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ECO/RA/91/1

ECA - MRAG
Mission Report on ECOWAS

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Report on an Advisory Mission to ECOWAS on
Review of the ECOWAS Treaty

Following a request from the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS for ECA advisory service on the review of the Community Treaty, S.K.B. Asante, Senior Regional Advisor, undertook a mission to Lagos, to Nigeria, on to August 12, 1991 to serve as resource person for the Committee reviewing the ECOWAS Treaty.

The terms of reference of the mission were briefly (i) to provide advisory service to the various sessions of the Committee reviewing the ECOWAS treaty especially an institutional aspects of economic integration with a view to improving the performance of the Community; (ii) to provide technical assistance on rationalization of the multiplicity of IGOs in the subregion; (iii) to attend the meetings of the four sub-committees of the main Committee; and (iv) to present a discussion paper on "Regional Economic Co-operation and Integration: Available Options."

This Report is in two parts: (i) a brief account of the main issues discussed at the first meeting of the Committee reviewing the ECOWAS Treaty; and (ii) a paper prepared by Asante for discussion by the Committee.

A. Background

1. At the meeting of the Authority of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government held in Banjul, the Gambia, in May 1990, a decision was taken to establish a high-powered Committee of Eminent Persons for the Review of the ECOWAS Treaty with General Yakubu Gowon, former head of the Federal Military Government of Nigeria, as Chairman. The review is to lay special emphasis on:

- (a) the legislative powers of the Authority;
- (b) financing of the budgets of the Community Institutions; and
- (c) the decision - making procedures of the Authority.

2. In examining this mandate at its first meeting held in Abuja in May 1991, to which I was invited as resource person and as specialist in the field of regionalism in Africa, the Committee felt that the scope of the mandate was broad enough to merit consideration of the following:

- (a) the existing provisions of the ECOWAS Treaty found to be adequate for achieving the aims and objectives of the Community should be retained;
- (b) provisions found to be inadequate or inappropriate for regional integration should be reviewed; and
- (c) adequate provisions should be included to cover areas of co-operation and integration not included in the Treaty.

3. The Committee then set up the following four Sub-Committees:

(i) Sub-Committee on Institutional Matters

To examine how the process of economic integration in West Africa can be enhanced and consolidated on a more sustainable basis in the light of the provisions of the ECOWAS Treaty and its Additional Protocols relative

to the Institutions, Organs and Powers of the Community both at the national and subregional levels.

(ii) Sub-Committee on Political Co-operation, Regional Peace and Stability

To examine what provisions for the promotion, improvement and maintenance of political co-operation, regional peace and security including aspects of conflict resolution and peace-keeping operations can be made in the ECOWAS Treaty.

(iii) Sub-Committee on Financing Regional Integration's Effort

To examine the problems and shortcomings of existing methods of financing Community institutions and integration programmes, and propose possible alternative means of financing the regional integration efforts, taking into account the nature of the different aspects of the institutions and co-operation activities to be funded to ensure the speedy and effective realisation of the objectives of the Treaty.

(iv) Sub-Committee on Regional Economic Co-operation and Integration: Available Options

To outline the meaning and scope of complete West African regional integration and examine the full implications of its achievement through the establishment of an economic community; examine other forms of regional economic operation as possible alternatives to full integration; to review the scope of co-operation and explore possible adoption of a pragmatic approach and inclusion of new areas such as informal sector, private sector participation, rural development; strategy for production integration (regional development and integration of the agricultural and industrial sectors); women in development, environment, etc.

4. As ECA Regional Adviser in Economic Co-operation and Integration, I was asked to hold a series of discussions with the chairman of each Sub-Committee and prepare agenda for subsequent meetings.

B. Meeting of Sub-Committee on Regional Economic Co-operation and Integration: Available Options

5. This Sub-Committee held its first meeting in Lagos on August 13 - 15, 1991 to examine closely its mandate, identify areas for special studies and to discuss critically the attached background paper I was requested to prepare for its deliberation.

