangerous individualism, erosion of social solidarity, increased conflicts engendered by survival struggles, high crime rates, annihilated middle class, compromised education system, unprecedentedly high corruption rate and ground-breaking ineffective austerity measures. The extremely high corruption, for example, introduced the notion and ascendancy of the 'national cake' into the Nigerian socio-political lexicon.

The political economy of SAP in Africa is certainly more of negativity in terms of outcomes, and the impact of SAP will surely be felt in the history, present and future of West African development, particularly as the variants of the policy are still being implemented in various guises of reforms in the region. Nations appear to have been fixated at some point in the dictates of SAP. The nauseating economic and general development consequences of SAP in Africa since the 1980s has particularly had negative implications on West Africa's development and it frequently makes them forgo long-term development frameworks for short-term ones and this includes ECOWAS regional integration plans. Member states thus give more commitment to national exigencies and nation building to built credibility, especially in democratic settings, as this could determine perceptions of government performance and future election outcomes. The orientation is thus a battle for relative socioeconomic stability in the short term at home, no matter how it is achieved. Sustainable development is certainly elusive in West Africa today. And underdevelopment is obviously extensive from the foregoing regardless of where you draw the line between development and underdevelopment.

It is therefore important for ECOWAS to pay deserved attention to development problems in the region if it is to achieve its objectives especially as no state in the region has significantly changed positively in terms of development. The development models adopted in the region, including SAP, were based on Modernization Theory. Those models were/are bound to fail as no two societies can entirely develop the same way, given the unique socio-cultural and politico-economic dynamics prevalent of individual societies. This is more so when the societies of reference are in different socio-geographic domains like Asia/Europe/America and Africa. For instance, it would be impossible to reproduce in West Africa the elements that jump-started South Korean and Taiwanese development, as the rich foreign economies that sustained their aggressive export activities no longer subsist.

Development frameworks adopted in the region hitherto were based on the incorporation of less developed nations of Africa prematurely into the world capitalist system in a manner that makes the Africans subservient and dependent on the developed nations of the North (Olutayo, Olutayo and Omobowale 2008). Such relationships are certain to underdevelop African nations further as the developed ones exploit the imbalance to develop themselves even more in the face of challenging development environments globally since all nations are, in the final analysis, still developing. This is why, for dependency theorists, the development of African nations is impossible, except such relationships are critically re-assessed against present

objective realities. It is also against these realities that Meilink (2003) concluded that evidently that was why the theoretical framework of the IMF in marshalling SAP in Africa was inadequate.

The Necessities of Harmonized Alternative Development Approach in West Africa

The drive globally in contemporary terms is for regions to coordinate state activities to galvanize common fronts that could ensure development. This is usually all-inclusive to ensure comprehensive human development in the region in the face of irreversible globalization and global market competition that could compromise weak nations' development. The ECOWAS region is certainly no exception and must guarantee a harmonized or near-harmonized development approach, especially as an alternative to failed SAP ones that were imposed on West Africa since the 1980s. Ameliorating and challenging SAP was particularly difficult for ECOWAS as the regional organization was just stabilizing after its formation just about a decade earlier. Now, however, ECOWAS has stabilized and should be consolidating with workable development approaches in the region. It is, however, important to note that harmonized alternative efforts are not entirely new in Africa. But experience suggests that such alternative development paradigms are frequently rejected by governments and political elites in the region.

International institutions and African political elites rejected such proposals and under-played their critical roles in African development, while they imposed foreign ones on them as was the case in the era of SAP. In fact, there have been protracted debates between African intellectuals and the foreign 'experts' at the Bretton Woods institutions since 1976 over the best approach in the continent but the Bretton Woods institutions have always triumphed over the African intellectuals. Cases in point are those of the Lagos Plan of Action and the African Alternative Frameworks to Structural Adjustment Programme for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP). Although the documents were excellent in predicting the negative implications of SAP and economic globalization, they were not adopted and implemented by African governments regardless of the efforts of the African intellectuals. Rather than listen to the alternatives, governments agreed with foreign institutions that usually trace underdevelopment to poor local policies rather than external forces.

An example of such official rejection was in the 1981 by the World Bank through the popular Berg Report (Towards Accelerated Development in sub-Saharan Africa) which characteristically blamed local factors for sub-Saharan Africa's underdevelopment and recommended a return to outward-oriented programme of export of raw materials, rolling back states' intervention and freeing up market forces. Generally, the Berg Report of the World Bank upheld and encouraged the Bank's support for SAP and export-led development approach. It is therefore important to note that the challenge is not that intellectuals who have not suggested viable alternative development approach(es) but that of African governments and their foreign expert

partners have refused to accept and adopt the alternative development strategies. African governments lack commitment to alternatives. In fact they appear to be averse to them. They have refused to commit time, finances and political resources to such approaches. The orthodoxy of the Bretton Woods institutions regarding development approaches in Africa is understandable. The Bretton Woods institutions finance the adoption of development approaches and experimentations while African political elites receive the funds and implement the prescriptions even to the detriment of the common good.

