

## **Political Economy of Multilateral Economic Cooperation and Third World Development: Lome Conventions and Their Implications for Nigeria.**

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**Abstract:** *This paper undertook a longitudinal study of the evolution of international cooperation for the development of the Third World in the context of the Lome Conventions and their successors and the implications for Nigeria as a country. Based on a survey of the extant literature on the subject, the paper discovered the long duration of the close cooperation between the two partners did not offset the incapacity of the relationship to impact positively on the economic status of the ACP States that have been adjudged to have remained underdeveloped, stagnated and engrossed in poverty, in spite of the frequent changes in the cooperation instruments, the duration of the various Conventions and the continuous expansion of the cooperation partners on both sides. The paper came to the conclusion that the failure of this instance of North-South cooperation to leverage Nigeria's economic development and the transition to regionally based Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) has had very deleterious impact on Nigeria's regional and South/South cooperation by destroying a major convergence zone of Nigeria's foreign policy which used to be centered around the Lome Convention. The major recommendation of the paper is that unless the new ECOWAS-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) is revised to the satisfaction of relevant Nigerian Stake-holders, namely the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), it should be repudiated.*

**Keywords:** *Political Economy, Multilateral Economic Cooperation, Lome Convention, ECOWAS – EU, EPA*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Everything considered, the post world war II international system could be designated with some justification and accuracy as the age or epoch of multilateral economic cooperation for the development of the Third World with different nuances; if we go by the titles of some leading studies of the era (Sagasti and Alcade 1999; and Dadzie, 1993). In fact, the significance and the importance of multilateral cooperation for development was not seriously affected by the debate over the real meaning and possible directions which the process of development should take (Benzanron and Sagasti (2005).

The dominance of multilateral economic cooperation was such that it was conducted and coordinated at multiple levels, with the United Nations and its specialized agencies playing the leading role such as when in the 1970s the United Nations General Assembly (G A )assumed direct responsibility for the negotiations leading to the establishment of a New international Economic Order (NIEO); or through the activities of the three Bretton Woods institutions: the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the International Bank for Development and Reconstruction (The World Bank) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) which was later succeeded by the World Trade Organization (WTO), which according to Milner, succeeded in significantly reducing tariff barriers to international trade among developed countries but having them replaced by non-tariff barriers, which have been the major obstacles to Third World exports to advanced countries (Milner 2012).

Other instances designed to promote multilateral cooperation for the economic development of the Third World were the different panels of eminent personalities on North-South Dialogue, the latest being the one constituted by the Chairman of the Group of 77 which in 2007 identified Trade, Financing for Development, Global Financial Architecture and Governance, Climate Change, Science and Technology and Energy, as the key areas and issues for the developing countries.(G-77/AM(XX 2008/6). It is pertinent to emphasize the reality that all the global efforts to achieve general solutions to economic challenges confronting the Third World ended in total or near complete failure for different reasons: the most important being the determination of the two leading economies of the world in the last quarter of the twentieth century the United States of America and Japan, to ensure that the Group of 77 did not use their numerical advantage at the General Assembly of the United Nations to legislate a New International Economic Order that will significantly redress the balance of economic power between the advanced industrialized countries and the Third World, but whose cost had to be borne mostly by the advanced industrialized countries.

It was in this context that the partial or regional dialogue and cooperation between the former European Economic Community (now the European Union) and the enlarged group of African Caribbean and Pacific

(ACP) states was inaugurated in the early 1970's both as a means of overcoming the stagnation of the global North-South dialogue and safeguarding the strategic interests of Europe that had been developed in the colonial connection between Europe and Africa.

What needs to be further emphasized here is that the regional or partial economic cooperation between the ACP States and the predecessor of the European Union (EU) which began in the unique circumstances specified above has proved to be most enduring, far reaching, and perhaps least satisfying to all the participating states as witnessed by the number of years it has taken to put in place the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAS) that were meant to succeed the Lome' Conventions, (Bilal and Stevens 2009; Odock 2012). This state of dependency on the status of ACP-EU relations can be further gauged by the subtle change in emphasis from what needs to be done to rectify the shortcomings of ACP-EU cooperation to the search for what went wrong in the cooperation (See Banthia 2007; ODI 1995:77; and Watanabe 2004?).

Why the regional multilateral economic cooperation for the development of the Third World in the context of the Lome' conventions should produce the paradoxical outcome noted above and its implications for Nigeria is the subject of this chapter and definitely requires a detailed study.

But before we embark on such a study however, the subject raises a number of questions that need to be answered:

- (a) What is the meaning of the key terms used in the title of this chapter; namely: Political economy; multilateral economic cooperation; Third World Development, implications for Nigeria?
- (b) What are the origins, processes and evolution ACP- EU multilateral cooperation for development?
- (c) What theoretical and methodological foundations can guide our study of ACP-EU cooperation in the context of Lome'?
- (d) What can be considered the major achievements and weaknesses of ACP-EU cooperation for Third World Development?
- (e) What are the implications of the above results for Nigeria as a country?

The analysis set forth in this paper focuses on five core policy areas: Partnership, Political Development, Poverty reduction and economic development, regional integration, and trade development. This paper will demonstrate that from Rome to Yaounde to Lome and finally to Cotonou, EU-ACP development policy failed to deliver on each of those objectives, leaving the ACP states impoverished, uncompetitive, underdeveloped, and weak... (Banthia 2007).

