

**SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION A RECIPE FOR THIRD WORLD GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT: THE
AFRO-ARAB IMPERATIVE**

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ABSTRACT

This study examines south-south cooperation as an imperative for growth in Third World countries and more significantly amongst the African and Arab countries. It argues that the global shift from hydrocarbon fuel to the development of sustainable green programme and low carbon energy regimes portend danger and a gloomy future for the countries that run mono-product economies based on oil and this therefore, should encourage African and Arab countries to invest in non-oil sectors. The study argues for a more purposeful and functional cooperation in non-oil sectors such as in trade, infrastructure development and joint investment in agriculture, industry, mining, natural and human resources as strategies for diversifying the economy, creation of more non-oil export products and commodities and promoting environmental sustainability by the African and Arab countries.

Keywords: development, cooperation, endowment, hydrocarbon, sustainable, depletion, resources

INTRODUCTION

The political economy of Africa and the Arab world are continuously influenced by global oil politics. Though blessed with large reserves of oil and gas and other precious minerals, resource endowment in most African and Arab countries such as Nigeria, Angola, Gabon, Congo, Libya, Algeria, Egypt, Syria, Oman, etc, has not really translated into concrete national development. Indeed while some of these countries unfortunately run mono-product economies solely dependent on oil, the possibilities of depletion of this non-renewable resource or even the gradual global shift from hydrocarbon fuel to the development of sustainable green programme and low carbon energy regimes portend danger and a gloomy future for the countries concerned. The problematic here is not the end or complete disappearance of oil or total depletion of oil reserves, but when it will no longer be economically feasible to extract it. Like Cinti (2008:1) pointed out, the core of this issue becomes the appropriate management of the resource left, and the political implications of it. Resulting from this unimaginable experience therefore, is the need to diversify the economy and create more export products and commodities by the individual African and Arab countries, but more purposefully through functional cooperation in especially non-oil sectors, such as trade, development and joint investment in agriculture, industry, and human resources and infrastructure. Yet, in this envisaged cooperation and partnership, there should be more emphasis on sectors that can be sustained and at the same time will promote environmental sustainability rather than damage the environment through unnecessary deforestation, green house emissions, destruction of the eco-system, etc.

To the African and Arab states, (see figure 1) the question is how to evolve or implement policies that would bring about this functional cooperation. Scientists such as Marion King Hubbert had developed theories and method that predict the future trend of global oil production. Taking into account the dilemma of oil production in the face of the scarcity of the resource, the viable option is for the African and Arab countries to re-invent the objective of the Bandung Conference.(The Bandung Conference was a meeting of representatives of 29 African and Asian nations, held at Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955, aimed at promoting economic and cultural cooperation and to oppose colonialism) These countries would realize the aim of Bandung by engaging in bi-lateral and multilateral co-operations to chart for themselves new course of growth away from oil and the dependency on it; to explore the development of new sectors, such as exploring increased trade in non-oil products, the manufacturing sector, tourism development, real estate, and banking, etc. While this will boost growth and development within the African and Arab countries, it will also facilitate the disengagement from the established North and South relations which of course has been lopsided in favour of the North. It will instead emphasize more on south-south partnership.

LITERATURE REVIEW

While scholars have addressed copiously the imperatives for cooperation and partnership between the African and Arab states, some of them have located this cooperation within the context of achieving full political independence especially after the attainment of independence by most of the African and Arab countries,(Amin, 1986) while others advocated for cooperation for economic independence and its benefits. Yet others emphasized cooperation to ensure total decolonization of the remaining territories still under colonial rule. While these works addressed the need of the time, the changing trends in global politics, economics, climate change and environmental issues call for a new basis for cooperation between Africa and the Arab world. Though scholars believe that any attempt to analyse the multifarious social, political, and economic factors

