



Ghana

in Search of
Regional Integration
Agenda



GHANA
IN SEARCH OF
REGIONAL
INTEGRATION AGENDA

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FOREWORD

No country in today's globalised world can exist without interacting with other countries. This fact places a great demand on government to put in place a carefully thought out foreign policy or strategy that defines the goals and interests of Ghana and how it intends to achieve these goals.

Ghana has in the pre-colonial era, but particularly in the period after independence played a key leadership role in the integration process of the entire African continent.

This leadership role continued with the formation of the ECOWAS in 1975. In almost all crisis situations in Africa particularly in West Africa, Ghana is looked up to, to provide the necessary leadership to assist in resolving the issues.

In spite of this stature that Ghana has amongst its African countries, there appears to be no deliberate strategy in place that provides the guidance for Ghana and her leaders in these leadership roles that they play.

This natural leadership role may be attributed to the following:

1. Ghana's pioneering role in the independence struggle i.e. past glory
2. Ghana's current state of democratic development.
3. The relatively better trained human resource

There is the need to address the fact that there is an absence of a strategy as described above.

The objective of this project is to come out with a publication that identifies key actors and the roles they can assist Ghana play in her leadership role in the regional integration agenda.

It is envisaged that this publication would serve as a reference book for policy makers, students, academics and civil society organisations in Ghana.

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ACRONYMS

ACO	Aliens Compliance Order
ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
ADB	African Development Bank
AEC	African Economic Community
AFRC	Armed Force Revolutionary Council
AGI	Association of Ghana Industries
AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
ASF	African Standby Force
ASU	Asante Students Union
ATN	African Trade Network
AU	African Union
BPU	Border Patrol Unit
BWI	Building and Woodworkers International
CDS	Chiefs of Defence Staff
CEAO	Communauté Economique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest
CEMAC	Communauté Economique et Monetaire de l'Afrique Central
CEPS	Customs Excise and Preventive Service
CET	Common External Tariff
CIVPOL	International Civilian Police
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CPA	Cotonou Partnership Agreement
CPP	Convention People's Party
CRI	Crop Research Institute
CSAG	Civil Servants' Association of Ghana
CSOs	Civil society organisations
CTCA	Commission for Technical Cooperation in Africa South of the Sahara
DFP	Democratic Freedom Party
DOAWTU	Democratic Organisation of African Workers Trade Union Unity

DPP	Democratic People's Party
EAC	East African Community
EBID	ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development
ECA	Economic Community of Africa
ECOGEE	Engendering Enterprise in ECOWAS Countries
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EEC	European Economic Community
EGDC	ECOWAS Gender Development Centre
EGLE Party	Every Ghanaian Living Everywhere Party
EI	Education International
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
ERT	Early Response Team
ETLS	ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme
EU	European Union
EYSDC	ECOWAS Youth and Sports Development Centre
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
FEWAMA	Federation of West African Manufacturers Association
FNISCI	Federation Nationale des Industries et Services de Cote d'Ivoire
FOODSPAN	Food Security Policy Advocacy Network
FTA	Free Trade Area
GAF	Ghana Armed Forces
GASU	Ga-Adangbe Students Union (GASU)
GCAA	Ghana Civil Aviation Authority
GcNET	Ghana Customs community Network
GCPP	Great Consolidated Popular Party
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDRP	Ghana Democratic Republican Party
GEPC	Ghana Export Promotion Council
GEXTRACO	Ghana Export Trade Company Ltd
GFL	Ghana Federation of Labour
GHALSA	Ghana Liberal Students Association
GIS	Ghana Immigration Service
GNAT	Ghana National Association of Teachers

GNCCI	Ghana National Chamber of Commerce and Industries
GNUPS	Ghana National Union of Polytechnic Students
GPHA	Ghana Ports and Harbours Authority
GPS	Ghana Police Service
GRNA	Ghana Registered Nurses' Association
GTUC	Ghana Trade Union Congress
GUFs	Global Union Federations
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICU	Industrial and Commercial Workers Union
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
IEA	Institute of Economic Affairs
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMCC	Inter-Ministerial Coordination Committee
ISRT	Inter State Road Transit
ITPPGG	International Training Program on Peacebuilding and Good Governance for African Civilian Personnel
ITUC-Africa	International Trade Union Confederation - Africa ITUC
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
IUF	International Union of Food
KNUST	Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
LECIA	Legon Centre for International Affairs
LPA	Lagos Plan of Action
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MAN	Manufacturers Association of Nigeria
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MEPRC	Ministry of Economic Planning and Regional Cooperation
MERCOSUR	Common Market for the South
MISTOWA	Market Information Systems and Traders' Organisations in West Africa
MOTI	Ministries of Trade and Industry
MPs	Members of Parliament
NAFTA	North Atlantic Free Trade Area
NAL	National Alliance of Liberals
NCBWA	National Congress of British West African States
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development

NLC	National Liberation Council
NPP	New Patriotic Party
NRC	National Redemption Council
NRP	National Reform Party
NTU	Northern Students Union
NUGS	National Union of Ghana Students
NYC	National Youth Council
OAS	Organisation of African States
OATUU	Organisation of African Trade Union Unity
OAU	Organisation of African Union
OERS	Organisation of Senegal River States
OPRI	Oil Palm Research Institute
OTUWA	Organisation of Trade Unions of West Africa
PFP	Popular Front Party
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
PNP	Peoples National Party
POSSA	Political Science Students Association
PP	Progress Party
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PSD	Private Sector Development
RAGB	Revenue Agencies Governing Board
REC	Regional Economic Community
RIAS	Regional Integration Assistance Strategy
RIPS	Regional Institute for Population Studies
RPFS	Regional Program for Food Security
RPU	Revenue Protection Unit
SACU	Southern African Customs Union
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
SIC	State Insurance Company Ltd
SMC I	Supreme Military Council I
SMC II	Supreme Military Council II
SRCs	Student Representative Councils (SRCs)
TESCHART	Tertiary Education Charter
TESCON	Tertiary Education Confederacy

TEIN	Tertiary Education Institutions Network
UCC	University of Cape Coast
UDEAC	Customs and Economic Union of Central Africa
UDEAO	Customs Union of African States
UDS	University for Development Studies
UEMOA	Union Economique et Monetaire Ouest Africaine
UGM	United Ghana Movement
UMA	Arab Maghreb Union
UNC	United National Convention
UNECA	UN Economic Commission for Africa
USA	United States of America
USAAID	United States Aid Agency
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WABNET	West African Businesswomen's Network
WACB	West African Central Bank
WACCI	West Africa Centre for Crop Improvement
WACIP	West Africa Common Industrial Policy
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union
WAGP	West Africa Gas Pipeline
WAHO	West African Health Organisation
WAIBL	West Africa International Business Linkages Program
WAIPS	West African Inter-bank Payment System
WAMA	West African Monetary Agency
WAMI	West Africa Monetary Institute
WAMZ	West Africa Monetary Zone
WAPP	West Africa Power Pool
WARPPP	West African Regional Programme of Political Parties
WATH	West African Trade Hub
WAUG	West Africa University Games
WAYN	West African Youth Network
WCL	World Confederation of Labour
WRCU	Water Resources Co-ordination Unit
WTO	World Trade Organisation
YPG	Young Peoples Guild

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CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW OF GHANA AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Afua Boatemaa Yakohene*

ABSTRACT

Ghana's initial efforts at integrating with other countries in Africa and West Africa in particular, were based more on economic interests than political. This pattern has of course changed over time. West Africa and Africa in general, have always been the focus of Ghana's Foreign Policy. However, as typical of all Foreign Policies, the leadership style, prevailing socio-economic and political conditions, as well as happenings on the international plane, have always affected positively and otherwise, Ghana's quests at integration. This paper therefore traces the integration efforts of Ghana from the pre-independence era to the post-independence era and also takes a glimpse at integration in the future.

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Introduction

Integration is widely conceived as a deeper form of interaction. The process of integration be it political, economical, technological or the use of human resources requires a conscious mission with a goal to be realised. Interaction among humans, being social beings, is definitely inevitable and as such, does not require a great deal of planning. It could be simply conscious at best, sometimes even accidental. However, Integration requires that the matter of 'who with', 'where', 'how', 'why' and 'when' be scrupulously addressed.

Some Schools of Thought believe that the commitment of African states to regional integration would facilitate the realisation of the benefits of economies of scale, through the expansion of markets and promote efficiency in the use of resources. Further, regional integration has the potential of encouraging the development and the sharing of new technologies and products. Again, a comprehensively integrated African continent is likely to have a better bargaining capacity on the global scene which would result in improvements in the well-being of individual national economies. With the increasing perception that regional integration currently holds the key to Africa's and particularly West Africa's development therefore, this work gives an overview of the extent to which the foreign policy of Ghana has pursued the agenda of regional integration before and after independence.

Some factors are key to the success of any Integration process. The approach to integration seems as important (if not more important) as the objective of integration. The personality, leadership style as well as the vision of a leader is key to the success of any integration process. The domestic environment of states can also determine the extent of success. Thus, integration has a better chance of succeeding, if the states within a region are experiencing political or economic stability. The reverse situation is also true.

A clear distinction can be established in the political history of Ghana in relation to her commitment to the regional integration process in Africa and West Africa in particular. This paper reflects the consequential impact on Africa's effort at realising what can be generally considered an elusive dream if the state of affairs within the fifty four (54) individual states are to remain volatile.

Integration in the Quagmire of Colonisation – The Gold Coast Era

A close examination of the colonial era of the state of Ghana (then the Gold Coast) with reference to regional integration reveals a bag of mixed outcomes.

The nations of the peoples within today's Ghana are believed to have settled in their present territories by AD 1400,¹ becoming fully fledged nations with centralised political authorities by the 16th Century. Economically, these nations experienced a significant degree of integration which facilitated trade and movement of resources. This integration became necessary due to the non-availability of some needed resources among other things, as a result of their geographical location. Significant mention must be made of the relevance of the Volta River which connected the nations of the Southern territories to the major historical Trans-Sahara trade route in the North. The trading activities transcended the realms of mere interactions to actually facilitating what could be considered strategic integrations. Yet, it must be mentioned that these integration efforts were generated and advanced by the indigenous peoples of the nations which efforts, were influenced by the various goals that guided their independent socio-economic and cultural development.

The roots of Ghanaian nationalism go back to the early decades of the 20th century. It owed much to the influences of the Pan African Movement of W. W. B. Du Bois, Sylvester Williams, Edward Blyden and Marcus Garvey among others and the West African Students Union based in the United Kingdom.² The Gold Coast compared to other colonies of the British Empire was said to have been endowed with a number of well trained natives who were instrumental in the relatively early annexation of independence from the colonial masters. In the pursuit of the struggle for independence, some of the strategies which were used included the formation of local and international movements that sought to pressurise the British to leave and also as a forum of protest. The Aborigines' Rights Protection Society (ARPS) was one such movement. formed in 1897 by traditional leaders and the educated elite in the Gold Coast, it had as its original objective protesting against the Crown Lands Bill of 1896 and the Lands Bill of 1897 that threatened traditional land tenure. The ARPS became the main political organisation that led, organised and sustained opposition against the Colonial Government, laying the foundation for political action that would ultimately lead to independence.³

Another notable strategy (which portrayed the leadership ability of a son of the soil) was an endeavour to integrate entities within the British territories of the West

¹<http://www.ghana50.gov.gh> accessed on 04/10/08

²<http://www.ghana50.gov.gh/history/> accessed on 04/10/08

³Nti Kwaku, Action and Reaction: An Overview of the Ding Dong Relationship between the Colonial Government and the People of Cape Coast, *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 11(1): 1-37 (2002) accessed from http://www.bookrags.com/wiki/Aborigines'_Rights_Protection_Society on 21/01/09.

African sub-region (being the Gold Coast, Nigeria, Gambia and Sierra Leone). It is essential for one to note that the Gold Coast began life as part of the integrated British possessions in West Africa with its headquarters in Sierra Leone. The integration of British territories within West Africa was spearheaded by Joseph Ephraim Casely -Hayford (also known as Ekra-Agiman, a Fante journalist, author, lawyer, educator and politician who believed in Pan-Africanism), with the backing of giants of the Pan-African Movement such as Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois. The inaugural meeting of the National Congress of British West African States (NCBWA) was convened in Accra by Casely Hayford in 1920, with the sole objective of creating a platform through which the intellectuals and elites of British West Africa would bring before the British government for redress, the wants and aspirations of the people. It was hoped that this Congress was going to create a long term platform for the attainment of self government through a constitutional process and integrate British West Africa.

Some of the outcomes of their first and subsequent meetings, included the demand for the election of African representatives to the Municipal and Legislative Councils; cessation of the exercise of judicial functions by untrained public servants; the opening up of the Civil Service to Africans; the establishment of a British West African University and the institution of compulsory education for all. Sadly, this movement died with the death of Casely Hayford in 1930.⁴

It could be said that, Britain, upon realising the colossal benefits of regional integration to them, implemented strategies that caused regional integration to gain some impetus in the pre-independence era through the establishment of a common currency and some common services in British colonies in West Africa. Additionally, common agricultural research institutes were set up for the cash crops such as cocoa, oil palm, timber and groundnuts. Furthermore, the four colonies were linked with a common airline company. These integration measures facilitated easy economic activities. However, compared to the French colonies, these efforts were minimal as it eschewed political integration. The French colonial administration established a higher level of political organisation by grouping their thirteen colonies in Africa into two federations namely the French West Africa and French Equatorial African Federations. A review of the literature leads to conclusion that the French federations had a solid political and administrative base but porous economic foundation. Thus, their founding fathers upon independence had the challenging task of making them economically viable.⁵

As established by Adebayo Adedeji (2002), separatism and irredentism were latent throughout the colonial era, a situation which facilitated the ease with which the

⁴Eluwa, G. I. C., Background to the Emergence of the National Congress of British West Africa, *African Studies Review*, Vol. 14, No. 2, 1971, pp. 205-218.

⁵Adebayo Adedeji, *op. cit.*, 2002

slave trade was carried out and the fangs of colonialism were sunk into the Gold Coast from the 16th to 18th Century.⁶ This same situation constitutes a major challenge to the possible integration of the region by the Gold Coast. Another major challenge that faced possible regional integration was the apparent competition which existed among the colonial masters of the territories namely Britain, Portugal, Germany, France, Spain, Italy, and Belgium who did not welcome any inter-territorial integration considerations. There was basically no motivation for these administrators to integrate what they had needed to separate in the first place. The lack of political will on the part of Britain (which is understandable considering her parochial interests) and the minimal drive for integration among the 'local' leaders of the colonies did not facilitate the regional integration process. This obviously underscored the importance of the role of leadership with regards to the vision and goals they set, since little could be achieved by the people unless the inclination of the leadership was consistent with the will of the people.

The Blazing Trail of Regional Integration – the Post-Independence (Kwame Nkrumah) Era

The Gold Coast was ushered into an unfavourable polarised international environment at the dawn of independence on March 6, 1957. The international environment was tense with the existence of the Cold War between the United States of America (USA) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). The Gold Coast assumed a new name, at independence, Ghana, (after the former strong Ghana Empire). As a small and independent state, Ghana attempted to enlarge its influence and increase its recognition through its foreign policy. It chose to use the vessel of foreign policy to assert itself because unlike Egypt (then known as the United Arab Union) which had geographical clout in the form of the Suez Canal,⁷ it did not possess strategic significance in the sight of the West and East. In the light of an aggressive integration agenda, however, Ghana was perceived to have some real potential.

The bedrock of Ghana's foreign policy especially in terms of its leadership role in the integration arena was firmly laid by its first President, Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah on the ticket of the Convention People's Party (CPP). As a strong believer and advocate of anti-colonialism, Nkrumah famously declared on the eve of Ghana's independence

“... we again rededicate ourselves in the struggle to emancipate other countries in Africa; for our independence is meaningless unless it is linked up with the total

⁶Ibid, p. 3.

⁷ W. Scott Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy 1957-1966, Diplomacy, Ideology and the New State*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969). p. xi.

liberation of the African continent.”⁸

This dictum established the foreign policy of Ghana. Being the first sub-Saharan African country to have gained independence, the future of Ghana as a beacon of light for the continent could not have been over emphasised. The foreign policy themes of Nkrumah clearly accentuated the expected integration role of Ghana in Africa. They were:⁹

The emancipation of Africa from colonialism and restoration of the dignity of the black race;

The establishment of power and influence in Africa;

The pursuit of world peace and security through a policy of positive neutrality and non-alignment and;

The promotion of international cooperation and development through such inter-governmental organisations as the United Nations (UN), the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the Commonwealth.

It must be pointed out that these four-pronged principles have influenced Ghana's Foreign Policies from 1957 to date. Every regime, of course, has had its area of emphasis arising out of the different personalities and perceptions of its leaders as a consequence of prevailing domestic and external conditions. These conditions are, of course, defined by the national interest (national interest being chiefly what the ruling leadership says it is). There are some striking elements of these principles that define the personality and personal beliefs of Nkrumah. The first and fourth principles show the vivid desire of Ghana to integrate with her immediate neighbours and the African continent at large. It revealed his nurtured hope that a united continent would make it strong and less vulnerable to outside influence. As an adherent of Pan-Africanism and a joint-secretary (with George Padmore) of the 1945 Pan-African Congress held in Manchester, Britain, this was not surprising. What is startling is the third principle of non-alignment and positive neutrality. Nkrumah's association with the West and East was anything but neutral and non-aligned. He was pro-East in his utterances and had a close relationship with the USSR, China and Cuba. In another instance, he went to America upon the recommendation of Britain, to contract a loan of \$140 million for the building of the Akosombo Hydroelectric Dam.

⁸K. B. Asante, *Foreign Policy Making in Ghana: Options for the 21st Century*, A Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Publication, 1997, p. 29.

⁹<http://bbc.co.uk/worldservice/focusonafrika> accessed on 11/11/08

The leadership role of Ghana was made possible when it became the 81st member of the UN and joined other organisations such as the Commission for Technical Cooperation in Africa South of the Sahara (CTCA). The CTCA was made up of the colonial masters of Africa, apartheid South Africa and Liberia. Ghana's membership of the UN boosted her image globally. After months of diplomatic lobbying, Ghana convened the Conference of Independent States of Africa, in Accra, on April 15, 1958, a year after her independence. The lobbying was done among other reasons to allay the fears of Liberia and other independent states such as Egypt who were of the opinion that Nkrumah wanted to use the Conference as a launching pad to seek a leadership role in Africa.¹⁰ According to Ako Adjei, the then Minister for External Affairs (April 1959-May 1961), Nkrumah had no such motives. All he wanted was the opportunity for the newly independent states to get to know each other and establish the necessary contacts where needed. Such a revelation emphasizes a key challenge confronting regional integration. The issue of mistrust among the leadership of the integrating states. The Conference did not have the objective of discussing the liberation of the colonised African states. This is because Nkrumah did not want to divert the attention of the All African Congress that was scheduled to be held later in 1958 purposively to discuss the issue of liberation. That notwithstanding, the issue of liberation was raised at the Conference.

The Conference was attended by Sudan, Egypt, Tunisia, Liberia, Libya, Morocco and Ghana. Although it is alleged that the Conference chalked some successes, the only success of the Conference as recorded by Scott Thompson was Nkrumah being established as 'something more than a local leader'¹¹. Without being fully convinced about the reasons given by Nkrumah for the holding of the Conference, apart from asserting his leadership weight in Africa affairs, it is correct to conclude that the Conference was really successful.

Yet again, with Ghana at the fore front, the All African Congress took place in Accra in December 1958. On the agenda was the need for the total liberation of the African Continent from the dungeons of colonialism and the general development of Africa. This dispensation witnessed the settling of several African Americans from the Diaspora in Ghana notably Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois, who commenced the Encyclopaedia Africana Project and George Padmore.¹²

The leadership prowess of Kwame Nkrumah was made manifest in Ghana's relations with Guinea. After attaining independence in October 1958, following an empire-wide referendum rejecting continued French tutelage, Guinea needed financial aid to support its economy. Ghana was the only country that went to its aid

¹⁰W. Scott Thompson, *op. cit.*, 1969, p. 28.

¹¹*Ibid*

¹²Kwame Botwe-Asamoah, Kwame Nkrumah's Politico-Cultural Thoughts and Policies: An African-centred paradigm for the Second Phase of the African Revolution accessed from informaworld.com on 04/10/08.

after fruitlessly canvassing for help from the other independent states. This gave Nkrumah the impetus to push for the formation of the Ghana-Guinea Union on November 23, 1958, which Mali later joined to become the Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union. This Union had among other objectives, to bridge the Anglophone-Francophone divide in West Africa. This divide had led to the formation of the Casablanca Group (made up of 6 states including Ghana) and the Monrovia Group (made up of 24 members).¹³ The main bone of contention between these two groups was not their differences in terms of objectives but their approach to achieving the objective. The Casablanca Group stood for a more radical decolonisation and speedy unification of Africa. On the contrary, the Monrovia Group preferred a cautionary and gradual approach to the unification of Africa. The Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union did not succeed in uniting these two groups.

This polarisation of the Pan-African Project further led to the All Peoples Conference held in Tunis in 1960 with the help of Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia. This Conference established the need for the creation of one organisation that would unite all the independent states as well as foster close economic and cultural cooperation. Besides, they sent African volunteers to fight in the Algerian liberation struggle. On May 25, 1963, Pan-Africanism was taken to another level on the Continent with the founding of the OAU.¹⁴ Led by the charismatic Kwame Nkrumah, Sekou Toure of Guinea, Leopold Senghor of Senegal, Banar Abdel Nasser of Egypt and Ali Ben Bella of Algeria, the dream of Nkrumah was finally realised. In his speech, Nkrumah expressed the fact that regional integration was needed if Africa was going to survive and develop. He declared;

“Here is a challenge which destiny has thrown out to the leaders of Africa. It is for us to grasp that golden opportunity to prove that the genius of African people can surmount the separatist tendencies in sovereign nationhood by coming together speedily, for the sake of Africa's greater glory and infinite wellbeing, into a union of African States”.¹⁵

As expected, the OAU's main objective was to assert the right of Africans to control their social, economic and political affairs as well as to achieve the freedom necessary to consolidate their development. A shortcoming of the OAU Charter was the fact that it did not have a provision for resolving disputes and violent conflicts. Tim Murithi¹⁶ accedes to this argument. Due to the jealously guarded newly acquired sovereignty of the new states, non-interference in the internal affairs of the

¹³Elizabeth Schmidt, Black Liberation and the Spirit of '57: The Ghana-Guinea Legacy, a paper presented at the Conference on “Black Liberation and the Spirit of '57”, Binghamton University, US, November 2-3, 2007. p. 4.

¹⁴Tim Murithi, Institutionalising Pan-Africanism - Transforming African Union Values and Principles into Policy and Practice, Institute for Security Studies, Occasional Paper 143, June 2007. p. 2.

¹⁵K. Y. Amoako, Economic Development and Reform Issues in Africa: Lessons for Ghana accessed from <http://www.africaresource.com> on 10/09/08. p. 2.

¹⁶Tim Murithi, op. cit., p. 3.

states was the preferred option or the watchword. This option was clearly stated right from the Conference of Independent African States in April 1958. As member states could only intervene at the invitation of the parties to the dispute or conflict, the occurrence of intra-state conflicts saw the degeneration of the already fragile economies and infrastructure of the conflicting states. Nkrumah's dream towards the realisation of a united Africa was cut short with his ousting on February 24, 1966 by a military junta. Nkrumah spent his last years exiled in Guinea.

As a leader, Kwame Nkrumah had his challenges with regards to his ideal understanding of what integration meant and how it should be achieved. One cannot fault countries such as Liberia, Nigeria and even Egypt for their apprehension that Nkrumah's sole aim of bringing the newly independent states together was because he had ambitions of being their leader. Although he denied this, his blatant disgust at his Francophone neighbours for being puppets of France, their colonial master, derailed his relationship with them and catapulted their suspicions. Thus, they acted as stumbling blocks to his vision of a united Africa by disagreeing with his integration policies. Moreover, his united Africa quest was imminent and of much priority to him regardless of obstacles such as the hesitation of the Monrovia Group and the apprehension of the West about his ideals and flirtatious relationship with the East and the West simultaneously. Also, Padmore, his mentor was apprehensive of Nkrumah's intended quest, which he saw as a distant hope.¹⁷

Thompson (1969) defines Nkrumah as a man of different compartments. One is tempted to agree with him in view of his relationship with both the West and East, all geared towards developing Ghana. A man, who was busy building the foundation of African Unity, also discontinued the colonial efforts aimed at integrating West Africa. Thus, he did away with the West African Airways Company and the West African Common Currency among others that the British colonial masters had established. He did not also support the idea of a sub-regional integration in whatever form. It can be understood that he did not want any relationship with the colonial masters, but the destruction of these integration efforts was quite unfortunate and backward. Was it not his overleaping ambition at play again? His famous declaration that: "Today, from now on, there is a new African in the world and that new African is ready to fight his own battle and show that after all the black man is capable of managing his own affairs..."¹⁸ may hold the secret answer to why he would take such detrimental steps. Simple logic has it that a whole is built by the putting together of fractions. Consequently, one would have thought that Nkrumah could have built on the achieved integration blocks in the sub-region. After all, today, as part of the integration attempts, the West African Monetary Union (a common currency) is being created.

¹⁷W. Scott Thompson, *op. cit.*, 1969, p. 33.

¹⁸G. K. Bluwé, *Understanding International Relations*, (Accra: Yamens Press, 2003). p. 102.

The Destabilising Moments

Ghana's political history from the ousting of Nkrumah and the CPP to the onset of the Fourth Republic in January 1993, was marked by political instability; economic turmoil and long periods of military regimes interspersed with short-lived civilian administrations. Here, the study takes a look at the contributions of the leaders of the various regimes that succeeded the CPP government between 1966 and 1992 with regards to their role in the regional integration process. These regimes followed in the footsteps of Nkrumah in various ways depending on their ideological orientation, but generally, their leaders did not impact the regional integration drive as much as Nkrumah did. The series of military coup d'états helped plunge the country into economic misery and political despondency and also affected Ghana's sub-regional and continental image. Over the period, Pan-Africanism was gradually supplanted by sub-regionalism and nationalism. It also faced two other challenges—separatist movements within the newly emerging states and irredentist movements by national minorities wishing to join their kith and kin in neighbouring states.¹⁹

The first military regime of the National Liberation Council (NLC) under the leadership of Lt. Gen. J. A. Ankrah (1966-1967) and later Lt. Gen. A. A. Afrifa (1967-1969) had a sole preoccupation of stabilising the ailing economy and returning the country to democratic rule. This was also true under the National Redemption Council (which metamorphosed into the Supreme Military Council I and II) under the leadership of Gen. I. K. Acheampong (1972-1978) and later F.W. Akwasi Akuffo (1978-1979). The same can be said of the short lived Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) under the control of Flt. Lt. J. J. Rawlings (1979) and his subsequent come back under the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) from 1981 to 1992. The two democratic interludes, the Progress Party (PP) government (1969-1972) under Prime Minister Dr. K. Abrefa Busia and President Edward Akufo Addo and Dr. Hilla Limann's People's National Party (PNP) government (1979-1981), like their military counterparts, also had the arduous task of salvaging the economy of Ghana.

The unorthodox nature of changing a government through a coup d'état at the time, prompted the NLC leadership to preoccupy itself with restoring ruptured relations between Ghana and her immediate neighbours, redeeming any damaged image and courting continental and international support and assistance. Emissaries were sent to Togo, Cote d'Ivoire, Benin, Senegal, Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia and Nigeria.²⁰ Being ideologically inclined towards the West and anti-Nkrumah, some were also sent to Britain, France, Canada and America. On the other hand, none was

¹⁹ Adebayo Adedeji, *op. cit.*, 2002. p. 3.

²⁰ G. K. Bluiwey, *The Foreign Policies of the Succession of Governments in Ghana 1966 to 1995. Part II.* (Unpublished). p. 271.

sent to Guinea, Egypt, Tunis, Morocco, Algeria and Zambia, which because of their close ties with Nkrumah had condemned the coup and the junta. Ghana's restored friendship with Togo and Cote d'Ivoire halted the smuggling of cocoa beans from Ghana and unauthorised routes and porous borders with the two neighbours were blocked.²¹

The NLC administration showed its diplomatic finesse and leadership by supporting Nigeria when the state was thrown into a state of emergency following an aborted coup d'état which resulted in heavy casualties. Lt. Gen. J. A. Ankrah issued a statement sympathising with the Nigerians and subsequently gave the military leaders of Nigeria the opportunity to iron out their differences at the Peruse Lodge in Aburi, Ghana. Significantly, this mark of leadership was demonstrated when Ghana was saddled with its own internal challenges.

In pursuance of its regional concerns, the NLC signed a protocol of understanding with the Military Government of Nigeria and the governments of Sierra Leone, Liberia and Gambia in December 1966. The protocol was to enhance the pooling of resources for the reactivation of the West African Airways which was dissolved by Nkrumah in 1957. Apart from the cementing of a healthy integration relationship, nothing concrete resulted out of the protocol.

On the African front, the NLC had the challenge of asserting its authority among its peers at the OAU. This was crucial to them as Nkrumah was still trying to hold onto the reins of power from Guinea. In March 1966, the NLC was able to assert its authority as the legal representative of Ghana at the OAU Ministerial Council Meeting and Heads of State Summit with the help of Nigeria. In addition, the NLC provided adequate financial support for the African anti-colonial nationalists through the OAU. Further, the NLC upheld the policy of non-alignment and positive neutrality and was also guided by its self-interest. Thus, the NLC renewed diplomatic relations with Rhodesia now called Zimbabwe.

Unlike the NLC regime (which voluntarily gave up power), the Progress Party (PP) administration was democratically elected under the 2nd Republic of Ghana. Nevertheless, it was also pro-West and continued with the NLC's line of traditional diplomacy and integration. Regional security and economic survival guided its relations with its immediate neighbours and Africa in general. Prime Minister Busia paid up Ghana's arrears to the OAU Liberation Committee and participated effectively in the deliberations of the various committees of the OAU. Prime Minister Busia initiated two policies that were quite controversial - the Aliens Compliance Order (ACO) of 1969 which saw several citizens of West African neighbours been

²¹Ibid., p. 271.

forced out of Ghana and his call for dialogue between the OAU and apartheid South Africa. The latter was widely condemned by Ghanaians and other Africans alike. Posterity, however, vindicated Busia because the Carter and Reagan administrations of the US supported and used 'constructive engagement' in the 1980s and 1990s with the full backing of the OAU. Power was transferred to Rhodesia and the back of apartheid was finally broken in South Africa in 1990 through the use of 'constructive dialogue' amid sporadic guerrilla tactics.

The ACO was intended to ensure that given the huge presence of non-Ghanaian Africans and expatriates such as Lebanese, Syrians and Indians in Ghana, non-citizens resident in Ghana fulfilled the legal requirements for residence. Those who refused to regularise their stay in Ghana were repatriated. This unfortunately affected an estimated one million non-Ghanaian Africans which soured Ghana's relations with their countries of origin, especially Nigeria. The enforcement of the ACO occurred in the heat of Nigeria's civil war. This compelled the PP administration to extend refugee status to the Ibos as a humanitarian act as they were under attack in Nigeria. The PP was accused by their Nigerian counterpart as being sympathetic to the Ibo's when they refused to extend refugee status to all Nigerians.

The NRC (later the SMC I and SMC II) regime also came to power through the barrel of the gun with far-reaching implications for the formulation and conduct of foreign policy. This was largely influenced by domestic policies that were implemented such as the repudiation of foreign debts, forceful acquisition of shares in foreign companies, re-evaluation of the cedi and price control. The regime was pro-Nkrumah and populist minded. In pursuance of winning the support of the OAU and carving a niche for himself, Gen. Acheampong renounced the ACO and the policy of dialogue with apartheid South Africa as proposed by Busia. Acheampong's regime fully supported the non-aligned policy and the liberation struggle especially against Rhodesia. To this end, he formed the African Youth High Command which consisted of amorphous groups under the CPP regime such as the Ghana Young Pioneer Movement and the Worker's Brigade with the aim of marching on Rhodesia. It is worth noting that this formal attack on Rhodesia never took place.

Following in the ideals of Nkrumah and as a sign of economic goodwill, Ghana gave a donation of \$50,000 to Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde which had declared de facto independence from Portugal in July 1973. This was done through the 1973 OAU Ministerial Council in Addis Ababa. The regime like its predecessors was elected to the Liberation Committee and was instrumental in hosting the Committee's meeting in Accra in 1974. Ghana also proposed the opening of a Liberation Information Centre in Accra in 1975 with the hope that it would coordinate the affairs and progress of the liberation struggles as well as serve as an information and propaganda outfit for nationalist fighters in Southern Africa.

The role of Acheampong improved Ghana's relations with Libya, Algeria, Zaire and Zambia which had gone bad following the overthrow of Nkrumah.²²

The adoption of the regional cooperation policy (initiated by the PP regime) saw the establishment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the West Africa sub-region. The treaty establishing the ECOWAS was signed in Lagos, Nigeria on May 28th 1975 by the Heads of States and Government of 14 West African nations, namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. In accordance with the terms of the treaty, the treaty came into force in June 1975 with the ratification by seven states.²³ The drive for the establishment of the ECOWAS was solely from Nigeria and Togo. Ghana was just one of the ratifying states. According to Article 2(1) of the 1975 Treaty, the aim of the Community was:

"... to promote co-operation and development in all fields of economic activity particularly in the fields of industry, transport, telecommunications, energy, agriculture, natural resources, commerce, monetary and financial questions and in social and cultural matters for the purpose of raising the standard of living of its peoples; of increasing and maintaining economic stability; of fostering closer relations among its members and of contributing to the progress and development of the African continent".²⁴

Thus, the treaty was to facilitate freely and easily, the movement of goods, services and persons among the member states of ECOWAS. This treaty is yet to achieve the purpose for which it was established.