## II. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

**Political Economy:** The concept of political economy can be used in a dual sense: either as a substantial field of study which emphasizes the inseparability of the economic and socio-political aspects of social reality as in the dialectic between the economic structure of society and the politico-legal and social super-structure. The fundamental assumption here is that the political, legal and artistic aspects of any society have their ultimate if not their immediate origin in the nature of the economy and relations of production. In a second sense, the concept of political economy refers to a methodology for the study of society that emphasizes the need to focus analysis on the distribution of economic power among groups in society as a key to explaining the patterns and dialectics of politics, ethnic and other dynamics of society.

What we need to underscore here is the fact that political economy in this dual sense is central to an understanding of the multilateral cooperation for development between the ACP and the EU. For example; the initial erroneous assumption that economic cooperation could be promoted and positive results achieved without due attention to political considerations became more and more evident after the first Lome' convention, with more explicit political 'conditionalities' being injected into the third and especially the fourth Lome' conventions. The centrality of the political dimensions of political inequality between the former colonial powers and their former colonies also weighed heavily in the cooperation as can be seen from some of the titles used to the relationship; for example (Zartman, 1976: "the weak confront the strong; Ravenhill 1986 : Collective Clientelism") Nabudere (1976) and Asante (1986). Igwe (2005:333), emphasized the duality of political economy when he noted that after the industrial revolution P.E "became clearly established both as a way of looking at and interpreting societal and international phenomena, and a distinct course within the social sciences, especially political science." Thus, given the strong interplay of political forces in the management of international economic relations and vice versa, Bergsten and Krause (1975 : IX) made a case for "an integrated analysis of the economic and political factors that together determine international arrangements".

We note that the appeal launched in that special edition of International Organization has not only given rise to a thriving new Inter-discipline – International Political Economy as a very fruitful approach to the study of International Relations, it has led many studies adopting the political economy approach.

### **III. MULTILATERAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT**

#### **(International Relation Theory)**

This expression denotes the practice that became rampant since the end of the Second World War for large groups of states both developed and under-developed, to work together in pursuit of economic goals and objectives by following the tenets of multilateralism as opposed to bilateralism or unilateralism (Igwe 2005:41-42). Caporaso (1978) endeavored to locate the concept in the context of International relations theory.

Griffiths and Collaghan, have opined that “Multilateralism is a particular way of bringing together international actors to support cooperation, incorporating principles of non-discrimination, diffuse reciprocity and generalized institutional structures”,(Griffiths and Callaghan(2002:198). What do the authors mean by these three additional concepts of non-discrimination, diffuse reciprocity and generalized institutional structures? In the broadest terms, non-discrimination in multilateral relations refers to the fact that all the state actors are treated as roughly equal; with no special considerations given to status or rank of the states in the international system in legal terms. This principle is often referred to as the most favoured nation principle (MFN). Diffuse reciprocity refers to the obligation of states to extend to each other the same treatment they expect to receive in their interactions. This means that states have to give as well as receive favors in their mutual relationships. Finally, generalized institutional structures has reference to the use of general international institutions that comprise general regimes and international organizations to administer their cooperation for development, for example; the Bretton Woods institutions for the management of financial and economic cooperation; the World Trade Organization for the oversight of global commercial relations, etc.

It is significant that after independence in the 1960s, many Third World Countries showed a strong preference for multilateral forms of cooperation for economic development as opposed to bilateralism. This preference could be accounted for in terms of desire to wrest the maximum concessions from the advanced countries that were generally more powerful than the Third World Countries and were certain to prevail in purely bilateral contests. More importantly, multilateralism proved a more useful strategy in the Post-war context of deep bipolarity. Thus multilateral cooperation for economic development could be described as a series of collective efforts jointly undertaken by the advanced industrialized countries of the East and the West including Japan, and the newly independent countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America to bring about development in these new countries (often defined and conceptualized in purely quantitative terms as conceived by Rostow (1960), in Stages of growth; but also sometimes also conceived in the more positive and qualitative dimensions, as shown by Seers (1969), in “What is happening to Poverty”? etc. However, multilateral economic cooperation for development whether pursued in a quantitative or qualitative perspective had a number of conceptual foundations that need to be constantly kept in mind.

- (i) The objective indicators of under development: poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy and squalor were accepted as an affront on the enlightened conscience of the world;
- (ii) The individual underdeveloped countries themselves lacked the intellectual, technological expertise and financial wherewithal to pull themselves out of the quagmire of under development;

Cooperation for economic development was therefore accepted as a global challenge that called on the contribution of all willing partners. The multilateral format of international cooperation for development was the preferred option because it did not put the newly independent countries in bilateral confrontations with their former colonial masters, who could use aid to nourish neo-colonial agendas. Therefore the multilateral context could help to dilute the overbearing influence of the major powers while magnifying the negotiating room for the poorer countries. Finally multilateral economic cooperation, it was agreed, must be operated on a multifaceted template comprising:

- (a) Financial aid: in the form of unconditional financial transfers from the advanced industrialized countries to the poor ones to support national budgets or any other expenses.
- (b) Project Funding which allowed the implementation of specific development projects in the new states: road and bridge construction, building of schools; and hospitals, etc.
- (c) Manpower training opportunities and funding which allowed personnel from poor countries to study or train abroad;
- (d) Commercial credit which was used by governments, agencies and companies to import and utilize needed factories, equipment and other materials;
- (e) Military aid which comprised of training and supply of equipment, armaments and logistic support;
- (f) Technical assistance in the form of provision of technical experts from the advanced countries to the under developed countries.

The most crucial point to note is that everyone or group of newly independent countries seemed to orientate their multilateral economic cooperation to suit their peculiar national or regional aspirations. For example; while military dictatorships generally emphasized military cooperation, popular or more people oriented regimes gave preference to economic and technical cooperation.