6. After a thorough examination of the discussion paper which was unanimously adopted by the five-man Sub-Committee (whose membership included Prof. Adebayo Adedeji, former Executive Secretary of ECA and Dr. Pius Okigbo, the renowned Nigerian economist), I was asked to prepare another discussion paper on "A Comparative Analysis of the Treaties of ECOWAS and the African Economic Community" for (a) the next meeting of the Sub-Committee scheduled for September 28 to 30 and (b) the plenary meeting of the Committee of Eminent Persons for the Review of the ECOWAS Treaty fixed for October 2 - 10, 1991.

x. Attached is the discussion paper on
* Regional Economic Co-operation and
Integration: Available Options * &
prepared in for discussion at the meeting
of ~~13-15~~ August 1991 at Lagos.

INTRODUCTION

1. One of the prominent features of the contemporary international system is the heightened tendency of States to gravitate towards some degree of regional economic co-operation and integration. This tendency has been influenced by the linkage of the concept of development to the process of regionalism. Linking the concept of regionalism with development has become so important that some scholars like John Sloan would prefer to substitute the term "developmental regionalism" for that of regional economic integration, because the latter, they contend, is imprecise, static, and irrelevant to the development issue. In most recent economic literature, the terms "integration" or "common market" have tended to become nearly synonymous with "rapid economic growth", "acceleration of economic development", or "big push". Regardless of the terminology used, there can be no doubt that the process of regional integration is now inextricably linked to that of economic development. For in no area of endeavour - whether it is in the internalization of the development process or international trade negotiations, debt policy, or adjustment with transformation - can much progress be made without co-operation among African countries. National development efforts have to be supplemented by subregional and regional co-operation efforts.

2. It is against this background that ECOWAS was established in May 1975. That momentous act represented the culmination of many years of effort by the sixteen West African States to increase the economic mass, and therefore the bargaining base, of their economies. Through a pooling of economic "sovereignty" their intent is to transform their economies so as to improve the living standards of their people and to extent the struggle for political decolonization into one for economic decolonization. In brief, the inauguration of ECOWAS must be seen as an attempt by the West African States to enhance their economic opportunity and to reduce their external dependency. Thereby they hope to overcome the existing structures of neo-colonialism and underdevelopment. The

lessening of the high degree of external dependence is a precondition for achieving basic structural development goals.

3. These were some of the basic ideas and objectives which the founding fathers of ECOWAS cherished for a dynamic West African Economic Community. However, these aims and objectives could not be attained automatically. Without a well-conceived and intensive effort and without adequate planning and the adoption of an appropriate form of integration, ECOWAS could lead to the perpetuation of neo-colonialism, under-development, and inequality; to increased rather than decreased external dependence.

4. Given this background, what is at issue, therefore, is not the imperative of economic integration in West Africa but the kind of approach to the process of integration that will be most effective in realizing the potential of the subregion for the benefit of its population.

5. Thus, over the years, with the slow process of West African integration and the disappointing practical results, the key problems facing the West African leaders are those of deciding what forms of subregional economic co-operation and integration are most likely to succeed and of how to design arrangements for mutual benefit.

6. This discussion paper, which is divided into five sections, attempts to respond to this issue. Section I examines the meaning and scope of a West African economic community, while Section II reviews briefly the various options and types of co-operation available. In Section III the basis for developmental regionalism in West Africa is briefly discussed, while Section IV focuses attention on the type of integration approach that would enable ECOWAS to realise the potential of the subregion for the benefit of its population. In Section V the economic, political and social aspects of integration hitherto neglected have been highlighted.

I. MEANING AND SCOPE OF COMPLETE WEST AFRICAN REGIONAL INTEGRATION

7. Although there is no simple or satisfactory definition of "full" or "complete" integration, integration might seem to be more fully achieved the more it leads to the economy of the cooperating group approximating to that of a single State. In the African setting, however, the peculiarity of the characteristics of the economies and the evolution of political and other institutions make it unrealistic to apply the term "integration" in the same sense as used in the developed countries. It is necessary therefore to paint boldly and fix firmly in our minds the economic, social and political realities of Africa in any discussion of African economic integration. This is particularly the case in the West African subregion which, as compared with other subregions, exhibits the following number of special characteristics that should be taken into account in deciding on a strategy and scope of economic integration in the subregion.

First, it is the most heavily populated of all the subregions, with 150 million people. This is the equivalence of the population of Japan or of France and West Germany combined. While this provides a large potential market, the realization of this potential is at present limited by the low income per capita in the subregion.

Second, it has the largest number of countries, numbering 16 in all, with a population ranging from 332 thousand in the case of Cape Verde to about 100 million in the case of Nigeria.