Consistent with the then negative image of Ghana as a land of coup makers, another coup d'état was staged by the AFRC under the Chairmanship of then Ft. Lt. (Rtd) Rawlings. The four-month revolution was not long enough for the regime to assert its role in Africa. It was, however, able to grip the state with fear and pandemonium through the killings of Gen. Acheampong, Afrifa and other military officers, seizure of verified and unverifiable hoarded goods, and abuse of nationals and non-nationals suspected of having engaged in shady activities among others. The international outcries against these acts came from the Commonwealth Secretariat, OAU Headquarters, Nigeria and other African countries. This caused a severe retrogression in the recognition of Ghana's integration efforts of Africa.

²²Ibid., p. 317.

²³Victor Essien, *Regional Trade Agreements in Africa: A Historical and Bibliography Account of ECOWAS and CEMAC*, Published in October 2006. Accessed from www.nyulawglobal.org on 26/08/08

²⁴Ibid

The political and social chaos made Nigeria Airways of Nigeria and Air Afrique of Cote d'Ivoire to cancel all their flights to Ghana. Moreover, Ghana's neighbours issued stern warnings to their citizens to desist from travelling to Ghana. The only foreign policy action taken was the attendance of the 1979 NAM Summit in Havana, Cuba.²⁵

The AFRC made way for another democratically-elected government under the Peoples National Party (PNP) administration. Some scholars such as G. K. Bluwey believe that the economic quandary of Ghana did not afford Dr. Limann the luxury of pursuing a foreign policy that was different from that of his predecessors. In the arena of integration, he sought the goodwill of his neighbours especially Nigeria and this paid off quite generously. He assured them of Ghana's support and enforcement of the ECOWAS Treaty. Bilateral agreements between Ghana and Nigeria resulted in Ghana getting a credit facility for supply of crude oil and natural gas. With respect to the OAU, the leadership style of Limann was also not inspiring as it saw Ghana playing its role as any other member supporting the ideals of de-colonisation in Africa.

The PNP Government was overthrown by the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) under the leadership once again of Ft. Lt. (Rtd) Rawlings in 1981. Not much attention was given to the integration process in Africa in the first few years of that regime. The militant and anti-imperialist approach of Rawlings as well as close association with Col. Mu'ammar al-Qadhafi of Libya (then suspected of engaging in terrorist and subversive acts) did not endear him to his neighbours and the world at large. The shutting of Ghana's borders to her neighbours and the banning of night flights to Ghana are typical examples. Additionally, the use of radio broadcasts allegedly to incite workers and the underprivileged against their exploiters, infuriated Ghana's neighbours, namely Togo and Cote d'Ivoire.²⁶ The junta indirectly put the brakes on the ECOWAS Treaty in that the closure of the borders inhibited the free movement of goods, services and persons. The withdrawal of Nigeria's oil credit facility and stoppage of trading activities with Ghana was a big blow to the fragile economy and deepened its financial dependence on Libya.

The traditional role of Ghana as a pacesetter in the promotion of integration became evident when relations with Libya became strained and Ghana upon seeking Western assistance started playing a key role in the integration drive. Ghana's 'new' image gave the PNDC the impetus to make meaningful contribution to the OAU. As part of its commitment to and with the collaboration of Algeria and Burkina Faso, the Emergency Fund for Drought and Famine in Africa was established with an amount of \$500,000 as its contribution. Furthermore, in 1980, Ghana contributed

²⁵G. K. Bluwey (Unpublished), pp. 324-327.

²⁶Ibid, p. 344.

£5 million to the Special Fund for Africa so as to relieve the frontline states' dependence on apartheid South Africa. Finally, realising that without a stable domestic political environment, sub-regional integration could not thrive, Ghana and Nigeria took the initiative of forming the Economic Community of West African Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in 1990 in order to intervene in the civil war in Liberia and subsequent ones in Sierra Leone in 1997 and Guinea Bissau in 1999.²⁷ Nigeria was the major provider of financial resources. Ghana also contributed troops to support those contributed by Nigeria.

One thing stands out throughout this era; in spite of the ideological position or leadership style, Ghana could not remove herself from the integration process, obviously emphasising the truism that it will be foolhardy for one to attempt to survive on its own in a world that is increasingly steering itself in the magnetic direction of global integration – not withstanding what the consequences will be.

The Stable Decades

Ghana's return to democratic rule in the Fourth Republic seems to have coincided with renewed efforts at regional integration on the continent. The relatively stable political and improving economic conditions in Ghana since 1993, have given her leaders a renewed credibility in leading the drive for regional integration. One such example is the Ghana-Nigeria Fast Track Approach. This nucleus of a first Anglophone union, took the lead in the ECOWAS Fraternity to create a monetary union that will run parallel to that of the Union Économique et Monétaire Ouest-Africaine (UEMOA) and be later merged with UEMOA to have a common currency for West Africa. The Object of the Ghana-Nigeria approach was to limit the existence of multiplicity of currencies and exchange rates as well as fragmented markets.²⁸ Subsequently, the Gambia, Guinea and Sierra Leone joined the union to create the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ). WAMZ also established the West African Monetary Institute (WAMI) which was set up within the overall context of the ECOWAS Monetary Cooperation Programme to undertake preparatory activities for the establishment of a common Central Bank (to be known as the West African Central Bank (WACB)) that will issue a single currency for the 5 countries by the year 2005. This vision is yet to be realised as all the 5 countries involved have not been able to satisfy the convergent criteria.²⁹

To some extent, the recent upheavals and catastrophic conflict situations occurring

²⁷United Nations Security Council Document 294 Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1216 (1998) relative to the situation in Guinea-Bissau on 17 March, 1999.

²⁸J. K. Kwakye, Monetary Union and a Single Currency within ECOWAS: How Feasible? Proceedings of a Workshop organised by the Legon Centre for International Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme and the National Renewal Programme on "Regionalism and Integration in West Africa: The Way Forward", Golden Tulip Hotel, Accra, December 20-21, 1999, pp. 68-76.

²⁹<http://www.wami-imao.org/english/welcome.htm> accessed on 15/04/09.

in some countries within the West African sub-region have also contributed to the generation of the respect and recognition Ghana is enjoying, since her leadership role in the intervention efforts have been appreciable and very significant. In effect, the turn-around in Ghana's political fortunes coincided with the deteriorating political situation in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire. Nevertheless, Ghana's willingness to help those countries could not be taken away from her. It was also in her interest to do everything possible to stop the conflicts in order to prevent the spill-over effects. Within the last three decades, Ghana has chalked many firsts in her political history. For the first time, a military leader turned civilian stood and won the right to govern through democratic elections. For the first time, a democratically elected president served the prescribed full term of office, a maximum of eight years of two successive 4 - year terms handing over power in 2001, to a successor also elected through the ballot, another first. It is even more exciting to note that the successor was from the main opposition party. Following this first is the fact that the New Patriotic Party's administration under the leadership of J. A. Kufuor served the two four year successive terms through the democratic system of elections and handed over in January 2009 to a successor J. E. A. Mills representing the National Democratic Congress. This to a large extent demonstrates what can be argued as a stable political environment by African standards, an important pre-requisite for a successful regional integration campaign.³⁰

Another key ingredient in the success of Ghana's integration efforts is that, Ghana has generally enjoyed a comparatively stable political period that has translated into relative economic stability. This has increased her degree of influence on the continental scene. The influential role played by Ghana in the chaotic moments experienced in the three countries in the sub-region is primarily as a result of Ghana herself experiencing an appreciable degree of stability. Considering that the integration effort is spearheaded by the institutions set up for the purpose and the achievement of integration itself requires that the countries within the region need to be at peace, Ghana's direct role in the peace building efforts in the West African sub-region and beyond must be commended. Ghana significantly contributed men and other resources to the efforts at resolving the internal conflicts in Rwanda, Somalia, and Sudan. In recent times, She has taken the lead in the resolution of the Kenyan election crisis. This is apart from the major commitments to the resolution of the conflicts in the West African region.

Ghana's leadership role in the regional integration process between 1966 and 1993 was not altogether inspiring due to the peculiar challenges that the leadership faced. Afterwards, President Rawlings served as the Chairman of the ECOWAS for two successive terms (1994-1996) and played a leading role in the resolution of the

³⁰Mzukisi Qobo, The challenges of regional integration in Africa in the context of globalization and the prospects of a United States of Africa. Occasional Paper 145, June 2007. The Institute for Security Studies. <http://www.iss.co.za/>

Liberian conflict. Similarly, President Kufuor also served as Chairman for the ECOWAS from 2003 to 2005, with Ghana again leading in the management of the Cote d'Ivoire turmoil. Riding on this, he was made the Chairman of the African Union in 2006 and 2007 and was a key figure in resolving the Kenya election crises.

The challenge of creating and sustaining a stable or advancing political and economic domestic environment within the individual states will ultimately determine any sustainable regional integration achievement. African States have generally remained internally un-integrated in the post colonial period to date.³¹ Until adequate reliable integration is achieved at the domestic level, the regional integration aspiration will remain a lingering mirage. As maintained by Qobo,³² policy-makers need to accede to the reality that domestic success precedes continental success.³³ During this era, Ghana has been consistent in her contribution towards regional integration efforts probably in a more rational way than before. The importance of regional integration to Ghana's development was established long ago and her foreign policy on integration appears to have remained the same over the years. However, the approach has seemingly shifted from the urgent radical manner in which the Kwame Nkrumah-led CPP pursued Ghana's Foreign Policy to an approach of diplomacy and gentle persuasion. This was made apparent during the Chairmanship of President Kufuor of the AU during which period management of the region's issues generally used a more diplomatic approach.

As spelt out by Dr. Kwesi Nduom (then Minister of Energy), the way forward (with regional integration) is to ensure that Ghana becomes a positive example of prosperity with the rule of law firmly taking roots in its sustained democracy in Africa.³⁴ He emphasised that the approach to relationships with Ghana's neighbours will be practical and aimed at bringing real, visible benefits that the average Ghanaian can feel. This goes to accentuate the less militant approach of the NPP administration with the resulting benefits being targeted at the citizenry of Ghana.

Another consideration can be given to the differences in era. These stable decades have witnessed the transformation of the integration institutions from what they were originally set out to do. The OAU for example had a primary mandate to see to the decolonisation of the entire African continent, but the AU which has resulted from the merger of the OAU and the Economic Community of Africa (ECA) has the mandate of uniting the 53 member countries into a united states of Africa.³⁵ Ghana is

³¹Ibid

³²Ibid

³³Ibid

³⁴Regional Integration, Trade in Africa and Strategic Options for Africa and Brazil. A speech given by Dr. Papa Kwesi Nduom, CMC, Minister of Energy at the Brazil-Africa Forum. June 9-10, 2003.

³⁵<http://www.africa-union.org> accessed on 05/10/08

committed to the new strategy of letting the individual states commit to integration by getting their people to own the integration process, a new paradigm termed 'people centred'.

This approach supported by Ghana seems to have a better chance of success at realising regional integration for Africa. Another approach is through the empowerment of the institutions set up to pursue the integration agenda. Kaplan³⁶ states that integration needs to be pursued through empowered institutions with the capacity not only to enforce decisions on governments, but to also monitor the activities and performances of these governments, thereby creating a supra-national entity in these institutions. He emphasises the need to organise these institutions at the sub-regional level and then consolidate their achievements into one final integrated entity.³⁷ Thus the formulation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in 2001 which is based on underlying principles of a commitment to good governance, democracy, human rights and conflict resolution is considered a step in the right direction.

Ghana's decision to be the first to be subjected to the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) which is an instrument designed to monitor adherence to the NEPAD, illustrates its advanced commitment not only to demonstrating its government's transparent democratic approach to governance, but also its commitment to advancing the tenets of regional integration. This decision, of course, can be said to be a precursor to a successful integration process as Ghana's integration is institution based.

To further illustrate Ghana's commitment to integration, the 2007 Globalisation Index Rankings has Ghana in the 33rd position among the 72 countries considered. The Globalisation Index Rankings is a list of countries of the world sorted by their globalisation, global connectivity, integration and interdependence in the economic, social, technological, cultural, political, and ecological spheres. Ghana at this position happens to be the first African country ahead of Senegal (51st), Egypt (55th), Nigeria (57th), South Africa (59th) and Kenya (60th).³⁸ Ghana is thus perceived to be readily willing to open herself up for integration and to contribute to the global effort aimed at integration even at the global level. Ghana's current commitment to regional integration also significantly departs from the original position of localizing business investments to attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) into the domestic economy. This commitment has the tendency of enabling the importation of advanced technologies into various sectors to enhance productivity and attain the capacity to compete globally.

³⁶Kaplan Seth, West African Integration: A new development paradigm? The Washington Quarterly 2005 29:4 pp. 81-97.

³⁷Ibid

³⁸http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=3995 accessed on 4th October, 2008.

Today, it can be perceived that the current breed of leaders on the African Continent appear to have generally moved away from the visceral propensities of Pan-Africanism which sought to externalise Africa's problems with much of the blame laid at the doors of the colonial powers and with little responsibility and accountability demanded from them. The NEPAD Blueprint with its attendant APRM demonstrates their willingness to pursue regional integration on the terms of globally-accepted democratic norms.

The Challenges of Integration in Africa

Regional integration, in Africa and sub-regionally in West Africa, has suffered huge hiccups, prolonging the realisation of the expected outcomes. These hiccups have been suffered largely because of lack of political will and focus; political instability (which manifested itself in military juntas and violent conflicts); proliferation of regional and sub-regional organisations (all aimed at one form of integration or another) and the fact that the integration experiment to date has been more of a government led rather than a people- led agenda. This creates an information and acceptance abyss at the grassroots and sometimes at the senior level, thereby building the platform for implementation challenges. The current impasse in the European Union (EU) concerning the Treaty aimed at establishing a Constitution for Europe (TCE) is one such example that can be drawn. The need for ratification led to some Member States such as France, the Netherlands, Spain, Luxembourg and Romania organising referenda to determine their support or otherwise. The failure of the TCE to win popular support in countries such as France and the Netherlands forced a re-examination of the constitutional question and led to the emergence of the Reform Treaty as one solution to overcoming the failed European Constitution.³⁹

Ghana's regional integration agenda has been tested profoundly and almost in equal proportions by the factors discussed. As established already, regional integration has always been an important agenda for the country. Yet, Ghana's domestic political challenges which had a direct detrimental impact on her economic fortunes over the past five decades managed to obscure what Ghana obviously achieved in the pioneering role, which made her an obvious leader in the regional integration drive for the continent.

Externally, Ghana's efforts at regional and sub-regional integration have experienced setbacks as results of what could be termed the proliferation of organisations set out to achieve the same goal. The proliferation has slowed the integration process instead of hastening it.⁴⁰ For instance, in the West Africa sub-

³⁹ <http://en.wikipedia.org> accessed on 26/01/09

⁴⁰ Adebayo Adedeji, 2002. p. 6.

region alone, the establishment of the Mano River Union (MRU) in 1973, ECOWAS in 1975 and UEMOA in 1994, created the possibility of distorting the commitment of the individual states to the ultimate aim of integration. The thrust of all these blocs is the need to have common economic policies that will improve the living standards of their populace. Among other reasons that one can offer for the proliferation, is the slow realisation of the aspirations of the treaties binding them which is as a result of lack of political will.

The proliferation actually had the effect of disintegrating the sub-region. An attempt to answer the question “to which bloc should I belong?” could result in dividing the region along eccentric and not familiar lines such as the original colonial inclinations. Worst of all, the situation had the effect of duplication of efforts which tends to waste resources. However, these realities cannot be made certain considering that the organisations coming into being and the other forms of challenges took place simultaneously. For example, what could one say is responsible for retardation in integration efforts in the following scenario? A military take-over set back bilateral agreements between a neighbouring government and the overthrown government which was established through an integration institution. Unexpectedly, the new military administrators decide to be part of another integration institution that the neighbour is not a member of. Obviously, not much progress would have been made over the entire duration and for all the resources expended. In fact, these realisations expose the complex nature in which these factors challenging the integration process impacted on progress.

The fact that military juntas had the power to unilaterally decide anything for the people they governed tended to disrupt earlier gains achieved as demonstrated in the political history earlier discussed. A stable democratic dispensation will largely avoid this kind of tendency that can at best be improvident.

Future

The future of regional integration for Africa is bright, though distant. Considering the current domestic political dispensation being enjoyed by Ghana, it is only a matter of time before the beacon of leadership in the integration mission is unquestionably placed on the country again. The trend of democratic governance being pursued in a consistent manner over the past decade, has manifested in tremendous goodwill in the eyes of the global community at large and this has once again given credibility to the country's efforts at contributing to the regional integration agenda.

With the realisation that integration is a definite must for the advancement of the developmental fortunes of an endowed continent, African leaders will need to

eliminate the propensity to self destruct through the destabilisation of domestic governance systems of the individual countries as manifested throughout its history. A sustained democratic governance system at the domestic level will give the needed platform for the promotion of a sustainable integration process. Ghana has achieved this and therefore can be confidently counted among the leading countries (South Africa, Botswana, Mali and Senegal) in the integration agenda. It however behoves on its leadership to avoid the radical approach which tends to generate mistrust (as was suggested to be the case during Kwame Nkrumah's era) but rather encourage the various sectors of the country and her West African neighbours to be part of the process. This will eliminate the challenges of a purely government led integration campaign which will ultimately encourage the employment of the "people led" approach which has a better chance of success as has been demonstrated by the European Union experience such as populous decision-making actions like a referendum.

Recommendations

One is inclined to agree with Kaplan's⁴¹ assertion that the established institutions for integrating the region ought to be empowered to supervise the individual government's activities towards integration. It is imperative that the autonomy of the individual states should not be undermined if the integration agenda is to be successful. The European success story should serve as a model in the integration efforts. Also, the organs of the institution should be encouraged to speed up the integration agenda by sustainably providing them with the requisite resources which must be managed in accordance with business enterprise norms.⁴² This can be done if the efforts and synergies of all the numerous regional organisations in a particular region are merged in the mandate of just one organisation. This will gradually erode the issue of divided loyalty and duplicity of roles as well as ensure the political commitment of the various national leaders.

Conclusion

The quest for regional integration among the states of Africa cannot be allowed to be derailed if the region wishes to globalise on more favourable terms than it is currently enduring. The successful integration of the states of Africa, whether as a continent or at the sub-regional level, depends on the commitment and efforts of the individual States. However, the stability of the domestic environments within the individual states constitutes a very significant precursor to the success of the regional

⁴¹Kaplan Seth, *op. cit.*, 2005, 29:4. pp. 81-97.

⁴²Adebayo Adedeji, *op. cit.*, 2002. p. 6.

integration agenda. It will be very important for the champions of the African integration quest to focus a great deal of their resources towards ensuring that the stability of the individual States is perpetuated to enable them contribute effectively towards the targeted integration of the continent. The clearly established phases of the integration history of Ghana, illustrates the unavoidable challenges that problems within the domestic environment can create to the extent of disrupting successes already chalked. If the benefits of integration are to be enjoyed by the Continent of Africa, it will take more than just a desire to do so.

CHAPTER TWO: THE EXECUTIVE AND STATE INSTITUTIONS AS PRIMARY ACTORS IN ARTICULATING GHANA'S INTEGRATION POLICIES IN WEST AFRICA: CHALLENGES AND THE WAY FORWARD

Alexander K.D. Frempong*

ABSTRACT

The Executive has primary responsibility for the formulation and implementation of regional integration policy. However, given the cross-cutting nature of regional integration, this responsibility is executed by several ministries and other state institutions, raising challenges of inter-ministerial collaboration and inter-agency coordination, among others. Against a brief background of the involvement of the Government of Ghana in the activities of ECOWAS, this paper examines the respective roles of the cabinet, various ministries and other state agencies and their challenges; and suggests ways for improving Ghana's regional integration policy.

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Introduction

Regional integration generally involves a somewhat complex web of cooperation between countries within a given geographical area. It demands harmonisation of policies in sectors such as trade, investment, infrastructural development as well as fiscal and monetary policies of member states. The overall objective is essentially to ensure stability and sustainable economic growth and development within the integrating area (Lavergne 1997: 5).

Basic to regional integration is Constitutionalism. This is because it guarantees the political, economic and social stability necessary for the pursuit of long-term regional projects. It also facilitates the partial transfer of state sovereignty to regional institutions and ensures that a change of leadership in member countries does not undermine the integration or agreements establishing it (Adewoye 1997: 216). Arbitrary economic policies that accompanies unconstitutional rule discourage development of long-term economic relations between countries and tend to distort the nature of entrepreneurial activity in favour of rent-seeking behaviour through smuggling and black market dealings. Equally, restricted freedom and arbitrariness at the national level are reflected at the regional level in the form of obstacles to free movement across national borders and regional trade (Ibid: 22).

In West Africa, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was formed in 1975, among other things, to encourage, foster and accelerate the economic and social development of member states in order to improve the living standards of their peoples. Beyond economic integration, Article 27 of the ECOWAS Treaty also offers a long-term objective of social integration of West Africans through the establishment of a community citizenship that may be acquired automatically by nationals of all member states.

The fundamental principles of ECOWAS are: equality and interdependence of member states, inter-state cooperation, solidarity and collective self-reliance, harmonisation of policies and integration programmes. The rest are: non-aggression between member states, maintenance of peace, stability and security, peaceful settlement of disputes, promotion and protection of human rights, promotion and consolidation of democracy and accountability, economic and social justice (ECOWAS Brochure, 2002).

In order to promote its regional integration agenda, ECOWAS instituted a number of protocols that span a wide spectrum of areas of cooperation including economic, trade and industrial policy, free movement, right of residence and establishment among member states (Benneh 2005:1). For instance, the ECOWAS Protocol Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment was adopted in Dakar, Senegal on 29 May 1979.

While the many ECOWAS protocols provide a legal and institutional framework and form a basis for higher and deeper levels of regional economic, political and social integration in the sub-region, it is recognisable also that several challenges and problems do exist, not least, the implementation and enforcement of ECOWAS decisions and policies contained in the protocols at the national level; which clearly falls within the ambit of the national governments and their institutions (Benneh 2005: 2).

The issue of free movement of goods and people has been at the heart of the ECOWAS regional integration process and past efforts at regional integration have often focused on removing barriers to free trade in the region to increase the free movement of people, labour, goods and capital across international borders. However, as long as the decision making powers completely reside with national governments of member states the commitment to the implementation of regional programmes will remain at the mercy of national governments and what suits them. Official statements or declarations during sub-regional conferences are often not backed by practical commitment to the burning issues of regional integration.

Over the years, ECOWAS has had to grapple with the unwillingness of leaders to appreciate the underlying principle that full integration entails the cessation of part of their sovereignty to a supranational authority, resulting in the prevalence of non-enforceable protocols. Thus to a large extent, the degree of integration in West Africa has been affected by the unwillingness of the governments of member states of ECOWAS to share their sovereignty.

The nature of leadership at the national level reflects at the level of regional integration. The emergence of stronger leadership could supply the vision and necessary direction and demonstrate the sacrifice and commitment that are essential in any cooperative endeavour. A leader's vision, personal aspirations, temperament, prejudices, force of personality, ideological persuasion, moral orientation and perception of regional issues tend to have a strong bearing on the manner in which regional integration policies are put into action (Bundu 1997: 33). Thus all governments of Ghana have dealt with the sub-region but with different emphasis and effort arising from the personality and perceptions of the head of state, the context of the prevailing social, economic and political conditions and circumstances in Ghana and the state of the sub-region (Debrah 2002: 27-28).

Under the circumstances, the primacy of the role of the Executive and related institutions in promoting regional integration cannot be overemphasised. What role has the government of Ghana played so far in the regional integration project in West Africa? What institutions under the Executive have roles to play and what strategies do they have in that respect? How are the activities of the various

institutions coordinated; what challenges exist and what is the way forward? This paper makes analyses of all these aspects of the role of the executive and its institutions.

Ghana's Role in Integration in West Africa- A Historical Sketch

Before Ghana's independence in 1957, there existed among the Anglophone West Africa states, such organisations as the West Africa Currency Board, the West Africa Court of Appeal and the West Africa Cocoa Research Institute.. Incidentally the politics of the post-independence era led to the collapse of these nuclei of integrative schemes. Ironically, while Ghana's first leader Kwame Nkrumah played a leading role in the integration of the whole of Africa, he was opposed to integration in the West African sub-region (Boafo-Arthur 2005: 2).

It was not until the 1970s that Ghana dramatically toned down on its anti-integration posture and moved in concert with other states that were anxious for West African integration. Ghana's change of policy direction was partly because of the negative consequences of the break up of the pre-independence schemes and partly because the Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), Dr Robert Gardiner, a Ghanaian, was eager to see to the establishment of regional economic groupings in West, and other parts of Africa, in the 1970s (Asante 1996: 5).

Though Ghana was a founding member of ECOWAS, the Head of State at the time, General I. K. Acheampong, did not play a very active part in the formation process, because his NRC/SMC I (like the subsequent SMC II and AFRC) was too engrossed with domestic politics of survival to pay the necessary and requisite attention to ECOWAS. Similarly, Limann's PNP civilian administration (September 1979 – December 1981) was so tied down by the stagnant economy and the politicised military it inherited that it was politically unwise to be bothered more by the politics of ECOWAS than its internal problems (Boafo-Arthur 2005: 3). Even if the Limann administration was committed to the ideals of ECOWAS, it did not have enough time to demonstrate it, since it was overthrown less than two years after its four-year term in office had commenced.

As a result, it was only during the decade of PNDC rule that Ghana's interest in integration schemes was rekindled. The PNDC era however partially coincided with the period of destabilisation in the West African sub-region and the need to be involved in peace negotiations and the sending of peacekeepers to war torn Liberia; a role that would be continued by the successor National Democratic Congress (NDC) government in Sierra Leone and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) in Cote d'Ivoire (Ibid: 2).

In 1990, Ghana became a member (together with Nigeria, Gambia, Mali and Togo) of the Standing Mediation Committee (SMC) tasked to find a solution to the Liberian crisis. Later, Ghana played a leading role in the formation of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and apart from Nigeria, made the largest contribution in terms of peacekeepers, logistics and funds. It also contributed the first ECOMOG Commander, Lt. Gen. Arnold Quainoo. Ghana was also instrumental in promoting all the Liberian peace accords and in fact hosted the Akosombo and Accra conferences in 1994, and Flt.Lt, Rawlings' two-term tenure as ECOWAS Chairman in the 1994-1996 period greatly facilitated the return to peace in Liberia in 1997. Ghana also contributed in terms of personnel and logistics to the 1997 Liberian election. The Chairman of Ghana's Electoral Commission, Dr. Afari-Gyan, for example, was appointed the Chief Technical Advisor to the Interim Electoral Commission of Liberia, while the NDC government supplied public address systems and indelible ink (Ibid: 13).

Ghana continued to play a similar leading role in the crisis in Sierra Leone particularly following the May 1997 coup which forced ECOWAS to send another peacekeeping force into Sierra Leone until peace was restored in 2002 (Ibid: 13.)

When Liberia relapsed into violence in the 1999-2003 period, Ghana was a leading troop-contributor to the ECOWAS Stabilising Force sent to maintain the peace ahead of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and indeed it was in Accra that the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) on Liberia was signed following peace talks lasting from early June to mid-August 2003. Liberia's transition to peace also virtually coincided with former President Kufuor's two terms as ECOWAS Chairman.

Ghana's leading role in peacekeeping, peace talks and diplomacy among other things continued under the Kufuor Administration (2001-2009). In addition to its role in the peace processes in Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire and Kufuor's two-term chairmanship, in 2002, the government sponsored Dr Mohammed Ibn Chambas to become ECOWAS Executive Secretary and he with the transformation of the Secretariat into a Commission has become the first President of the ECOWAS Commission (Ibid: 15).

At the economic front, Ghana (under the NDC in December 1999, and Nigeria adopted the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) covering five programmes: the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS); the establishment of a Second ECOWAS Monetary Zone; a borderless zone, infrastructural development, private sector development and collaboration and investment promotion. In March 2000, the Ghana-Nigeria initiative was broadened to include Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Togo, which unfortunately diluted the FTI (Ibid: 15).

The Role of the Executive Actors

Regional integration, as part of foreign policy, cannot be the exclusive preserve of the Executive branch of government in a democracy. The elected representatives of the people have an important role in the ratification of international agreements and delineating the laws within which the conduct of foreign policy must take place. Under Ghanaian law, treaties, international agreements and conventions are incorporated into domestic law by means of an Act or resolution of Parliament (Article 75(2), 1992 Constitution). Thus international and other specified agreements need legislative ratification before they can have effect in the domestic jurisdiction. Therefore, the role of the Executive and its related institutions in the formulation and implementation of foreign (in our case, regional integration) policy is most significant.

Ghana's 1992 Constitution grants the Executive wide powers in foreign policy in general (and in our context regional integration). Article 40 provides among other things that "in its dealings with other nations, the Government shall ... adhere to the principles enshrined in ... the aims and ideals of – (i) the Charter of the United Nations; (ii) the charter of the Organisation of African Unity; (iii) the Commonwealth; (iv) the Treaty of the Economic Community of West African States; and (v) any other international organisation of which Ghana is a member."

More significantly, Article 75(1) provides that "The President may execute or cause to be executed treaties, agreements or conventions in the name of Ghana".

In the specific context of regional integration in West Africa, Ghana's policies are focused on the promotion of peace and good neighbourliness with immediate neighbours through the conclusion of various bilateral arrangements to ensure the security and integrity of its territorial borders; as well as, general cooperation with states in the West African sub-region in the implementation of ECOWAS protocols, particularly those related to in free movement of goods and services, intra-community trade, common infrastructural development, sub-regional peace and security and dealing with cross-border crimes.

The most relevant executive institutions with respect to regional integration are the Cabinet, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and NEPAD; the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Presidential Special Initiative (PSI) and Private Sector Development (PSD); the ECOWAS Bureau; the Customs Excise and Preventive Service (CEPS); the Ghana Immigration Service (GIS); the Ghana Police Service (GPS) and the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF).

Broadly speaking all the ministries form part of the Presidency and each of the other state institutions listed above falls under one ministry or the other, but they have been individually isolated here for the direct impact each of them has on regional integration.

The Cabinet

By Article 76 (2) of the 1992 Constitution, the Cabinet assists 'the President in the determination of general policy of the government'. Like in other areas of state activity, policies relating to regional integration are discussed and approved at the cabinet level. This is usually tabled by the President or the ministry directly affected by a particular policy. To facilitate the work of the cabinet, the ministries whose portfolios extend beyond the domestic sector (Foreign Affairs, Trade, Finance, Defence, etc) are represented on various inter-Ministerial Policy Advisory Committees to ensure greater participation in the decision making process (Bluwey 2002: 48). After the cabinet decision, the policy, if it requires changes in the law, is laid before Parliament for ratification before implementation can be effected by the relevant ministry or state institution.

A major role of the Executive in regional integration, therefore, is the signing and ratification of ECOWAS Protocols (with Parliament). As at 2005, Ghana had ratified 45 out of 46 ECOWAS Protocols, the exception being the ECOWAS Protocol on Education and Training (Benneh 2005: 5).

These ratifications mark an impressive achievement on the part of Government of Ghana and Parliament to incorporate into Ghanaian law, schemes for a free trade area, the free movement of people, regional defence cooperation, infrastructural development, regional transport and communication networks, etc (Ibid). While ratification of protocols is a vital first step in the implementation of these international instruments, the challenge is how to ensure the effective application and implementation of these Protocols. This entails commitment on the part of the government and the identification of institutional weaknesses at various levels (Ibid: 6).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and NEPAD

The central pillar of the foreign policy is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which in the case of Ghana, now specifically includes Regional Cooperation and NEPAD. It is the responsibility of the Ministry to advise, assist and make recommendations to president in formulation of foreign policy and to see to the implementation of those foreign policy decisions of the Presidency (Bluwey 2002: 49).

It is the responsibility of the Ministry, among other things, to promote friendly relations and economic cooperation between Ghana and other countries; playing a positive and creative role as a member of ECOWAS in the interest of peace, stability and economic development and providing support services to relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in the international arena.

Issues of regional integration in Ghana have traditionally been part of the portfolio of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2000 however, the NDC government created the Ministry of Regional Integration and Cooperation to fast track Ghana's role in ECOWAS, but this came rather too late in that administration's term to make any meaningful impact. The NPP government in 2001 expanded this into the Ministry of Economic Planning and Regional Cooperation (MEPRC). In 2003, the Ministry metamorphosed into the Ministry of Regional Cooperation and NEPAD, and then in 2007 it was again returned to the foreign ministry, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Cooperation and NEPAD.⁴³

In the specific context of regional integration, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs aims at the maximisation of the benefits of Ghana's participation in the regional process; creating awareness of ECOWAS activities and inculcate community spirit among the public in general; and ensuring effective management of regional cooperation and integration programmes (Benneh 2005: 6).

The Ministry of Trade, Industry, PSI and PSD

The Ministry is responsible for implementation and monitoring of the country's internal and external trade and industry policies. The administration of Import and Export Laws is vested in the Ministry. The promotion of trade with other developing countries particularly sister African countries continues to be a major focus of the ministry.

The frontline institutions with which the Ministry of Trade collaborates include the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Lands and Forestry, CEPS, GIS, Ghana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) Ghana Ports and Harbours Authority (GPHA), COCOBOD, as well as stakeholders in the import and export, manufacturing and trading sectors.