#### **IV. THE LOME' CONVENTIONS**

This expression describes the series of four multilateral cooperation agreements between the ACP countries and the European Economic Community and its successor the European Union (EU) concluded between 1975 and 1999, otherwise known as Lome' I, Lome' II, Lome' III and Lome' IV; which four treaties provided the legal framework that governed the interactions between the two groups of actors from 1975 to 1999. The significance of the Lome' conventions rests in the fact that they not only provided the foundation of a quasi permanent inter-change between the ACP and EU countries, they have given birth to more complex and far reaching forms of cooperation between Europe and Africa such as the "ACP – EU Strategic Partnership Agreement" (Ering and Odock 2013), and the protracted efforts to conclude an Economic Partnership Agreements that will regularize the special relationship within the parameters of the World Trade Organization (WTO) (Odock and Dirisu 2012). With these preliminary remarks, we can proceed to examine the unique nature of the Lome' Conventions as a special regime of multilateral economic cooperation for Third World Development and the implications for Nigeria as a nation state.

#### **V. THIRD WORLD DEVELOPMENT**

The Third World is a collective designation of the newly independent countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America coined in the context of the deep bipolarity that characterized the post- World War II Two era of the 1950s to the end of the Cold War in 1989. The Third World was designed to ideologically separate the newly independent countries from the divided First and Second Worlds characterized by their rival ideological and military alliances to limit the Capitalist ideology of the First World represented by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Second World of socialism represented by the Warsaw Pact Organization (Warsaw Pact). With these two blocks, locked in lethal competition for global dominance, the newly independent countries, desirous to safeguard their independence and sovereignty choose to come together as a non aligned movement, the group of 77 or simply the Third World. It is note-worthy that the umbrella organization of the Third World, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) played a very significant role in the international system throughout the duration of the auspice of the Groups of 77 that the Third World countries were most successful in influencing the course of international relations, as when they prevailed on the United Nations in 1975 to pass the General Assembly. Resolution on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order (NIEO) Although the specific objectives enunciated in the demand for a New International Economic Order (NIEO) were eventually sidelined or overtaken by other developments, these objectives were systematically made an integral part of the four Lome' Conventions between the ACP and EU countries. For example; STABEY, SYSMIN and Industrial cooperation were built into the Lome' Conventions at different times as a partial responses to the global demands for the transformation of international economic relations.

#### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE, CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE LOME' CONVENTIONS**

One major issue of controversy which is yet to be settled in literature is how regional cooperation either promotes or hinders growth in these economics, through external trade. They are those who believe that multilateral economic cooperation can foster deep economic integration while others supports the fact that this cooperation only erects some walls that can hinder trade (Okafor 2012).

According to Oyejide (2009), he argues that the developing countries may not have the needed capacity to or even know what to negotiate given that some of these negotiations and agreement recognizes the economic fundamentals and constraints of developing countries that affect the effectiveness of the trade policies. Banthia (2007) maintains that the negotiation table between the EU and the ACP has not been stable but tilts heavily to the EU. Lome I came with equality to the partners but according to Whiteman (1998), their "negotiating muscle" has withered over the period. Herbst (1987) further argues that by Lome III "the EC formulated policy on all major questions at the last moment, and then presented it as a take it or leave it proposition to the ACP". Hurt (2003) also argues that ACP had in Lome II and III refused political conditionality only to be forced to accept it in Lome IV.

The Most Favoured Nation (MFN) which protects the multilateral trade rules has to great extent reduced the trade preferences and duty free offered by the EU to ACP states (Adenikinju 2005). Despite the fact that Multilateral Trade System (MTS) came with tariff reduction,

Adenikinju (2005) argues that because of the MFN, it has ended up causing a lot of tariff erosion. This has led to a lot of loss of revenue and loss of competitiveness of the ACPs economy. In his view, Oyejide (2010) believes that the capacities to participate and negotiate as well as to bear the cost of implementation of the body of rules are the problems facing developing countries if they are to realize the potential gains in MTS. In another argument, the trade performance of African economies have improved and benefited largely since the commencement of the World Trade Organization (WTO) disciples. Roderick (2003) also argued that the fact that African countries are behind Asian countries in world trade should not be seen to be caused by external



factors but internal. Supplementing this argument, (Oyejide 2001) notes that African countries have not fully tapped the potential opportunities offered by the WTO under the MFN and generalised preferences (GSP). He added that the ability to negotiate is not as important as being able to understand how to maximize the offered opportunities under the MTS.

The Lome' Conventions seem to have attracted a very large number of conceptual and theoretical appreciation and evaluations, often colored by either the geographical location of the observers or their ideological orientations. By geographical location we refer specifically to whether the writer making the comment is a citizen of the EU or a representative of its institutions. For European writers and other scholars of liberal institutions the Lome' Conventions have been described in terms of either contributing to the establishment of a new international economic order by its various provisions (Twitchett 1978). "Inching towards Interdependence" (Gruhn 1976). According to the author, the first Lome' convention produced some innovative and groundbreaking moves towards more equitable trade and aid relations". In simple terms Gruhn is optimistic that the convention if faithfully implemented could transform ACP-EEC relations from those of independence and domination, to those of interdependence and partnership and equality. Another conceptual interpretation of the Lome' Conventions was the suggestion that the Lome' regime represents a system of "collective clientelism" Ravenhill (1986). In this work emphasizes the point that through the instrumentality of the Lome' Conventions, the members of the EU were able to transform their bilateral relations and responsibilities for their former colonies, into a multilateral or collective responsibility. For the former colonies, instead of remaining tied to apron strings of their former colonial powers they were now beholden to the members of the EEC/EU as a whole. But as many decades of ACP-EU have demonstrated a clientele relationship does not change significantly even if it is multilateralized or made collective.