which provide a more or less tenable basis for future cooperation between Africa and the Arab Middle East is a difficult exercise, (Wai, 1983: 187) yet the need for this is more forceful than ever. Within these perspectives therefore, scholars have identified several impediments to Afro-Arab cooperation no matter the basis for such cooperation. While Azevedo (1988:70) identified the Israeli relations with most black African countries, as a factor that militated against cooperation between black Africa and the Arab states, Wai (1983:188) in particular extensively identified and explained many more issues that have constituted daily politics among nations. However, the imperative of modern times call for a retrospective thinking especially about some of the visions or strategies enunciated by the historic visionaries of the continent, Ghana's Nkrumah and Egypt's Nasser. Both leaders advocated for comprehensive range of cooperative strategies, policies and programmes, among which was partnership that would gradually build up a better integrated regional society based on the development of complementary internal connections, (Amin, 1986:7). Under their vision, joint projects involving technological exchange, the exploitation of mineral, agricultural and industrial resources and the consolidation of integrated transport networks were some of the issue areas in the cooperation and partnership between Africa and the Arab world, (Amin, 1986:7). With the power of hindsight, many scholars now believe that these ideas were steps ahead of their times. Not only because the success of regional integration elsewhere vindicates their position but also because simple economics and strategic thinking demand this realization. Moreover, the exigencies of the times call for environmental sustainability, reduction of green house emissions; the use of alternative non-hydrocarbon energy sources and sustainable development among others in the development process of any state or region of the globe. It is within the context of these development parameters that the new partnership and cooperation between Africa and the Arab countries should be situated.

The unbalanced North/South cooperation, an extension of the colonial system that existed overtime has demonstrated repeated failures especially for the Third world as the latter was simply partnered and encouraged by the former to develop only along the dictates of the West, including the continuous exports of primary products to feed the industrial needs of the West. While the Third world countries of Africa, Latin America and Asia jumped at this mode of cooperation, at the detriment of south/south partnerships, the aim was to employ the export earnings for funding domestic industrial take-off. Yet, this was not possible without the so-called transfer of technology from the North to the South. Such failures of the past now call for development of a genuine brand of cooperation, Afro-Arab cooperation and indeed Afro-Asian internationalism. While China has begun the first phase of this relationship with Africa and other developing regions in Asia, Afro-Arab cooperation and partnership will be counting on common historical antecedence, the benefits of developing complementary internal connections and the imperatives of protecting the environment from destructions.

In modern times, globalization has replaced the old colonial mechanisms in putting more limitations to south/south cooperation. Economically, the South has been at a disadvantaged position. This is because the principle of comparative advantage reinforced by scientific and technological, industrial and finance capital base, continuously limits the participation of the South in global economic intercourse to only the producer of raw materials for and the consumer of finished products of the North. The South also suffers more of the inherent contradictions associated with capitalist economies of the North, (Nwoko, 2011). This asymmetric economic relations that globalization engenders between the North and the South by availing the countries of the North greater opportunities to wealth and the expansion of their economies placed the South at the receiving end of the global relations of production with its speculative crises. Onyekpe (2004)

contends that even in the first decade of the 21st century, the gap between the poor and the rich countries of the world has only recorded an unprecedented exacerbation. Furthermore as Igbinedion and Igbatayo (2005:4) observed, workings of market forces; labour abundant economies (mainly countries of the South) receive poor terms of trade compared with labour shortage economies even in the North/South relationship. The implication of this is that the South has not been properly absorbed into the global industrial economy. The countries of the South have continued to play marginal role in the global economy. This has led to their classification as ‘fringe players’ or ‘weak globalizers’ in the globalization process (Igbinedion and Igbatayo, 2005:4). Yet problems arising from climatic changes and environment issues place more burdens on the poor South than the North in terms of availability and usage of resources as well as impact on development. In particular for Africa and the Arab countries, the areas of cooperation and partnership with the North have been predominantly areas that constitute a threat to the environment. These include investments in the oil and hydrocarbon energy sources with the associated incessant gas flaring and oil pollution especially in Africa, the land grab of the big multinationals and the consequent deforestation for industrial constructions, etc. Common experience in the failure of North/South relations therefore, offers the countries of the South and in particular the African and Arab countries a new vista to pursue sustainable development while developing complementary internal connections and protecting the environment since it is more to their own interest.