In terms of trade, Ghana's sub-regional policies are to formulate and harmonise policies that will ensure inter-sectoral collaboration in the implementation of trade and industrial policies at both the national and sub-regional levels. Ghana therefore

⁴³ The implications of these frequent changes in the status of the Ministry for Regional Integration are discussed later in this paper.

intends to implement its trade policy by developing statistical and quality systems to meet broad requirements of domestic and international markets, facilitating the development and promotion of non-traditional exports products and the development of the production base and expansion of cross-border trade.

The Private Sector Development (PSD) division of the Ministry is to provide an overall enabling environment which allows private firms to operate efficiently and support specific institutions and policies to promote the private sector nationally and regionally. It recognises the active involvement of several MDAs in private sector development and ensures inter-sectoral coordination through the permanent inter-ministerial committee for private sector development.

Several initiatives have been taken by Ghana to facilitate trade between its neighbours. The Ghana Gateway Project continues to deepen coordination and improve institutional capacity for project implementation and the Ghana Free Zones Board continues to develop off-site infrastructural facilities to attract potential investors. The Ghana Trade and Investment Programme seeks to promote foreign direct investment and to establish Ghana as a major manufacturing, value added, financial and commercial centre of Africa.

The ECOWAS Bureau

The ECOWAS Bureau has a long history in dealing with integration in West Africa and it has been the main focus of ECOWAS activity in the varying phases of regional integration in Ghana. It was on the recommendation of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers, in 1982, that national units were created in member states to coordinate and monitor Community activities in member states (Recommendation C/REC. 1/11/82, 17 November 1982).

In December 1990, the Council further decided on the appointment of high ranking officers to head ECOWAS Bureaux in member states, the establishment of national inter-ministerial coordination committees to ensure the effective implementation of Community Acts and Decisions and the institution of the annual meeting of heads of ECOWAS National Units to exchange ideas and seek appropriate solutions to problems encountered at the national level in the follow up of ECOWAS activities (Decision C/DEC. 3/12/90).

The mission of Ghana's national unit, the ECOWAS Bureau, is to 'ensure the maximum participation and contribution of Ghana to the regional integration and development process, to enable Ghana derive optimum benefits from ECOWAS membership.' (ECOWAS Bureau Brochure, 2008)

The Bureau has several functions in relation to the Community (e.g, participation in ECOWAS activities and distribution of information about its programmes); the

sector ministry (e.g, incorporation of ECOWAS Acts and decisions in national legislation and identifying and proposing new areas for consideration at the regional level); inter-ministerial coordination (e.g providing technical support to the Inter-Ministerial Coordination Committee (IMCC) and working with relevant government institutions; and to other stakeholders (e.g. encouraging maximum participation of economic operators, civil society groups and inform and involve all stakeholders concerned with any ECOWAS programmes) (Ibid).

The Customs, Excise and Preventive Service (CEPS)

The Customs Excise and Preventive Service (CEPS,) in addition to its primary function of collecting various forms of taxes, performs other functions which impact on regional integration. These include combating fraud, smuggling, terrorism and organised crimes, counterfeiting, piracy, human and drug trafficking through patrolling the borders and other strategic points, examination of goods and search of premises as well as documents relating to goods. In the process, it implements government policy on the borders to ensure compliance with national and international regulations in force. Offenders found involved in smuggling and other revenue offences are made to face prosecution. Also, as a frontline institution at the country's borders, CEPS is part of the country's national security, assisting to surmount external aggression and maintain the territorial integrity of Ghana.

In order to facilitate the implementation of the ECOWAS protocol on free movement of goods and services, CEPS has established an ECOWAS Desk at its Headquarters to disseminate information and give due advice to nationals of member states on import and export procedures. It has also compiled the names of approved ECOWAS enterprises and their respective products in the National Customs Tariff Schedules for the attention of customs officers and the general public. CEPS has also computerised its operations and introduced the Ghana Customs community Network (GcNET) to ensure speedy clearance of goods. CEPS has also started implementing the Inter State Road Transit (ISRT) system which requires that goods transported across Ghana's land-linked (land locked) corridors are not tampered with until they reach their destination. Ghana's national Guarantor to guarantee the safe transit of goods and ensure that revenue is not lost to the country is the State Insurance Company Ltd (SIC).⁴⁴

The Ghana Immigration Service (GIS)

The control and regulation of cross-border activities are essential for ensuring peace and stability and for promoting pertinent political and socio-economic activities

⁴⁴Interview with Head of ECOWAS Desk, CEPS Headquarters, 24 September 2008

needed for integrating the economy of West Africa. The Ghana Immigration Service (GIS) is the agency of government to advise on and to ensure the effective implementation of all laws and regulations pertaining to immigration and related issues. The government through the Ministry of Interior and on the advice of the GIS Board, formulates policies. The Director of Immigration as head of the Service acts as the chief advisor to the Board and the Ministry and has the responsibility for the day-to-day administration of the Service.

GIS has the mandate to regulate and monitor the entry, residence, employment and exit of all foreigners. It also monitors the movement of Ghanaians in and out of Ghana. The Operations Department, headed by a Deputy Director performs the core immigration function of monitoring the movement in and out of the country and regulating the activities of foreigners. It collaborates with other agencies (CEPS, the Police and military) in border patrols.

The Legal Department, also headed by a Deputy Director, provides inter alia, internal legal advice to the Service on disciplinary matters, the personal files of officers and legal opinion to the Director. It also prosecutes violators of the Immigration Act 2000, (Act 573). It drafts review and amends immigration laws and regulations in consultation with the Attorney General's Department.⁴⁵

In August 2006, the government established a Border Patrol Unit (BPU) under the GIS, to monitor the flow of travellers in and out of the country as a means of counteracting the problems emanating from the poor management of Ghana's frontiers and borders. By the year's end, 150 officers had completed an 8-week course of training in paramilitary operations and light weaponry as well as the standard six-month training of the GIS.⁴⁶

The Ghana Police Service (GPS)

The Ghana Police Service (GPS) officially has no role in the formulation of regional integration (ECOWAS) policy, but it implements/enforces ECOWAS decisions and policies adopted by the Government of Ghana. GPS has a role in implementation of the ECOWAS Protocol on free movement of persons, goods and services in the areas of police barriers, the joint border post system and road traffic regulations. Most of the activities of the GPS in relation to regional integration – conflict, barrier, border

⁴⁵ For example, The Ghana Immigration Service Bill and its amendment for the establishment of the Border Patrol Unit (BPU) within the GIS.

⁴⁶ The history of border patrol is one in which the agency responsible has changed from time to time. Initially, border control fell under the police, it was later placed under the GAF, where there was the Border Guards Service, this role was given in the aftermath of the defunct border guards to the protection section of CEPS and recently to the GIS-created BPU.

post patrols, major events and international conferences fall in the ambit of the Operations schedule.⁴⁷

The GPS collaborates and coordinates with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs particularly as regards lectures at cadet training and workshops, and with CEPS and GIS (on issues of revenue/customs evasion, immigration irregularities and other cross-border criminal activities). In addition, the GPS collaborates with the Revenue Agencies Governing Board (RAGB) particularly its Revenue Protection Unit (RPU), a para-military body trained by CEPS, whose coordinator must have a security background, and monitors issues in relation to revenue evasion and whose activities influence the ECOWAS protocols.⁴⁸

To facilitate free movement of goods and persons, a recent directive from the GPS headquarters directed the suspension of all day barrier duties and the restriction of night barrier duties to only approved ECOWAS/NEPAD check points.⁴⁹ These approved ECOWAS/NEPAD check points are only nine across the Northern (Accra-Paga), Western (Accra-Elubo) and Eastern (Accra-Aflao) corridors.⁵⁰ By the directive, temporary night snap checks may be conducted between 6.00 pm and 6.00am only at locations approved by regional commanders.

The Ghana Armed Forces

Regional integration always has a defence component since there cannot be economic development without peace. Thus, even though GIS and CEPS serve as the first point of call and frontline organisations in dealing with people at the borders, the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) has been the lead security agency in dealing with the protection of Ghana's sovereignty and warding off external threats.

The Ghana Navy, for example, is charged among other things with anti-smuggling operations at sea, prevention of landing of saboteurs, infiltrators and people engaged in anti-national activities and the security and safeguard of Ghana's shores; while the Ghana Air Force protects the territorial air space of Ghana and undertakes air reconnaissance operations. On its part, the Ghana Army has been assisting in halting smuggling, particularly in cocoa, across Ghana's borders and also mounting surveillance operations at the western and eastern entry points of the country.

⁴⁷ Interview with outgoing Second in Command, Operations, Police Headquarters, 12 September 2008

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Police Wireless Message, AC.131/379/01/A/TJ Suspension of Barrier Duties, 2 March 2008

⁵⁰ For instance, there is only one such check point between Accra and Kumasi (at Doboro near Nsawam) and only two between Accra and Elubo (Korkrobite and Half Assini).

In addition, the ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution and Peace-Keeping and Security provides special roles for the armed forces of member States. Article 18 makes the Chiefs of Defence Staff (CDS) of member states automatic members of the Defence and Security Commission. Article 21 provides that stand-by units of the armed forces be held in readiness for peace support operations within the sub-region.

Challenges

Despite the frontline role the Government of Ghana plays within ECOWAS, there is an apparent low recognition of regional integration as a priority in the scheme of things. This manifests itself in the manner in which regional integration has been affected in virtually every ministerial reshuffle in the last decade or so. The regional integration sector has always been an 'orphan'. The infant ministry under the NDC came too late to make any impact. As part of the MEPRC, the focus was on economic planning which concentrated on poverty reduction, as MRCN, the focus was on NEPAD particularly peer reviewing Ghana, and now as a sub-ministerial sector at foreign affairs its role as the inter-ministerial coordinator of regional integration has been subsumed under the broad objectives of foreign affairs. From MEPRC to MRCN, it lost its cabinet status but at least had a minister as head, and now as a sub-sector of FA it is headed by a deputy minister. Currently, with a single deputy minister in the MFA, the activities of regional integration are largely confined to the Director of the ECOWAS Bureau. This clearly has affected the consistency in implementing regional integration policies.

In Ghana, as elsewhere in the sub-region, ECOWAS has thus far remained an elitist project designed and carried out by government leaders and top bureaucrats without much consultation with the mass of the population. Regional integration has literally been imposed from above with little or no participation. Governments assume that the objectives of ECOWAS are noble and are in the national interest without making the population part of the decision making process.

Regional integration can operate effectively at the inter-ministerial level since it demands the collaboration of several ministries. This has largely been ineffective. For the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which must be the lead ministry, regional integration, is only an adjunct to its activities and is not given the needed attention and resources. On the other hand, other relevant sector ministries like Trade, Interior and Defence, prefer to conduct their respective integration policies on their own.

There are also problems of inter-agency coordination. First, the agencies fall under different ministries. Whilst GPS, GIS and other para-military agencies belong to the Interior Ministry, CEPS belongs to the Ministry of Finance and GAF to the Ministry of

Defence. One effect is that while CEPS has a para-military/security protection department, it tends to associate itself with the security agencies in good times and to dissociate from them in bad times.

While the agencies relate relatively well, there are often pockets of resistance and friction between them. The creation of the BTU in the GIS in 2006 led to stiff opposition from CEPS which saw that as usurpation of its protection functions. Confusion also occurs between CEPS and GPS over arrest; the CEPS as a revenue agency is more interested in the revenue from arrested customs violators, the police is more interested in the criminal aspect of the matter. This leads to a tug of war in implementation. Similarly, the creation of the BPU raised opposition from CEPS which felt its preventive function was being usurped and also from the opposition who thought the arms-bearing officers could be deployed by the government for other purposes.

ECOWAS has approved the introduction of the Joint Border Post System at both the Inter-Agency (police, customs and immigration) and the inter-state (for example Ghana-Togo) levels. The implementation has however been affected by lack of funds and non-cooperation at both levels.

The agencies generally do not have their own institutional strategies in relation to regional integration but simply, operate according to the ECOWAS protocols as approved by the Ghana Government. While an institutional strategy would be useful, the GPS for example, is often restricted by its historical regimentalism.⁵¹

Unregulated migration is perceived as a potential threat to domestic security. Migration challenges include the proliferation of criminal networks in the trafficking of narcotics, small arms, women and children and the menace of Fulani herdsmen. Ghana has not yet developed a coherent comprehensive policy for managing migration and combating illegal immigration. Inadequate structure and coordination among the relevant agencies at the national level impede the collection and analysis migration data to inform policy and practice.

Sometimes the ECOWAS protocols contradict national rules and regulations, and the agencies must struggle to reconcile them. For example, the GPS has tried to reconcile the ECOWAS road regulation which impinged on Ghanaian road regulations. The approved height for load in the ECOWAS regulation of 14 feet impinged on the approved 11 feet in the Ghanaian regulation. The effect was that

⁵¹ Interview with outgoing Second in Command, Operations, Police Headquarters, 12 September 2008

whereas Ghanaian drivers who went beyond 11 feet were arrested and persecuted, their ECOWAS neighbours were allowed to use the ECOWAS limit. The GPS has now adopted the ECOWAS limit for all vehicles.⁵²

Low knowledge of travellers and law enforcement agencies about the protocols, general feeling among travellers that borders are unsafe and hostile as a result of law enforcement officials and so-called 'facilitators', high level of disharmony in the rules applied by the law enforcement agencies across borders, reveal that the protocols have done little in harmonising rules across jurisdictions.

The Way Forward

Given the challenges identified above to Ghana's West African integration programme, the following steps will have to be taken:

- Strengthening consultation and social dialogue mechanisms at the national level in order to develop clear and coherent national policies.
- For effective implementation of ECOWAS Protocols there is the need for greater institutionalisation. This requires participation of the sectoral ministries – trade, industry, finance, transport, etc and organisations such as the Association of Ghana Industries (AGI) in the implementation process through the proper functioning of inter-ministerial coordination committees. This suggests the need for more regular meetings and at more levels to analyse measures already adopted at the national level, to assess the level of implementation of Protocols, to identify needs, to make all levels of the state hierarchy aware of the need for national implementation and to plan future action.
- There is also the need for the executive to facilitate greater participation of the private sector and civil society groups in the integration process. To date, the integration process has been left to government alone but the fact is that neither the public sector endorsement of the imperative of regional integration nor the acceptance of responsibility for creating an enabling environment or the adoption of the fast track approach, is considered sufficient to bring the desired regional integration into fruition, without the other two sectors.
- The executive is expected to galvanise political will for regional integration; its actions must transcend into concrete reality of effectively creating the enabling environment, lending practical support in identifying and creating the framework for private investment.
- Data and other kinds of information on issues of regional integration should be made available to the public, unless classified, as a way of increasing public

⁵² Ibid.

awareness and generating public interest in and ownership of the policies pursued in the sub-region on behalf of Ghanaians by government.

- Border procedures must be modernised by the use of passport scanning machines and border patrols should be established to monitor and police national frontiers, in addition to close collaboration between the police and internal security agents on the exchange of information, staff exchange and training courses.
- To improve the agencies' role in the implementation of regional integration there is the need for capacity building to cover not only the top ranking officers but also the lower ranks who are actually on the field. There is also the need for change of attitude in the agencies in relation to issues of regional integration.
- It is crucial to have a ministry of its own, with a cabinet-level minister in charge of the implementation of Ghana's regional integration policies. The incorporation of the ministry of regional integration into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has led and continues to lead to second-rating issues of regional integration compared to the broader foreign policy of Ghana.
- Finally, Parliament must take its oversight role in regional integration more seriously. It is not enough for Parliament to ratify ECOWAS protocols but more so to ensure that the executive implements its regional integration obligations adequately and effectively.

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CHAPTER THREE: SETTING THE REGIONAL INTEGRATION AGENDA IN WEST AFRICA: THE ROLE OF GHANA'S ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

Boni Yao Gebe*

ABSTRACT

The Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS,, has witnessed some major institutional transformation since its establishment in 1975. One of these transformational edifices is the Community Parliament which currently operates largely in an advisory and consultative capacity. The paper explores the representative role of Ghanaian parliamentarians in the Parliament and its credentials as a legislative body. The structure, functions and powers of the Parliament are thus scrutinized with a view of understanding the possible ways of addressing the institutional challenges vis-à-vis the role and contribution of the Ghanaian members of the Community Parliament. It argues that despite the limitations, Ghanaian representatives are positively affecting the processes of economic and political integration through the institutional and democratic channels at their disposal. Further to this, Ghana's own national interests in sub-regional integration can be attained and consolidated through concrete political leadership that disburses the appropriate economic and political capital.

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Introduction

The establishment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in May 1975 heralded a momentous development in African integration processes at the sub-regional level that transcended the linguistic divide. In West and Central Africa, the initial attempts to establish economic or customs unions were predominantly initiated by French-speaking countries and had a largely French hegemonic flavour, the exception being the Ghana-Guinea-Mali initiative which was spearheaded by the then Ghanaian President, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah.

The following examples with their accompanying French acronyms demonstrate this historical trend: the West African Customs Union (UDAO) of 1959, Customs and Economic Union of Central Africa (UDEAC) of 1964, Customs Union of African States (UDEAO) of 1966, the Organisation of Senegal River States (OERS) of 1968, and the Economic Community of West Africa (CEAO) of 1973, all fragments of the defunct Federation of French West Africa.⁵³ The establishment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1975 that eventually grouped all the Anglophone, Francophone and Luxophone countries in the sub-region, therefore, seemed to have prevented the danger of institutionalising colonial political structures.

Another inhibition on the push for sub-regional integration in post-colonial West Africa was the lack of a sustained democratic culture due to the rampant intrusion of the military into national administrations. This political development has received a plethora of scholarly examination,⁵⁴ and the idea here is not to castigate that historical reality. Rather, it is meant to demonstrate the extent to which it might have crippled the development of a truly democratic culture in regional integration arrangements and overall institutional governance in the sub-region. It is ironic though, that while the intrusion of the armed forces into national politics could be viewed by some as an unhealthy political development, it is equally the case that it was through the instrumentality of mostly military governments in the sub-region that the ECOWAS was established. The leadership and foresight of Presidents

⁵³ Refer to the works of S. K. B. Asante on the evolution of regionalism in Africa and the case of West Africa in particular. On this subject, see his *Regionalism and Africa's Development – Expectations, Reality and Challenges*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), p. 35.

⁵⁴ Relevant works in this regard include Opoku Agyeman, "Setbacks to Political Institutionalization by Praetorianism in Africa." *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 3, 1988; Pat McGowan and Thomas Johnson, "Sixty Coups in Thirty Years – Further Evidence Regarding African Military Coups d'etat." *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 3, 1986; Samuel Decalo, "Military Coups and Military Regimes in Africa." *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 1, March, 1973; Amos Perlmutter, "The Praetorian Army: Toward a Taxonomy of Civil-Military Relations in Developing Politics." *Comparative Politics*, April, 1969; Robert Price, "A Theoretical Approach to Military Rule in New States: Reference Group Theory and the Ghanaian Case." *World Politics*, Vol. xxiii, No. 3, April 1971; The general but insightful work of Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*. (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1957) provides a peep into future developments.

Yakubu Gowon and Gnassingbe Eyadema of Nigeria and Togo respectively in this regard is worth recalling.⁵⁵

The demise of the Cold War which ended autocratic rule in most of Central and Eastern Europe also induced the flowering of civil liberties and the rule of law globally (Huntington: 1991). Africa in general and West Africa, in particular, seemed to have benefited from this democratic wave with the development of democratic institutions and representative government across the length and breadth of the sub-region, perceptively described by some as “the taming of the leviathan”.⁵⁶

While these developments heralded the impetus for democratic consolidation, it inadvertently also set into motion ethnic, religious and nationalist tensions and disturbances in some countries. The result was the configuration of opposition forces around out-spoken but popular political elites who successfully galvanised the support of disgruntled youth willing to disburse their productive energies on very destructive wars and conflicts.⁵⁷ The engagement of the ECOWAS in the management of conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire since the early 1990s provides ample evidence of the twin problem of state disintegration and consolidation in the African context. It also led to the reversal of the gains of democratisation in others, for instance, Guinea and Nigeria. In effect, the demise of the Cold War raised the banner of insecurity in the sub-region and brought to the forefront the imperative to further develop and deepen the culture of constitutional rule, democratic control of the security sector as well as harmonious civil-military relations.⁵⁸

In the midst of these developments, every attempt was made by the ECOWAS leadership to develop institutional mechanisms or policy initiatives that could strengthen the organisation to achieve its set objectives towards the overall economic development and political integration of the sub-region. This was executed through direct interventions by the ad-hoc ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in the conflicts that ravaged the sub-region. Despite the imperfections in the performance of ECOMOG in the Liberia civil war (Vogt: 1992) and later in the Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire conflicts, some important lessons were learnt. The ECOWAS took cognisance of the loose defence structure around which its operations were organised and issued a new policy instrument to mitigate the

⁵⁵ Mention is made of the pioneering roles of General Yakubu Gowon of Nigeria, General Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo and to some extent General Kutu Acheampong of Ghana. The only exception was the invaluable input of the civilian head of state, President Tolbert of Liberia.

⁵⁶ For some insight on this development, see Richard Sanbrook, “Taming the African Leviathan.” *World Policy Journal*, Fall, 1990, pp. 673-701.

⁵⁷ Jeffrey Herbst, “Responding to State Failure in Africa.” *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 3, Winter 1996/1997, pp. 121-144; See also Robert H. Jackson, *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

⁵⁸ United States Institute of Peace, “Responding to War and State Collapse in West Africa.” Special Report, No. 81, February, 2002.

deficiencies in the 1978 and 1981 defence and security pacts. This led to the 1999 Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security.⁵⁹ Also, the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance was signed as supplementary protocol in December 2001.

The leadership of the sub-region, however, as far back as August 1994, had undertaken the commitment in the Nigerian capital of Abuja, to establish a Community Parliament through the execution of Protocol Number A/P2/8/94. It identified the need for a 'parliamentary forum for dialogue, consultation and consensus' as an instrument to bring into manifestation the Declaration of the Political Principles adopted by the same Authority of Heads of State and Government earlier in July 1991.⁶⁰ The Community Parliament has, since 2000, been operational alongside the fifteen national parliaments of ECOWAS member states. It is from these parliaments that delegates are sent to the Community Parliament to perform its advisory and consultative roles.

Against this background, some questions worth considering include the following: What are the constitutional and legislative processes in place in the sub-region to elicit the necessary political and popular support of the people of the sub-region? In what ways can it be said that national parliaments and their representatives in the Community Parliament work in the interest of the generality of the people of West Africa? What kind of relationship exists between the Community Parliament and national parliaments in fostering stronger collaboration in the integration agenda? What are the tangible results from these processes for the citizenry so far?

Objectives of the Paper

For these and other related questions and issues, the paper explores as its primary objective the role of Ghanaian parliamentarians in the West African integration process. Additionally, it examines their representation in one of the foremost and important supranational institutions, the Community Parliament which ultimately is to provide the organisation with a legislative and representative character, though currently operating in strictly in an advisory and consultative capacity. The study also explores the structure and functions of the Community Parliament, the input and impact of Ghanaian representatives in the Parliament, the challenges and the possible ways to address them.

⁵⁹ For a comprehensive analysis of the ECOWAS security architecture, see Boni Yao Gebe, "ECOWAS Security Protocols and Conflict Management in West Africa: Lessons and the Way Forward." *Legon Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 1, December 2004, pp. 1-25. In addition, see the following works of Emmanuel Kwesi Aning, "Investing in Peace and Security in Africa: The Case of ECOWAS." *Conflict, Security and Development*, Vol. 4, No. 3, December 2004; and also "A New ECOWAS?: Democracy and Security Sector Governance in West Africa." *Africa Security Dialogue and Research* (Unpublished Manuscript).

⁶⁰ Hon. Kenneth Dzirasah, one time Member of the Parliament of Ghana and the Community Parliament in his lecture on "The Structure, Functions and Relevance of the Community Parliament of the ECOWAS" at an International Workshop on the ECOWAS Parliamentary System at Ho, 12-15th August 2002.

The paper is premised on the argument that Ghanaian parliamentarians are affecting the processes of economic and political integration in West Africa through the institutional and democratic channels and resources at their disposal. This can be further consolidated if the country is willing to provide concrete leadership by disbursing the appropriate economic and political capital.

The Ghanaian Parliament and West African Integration

The centrality and significance of the Parliament of Ghana in the conduct of international relations and foreign policy can be looked at from a variety of ways, but principally in the areas of legislative and deliberative or inquiry powers or functions.⁶¹ The 1992 Republican Constitution provides under Chapter 10, Article 93 (1) that there shall be a Parliament of Ghana which shall consist of a minimum of 140 representatives. The number has increased steadily from what was originally stipulated to 230 in 2004. Article 93 (2) further states that "subject to the provisions of this Constitution, the legislative power of Ghana shall be vested in Parliament and shall be exercised in accordance with the Constitution." The power of parliament as the peoples' representatives to make laws is exercised through the bills that are passed on the floor of the House and assented to by the President of Ghana. These laws are in two categories: domestic laws which are binding on the country and her people and international treaties which need to be ratified by parliament before they become binding in Ghana.

In furtherance of the powers of parliament in their deliberative and legislative functions and roles, Article 103 (1) provides that "Parliament shall appoint Standing Committees and other Committees as may be necessary for the effective discharge of its functions." And the Constitution further states under 103 (3) that "the Committees of Parliament shall be charged with such functions, including the investigation and inquiry into the activities and administration of ministries and departments as Parliament may determine; and such investigations and inquiries may extend to proposals for legislation." It is in this capacity that there has been established a Parliamentary Select Committee on Foreign Affairs. This constitutional provision has empowered the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs since 1993 to inquire and investigate complex proposals on foreign policy outside the House of Parliament.⁶²

While it is true that the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs is at the apex of parliamentary hearings and dealings on foreign relations, there are other

⁶¹ Boni Yao Gebe, "Protecting the National Interest: The Parliament of Ghana and Foreign Economic Assistance." Institute of Democratic Governance (IDEG), Policy Research Series, No. 1, 2008, p. 8; See also K. B. Ayensu and S. N. Darkwa, *How our Parliament Functions: An Introduction to the Law, Practice and Procedure of the Parliament of Ghana*. (Accra: Super Print, Ltd., 2000), p. 23.

⁶² Paul O. Asimeku, "The Parliamentary Select Committee on Foreign Affairs and Ghana's Foreign Policy: 1992-2004." MA Dissertation, Legon Centre for International Affairs, (LECIA), University of Ghana, Legon, August 2005, p. 2.

committees that, by their functions and powers, have roles to play in the country's external relations, for instance, finance, trade relations, security and defence, the environment, education, science and technology, so far as these fall within their official mandate.

Indeed, the processes of West African integration have actually engaged the governments of the sub-region in different sectors of national and sub-regional importance, including trade, telecommunications, science and technology, customs, finance, migration, transportation, agriculture, water, the environment, energy, health, justice, the rule of law and good governance. In the Ghanaian example, these priorities translate into frequent consultations among government officials in the ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) on one hand, and parliamentarians on the other, on issues that bear national and international ramifications, thus offering opportunities for interactions with their counterparts at the sub-regional level.

Some of these commitments entail deliberations on proposed policies which require parliamentary hearings and approval at the committee level and on the floor of the House. The fact that protocols and bills emanating from the ECOWAS have to be deliberated upon and ratified by parliament in order to become law of the land whilst those ratified through Acts of Parliament receive presidential assent, means that parliament plays a significant role in the processes of regional integration. Examples of such treaties that have passed through the Ghanaian Parliament include the ratification of the 1993 Revised Treaty of the ECOWAS; the 1994 Protocol establishing the Community Parliament of ECOWAS; the 1999 Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security; the 2001 Protocol on the Fight against Corruption; the 2001 Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance; and the 2001 Supplementary Protocol Amending the Protocol on the Establishment of an ECOWAS Brown Card Relating to Motor Vehicle Third Party Liability Insurance.

It has to be borne in mind though, that there are several protocols and conventions that had been ratified by the government of Ghana since the establishment of the ECOWAS in 1975 without parliamentary deliberation or legislation though the parliamentary function was performed by defined bodies in the proclamations which established these regimes. This condition is attributable to the military interregna between 1972 to 1979 and also 1981 to 1992. Some of these include the Treaty establishing the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); General Convention on Privileges and Immunities of the ECOWAS (ratified by Ghana in 1979); Protocol on Non-Aggression (ratified by Ghana in 1979); Supplementary Protocol amending the Definition of the Concept of Products Originating from Member States (ratified by Ghana in 1985); Supplementary Protocol amending Article 4 of the ECOWAS Treaty Relating to Community Institutions (ratified by Ghana in 1985); Protocol on the Establishment of an ECOWAS Brown Card Relating

to Motor Vehicle Third Party Liability Insurance (ratified by Ghana in 1985); Convention Regulating Inter-State Road Transportation between ECOWAS Member States (ratified by Ghana in 1985); Protocol Relating to the Definition of Community Citizen (ratified by Ghana in 1985); Protocol Relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence (ratified by Ghana in 1989); Protocol Relating to the Establishment of a West African Health Organisation (ratified by Ghana in 1989).

In this regard, the ratification process before 1993, while having the assent of the president or the head of state, never carried parliamentary approval since none was in existence, except for the brief constitutional period between 1979 and 1981. In fact, only a single protocol received parliamentary approval during this period, thus the 1979 Protocol Relating to the Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment which was ratified in 1980.

Structure, Functions and Powers of the Community Parliament

The Protocol establishing the Community Parliament of ECOWAS, thus A/P2/8/94, was signed in the Nigerian capital of Abuja on August 6, 1994, a whole year after the promulgation of the Revised Treaty of ECOWAS in July 1993. The understanding among the then sixteen Heads of State and Government was that in order to establish a viable regional economic community that could effectively promote integration, a requisite parliamentary infrastructure ought to be put in place.⁶³ The Community Parliament, however, took another six years to be inaugurated as a supranational entity following the ratification of the protocol by nine countries as stipulated in the protocol and which meant that the protocol came into force. The countries consisted of Benin, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone.

The formal inauguration of the Parliament took place in two sessions with the first one held in Bamako from the 16th to the 19th of November, 2000 and the second one from the 21st to the 27th of January 2001 in Abuja.⁶⁴ In conformity with Article 5 of the provisions of the protocol, the Community Parliament is to consist of 120 seats. All member-states are guaranteed a minimum of five seats and the remaining 40 seats shared according to population size. Nigeria, therefore, has the largest number of seats with 35 members, followed by Ghana with eight seats; Cote d'Ivoire, seven seats; Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Niger and Senegal have six seats each. Seven other states, consisting of Benin, Cape Verde, the Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Mauritania take five seats each.⁶⁵

⁶³ Kenneth Dzirasah, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

⁶⁴ ECOWAS Annual Reports, Office of the Executive Secretary, Abuja, Nigeria, December, 2005, pp. xxiii and xxix.

⁶⁵ Mauritania had since left the ECOWAS as a member-state at the turn of the new millennium, bringing the membership of the organization to fifteen, and leaving its representation in the Community Parliament null and void. Cote d'Ivoire also, for a long time, has been unable to assume her seats in the Community Parliament, the reason attributed to the civil war in the country.

The enabling protocol stipulated that the representatives of the Community Parliament and their alternates should be elected through direct universal suffrage, meaning that citizens of each country must directly elect their parliamentarians. Until such time that this condition is fulfilled, the protocol empowers the national assemblies of member states to elect members of the parliament from amongst themselves. This gives the composition and membership of the parliament a transitional character.⁶⁶ It is worth stating that some important decisions have been taken in the last few years to transform the Community Parliament into a truly representative one in which the delegates are to be elected through universal adult suffrage. This is in light of the fact that the stipulated five-year term for the transitional period in 2000 had already elapsed.

The Parliament functions as any other national parliament and constitutes the assembly of the peoples of the Economic Community of West African States. The members are known as representatives, thus representing the entire people of West Africa. The Parliament is headed by a Speaker, chosen from its membership and is vested with the highest authority. He performs the primary functions of opening, closing and suspending sittings and cannot perform his official duties in combination with any other, for instance, a speaker of a national parliament.⁶⁷ The Speaker is legally not allowed to participate in debates but if he so wishes must vacate the seat temporarily until the debate is over.

There is also provision for six Deputy Speakers which is part of a sixteen-member Bureau, the highest decision-making organ of the Parliament, responsible for the administrative, organisational, financial and budgetary issues. Another important organ is the Conference of Chairpersons which controls affairs relating to the countries and national parliaments of the Community. The Conference of Chairpersons supervises the composition and competence of Standing Committees, ad hoc delegations and temporary committees of inquiry as well as administrative and budgetary proposals regarding the various parliamentary groups to the Bureau. The Conference of Chairpersons is composed of the Speaker of the Community Parliament, the Deputy Speakers, Chairmen of the Parliamentary Groups as well as the Chairpersons of Committees. The seat of the Community Parliament is to be determined by the Authority of Heads of State and Government though currently based in Abuja, courtesy the government of Nigeria. The official working languages of the Parliament are English, French, Portuguese and Spanish (the latter through the insistence of Cape Verde).

⁶⁶ Kenneth Dzirasah, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

⁶⁷ Linda Quashigah, "Restructuring of the ECOWAS Parliament: Challenges and Prospects." MA Dissertation, Legon Centre for International Affairs (LECIA), University of Ghana, Legon, August, 2007, p. 20.

In terms of the Parliament's jurisdictional competences, powers and functions, it is purely an advisory body. Under Article 6 (2) of the 1994 Protocol, the opinion of the Parliament is sought in the following areas: interconnection of the communications links between member states; interconnection of telecommunications system, interconnection of energy networks; increased cooperation in the area of radio, television and other media links; public health policies of the community; common educational policy; youth and sports; scientific and technological research; community policy on the environment; treaty review; community citizenship; social integration; and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in all their plenitude.