However, Third World and African writers in particular have put forth very radical and critical descriptions of the Lome' convention, especially after the signature of the first one in 1975. For example; S.B.K Asante (1986) raised the question as to whether the relations established under the Lome' Conventions could be classified in terms of "collective dependence or interdependence. As it turned out, the relations of Lome' remained largely in the orbit of collective dependence of the ACP on the EU rather fostering a robust regime of interdependence. Hence, Asante's conclusion that the relations established by the Lome' Conventions were "non progressive". While Galtung categorized the Lome' regime as neo-capitalist" Galtung (1976); Nabudere on his part the relations under reference as "neo-colonial", (Nabudere 1976). The question that all these descriptions raises is whether relations that fall under such negative references could be expected to transform the economies of the collective clients or neo-colonial territories? The answer is a definitive number. The obvious implication of this conceptual and theoretical survey is that the study of Lome' Conventions need not be undertaken from an overly optimistic perspective. Watanabe (2004) has also indicated that Lome' Conventions have been studied from the perspectives of the dependent and modernization theories.

It is obvious that the various authors cited above can be located in at least one of the above mentioned approaches, although Watanabe proposed the concept of Fordism to categorize ACP-EU relations under the Lome Conventions, given their initial focus on the industrialization of ACP countries.

## **VI. THE ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF THE LOME CONVENTIONS**

The origin of the Lome conventions can be taken as far back as any researcher will like to go in the history of Africa's long standing relationship with Europe, beginning with the so called voyages of discovery which brought European traders, missionaries and colonialists, beginning with the Portuguese in the second half of the fifteenth century to Africa. However, the Berlin Conference of 1884/85 which recognized, approved and ratified the spheres of influence of the major European powers: Great Britain, France, Germany, Portugal and Spain in Africa appears to be the remote origin of the Lome' Conventions. This background created the condition whereby, when the original six EEC members of Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands decided to transform and broaden their cooperation in Coal, Iron and Steel production into a full - fledged European Economic Community in March 1957, by the instrumentality of the treaty of Rome, they could not do so to the exclusion of the colonies and overseas territories of France and Belgium in Africa and the Caribbean seas, as a result of the thick web of economic, political and social ties between the metropolitan countries of France and Belgium especially and the overseas colonies and territories. The articles of Association that were hurriedly attached to the Treaty of Rome helped to resolve the initial dilemma that confronted the European parties to the treaty of Rome (Odock 2010). By means of the Articles of Association, all the colonies and overseas territories became associated members of the European Economic Community and its members states ; whereby reciprocal trade preferences enjoyed by the community members among themselves were extended to the Overseas territories and colonies; while the members of the European Economic Community agreed to constitute the first European Development Fund (EDFI) that will intervene in the associated colonies and territories to promote their economic and social development. In addition to the financial envelope to be

contributed by the six member states of the European Economic Community, the Community and its members agreed to provide technical assistance to the associated members to ensure “their rapid development”.

Although the independence of many French and Belgian colonies in Africa between 1957 and 1962 put the association freely extended to the overseas territories and colonies to serious question, and especially the contentious nature of the concept association, which became subject of very divergent interpretations (Odock 1989:67) the two sides were able to overcome the challenges of independence by concluding two Yaoundé’ conventions in 1963 and 1969. These conventions were noted for their very limited impact in stimulating the economic development of the associated states in Africa and the Caribbean Sea. This poor performance of the two Yaoundé’ conventions to promote the economic especially the industrial development of the associated states in spite of the fact that they carried forward the three main features of the regime of association namely; reciprocal trade relations between the EEC and its member states, financial and technical cooperation, which became a prominent reference point in the negotiations of the first Lome’ convention between 1972 and 1975.

Elsewhere we have noted the following in relation to processes that led to the conclusion of the first Lome’ Convention in 1975: “The Utility of the two Yaoundé Convention lies however in the widespread hostility which they aroused amongst Africans of the dangers and effectiveness of exclusive arrangements between African states and their former colonial masters as well as the need to reform the whole structure of relations between Europe and Africa. The opportunity to discuss and resolve some of these issues was not far to seek: the expected expiration of the second Yaoundé Agreement in 1974, the renewed interest of the United Kingdom of Great Britain in joining the European Economic Community in 1972 as well as the movement in the United Nations for the Establishment of a new International Economic order combined with the world energy crisis of 1973 to fundamentally strain the status quo in the relation between the European Economic Community and the Associated African States (EAMAS). The search for a new system of relations therefore opened in 1972” (Odock, 2001).

It was with this background that negotiations of the first Lome’ Convention took place mostly in Brussels, but with significant conferences and meetings in different locations. The most significant aspect of the negotiations were the following:

**First;** the determination of the Nigerian government of the day to ensure that the Lome’ Convention was not a mere reproduction of the Yaoundé’ Conventions.

**Second;** the effort made by the Nigerian government to ensure that instead of African, Caribbean and Pacific groups negotiating separately with Europe, all the future signatures of new agreement confronted the EEC as a unified, coherent group – the African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) groups of states. This new found unity and solidarity was consolidated in 1975 by the signature of the Georgetown Agreement creating the ACP Group, a new actor in the international system (See Briggs 1976).

**Third;** in order to offset the less than salutary impact of the two Yaoundé’ Conventions on the industrial development of the former associated states and territories the Nigerian government insisted that a special chapter on industrial cooperation be included in Lome’ Convention to stimulate the industrialization of Nigeria.