Third, it contains the largest number of intergovernmental organizations (about 30 in all) dealing either with general economic integration matters (ECOWAS, CEAO, Mano River Union) or concerned only with limited sectoral activities, (example WARDA, OMVG). This multiplicity of IGO's imposes a heavy burden on the budget of individual states without providing them with

corresponding benefits and it also creates immense possibilities for wide spread duplication of activities.

Fourth, the region embraces two major ecological zones - the Savannah in the North and the forest zone in the South - which provides some basis for complementary economic activities (cotton, millet, sorghum in the savannah areas, and coffee, cocoa, palm products, plantain and manioc in the forest zones), while some cereals, such as rice and maize are produced in both ecological zones.

Fifth, the general relief is relatively flat, a feature which facilitates the construction of roads and railways, although the inter-connections of national rail networks are made difficult by gauge differences.

Sixth, it possesses a relatively large coast line - only three of the sixteen countries are landlocked - that should provide great opportunity for coastal traffic and for exploiting the abundant fish resources of the coastal waters which constitute one of the most fertile fishing grounds in the world.

Seventh, other significant characteristics of West Africa are first, the level of poverty and, second, the standard of living in the subregion which is one of the lowest in the world. The average GNP was about \$760 per capita in 1980, including subsistence incomes. Eight of the 16 member States of ECOWAS are officially listed among the 42 least developed countries of the world. These are Benin, Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso.

Eighth, the artificiality of the frontiers or national boundaries. For if frontiers are artificial and arbitrary on the African continent in general, they are absurd and capricious in this subregion. They run inward from the coast, cutting across tribal,

cultural, and linguistic borders. Thus, for example, the Ewe-speaking people are still divided between the Republics of Ghana and Togo; some Yoruba speakers live in the Republic of Benin while the majority of their kinsmen are Nigerians. To this should be added the great African political divides: French, English, and Portuguese-speaking regions and, until the EEC-ACP Lome Convention of February 1975, the EEC associates and non-associates which had bedeviled integration and co-operation movements in the past.

Finally, the region is blessed with a wide range of mineral resources; petroleum (Nigeria), phosphates (Senegal and Togo), iron (Liberia, Mauritania), bauxite (Guinea - Conakry), uranium (Niger)...etc., all of which should provide a good basis for viable industrial structures.

8. Given this background of large and varied resources in a subregion that is highly politically fragmented, a viable economic integration will have to be broadly based and wide in its application, and sufficiently flexible in its practical form to embody social, cultural, political, and economic considerations. First, it must be seen as a method of providing a more viable basis for economic growth and, more especially, for expansion and diversification of material production or accelerated industrialization; second, for creating opportunities to solve problems of unemployment and underemployment of resources, particularly human resources; third, for enhancing the bargaining power of the West African countries on economic issues vis-a-vis the developed countries; and fourth, for increasing their political strength and influence in African affairs and in the international community at large.

9. Hence, a West African economic integration should be wide in its scope in order to achieve the development implied by the existence of sufficient markets, a vigorous economic life, technological progress and the shoring up of cultural values; to

strengthen the national sovereignty of the member States, making them more independent, granting success to their relationships of inter-dependence and enabling them to be better-equipped to face the unjust exploitation to which others seek to submit them. Thus the West African countries will not envisage their economic community as an exclusively economic undertaking, but rather as a multi-facted enterprise. The type of economic integration to be adopted in the West Africa will have to be comprehensive to respond adequately to the realities of the subregion.

II. VARIOUS TYPES OF CO-OPERATION AND INTEGRATION: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

10. There is now considerable experience of many different forms of regional co-operation, some of which reach back historically into the colonial period. Even specialists almost lose track of the number and variety of regional organizations, especially in Africa.

11. A wide range of types of co-operation exist, with great variations as regards (i) the number of countries involved, (ii) the size of the region covered, (iii) the degree of historical and linguistic homogeneity of the countries involved (iv) organizational structure, and (v) aims and instruments. The following basic types of economic co-operation can be identified from the main features of the schemes and instruments put into effect.

1. Market Integration

12. The first type, and the most popular one, is the customs union or market integration approach which aims at creating a larger market. The treaties of too many of the schemes in Africa -- ECOWAS, CEAO, PTA, UDEAC, ECCAS-- have been based on this approach,

that is, on similar schemes in developed parts of the world. Specifically, the treaties establishing these schemes were inspired by the EEC example, and thus fall within the traditional approach to economic integration.