Representation in the Community Parliament, until such time that it begins to work through direct universal adult suffrage, consists of elected members of the national assemblies or equivalent institutions. The length of representation in the Community Parliament is for a period of five years from the day of swearing-in to the end of the life of the parliament. The credentials of all appointed representatives are screened and validated by the parliament. In the event of death or resignation, their mandate as members is terminated. Representatives not re-elected in their national assemblies can remain in office during the transitional period until new representatives from the various member countries take up their seats.

Sessions of parliament are of two kinds: Ordinary and Extra-Ordinary. Ordinary sessions are convened twice a year (May and September) but each of these sessions cannot exceed a period of three months. Extra-ordinary sessions can be convened at the initiative of the Chairman of the Authority of Heads of State and Government or at the request of an absolute majority of member-states to deliberate on a specific issue only, and should not exceed fifteen (15) days.

While all sessions are to be held at the seat of Parliament, thus Abuja, Parliament may decide to hold some of its meetings in any other member state. Article 9 of the Protocol provides protection for all representatives in the conduct of their duties. It stipulates that no representative is liable to prosecution, summons, arrests, detention or sentence on account of opinion expressed or vote cast in the course of deliberations. The immunity clause covers both parliamentary sessions and recess, under which member-states are enjoined to refrain from effecting the arrest and prosecution of members, even in criminal matters unless clearance is sought from parliament.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ It is stipulated in the Protocol establishing the Community Parliament that the application of "flagrante delicto" shall be the only exception to the injunction guaranteeing immunity to representatives.

Restructuring the Community Parliament

The Community Parliament has operated for close to eight years since its inaugural session that took place in Bamako, Mali between the 16th and the 19th of November 2000. All this while, the Parliament has operated strictly as a consultative and advisory body in compliance with the provisions of the protocol establishing it. However, the important principle of making representation in the Parliament based on direct universal adult suffrage has remained practically untried and illusive. If the objective that underpins the parliamentary representation of the peoples of the sub-region is to allow their voices to impact on the processes of decision-making and integration policy, it is obvious that this has so far being done indirectly. The elected officials, though from their national assemblies, may not necessarily represent the interests of different constituents at the grassroots. Even then, the powers of the Community Parliament and, for that matter, the representatives are largely circumscribed since they cannot take independent decisions or embark on policy initiatives that can enhance the development of the Community without instructions from the Authority of Heads of State and Governments.

It is these considerations, among others, that led to discussions to restructure the Community Parliament together with other community institutions, including the Executive Secretariat. The necessity for the restructuring had been on the agenda of the ECOWAS for some time now. This was further buttressed by the President of Niger, His Excellency Mr. Mamadou Tandja, the then ECOWAS Chairman when he stated that the proposed restructuring as was decided at the 53rd Session of the Council of Ministers held in Accra from January 16th to 18th, 2005 should be executed immediately.⁶⁹ A series of meetings were, therefore, held in Abuja between November 27th and 29th 2005, convened by the then Executive Secretary (now President of the Commission) for the Secretaries-Generals/Clerks and Speakers of West African parliaments. The purpose was to examine the proposals and invite inputs to the documents relating to the restructuring exercise for the consideration of the Council of Ministers and subsequently, the Extra-ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Governments in Niamey, Niger which took place in January of 2006.⁷⁰

The restructuring has, in principle, been approved, pending the necessary transformational activities which are scheduled for 2010. In the area of representation in the Community Parliament, elections are to be organised in individual member-states and through direct universal adult suffrage and members

⁶⁹ Linda Quashigah, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

are to be elected on their own merit.⁷¹ According to the leader of Ghana's delegation to the Community Parliament, Mr. Stephen Kwaku Balado Manu, the Member of Parliament for Ahafo Ano-South and Majority Chief Whip, polls shall be conducted similar to national general elections, and those who emerge victorious become bona fide members of the Community Parliament.⁷² ECOWAS nationals interested in contesting for representation in the parliament must satisfy certain conditions, including proof of citizenship and evidence of payment of taxes and levies.

On the question of the delineation of electoral constituencies and the requisite number of seats, Mr. Manu explained that constituencies would be allocated according to the current number of seats occupied by member states in the Community Parliament. Ghana would, for instance, maintain the minimum of five seats allocated to each member, and a further three seats added, based on the country's population (Nigeria, for instance, is allocated a further 30 seats, using her population size). A former leader of the Ghanaian delegation to the ECOWAS Community Parliament, Mr. Osei Kyei Mensah-Bonsu, current Member of Parliament for Suame and Minority Leader, however, called for a review of the criteria for the allocation of seats which he considers as inherently flawed and inadequate.⁷³

Other areas proposed for the restructuring include the Political Wing of Parliament which consists of the Plenary, Bureau and the Conference of Bureaux. According to the proposals, the Plenary is to constitute the highest decision-making body and its decisions are binding on all the structures of the parliament. The Plenary adopts the resolutions of parliament and forwards them to the decision-making bodies of the Community, in accordance with the provisions of the protocols, treaties, decisions and regulations of the Community.

An additional body is the Bureau of Parliament which is to act as the governing body of the Parliament. It is autonomous but its actions and functions should not be at variance with other decision-making bodies of the Community such as the Authority of Heads of State and Governments and the Council of Ministers. Its membership will be smaller, possibly five instead of the current membership of sixteen, and will be comprised of the Speaker and the first four Deputy Speakers. In terms of functions, it will provide the necessary financial, administrative and technical services to parliament. It will help reduce the workload of the Bureau and render the retention of the parliamentary secretaries and treasuries unnecessary.

⁷¹ Mr. Stephen K. B. Manu, Member of Ghana's Parliament for Ahafo Ano South and Majority Chief Whip as well as the Leader of Ghanaian Representatives to the Community Parliament, made this known to the Ghanaian Media in a briefing session in Kumasi. See Story in *The Spectator*, Saturday, September 2008; and the Ghanaian Times, Tuesday, September 16th, 2008, p. 21.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

The other organ slated for restructuring is the Conference of Bureaux, made up of the Speaker and his four Deputy Speakers, the Chairman or the Deputy Chairman as the case may be, and the Rapporteur of each of the Standing Committees. This organ, in collaboration with the Bureau of Parliament, will undertake the preparation of draft annual work plan of parliament with due regard to other programs and work plans of the whole community and its other institutions. It is also charged with producing a work plan for the Standing Committees of parliament which are collectively represented on this organ and is chaired by the Speaker.

There are also proposals for rotating the position of the Speaker of the Community Parliament which can assure the possibility of the revered seat being occupied by all member-states within the shortest possible time. A former Clerk of the Parliament of Ghana, Mr. Rex Owusu-Ansah has suggested that the rotation of the Speaker position should go to the country that holds the Chairmanship of the ECOWAS for that particular year. His view is that this formula would bring the Executive and the Community Parliament closer, provide the possibility of exchange of relevant information, particularly since the same government would be taking charge of the activities of the Executive as well as the Legislative arms of the Community. He further proposed that the seat of the Speaker should be non-residential to overcome the attendant costs of residency, since parliament does not sit daily (but twice or thrice a year). This will allow the Speaker who is elected through a universal adult suffrage to adequately represent his constituents in his own national parliament, and not reside somewhere else and neglect the needs of his people.⁷⁴ With regard to the tenure of office for the representatives to the Community Parliament, the ad hoc Ministerial Committee proposed a four-year term instead of the five-year term stipulated in Article 7(2) (i) of the Protocol.

Relations between the Community Parliament and national parliaments also come under consideration for the enhancement of the sub-region's integration programs. It is recommended that the two institutions should work closer so as to enhance the prospects of regional integration. In particular, members delegated to the Community Parliament should preferably come from the Integration Committees of the national parliament in order to reflect a national character, with representation from both the ruling and opposition parties, and possibly a 30% women representation in the delegation.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 21. The evidence shows that the practice of non-residential status for the Speaker is being practiced in other parliaments in Africa, for instance, in the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) of the African Union, UEMOA of Francophone West Africa and the East Africa Legislative Assembly (EALA).

⁷⁵ Final Report of the Ad hoc Ministerial Committee on the Restructuring of the Community Parliament, Executive Secretariat, Abuja, February, 2006, pp. 3-5.

The Administrative Wing of the Community Parliament, headed by the Secretary-General, constitutes the Head of the Secretariat of the Parliament. The Secretary-General is responsible for administrative aspects of the Parliament, consisting of the supervision of the preparation, publication and custody of all the minutes and reports of the activities of the Bureau of Parliament and Committees. The additional responsibilities of the Secretary-General include recruitment and supervision of the professional staff of the secretariat, remuneration of the employees of the Parliament and any other administrative proceedings of the Parliament. In the absence of the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General(s) can perform any of the aforementioned responsibilities. In the light of the restructuring, it is proposed that the administrative wing should be separated from the political wing to enable the Speaker concentrate on the political aspects of parliamentary business and leave the administrative side to the Secretary-General. It is also proposed that the offices of the Secretary-General and Deputy Secretaries-General should be converted to permanent staff to serve as the institutional memory for the administrative functioning of parliament. In his capacity as the Secretary-General, the individual constitutes the chief advisor to the Speaker and the Bureau on administrative issues.⁷⁶

Selection and Role of Ghana's Representatives in the Community Parliament

Ghana has been represented continuously in the Community Parliament since its inception in 2000. It has contributed in diverse ways to the institutional development of the ECOWAS, the integration process itself, as well as the promotion of harmonious relations in the sub-region, towards the overall maintenance of regional security and stability. Ghanaian parliamentary representation commenced effectively after the inaugural sessions of the Community Parliament in Bamako, Mali between the 16th and the 19th of November, 2000 and in Abuja from the 21st to the 27th of January, 2001.

On the floor of Ghana's Parliament the then Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Majority Leader of the House, Papa Owusu-Ankomah moved for the approval of eight elected members of the Ghanaian Parliament to represent the Parliament of Ghana in the Community Parliament in accordance with Articles 5 and 7 of the protocol that established the ECOWAS Parliament (Hansard, Volume 33, Number 11, 30th May, 2002). The motion for the approval was however opposed by the then Minority Leader, Mr. A. S. K. Bagbin on a point of order that as a motion, no notice was given and that no Standing Orders were set aside for that purpose. For such an urgent matter as electing members to represent Ghana in the ECOWAS Parliament, therefore, it was Mr. Bagbin's considered opinion to adjourn for the necessary procedural action.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-15

Some fundamental issues pertaining to Ghanaian representation were raised in subsequent meetings on the floor of the House of Parliament, including the following: a) Members of the Ghanaian Parliament who were elected to represent Ghana in the Community Parliament were already sworn into the Parliament in Abuja the previous year, thus in January 2001 without due process in the Parliament of Ghana, thus making it an illegality; b) Some minority parties, particularly the People's National Convention (PNC), were of the view that they should be given representation on the Ghanaian delegation, despite their small membership in the Ghanaian Parliament and the very limited number of seats allotted to Ghana. Finally, after some adjournments and interventions by members from both sides and clarifications from the Speaker of the House who had always urged compromise, the resolution on Ghana's representation as presented by the Majority Leader, Papa Owusu-h in the House was finally adopted (Hansard, Volume 33, Number 13, Tuesday, 4th of June, 2002). The delegation consisted then of the following members: Hon. Osei-Kyei Mensah Bonsu (Leader); Hon. Hawa Yakubu; Hon. Stephen Kwaku Balado Manu; Hon. Joseph Akudibillah; Hon. Kenneth Dzirasah; Hon. Abraham Kofi Asante; Hon. Alice Boon; and Hon. Likplalimor Kwajo Tawiah.

The issue of representation in the Community Parliament of the ECOWAS came up again after the 2004 presidential and parliamentary elections in Ghana. This was to be expected since the provisions in the protocol only allow representation of elected members of national assemblies. Secondly, those appointed to an executive office or position in the sending state (for instance, a minister of state) must resign membership of the county's delegation. The reconstitution led to retention of only Hon. Mr. Osei-Kyei Mensah Bonsu and Hon. Balado S. K. Manu and the addition of the following new members: Hon. David Apasera; Hon. Elizabeth K. T. Sackey; Hon. Ken Ohene Agyapong; Hon. John A. Tia; Hon. Michael Teye Nyaunu; and Hon. Francis A. Agbotse (Hansard, Volume. 51, Number 11, Friday, 11th November, 2005).

On the reconstitution of Ghana's delegation to the Community Parliament, however, Members of Parliament raised some very crucial issues pertaining to the designation and the legal status of the members who generally represent Ghana. Members wondered whether they were delegates to the Community Parliament of the ECOWAS or they were representatives of the Parliament of Ghana. The position that was finally agreed upon was that all such delegates from the various national parliaments across the sub-region represent all the people within the ECOWAS framework and not just representing particular governments or arms of government. In the same vein, the Ghanaian delegates in the Pan-African Parliament of the African Union are representing the people of Africa in its entirety and not individual countries. On the issue of leadership of Ghanaian delegations to sub-regional and regional representative bodies, it was agreed that the most senior member of the group from the majority side leads such delegations. While these issues constituted important elements for consideration, Members of Parliament further agreed that representation in the Community Parliament of the ECOWAS

should not be viewed as one of convenience but that the country, first and foremost, and the Parliament of Ghana should have substantial benefits from such representation (Hansard, Vol. 59, Number 19, Thursday, 19th June 2008).

According to a former Ghanaian delegate to the Community Parliament, the fact that the Parliament is not a law making body in the conventional sense has hindered the institution to be pro-active, thus limiting it to “a forum of discussions, deliberations and recommendations.”⁷⁷ He contends that the idea to create a parliament was perhaps accidental, considering the fact that it took six long years for the 1994 protocol to be translated into reality in 2000 and the reluctance of the Authority of Heads of State and Government to provide the institution with the powers to exceed its original mandate, thus to be consulted on matters concerning the Community. He believes that this condition is compounded by the fact that member countries are unwilling to yield part of their national sovereignty towards a greater communal good.⁷⁸

Despite the institutional limitations, the Ghanaian delegate was of the view that the Parliament had performed its duties through debates at both Plenary and Committee Sitzings on a wide range of issues germane to its mandate and competence. These are normally covered in thirteen subject-matter Committees whose areas of deliberations correspond to various ministerial and administrative sectors of national governments. Deliberations are largely held in the following Committees: Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, Defence and Security; Legal and Judicial Affairs; Rural Development; Transport and Communications; Environment and Natural Resources; Public Health and Social Affairs; Education and Training, Employment, Youth and Sports; Economy and Finance; Industry and Mines; Energy, Technology and Scientific Research; Women and Children's Rights; Tourism and Culture; and Budget Control. The framework for parliamentary business, therefore, accords delegates the flexibility to provide inputs on various issues as they relate to the subjects of Community treaties, protocols and decisions of the Authority of Heads of State and Government.

In terms of actual work accomplished in the Community Parliament to which Ghanaian representatives actively contributed, the Ghanaian delegate draws attention to the following:

- The Permanent Framework for Coordination and Monitoring of Integrated Water Resource Management in West Africa;
- The adoption of a Regional Plan of Action for Integrated Water Resource Management;
- The issue of Energy in West Africa, particularly the establishment of a mechanism for financing of the West Africa Power Pool (WAPP);

⁷⁷ Kenneth Dzirasah, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

- The issue of Food Security in West Africa, particularly a Mechanism for the implementation of the decision on adopting the Regional Program for Food Security (RPFS);
- Promotion of Private Airlines and Shipping companies, particularly the decision to grant certain advantages to the Private Airline Company-ECOAIR, and the Private Shipping Company, ECOMARINE.
- The role of Parliament in the Monitoring and Observation of Elections and the Consolidation of Good Governance and Democracy in West Africa;
- Prevention, Management and Resolution of Conflicts in West Africa;
- Fight against Corruption and Human Trafficking;
- Enhancement of the powers of the Community Parliament in accordance with the decision of the Authority;
- The status of the Community Parliament within the institutions of the Community and its relationship with these institutions;
- Strategies for the implementation of the decision of Heads of State and Government for the negotiations of economic partnership agreement between West Africa ACP States and the European Union;
- Introduction of the debate on a common electoral law for West Africa;
- Interconnection of Telecommunications Network and Privatisation of telecommunications in member states;
- Interconnection of Energy networks and distribution of fuel, gas and other petroleum products to non-petroleum producing countries;
- The issue of equivalences of University Degrees and Diplomas;
- Trans-human rules in ECOWAS Member States and the meat and milk trade in West Africa;
- The issue of Coordination and Dissemination of the results of Scientific and Technological Research in ECOWAS member states;
- The issue of Human and Child Trafficking and Child Soldiers in Member States;
- The Role of Private Banks in the Integration process of West Africa;
- The issue of a single currency for West Africa.⁷⁹

Committee Reports are normally presented to the Plenary with consequential resolutions on these issues which are brought to the attention of the Authority of Heads of State and Government for necessary action.

Ghana's representatives to the Community Parliament, continue to exhibit their commitment to the principles and objectives which underpin its establishment and working towards the necessary transformations.⁸⁰ Reports on their activities within

⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 13-15.

⁸⁰ The delegation is composed of the following Members of Parliament: Mr. Stephen Kwaku Balado Manu, MP for Ahafo Ano South and Majority Whip (Leader of Delegation); Mr. Osei Kyei Mensah Bonsu, MP for Suame; Mr. Francis Agbotse, MP for Ho West; Mrs. Elizabeth Sackey, MP for Okaikoi North; Mr. John Akologu Tia, MP for Talensi and Minority Whip; Mr. Kennedy Ohene Agyapong, MP for Assin North; Mr. David Apaesera, MP for Bolgatanga; Mr. Simon Osei-Mensa, MP for Bosomtwe Ghanaian Times, Tuesday, September 16, 2008, p. 21.

the Community Parliament are periodically presented to their colleagues in the Ghanaian Parliament. Examples include their active participation in the annual Ordinary Sessions as well as the Extraordinary Sessions of the Community Parliament. These are issues and developments relating to the ECOWAS sub-region, for instance, the need for the ratification of protocols and conventions that have been signed and those yet to enter into force; swearing-in of new members of the Community Parliament of member states; the various attempts at resolving the conflicts in some member-states, including Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire; the crisis over the Bakasi Islands between Nigeria and Cameroon; general country reports on the state of affairs of member states; trade liberalisation scheme in the ECOWAS sub-region; loan agreements and other financial transactions between ECOWAS, the World Bank and other international financial institutions on the implementation of regional programs; the Government of Ghana and ECOWAS Bank Financing Agreement for Investment and Development for the Modernization of the Ghana Fire Service; among several others.

Challenges and Coping Strategies for Ghanaian Representatives

The sections above provide a broad overview of the processes of institutional development within the ECOWAS and the dynamics of integration, the roles and inherent challenges for our representatives as well as the opportunities for consolidation. A careful consideration of the prominent actors embedded in these processes reveal three levels or layers of power relations: the Ghanaian state; representatives of national parliaments and the institutional frameworks of integration (Community Parliament inclusive); and the ECOWAS as a supra-national actor.

The Ghanaian State:

The first layer is the sovereign State of Ghana, a founding member of the ECOWAS. Her behavior in a system of State actors predictably is to protect core values, primary among which include territorial integrity, sovereign existence and autonomous action within the international system. The state pursues certain vital interests in association with other actors where there is seemingly a convergence of those interests.⁸¹ One of these primary interests is the survival of the Ghanaian state through the harnessing of the resources at its disposal. But since resources are limited and other actors can complement those that the country needs, there is the need for institutional collaboration. The opportunity to harmonise the individual strengths of the several actors towards the attainment of a larger public good has led to the foundation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

⁸¹ For an analytical approach on issues pertaining to the national interest and the inter-state system, refer to the following works, among many others: D. Papp, *Contemporary International Relations – A Framework for Understanding*. (New York: Macmillan, 1991); Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc, 1979); Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations - The Struggle for Power and Peace*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1993); J. Frankel, *National Interest*. (London: Pall Mall, 1970).

One fundamental predicament that Ghana as a modern state faces is the fact of being a post-colonial entity with the structural limitations of underdevelopment.⁸² These limitations include small market size which is also largely undeveloped; an agriculture-based economy dominated by peasant labour; low levels of technological know-how and industrialisation; large population with a narrow human capital base; a low savings culture hence the dearth of capital formation and investment; dependence on foreign financial assistance, technology and investment capital for national development, among many others.

Whilst these limitations constitute a serious handicap on the country's developmental agenda, there are certain strengths and opportunities that the country can explore to its advantage. These include the geographical location of the country as a coastal state with marine assets and resources (navigable ports and harbours, oil deposits etc); centrality of the country in relation to other members of the ECOWAS; rich natural resources, both mineral and forestry; an increasingly competent and resilient human resource base; comparative stability and peace of the nation, diversified cultural heritage, historical antecedents of African leadership and diplomacy; and currently an enviable track record of good governance and democracy. The objective reality of Ghana's circumstance in a contemporary setting is that the country cannot develop in isolation, a recognition that led to the membership of various international institutions and organisations vis-a-vis the treaty obligations that ensures its security, survival and conditions amenable for progress.

In the particular case of Ghana's membership of the ECOWAS, there is a contradictory tendency by the state to, on one hand, play the status of active membership with all the lure of benefits that can accrue from the processes of integration, whilst on the other hand, exhibit a dire reluctance to provide the vital ingredients towards sustaining the integration of the sub-region. One serious consideration in this regard is the preparedness of Ghana to provide the critical factors that will induce a faster pace of development for the country. In particular, the country should significantly collaborate with the most dominant actor of the sub-region, Nigeria whose market size, population, productive base, and industrial output can catapult Ghana's own developmental effort.

This realisation brought two of the leaders in the sub-region to collaborate in two critical areas in the past. Firstly, to ensure peace and stability in the sub-region

⁸² The works of the following writers are instructive in this regard. Robert Gilpin, *The Political Economy of International Relations*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990); J. A. Caporaso, "Dependence and Dependency in the Global System", *International Organization*, Vol. 32, Winter, 1978; P. R. Viotti and M. V. Kauppi, *International Relations Theory: Realism, Pluralism and Globalism*, Second Edition. (New York: Macmillan, 1993).

through the instrumentality of the ECOMOG to tackle the debilitating wars within the Mano River Union (Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea) as well as Cote d'Ivoire. That singular action brought to the fore the recognition of the competence and capabilities of the Ghanaian state. It also brought into sharp focus the visionary leadership that another Ghanaian leader, President Kwame Nkrumah provided during the decolonisation of the entire African continent, through material and intellectual investment in the pan-African project.

A second aspect of this leadership credential was displayed by Ghana almost a decade ago through the "fast-track" approach to integration which was spearheaded by two former heads of state, Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and Jerry Rawlings of Ghana.⁸³ The essence of this process primarily is the intensification of economic and political integration through the leadership of the two hegemonic players in the sub-region (in terms of population, natural resources, market-size, technocratic skills and know-how, autonomy and ideological prudence) to achieve and cement certain vital infrastructural inroads. It was meant to accelerate and consolidate the productive capacity of the Community in the areas of monetary convergence, transportation, telecommunications, customs harmonisation, deepening of factors of production in labour mobility, residence, establishment, investment and capitalisation and ultimately industrialisation.

Even then, one major limitation in this joint hegemonic role is the reputation of the other actor, the notoriety of Nigeria as unstable, corrupt, untrustworthy and undemocratic. Therein lies the strength of Ghana to capitalise on these apparent weaknesses of the leading hegemony and attract the sub region under her leadership, while moving the international community to appreciate the "soft power" available to the country.⁸⁴ The country can then consolidate its role and position as a hub of industrial activity, commerce, diplomacy and international relations. The country can surely succeed in these processes if it recognises the wisdom in disbursing both material and intellectual resources towards institutional enhancement of the integration process. This also inevitably entails sacrifices on Ghana's sovereign existence as prices must be paid in terms of encroachment on national security, local ownership of the productive sector and services, laws pertaining to residence, citizenship, among others. These are, however, to a large extent, taken care of by existing ECOWAS protocols and conventions.

⁸³ An independent research commissioned under the chairmanship of Prof. S. K. B. Asante, a United Nations consultant and Special advisor to the UNECA recommended that the UEMOA was less a pull factor for ECOWAS integration and more a hindrance. The Fast-Track Approach was launched subsequently to intensify the integration process by forging a second monetary zone among the mostly Anglophone West Africa members of the ECOWAS instead of joining the Francophone-led UEMOA currency zone, the CFA. It took cognizance also of the market size and the population of the same zone hence the need to lead the integration process.

⁸⁴ Soft power in this regard refers to the values and leadership credentials that Ghana has and which are attractive to the other ECOWAS members and the international community to invest in the country's development and growth process. Refer to the leading work on soft power by Joseph Nye Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Succeed in World Politics*. (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

Ghana's Representatives and the Community Parliament:

The second layer of activity with its inherent challenges as well as opportunities for strategic planning relates to Ghana's representatives, the lawmakers and their role in the integration process. The general movement within and between states, both internationally and locally, seems to be the deepening and enhancement of democracy and the development of democratic institutions. Ghana, as stated earlier, has been in the forefront of the push for democratisation in the sub-region. Since the advent of the Fourth Republic in 1993, the country has successfully organised five general and presidential elections. Besides, changed hands to the opposition peacefully on two occasions in 2001 and 2009. Despite the imperfections, the political system has displayed resilience and consolidation of the institutions that can affect democratic practice in the sub-region.

The important challenge though is how Ghana can positively impact on governance arrangements in other member countries through her parliamentary representatives in the various theatres of operation, such as the Community Parliament of the ECOWAS. The pre-occupation should be how to cultivate the democratic culture in the sub-region, consolidate good governance in the corporate environment, thus industrial and financial institutions. It also require the provision of a more secure political environment that support civil-military relations based on a well-functioning system of civilian control of the military, and towards the overall enhancement of peaceful negotiations in conflict situations through the application of diplomacy.

In the current scheme of things, most of the member states of ECOWAS are yet to fully adopt the basic essentials of democratic rule, some having just emerged from the throes of destructive civil conflicts and others unable or unwilling to play by the rules of democratic governance. The results of elections in neighbouring Togo and Nigeria, the delay in presidential elections in Cote d'Ivoire, and governance challenges in countries such as Guinea and Gambia are a testimony to the long journey ahead. Yet, there are some which have competently displayed the same level of democratic maturity in recent elections. Among this latter category include Benin and Senegal and to some extent, Sierra Leone.

The Ghanaian Parliament must be interested in following events in these countries since the furtherance and deepening of democracy in the member states enhances the chances for peace and stability within the sub-region. There is no gainsaying the fact that peace and development are bedfellows and hence the necessity to ensure that both are attained at both the national and community levels. It is therefore encouraging news that the principal instrument for further enhancing the democratic culture in the sub-region, the Community Parliament, is to undergo some restructuring. The important aspect of this transformation is the idea of commencing with direct universal adult suffrage in elections to the Parliament.

Already, there are complaints that the current practice of sending representatives from the national parliaments contradicts the agreed principle of grass root representation.

The Ghanaian delegation has provided evidence of what they have done in the past years even though they did not meet the original criteria of direct representation. The opportunity has therefore arrived for our representatives to champion the cause in every possible forum to make sure that structural change becomes a reality. The other dimension, nevertheless, is the issue of the powers that the representatives of the parliament will have. In their current advisory role, they can do very little to effect change at the level of the Authority of Heads of State and Government. The representatives of the people are naturally closer to them, regarding their circumstances and aspirations, hence are better positioned to advance their interests through concrete decisions and backed by purposeful legislation. The end result will be what can bring development, equity, protection of their rights and freedoms, the provision of better living conditions, and ensure individual freedoms and rights in the sub-region.

The Ghanaian representatives must therefore undertake to pass all the necessary legislation within the national parliament and take the same commitment to other national parliaments in the sub-region. It will be recalled that the Ghanaian Select Committee on Foreign Affairs commenced this programme of visiting their counterparts in the Cote d'Ivoire and Nigerian parliaments just before the turn of the new millennium.⁸⁵ It is the expectation that more of such visits can be organised to provide the grounds for cooperation and collaboration on shared problems, for instance, the harmonisation of national laws and developmental programs and projects. Other committees of Parliament can take a cue from the example of the Committee on Foreign Affairs to organise solidarity visits and towards a sustainable framework for inter-parliamentary activity and exchange of ideas on problems confronting the sub-region. Another area of collaboration will be formal invitation to Heads of State and Government to address members of national parliaments and also the Community Parliament, all in the effort to deepen the culture of democratic practice.

⁸⁵ It would be recalled that the Select Committee of Foreign Affairs of the Parliament of Ghana visited the Parliament of Cote d'Ivoire in 1999 in which this writer participated as an official delegate of LECIA. The visit was reciprocated by Ivorian Parliamentarians from their National Assembly between May 26th and 29th 2002. There was a similar visit by the Ghanaian Select Committee on Foreign Relations to their Nigeria counterparts on the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Integration in September, 2000. These visits are normally concluded with Joint Communiqués that go to emphasize their commitment to the integration project.

ECOWAS and Parliamentary Relations:

The third layer is the over-arching supranational institution, the ECOWAS and its role in the processes of integration. It has emerged as an important international actor, particularly since the events that led to its interventions in the civil conflicts that inflicted the sub-region in the 1990s. A close examination of the staggering number of protocols and conventions that have emerged from the activities of the organisation over just thirty years provide a convenient yardstick to imagine the prospects for sub-regional integration. The agreements that purportedly are to shape the integration and development of the sub region cover virtually all areas of human activity. These go to advance, in a real sense, the *raison d'être* of the ECOWAS, thus to enhance economic cooperation and trade relations towards overall development, individually and collectively.

It is, however, apparent from the inaction and attitude of member states and their respective governments that they are not truly committed to the laudable aims and objectives that they had agreed to champion and accomplish. They are unwilling to cede any of their sovereign powers towards the development of the organisation. The protocols and conventions remain largely undertakings on paper with miniscule activity in the area of implementation. The institutional mechanisms that have been worked out somewhat provide some direction toward real action. There are signals for concrete action and desirable results in the areas of trade relations, tariff reduction and customs, monetary union, energy production, telecommunications, residence and citizenship, security, democracy and human rights. However, it is the lack of commitment by the governments to invest the needed energy for the integration process that has created some concern. A number of protocols and conventions are yet to be ratified by national parliaments, much less to be signed into law. Dues and contributions owed by member states to the Community are not paid making it appear as if these are unwarranted impositions. Worse of all, representation on some of the institutions of the ECOWAS appear to be a mere fulfilment of treaty obligations and not serious undertakings with bench marks for the implementation of policy programs.

The state of affairs certainly requires serious intervention by representatives to the ECOWAS Parliament as well as in the national parliaments. Some restructuring has taken place within the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat which has led to its transformation into the ECOWAS Commission. If indeed the transformation is meant to provide the Commission with the powers to perform its task more purposefully, it is well intentioned. So far, regional activities since the said transformation have not registered any major or spectacular breakthroughs. The liturgical approach to the resolution of issues by the Authority of Heads of State and

Government and their reluctance to show commitment to institutional enhancement through the ceding of the necessary powers to the technocrats to effect the all important changes are issues that the representatives must work on.

In this area of activity, the Ghanaian parliamentarians, particularly those who are delegates to the Community Parliament, must constitute themselves into instruments of change, spearhead a process within the ECOWAS institutions based on the conviction that meaningful economic development and political transformation can occur through their intervention. They must galvanise civil society groups across the sub-region to appreciate their input and this should be tackled across the entire sub-region; induce commitment in other national parliaments through inter-Committee interactions, issuance of joint programs and common positions, and solidarity messages on important national, sub-regional and international issues. The benefits for the country will be realised from the absolute gains that will accrue to the community as a whole and not individual actors working for relative gain. This is the essential logic between state actors in cooperative ventures at the international level.

Conclusion

The study set out to examine the regional integration agenda from the perspective of the role of Ghana's representatives or parliamentarians in these processes. Important questions were asked pertaining to their roles in the integration process and the strategies that the representatives can employ to be actively engaged. The objectives the Ghanaian state seeks to achieve, the contributions that the country's representatives have made, and the challenges they have encountered in their activities within the national and Community parliaments were also examined. Cognisance is also taken of the undercurrents that underpin the establishment of the ECOWAS, the past record and achievements of the organisation and the transformations taking place currently. It has also demonstrated the strategic path for the Ghanaian lawmaker in terms of choices and planning in order to take advantage of the benefits of integration.

It is recommended that our representatives adopt a more proactive role, a positive mindset, employing the assets of the country both in material terms and in value orientation. Their theatre of operation should go beyond the Ghanaian society and be situated within the ambit of regional politics and diplomacy. The leadership skills, values and patriotic credentials of the Ghanaian within the historical and contemporary setting of Africa and globally should provide the representatives, who are the ambassadors of integration, to achieve concrete benefits for the country.

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**CHAPTER FOUR: REGIONALISM AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION:
PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES (*MAKING THE ORDINARY GHANAIAN
ACTIVE IN THE INTEGRATION PROCESS*)**

Vladimir Antwi-Danso*

ABSTRACT

The phenomenal increase in global economic activities, especially trade, and the inability of global structures to ensure equity in global trade and development; have created an inevitable process of regionalism. It is an accepted norm that a high degree of integration would ensure an organically functioning international system. The last quarter of the last century particularly, saw the proliferation and/or intensification of efforts at regional integration. Specific to Africa, integration has seen lots of hiccups. This paper sets off with a theoretical foundation for regionalism after which the picture of regionalism in Africa is given, with emphasis on the challenges and prospects of the phenomenon in Africa. Ghana's role in the integration process both in Africa region and within the West African sub-continent is then outlined. Integration is about trade, about infrastructure, and therefore about markets. In this regard, the importance of free movement of factors – goods, capital, and especially persons – cannot be overemphasized. It is in this vein that the role of the socio-economic partners in development cannot be ignored. The paper contends that the non-incorporation of integration schemes in national plans creates ignorance among the people. A little survey conducted for the purpose of this paper shows that the ordinary Ghanaian is not active in the integration process.