ANALYSIS OF AFRO-ARAB COOPERATION OVERTIME

Despite the broad similarities of their objectives and structure, the instruments establishing the Arab League as well as the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), did not create or institute any form of cooperation between the two organisations. This is in spite of the membership of the OAU by eight League member states and the broad similarities of their aims. (Ojo, 1981:132) The threat of Western imperialism, the implantation of a western state in the Arab territory, and in particular, “Zionist colonialism,” (Ojo, 1981:132) was the precipitating factor to the establishment of the Arab League and its preoccupation after its establishment. The interest of the Arab League at the time in Africa was to draw support and enlarge the anti-Israeli sentiment and camp from the new African countries in the light of the historical contacts between Africa and the Arab World. On the other hand, the birth of the Organisation of African Unity (now African Union) was brought about by the imperatives of tackling the realities of Portuguese colonialism and white minority and racist regimes in Southern Africa. (Ojo, 1981:132) While decolonization was the primary focus, issues of poverty and economic underdevelopment forced the African states to also focus attention on national development. This led them to turn to the Arab world for support and partnership since the regions were both sufferers in the hand of the West. The cooperation between the two organisations was therefore conceived only within the context of a common experience of western imperialism. As for the Middle East conflict, this most times threatened the budding cooperation (as the member states of the two organisations had conflicting views on the matter) in the same way the competition for influence and pre-eminence between the League and the OAU on the African Continent did.

The exigencies of the 1960s therefore, heightened the need for close cooperation as well as the co-operative processes. The forced circumstances, in which the co-operative processes were conceptualized and shaped made them selective, right from the struggle by the newly independent African and Arab states for decolonization in Africa and Asia against western imperialism; to a much later attempt at economic co-operation, they were the product of an attempt to resist and create a

united front and solidarity against the imperialist West and her neocolonialist plans both in the newly independent states and those still under colonialism. Further, the core of this co-operation was to extend the political solidarity binding liberation movements into a new area of economic co-operation between those States which refuse to align with the neocolonialist plans proffered by the West after their liberation from colonialism. Indeed, while both areas of the cooperative process were reactionary in nature, the political enjoy a relatively better outcome than the economic, as exemplified in the birth of the Arab League and the OAU, mid-wived by Pan-Africanism and Pan-Arabism respectively, as well as the new independent African and Arab states. Despite growing desire for more cooperation as suggested by the LAS Secretary-General's letter to his OAU counterpart in April 1970 encouraging a cooperation agreement between the two organizations, the cooperation process was stalled. (Ojo, 1981:134) But for the establishment of OPEC and a few others, economic projects involving technological exchange, the exploitation of mineral, agricultural and industrial resources and the consolidation of integrated transport networks remained utopian.

From the 1970s onward, there was a boost in the type of co-operation that emerged between these regions. These were comprehensive co-operation programmes open to all African and Arab countries irrespective of their political regimes, ideologies and social orientations, domestic or international. Both economic and political cooperation was re-established as a result of the massive political support given to the Arab states by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) member states in the Middle East War of October 1973 as well as the oil crisis, and consequently, these groups of states entered into a formal dialogue aimed at strengthening political and economic cooperation between them (Ojo, 1981:131). The platform for the economic cooperation was set up by OAU's Eighth Extra-ordinary Council of Ministers which was put in place to review the Middle East War and the effect of the oil crisis on African states in November 1973. In its recommendations, the Council recommended amongst others, for "The establishment of economic cooperation between the Arab League states and the OAU member states and instructs the Administrative Secretary General in consultation with the Secretary-General of the Arab League to set up the machinery for such cooperation" (OAU Doc. ECM/Res 20 Rev. 1 (VIII), 1973).

This was reciprocated by the Arab League in the Algiers and Rabat Arab Summit Conference, which also desired *to strengthen and consolidate economic, financial and cultural cooperation with the sister African states on the bilateral level and on that of Arab-African regional organization* (Arab League Relations). The OAU further extended the build up of this cooperation in its Twenty Fourth Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 13 - 21 February 1975, after reviewing progress made, reconstituted the Committee of Seven set up by the Eighth Extraordinary Session of the Council of Ministers and decided that the new Committee, assisted by the Administrative Secretary-General, shall also serve as Coordinating Committee for Afro-Arab Co-operation (OAU Doc. CM/Res. 395 (XXIV), 1975). The resolution also requested the Administrative Secretary-General to put in place within his Cabinet a unit entrusted with the responsibility of servicing the activities for the coordination of Afro-Arab co-operation. Subsequent overtures made by both organisations prepared the ground for further exploitation of new horizons for Afro-Arab cooperation (See OAU Doc. CM/606 (XXIII) 1974). In particular was the decision of the OAU Twenty -third Session of the Council of Ministers decision to "establish a special body within the OAU for Afro- Arab cooperation to study and submit recommendation on all factors likely to strengthen cooperation between Africa and Arab countries" (OAU Doc: CM/Res 337 (XXIII), 1974); and the LAS-Council decision at its Sixty-second Session in September 1974 to establish a Bureau of the League in Addis Ababa in order "to work

closely with the OAU” (LAS Doc: CM Res No. 3202, 1974). This new enthusiasm about cooperation scholars had argued was the fallout of the political support the Africans gave the Arabs during the October 1973 War, (Ojo, 1981:135). This had elicited the Arabs’ support at cushioning the adverse effects of the oil crisis on Africa. Nonetheless the enthusiasm once more diminished as the attempt at the cooperation was mismanaged by the two organisations owing to conflicting organizational interest and high politics amongst the member states of the two organisations.