And, why should the North as represented by the Bretton Woods institutions finance African alternative approaches – approaches that negate and often counteract the Northern Agenda? It is unlikely and certainly irrational! Governance in Africa is thus an important element in the alternative development agenda issue. Where is the commitment of the African leaders to the alternative approaches? Asians were/are committed; Latin Americans were/are committed and they are reaping the benefits as some are now even ahead of some European nations on the development scale. They have become the twentieth and twenty-first century 'development tigers, dragons and miracles! How have even the alternatives been managed over time by African social scientists who are/were in government? These are strategic issues that must be addressed objectively by ECOWAS and the African development community. There is the need to encourage governments of member states to be responsible to the alternative approaches on development. There is also the need for the African governments and political elites to appreciate local experts and their outputs in the region. And there is the need for the local intellectuals to be committed to the implementation of alternative approaches at every given opportunity.

The time to act is now. West African states today are emerging stronger and more promising as a few like Nigeria and Togo are now ranked amongst the best emerging economies in the world. The need to build on these positive development indicators is rife and the needed approach is a return to the state especially as they are now emerging stronger than the pre-SAP and SAP eras. There must be regulation. And the states, through their governments, should regulate activities of nations and not blindly deregulate. Regulation is the primary activity and essence of governments. Economically, the primary step to development is to grow the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the second is employment. It is impossible to create wealth and development by unemployment and inflation and, above all, inflation creates poverty and poverty is underdevelopment. These are what deregulation and rolling back the state have created in the West African states. It is a strong state and viable government that can successfully manage these complex situations in Africa today through regulation.

Rolling back the state cannot successfully manage these complexities in Africa for the future. African states need to decidedly unleash the energy of their people for efficient capacity utilization for development. Nigeria and Venezuela case are both members of Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) but Nigeria is rolling back the state while Venezuela is 'rolling in' the state. At present,

the local price of petrol (Premium Motor Spirit [PMS]) is 16 times higher in Nigeria than Venezuela and Nigeria is the only country in OPEC that imports petroleum. Rolling back the state is not the solution to Africa's development debacle and it is not surprising that such policies have failed since the 1980s. In the Nigerian oil sector, for instance, Nigeria has rolled back the state 17 times and this has failed 17 times beginning from 1 October 1978 at the wake of the global oil crisis that ushered in SAP. The warning therefore is that it is time to return to state as African states lack the capacity to compete effectively in the delicate global systems. Interestingly, Nigeria recently faced this stark reality in its banking and aviation industries, for example. The two sensitive and strategic industries were to crash heavily of recent and the Central Bank of Nigeria had to release billions of Naira (millions of US dollars) as bailout funds. A similar bailout fund is now also being lobbied for to shore up the downstream petroleum sector of the economy as it is also at the verge of collapse.

All African states must invest in their intellectuals to generate contemporary and competitive ideological knowledge that can continually provide alternative sustainable development approaches. This is development that is friendly today and protective tomorrow. This will include environment, gender, age, technology and health sustainability? and not just the economy. Unfortunately, intellectual and ideological investments are not particularly appreciated in Africa. Attention to education in sub-Saharan Africa today is disproportionately on science and technology while disciplines that engage socio-cultural, psychological and ideological dynamics of development are least valued. In Nigeria, two governments have recently attempted to scrap such courses from the Nigerian university curricular. These were the Abacha's regime and the Obasanjo government – one – military and the other a democratic! What stopped Abacha was his sudden death, while the needed time and democratic due diligence prevented Obasanjo. Chief Olusegun Obasanjo's government advocated for the scrapping of courses like Philosophy from the universities because, according to him, why study such courses when you know no one will employ you with such certificates.

That was and is the attitude of the African political elites. One of the foremost private universities in Nigeria today is owned by the ex-president, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. It is a purely science and technology institution. Africa needs to build and re-build its extensive knowledge infrastructure, if the continent will develop in real terms. Comprehensive ideas rule the world and generate development. It is heresy that only by science and technology knowledge and entrepreneurship skills can the African continent develop. This is a dangerous idea and should be jettisoned in its entirety. This should be discouraged because it is grossly misleading and dangerous. Government policies in the continent on economic reconstruction, technological diffusion and innovations, engineering and business development must be all-inclusive and consistent. These must be married with Social Sciences, Arts, Humanities, Administration and Agriculture and collapsed with regional integration if they are to really benefit ECOWAS nations particularly.

Unaccountable leadership, poor political elites' capacities and widespread corruption are also development challenges in the sub-region. Thus, in harmonizing the alternative development approaches, governance environments must be improved on the continent. It is only within these trajectories that the strategic opportunities in the harmonized alternative approach(es) to development in the region could be productive. It is also necessary to appropriate the knowledge and capacities of the Africans in the diaspora. This is very important as Africans in the diaspora have traversed the two divides of the worlds and have experienced the two policy domains. They therefore have the capacity to appreciate the two policy domains and contribute positively to the alternative policy formulation and adoption for sustainable development in the region, rather than relying on foreign experts that have no stake in the African development process.