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Introduction

One of the most interesting developments in contemporary international relations is the trend toward regionalism and regional integration. There seems to be a common consensus today that a functioning international system requires a high degree of integration, and is most effective if it is undergirded by a supporting community structure. The community approach to international sub-systems was given very high academic exposition in the 1950s and the 1960s by scholars such as Karl W. Deutsch, Amitai Etzioni, Ernst Haas, and David Mitrany. Most of these scholars believed that the formation of transnational structures is key to rapid economic development as well as ensuring peace and stability of the international system. Indeed, in 1949, Walter Lippmann predicted that "the true constituent members of the international order of the future are communities of states."⁸⁶

This chapter seeks to throw more light on the theory and practice of integration. It is in three parts. Part one discusses the theory of integration; part two analyses the problems and prospects associated with integration in Africa. The last segment is devoted to the involvement of the socio-economic partners of integration in Ghana – the ordinary citizens.

I

Various approaches to regionalism and/or integration have been proposed. To many scholars, especially before the post-War years, regionalism involved political actors coming together for a common good of their respective societies in a collective effort. Thus, Ernst Haas defines integration as a

*"process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations, and political activities toward a new centre, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states."*⁸⁷

Leon Lindberg also conceives integration as

*"the process whereby nations forego the desire and ability to conduct foreign and key domestic policies independently of each other, seeking instead to make joint decisions or to delegate the decision-making process to a new central organ".*⁸⁸

⁸⁶Unpublished address on "The Atlantic community" Philadelphia, May 6, 1949, quoted in Palmer, Norman D and Howard Perkins, *International Relations*, Third edition, Delhi, AITBS Pub. 2004, p.558.

⁸⁷Ernst B. Haas, *Beyond the Nation State*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1964, p49

⁸⁸Leon N. Lindberg, *The Political Dynamics of European Economic Integration*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1963, p6. Quoted in Dougherty J.E and Robert Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories of International Relations*, New York, Harper Collins Publishers, p433.

It was this kind of thinking that was so persuasive to most Pan-Africanists that they called for a political union of Africa.⁸⁹

The post-War realities have caused a change in the thinking about what integration should be, how it should be built, and for what it should exist. Integration is now perceived more as trade-induced and therefore an economic phenomenon. As already indicated, the case for free trade and integration was made more forcefully by economists in the 1950s. It was strongly believed that free trade leads to increased welfare and also that customs unions would lead to the most efficient utilisation of world resources and this would maximise world out-put and welfare. Interestingly enough, the positions of both Haas and Lindberg reverberate in all discourses on integration. In essence, free trade and economic integration result in exactly what they are saying.

In purely economic and/or trade terms therefore, Regionalism or Regional integration may be defined as the commercial policy of discriminatively reducing or eliminating trade barriers only among the nations joining together. This is the model known to have been followed and successfully carried through. A living example is the European Union (EU). This is what has been aptly called the market approach to integration.

There are various degrees of economic integration.⁹⁰

Degree (Types) of Integration

For the attainment of a full-fledged integration, a regional bloc may have to go through four main stages of economic cooperation.⁹¹

- i. A Free Trade Area (FTA), in which members remove trade barriers among themselves, but keep their separate national barriers against trade with the outside world. In such a setting, customs inspectors must still police the borders between members in order to tax or prohibit trade that might otherwise avoid

⁸⁹This was the call by W. E. B Du Bois, Sylvester Williams, Marcus Garvey, and a host of the Diasporian Pan-Africanists. Throughout Nkrumah's life, he called for a Union of African States (OAS), and indeed formed the Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union, naming it the OAS (the nucleus of African unity). Some others (e.g., President Muammar Gadhafi of Libya) are still calling for this kind of political integration of the African Continent.

⁹⁰Indeed some scholars have argued that for Africa, integration must take the 'production approach'. See, for instance, S.K.B. Asante *Regionalism and Africa's Development: Expectations, Reality, and Challenges*, London, Macmillan Press, 1997. But I have argued elsewhere that there cannot be any such thing. If integration is trade-induced and production is an integral part of trade and both are inseparable from the concept of the market, then there is only one approach – the market approach. Trade and production are a function of the market. See Antwi-Danso V, *Regionalism and Economic Integration in Africa: Challenges and Prospects* in *Legon Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 3 No.2, pp135-158

⁹¹Others think that there are six stages: the first stage is a Preferential Trade Area (PTA) and the last one is a Political Union. We note these, but in the strict sense of economic integration the four being described here are the more important. A political union may follow a full economic union. A PTA hardly allows integration to flourish, since no barriers are removed.

some members' higher barriers by entering (or leaving) the area through low-barrier countries. One example of FTA, true to its name, is the European Free Trade Area formed in 1960. Another is the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA), which was formally incepted in 1994.

- ii. A Customs Union, in which members remove all barriers to trade among themselves and adopt a common set of external barriers. By so doing, the need for customs inspection at internal borders is eliminated. The European Economic Community (EEC) from 1957 to 1992 had included a customs union along with some other agreements.
- iii. A Common Market, where members allow full freedom of factor flows (migration of labour or capital) among themselves in addition to having a customs union. It should be noted that, despite its name, the European Common Market (or EEC, then EC or EU) was not a common market up through the 1980s, because it still had substantial barriers to the international movement of labour and capital. The EU became a common market, and more, in reality at the end of 1992.
- iv. Full Economic Union (Community), in which member countries unify all their economic policies, including monetary, fiscal, and welfare. Policies toward trade and factor migration are also harmonised. The EU has approached full unity, though governments keep much of their tax autonomy. Monetary union has been achieved, even though some members (Great Britain for instance) are still outside of the total monetary integration.

The first two types of economic blocs are simply trade blocs (i.e., they have removed all explicit trade barriers but keep their national barriers to the flow of labour and capital. They also keep their national fiscal and monetary autonomy). Trade blocs have proved easier to form than common markets or full unions among sovereign nations.

Table 1 Features of Bloc

Type of Bloc	Free Trade among the members	Common External Tariffs	Free Movement of Factors of Production	Harmonisation of all Economic Policies (e.g. fiscal, Monetary,)
Free Trade Area (FTA)	+	-	-	-
Customs Union	+	+	-	-
Common Market	+	+	+	-
Economic Union	+	+	+	+

The Impetus for Regionalism

There are several reasons why nations may want to form a community. We have already indicated that regionalism and/or regional cooperation is trade-induced and, as such, the main objective in an integrative scheme is the desire to eliminate barriers

to trade. The first impetus therefore, is the attraction of creating an expanded regional market. An expanded Regional Market can

- allow economies of large-scale production;
- foster specialisation;
- encourage learning by doing; and
- help to attract foreign direct investment (FDI)

Secondly, an expanded regional market creates conditions for enhanced economic growth. Thirdly, the need and desire to foster cooperation and create a common market help to enhance and solidify domestic reforms. Most nations on their own might find it difficult to engage in domestic economic reforms, requiring prudence and discipline. Integration makes it possible for governments to adhere to reforms that the supra-national institutions⁹² may have laid down for the attainment of community goals.

Integration also acts as an insulator against the vagaries of globalisation. Globalisation is no respecter of stereotypes. Smaller economies may, therefore, have problems coping with the demands of globalisation. The bigger and more robust an economy, the more it is able to withstand competition and gain market access. It is against this background that integrated economies always stand the chance, not only of creating larger markets, but also of being effective players in the competitive global market place.

In this regard, there is an added dimension that also acts as an impetus for getting involved (to be part of an integrative scheme) – an added higher opportunity cost of remaining 'non-aligned'. Countries do not want to remain uninvolved in any integrative scheme, for fear of 'fighting it all alone'.⁹³

Finally, there are also non-economic objectives. These include managing immigration flows and promoting regional security. The EU has a common immigration policy and a defense policy that allows it to even deploy forces abroad.⁹⁴ The ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), which helped to bring the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone to an end, is also an example of collective security.

The new wave of Regionalism

There has been a new wave of regionalism, especially since the 1980s. This new wave may be explained away first, by the uncertainties surrounding the conclusion

⁹²Since the ultimate goal of an integration scheme is the attainment of a 'community', the creation of supra-national institutions (e.g., a Central Bank, Community Parliament, Clearing House, etc.) is inevitable.

⁹³Canada initially, threatened withdrawal from the NAFTA, if Mexico was admitted. However it backed off when she saw that isolated, it would be difficult to go it alone.

⁹⁴An example is the EU Force in Chad and the Central African Republic.

of the Uruguay Round of Trade Negotiations. It was feared that if the Round was unsuccessful the world would see a wave of protectionist tendencies. The logic, therefore, was to insulate oneself against the vagaries of protectionism through regional integration. Second, the success of the European Economic Community (EEC) (later to be turned into the European Union-EU) project acted as impetus. Various regions saw and appreciated the appealing viability, cohesion, and gradual but systematic transformations that were ongoing within and among the nations forming the then EEC. It was therefore invitingly appealing to want to group together, possibly along similar lines as the EEC.

Within the Third World a specific appeal towards integration, specifically, the formation of free trade areas, held sway. It was easy to assume that forming a free trade area or customs union would give the union a market, large enough to support a large scale producer in each modern manufacturing sector without allowing in manufacturers from the industrialised countries. This appeal was influenced by the infant industry argument. New firms could eventually cut their costs through economies of scale and learning by doing until they could compete internationally, perhaps even without protection.

For all the appeal of this idea, its practice has been littered with failures and the life expectancy of the average Third World trade bloc has been short. The Latin American Free Trade Area (Mexico and all the South American republics) lack binding commitment to free internal trade even at its creation in 1960, and by 1969 it had effectively split into small groups with minimal bilateral agreements. The Central American Common Market, also created in 1960, scored some small victories for a decade, but fell apart in the 1970s. Other short-lived unions with only minimal concessions by their members included a chain of Caribbean unions, the East African Community (Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda) disbanded in 1977, (and now being resurrected), and several other African attempts.

The failures may be attributed to several factors, but one main reason is the fact that while those Third World countries had a genuine desire to come together, each one of them maintained some protectionist policy of import-substituting industrialisation. The inherent inequality of benefits from such a policy made it impossible for integration to take root. This was the case, especially in Latin America and Africa, where nationalist leaders were protectionist and relied on import substitution as a way of rapid industrialisation. If economies of scale were to be reaped, the new industrial gains would inevitably be concentrated into one or a few industrial centres. However, every member wanted to be quickly industrialised and be seen as the group's new industrial leader, and none wanted to remain more agricultural. No formula for gains-sharing could be worked out in such a setting. Even the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), with its broader industrial

base, was unable to reach stable agreements about comparative advantage when this was tried in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Mindful of this experience, most experts became sceptical about the chances for great gains from most developing-country free-trade areas.

II.

Regional Integration in Africa

The case for Africa's integration was made as far back as the days prior to decolonisation. The Manchester (Pan Africanist) Conference of 1945 spelt out in detail, the need for African Unity. The period of decolonisation saw the pan-Africanist demands being strongly echoed. The formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the compromises therein made showed to what extent the African nationalist leaders yearned for one form or another of integration.⁹⁵

The realities of the second decade of independence forced African leaders to think more of integration. It was the decade that saw the emergence of ECOWAS, the East African Community and the SADCC etc. The decade saw the demise of the Breton Woods system of fixed-but-adjustable exchange rate regime; it was immediately followed by the oil price shocks of 1973/74 and 1979. In fact, by 1979 African economies were running at negative 1.9% of GDP growth rate.⁹⁶ It may have to be emphasised here therefore, that regionalism was given a new impetus in the 1980's and 1990's by regional and global realities. Faced with challenges such as declining economies, mounting debts and continued shortfalls in export receipts, African countries increasingly became aware that integrating their economies would be the way forward. Meanwhile, the steady and progressive forward march of the European Community as well as the vicissitudes of the global liberalised system combined to inform the African countries' decision to seek integration.

Challenges of Integration in Africa

Bad governance and the spectre of intra-state wars constitute the greatest drawback to integration in Africa. The continent has produced some of the most grotesquely corrupt and predatory leaders that the world has ever known. It must obviously be stated that the Cold War international system aided the spectre of bad governance in Africa. In such a setting one of the cardinal requirements of integration – prudence in economic governance – was lacking in most parts of

⁹⁵ For a detailed analysis see C. O. C. Amate, *Inside the OAU: Pan-Africanism in Practice*, London, Macmillan Press, 1986

⁹⁶ These were the imperatives that caused the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) to be drafted. It was same imperatives that caused the African Governors of the World Bank to appeal to the President of the World Bank to find a way to get Africa out of the doldrums of stagnation, decay, and decline. And it was this plea that got the Elliot Berg Commission inceptioned. The Commission proposed Structural Adjustment, which became the blue print for Africa's development in the 1980's and beyond.

Africa. To this may be added the problem of instability. In most places in Africa civil/military cycles and, at times, intra-state upheavals, (mostly leading to war and state implosion), have reversed gains made in integration. Wars in Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Rwanda, Burundi, D.R Congo, Sudan, Chad, Liberia, Sierra Leone and La Cote d'Ivoire have seriously affected the integrative projects to which these countries belong.

Still linked to the issue of bad governance and instability is the problem of elite non complementarity. Both Mitrany and Joseph Nye stress the importance of elite socialisation in integration. Most often, some leaders in Africa undermine each other. The Libyan leader, Col. Muamar Gadhafi, is reputed to have sponsored several insurgencies across Africa, notable among them, the wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. President Blaise Campaore of Burkina Faso has been accused of supporting the New Forces of La Cote d'Ivoire; he was similarly accused of undermining Benin during the reign of President Mathew Kerekou. At points in time, Jerry Rawlings of Ghana was not on talking terms with President Eyadema of Togo, Campaore of Burkina Faso, and Houphouet Boigny of the Ivory Coast. Presidents Idris Derby of Chad and Omar Bashir of Sudan are suspicious of each other, trading accusations of rebel support in each other's countries. President Museveni of Uganda has openly accused Khartoum of supporting the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), led by Joseph Kone. It is the suspicions among Presidents Kagame of Rwanda, Museveni of Uganda, Mobutu (and thereafter Kabila) of D.R Congo, and Mugabe of Zimbabwe that nursed the crisis, in which six African nations went to war in 1997-98. In such a setting, talk about integration is a myth.

The biggest roadblock to integration in Africa is the economic dependency status of many African countries. The economic weakness and relative stagnancy of African economies have very negative impact on government policies. This works against the viability and strength of sub-regional economic cooperation groupings in Africa. It is trite knowledge that a growing and active economy creates a more conducive environment for the promotion of economic cooperation and integration. It must be noted that Sub-Saharan Africa entered the 1990s poorer than it was in the 1970s and 1980s. African countries are faced with mounting economic problems: minimal or zero growth rates, low domestic savings and investment, scarcity of foreign exchange, balance-of-payments difficulties, and a heavy debt burden. Periods of economic stagnation are not a favourable time for formulating long-term plans, which promote intra-sub-regional/regional trade. Liberalising national markets and embarking on medium-term and long-term plans that establish multinational projects, sectoral linkages, and to develop programs of sub-regional harmonisation in the macroeconomic field become a more difficult enterprise during periods of economic decline or stagnation. In such circumstances, there is much pressure on governments to give priority to domestic crisis management and take protective measures against other countries, including the regulation of the domestic economy

in sensitive sectors and the imposition of restrictions on imports and the use of foreign exchange.⁹⁷ This kills the rationale for creating bigger markets to facilitate the growth of viable production enterprises.

Intrinsically linked to the problem above is the fact that, the private sector, which is the engine of economic growth, has not been actively involved in the effort to advance integration by the various African States. It is the lack of home-grown entrepreneurial capacity and skills which account for the excessive dependence of African economies on imported products.⁹⁸

Lack, or a low level of intra-African trade, constitutes yet another stumbling block to positive integration in Africa. African countries produce the same things and, therefore, compete with one another in a kind of vertical order (i.e. trading with Europe), rather than horizontally (i.e., among themselves). Hence, no meaningful trade can take place among countries in one bloc. Note that we have already indicated that integration is trade-induced. Further, there is no adequate transport infrastructure to support intra-African trade. Even when tariffs have been reduced and intra-country transport links are open, the costs of transport between countries forming a cooperation bloc tend to be high.⁹⁹

The African Development Report 2003 laments Africa's abysmal performance in this area thus: "African regional arrangements have not succeeded in appreciably expanding intra-African trade, increasing Africa's trade or enhancing the region's overall economic growth.....Inter-regional trade has stagnated at around 10 percent of Africa's total trade"¹⁰⁰. Tables 2 and 3 below give ample testimony to the aforesaid.

**Table 2: Intra - REC Trade (1970 –1999)
(percentage of Total Export)**

	1970	1980	1985	1990	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
AFRICA									
AMU	1.4	0.3	1.0	2.9	3.8	3.4	2.7	3.3	2.5
CEMAC	4.9	1.6	1.9	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.1	2.3	1.6
COMESA	9.1	6.1	4.7	6.6	7.8	8.0	7.9	8.6	7.5
ECOWAS	2.9	10.1	5.2	7.8	9.8	9.4	9.7	11.8	12.2
SADC	8.0	2.0	3.8	4.8	8.7	9.4	10.4	10.2	9.3
UEMOA	6.5	9.6	8.7	12.9	10.0	9.8	11.8	11.6	12.7
OTHERS									
E.U	59.5	60.8	59.2	65.9	62.4	61.4	55.5	57.0	62.6
NAFTA	36.0	33.6	43.9	41.4	46.2	47.6	49.1	51.7	54.6
MERCOSUR	9.4	11.6	5.5	8.9	20.3	22.7	24.8	25.0	20.5
ASEAN	22.9	18.7	19.8	19.8	25.4	25.4	25.0	21.7	22.2

Source: World Bank: World Development Indicators, 2001. p. 333

⁹⁷ In 2006, for instance, Nigeria banned the importation of about 40 products (33 of which affected Ghana), even though Nigeria is signatory to the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Goods, Persons and Services, and Establishment.

⁹⁸ Gradually though all the integrative groupings in Africa are incorporating the private sector. The AU has established the Private Sector Forum which meets ahead of each and every AU Summit. Similarly, the SADC, ECOWAS, and COMESA have Private Sector representation and participation at their fora. Although this is a recent phenomenon, it is a welcome one indeed.

⁹⁹ Under the NEPAD the African Development Bank is tasked to fund quite a substantial number of infrastructural projects. Much has been achieved in this direction.

¹⁰⁰ AfDB, African Development Report 2003: Globalization and Africa's Development, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003, p191

Notice that while intra-EU and intra-NAFTA trade has been growing steadily and ASEAN has shown consistency, few of the African integrative groupings are showing such tendencies (UEMOA and SADC, but only marginally). Although there are prospects of growth in intra-regional growth in 1990s in ECOWAS and UEMOA, these cannot be compared with such growth in other regions like NAFTA and MERCOSUR.

Table 3 African Region's Average Annual Imports
(as a percentage of total imports 1996-2001)

	AMU	CEMAC	COMESA	ECCAS	ECOWAS	Franc Zone	SADC	UEMOA	AFRICA	WLD
AMU	3.07	0.17	0.58	0.17	0.8	0.6	0.27	0.43	4.86	100
CEMAC	0.91	3.43	0.55	3.65	8.37	6.22	1.94	2.79	14.44	100
COMESA	0.62	0.12	3.49	0.22	0.42	0.26	9.77	0.14	13.27	100
ECCAS	0.57	2.31	2.19	2.55	5.92	4.18	7.92	1.87	17.89	100
ECOWAS	0.81	0.27	0.2	0.28	10.19	4.9	1.31	4.63	12.5	100
Franc Zone	1.19	1.59	0.36	1.68	14.81	7.98	1.52	6.39	18.89	100
SADC	0.05	0.13	3.39	0.37	0.9	0.36	0.11	0.23	12.55	100
UEMOA	1.36	0.57	0.19	0.59	18.55	9.05	1.73	8.47	21.35	100
AFRICA	0.03	0.01	0.04	0.01	0.06	0.03	0.1	0.03	0.21	100

Source: Statistics Dept. African Development Bank. Reproduced in *African Development Report 2003*, p192

From the tables above, it is clear that intra-African trade is very insignificant. Unless intra-regional trade is enhanced, the efforts towards integration would not yield the necessary benefits. This may be done through production diversification, the removal of the bottlenecks that strangle the free movement of factors, harmonisation of macro-economic policies within the RECs and the acceleration of intra-African infrastructure and communication development. This would help to integrate national markets into sub-regional markets and lead to increasing intra-regional trade within Africa.

Even where some intra-bloc trade goes on there is usually the reluctance and inability of the members of economic blocs to create the facilities and mechanisms necessary to expedite the movement of goods and services. A case in point is the clearing mechanism on which agreements may have been signed but not followed up. One consequence of this is that it destroys confidence in the clearinghouses. In some cases, clearinghouses have either collapsed or continue with difficulty. The process towards the establishment of sub-regional monetary unions intended to facilitate the removal of such macro-economic disharmonies and provide a stable environment for economic integration to take place unimpeded has been rather slow.¹⁰¹ Meanwhile, procedures governing free movement of goods and services are lengthy and cumbersome and often lead to delays and unnecessary bureaucratic work. To this may be added the exorbitant fees transporters are required to pay in order to cross borders. Further road tolls are required to be paid at customer

¹⁰¹ A clear case in point is the West Africa Monetary Zone (WAMZ), which is supposed to introduce a second monetary zone for English-speaking West Africa with the ECO as the currency by 2003. This date has been postponed a number of times, now settled at 2009

checkpoints and very often customs officials insist on physical checks of goods in transit, despite the existence of valid documents. Another problem is that designated transit corridors do not work satisfactorily because customs administrations totally ignore the transit facilities that are supposed to be accorded to transport.

Another problem is customs duty. One reason for it is the fact that the geography of many sub-regional economic groupings demands that imports into some countries has to traverse the territories of other countries. Often, this leads to conflict and controversy, in which inland countries complain that, they do not receive a fair share of the revenue. This was controversial among the countries of the East African Community, UDEAC in Central Africa, and the ECOWAS in West Africa.

A particular weakness of regional economic arrangements in Africa is that they tend to be based more on linguistic and cultural criteria. In such groupings, divisive elements are strong and their existence frustrates the development of cohesive and viable sub-regional groupings. For example, in West Africa, Ghana, Liberia, and Sierra-Leone (English-speaking countries) are geographically surrounded by UEMOA countries, all of which are French speaking. Gambia is culturally and economically part of Senegal but not a member of the French speaking bloc of the Senegal River Basin because it is English-speaking. Thus the UEMOA/ECOWAS dichotomy has been a real bane in forging the ECOWAS project ahead. This, at times, has led to yet another problem: the duplication of economic blocs essentially created to achieve the same objectives. Take for instance COMESA and SADC; and IGAD and the East African Community, in which many countries maintain dual membership. Bax Nomvete laments thus:

'it is patent that better results would be obtained through a limited number of larger multipurpose institutions, which would contribute to the establishment of a basic equilibrium among all states within the same sub-region, and provide economies of scale for quicker economic transformation.'¹⁰²

Sadly however, the African Union's (AU) rationalisation effort has been ineffective. The African Economic Community (AEC) project

envisaged five viable sub-regional blocs, which would serve as building blocks for the realisation by 2025 of a single African Community. Since its (AEC) inception in 1991, there have mushroomed several sub-regional blocs and the AU sought to rationalise them. Unfortunately, at its Summit in Banjul, The Gambia, in 2006, it only succeeded in adding on to the five to make it eight.

¹⁰² Bax Nomvete 'Regional Integration in Africa: A Path Strewn with Obstacles' in *The Eye on Ethiopia and The Horn of Africa* Vol. 6, No. 39, April-May, 1997

The dis-equalising effect of integration is yet another difficulty. Even though this is a known difficulty in every integrative scheme, it is very well pronounced in Africa. This is due to some factors that arise, in particular, from the tendency of investment to concentrate on the relatively more advanced countries. In fact, the cumulative causation, resulting from this, tends to increase divergence between the relatively more advanced and less advanced economies.

There are also problems of operational and institutional nature, which make intra-African cooperation difficult. These relate to information, banking, language, costs of promotion, prices of research, and poor management of the Secretariats.

III

Ghana and Integration.

Ghana has since independence been at the forefront of the schemes to have one form or another of integration in Africa. Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first President had called for the political union of Africa. He indeed formed the Organisation of African States (OAS), comprising Ghana, Guinea, and Mali. Ghana was instrumental in the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963.¹⁰³ Ghana was also at the forefront in the formative years of the ECOWAS and has played a leading role in getting the ECOWAS agenda always on course. Indeed, the desire to create a second monetary zone in West Africa has been the result of efforts by Ghana and Nigeria. In this regard, Ghana has succeeded in getting the West Africa Monetary Institute (WAMI) established and headquartered in Ghana. The current President of the ECOWAS Commission is a Ghanaian (Dr. Mohammed Ibn Chambas) underscoring the fact that Ghana is very active in West African integration.

It is not just enough to be seen to be spearheading the call for integration. Integration is about building a community of people, creating a market and the generation of the necessary structures for interaction. Integration is about fostering a sense of community, without endangering national integrity. Above all, integration is about the free movement of factors for community development. It is against this background that the involvement of the socio-economic partners in development is essential. These are the ordinary people who have no role (actively) in policy formulation, but who are the tools for the realisation of policy ends.

Making the Ordinary Ghanaian Part of the Integration Process.

One paramount hurdle to African integration has been the lack of full commitment in the sense of the failure to incorporate agreements reached by different integration schemes in national plans. By this, the value of collective agreements to

¹⁰³For details of the role Ghana played towards the formation of the OAU, see C.O.C Amatey, op.cit.

protocols, arrived at to expedite trade and harmonise policies at sub-regional levels is, therefore, played down. Follow-up of decisions taken at the sub-regional meetings is left to the Heads of State, or to a few ministers and civil servants in the ministry dealing with cooperation matters or in the office of the president. The rest of the government and the population of the country are not involved. In fact, they may not even know that there is a treaty establishing the cooperation arrangement.¹⁰⁴ This elitist way of going about integration is one of the greatest drawbacks in Africa's efforts at establishing sub-regional economic communities.

Even though Ghana has strongly been spearheading the integration process in Africa generally and in West Africa particularly, participation in the process seems to be elitist. For the purpose of testing the extent to which the ordinary Ghanaian has been made part of the integration agenda a random sampling was conducted among 'the ordinary Ghanaian' public, which we here define as persons, having little or nothing to do with policy formulation and/or implementation. We chose persons in some trade related organisations;¹⁰⁵ we also chose students (university level); and finally, we talked to very ordinary people – market women and traders. Respondents were asked:

- (i) whether they knew about the existence of ECOWAS, and
- (ii) whether they knew anything about the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS).

All the respondents knew about the existence of ECOWAS. It was clear that the Chairmanship of ECOWAS, at various times, of Ghana's Heads of State (ex-Presidents Jerry Rawlings and John A. Kufuor) as well as the visibility of the current President of the ECOWAS Commission, Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, (incidentally, himself a Ghanaian), have helped to imprint ECOWAS in the minds of respondents. About 92 percent of the first category seemed to know much about the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS) and the Protocol on free Movement of Goods, Persons and Establishment. Interestingly, only 12 percent of students (undergraduates) knew about the ETLS; 100 percent knew about the Protocol on Free Movement etc., but had little knowledge about how it works or whether it was working at all. They also did not know that the Protocol is part of the ETLS. The last category had good knowledge about the Protocol, because some of them have been travelling across borders, but were very sceptical about its existence, since they complained about treatment they receive from border officials outside Ghana. They have little faith in ECOWAS.

In effect, we may conclude that awareness on the issue of economic integration has not been promoted at the grassroots level. This is principally because of the fact of elitism which characterises the formulation and implementation processes of integration schemes. In many countries, the idea of forming or joining an economic cooperation arrangement has not derived from the wishes of the people or in

¹⁰⁴ Bax Nomvete, *op.cit.*

¹⁰⁵ The list, which we consider to have trade relations, is annexed. See Appendix.

response to the felt needs of the leadership, but rather from a feeling of belonging to a 'club' by the leadership. In Ghana, except for the period of the First Republic under Kwame Nkrumah, knowledge of and participation in integration schemes has always been the preserve of the elite.

Generally, integration schemes in Africa have been led not by the private sector (in which case it would be easier to incorporate the socio-economic partners in development – the ordinary people –) but mostly by politicians. Integration is effective and rigorous when the people being integrated in the various economies understand the ramifications. For ordinary Ghanaians to be made part of the integrative process there is first and foremost, the need to mainstream the integration process. To this end, there is the need to

- incorporate into the curricula of schools, issues about integration. Schools are the breeding grounds for the making of future leaders. They are also the repository of enlightenment. If integration schemes are part of the school curricula, the tendency is that the whole of society would be made aware of the building of a community.
- make public, agreements and protocols signed and/or ratified. It is intriguing that governments either fail to incorporate agreements and/or protocols signed into national plans, or deny the general public knowledge about their existence. Public debate about integrative arrangements enhances understanding of efforts at the creation of supra-national institutions, policy harmonisation, and the undertaking of collective community projects. Generally, it creates awareness about an integration scheme.
- create public awareness of the integration process through the media and other fora. The media is a powerful tool for educating the public about government programmes. It is also an effective conduit for disseminating information to the public. A vibrant media exposure of the public to integration schemes and plans would always enhance public awareness.
- give the Ministry responsible for integration the necessary visibility. It is unfortunate that the Ministry for Regional Integration and NEPAD had a very short spell. It was dissolved and placed under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As a wing of the latter ministry, visibility was lost of anything on integration.
- engineer and spearhead intra-sub-regional interactions through channels such as sports, cultural festivals, trade fairs and tourism. Even though such interactions are ongoing, none is done under the aegis or on the platform of integration. Such interactions would need special themes that create awareness for integration.
- give visibility and meaning to the integration process by giving community names to projects, streets, highways, institutions etc. (For example, Trans-West African Highway, ECOWAS Street, Trans-ECOWAS Railway etc.). Continuous use of such names would help to create awareness.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the theory of integration, noting that integration is very vital in enhancing development since it creates larger markets and fosters economies of large scale production. Besides, integration, as was noted, act as a shield against the vagaries of globalisation. The story of integration in Africa, however, has not been a pleasant one. Instability, weak economic bases of African countries, low intra-African trade, proliferation of integrative groupings, elite non-complementarity and several barriers to trade have combined to draw warped contours for integration in Africa.

Ghana has an enviable record, where African integration is concerned. She has always been at the forefront of the efforts towards integration both at the sub-regional and the African (regional) levels. One major observation, however, is that the ordinary citizens are usually not aware of ongoing integrative arrangements. They are hardly part of the process. But integration is about people, about interaction, about trade, and about institutions. That is why leadership must do everything possible to involve the people, through education and other awareness programmes.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: African Integrative Groupings

Name	Year Formed	Member Countries	Remarks
Economic Community of West African States –(ECOWAS)	1975	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo	Mauritania opted out of the ECOWAS to join the AMU. She has, however, since 2007, decided to rejoin ECOWAS
Arab Maghreb Union (AMU)	1989	Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia	Started in 1964 as a Union of Maghreb Countries, the AMU has been joined by Mauritania. It is yet to have formal links with the AEC
East African Community (EAC)		Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda. (Rwanda, Burundi)	Started in 1967 and lasted until 1977. Reorganised as the East African Cooperation (EAC) in 1993 and then re-launched as the East African Community in 1999 (EAC). Rwanda and Burundi have joined the EAC (2006)
South African Development Community (SADC)	1989	Angola, Botswana, DRC, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe.	Formed from the SADCC. The name SADC was adopted in 1992 in Windhoek. The SADC Treaty was amended in 2001.

Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)	1993	Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, DRC, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe	Successor to the Preferential Trade Area (PTA), of Eastern and Southern Africa, which was established in 1981.
Mano River Union (MRU)	1973	Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone	The area became the hotbed of war and carnage, thus effectively paralysing the Union.
Communaute Economique et Monetaire de l'Afrique Central (CEMAC)	1983	A customs union that includes Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, and DRC.	The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) now comprises the present members of the Central African Customs and Economic Union (UDEAC) and those of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Region
Economic and Monetary Union of West Africa (UEMOA)	1992	A prospective customs union including Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo.	French – sponsored
CEN-SAD		Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Rep., Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, The Gambia, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Libya, Tunisia, Togo, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan.	Ghana joined the CEN-SAD in 2006
IGAD	1986	Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda.	Started as the Inter-governmental Authority on Drought and desertification, (IGADD) and now called the Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD)

Appendix 2: Ghana: Trade and Investment Related Organizations

1. Ministry of Trade and Industry, Private Sector Development, and Presidential Special Initiatives
2. Ghana Investment Promotion Council
3. Ghana Free Zones Board
4. Divestiture Implementation Committee
5. Ghana Export Promotion Council
6. Ghana Shippers Council
7. Ghana Customs, Excise, and Preventive Service
8. Registrar Generals Department
9. Ghana Yam Producers and Exporters Association
10. Association of Ghana Industries
11. Ministry of Tourism
12. Ghana Tourist Board
13. Ghana Tourist Development Company
14. Internal Revenue Service
15. Ghana Chamber of Mines
16. Timber Export Development Board
17. Precious Minerals Marketing Corporation
18. Horticulturalists Association of Ghana
19. Ghana National Chamber of Commerce
20. Federation of Associations of Ghanaian Exporters
21. Private Enterprises Foundation
22. Pawpaw Exporters Association
23. Ghana Rubber Estate Ltd
24. Ghana Cocoa Board
25. Ghana National Petroleum Corporation
26. Port of Tema
27. Port of Takoradi
28. Kotoka International Airport
29. Ministry of Foreign Affairs
30. Ghana Immigration Service

CHAPTER FIVE: THE ROLE OF YOUTH ORGANISATIONS IN ACCELERATING THE PACE OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN WEST AFRICA: THE CASE OF GHANA

Philip Attuquayefio*

ABSTRACT

Article 61 (1) of the 1993 Treaty, affirms the undertaking of member states of the ECOWAS to cooperate with a view to mobilising the various sections of the population and ensuring their effective integration and involvement in the social development of the region. In ensuring the above, the youth or youth organisations and their actual or potential role they play or can play in promoting and improving the process of regional integration is brought to the fore. Thus, Article 61 (2c) of the 1993 Treaty for instance, identifies the promotion of women and youth organisations and professional associations as a means of ensuring mass involvement in the activities of the Community. The acknowledgment of youth organisations stem from the recognition of the youth as a key dynamic, not just in the process of seeking solutions to developmental challenges countrywide, but in the process of developing regional strategies because decisions made now will have an impact on future leaders. Thus, the extent to which the youth is involved in efforts at sub-regional integration is expected to influence the sustainability of sub-regional integration programmes. Using Ghana as a case study, this paper examines the role of the youth and youth organisations in accelerating the pace of integration in West Africa. It reveals that the youth and youth organisations in Ghana currently play a minimal role insofar as the process of West African integration is concerned. It notes that while a primary reason for the negligible role appears to be the general apathy of the youth on issues of West African integration, to a large extent, the youth have also not been sufficiently integrated into the mainstream of policymaking. The chapter concludes by suggesting some strategies by which the youth and youth organisations can accelerate the process of West African .

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Introduction

Regional integration can be explained as a process by which countries collectively situated within a particular geographical area and/or confronted by common challenges concur to initiate and sustain measures that would harmonise their laws and procedures in various areas for their common benefit. In Africa, regional integration dates back to 1910 with the formation of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU). Since then, Africa has witnessed the emergence and in some cases the demise of a plethora of regional integrative schemes.¹⁰⁶ In spite of the failures and even the collapse of some of these regional integrative schemes, various sub-regions in Africa continue to experiment with regional integration as a route to sub-regional growth and economic development. The reasons oft cited, for the continued interests in regional integration have been numerous. It has been suggested for instance, that the dynamics of globalisation have brought in their wake, extreme challenges particularly in an area such as international trade. In this regard, it has been surmised that, by promoting regional integration, West African states, will be able to present themselves as a united and credible body in dealing with the international community. By this, it is believed that West African countries may fare better as they face some of the challenges of globalisation en bloc. Further, the observable successes being chalked by the European Union as well as the birth of the AU, which signified a new awakening for regionalism in Africa as a whole, have all been identified as factors accounting for the continued interest in regional integration in Africa.

In West Africa, regional integration dates back to the pre-independence era during which a number of currency agreements evolved between the countries in the region and the colonial masters.¹⁰⁷ Thus, Ghana, The Gambia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, representing Anglophone countries in West Africa operated under the West African Currency Board established in 1912 as the sole institution responsible for the issue and management of currency in the four countries.¹⁰⁸ The second decade of independence however witnessed an upsurge in the establishment of regional integration schemes, precisely with the formation of the French Speaking West African Economic Community or Communauté Economique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (CEAO) in 1972,¹⁰⁹ this was followed in 1975 by the ECOWAS and in 1976 the Mano River Union.¹¹⁰

Stirred into action by the then Heads of State of Nigeria and Togo and with an initial membership of sixteen states, ECOWAS was conceived with the aim of promoting

¹⁰⁶ The East African Community collapsed in 1977, barely ten years after it was formed.

¹⁰⁷ Wampah, H.A.K. "A Critical Appraisal of Economic Integration Process in the West African Sub Region" in West African Journal of Monetary and Economic Integration Volume 1 Number 1 Page 2.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid

¹⁰⁹ This group metamorphosed into the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) or UEMOA

¹¹⁰ West African Monetary Institute, Economic and Monetary Integration in West Africa (Accra: WAMI, 2004)p.1

co-operation and development in all fields of economic activity particularly in the fields of industry, transport, telecommunications, energy, agriculture, natural resources, commerce, monetary and financial questions and in social and cultural matters for the purpose of raising the standard of living of its peoples, of increasing and maintaining economic stability, of fostering closer relations among its members and of contributing to the progress and development of the African continent.¹¹¹

The mandate given to ECOWAS under the 1975 Treaty was; to eliminate customs duties and other charges of equivalent effect in respect of the importation and exportation of goods between member states; the abolition of quantitative and administrative restrictions on trade among member states; the establishment of a common external tariff and a common commercial policy towards third countries; the removal of obstacles to the free movement of persons, services and capital; the harmonisation of agricultural policies and the promotion of common projects notably in the fields of marketing, research and agro-industrial enterprises; the development of joint transport, communication, energy and other infrastructural facilities as well as the evolution of a common policy in these fields and such other activities calculated to further the aims of the Community as the member states may from time to time undertake in common.¹¹²

Subsequent attempts at achieving the objectives under the 1975 Treaty exposed some shortcomings, attributable to, among other things, the change in economic development philosophy of the countries from state domination of economic activity to increased private sector performance. This called for the participation of the private sector and civil society in the integration process. Consequently, the 1975 Treaty was revised in 1993 to, among other things, allow for the increased understanding of the process and participation by identifiable groups such as civil society organisations. Article 3 (2)(l) on the objectives of the Revised Treaty of ECOWAS therefore calls for

“the encouragement and strengthening of relations and the promotion of the flow of information particularly among rural populations, women and youth organisations and socio-professional organisations such as associations of the media, business men and women, workers and trade unions.”¹¹³

Over the years since its establishment, ECOWAS has chalked some significant successes in the area of conflict management within the sub-region. This notwithstanding, quite minimal achievements have been chalked vis a vis the objectives set for the organisation. Such minimal achievements can be attributed to a number of challenges not the least of which has been the lack of effective political

¹¹¹Article 2(1) of the 1975 Treaty of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

¹¹²Article 2(2) of the 1975 Treaty of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

¹¹³Article 3 (2)(l) Revised Treaty of ECOWAS 1993 p. 6

will to establish efficient and dynamic supra –national institutions to monitor the implementation of agreed protocols. This lack of political will apparently stems from competing domestic considerations and/or overlapping membership of other regional organisations. Thus, West African countries have not necessarily looked beyond their national interest to the achievement of sub-regional goals but have rather engaged in a cost-benefit analysis ending with the convenient selection of the course that brought immediate benefits to the country in question.

Beyond the lack of political will, a cursory glance of the nature of policymaking and public administration in most West African countries as well as informal interviews of citizens of countries within West Africa strongly suggests that the presence of an elitist canker among the major policy-makers has also acted against the success of regional integration in West Africa. Such an elitist attitude arguably emanates from the top-down approach of policy making at the sub-regional level and the general ignorance/passiveness of the populace on issues of regional integration in West Africa. Consequently, stakeholders at the grassroots, such as border officials who are expected to implement sub-regional protocols as well as cross-border traders who are expected to take advantage of sub-regional protocols have, to a very large extent, not demonstrated a sense of ownership of sub-regional protocols and programmes. Corrupt practices by some border officials who refuse to respect the provisions of the ECOWAS protocols have for instance been cited as one of the main challenges frustrating the implementation of decisions on free movement of persons and goods. The challenges posed by such border officials have been further compounded by the general lack of monitoring mechanisms to tackle complaints of ill treatment and denial of privileges under the protocols.¹¹⁴ The overall result is the noticeable gap between decisions made at the sub-regional level and the extent of their implementation.

Closely related to the above, there has been very little private sector and civil society participation in the integration process. This has been most pronounced at the level of decision-making where the institutional structure demands that all decisions are taken at the level of the Heads of State or Government or the Council of Ministers. The result is that a number of key stakeholders are cut off from the policy making process. Thus, for instance, the private sector and other interest groups often show signs of partial or complete lack of awareness of key provisions of the ECOWAS Treaty as well as specific protocols relating to the strengthening of regional integration in West Africa. While there has been an improvement over the last two to three years, the situation is still quite disheartening. Consequently, a lot of advocacy has been devoted to the need for efforts at regional integration to be a bit more people centred, to adequately involve all stakeholders as well as to ensure the development and sustenance of a keen sense of ownership among all.

¹¹⁴West African Monetary Institute Op. Cit. p. 76

The Relevance of the Youth in West African Integration: A Brief Assessment

The concept of the “Youth” generally refers to the time of life between childhood and maturity. It is also used to describe young people collectively. Statistically, there are no generalised definitions for the ‘youth’. Various organisations and countries however, have minimum and maximum age limits to identify the youth. The United Nations General Assembly for instance defines the ‘youth’ as persons falling between the ages of 15 and 24 years. The African Youth Charter on the other hand describes the ‘youth’ as those persons falling within the age bracket of 15 and 35 years. In Ghana, the National Youth Policy defines the ‘youth’ as persons who fall within the age bracket of 15 and 35 years. Thus used in this chapter, “youth” refers to persons falling within the bracket of 12 to 35 years. Youth organisations thus refer to organisations or groups, whatever their nature or dealings are, made up of people within the age bracket of 12 to 35 years.

As noted in the previous section, some of the challenges that have perennially acted against the achievement of the objectives of ECOWAS are attributable to elitism at the policy making level as well as the inability of the ECOWAS to galvanise all stakeholders to desire ownership of the integration process. Thus, the need to focus West African integration on the people of West Africa has been the subject of recent deliberations on how best to move regional integration forward. At a conference on regional integration in West Africa held in Addis Ababa in 2002 for instance, it was reaffirmed *inter alia* that; integration should aim to benefit non-state actors and average Africans across the continent and not just governments and elites. It was further reaffirmed that the process of integration must be inclusive and decision makers must involve ordinary people in the development of integration policies.¹¹⁵

While the call for people-centeredness appears to be of recent origins, the essence of people centeredness to West African integration does not seem to have been lost on the framers of the ECOWAS Treaty. Recommendation A/REC.1/5/83, for instance, advocates the mobilisation of the various sections of the population in the integration process.

Similarly, Article 61 (1) of the 1993 Treaty affirms the undertaking of member states of the ECOWAS to cooperate with a view to mobilising, the various sections of the population and ensuring their effective integration and involvement in the social development of the region.

In ensuring the above, the youth or youth organisations and their actual or potential role they play or can play in promoting and improving the process of regional

¹¹⁵ www.trustafrica.org/documents/report2_integration.pdf Conference was held from the 25 to 28 of November 2002

integration particularly as regards the spread of information is brought to the fore. Thus, Article 61 (2c) of the 1993 Treaty identifies the promotion of women's, youth organisations, and professional associations as a means of ensuring mass involvement in the activities of the Community. Similarly, Article 9 of Decision A/Dec.7/12/00 on Adopting A New ECOWAS Information And Communication Policy¹¹⁶ calls for the active involvement of civil society and personalities from various sectors (labour unions, universities, sports organisations, religious bodies, youth, women movements) in the integration process. The decision further calls on Member States to encourage student exchange programmes in order to inculcate the Community spirit among youths and schoolchildren.

The emphasis on the youth stems from the recognition of the youth as a key dynamic, not just in the process of seeking solution to developmental challenges countrywide but in the process of developing regional strategies because decisions made now will have an impact on future leaders. Thus, the extent to which the youth will be involved in the efforts at regional integration will, to a large extent, determine the sustainability of regional integration programmes. It is therefore essential that the participation of the youth in regional integration is encouraged. Youth participation is viewed as the ability of young people to be meaningfully involved in and influence processes, decisions and activities that affect their lives; to make choices and informed decisions and take action based on those decisions; and to accept responsibility for the consequences.

The importance of youth participation in the achievement of the objectives of ECOWAS was emphasised by Adrienne DIOP, Commissioner for Human Development and Gender in a speech delivered on behalf of the President of the ECOWAS Commission, at the meeting of Ministers in Charge of Youth and Sports of ECOWAS Member States held in Cotonou on 25 July 2008. She observed thus:

Youth in our region constitute the major part of our Community's population. They build high hopes on the programmes and projects that we implement to prepare them for their role as adults. The youth of our region are the future generation of workers, entrepreneurs, family heads and community or national leaders. We should prepare them to assume the responsibilities that would be theirs in an increasingly competitive world. This means that our responsibility at the Commission will be to develop realistic regional policies while Member States' responsibility will be their effective implementation.

This notwithstanding, it can be observed from a cursory glance, that the situation of the youth and youth organisations in West Africa has been one of marginalisation

¹¹⁶Article 9 titled "Role of Youth, Women and Civil Society"

from decision-making in key social and economic institutions. Such conscious or unconscious marginalisation of the youth has as expected, spawned youth apathy and alienation and in most cases simultaneously given rise to substitute youth mores which provide self-esteem, social standing and income, but are often associated with negative consequences such as illiteracy, drugs and violence.

The extent to which youth organisations contribute to the processes of regional integration may be viewed within the prism of formal and informal structures. The formal structures refer to carefully laid out policies and platforms within which the youth or youth organisations are specifically expected to act or play roles and the specific roles required even as they are laid out in the structures. The informal, however, relates to less official or colloquial avenues and platforms generated sometimes by youth organisations through sports and other means and by which their activities affect positively or negatively, the process of regional integration.

As regards the formal sphere, within the framework of ECOWAS, there is a Department responsible for Youth and Sports, situated within the Office of the Commissioner for Human Development and Gender. From the 10 to 16 August of 2003, the Department organised a forum dubbed "First ECOWAS Youth Forum" in Abuja, Nigeria. A critical observation of the date of the forum as well as its title indicates that since the setting up of the sub-regional body, virtually nothing has been done, from a formal perspective, to create a platform for the youth to make inputs into the integration process. The forum itself was aimed at providing youth drawn from West Africa as well as other Regional Economic Communities with "an opportunity to dialogue, interact, share experiences and lessons that would develop their capacities as they yearn to contribute effectively to the economic, social and cultural integration of the region".¹¹⁷ The event created a platform observers widely considered as vital in aiding the youth to assert their role as major stakeholders in the development of the sub-region in particular and the continent as a whole. Consequently, the communiqué adopted at the end of the forum, which basically recommended that the youth forum be made an annual event, has served as a justification for the activities of the Department for Youth and Sports.

The above recommendations reflect similar recommendations arrived at after the Cotonou meeting of Ministers in Charge of Youth and Sports of ECOWAS Member States, held in 2008. . The recommendations were inter alia; the organisation of the ECOWAS Games in the months of July/August 2009 in Benin, the setting up of an ad hoc Committee to reflect on the ideal relationships between States and national and international sports federations, the profitable returns on national sports infrastructure and a fiscal incentive policy for the private sector to promote youth employment and the financing of sports.

¹¹⁷http://www.comm.ecowas.int/dept/stand.php?id=e_e2_brief&lang=en

Other recommendations reached at the end of the above meeting included the increase of the level of national budgets earmarked for youth and sports while envisaging new possibilities of funding in line with the specificities of each State, the creation of a Community Fund within the ECOWAS to sustain efforts towards youth employment, the review of partnership agreements and conventions to cover the youth and sports sectors, the strengthening of mechanisms aimed at promoting professional exchange in favour of youth within the framework of the volunteers programme and their integration and the identification of Sports as a development tool. Subsequently, the Department for Youth and Sports has sought to implement these recommendations. However, the extent of implementation is not conspicuous enough. Indeed, it is not clear whether the implementation has gone beyond the declaratory or political rhetoric stage, identified with a number of sub-regional programmes.

Yet another formal means of youth development within the framework of ECOWAS is the institutionalisation of the Youth and Sports Development Centre by the Twenty-eighth session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) held in Accra on 19th January 2005.¹¹⁸

The ECOWAS Youth and Sports Development Centre is a specialised institution of the Economic Community of West African States charged with the responsibility for Youth and Sports Development in the West-African sub-region. The Centre is to initiate, develop, coordinate, monitor and implement Programmes concerning youth and sports development within the Community.¹¹⁹ The objectives of the Centre are inter alia; to encourage young's people's initiative, enterprise and creativity so that they may take an active role in the ECOWAS community; to address current and emerging youth problems in the sub-region; to promote youth social-professional and economic integration and to promote, initiate and encourage sporting activities in the community.¹²⁰

Further, on the formal means, there is an ECOWAS Youth Centre currently based in Burkina Faso mandated to mobilise the youth for regional integration within the West African Region. To a very large extent, the youth centre exists merely on paper as its activities have been far from conspicuous. Thus a casual interview of randomly chosen young people in Ghana, suggested the lack of knowledge about the existence of the Centre as well as its objectives. Further, a desktop search of the Youth Centre revealed very little by way of information put in the public domain. Thus, while the establishment of the youth centre could be listed as one of the

¹¹⁸Decision (A/DEC/13/01/05) transformed the Conference of Ministers of Youth and Sports to the ECOWAS Youth and Sports Development Centre.

¹¹⁹www.ecowas.int

¹²⁰Ibid.

formal means for encouraging the input of the youth in regional integration in West Africa, its practicality is limited.

Within the formal sphere, there appears to be a minimal level of influence or role played by the youth in promoting regional integration in West Africa. The reasons may not be difficult to find. The activities of the Youth Department itself can best be described as insipid. Examining the ECOWAS official website for instance, the Department lists as part of its 2008 activities, the "Publication and wide dissemination of the Policy and Strategic Plan of Action (2 documents) in French and English and the implementation of the various recommendations from the Youth Forum, meetings of the ECOWAS National Directors of Youth and Conference of Ministers of Youth and Sports. The extent of implementation is however not specified.

Apart from this, a perusal of the 1993 Treaty of ECOWAS indicates a conspicuous silence on the specific role open to the youth in accelerating the process of regional integration in West Africa. This is in spite of the fact that some mechanisms at the national level provide room for the youth and youth organisations to play a role irrespective of how unpronounced it may be as regards regional integration in West Africa.

The Youth in Ghana and West African Integration: An Assessment

The youth in Ghana generally come under the National Youth Council (NYC), which is the umbrella organisation set up by the state to manage and promote affairs concerning the youth. In conducting its activities, the National Youth Council is guided by the National Youth Policy 1999. Within the framework of the National Youth Policy, "Youth" is defined as people within the age bracket of 15 to 35 years.¹²¹ According to the most recent national population census of the Republic of Ghana, conducted in 2000, the youth constitute about 33 percent of the entire population census of the Republic of Ghana.¹²² Operating with this age bracket, a plethora of youth organisations may be identified in Ghana. For the purposes of this work however, a few of them would be highlighted.

The first category of youth organisations in Ghana may be identified as student based organisations such as the National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS), the Ghana National Union of Polytechnic Students (GNUPS) and the student Representative Councils (SRCs) of the various secondary and tertiary institutions throughout the country. Such secondary institutions with SRCs include Achimota School, Presbyterian Boys Secondary School, Wesley Girls High School, Accra

¹²¹National Youth Policy 1999

¹²²Ghana 2000 Population and Census, Summary Report, p.18.

Academy and Aburi Girls Secondary School among others. Of the tertiary institutions with SRCs, mention can be made of the University of Ghana, Legon, the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), The University of Cape Coast (UCC), University of Education, Winneba, the University for Development Studies (UDS) in Tamale, the Central University College in Accra and the Institute of Professional Studies (IPS). Others are the various polytechnics in almost all the regional capitals such as the Koforidua Polytechnic, the Accra Polytechnic, the Cape Coast Polytechnic and the Tamale Polytechnic. The NUGS, GNUPS and the various SRCs generally aim to promote the interest of their student membership mainly within their respective campuses. In the case of the NUGS however, it has on occasions engaged itself in advocacy on some issues concerning national development. Such advocacy is often on the basis of its status as the umbrella organisation of students nationwide.

Related to the above are those youth organisations formed along the lines of specific academic disciplines. These are found mainly on campuses of the public universities. Such organisations include the Political Science Students Association (POSSA), Sociology Students Association, University of Ghana Association of Psychology Students, and Legon Economic Students Society among others. This category of organisations mainly aims to advance the study of their respective disciplines.

Apart from the student based organisations, there are other youth organisations formed along the lines of national political parties. These include organisations such as the Tertiary Education Institutions Network (TEIN) of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), the tertiary Education Confederacy (TESCON) of the New Patriotic Party and the Tertiary Education Charter (TESCHART) of the Convention People's Party (CPP). These organisations aim at attracting young people into a political cause as well as to canvass for political support.

A third category of youth organisations in Ghana may be identified as ethnic/tribal or region-based organisations such as the Asante Students Union (ASU), Ga-Adangbe Students Union (GASU), the Wenchi Youth Organisation and The Northern Students Union (NSU). This category of youth organisations generally aims at advancing the cause of a particular region or ethnic/tribal group. A good number of such organisations are situated within the campuses of public universities in Ghana.

Another category of youth organisations may be identified as the faith/religion-based organisations which generally seek to advance the practice of their respective faith among the youth. Often, such organisations also seek to address issues relating to the general advancement of their membership within the context of national development. Thus, issues such as education and morality may come under their scope of activities. Included in this category are Young Peoples Guild (YPG) of the

various Presbyterian Churches of Ghana, The Ghana Baptist Students Union, The Assemblies of God Campus Ministries, the Catholic Youth Organisations and the Ghana Muslim Academy.

Finally yet importantly, is that category of youth organisations formed for various reasons often linked to some national or international objectives. Often the specific cause(s) which the organisations seek to advance is/are reflected within the names of these organisations. Examples of such organisations are the Ghana Liberal Students Association (GHALSA), the Society for National Affairs, the Political Advocacy group and the Forum on African Affairs.

The role played by the above youth organisations in accelerating the pace of sub-regional integration can be explained through the formal and informal prisms. Till date, the National Youth Policy is the only document that formalises the role or potential role of the youth and youth organisations in the West African integration process.

The National Youth Policy directly or indirectly aims at making the youth in Ghana an integral part of Ghana's quest at championing the integration process in West Africa. Directly, the most important aspect of the 1999 Youth Policy is the empowerment given to the National Youth Council as a body for promoting international friendship and co-operation to enable the youth to understand and appreciate global issues, especially those that affect the African Continent. Cross-cultural exchange programmes and networking among the youth of the various political, socio-cultural, economic and religious backgrounds to enhance national integration and international understanding¹²³ are some of the means by which these aims can be achieved.

Indirectly, other policies in the 1999 Youth Policy also make the youth a party to Ghana's quest at championing the integration process in West Africa. These include, policies aimed at educating and creating employment opportunities for the youth, a healthy and drug free youth, a peaceful and united country and the encouragement of competitions among the youth. It is suggested that to the extent that such policies directed at areas as mentioned above will go a long way to accelerate the development of the youth in general and will thus generate a corps of trustworthy and dependable youth capable of championing the process of regional integration in West Africa, such policies can be seen as empowering the youth to contribute to regional integration in West Africa.

¹²³ibid.

In 2001, the Government of Ghana set up a nine member Youth Empowerment Committee under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Minister for Youth and Sports, Joe Aggrey.¹²⁴ The Committee recommended among other things, the review of the 1999 Youth Policy. Following the review, the draft policies bear indication of an even more pronounced role for youth and youth organisations in the regional integration process. It does this by aiming to strengthen networking and partnership among the youth organisations internally and externally. It further aims at promoting youth exchange programs on best practices in youth development as well as the extension of sponsorship to youth organisations to aid them participate in international conferences, workshops and educational/cultural exchange programs none the least of which would be those relating to regional integration in West Africa.

Notwithstanding the contribution of the National Youth Policy in stating the role of the youth and youth organisations in accelerating integration in West Africa, it is clear from the onset, that such contribution is limited and consign, insofar as sub-regional integration is concerned, to a hypothetical level.

Examining the youth organisations identified above, it became clear that the contribution of the youth organisations to sub-regional integration is insignificant. It was realised for instance that a significant number of these youth organisations consign themselves to their rather tapered objectives. It further came to light that knowledge about sub-regional integration among an overwhelming number of youth organisations does not go beyond a mere appreciation of ECOWAS as a sub-regional organisation. Thus, a good number of the youth organisations identified do not appreciate sub-regional integration as a development strategy.

Related to the above, there was a general lack of interest in issues of sub-regional integration. Thus, of all the youth organisations identified, only the Debating Society of the University of Ibadan organised a debate with their colleagues from the University of Ghana on the relevance of the transformation of the ECOWAS Secretariat into a Commission.

Related to the above is the realisation that youth organisations generally lack information on processes of sub-regional integration. These include decisions and protocols of ECOWAS. The situation is even worse towards the lower end of the age bracket and to youth organisations within the secondary schools. Naturally, with the lack of information very little can be done by way of contributing to the acceleration of the process of sub-regional integration.

¹²⁴www.modernghana.com/news/14965/1/veep-inagurates-youth-empowerment-committee.html 23 June 2001

On the basis of the above, it appears that currently, the only avenue through which the youth contribute to accelerating the process of sub-regional integration is through inter university interactions such as the West Africa University Games (WAUG). While the present situation may be described as appalling, it is worth noting that in spite of appearances to the contrary, in reality there is very limited interaction vis a vis West African Integration between the National Youth Council, the ECOWAS Youth Department and youth organisations in Ghana. This lack of interaction is worsened by the obvious lack of initiative among youth organisations, a situation that is also worsened by the general lack of information about issues relating to sub-regional integration among youth organisations in Ghana.

The Way Forward

Ghana has been in the forefront of regional integration since time immemorial. Asante suggests that owing to the link between sub-regional integration and the Pan-Africanist activities of people like J.E Casely-Hayford and Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana has historically been at the front line of West African integration.¹²⁵ Currently, Ghana's sub-regional policy within her general foreign policy is generally aimed at promoting good neighbourliness between Ghana and her neighbours, as well as facilitating the implementation of all ECOWAS protocols. This is in line with Article 40 (d) (iv) of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana.

Commendable as this is, it has been established that youth organisations within Ghana, contribute very little of their efforts if any at all, to the acceleration of the pace of regional integration in West Africa. This must be appreciated within the context of the recognition of the youth as future leaders and a driving force of society. It was realised for instance, that the concept of regional integration as a development strategy was generally lost on the youth or youth organisations. This calls for the education of representatives of these youth organisations on benefits of regional integration to national development and thus invariably youth development. This may be done through symposia or fora particularly on the campuses of educational institutions. An alternative strategy may be Peer Education. With this, a core group of youth leaders or activists can be identified and trained with the aim of exposing such leaders to the benefits of sub-regional integration. Such leaders can then be encouraged to 'spread the news' with the aim of encouraging more of the youth to appreciate the essence of sub-regional integration. These tasks may be championed by the relevant government ministry in charge of the youth, the National Youth Council or indeed local or international Non-governmental organisations.

¹²⁵Asante S.K.B Ghana and The Promotion of Pan-Africanism and Regionalism (Accra: Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2007) p.65

Beyond advocacy, youth organisations in Ghana through fora, workshops and seminars can connect with other youth organisations within West Africa to discuss issues relating to sub-regional integration. An example is the West African Youth Network (WAYN), which was created in March 2001, in direct response to the rise in violent activities and the continuous marginalisation and exploitation of young people in West Africa. Such platforms will play a crucial role to help youth organisations in Ghana to network across borders, share information about national and regional development, mobilise people to support integration, and develop common platform for action and advocacy strategy.

Lack of information on details and the status of West African integration can be addressed from an information management perspective. For example, most sub-regional and regional organisations and secretariats have fixed calendars and schedules. Without access to such calendars and time frames youth organisations in Ghana cannot convene before relevant integration events in order to prepare themselves to contribute meaningfully to the issue on board neither can they be informed about decisions made at sub-regional meetings because of the very little information put in the public domain (especially in the print media) to educate Ghanaians about decisions reached at ECOWAS meetings. There is therefore the need for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Co-operation in collaboration with other stakeholders such as the National Youth Council to disseminate agenda and recommendation of sub-regional meetings in a format that makes interesting reading without compromising technical issues. This can be pursued within the framework on current debate on the need to widen the space for foreign policy making and implementation.

Added to this is the need to involve the youth in the drafting of policies on regional integration. Currently, in Ghana, youth organisations are to a very large extent left out in the process of determining policies and programmes for regional integration within the West African sub-region. This is not just detrimental to efforts at regional integration in West Africa but also works against the need to integrate the youth into the mainstream of public policy-making as a way of developing or mentoring them.

In addition, youth organisations especially those in the universities must be effectively encouraged to research in various aspects of sub-regional integration. Such research should be more than mere collection of information; it should be geared towards improving the lives of people and meeting the challenges of regional integration. The research findings and results have to be simplified, translated into understandable languages, and disseminated across borders through journals and creation of websites. Findings must also be effectively communicated to policy makers and efforts made to ensure that recommendations are implemented.

The youth can also strengthen their role in accelerating sub-regional integration in West Africa by exploring and taking advantage of employment opportunities within the sub-region. Currently, due to the advancement of technology occasioned by the process of globalisation, a significant number of jobs within the sub region are advertised in media that are easily accessible to all. It is suggested that by taking advantage of some of these opportunities, the youth can accelerate the pace of regional integration within the West African sub-region. In doing this, youth organisations can play the role of effective facilitators by organising employment symposia to introduce their respective constituents to such opportunities.

Yet another platform by which the youth can facilitate the process of integration within the West African sub-region is through trade. Currently intra West African trade can be considered as being on the decline, registering about 11.5 percent of imports and 12.6 percent of exports ¹²⁶ of the total international trade of the entire West African Sub region. A good number of the partakers of that trade fall within the active age bracket, which includes the youth bracket of between 18-35 years. Given the important role of intra regional trade, interstate co-operation and indeed integration, it is surmised that by improving on cross border trade within the sub region, the youth can hasten the speed of regional integration within the sub region.

Beyond trade, another area where the youth can effectively contribute to accelerating the pace of West African integration is through educational exchanges. Events such as the West African University Games (WAUG) and the University of Ghana / University of Ibadan bilateral games which are basically inter-university interactions but which create considerable platforms for the youth to interact must be encouraged. Similar partnerships must be engendered between educational institutions in Ghana and others in West African countries. Events such as debates can be organised even at the level of secondary institutions to strengthen co-operation among the youth in West Africa. Further, youth organisations based on regional lines such as the Ashanti Youth Students Union can explore the platform created by the concept of sister city relations to engage likeminded youth organisation in other west African countries. Through such arrangements, youth organisations can accelerate the exchange of ideas necessary for regional integration.

Youth organisations in Ghana can also use entertainment as a platform for accelerating Regional integration in West Africa. Currently, music genres are transcending boundaries with the youth playing a leading role in this industry. A recent trend in the Ghana music and movie industry is joint productions between

¹²⁶ibid. p. 73

Ghanaian musicians and actors and colleagues from other West African countries particularly Nigeria and Togo.¹²⁷ It is widely reported that the Nigerian Movie industry exports about one thousand films to West Africa every year. A significant number of such exports end up in Ghana. Considering the key role the youth play in these ventures, it is essential for such arrangements to be encouraged. In 2008 for instance, a delegation from the Republic of Togo were in Accra to obtain first hand information on the planning and Execution of “Ghana's Most Beautiful” a competitive show organised by Tv3, a private media house, and aimed at unearthing beauty with the knowledge of culture of the people. Considering the age spread of the contestants and the significantly youthful viewership, such programmes can be considered as a youth programme. Thus, such visits can lead to the development of similar youth programmes across the sub-region, a process that can spill over to other areas of the entertainment industry and others. This can eventually contribute to the acceleration of regional integration.

Beyond the above, the contribution of the youth and youth organisations to accelerating the pace of West African integration will be enhanced with the effective implementation of some community decisions and protocols. While this may be a case of “the egg or chick – which comes first”, the fact still remains that some difficulties in implementing community decisions act against activities that would have deepened the participation of the youth in sub-regional integration. An example is the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Goods and Persons. Its existence notwithstanding, almost all states continue to maintain a number of checkpoints along the international roads. While it is important to guard against potential abuse of the Protocol by criminals, a good number of officials at these checkpoints engage in acts of extortion and administrative harassment¹²⁸ and thus frustrate users of such roads. Such practices could dissuade not just traders but ordinary citizens including the youth and youth organisations who may have wished to take advantage of the freedom of movement to learn about other countries and people within the sub-region. Thus, by facilitating the implementation of sub-regional decisions, Government will be laying the foundation, critical for the acceleration of regional integration by all stakeholders, including the youth.

Another militating factor relates to the issue of funding. In spite of the utterances to the contrary, the issue of sub-regional integration has received relatively marginal attention when funds from the national budget are concerned. In 2002 for instance, the Government established the Ministry of Regional Co-operation and NEPAD ostensibly to champion the challenges of regional integration in West Africa. Prior to

¹²⁷ Artistes such as Nana Kwaku Dua (TicTac) and Bice Osei-Kuffuor (Obuor) are in the vanguard of such West African collaboration.

¹²⁸ Asante S.K.B Op. Cit. p.72

that, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had dealt with issues of West African integration. The creation of a separate ministry to handle integration matters was thus hailed as a show of political will by the Government to advance efforts at regional integration. The political will demonstrated notwithstanding, not much was done in the area of committing funds to the activities of the Ministry. Subsequently, the ministry was dissolved and its functions reverted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This suggested that, the country was still not ready to use regional integration as a driver of the country's development efforts. This challenge of funding as encapsulated in the general idea of a demonstration of political will still persists and is likely to challenge any action the youth may take to accelerate the process of regional integration in West Africa.