13. The traditional approach, of course, recognizes that joint action by developing countries can be beneficial, but such joint action is to be put into practice through certain accepted formulas such as free trade areas, customs unions or common markets. Thus these schemes concentrate on the abolition of discrimination and the creation of centralized decision-making structures. This method is how economic integration has traditionally been implemented, with one of the primary goals, as already stated, being market expansion.

14. Imitating the traditional or European model of economic integration, the mechanism for realising, for example, the aim of the ECOWAS treaty --that is promotion of "co-operation and development in all fields of economic activity"-- lays much more emphasis on trade liberalization rather than production, despite the virtually non-existence industrial base in the West African subregion. While the European countries needed a wider market to increase the competitiveness of their established industrial structure, West African countries, like the rest of Africa, are faced with the problem of developing on a collective basis a viable industrial structure that they could not develop individually because of their small size and poor economic and social infrastructure.

15. Progress towards market integration of all the African economic integration schemes has been disappointing, with the share of intra-regional trade in total trade still at the level it was more than two decades ago. This is due to two main reasons. In the first place, the major reason why trade might not rapidly increase is the lack of very much to trade, particularly once the

unrecorded trade (smuggling) is totally ignored. It is basically the low level of production that would be tradeable in African markets that accounts for the small volume of intra-African trade and the likelihood that the mere removal of trade barriers would not produce a rapid expansion of such trade.

16. Second, regional schemes based on the integration of markets have generated distributional crises which have had deleterious impact on the integrative schemes. A case in point are the respective experiences of the defunct East African Community, the West African Customs Union (UDAO), the Customs and Economic Union of West African States (UDEAO), and the withdrawal of Chad in 1968 from the membership of UDEAC. These amply demonstrate that distributional crises cannot be solved through market mechanisms, as for example, fiscal compensation alone, which has proven in various cases to be of the least appropriate and politically most unacceptable instruments. This is largely because it fails to address the most fundamental issue of balanced development and the equitable distribution of productive activities: the location of industrial production within the region with its spillover effect on employment, technological transfer and learning-by-doing.

17. Generally, when countries face budget and balance of payments problems, they seek to avoid the immediate costs of regional integration, which, in the case of market integration, involve loss of customs revenue, of particular importance to the industrially less developed members. But these costs must be borne if longer-term benefits are to be reaped. The smaller and poorer members are also concerned that most gains from integration will flow to the more developed partners and that compensation procedures will be inadequate, as was the situation in the East African Community, UDAO, UDEAO and UDEAC cited above. Indeed, the regime of structural adjustment programmes which has prevailed in most of West Africa (as indeed in the rest of Africa) for most of the existence of ECOWAS has hindered the integration process

tremendously. SAP policy instruments disregard completely the impact of their consequences on other countries.

18. Also in ECOWAS, the difficulties faced by member States in adhering to a given timetable for tariff liberalization because of their low level of industrial development, their high dependence on customs revenue, the delay in paying in full their assessed contributions to the "Compensation Budget" to enable the much postponed Trade Liberalization Scheme to take off on 1 January 1990, as decided at the 1989 ECOWAS Ouagadougou Summit are a clear evidence of the complex and potentially explosive problems involved in the adoption of market integration which imposes considerable constraints on the latitude of national decision-making without providing the means by which sufficient gains to warrant this sacrifice might be realized.

2. Functional Approach to Integration

19. The second type of economic co-operation and integration is the functional approach or flexible co-ordinating bodies and organizations to carry out joint programmes and projects, in which individual States can co-operate selectively at a functional level, varying their involvement from case to case. The Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) is a typical example of this functional approach. Other examples are CILSS in West Africa and the Indian Ocean Commission in the Indian Ocean based in Mauritius.

20. Flexible, functionally specific organizations have the advantage of impinging little on the sovereignty of participating States: decision-making power remains concentrated at the national level.

21. This approach is perhaps better grounded in the realities of the African situation than that of market integration. It chooses

to identify concrete projects where gains from co-operation may be realized in the immediate future, projects which can lay the foundations for further co-operation once the basis for trade has been established. In contrast, market integration, involving the creation of a customs union or free trade area usually involves relatively long time periods for fruition so that the initial impact, and perhaps the most important one, is an expectation regarding future market opportunities rather than existing trade patterns. Attention, therefore, has to be paid to the long-run effects which economic integration is likely to have.