**LOME I TO LOME IV:** From multilateral cooperation for development to a system of Political dictation? With the passage of time and benefit of hindsight and, with the transition of ACP-EU multilateral cooperation from Lome’ I to Lome’ IV and the slow motion from the Cotonou Partnership Agreement to regionally negotiated Economic Partnership Agreements EPAs (Odock and Dirisu 2012; Watanabe 2004), how can we now designate the Lome’ process? In our considered opinion the whole process of Lome’ from the first to the Fourth Lome’ Convention can best be described as a transition from a system of multilateral economic cooperation between the ACP and the EU in the true sense of the term and mutual agreement to a system of political domination and dictation on the part of the EU and its member states over the ACP countries. Two important variables help to explain this transition: First of all, time and context; and Secondly, the content and subject matter of the four Lome’ Conventions.

In terms of context, most scholars have singled out the period leading up to 1975 as a favorable international context in which the world prices for raw materials and African export commodities were high, the movement for the establishment of a New International Economic Order was at its climax, pitting the Third World countries against the industrialized countries; while OPEC; the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries demonstrated beyond doubts by its use of oil as a political weapon that the Third World was a rising force. The international context not only favored the ACP countries, it put pressure on the members of the European Economic Community to make concessions to the ACP countries. It was a pleasant coincidence that Nigeria, a prominent member of OPEC led and coordinated the negotiations between the ACP and the EEC.

However, the international context declined rapidly after 1975 in such a way that the dialectics between the regionalists and globalists within the global community itself not only sharpened giving rise to questions as to whether the focus on a small group of ACP states was sustainable or consistent with the EEC policy of cooperation for development. But more significantly a new group of political leaders imbued with the zeal of

free market economics or monetarism emerged in Britain and the United States strongly opposed to the use of aid and more favorable to trade as an instrument of development cooperation. The combined effect of Thatcherism in Great Britain and Reaganomics in the United States of America must have gone a long way to dilute the enthusiasm of the European Economic Community to maintain its original level of financial commitments to the ACP countries. The abatement and eventual end of the Cold War provided a group of new candidates with favourable economic and social credentials for European economic support. In concrete terms central and Eastern Europe became more attractive and compelling candidates for EU development cooperation than the ACP countries. All these taken together contributed to the steady deterioration of ACP – EU cooperation (Watanabe 2004). Gomes (2013), anchored this point in a recent article when he emphasized the changed environment of ACP – EU interactions by noting that the ACP – EU intervention is taking place in a world drastically different from the neo-colonial era of the 1970s; a situation he felt demands a reshaping of the asymmetrical partnership between the ACP and the EU.

This background provides a good foundation for a study of the provisions of the successive Lome' Conventions as evidence of the transition from a regime of multilateral cooperation for economic development to an instrument of political domination and dictation by the EU over the ACP countries:

**LOME' I:** The result of sincere bargaining and compromise contained three major innovations that constituted a real attempt to address ACP economic challenges. First the regime of reciprocal trade preferences between the European community and the associated states that prevailed under the Yoaunde' Conventions was abolished and a system of unilateral preferences in favor of the ACP was instituted. A significant percentage of ACP products were granted free access to the European markets, and a series of measures to stimulate ACP trade were introduced,

Given the fluctuations and gyrations of the prices of raw materials and primary commodities in the world market, and their negative impact on the financial and budgetary stability of the ACP states, a new instrument was introduced to stabilize the export earnings of the ACP countries, called STABEX. In very simple terms, STABEX meant that those ACP countries whose export earnings from a number of specified commodities fell below a specific threshold calculated as a percentage of total export earnings for a year, could apply the European Community for a financial contribution to compensate for the loss in revenue. If conceived in good faith, the application of STABEX soon raised a controversy over the number of products left out; the adequacy of the financial resources made available for each of operation; and the slow process of disbursement of agreed sums.

Finally, as already indicated a chapter on Industrial Cooperation was included in the convention in response to the industrially advanced members of the ACP Group such a Nigeria. This provision which was considered very far reaching in its potential impact, however rapidly lost its value as the economic crisis which began in the late 1970s, deepened in the 1980s. As foreign exchange to pay for imported raw materials became more difficult to access, many of the factories that hurriedly set up had to shut down.

In addition to these three innovations contained in the first Lome' Convention, the two traditional elements of the regime of association namely financial and technical cooperation, as well as the provision for settlement and establishment between the two parties. One observer in particular turned out a very positive assessment of the Lome' Convention based on these provisions. In the view of the three innovative mechanisms introduced in Lome I namely:

- i. The provision for industrial cooperation
- ii. The introduction of non-reciprocal trade performances and
- iii. The export earnings stabilization fund STABEX Gruhn (1976)

### **Lome' II: The Beginning of the Decline.**

Although Lome' II convention was eventually initialed in 1979 this was done in an atmosphere of either total disappointment or unfulfilled expectations on the part of the ACP group. The causes of disappointments were many; rather than expand, deepen and consolidate the three main instruments of improved access to ACP products in European markets; providing a robust financial envelope for STABEX and including more products under the coverage of STABEX, and improving on industrial cooperation, Lome' II introduced a system of financial support of mineral products that were formerly covered by STABEX, called SYSMIN. Although well intentioned SYSMIN did not witness a radical improvement in EU investment in ACP mines partly due to the fact the funds allocated to SYSMIN were sourced from part of the total cooperation envelope, but also due to the fact the long process of disbursement of agreed funds did not improve.

**LOME III:** According to David (2000), the third Lome Convention signed in 1984 had a total of 75 signatories 10 on the part of the European Union and 65 ACP states. The putative innovation introduced by this convention was the genesis of politicization of the cooperation by the "progressive abandonment of the project approach

and the need for concentration of Community aid on a sectoral basis”, with priority given to food security, combating desertification and drought (David 2000:13).