Conclusion

The youth remain the key resource for the sub-region. It is therefore essential that they are sufficiently brought on board to help accelerate the process of sub-regional integration. This calls for collaborative approach from not just the various member states of the ECOWAS, but also the sub-regional body on its own. In this regard, a lot more platforms ought to be created in addition to ensuring that the limited programmes that are currently going on are given enough visibility.



CHAPTER SIX: CHAMPIONING REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN WEST AFRICA: THE ROLE OF GHANA'S POLITICAL PARTIES

Emmanuel Debrah*

ABSTRACT

This paper identifies and examines the critical role political parties in Ghana have played towards the West African integration agenda. Issues of West African integration have occupied a central space in the political parties' programmes. Immediate post-independent political parties, particularly, the Convention People's Party (CPP) showed leadership in the process toward regional and sub-regional bloc building. The CPP's political agenda incorporated efforts towards the integration of the African continent. The formation of the defunct Organisation of African Union (OAU) in the 1960s owed much to the role played by the CPP and its leader, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. Although the formation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) occurred during the era of military regimes, post-1992 political parties have made regional integration pivotal not only on their campaign platforms but have taken concrete steps to pursue programmes with far reaching consequences for the ECOWAS. With the support of the minority parties in Parliament, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and New Patriotic Party (NPP) governments have worked assiduously to move forward the agenda set in the framework of the ECOWAS. Even though many challenges confront the political parties in their quest to advance the course of the West African integration, there is much optimism for success once intra-party democracy improves and regional party alliances and programmes are formalised and harmonised.

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Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War, regional integration has increasingly become an indispensable feature of the global political order. Ginkel and Langenhove (2003) have defined regional integration as the process by which states within a particular region increase their level of interaction with regard to economic, security, political, social and cultural issues. Independent states commit themselves to undertake common goals through regional 'alliances' and interactions at the national level (DeLombaerde and Langenhove 2007:379). Although the phenomenon of regional integration is not new, the successful formation of the European Union (EU) has reawakened interest in cooperation and interaction among nation-states. Elsewhere, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the North Atlantic Free Trade Area (NAFTA) and the Mercado Común del Sur (Mercosur), among others, have reorganised and braced up ties among member-states in order to fashion regional unions along the lines of the EU.¹²⁹

What is also remarkable within the context of Africa's 'Third Wave' of democratisation (Huntington 1991) is the trend towards regional cooperation which is set to continue as governments and states opt for cooperation to serve a variety of purposes. The surge in regional integration in Africa in the early 1990s was due to two key forces of change in the global political and economic scenes. First, the crisis of the post-cold war order led to the emergence of a new global political structure which emphasized globalisation – and de-emphasised traditional barriers and individualism that had previously defined the focus of international relations of nation states. The second one which is directly linked to the first is that the global 'Third Wave' rendered obsolete the Westphalian concept of a system of sovereign states – that stressed the fully autonomous power of a state. Consequent to these developments, the dominant political philosophy in Africa in the 1990s came to centre on the integration of the economies of neighbouring states as a strategy for 'creating a larger regional market for trade and investment among African states' (Ginkel and Langenhove 2003:2).

Leading proponents of regional integration in Africa further claimed that stronger sub-regional groupings such as the ECOWAS would spur greater efficiency, productivity gain and competitiveness, not just by lowering border barriers, but also by reducing other costs and risks of trade and investments (Ginkel and Langenhove 2003:2-3). This way, sub-regional trading arrangements were advocated as development tools because they encourage a shift towards greater market openness, reduce the risk of reversion to protectionism, and locks in reforms already prosecuted under the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) (DeLombaerde and

¹²⁹ The European Union (EU) is an economic and political union of 27 member states. It was the outcome of the Treaty of Maastricht signed on February 1992 but came into force in November 1993. The EU has developed a single market through a standardised system of laws which apply in all member states, guaranteeing the freedom of movement of people, goods, services and capital. It maintains a common trade policy, agricultural and fisheries policies, and a regional development policy. Sixteen member states have adopted a common currency, the Euro.

Langenhove 2007:378). This realisation that continental integration is only possible through regional integration has intensified sub-regional blocs' functioning. In West Africa, there is virtual unanimity among member states of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) founded on May 28, 1975 with the signing of the Treaty of Lagos, to foster close interaction among themselves, particularly along the following functions,

- strengthen trade cooperation by removing barriers to free trade and increase free movement of people, labour, goods, and capital across national borders;
- develop infrastructure programmes in support of economic growth;
- promote democratic institutions and good governance;
- reduce social exclusion and the development of an inclusive civil society;
- contribute to peace and security in the region, and
- strengthen the region's interaction with other regions of the world (ECOWAS Secretariat: Revised Treaty of the ECOWAS 1993: 6-18).

However, recent developments in the West African sub-region such as the wanton civil wars in Liberia, Sierra Leone, military coup d'état in Guinea, maltreatment of nationals of member states including the murder of four (4) Ghanaians in The Gambia, conflict in Cote d'Ivoire, among others, have slowed the progress of regional integration (US Department of State 2002:1; Republic of Ghana 2004:1). To be sure, several areas in governance, democracy, inter-state trade and security in West Africa, have been abysmal. For instance, economic difficulties in Ghana and Guinea have held back their entry into the West Africa Monetary Zone (WAMZ) (Republic of Ghana 2004:2-8). The lack of advancement in these areas over the years highlights the urgent need to speed the process of West African integration to levels comparable to those in other regions of Europe, North Atlantic, Southern Asia, among others.

A new thinking within Africa's Third Wave of democratisation is that political parties have an invaluable role to play in the process toward regional integration. The advocates refer to the indefatigable role the European political parties played toward the successful European integration. For instance, in countries such as France, Germany, Poland, Ukraine, inter alia, consensus forged among the ruling and opposition political parties provided the environment within which the mandates for the countries' membership of the European Union (EU) were secured (Kreppel 2001:2-3). The strength of these parties in advocating the integration of European states lay with the provision in the Treaty of Maastricht that duly recognised their role in the integration process. Notably, Section 41 of the Treaty of Maastricht stated that, 'political parties at European level are important as a factor for integration

¹³⁰ A review of some of the Ghanaian political parties' manifestos reveals that there are, at least, few statements devoted to regional integration. While in many cases the NDC and NPP manifestoes are elaborate on the subject, and that of the CPP and PNC are scanty, there were gaps in terms of consistency in their political programme on regional integration. There were also marginal variations of policy issues on the ECOWAS in their manifestos – indeed, the same message was recycled. The researcher could not obtain all manifestos of the political parties. What is true is that the parties did not produce election manifestos in every election.

within the Union. They contribute to forming a European awareness and expressing the political will of the citizens of the Union' (Wikipedia 2009:1).

The overarching question then is; what should be the role of political parties in regional integration? What specific role have political parties in Ghana played toward the formation and promotion of the integration of the West African sub-region? What are the dynamics and challenges facing the parties' ability to play their integration role? What should the Ghanaian political parties do to overcome the challenges in order to contribute to regional integration? These are complex questions and the issues involved require careful investigation, a task this study endeavours to accomplish.

The Traditional Role of Political Parties

As many associations and groups operating in the state bear identical characteristics, it is most appropriate to provide a definition of a political party to avoid controversies surrounding what actually constitutes a political party, party This study adopts a working definition based on the assumption that a political party is a group of like-minded people – a homogeneous group with shared values, attitudes and interest – a view captured in Edmund Burke's classic definition of a political party.

Burke postulated a political party as 'a body of men and women united for promoting by their joint endeavours the national interest upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed' (quoted in Ware 1996:5).

But this definition does not establish a distinction between a political party and other legitimate associations doing 'business in a state". Hence, Giovanni Sartori defined a political party as 'any political group that presents at elections, and is capable of placing through election, candidates for public offices' (Sartori 1976:4). Thus a political party refers to any legitimate organisation with a well defined manifesto – which expresses its ideological position and programmes, and seeks to capture political power through an election to control the affairs of a state.

Once, a description of a political party is provided, the next task is to identify the specific role that has been assigned to political parties in the political system – that may even transcend domestic boundaries. In contrast to the Madisonian skeptics who denounced political parties on the pretext that they represent division and that their activities 'can pervert the popular will of the majority', liberal theorists have viewed political parties in a more positive light (Norris 2004:1).

Contemporary advocates of political parties recognize their invaluable role in the state and society. Among the countless groups in the state, political parties articulate interests of competing social groups and forces by advancing their specific claims and interests to the government. Although other civil society organisations tend to undertake this activity, P. C. Schmitter thinks that no other group does this better

than political parties. According to him, one way interest articulation is done is through the parties' platforms (manifestoes) which oftentimes encapsulate the overwhelming perspectives of society, at least in content (Schmitter 2001: 75). In most established democracies, parties that enter the legislature ostensibly promote the interest of social groups. A typical scenario is that 'when bills are drafted and deliberated upon, political parties calculate the gains and losses of a policy proposal on behalf of their social groups, thereby giving voice to the voiceless' (Schmitter 2001:76). In another sense, political parties aggregate citizens and groups' interests and demands. In a liberal democratic environment, political parties tend to coordinate and refine demands that are made on the political system by allowing the system to respond more adequately to the expressed opinions and demands from society and groups. This process is essential because it can help modify conflict, build coalitions and compromises between contending groups in the state, thereby facilitating 'universal' decision making in the country (Debrah 2008:30).

One core function political parties perform in the state that is also highlighted in the Treaty of Maastricht, is their ability to provide political socialisation to the citizenry. Needless to say, parties socialise segments of the population into the existing political and democratic culture. Throughout the history of modern democracy, parties have assisted in inculcating fundamental values and norms of democracy in the adult population (Gunther and Diamond 2001:8). The provision of political socialisation is important to reinforce the established norms and values, change tribal and ethnic parochial feelings to foster national or regional unity and cohesion. Since political parties act as the conduit of communication, they are able to transmit information upward from the grassroots and downward from the government to the public (Jackson and Jackson 1997:319). The Treaty of Maastricht has recognised that the survival of the European Union, to a large extent, depends on the European parties' role in educating the people on the democratic values and perhaps, the tenets of regional or continental integration (Wikipedia 2009:2).

Political parties form governments and formulate policy for public consumption. These policies usually have domestic and international focus. Citizens' participation in the policy formulation process is critical for the success of the policy. For instance, regional integration policies of political parties that have input from their rank-and-file are more likely to receive their concordance support than those that discard their participation in the policy formulation process. For this reason, ideally, elected representatives on party labels endeavour to transform their parties' manifestos – that oftentimes encapsulate the overwhelming desires and aspirations of the membership into manageable programmes (Lipset 2000:49). In the same vein, the parties' organisations can mobilise popular support for a country's membership of a regional organisation such as the ECOWAS.

The Ghanaian Political Parties and West African Integration

Political parties in Ghana have been prominent in the long search for regional and continental integration. From the 1960s when continental integration flourished through the 1990s and 21st century when the consciousness of sub-regional integration deepened, the political parties in Ghana have contributed to the making of both the African Union (AU) and ECOWAS. It is commonplace that the Convention People's Party (CPP) under Dr. Kwame Nkrumah sowed the seed of the defunct Organisation of African Unity (OAU). From the beginning, the CPP indicated its desire to the promotion of African integration and articulated the ideals of African unity on several campaign platforms. For instance, Nkrumah declared to 'surrender in part or in whole of our (Ghana's) sovereignty in the interest of African continental unity' (CPP, *Work and Happiness* 1963: 44). Toward this goal, the CPP advocated 'an overall economic planning on a united continental basis which would increase the industrial and economic power of Africa' (CPP, *Work and Happiness* 1963: 45). According to Nkrumah, one means of fostering African integration was the creation of a joint military command.

Political parties' interest in regional integration did not wane with the overthrow of Nkrumah and the CPP on February 24, 1966. The Progress Party (PP) that formed the 2nd Republic showed, and worked towards the integration of the West African sub-region. For instance, the constitution of the PP expressed the party's intention to 'developing closest political, economic and cultural relations with the neighbouring states of Ivory Coast, Upper Volta, Togo, Nigeria, Dahomey, Niger and Mali' (PP Constitution 1969: 7). Consequently, during its tenure in government, 'the PP participated fully in the movement for a West African political and economic community' (Quarshie 1971:16). Even the opposition National Alliance of Liberals (NAL) showed a strong commitment to programmes that had the potential to align Ghana to other sister countries in the sub-region and Africa as a whole (NAL, *Manifesto* 1969: 12).

Although the ECOWAS was born in the era of non-democratic military regimes in West Africa in the mid-1970s, political parties that emerged at the end of the decade were supportive of the sub-regional integration agenda. The People's National Party (PNP) that inaugurated the 3rd Republic led by Dr. Hilla Limann directed its attention not only toward the promotion of the ECOWAS but also announced the party's resolve to work toward the attainment of Dr. Nkrumah's dream of the eventual unification of the African continent (PNP, *Manifesto* 1979:30). According to the PNP, the attainment of the ultimate objective of continental integration was necessary if regional integration was given a boost. The PNP therefore declared, 'we believe in political and economic cooperation with our immediate neighbours and this would be promoted within the framework of the ECOWAS' (PNP, *Manifesto* 1979:31). The Popular Front Party (PFP) like the United National Convention (UNC) –

minority parties from 1979-1981, gave vent to regional integration concerns. While seeking the unity of the African continent, the UNC and its counterpart, the PFP also hoped to foster cooperation among Ghana's immediate neighbours (Daily Graphic 1979: 9 and 10).

Due to the long hiatus of political parties from national affairs after the December 31 1981 coup d'état, the ECOWAS suffered major setbacks: for instance, the epoch was marked by political turbulence in West Africa that manifested in incessant coups and counter-coups as well as accusations of sabotage by neighbouring governments of Togo, Ghana, Burkina Faso, among others (Crotty 1993:668). The resultant strained relations among Heads of State of these ECOWAS member-states brought severe attrition to whatever unity and cohesion that had been achieved toward West African integration in the 1970s (Nugent 2004:205-210). However, since democratic renaissance in 1992, the emerging Ghanaian political parties have positioned themselves to play an active role in the West African integration process. There may be more than fifteen registered political parties in Ghana, including the National Democratic Congress (NDC), New Patriotic Party (NPP), the Convention People's Party (CPP) and People National Convention (PNC). Others are the Democratic People's Party (DPP), Every Ghanaian Living Everywhere (EGLE), Great Consolidated Popular Party (GCPP), Ghana National Party (GNP), National Reform Party (NRP), United Ghana Movement (UGM), Ghana Democratic Republican Party (GDRP) and the Democratic Freedom Party (DFP), among others. Of these, only the NDC, NPP, PNC and CPP have been most active on the political field with constant representatives in the national Parliament. The power alternation in 2000 and 2008 revolved around the NDC and NPP – the two dominant political parties in the country.

Interestingly, the new political elites have almost invariably chosen the regional integration approach as the 'clean' path toward the acceleration of national development. As the NPP noted:

A strong and vibrant ECOWAS will not only be a stimulus to our national development but will also serve as a springboard for the realisation of an African Economic Community (NPP, Manifesto 2000:24).

One of the NDC's manifestos also captured vividly the spirit of regional integration that seems to be the new focus of the Ghanaian political parties:

The peace and process of globalization is rapid. It is integrating states, regions and economies on a phenomenal scale and it is in this light that regional groupings as instruments for expanding production bases and achieving greater competitiveness become relevant (NDC, Manifesto 2008: 35).

After winning the 1992 elections, one of the priorities of the NDC government under Jerry John Rawlings was to reorient itself toward the realisation of the ideals of the ECOWAS. Indeed, a dominant political agenda of the NDC was the advancement of regional integration (making ECOWAS more functional) – a priority that occupied elaborate spaces in some of the post-1992 NDC's manifestos. For instance, as was the case with its 1996 manifesto, the NDC defined its 2004 campaign platform to reflect the country's 'original African-centred foreign policy bequeathed to the nation by the founding fathers with a special focus on West African integration' (NDC, Manifesto, 2004:16).

During its eight years in power, the NDC had bilateral discussions with Burkina Faso on some developments that had the potential of undermining aspects of the ECOWAS protocol. For instance, the NDC government made the effort to deal with the issue of cattle transhumance and other related criminal matters associated with the Fulani herdsmen doing business in the country (Daily Graphic Monday February 1 1999:1). In spite of such efforts made to resolve the seeming canker, the NDC 2004 manifesto reserved a place for more broad issues of cross border crime, cattle transhumance, drug and child trafficking as well as the movement of illegal arms across West Africa. According to the NDC:

We shall, within the ECOWAS framework, address the issues of cross border crime, cattle transhumance, drug trafficking, trafficking in children, and the movement of illegal arms (NDC, Manifesto 2004: 72).

By creating the Ministries of Regional Integration and later Regional Cooperation and NEPAD by the NDC and NPP governments respectively, they translated their promises to promote greater integration among the ECOWAS member-states into concrete action. Other minority parties have also shown interest in regional integration. Some of the manifestoes of the CPP and People's National Convention (PNC) give clear signals to the parties' vision for West African integration. It is one of the cardinal principles of the CPP 'to actively promote co-operation with all democratically established governments for the mutual benefit of the peoples in the West African sub-region' (CPP, 2004: 16). The CPP views issues of 'peace, social justice and economic well-being, the rule of law and the guarantee of fundamental human rights among Ghanaians and their neighbours' (CPP, 2000:18) as critical for sustainable West African integration. The PNC would also 'fortify ties with neighbouring ECOWAS states as a prerequisite for reaping economic integration in the sub-region' (PNC, 2000: 13). Because sub-regional integration is central to both the CPP and PNC, their representatives in Parliament (MPs of the CPP and PNC) supported the NDC and NPP governments to advance the course of the ECOWAS, particularly on measures that were to qualify Ghana into the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ).

One of the preoccupations of the Ghanaian parties has been the implementation of the ECOWAS protocols. In line with the NDC's 1992 campaign manifesto to promote effective cooperation among the ECOWAS member-states, the government of the NDC worked with its counterparts in the sub-region to redefine a new vision for the ECOWAS. Consequently on July 24, 1993 an international conference was held in Cotonou, Benin to finalise a revised Treaty of the ECOWAS (Revised Treaty of the ECOWAS 1993). Furthermore, the NDC government was at the forefront in seeking for ways to harmonise and standardise hotels and other things in the 'hospitality industry' for the West African sub-region. The NDC government was among the first to implement the standards in the country (ECOWAS Secretariat 1999).

Committed to the ideals of the ECOWAS, particularly in the area of having a single currency for all member-states, the NDC government implemented the economic recommendations that could register Ghana's membership of the WAMZ. In a clear show of a sense of purpose, the NDC government hosted the international conference on April 20, 2000 in Accra that eventually led to the formal creation of the second Monetary Zone called the WAMZ (Daily Graphic 2000:1). The formation of the WAMZ was particularly significant for the ECOWAS' integration because it bounded five core members of the Community, namely, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria and Sierra Leone together in order 'to accelerate a genuine union between the WAMZ and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) of the ECOWAS (Republic of Ghana, 2004:13).

On its part, the NPP government demonstrated that it was committed to helping the ECOWAS to fulfil many of its objectives. For instance, the transformation of the ECOWAS Fund to the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development in 2001 owed much to the advocacy of the Ghanaian parties in Parliament and the tireless effort of the NPP government (IDEA, 2007:68). The same interest in the ECOWAS' affairs encouraged the NPP government to host a Summit of Heads of States and Governments of the five member states that form the WAMZ in Accra in December 19, 2003. The critical summit signed a statute to establish a West African Central Bank (WACB) – the body that would issue a common currency, 'ECO' for use by the five countries with Accra as its headquarters (Republic of Ghana, 2004:13).

In pursuance of their campaign manifestoes, both the NDC and NPP undertook domestic infrastructural projects that had far reaching effects on the ECOWAS protocol. For instance, the rationale for the Trans-Regional Highway project – involving the reconstruction of road networks linking Ghana to Cote d' Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Togo that began under the NDC and was continued by the NPP government was aimed at promoting free movement of goods and persons across the sub-region (Republic of Ghana, 2004:1 & 3). Indeed, the NPP had already indicated, 'we shall support and adhere to the ECOWAS regulations on freedom of movement within the sub-region' (NPP, Manifesto 2000:23). This vision was to be

continued in the next NPP government – if it had won the 2008 elections. It indicated, 'the Next NPP government will work towards the realisation of all the objectives of the ECOWAS, notably the free movement of people, goods and services' (NPP, Manifesto 2008:62).

In the area of justice in West Africa, the NPP government made a remarkable stride when in 2002 it committed Ghana to the ECOWAS by signing the 'Protocol on The Community Court of Justice' (ECOWAS Secretariat, 2002). The endorsement of the protocol became possible after the minority parties in Parliament, namely, the NDC, CPP and PNC had concurred the motion forwarded by the ruling NPP. It was also the same need to increase cooperation among the ECOWAS member-states that encouraged the NPP government to join Nigeria, Benin and Togo to implement the West African Pipeline project¹³¹. The NPP government further cooperated with Ghana, Togo, Benin and Nigeria to harmonise their policies on communication systems in the area of radio, television, among other things¹³². This cooperation with member-states on policy issues was in fulfilment of the NPP's manifesto:

To encourage all groupings within the sub-region to harmonise their objectives and operations with a view to eventually facilitate the achievement of a united and strong West Africa (NPP, Manifesto 2004).

Building effective inter-state trade among the ECOWAS members had been one of the important policy areas of the Ghanaian parties. Their manifestoes have underscored the fact that trade among members of the ECOWAS is a necessary incentive for regional cooperation. The NDC promised to 'strengthen the partnership between our exporters and the scientific community to develop new niche products targeted at the ECOWAS sub-region in particular' (NDC, Manifesto 2000: 7). This can be effective if the NDC could 'work to implement the various ECOWAS Protocols designed to facilitate sub-regional trade (NDC, Manifesto 2004:8). Similar sentiment was expressed by the NPP in its 2004 manifesto:

Every effort will be made to improve upon the existing intra-ECOWAS trade. We will support the actions of the West Africa Chamber of Commerce aimed at making West Africa one market and shall pass all necessary legislation to give concrete meaning to ECOWAS. We are not oblivious of the numerous problems that have constrained the progress of the sub-regional body. But we should not lose sight of the developmental advantages for the nation if ECOWAS is strengthened, especially in the field of trade (NPP, Manifesto 2004: 24).

¹³¹. The revised Treaty of ECOWAS encourages member-states to undertake any joint activity with a view to attaining the Community's objective. See ECOWAS Secretariat, Article 3 (o) of the Revised Treaty of the ECOWAS (Abuja: ECOWAS Secretariat 1993), p.7.

¹³². The cooperation forged between the NPP government and its counterparts is in consonance with the ECOWAS Protocol (see Article 34 of the Revised Treaty of the ECOWAS).

In seeking to advance regional integration, the NDC and NPP governments executed economic policies and programmes aimed at stabilising the local currency and ensuring economic growth. The NDC indicated that it would design Ghana's monetary policy to ensure that it met the goals set by the ECOWAS, particularly, the 'convergence criteria for the ECOWAS Second Monetary Zone and the ultimate Single Monetary Zone' (NDC, Manifesto 2004:73). The NDC highlighted the specific economic policy areas it would pursue in order to qualify for the membership of the WAMZ of the ECOWAS. These included the 'attainment of a single digit rate of inflation, gross foreign reserves to cover six months of imports and a limit of 4% to the budget/GDP ratio', among others (NDC, Manifesto 2004:74). It further promised to pursue policies to address problematic areas in the West African integration thereby giving meaning to the Treaty of the ECOWAS:

Ghana under an NDC Government will enhance her role within the ECOWAS by providing a balanced approach to the problems confronting each country in the sub-region, with a concentration on such issues as the creation of the Free Trade and Borderless Zone, the establishment of the Single Monetary Zone, and communication linkages (NDC, Manifesto 2004: 73).

The same economic measures spelt out in the manifesto of the NDC were re-echoed in the NPP policy objectives for regional integration. According to the NPP, its policies on banking, finance and monetary management during its first term in office were structured in line with the party's vision of regional integration. For instance, the economic policy targets set by the NPP reflected the content of its manifesto – that had focused on meeting the criteria determined by the WAMZ. According to the NPP:

The effort towards macroeconomic stability will be guided by the need to achieve the targets set by the West Africa Monetary Zone (WAMZ) convergence criteria. In the shortest possible time, the process will eventually lead to the five West African Countries (Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria and Sierra Leone) adopting a common currency, the ECO. The over-riding objective is to achieve regional (ECOWAS) integration (NPP, Manifesto 2004: 21).

Political parties in Ghana have utilised the platform offered by the establishment of the ECOWAS Parliament to advance the course of regional integration in West Africa. The Ghanaian political parties have schooled the populace on many dimensions of the ECOWAS protocols even though the education has not penetrated deep into all segments of the citizenry. Nevertheless, the Ghanaian parties, particularly those represented in Parliament, namely, the NDC, NPP, CPP and PNC have been instrumental in raising the consciousness of the people on human rights and fundamental freedoms of the citizens in the sub-region. The parties' representatives serving on the ECOWAS Parliament have drummed issues pertaining to conflicts in West Africa louder than any sister country. The commitment to

educate Ghanaians on ECOWAS issues is central to the NDC vision on regional integration. As the NDC rightly noted:

We shall through education and other means sensitise the people of the sub-region to the advantages of sub-regional integration, especially with regards to peace and security issues, and move the ECOWAS agenda from the level of politicians and officialdom to a people to people level, especially involving the youth (NDC, Manifesto 2000: 33).

When it assumed office in 2001, the NPP government¹³³ made education of the doctrine of regional integration one of its foreign policy objectives. In particular, the NPP's political education focused on Article 4 (f) of the Revised Treaty of the ECOWAS¹³⁴ – and made peace in the sub-region a policy priority. To this end, it courted the friendship of Ghana's immediate ECOWAS neighbours. Significantly, the NPP's advocacy for peace within the West African sub-region (among ECOWAS states) resonated well with its own campaign manifesto that noted:

The NPP will continue to focus on promoting Ghana's vital interest and those of her citizens in our search for prosperity, peace, dignity and security. Based on our policy of peaceful co-existence and close cooperation with all our neighbours, for the purposes of peace, stability and mutual development, we have established the most cordial links with our neighbours in Burkina Faso, La Cote d' Ivoire, Togo, Benin and Nigeria (NPP, 2004: 32).

Recounting some of the achievements of the NPP government, Dr. K. K. Apraku, the then Minister of Regional Integration and NEPAD noted that 'peace in West Africa was integral to the overall development of ECOWAS member states...this is the reason behind the NPP government's peace moves since taking over power in 2001' (Republic of Ghana, 2004: 1 and 3).

The context of the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance established in Dakar December 21, 2001 influenced the NPP governments' stance on democratic governance (multiparty politics) in all ECOWAS states. The consensus to make democracy functional in West Africa has also defined the political agenda of the minority parties in Ghana. The parties' representatives in Ghana's Parliament have been quick in their rebuttal against anti-democratic developments that have the potential to derail democratic sustainability in the sub-region. The NDC, NPP, CPP and PNC Members of Parliament (MPs) have kept faith with multiparty

¹³³ Only the NDC and NPP that had alternated political power have carried public education on the essence of West African integration. This is because, as it is the case of most developing countries, it is only the ruling party that has the capacity to carry its campaign message across to the citizenry after an election. Unlike the opposition parties that lack resources, the ruling party is relatively able to marshal state resources to educate people on its policies as contained in its election manifesto.

¹³⁴ Article 4 (f) of the revised Treaty of the ECOWAS require member states to engage 'peaceful settlement of disputes ..., active cooperation between neighbouring countries and promotion of a peaceful environment as a prerequisite for economic development' (see ECOWAS Secretariat 1993:8).

democracy and have influenced political parties in other sister countries in the sub-region to embrace same¹³⁵.

Some Challenges

One major challenge relates to weak party organisation¹³⁶. The Ghanaian parties lack the capacity to build their organisations into formidable ones. Although the parties' complaint is the lack of funds to establish and strengthen existing structures, the excuse is farfetched. This is because they limit their activities to election contestations rather than building strong party structures and organizations (Debrah 2008). Their organisational lethargy manifests in party inactivity after every general election. Even the ruling NPP and the NDC that have alternated political power are not able to establish effective organisational structures across the country and beyond in order to capture their supporters in other ECOWAS countries. Their infrastructure is weak and they are only active at the national offices at Accra, the ten regional capitals and some constituencies¹³⁷.

Their strategy is to mobilise campaign funds to compete in general elections rather than building party infrastructure and occupying the political space before, during and after elections. Consequently, the Ghanaian parties have become seasonal parties – that go on hibernation after general elections and resurrect when general elections are to commence (Debrah 2008:15). The cumulative effect of their organisational weakness manifests in low institutionalisation – the parties have not been able to penetrate the society with their programmes in order to socialise the electoral population on the usefulness of regional integration and the ECOWAS. To date, a large proportion of the population lack a clear understanding of the actual relations between Ghana and her neighbours – popular awareness of the Treaty of the ECOWAS and Protocols remain scanty¹³⁸.

Achieving sub-regional unity is a consequence of intra and inter-party discipline and harmony. What is true of the Ghanaian parties is that they lack internal unity largely due to conflicts over political competition. The growing cases of internal petty squabbles are the result of a total lack of cohesion at the national front¹³⁹.

¹³⁵. At several regional fora organized by the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) of Ghana, the Ghanaian parties used the platforms to demonstrate their belief in multiparty democracy. The call to allow democracy to be sustained in West Africa has been forcefully articulated by the Ghanaian parties' representatives to such conferences. Evidences from the conferences (Communiqués) show that even countries such as Sierra Leone, Cote D' Ivoire, among others, have embraced the spirit of multiparty democracy and have resolved to allow the Ghanaian political parties' experiences to guide their actions. See for instance, IEA, First West African Regional Conference of Political Parties, (Accra: IEA, 2005) p. 32; IEA, Maiden Meeting of the Interim Steering Committee of the West African Regional Programme of Political Parties (WARPPP) Accra: IEA, 2007, p. 26.

¹³⁶. See IEA Ice Breaker Meeting Between the Chairmen of Ghanaian Political Parties and their Ivorian Counterparts (Accra: IEA, 2006), pp. 25-35.

¹³⁷. Ibid, pp. 34.

¹³⁸. IEA First West African Regional Conference of Political Parties, p. 12-14.

¹³⁹. Ibid, pp. 8-9.

The manifest internal conflicts have dissipated the Ghanaian parties' energies to assist in conflict resolution in other West African countries. The excessive polarisation not only of national debates but also issues of international importance for the successful regional integration has contributed to the lack of implementations of some important ECOWAS protocols that have far reaching implications for Ghana's relations with her neighbours¹⁴⁰. This is oftentimes fuelled by ideological polarisation that has proved to be divisive to Ghana's search for peaceful political processes as a prerequisite for regional peace and harmony.

The perennial inter-party conflict exemplified by the lack of consensus over national debates in Parliament reveals sharp ideological cleavages. This way, common direction regarding the ruling party's foreign policy goals sometimes proves difficult to achieve. If the opposition parties' criticisms do not lead to alternatives, then the political discourse becomes more complicated. Political carnages in West Africa that increased in the early 1990s were partly due to the lack of consensus among parties regarding the solution to the future directions of the countries¹⁴¹. This position was the subject of discussion and conclusion made at the First West African Regional Conference of Political Parties held at Accra on July 2005. Among others, the participants that comprised leading party figures from Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Togo recognized the essentiality of 'government of consensus' and recommended that 'government and opposition must see themselves as partners in governance and development' (IEA 2005:9). Frequent dialogues among the parties at all levels of politics as well as compromises on what should constitute the national good may go a long way to dissipate conflict occurrences among parties (IEA 2006: 50).

In a heterogeneous Ghanaian society, overcoming the problem of ethnic parochialism, separatism, minority alienation and sectionalism means broadening political participation and access to resources, among others. The politics of factionalism steeped in ethnic sentimentalism has been divisive and obstructive to the integration agenda. Over the years, electoral campaigns have been characterized by recourse to ethnic mobilisation. The appeal to tribal feelings in order to win elections has affected post-election exercise of mandate. The politics of winner-takes-all also means that the opposition would have to wait for their turn. Therefore losing elections means undergoing political alienation. These practices have tended to reduce politics into a zero sum game thereby undermining peaceful post-election political bargaining – a development that has affected the parties' ability to secure a common platform to prosecute 'a united ECOWAS agenda and programmes'¹⁴².

¹⁴⁰ See K. Ahwoi speaking on 'Political Tolerance and Power Sharing in a Multi-Party Democracy', in IEA, Ice Breaker Meeting Between the Chairmen of Ghanaian Political Parties and their Counterparts from Sierra Leone: Growing Democracy in the Sub-Region (Accra: IEA, 2006), pp. 28-30.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, p. 29.

¹⁴² See IEA, Conference of Political Parties in Sub-Saharan Africa: Consolidating Democracy on the Continent, Accra: IEA, 2007, pp. 45-47.

What Parties Can do to Foster Effective Regional Integration in West Africa

Since regional integration is needed in order to diffuse regional tensions, the platforms of the Ghanaian political parties must be free from acts that have the potential to ignite any form of conflict. This implies the development of political party “enabling environments” that can help mainstream the parties into the regional integration process. Doing this means establishing a regulatory framework that enforces political and electoral codes, laws and statutes that direct the parties to peaceful campaigns and legislative harmony. The drafted codes should have the force of law and swift adjudication processes aimed to discourage inter-party conflicts and acrimonies. The legal instrument could make a demand on the parties to harmonize their regional integration policies. This way, losing parties could still find it appropriate to support the ruling party's ECOWAS programmes because 'it resonates with their own'.