Nevertheless, the cooperation reached a high point when it achieved the creation of financial institutions, established funds and offered loans for development and aids. Examples of this were the financial institutions established between the O. A. U. and the Arab League. Noteworthy was the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, with its headquarters in Khartoum, Sudan. Established in 1974, with an authorized capital of \$392.25 million and total potential lending resources authorized at \$1 billion, this particular Arab bank was the only Arab fund that concentrated entirely on Africa,(Kokole 1984:16). This kind of co-operation availed itself of the huge funding which according to Amin (1986:12) were available from the petrodollar windfalls of the oil boom of the period.

In March 1977, African and Arab countries held their first summit in Cairo, Egypt to set out the principles and framework of collective and individual actions necessary for the consolidation of Afro-Arab relations, (Niyiragira, 2012). While this reopened the way for more discussion and the modality for this relation, there has not been any serious follow-up on it. Despite the repeated attempts at fostering long lasting South-South cooperation between the countries of the Third World, such as the African and Arab states, there has been no serious commitment on the parts of the countries of the region to ensure a disengagement from the established North/South partnerships which of course has been lopsided in favour of the North and the bane of South-South cooperation.

The age long practice of North/South partnership has been blamed on a number of factors. First is what kokole (1984:15) considers as the "northernization” of the Arab world. This refers to the Arab world increasingly regarding itself as part of the developed Northern Hemisphere of the world and not as part of the underdeveloped Southern Hemisphere of the world. Second, it was argued that the oil wealth effectively emasculated whatever entrepreneurial ability the Arabs states would ever have developed, coupled with the fact that there is not enough economic adventurism among the Arabs (Kokole, 1984:17), this however is highly contestable. According to this argument, this created the tendency among the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) to be cautious and therefore to invest in, and trade with, the developed North rather than with fellow Southerner, (Kokole, 1984:17). Similarly, despite several decades of independence, most African states are still tied to the aprons of their colonial masters. In terms of trade relations, these countries prefer to trade with their former masters rather than with even fellow African states. By this, the economies of these African states are continuously tied to the capitalist economies of the North and their inherent contradictions. The perpetual grouping of African states into Anglophone, Francophone, Lusophone, has continuously proven an obstacle to regional integration and cooperation both within the continent and with the Arab world.

A deep examination of the economies of the Afro-Arab regions suggests a great similarity in economic features between these African and Arab countries even if this similarity is relatively different in economic resources. Except for the Arab Gulf states, practically all Arab and African states are within the bracket of the heavily indebted countries; this could be explained

by pointing to a number of internal and external factors which are both common and peculiar to the regions. Similarly, all African and Arab states have their own share of economic problems as represented in economic deflation, rising inflation, unemployment, sometimes capital flight, etc, resulting in low GDP and retarded economic development. Conversely, the relative inequality in the level of natural resource endowments and national developments has engendered dialectics between resource-poor countries (more in Africa) on one side and resource-rich (more in the Arab world) on the other. This gap becomes wider with the exacerbation of conflicts especially civil wars, in sub-Saharan Africa, while countries of the Arab world especially Saudi Arabia and the Arab Gulf countries continue to witness stupendous economic growth and development. This has made it impossible for any kind of integration or economic cooperation to be sustained between the two regions as there are two conflicting levels of development. While some of the Arab states with fewer populations have relatively high GDP and per capita incomes, the sub-Saharan African countries have continued to struggle with poverty and poor leadership. Yet the unequal level of developmental process between the African and some of the Arab states could produce the kind of partnership that could bring about enhanced comparative advantage especially in non-oil sector thus, promoting their self-reliance, accelerated growth and economic transformation for mutual growth and development. This will reduce the dependence of the Afro-Arab world on the West for finance and investments as well as most of their finished goods. The availability of raw materials, abundance of low-priced workers, arable land and good weather condition in African calls for functional cooperation and coordination between Arab experts and their counterparts in Africa for exploitation. This synergy in harnessing African resources with the funding and expertise from the Arab world provides the environment for unified development plans and Afro-Arab management in order to achieve broad and sustainable development.