22. This approach also shows the possibility for the pursuit of integration in ways that are less all-embracing, and perhaps more practicable, than establishment of customs union and common markets.

23. There are no doubt problems with this functionalist approach: regional co-operation based entirely on a number of specific programmes, prospects and/or activities may miss opportunities for wider participation and thus be sub-optimal in terms of the realization of potential gains.

24. A further weakness of a functional approach is that it lacks the automatic spillover effects associated with market integration; there is a danger that co-operation will become encapsulated in a limited number of projects unless efforts are continuously made to identify new prospects for co-operative action. Here the role of the regional secretariat, as exists with market integration approach, will be vital.

25. Certainly, this approach, adopted by SADCC, is no guarantee of success for any regionalist scheme in Africa, given the formidable economic and political constraints under which they must operate.

3. Production Approach to Integration

26. Production-focused approach or "collaboration for expansion and diversification of material production", as the UN Journal of Development Planning would describe it, is a new approach that emphasizes broadening the regional production base and that gives priority to deliberate measures for increasing industrial and agricultural production in the framework of a variety of co-operative schemes and arrangements.

27. This approach is based on the premise that expansion of mutual trade can take place only if the interested developing countries are able to produce the desired merchandise in sufficient quantities to meet each other's demand. The possibility of increases in mutual trade is a crucial incentive to expansion of production, but it cannot be taken for granted that the desired expansion will automatically follow. Gradual harmonization of industrial and agricultural policies and joint industrial agricultural planning and production are complementary to market integration.

28. The production-focused approach, which does not necessarily exclude trade liberalization on a broad basis, involves (a) industrial allocation schemes and joint industrial planning; and (b) joint agricultural ventures. This approach is discussed in detail in Section IV.

4. Some limited Co-operation Schemes

29. The following four co-operation schemes with limited objectives also exist.

- (i) Organizations set up to carry out specific, limited objectives or individual projects (for example, developing river basins or inland lakes with

several riparian States, managing educational and research institutions, combating disease and natural disasters, running airlines, etc.)

- (ii) Pragmatic, ad hoc co-operation without any fixed institutional form to promote specific objectives (for example, agreements on transport corridors affecting several countries).
- (iii) Joint action to improve bargaining positions vis-a-vis extra-regional economic actors. This might take the form of co-ordination of marketing of certain primary products (the success of which will depend in part on the market share of the regional partners). The potential for co-operation in other areas exists, e.g., in negotiating conditions for foreign investment in a region.
- (iv) Co-operation to mobilize financial assistance from foreign sources. This is particularly attractive at a time when the international aid community continues to favour regional projects, e.g., funds available for regional co-operation under the Lome System.

30. These are the main types of integration arrangements that exist. Considering the low levels of development in West Africa, the structural diversity and the intricacy of the economic, political, and social dimensions of the subregion, would cooperation objectives be realised through the operation of market forces? What kind of approach to the process of integration will be most effective in realizing the potential of the subregion for the benefit of its population? And what should be the goal of West African economic integration?

III. THE BASIS FOR WEST AFRICAN INTEGRATION

31. A primary goal of an economic integration scheme in West Africa, as in other parts of Africa, should be to reduce the dependence of the ECOWAS members on the outside world and to create conditions that will make self-sustained, autonomous development possible. In the African setting, such development can only come about through the transformation of productive structures. In other words, in a developing area such as West Africa, the goal of economic cooperation should be the transformation of the structure of production and distribution. Given the realities of the West African situation, such a transformation can only come about not through mere integration of markets, as noted in paragraphs 12-18, but through collaboration for expansion and diversification of material production, as referred to in paragraphs 26-28.

32. West African subregional cooperation must start from the premise that the requisites for integration do not presently exist but must be created. This is in contrast to the dominant approach of ECOWAS which has tended to entertain a belief that integration in West Africa could be legislated from above, ex nihilo. There is little purpose in liberalising trade when the parties have nothing to exchange: regional cooperation inter alia must create the basis for trade. Otherwise, West African market integration will merely be for promoting non-African goods and services.

IV. TOWARDS AN EFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENTAL REGIONALISM IN WEST AFRICA

33. A multi-purpose, more or less comprehensive cooperation initiative in West Africa that would have the potential for achieving the goals of integration would necessitate a re-arrangement of the priorities of ECOWAS and a review of its treaty

by the incorporation of some hitherto neglected economic and social aspects of integration.

