

Dejumobi, Said and Adebayo Olukoshi (Ed.) (2009). “The African Union and New Strategies for Development”, Codesria and DPMF

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Tackling development by African countries has been by means of erratic strategies. Each country internalizes its own policies without harmonizing them with those of other African states. In the early 21st century, Africa witnessed noteworthy efforts towards realizing the African union. A number of issues helped the development process. This 318 pages book discusses the political, economic, peace and security, democracy and general welfare of the African people. The publication is a product of Panafricanist scholars. It puts forward new development trajectories for the African continent.

Nkrumah envisaged the formation of the Organization of African Union to liberate the continent. By 1999, the processes begun for the winding down of OAU, since it had achieved its main political objective of liberating the continent. However, the African countries were characterized by decline in socio-economic development, marginalization from mainstream global political economy, overdependence on external world, and under-exploitation of their development potential at the national and regional level.

Characterized by political freedom, social welfare, single currency good governance, and sustainable development, the enduring theme for a united continent prompted the birth of African Union, which envisaged collective security as opposed to regime security. Also key to its agenda was to embed member states in the global development and build an African consensus on trade, commerce, and diplomacy. African ministers for foreign affairs Durban meeting in 2007 identified union’s progress, setbacks and challenges.

To reaffirm AU's quest for sustainable development, the Durban meeting resonated around member states ceding some executive powers and adopting confederal authority, the need for a union government to implement cross cutting decisions, programs and projects and instituting Central Bank of Africa (AMF) to harmonize the fiscal and monetary policies.

As a consequence, Panafricanists link the historical significance of current debates on Africa's economic progress, struggle for global space, and unification of the continent to pre-independence federal arrangements. On globalization, Nkrumah proposes policy prescription to transform the structural, political, and cultural asymmetries of globalization through formulating a common, coordinated African continental and African Diaspora transcending African state boundaries.

The authors thus contend that nations cannot maintain themselves within their constitutional and political territory, therefore, their inability to exercise territorial domination. This hampers individual states' efforts to discharging their sovereignty responsibility. Consequently, Africa must unite on the basis of compact regional groupings that bring along advantages of shared economies.

Though from its inception and development the OAU has embraced the role of cooperation and integration among African states in economy, social and cultural sphere, the institutional frame work of AU is a replica of the EU. Indeed the Lusaka summit accordingly emphasized on the need to create an organization that is characterized by African reality.

Revisiting the debate on national autonomous development is the foundation of part II of the book. It questions autonomous development in the era of globalization not only in its ideological and theoretical configurations but also in its political ramifications. Issa G. Shivji concludes by lauding the need to move from generalized characterization of ruling class blocks and forces of resistance to more concrete understanding of class structure in our societies.

The general thesis of the last part concentrates on the political and security issues and the role of multicultural institutions such as ECOWAS in responding to the security threats confronting the region. On ECA, AU and ECOWAS interventions, Said Adejumbi contextualizes the change from impunity to

non indifference. In addition to highlighting the several constraints that regional organizations face in their attempts to fashion and enforce regional norms and standards of governance in Africa.

The section on Darfur –a challenge to African Union reignites the debate on the future of AU bearing in mind the numerous war torn regions in the continent. Of particular concern is the Darfur conflict and prospects for peace. , international political and diplomatic assistance has focused on peacekeeping rather than peacemaking. Domestically, Sudan’s main question is whether the country should remain united or Southern Sudan secedes and thrives as an independent state.

Indeed, this book amount to a major reference work and compendium for all those interested in past, present, and future of Africa’s development process.