AN OVERVIEW OF AFRO-ARAB AID

As pointed out earlier OPEC was one of the few success stories of Afro-Arab cooperation in the period following decolonization. It was product of solidarity for majority of members were Afro-Arab states. However, during the first few years of its formation, Nigeria and Gabon were the only Black African states in the Organisations. Consequently, it was criticized for adopting a pan-Arab cultural solidarity especially in operating and disbursing fund (Kokole, 1984:16). This was evident in the criteria for disbursing fund. Some of the funds include, Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, established in 1961, with an authorized capital of \$3.45 billion, and total potential lending resources estimated at approximately \$11.5 billion. The fund was designed for projects suggested by Arab governments (Kokole, 1984:16).

Further, was the Abu Dhabi Fund for Arab Economic Development, which was established in 1971 to extend credit to Arab countries. This fund was initially lending only to Arab states until 1974 when it extended the facility to other developing countries in Asia and Africa as well as all Islamic countries. With an authorized capital of \$512.8 million and potential lending resources put at \$1.93 billion. After this came the Saudi Fund for Development, established in 1974, with an initial authorized capital of \$2.9 billion and total potential lending resources of the same amount. (Kokole, 1984:16) Others include multilateral funds such as the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, with an authorized capital of \$1.3 billion and potential lending resources of \$4.14 billion. Added to this was the Islamic Development Bank which was established in 1975, with its headquarters in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. It was established with an authorized capital of \$2.4 billion, and potential lending resources authorized at approximately the same amount. In the case of this particular fund,

the imperative of self-interest is diluted by that part of the Sharia (Islamic Law) which prohibits the taking of interest, (Kokole, 1984:16). In all these funding, the interests of Arab states, followed by Muslims states and then the Third World countries were satisfied to the exclusion of other interests.

However, the most important of these funds as far as Afro-Arab cooperation was concerned was the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, which was established in 1974 with its headquarters in Khartoum. With an authorized capital of \$392.25 million and total potential lending resources authorized at \$1 billion, the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa was the only Arab fund that concentrates entirely on Africa. It lends only to the non-Arab African countries, which makes it at the same time the only Arab fund that does no lending to Arab countries (Kokole, 1984:16). This bank has played a major role in promoting economic development in Africa, by providing grants to African governments for certain projects. In order to encourage regional integration, it provides funds for a single project that will be carried out in several countries. However, it has been argued that in the new model of Afro-Arab cooperation, the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa has to increase its capital used in financing its operations in Africa, taking new and more flexible measures to satisfy the development needs in Africa.(Adel Abd Er-Razeq) Similarly, the bank should assume the role of the bankers' bank by financing other banks and private sector projects or offer them some facilities to practice regional activities inside the continent (Adel Abd Er-Razeq), especially those that focus on non-oil projects.

In this area therefore, collaborations with other development institutions such as the African Development Bank, AfDB, could yield desirable results. The bank established in 1964 with the intention of promoting economic and social development in Africa, the AfDB provides loans and grants to African governments and private companies investing in the regional member countries (RMC) in Africa, (African Development bank). Though still a relatively small source of development finance for Africa. AfDB invests approximately \$3 billion per annum to African countries. It provides only 6 percent of total development assistance to the continent. While the AfDB's lending had not expanded significantly in recent years, the AfDB presently is striving to meet its specific mandates from the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and other international organizations to assume the leadership position amongst financial and development institutions in areas such as infrastructure, regional integration, and banking and financial standards in Africa. During its forty years of operations, AfDB has financed 2 885 operations, for a total of \$47.5 billion. In 2003, it received an AAA rating from the major financial rating agencies and had a capital of \$32.043 billion. Collaborations between the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa and AfDB with governments, private institutions or governments especially in areas that fall within the mandate of these financial institutions as well as constituting the core developmental imperatives of Afro-Arab cooperation remains fundamental.