34. To achieve the goal of West African economic integration, therefore, ECOWAS should give top priority to production and devote substantial resources to production integration in order to reduce the subregion's excessive external dependence, critical lack of productive capacity and internal non-viability of member-economies. It is from the integration of the productive structures that the veritable gains of Africa's self-reliance will be derived. First, it is at this level that the benefits of the economies of scale will be reaped. Second, given the natural complementarities of endowments in West Africa, the integration of the productive structures would generate new forward and backward linkages in the process of subregional development. And third, integrating the production structures would alleviate the persistent constraint of financial resources, as it would enable countries to pool resources and establish multi-country programmes in areas like iron and steel and the development of lake and river basins.

35. To say this is not to ignore or underestimate the importance of market integration in the building of a viable West African economic community. The point at issue is that, on the basis of past experience, attempt to integrate markets through the removal of trade barriers without simultaneous effort to promote a joint approach to the expansion of production capacities, will be largely ineffective. Not only is it important that the two endeavours should proceed simultaneously and be mutually reinforcing, it is also essential that the removal of trade barriers should be pursued in the context, and as an integral part, of agreements and understandings relating to the planning of production improvements on a subregional basis.

36. Harmonization of national efforts to improve agricultural productivity, restructure industrial production to rely more on

domestic rather than on imported factor inputs, rationalize the production and utilization of energy, and improve facilities for repair and maintenance of plant and machinery, among other things, through subregional efforts to standardize equipment and parts, should be major components of co-operative programmes that ECOWAS ought to promote if it is to have any significant impact on the development of member States.

The four ECOWAS Priorities

37. Even within the production integration approach, priorities must be set. The following four specific subregional priorities or special production structures are proposed for consideration:

(i) Subregional food self-sufficiency and security

Following the objective of establishing a human-centred development, particularly in such a food deficient subregion as West Africa, the first priority area of collective self-reliance is that of subregional food self-sufficiency and security. The recurrent food crises in West Africa have heightened the need for integration in agriculture designed to provide self-sufficiency in food, the production and distribution of seeds, the local manufacture of agricultural inputs, including animal feed, an integrated research and animal health facilities; food processing and the establishment of food marketing system on a West-African basis. Indeed, nothing short of a West African Common Agricultural Policy, Production and Marketing is required.

(ii) Production of intermediate and capital goods

Production of intermediate and capital goods, especially iron and steel, machine tools, fertilizers, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, building materials, as well as agricultural,

transport and construction equipment may constitute the second priority.

(iii) Joint services

Priority has to be given to the establishment of joint services: air, communications, shipping, insurance, for example, for provision of efficient and reliable subregional services.

(iv) Infrastructural dimension

A new orientation should be given to the integration not only of the productive base but also of the physical, institutional and social infrastructure to sustain the subregional production structures and markets. Of particular importance in this integration approach are the transport, posts, and telecommunications.

(v) Joint Research Institutions and Programmes

This is required for subregional capacity building. Because research is specialized, subregional cooperation yields significant economies of scale.

(vi) Joint Energy Policy and Programmes

The integrated exploitation of the region's uneven energy resources, such as hydropower, would enable energy deficit areas to obtain the energy that is critically necessary for transformation. This calls for an ECOWAS joint energy policy, programmes and activities.

38. To reflect these priorities, the following chapters of the ECOWAS Treaty need to be strengthened and put up front:

- (i) Chapters V (Industrial Development and Harmonization) and VI (Co-operation in Agriculture and Natural Resources);
- (ii) Chapter VII (Infrastructural Links in the fields of Transportation and Communications; and finally

39. The language of the Lagos Treaty with respect to harmonization of industrial policies (Chapter V) is rather vague, and it falls somewhat short of the vigorous measures that need to be taken to begin the process of merging West African economies. For example, although member States are called upon in Article 30 to harmonize their industrial policies, no institution or body of ECOWAS is given the power to allocate industries among member States or to ensure that industrial policies are indeed harmonized. The Council of Ministers can make recommendations in this regard, but unless the recommendations are accepted by the Authority of Heads of State and Government, they are not in any way binding. This lack of harmonization of industrial policies leaves external forces, particularly transnational corporations (TNCs) in the position of being able to bargain with individual ECOWAS countries and to undermine the goals of the ECOWAS treaty by employing classic divide-and rule tactics.