A point worth emphasizing is to note that the seed of politicization sown in Lome 111 became full blown in LomeIV with the introduction of full political conditionalities such as respect for human rights, democratic participation, etc.; thereby giving the EU states unlimited powers to dictate the policy choices of ACP governments. Some of the items in review of the Lome’ IV incorporated political conditionality into the development assistance for ACP countries” (Watanabe 2003:47). There is no doubt that the progressive decline of the gains of Lome’ with the transition from Lome’ I to IV had a very negative impact on the quality and outcome of ACP-EU multilateral cooperation. Although several indicators could be used to underscore this negative impact, we shall concentrate on the volume of financial envelope offered by the EU during the phase of cooperation under discussion. A study published by Bilal and Stevens (2008) provides us a useful platform for assessing the vagaries of EEC-ACP cooperation that did not allow it to make significant progress in subsequent Conventions after Lome’ I.

An Asian observer of ACP-EU cooperation for development has noted that while the transition from Lome’ I to Lome’ III witnessed the systematic erosion of the preferences extended to Africa through the guise of new instruments such as SYSMIN rather than deepening and strengthening STABEX,

**Lome IV:** The Convention explicitly supported structural adjustment measures of the World Bank. In the particulars,, the 1996 midterm With respect to the system of stabilization of the export earnings of the ACP countries STABEX; although the implementation of the programme in the first five years revealed two major shortcomings namely, a serious shortfall in the financial provision for each of the operating years and the total outlay for the five year period, on the one hand, and the ACP countries that actually made requests for financial transfers experienced serious delays in having their requests processed no remedial measures were taken in the second and Third Conventions to address the challenges.

Finally, with regard to industrial cooperation which a country like Nigeria wanted to leverage her own industrialization, the preferences were either by programme elimination of tariffs under the GATT; or the adoption of stiff non-tariff barriers or again the inflexibility of the rules of origin applicable to ACP exports. It is no surprise that most evaluations of ACP-EU trade cooperation often turned out a negative verdict (see for example, Wolf 1996), where she raised many questions about the economic situation of the ACP economies “Over 20 years after the first Lome’ Agreement came into force, most of the ACP countries are still amongst the poorest in the world”.

President of the World Bank, James D. Wolfensohn in his forward to the 2000 Bank Publication: The Quality of Growth noted the bleak situation of some parts of the world in the face of several decades of global prosperity. In the face of almost two decades of rapid economic growth in some countries, others have not benefitted from such progress. “In many settings policies have favored vested interests of the elite, and thus not promoted adequate investments in human capital and natural capital, which are essential for broad based growth”. If there are any areas of the world that fit this description, it is obviously the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa and their counterparts in the Caribbean and Pacific Ocean.

At this juncture it is appropriate to pose the question: what is the real magnitude and value of EU aid to the ACP countries over the more than five decades of their close cooperation? Bilal and Stevens (2008), provide data that can be useful in making an evaluation. In table 1 below the authors show EU funding for the various European Development Funds (EDF) under four columns: Funds allocated during each five year envelope in terms of nominal value, real value of the financial envelope in 1975 equivalent, disbursements in five years to which the envelope was allocated (normal value); and percentage of total allocation disbursed in the five years to which it was allocated to the nearest percentage.

**Table 1:** Fund Allocated and Spent during each Five – Year Financing Cycle of ACP – EU Cooperation since Lome I (million euros)

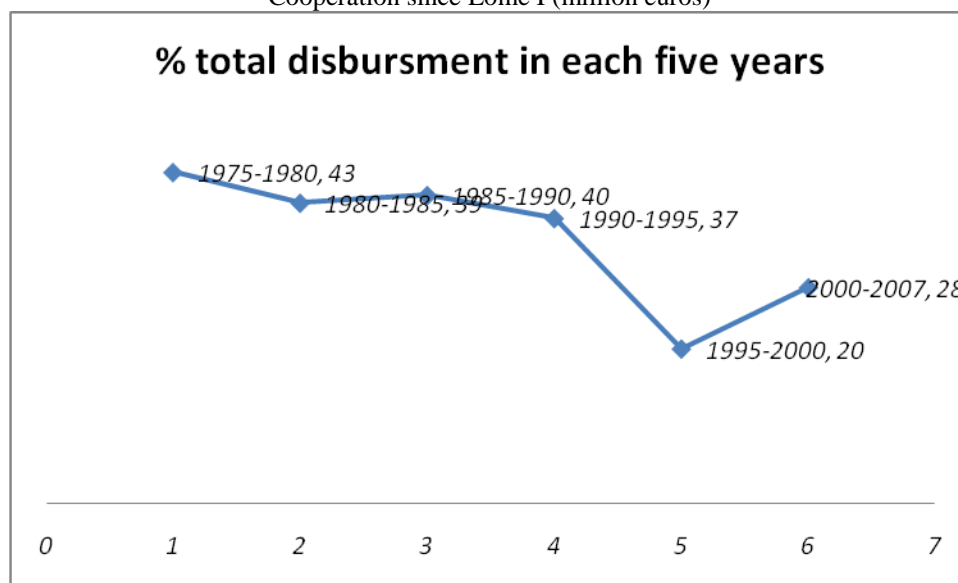
| EDF Assistance Package             | Funds allocated during the 5 year envelope (nominal value). | Real value of the envelope (1975 base year) | Disbursements in the five years to which the envelope was allocated (normal value) | Percentage of total allocation disbursed in the five years to which it was allocated nearest % |
|------------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| 4 <sup>th</sup> EDF<br>1975-1980   | 3,390   | 2,696                                       | 1,454.5  | 43   |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> EDF<br>1980 – 1985 | 5,227   | 2586  | 2,041.6  | 39   |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> EDF<br>1985 – 1990 | 8,400   | 3,264                                       | 3,341.6  | 40   |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> EDF<br>1990 – 1995 | 12,000  | 3,264                                       | 4,417.9  | 37   |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> EDF                | 14,625  | 3,463                                       | 2,921.6  | 20   |



|                     |        |       |         |    |
|---------------------|--------|-------|---------|----|
| 1995 – 2000         |        |       |         |    |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> EDF | 15,200 | 3,131 | 4,239.0 | 28 |
| 2000 – 2007         |        |       |         |    |

SOURCE: Bilal, S. and Stevens, C. (eds.) (2009): The Interim Economic Partnership Agreements between the EU and African States. Contents Challenges and Prospects. Mastricht, P227.