REINVENTING FUNCTIONAL AFRO-ARAB RELATIONS

It has been suggested that within the framework for supporting the Arab-African economic work in the field of investment, the priority should be establishing a Higher Council for joint Arab and African investment, with the aim of "investing in Africa and removing the obstacles that hinder development and investment, facilitating investment, giving advice and information and coordinating between the industrial unions, businessmen and official bodies concerned with development on both sides,"(Adel Abd Er-Razeq). While closer collaboration and mutual cooperation hold the key to economic growth

among the African and Arab states, the emphasis is not only on cooperation between governments but also between corporate and individual citizens. In spite of several agreements and political consultations it appears that so far there hasn't been a real and close cooperation in concrete terms. However, bilateral agreements especially in trade and economic ventures between African and Arab countries have not translated into action except for a few. It is observed that while Arab investments increased in some African countries, African exports to many Arab countries also increased (Ambassador Ahmed Hajaj).

In 2010, Ghana's "Middle East Strategy" a trade and investment programme aimed at engaging the Arab World to tap experience for Ghana's economic growth was launched. The strategy was to engage Arab countries in Ghana's economic development planning in areas of trade and commerce, agriculture and oil and gas management, (Mahama Ayariga,). While this strategy is commendable, it should be private sector driven. Moreover, there should be a conscious attempt at prioritizing sectors that would offer the most investment opportunities as well as create the most benefits in terms of wealth creation, employment opportunities and general national development. But most importantly, sustainability remains the keyword. In other words African and Arab countries should not only invest or attract inflow of investment capitals but ensure that these investments are guided into sectors that can be sustained. While investments in the oil and gas sectors are catalysts that ginger the economy, the global oil politics as well as the global attempted at evolving a sustainable green programme and governments' commitment to accelerating the development of a low-carbon regime, which obviously would reduce the demand for hydro-carbon fuel, investment in oil may not be sustainable in the long run.

In the agricultural sector for instance, Africa's agricultural export potentials are high. However, in sub-Saharan Africa, these potentials are under utilized due to the absence of substantial investments in the sector. Endowed with cultivable land and weather conditions, there are potentials for collaborations between sub-Saharan African and Arab countries in the form of bilateral or multilateral agreement on joint investments or projects in the agricultural sector. They can also evolve policies for managing these agriculture's export potentials. Like the Zimbabwean farmers in Nigeria, Egypt for example with its high level of scientific and economically efficient agriculture and technology in modern irrigation can enter into joint partnership with one or more sub-Saharan African states in a substantial agricultural project. Of course with finance from the already discussed financial institutions above, such investments not only open up more avenues for meeting food sovereignty in Africa, but also developmental targets and create the atmosphere for further cooperation.

CONCLUSION

In 1955, in the Bandung meeting, the need for cooperation between the African and Asian states was given full expression (Amin, 1986:5). The decade following the end of colonialism in most African and Arab countries saw heightened optimism for cooperation and partnership between African and Arab countries especially because of the envisaged political and economic gains, (Cervenka, 1974:76-9). The imperatives for Afro-Arab cooperation are as inevitable as in the previous decades. But the factors which necessitated them in contemporary times are more forceful than those period immediately following colonialism; hence scholars believe that while political independence has been to a large extent achieved, Afro-Arab cooperation remains a key prerequisite objective for the economic independence of this Third World regions. This assumption is built on the fact that the African and Arab regions remain at the receiving end during any global economic crisis, in many cases, caused by the contradictions in western capitalism. They are also the weakest and most vulnerable part

of the Third World to disintegrative pressures and consequently, the most vulnerable of the world system, hence a new model for cooperation. Akinsanya (1976:511) argued that, it is impossible to carry out large scale, sustained economic planning without an institutionalization of political decision-making that includes a certain permanency, and that can over-rule particularistic interests. While a supra-national body may be plagued with high politics, cooperation between individual African and Arab countries on bi-lateral or tripartite basis is highly recommended

Secondly, it is in the interest of both the African and Arab countries especially the oil producers to emphasize less on oil and oil products and more on other sectors that not only promote environmental sustainability, but can also be sustained overtime. Equally, in a world where the global agenda is gradually shifting from the use of hydrocarbons to clean and renewable green energy regime, it is both strategic for the African and Arab countries to align themselves with universal progress as well as pool resources together to complement efforts among them in terms of promoting economic development, south/south cooperation and averting the common negative impacts of environmental destruction and undesirable climatic changes. Globally, though fraught with challenges, the successes of economic blocks in Europe,(though this is contestable as a result of recent problems in the EU), the Americas and elsewhere, demonstrate that the critical factors necessary for economic development come more from within the economic blocks or regions than outside.

Figure 1: Map showing African and Arab Middle East countries



Source: <http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/printpage/printpage.php?l=/webimage/co...> 12/21/2012

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