40. The Council of Ministers is also called upon in Article 32 to "take steps to reduce gradually the Community's economic dependence on the outside world and strengthen economic relations among themselves". Yet no institution or body in ECOWAS is empowered to negotiate with outside forces on behalf of ECOWAS; neither has any institution been established to control the importation of technology. Indeed, the relations of ECOWAS with the outside world, which are crucial if reducing dependence is a goal, are largely ignored by the Lagos Treaty.

41. To sum up, the kind of an economic community required in West Africa should be one whose main thrust should be based on production integration. The underdevelopment of the subregion that is manifested most vividly in the pervasive lack of productive capacity; its food and general agrarian crisis, small internal production bases, excessive external dependence for industrial and agricultural products and the patent non-viability of national industrialisation programmes in most countries, underline the urgent need for effective production integration in West Africa. Production and infrastructure should be the underlying areas of West African economic integration, while liberalization of trade within the group should be only supportive of this process.

42. The effectiveness of a West African economic community based on production integration should include in its scope some economic and social aspects of integration. For integration should comprise as many social activities as possible so as to create and strengthen the subregional identity of the West African countries as well as facilitate the pursuant production approach. These aspects of integration are the focus of the following section.

V. ECONOMIC AND SOCIO-POLITICAL ASPECTS

(i) The Human factor

43. Promotion of ECOWAS production-focused integration should not be seen in isolation. Certain other sectors would need to be stimulated pari passu to enhance production. Among them is the need to strengthen the popular base of the ECOWAS production approach to integration. Towards this end, it is imperative for West Africa, in the light of the current developments in the rest of the world, to map out its production-focused strategy of integration which incorporates the human factor so as to lay solid foundations for sustained development. It must be emphasized that

unless the peoples of West Africa are themselves aware of the process of ECOWAS' production-focused integration, and are interested in, and enthusiastic to make an effort, all the attempts in reshaping ECOWAS integration strategy may come to nil. Therefore, the effective mobilization of public support should be regarded as a crucial ingredient in recipes for implementing and maintaining subregional co-operation and integration oriented towards collective self-reliant, indigenous, and self-sustaining development.

44. Towards this end, Chapter II (Article 4) of the ECOWAS Treaty should be amended to provide a forum for formal exchange of views with the private sector, as enshrined in Articles 193-198 of the European Community Rome Treaty, which set up the Economic and Social Committee composed of representatives of the various categories of economic and social life, in particular, representatives of producers, agriculturists, transport operators, workers, merchants, artisans, liberal professions, and the general interests. In other words, the institutional structure of ECOWAS be restructured to bridge "the elite-mass gap" and to involve the private sector in the Community's decision-making processes.

(ii) Common Education Policy

Closely related to this is the need to expand and enhance cooperation in the education field (common curricula, exchange of teachers, exchange of teaching materials, etc.). This will also include such longterm policies as extending West African Examinations Council to cover all ECOWAS countries, promoting bi-lingualism in secondary, technical and university education; and developing West African Centres of Excellence. Added to this, the Community must encourage and devote some of its resources to the foundation of integration journals (like the Common Market Studies published in the UK) and promotion of seminars in the field of integration. Such an undertaking

would in no small measure contribute to the broadening of outlook of West African socio-economic groups as well as the enlargement of their regional understanding, all of which would help to create a favourable nationwide climate for the development of integration movement in the subregion.

(iii) Enabling Environment

45. One important function that the governments in West African countries must perform in order to enhance promotion of the process of ECOWAS production integration approach is to create the requisite enabling environment for economic co-operation and integration. Apart from the creation of an environment to facilitate, among other things, the intra-regional movements of goods, services, capital and labour and other customs union or trade matters, there must be an enabling environment in terms of political freedom and human rights; freedom of speech, of thought, and of association; from economic and personal insecurity, and freedom from arbitrary arrest. "It is in such a political environment that a high level of productivity can be generated. It is in such a society that values of self-reliance, dedication and loyalty can be developed. It is such a society that a consensus of values, based on such characteristics as toughness, determination, resilient inner strength, steadfastness in duty and respect for the law, will evolve and grow".^{1/} In other words, there must be the democratization of the development process both at national and ECOWAS levels.

^{1/} Adebayo Adedeji