**Figure 1:** Trend analysis of Fund Allocated and Spent during each Five – Year Financing Cycle of ACP – EU Cooperation since Lome I (million euros)



Source: Arthurs

**What is the Significance and the Implication of the data presented on the Table and figure?**

The most important point to note about the figures presented in the table above is the reality that whatever the total financial envelope nominally allocated for ACP-EU cooperation during the various five year periods under consideration, only a small percentage of the actual sum got actually disbursed, with the period 1975-1980 representing the highest level of actual disbursement of 43% the total aid envelope of N3, 390 million Euros. The 20% recorded between 1995 and 2000, out of a total envelope of N14, 625 million Euros represented the lowest level of disbursement in ACP-EU cooperation. It is significant that at no point did the two partners witness the disbursement of up to 50% of the allocated assistance package.

The most evident and far reaching impact of this low level of actual disbursement of funds is that it affected the whole complexion and tenor of ACP-EU multilateral cooperation for development; irrespective of the laudable projects and programmes agreed upon by all the partners. Similarly, since the financial allocation or package was deployed to implement all the agreed projects and programmes, chronic underfunding, slow disbursements of agreed or programme funds only translated into inaction or abandoned cooperation projects. It is therefore not surprising the positive appraisals of ACP/EU cooperation in the media or on special reports were only on paper but had little or no impact on the ground in ACP countries. The low disbursement of agreed financial resources taken together with the erosion of the commercial preferences extended to the ACP countries and the erection of nontariff barriers to the EU markets can go a long way to providing an answer to Wolf’s question as to why after more than 20 years of the implementation of the first Lome’ Convention, there was little or no impact on the ACP countries. In this regard, Banthia (2007), provides a powerful summary of how and why ACP-EU cooperation failed. In his words:

The contemporary condition of ACP counties makes Banthia’s assertion totally credible and without need of further demonstration. We only add that an observer of ACP-EU cooperation from the Caribbean perspective also came to the conclusion that the whole process was flawed from the start owing to lack of information, adhoc approach to consultations, selective involvement of partners and lack of organizational and capacity support, (Katja 1998).

## **VII. EPAS AND THE BALKANIZATION OF THE ACP GROUP**

It is now an established fact that after a long and protracted process of negotiations which began in 2002 and continued up to 2014, the European Commission EU has concluded full or interim Economic Partnership Agreements EPAs with most of the ACP regional groupings isolated and identified for that purpose (Bilal and Stevenson 2009); although in the case of the ECOWAS-EU regional EPA, the agreement remains to be ratified, amid strong protestations by the manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) that the treaty be rejected or very seriously modified (see MAN advertorial titled: “MAN Position on ECOWAS-EU Economic Partnership Agreement EPA” Punch, Friday June 5, 2015, 22]. The Publication in question makes an interesting reading as it strikes at the heart and essence of an EPA which seeks to build bridges between economic and business actors from the two communities. But in order to put the MAN contestation in proper context, we need to determine both the economic and determine both the economic and political meaning and implications of the EPA.

In the most direct and brief terms, an Economic Partnership Agreement has been conceptualized as an escape route that allows the European Union and its ACP partners to overcome the hurdles imposed by the World Trade Organization (WTO) on the practice of non - reciprocal trade preferences that obtained during the lifespan of the Four Lome’ Conventions. Consequently, the EPA has been conceived in terms of three related features: the first is reciprocity whereby the two actors in an Economic Partnership Agreement will extend to each other the same privileges and opportunities. This is characterized by the creation of a Free Trade Area (FTA) between the two partners, irrespective of their levels of economic development. A second feature which the designers of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) built into the system is regionalism, or simply the principle of geographical propinquity in the negotiation and conclusion of EPAs. In practice, what regionalism means is that rather than treat the ACP group holistically as an economic partner, the EU succeeded in breaking the whole ACP Group into first the original three negotiating groups that existed prior to the conclusion of the first Lome Convention, and eventually into about fifteen different groupings: about four or five groups in Africa alone, while the Caribbean and Pacific countries form their own multiple groups.

Now, the logic of regionalism appears to be difficult to assail conceptually in so far as belonging to the same geographical region translates into sharing the same climatic, ecological, agricultural and transportation challenges and opportunities. But given the disparities in the natural endowments of ACP countries and their development potentials, limiting their interactions with the EU and its member states tantamount to returning them to the old regime of association where the ancestor of the present EU used to define what was good, for the overseas territories and colonies. Ultimately, the major consequence of regionalism is the balkanization of the ACP group into minute groupings that can hardly take a stand and define their interests against the powerful EU. The third and last feature of the new EPAs is the special consideration extended to the least developed, landlocked and island states to export into the EU markets “all but arms”. In principle, these special considerations alongside the generalized system of preferences practiced by the EU in favour of developing countries were put forth as capable stimulating ACP exports into the EU market. Unfortunately the real barriers to ACP exports have never been tariff barriers, but non tariff, in the form of quantitative restrictions and phyto – sanitary standards. Different studies have shown that the combined effect of these two types of barriers has been largely responsible for the poor performance of the ACP in trade cooperation.