Reflections on the Alternative Approach: Statements of Conclusion

African nations must develop, and the development must be sustainable. More importantly too, the sustainable development must start now. To start now and to be sustainable, however, the continent must evolve an alternative development approach. Particularly, West African nations' age-long development problems suggest the need to rethink and retool the development strategies adopted hitherto. Development approaches adopted by African nations since the 1980s have done nothing but make development in the region a mirage and make African leaders and finance ministers international beggars (Boafo-Arthur 2003). The first stage in African development is thus a return to the state. According to Boafo-Arthur (2003:48):

It has become fashionable for some analysts to ignore the fact that the vaunted phenomena economic development of the East Asian Tigers was attained by strong and capable states – not by states that were solely at the mercy of uncontrolled external phenomena often manipulated by the West to suit their developmental needs. So long as this situation persists (erosion of state power), Africa's ability to wiggle itself out of its developmental quagmire is a matter of conjecture.

The return of state power is thus a must for Africa's development. There is no such a thing as a completely liberalized economy. While the United States of America (USA) used to be a fair example of a liberalized economy, the recent global financial crisis, also known as the global economic meltdown, has even proved otherwise. In this instance, the American government had to intervene in the economic system to save the state from total collapse and this was/is the practice across the world. Aside the Lagos Plan of Action of 1980 and the AAF-SAP of 1989, as the two major alternative policy in the African development stable, some contemporary African intellectuals have contributed to the subject. Examples of these indigenous intellectuals are: Olutayo, Olutayo and Omobowale (2005), Boafo-Arthur (2003) and Ake (1996). Olutayo, Olutayo and Omobowale's (2005) alternative focused on return to the Lagos Plan of Action and the AAF-SAP framework but with the establishment of independent grassroots organizations at various levels (p. 246). For Olutayo, Olutayo and Omobowale (2005), these grassroots organizations are to be voluntary,

democratically operated and enshrined in the people's culture – to appropriate culture and tradition for self-realization. The Olutayo, Olutayo and Omobowale (2005) alternative is deployment of LPA and AAF-SAP with social capital appropriation.

For Boafo-Arthur (2003), the alternative is the return of the state to the economy. According to Boafo-Arthur (2003), serious attention must be given to the operation of a mixed economy. This mixed economy suggested by Boafo-Arthur (2003) must be summarily blended with African leaders' political will. An important point of convergence between the Olutayo, Olutayo and Omobowale (2005) alternative and the Boafo-Arthur (2003) alternative is the appreciation of the LPA and the AAF-SAP framework. But while Olutayo, Olutayo and Omobowale (2005) included social capital appropriation, Boafo-Arthur (2003) emphasized return to the state principally. While Ake (1996) also appreciated the LPA and the AAF-SAP framework, he suggested a populist alternative based on marshalling the energy of ordinary people, otherwise known as community mobilization. This is through smallholder agriculture underwritten by popular democracy and participation to increase efficiency and productivity of small farmers and rural industries.

Ake's (1996) alternative thus rests on the tripod of the market, the state and the community. A closer look at the Olutayo, Olutayo and Omobowale (2005) and the Ake (1996) alternatives thus reveals another point of convergence through the community engagements. We suggest a return to the LPA and AAF-SAP fundamentally because these policies are realistic, objective, comprehensive, pragmatic, endogenous, compliant and intellectually rigorous. Contemporary African development strategy must also return to the state. Although survival necessities are making some African states appropriate state powers, coordinated efforts must be made in the region to comprehensively return to the state. Development drives in the region must move from rolling back the state to 'rolling in' the state. It is only through the state that development in Africa can be realized, especially within the context of weak isolated economies in the region in the face of intimidating and sometimes corrosive globalization.

Hence, African development must be sustainable and inclusive. In other words, against deep-rooted patriarchy in Africa, the development alternative being suggested in this paper includes women and makes the development approach gender-compliant. This strategy is community-based and participatory to include people at the grassroots. It is not a detached development effort. At the same time, external influence or origin should be minimized. This encourages local development innovations that are workable within peculiar situations devoid of external ulterior motives. This is why strong states are expressly needed and must be returned to in the African states' development puzzle. Development policies and strategy as have been proposed in this chapter appreciate the need for the environment. The environment is a major component of this strategy. The environment (physical, natural and socio-cultural) must be respected and protected.

The environment must not be degraded through development activities and policies. The land must not be degraded; the water must be protected; forests must be conserved; climate must be reckoned with while the socio-cultural infrastructure must be conserved and deployed regularly for development. This is the historical, socio-cultural, political, economic, global and physical ecologies integration alternative development approach. It is an alternative factor in the appreciation of the consequences of complex intermingling of natural existences, external forces, regional elements, national exigencies, and the community level imperatives in African development.

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