## **VIII. THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE OF ACP-EU MULTILATERAL COOPERATION UNDER THE LOME CONVENTIONS**

It is quite evident that given the long standing nature of ACP-EU cooperation, it has had several implications for Nigeria as a country and as an actor in the international system, some beneficial, but most of them negative or deleterious; both economically and politico-diplomatically.

From a purely economic perspective, the implications the Lome conventions have been mixed. While the Lome conventions opened with the prospects that Nigeria could leverage her cooperation with Europe to become an industrial power, such expectation did not materialize as the country has remained largely a crude petroleum exporting country. It may be true the EU did commit some resources to the financing of some micro and sectoral projects in Nigeria as part of ACP-EU cooperation (Nwaodu 2010), the impact of the effort was always restrained given the country’s geographical size and the limitations of EU financial cooperation as shown by some observers; (Banthia 2007; Bilal and Stevens, 2008). Not even the prospects of the future ratification and implementation of the ECOWAS- EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) signed in 2014 holds great economic promise for the country; for the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) has repeatedly pointed out that the Free Trade Area (FTA) between ECOWAS and the EU will work to the detriment of Nigeria: in brief the implementation of the treaty will de-industrialize Nigeria by reinforcing the country’s role as exporter of raw commodities (MAN 2015). More the incidence of ACP-EU cooperation on West African regional integration remains problematic to say the least. While the subject of regional integration remained title of cooperation in the various Lome Conventions, the reality on ground has been the low volume

of intra-regional trade compared to the magnitude of ECOWAS-EU transactions. As it is well known, with minor exceptions, west African economies are more competitive than complementary in their production of goods and services. Perhaps it is in the politico-diplomatic sphere that Nigeria's participation in the Lome process or ACP-EU multilateral cooperation for development has produced the most significant results for and implications for the country. In fact, the negotiations leading to the conclusion of the first Lome Convention and the decade or so after 1975 could be described with some justification as the "golden age of Nigeria's external relations with the Lome process serving as the convergence point of Nigeria's foreign policy; with several beneficial effects such as:

-acting in concert with the former associated states of Africa and Madagascar to secure a better agreement from Europe;

-leveraging on the negotiations of Lome 1 to actualize the formation of ECOWAS;

-deployment by Nigeria of the multilateral context of Lome to radically transform Anglo-Nigerian relations and improve relations with other members of the EU;

-Nigeria's deployment of the Lome process in the progressive coalition formation from ACP-EU; to ACP-EU-G77; and then ACP-EU, G77-UN; which coalition led to the fall of the apartheid regime in South Africa; (Odoek, 1989:53).

It is against this background that the recent transition to regionally based Economic Partnership Agreements must be seen. Some obvious implications of the new arrangements for Nigeria can be identified as follows:

1. The regionally based EPAs have either intentionally or in an indirect set back Nigeria's project of South-South collaboration and unity in dealing with Europe which was accomplished in the period leading to the signature of the first Lome Convention.
2. It is doubtful that Nigeria's diplomatic practice will not suffer adverse consequences as a result of this loss of a privileged turning or convergence point.
3. It is posited that the nation's preoccupation with relations with Europe either under the EPA or under the AU-EU Strategic Partnership arrangement continues to have the effect of hindering Nigeria's capacity to evolve enduring partnerships with other major powers and to think outside the box.
4. Finally, the process of Lome over the decades has constituted a major obstacle to Nigeria giving serious consideration to adopting strategy of National Autonomous Development (NAD) which the country's natural endowments would lead one to expect.

## **IX. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Since Nigeria engaged in the Lome agreement to promote her political and economic interests, her continued participation should be assessed strictly on the extent to which these interests have been and will be served. Consequently these measures need be considered:

1. Repudiation of the ECOWAS-EU Economic Partnership Agreement if the fears and anxieties of critical stake holders like the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) are not addressed.
2. Nigeria must ensure that the preparation for implementation of the FTA with the EU is preceded by the putting in place of an effective West African common market.
3. The political conditions in the EPA that obliterate the distinction between the domestic and external relations of ECOWAS states should be expunged.
4. Nigerian authorities need to bear in mind that it was the non implementation of the Lagos Agreement concluded in 1966 that empowered the country to search for new partners during the civil war.

## **X. CONCLUSION**

We have shown in this paper that ACP- EU multilateral cooperation for development has been a very enduring feature of the post World War Two international system. Embodied in a number conventional instruments called the Lome Conventions, this system of north-south cooperation has defied many predictions of its demise and subsisted for more than five decades; transiting from Lome I to Lome 4; and from Cotonou 1 to Cotonou 2 and 3. The scope and content of this cooperation has varied widely over the years, beginning with the initial emphasis on commercial cooperation, technical and financial cooperation, and then expanding to embrace other subjects, including the contentious political conditionalities of respect for human rights and governance. Notwithstanding the continuous growth in the volume and range of subjects treated in the conventions and agreements the reality is that this cooperation has been adjudged a failure because it left the APC partners worse than when it started. One cannot but ask the question whether the Lome conventions were based on the wrong choice of policies or failed due to the improper application of the right policies? There appears to be evidence in support of both hypotheses. However, whatever the explanation of the failure of ACP-EU one adopts, the impact of that failure have far reaching implications for Nigeria both economically and politically; economically ACP-EU cooperation has perpetuated the country's underdevelopment while politically the introduction of regional EPAs has undercut a major convergence point of Nigeria's diplomatic relations.

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