Intensification of the parties' political education on the imperatives of regional integration will direct the publics' attention to the usefulness of cooperation between Ghana and her neighbours. The suggestion is that prioritising the ECOWAS ideals of free movement of goods and persons across the sub-region, democratic governance and peaceful co-existence on the political parties' agenda would help increase popular consciousness about the benefits Ghana's friendship with her neighbours bring to her development process. In contrast to the parties' current manifestoes that provide a limited space for the ECOWAS' agenda, they could be encouraged to devote considerable space – detailing the important dimensions of their integration approach including defining the specific steps the parties would take to achieve sub-regional integration. It may be most ideal for the ECOWAS Secretariat to consider the establishment of a department under its Democracy and Governance unit to ensure congruence between the parties' respective constitutions and manifestos and the basic tenets of the ECOWAS Protocols.

Developing a democratic political culture does not concern simply the relations between parties and the rest of society. It also involves the development of consociational principles such as application of proportional representation¹⁴³ in election systems, and institutional recognition of ethnic or regional interests to satisfy minority concerns.

This approach can help nurture political parties' democratic ambitions, because the range of entry points for political participation is broadened. Unlike highly

¹⁴³. Proportional representation (PR) is a category of electoral formulas aimed at a close match between the percentage of votes that groups of candidates (grouped by a certain measure) obtain in elections and the percentage of seats they receive (usually in legislative assemblies). PR is a democratic principle rather than an electoral system in itself. It is often contrasted to plurality voting systems, where disproportional seat distribution results from the division of voters into multiple electoral districts, especially “winner takes all” plurality (first past the post) districts. For more explanation see Denis Pilon (2007) *The Politics of Voting* London: Edmond Montgomery Publications, pp. 3-4.

centralised systems where power is tightly held and controlled, political parties that apply consociational elements in their activities can demonstrate that they are able to diffuse tension and conflict (Debrah 2008). This system can be supplemented with the all-inclusive model of government formation that allows the winning party to extend the distribution of state power to cover opposition expertise. This can be an important step toward overcoming the challenge of disunity and polarization of the electorate along party lines – a practice that has the potential of legitimising bi-partisan politics in the country.

There is a genuine believe that regional cooperation can be promoted if political parties in the sub-region build bridges that connect each other to common programmes. Although the ECOWAS Parliament represents party integration, an additional mechanism by which political parties in the sub-region would form regional alliances and blocs not only on ideological friendships but also based on strong commitments to democratic ideals. A 'Union of West African Political Parties' with a solid objective anchored in democratic culture and virtues of participation, rule of law, respect for fundamental human rights, social justice and equity, among others, would be the starting point of securing effective regional integration. The recommended new design of party integration offers immense promise for successful economic integration. The current practice with an over-emphasis on economic cooperation will be illusive if political parties in the sub-region on whose platforms the ECOWAS integration are anchored are themselves not fully integrated. Party-to-party friendship can encourage mutual respect for ECOWAS programmes that have been developed by the ruling parties of member-states. Observed proceedings from several sub-regional conferences of political parties organized by the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), Ghana, give expression to the suggested approach. The respect and 'comradeship' generated among the political parties during the conferences indicate that the various parties can work together despite their ideological differences.

Conclusion

The point has been made that political parties in Ghana have an important role to play in the West African integration. We have noted that since 1992, the current political parties especially the NDC, NPP, CPP and PNC (that are represented in Parliament) have played an instrumental role in the process toward 'effective' integration in West Africa. The parties have deployed several strategies to promote West African integration via their manifestoes. The NDC and NPP that had formed governments have pursued programmes and policies with a view to promoting effective integration of the ECOWAS howbeit marginal the efforts have been.

We further explained that organization weaknesses of the Ghanaian parties have affected the extent to which they were able to foster effective ECOWAS integration. Some of the activities of the parties have not encouraged regional integration. The

opposition-government conflicts, ethnic politics, factionalism, ideological polarisation are a few of the factors that limited the incentive for effective regional integration. The logic is that extreme conflict among the Ghanaian parties would constrain their moral ability to forge sub-regional peace, unity and harmony.

Developing new strategies of cooperation and integration through the instrumentality of regional party alliances with the aim of harmonising the parties' programmes on the ECOWAS would ultimately spur the process of West African integration. Achieving this goal is a complex and tortuous one that definitely requires strong political will of the various political parties, particularly the ruling and minority parties in Parliament, and an intensified political education for the electorate to comprehend the new modes of relationships and cooperation.

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CHAPTER SEVEN: PROMOTING REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN WEST AFRICA: THE PRIVATE SECTOR, A CRITICAL PARTNER.

Cletus Kossiba*

INTRODUCTION

Globalisation has become one of the main driving forces behind the development of the world's economies. It has also implied a surge in international trade. Through international trade, both developing and developed countries have experienced new opportunities for growth.

Countries all over the world have sought to reap the benefits of globalisation and many have recognised regional integration as a useful platform for attaining global competitiveness. The establishment of the European Union (EU), the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA), the Common Market for the South (MERCOSUR) and Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), among others has contributed to the world's strong growth in trade and clearly shows the benefits from increased competition through economies of scale along with regional consolidation of the operations of companies.

Regional integration in Africa has been almost exclusively driven by Governments and nongovernmental institutions. However, the realisation is growing that the private sector can be a vehicle for strengthening the process.

After decades of domination of economic activities by the state, African governments are increasingly recognising the private sector as a partner in the development process and relying on it to foster growth. Its role in regional integration is also gaining momentum. The private sector's role is perceived from two dimensions; firstly, by way of contributions to political decision making at the national and regional levels through policy formulation and advocacy and through lobbying for continued implementation of reforms; and secondly, the sector's practical contribution to regional initiatives through the provision of human resources for regional projects. The economic benefits from the expansion of regional activities of the private sector include job creation and increased market size.

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GHANA'S POLICY AND STRATEGY ON REGIONAL INTEGRATION

Ghana has been leading the Pan-African cause since Independence. Its first President, Dr Kwame Nkrumah was a powerful advocate of African unity. This legacy has to some extent, guided Ghana's policies on regional integration. Ghana has always been a leading country in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and stands as one of the critical players for further regional integration in West Africa. In the view of the government of Ghana, the ECOWAS community remains the only viable framework for economic integration and progress in the West African sub-region. This is reflected in Article 40 of the 1992 Constitution, which adheres to the principles of the treaty establishing ECOWAS (40 (d) (iv) :

- In its dealings with other nations, the Government shall (d) adhere to the principles enshrined in or as the case may be, the aims and ideals of (iv) the Treaty of the Economic Community of West African States;

Hopes were high when the ECOWAS treaty was signed in 1975 in Lome, Togo. The Heads of States and Governments envisioned a West Africa with strong trade relations, strengthened political cooperation and free of colonial ties. However, in the ensuing decades, progress geared towards integration was slow; so slow that ECOWAS was considered a failure by many observers. This finally led to the ratification of a new ECOWAS treaty. In 1993, the Heads of States and Governments decided to revitalise the community by signing a treaty with even more ambitious goals. The cooperation under the new treaty was to be extended into an internal market, a common currency and a West African Parliament. Unfortunately, this new treaty was no more successful than that of 1975. As at 1999, only a few of the basic goals of the treaty had been achieved. There is currently an ECOWAS Parliament in place in Abuja, Nigeria. Its operations are not much known by the citizens of the West African states; and its impact on the regional integration process is being questioned. The internal market and common currency projects, which are of great importance to the private sector, still remain unrealised goals.

Ghana's commitment to the ECOWAS project was further underscored when together with Nigeria, it initiated a "fast track" approach to regional integration at an ECOWAS meeting in Lome, in December 1999. This proposed fast track approach was a direct outcome of the lack of progress in the integration process of ECOWAS, vis-à-vis the seeming success of the Francophone grouping within the ECOWAS. Certainly, the rapid and successful integration among the countries in the Union Economique et Monetaire Ouest- Africaine (UEMOA) was equally an important factor in the birth of the fast track initiative. The essence of the fast track

approach was for the ECOWAS leaders to adopt a two-track approach to regional integration. Conceptually, the initiative posited that if two or more member states were ready to implement a particular ECOWAS programme, they should be allowed to proceed with the implementation of the programme. These member states implementing the said programme would then constitute a fast track group to which the 'slower track countries' could join later. The idea was formally endorsed by the ECOWAS Heads of States and Governments in Bamako, Mali in January 2000.

The aim of the fast track initiative was to establish a Second Monetary Zone (SMZ) by 2003 and a Free Trade Area from the year 2000. The Chief Executives of UEMOA and ECOWAS were tasked to find strategies for merging the fast track countries and UEMOA. The two countries that initiated the fast track approach have shown ample proof of their commitment to the process and the leaders then, had consistently advocated for an accelerated integration process.

Ghana was among the first ECOWAS countries to liberalise trade in industrial products in 1996. Apart from Ghana, only a few states are applying the reduced tariff as the cardinal principle of reciprocity – crucial for the successful implementation of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS). Ghana's two-year chairmanship of ECOWAS in 1995 – 1996 and again in 2002-2005 demonstrated the country's commitment to integration of West Africa.

Ghana has persevered in the implementation of additional initiatives. The ECOWAS traveller's cheques came into circulation in 1999. An ECOWAS levy of 0.5% on imports from third countries was introduced in 2000 and effectively implemented on 15th April of 2000. The revenue from the duty was to be used for paying arrears and contributions to the ECOWAS and funding for a compensation mechanism for loss of revenue to countries implementing the ETLS. Ghana's commitment was further underscored with the establishment of a Ministry for Regional Cooperation and NEPAD following the declaration of the Fast Track initiative. The Ministry was accorded cabinet status. (AGI/DI Study, 2000)

PRIVATE SECTOR'S VIEWS ON REGIONAL INTEGRATION

The involvement of the private sector in the programme and strategies for regional integration has been very limited from the time of the formation of ECOWAS. In recent times, however, the role of the private sector is being recognised by the governments. The initiation of the fast track approach has witnessed greater efforts by the governments of Ghana and Nigeria to involve their private sectors in the discussions and negotiations for integrating the two economies.

The private sector is defined to include all non-state actors; companies operating in the formal and informal sectors; business associations and civil society advocacy groups. In this paper, however, emphasis is laid on companies in the formal sector as well as the major national business associations who are on record to have made positive and constructive interventions in the integration process and are known to persist in this direction. This is not to downplay the role of the informal operators in regional trade. Not only has cross-border trade preceded the advent of ECOWAS, but the fact remains that if data on informal trade across the borders could be captured, then trade statistics for the region would have pointed to a greater level of integration, particularly with regard to trade in goods.

In Ghana, under the auspices of the then ministries of Trade and Industry and Regional Cooperation, the private sector's participation in the integration process was given a boost. The Association of Ghana Industries (AGI) and the Ghana National Chamber of Commerce and Industries (GNCCI) have been invited to join various government delegations to ECOWAS technical meetings (including Ministerial Meetings that preceded Heads of States and Governments conferences) and workshops at which programmes for integration are discussed. AGI, along with other private sector Associations from Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Senegal among others, have been actively engaged in the development of the West Africa Common Industrial Policy (WACIP); the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) and negotiations between ECOWAS and the European Union among several others.

By and large, the private sectors, specifically the business associations, in Ghana and Nigeria have been in favour of the Ghana-Nigeria fast track approach to the extent that this had the potential of accelerating the ECOWAS integration process. In their view, the two countries have a lot in common that could facilitate economic integration – common colonial heritage, and resultant characteristic of the economies, culture and language. In addition, being two of the four dominant economies in the sub-region, their integration would serve to exert the needed pressures to get the other ECOWAS economies to move towards the implementation of the ECOWAS agenda.

To this end, AGI in 1999 hosted a West Africa Industrial Business Associations Seminar in Accra. The objectives of the Seminar included;

- Creating a forum for industrialists to; discuss the state of implementation of the ECOWAS agenda;
- Promote the exchange of ideas and harmonisation of strategies of the industrial associations in moving the integration agenda forward;

Establish a network of industrialists in West Africa. Participants were drawn from Ghana, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal. (Report on FEWAMA seminar, 11 April, 2000)

The Seminar concluded and agreed on the following:

- The private sector could play a useful role in the sub-region by building bridges of partnerships;
- In this era of Globalisation, African industrialists need to work in partnership with others to be competitive.
- There was a need for dialogue between government, the private sector and the ECOWAS Secretariat on the entire integration process and;
- There was a need to revitalise the Federation of West Africa Manufacturers Associations (FEWAMA).

Also, in response to the Fast Track declaration, AGI (with the collaboration of The Confederation of Danish Industries(DI), undertook a study of regional integration in September 2000, focusing primarily on relations between Ghana and Nigeria, but with the inclusion of Cote d'Ivoire, which plays an important role in regional integration as a leading UEMOA country. The objects of the study included:

- Providing a background report on regional integration;
- Analysing the fast track negotiations between Ghana and Nigeria and;
- Clarifying the Ghanaian private sector's views on regional integration and developing a list of proposals on how regional integration can be accelerated.

The study involved desk research and interviews with government institutions, private sector organisations, companies and donor agencies in Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria. The interviews in the two latter countries were carried out with the assistance of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria(MAN) in Lagos and the Federation Nationale des Industries et Sevices de Cote d'Ivoire(FNISCI) in Abidjan.

The findings of the study were quite revealing to the extent that there was an indication of a gap between the governments' and the private sectors' perceptions of the essence and strategies for the regional integration process, be it the Fast Track initiative or overall ECOWAS approach.

Focus of Regional Integration

A substantial section of the Ghanaian private sector surveyed had reservations about the practical consequences of the fast track approach on their operations, taking into consideration the geographical location of Ghana vis-à-vis its immediate neighbours who are all members of UEMOA. The current volume and spread of trade between Ghana and these countries were and still remain quite significant compared to that between Ghana and Nigeria which is dominated mainly by oil imports from the latter.

One aspect of the Ghana-Nigeria fast track approach was the effort to get the intervening countries, Togo and Benin, to subscribe to the free trade area that had been endorsed by Ghana and Nigeria. The view of Ghanaian companies interviewed is one of scepticism about Togo and Benin's commitment in view of their membership of UEMOA. Yet, by the fact of their geographical location, they could pose a threat to or positively advance the fortunes of a Ghana-Nigeria free trade area.

The Ghana approach to the fast track and the level of consultation with the private sector did not commend itself much to the companies interviewed. In their opinion, with adequate consultations and appreciation of the realities confronting operations on the ground, the Ghana government's approach should have been more guided by practical experiences of the private sector in cross border trade. Government seemed to have taken a position based primarily on political considerations, which, in the view of the companies, could undermine the advantages that Ghana could benefit from a more comprehensive approach to UEMOA vis-à-vis Nigeria. Notwithstanding that Ghana and Nigeria are Anglophone countries and have a common economic legacy, the view of many of the Ghanaian companies was that Ghana's immediate neighbour, Cote d'Ivoire, should be involved in the fast track process. Being a key player in UEMOA, they held the view that if Cote d'Ivoire co-operated in the process, it would drive other UEMOA members along.

Companies surveyed were overwhelmingly opposed to Ghana joining UEMOA as an alternative to the Ghana-Nigeria fast track, the. Even though they appreciated the goal of the fast track approach, which was to accelerate the ECOWAS integration they preferred that the fast track would be inclusive of critical players such as Togo, Benin and particularly Cote d'Ivoire. The general view was that UEMOA should be absorbed into ECOWAS. There was an appreciation of the need for harmonising activities and regulations so that the same conditions and privileges would be applied to all countries within the sub-region regardless of whether they are members of UEMOA or not. This was conceived as the only approach that would sustain Ghana's trade relations within the sub-region without sacrificing the ultimate goal of ECOWAS.

Benefits to Industry

The objective of ECOWAS as set up in 1975, is to promote co-operation in all fields of economic activity including agriculture, industry, transport, telecommunications, trade, customs, immigration, monetary and financial matters, as well as social and cultural affairs – in order to achieve rapid economic development and integration of the economies of West African countries. The vision of a larger regional market has

been a major objective since the establishment of ECOWAS. Consequently, the strategy of market integration has been adopted with supporting measures for facilitating increased intra-regional trade.

The companies covered by the interviews in the three countries (Ghana, Nigeria Cote d'Ivoire) – all recognised the vital role that the integration of the West African economies could play in the socio-economic transformation of the region. Given the global trends towards regionalisation, the industries were unanimous that the sub-region should not be left out, if it was to become an active player in the global market and ensure sustained economic growth and development in member countries.

Specifically, potential benefits of integration perceived by the private sector include:

- the growth of new industries and the strengthening of existing ones
- economies of scale resulting from the large market created by integration
- real product and income creation
- employment generation
- integrated development of infrastructure
- promotion of healthy competition in terms of efficiency, quality and productivity.

Industrial Partnerships within ECOWAS Region

Companies and business associations surveyed in Ghana, Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire were unanimous that the private sector should spearhead the integration process. The revival of the Federation of West African Manufacturers Association (FEWAMA) was considered a step in the right direction. This would, however, require a thorough coordination and an arrangement of common strategies and actions among private sector associations.

FEWAMA was established by the manufacturers' associations of West Africa to:

- Promote the establishment of national manufacturers' associations in member countries of ECOWAS where they did not exist.
- Promote and sustain a permanent link between association of manufacturers and related sectoral organisations in the sub-region.
- Provide a forum for disseminating information and formulating general policy with regards to industrial, labour, social, legal, training, and technical matters for industrialists within the sub-region.
- Promote intra-regional trade in locally manufactured goods within the context of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS).
- Identify and harness local sources of raw materials for processing and for industrial utilisation.

- Promote industrialisation in member states by such means as exhibitions and seminars. and the encouragement of bilateral cooperation among member states.

The following countries were members of FEWAMA: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. The Secretariat was located in Lagos, Nigeria, with a permanent secretary responsible for the daily operations of the association. In 1995, FEWAMA could not conduct its annual general meeting because of lack of attendance. Consequently, it was decided that the activities of the association should be discontinued. FEWAMA appeared to have failed for a number of reasons. In the main, many of the manufacturers' associations in West Africa were not financially capable of paying their contributions.

However, the largest national manufacturers associations in West Africa, AGI, Federation Nationale des Industries et Services de Cote d'Ivoire (FNISCI) and Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) are now determined to revive FEWAMA. (Reports on 1st ECOWAS Business Forum and FEWAMA Meetings in Accra, October 2007). They have all expressed commitment to the FEWAMA agenda and agreed that the recent developments towards accelerated regional integration were sufficiently important to justify increased cooperation between the associations in the sub-region. The view was that if the three strongest associations in the sub-region could form the nucleus of the federation, it will be possible to revive it.

Recent developments have indicated the determination of not only the private sector actors but more importantly of the ECOWAS Commission to revive all private sector association in the sub-region to enhance their capacities as critical actors in the regional integration process. In October 2007, under the auspices of the Private Sector Division of the ECOWAS Commission, an ECOWAS Business Forum was organised in Accra, embracing all identifiable business associations in West Africa. This was followed in July 2008, with a workshop for FEWAMA, on its reorganisation. A formal endorsement of new articles of association and a secretariat are scheduled for October 2008.

Challenges of Regional Trade and Integration

Regional integration has been regarded as an instrument for the development of Ghana's economy. Increased trade with the neighbouring countries is envisaged to result in accelerated development and growth. Consequently, Ghana has been an active participant in ECOWAS and recently the fast track initiative with Nigeria.

However, the feeling among economic operators is that integration remains a political project. Companies complain that the necessary framework for free trade has not yet been put in place. Furthermore, the private sector has not been properly consulted on its priorities for integration. Ghana's aspiration to become the gateway to West Africa did not make much sense when the existing trade barriers prevent large-scale exports to the sub-region.

As part of AGI's study, 13 companies in Ghana, and several others in Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire were interviewed on their experiences with cross border trade. The companies identified a number of barriers that needed to be removed if free trade in West Africa was to become a reality.

It was interesting to note that most companies did not raise the issue of language as a major barrier to trade. Apparently many Ghanaian companies have employed personnel with a French background to handle trade issues with francophone countries. It was also interesting to note that a good number of business people in Cote d'Ivoire were able to communicate in English. The view of the private sector was that although language could pose a problem for intra-regional trade, this could be overcome without much difficulty, if other barriers were removed.

Another major barrier to proper integration has been poor infrastructure linking countries in the sub-region. In order to promote free and fast movement of people, goods and services, regional infrastructure should be developed to a more sophisticated level. Whereas roads between Ghana and its immediate neighbours are sufficiently developed to transport goods and persons, the numerous security checks and cumbersome procedures adopted by security agencies make road transport very expensive and highly inconvenient. Generally, road networks linking ECOWAS countries are not in very good condition..

Sea transport also entails a number of problems including lack of direct shipping links within the sub-region, poor port facilities and a general lack of commitment of port officials in ensuring fast clearance of goods at the ports. Although roads in the sub-region have improved in the recent past there are still a number of problems related to transport. Firstly, a railway line linking countries in the sub-region is essential for proper integration. Secondly, air transport among sub-regional countries is not well developed; it is poorly patronised and very expensive. Thirdly, the telecommunication network in the sub-region is also not well developed.

Trade Barriers

The study identified five main short-term trade barriers which constitute additional challenges to regional integration.

Red Tape concerning export/import procedures:

The measures proposed to address these included:

- Harmonisation of certification and testing procedures.
- Simplification of export/import procedure.
- Fast track application procedure for ETLs tariff.

Lack of Intra-regional Payment and Clearing System:

One measure proposed was the introduction of the West African Inter-bank Payment System (WAIPS).

Road blocks and obstructive attitude of officials:

Measures proposed included: The establishment of an institution for surveillance of irregular trade practices and a sealing system, the institutions of common border posts; and in the case of Ghana, the privatisation of land port(border) operations and payment reforms.

Mistrust between the economic operators in the sub region.

Measures proposed included:

- The revival of the Federation of West African Manufacturers Association (FEWAMA).
- Establishment and networking between trade arbitration centres.

Lack of an enabling environment for Ghanaian exports.

Measures proposed included:

- Export financing
- Establishment of dedicated warehouses for Ghanaian Goods.
- Export promotion in ECOWAS countries.

The barriers identified were to define AGI's initiatives in the process of regional trade promotion and integration.

Advocacy

Since the publication and dissemination of the Study in 2000/2001, AGI initiated an advocacy programme aimed at addressing the first three barriers listed above. The main targets of the advocacy were the Ministries of Trade and Industry (MOTI), Regional Cooperation and NEPAD (MRCN) and the key implementing Agencies –

Customs, Excise and Preventive Service; Ghana Immigration Service; the Ghana Police Service among others. In collaboration with the Ministry of Regional Cooperation and NEPAD, intensive and countrywide sensitisation of Agencies whose operations had an impact on the movement of persons and goods was carried out. This produced positive results then, as officials became active facilitators, thereby projecting Ghana's commitment to the integration process. The Ministry of Regional Cooperation and NEPAD has since been transferred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In response to the non or poor implementation of the ETLs, especially by the UEMOA countries, AGI had advocated for its Government to institute bilateral agreements between Ghana and any of the UEMOA member countries that would agree to a bilateral implementation of the ETL scheme pending an ECOWAS wide application of the Scheme. This was endorsed by the MRCN which facilitated the institution of Bilateral Meetings between Ghana and Burkina Faso on one hand, and Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire on the other. Selected AGI members actively participated in two major meetings held with Burkina Faso in October 2003 (Ouagadougou) and July 2004 (Bolgatanga). Agreement has been reached with Burkina Faso on implementing the Scheme; and that of Cote d'Ivoire is receiving active and positive consideration, having been adversely affected by political developments in that country. AGI worked closely with MOTI and its implementing agency, the Ghana Export Promotion Council (GEPC) to undertake a market study in the sub-region in order to identify export opportunities for Ghanaian products. This resulted in the institution of the Made-in-Ghana Solo Exhibitions. AGI and GEPC, under the auspices of MOTI have organised Solo Exhibitions in the various ECOWAS countries since August 2002:

- Burkina Faso: 5 Exhibitions: July 2002; November 2003; August 2004; June 2005; July 2007
- Sierra Leone: 4 Exhibitions: March 2004; April 2005; April 2006; December 2007
- Benin: 2 Exhibitions: October 2003; November 2005
- Mali: 1 Exhibition: July 2003
- Liberia: 2 Exhibitions, (the first in 1998 was organized on the sole initiative of AGI); October 2006.
- Cote d'Ivoire: Two initiatives had to be aborted due to the prevailing political situation. AGI participated in a Fair on Subcontracting Partnerships.(DATE)

AGI and GEPC have advocated the establishment of trading houses in these and other ECOWAS countries to ensure the continuous presence of Ghanaian products in these markets. These would complement the presence of agencies established by some of the AGI participants in the Solo Exhibitions. The Ministry responded and started the process of incorporating a company Ghana Export Trade Company Ltd(GEXTRACO) to initiate and manage the trading houses. This has since been

stalled. The Solo Exhibitions have brought to the fore, the enormous opportunities for trade within the sub-region as well as the numerous but surmountable challenges that need to be addressed. These have been stated above. There still exists some ambivalence and mendacity regarding the commitment of some ECOWAS countries to the implementation of ECOWAS protocols. Ghana could be a beacon of hope for integration if its government would remain consistent and persevere in the implementation of programmes that would create opportunities for its private sector and which would serve as lessons to the other countries about the benefits of regional integration. Collapsing the Ministry of Regional Cooperation into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs undermines the importance attached to the regional programme and Ghana's commitment to provide leadership in this direction. Indeed, the achievements of the Ministry Regional Cooperation and NEPAD, even with regard to roadblocks and the attitude of officials have been eroded. The stalling in the operations of GEXTRACO is delaying and undermining opportunities gained during the Solo Exhibitions organised.

THE WAY FORWARD

Challenges of Advocacy

The private sector needs a strong voice in the negotiations for further integration. Within the framework of the proposed Fast Track approach, AGI and MAN needed to place their priorities on the fast track agenda and FNISCI would have wished to establish closer ties with its sister organisations (AGI and MAN) in order to convince the Ivorian Government to strengthen their relations with non-UEMOA countries, especially Ghana. Companies in the three countries face many of the same problems. This is true of all ECOWAS private sector operators outside of the target countries covered by the AGI study. Furthermore, the difficulties with the ECOWAS regulations and cross border trade applied to all countries in the sub-region. Therefore, there were many common goals that could be pursued through FEWAMA. This fact underscores the need for pursuing efforts to revitalise the Federation.

In Ghana, the way forward demands consistency and persistence in the implementation of programmes to advance the integration process, in particular, providing support to its private sector to penetrate the regional market. The government should pursue with the same zeal as in regional security and peace operations, the lobbying of other ECOWAS governments to show commitment to the implementation of ECOWAS protocols.

AGI, on its part will not relent in its commitment to the revival of FEWAMA to serve as a platform for industrial and business partnerships as well as regional advocacy for improved regional industrial and integration policies.

There is demonstrated commitment on the part of the private sector associations of the other ECOWAS countries to create common platforms to enhance the private sector participation in the regional integration processes.

CONCLUSION

The benefits of regional integration include gains from new trade opportunities, larger markets, and increased competition (Venables 2000; World Bank 2000b). Integration can only raise returns on investments, facilitate larger investments and induce industries to relocate. It can commit governments to reforms, increase bargaining power, enhance cooperation and improve security. These are benefits that should inure to the welfare of ECOWAS citizens if the regional integration arrangements, as defined by the various ECOWAS protocols, are in place and effective.

As ECOWAS governments continue to disengage from non strategic economic activities, there will be a crucial need to tap private sector resources to finance some regional projects. Activities related to the processing of primary products for domestic and regional markets will constitute avenues for growth and diversification in which the private sector can play a major role. Opportunities for public private partnership in the provision of infrastructure – telecommunications, transport, banking and finance, etc. - will further underscore the critical role of the private sector. Is the ECOWAS private sector ready to respond positively?

Effective participation of the private sector will depend on a number of factors:

- The private sector has to become proactive in its own development and adopt long term investment perspectives.
- The private sector must work to increase product quality and competitiveness and also become multifaceted, catering to domestic, regional and international markets.
- Embrace good practices in corporate governance as well as strengthening their organisational structures.

To complement the efforts of the private sector, Regional and sub regional institutions should develop additional mechanisms to facilitate private sector participation in the public private partnership process.

ECOWAS should make provisions in its treaties for involving the private sector in the conceptualisation, adoption and implementation of trade policies and other regional agreements dealing with the issues of interest to private sector development. This would constitute an improvement on the current situation where the private sector is only accorded observer status.

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CHAPTER EIGHT: ORGANISED LABOUR AND GHANA'S REGIONAL INTEGRATION AGENDA FOR WEST AFRICA,

Kingsley Ofei-Nkansah*

ABSTRACT

The last two decades in particular have seen renewed interest in regional integration in Africa, commanding the attention of many sections of civil society. This paper discusses organised labour's demonstrated interest and concern in regional integration and how it has been expressing this. After a general discussion of organised labour in Ghana, the paper discusses Ghana's integration agenda in the context of regional integration in Africa. The paper examines organised labours' articulations and interventions on regional integration in general; it then proceeds to show how the Sub-Regional Working Group on Trade and Development, in West Africa evolved largely in response to the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations. It also discusses how, increasingly, this Working Group is making regional integration a major advocacy issue for organised labour, notwithstanding various challenges.

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Introduction

A major feature of the last three decades in particular is the tendency towards regional economic integration. This process is taking place at different levels and to different degrees, in all parts of the world. In Africa, even though there have been efforts towards regional integration since independence, the last two decades have seen renewed efforts that have been largely spurred on by globalisation, that is, the process of growing economic integration at the global level, with its attendant political, social and cultural manifestations.

Hailed for the massive increases in global production and wealth creation, globalisation has aroused intense debates for various reasons including the huge chasm between the rich industrialised countries and the developing countries, as well as the growing inequalities within nations. The combined effect of the growing wealth under globalisation along side the yawning poverty and the information communication technology that the globalisation thrives on, are reasons why increasingly more sections of civil society are participating in processes that affect them. Workers and their organisations have in particular found themselves challenged to engage in broader development issues because of their role in wealth creation and the growing recognition of rights of people. Regional integration in Africa and West Africa is among issues of concern to civil society and the trade unions in particular. This paper seeks to highlight the role of organised labour in furthering Ghana's regional integration agenda. It examines the concept of regional integration with examples from the African context; discusses organised labour at the national and beyond; follows up with a discussion of regional integration in Africa and then Ghana's Integration agenda; it examines the positions and roles of organised labour in furthering Ghana's regional integration agenda; assesses strategies being employed (including collaborations with others, the nature of the collaborations, how successful these collaborations have been, the challenges entailed in these collaborations). It discusses the overall challenges organised labour is facing in promoting regional integration agenda and makes recommendations on how to address these challenges.

This study has been the result of analyses of secondary data, including official documents from Government and regional institutions, trade union organisations at the National and Regional levels as well as primary data obtained through key informants interview and participant observation.

The Concept and Practice of Regional Integration

At the most general level, integration is a unification of a number of hitherto independent units into a larger whole. This process may happen to various degrees.

Or even simpler, integration means forming parts into a whole. International organisations represent forms of integration requiring some measure of subjugation of individual members as agreed within the framework of such organisations. Sovereign states entering into integration processes invariably give up some of the individual rights as nations to the common cause and persuade political actors in both State institutions as well as civil society to shift some of their loyalties and expectations from the national to the supra-national. Regional integration brings together national entities in a given geographical region for the purpose of cooperating and harmonising social, economic and political policies for the common good. Adjavor¹⁴⁴ underscores Mistry's definition of economic integration as *"the assignment of responsibility for formulating regional policies, developing rules and regulations and for applying these policies to all markets at a regional level, superseding national controls"*.

Thus, regional integration is an association of states based upon location in a given geographical area, for the safeguarding and promotion of the participants' interests, an association whose terms are fixed by a treaty or other arrangements. It necessarily involves increased level of interaction among the States and peoples with regard to economic, security, political, social and cultural issues. In short, regional integration is the joining of individual states within a region into a larger whole. The degree of integration depends upon the willingness and commitment of independent sovereign states to share their sovereignty.

Organised labour at various levels

Efforts of working people to organise themselves to promote their common interests in the then Gold Coast – now Ghana - go as far back as the turn of the 19th Century.¹⁴⁵ The deplorable working conditions under colonial rule, all over Africa, gave birth to organised forms of resistance. The growth and development of the formal economy during the colonial period gave impetus to the increasing numbers of formally employed and the material conditions for the development of trade unions as the clearest formation for organised labour. As recounted by Arthiabah and Mbiah,¹⁴⁶ British colonial experience with workers struggles in the colonies, especially during the 1920s, gave them reason to initiate institutional processes to regulate workers organisations and actions. The Gold Coast Government

¹⁴⁴Adjavor, B. Regional Integration in West Africa, (Accra, Unpublished Paper, 2006)

¹⁴⁵Adu-Amankwah, K.: The State, Trade Unions and Democracy in Ghana, 1982 – 1990, A Research Paper Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for Obtaining the Degree of Master of Arts in Development Studies at the Institute of Social Studies, (The Hague, ISS, 1990)

¹⁴⁶Arthiabah, P. B. and Mbiah, T.: Half a Century of Toil, Trouble and Progress: the History of the Trades Union Congress of Ghana. (Accra; Gold Type Press Publications Limited, 1995)

accordingly established the Labour Department in 1938 and followed it up, in 1941, with the enactment of the first labour legislation, the Trades Union Ordinance, Cap 91. This Ordinance for the registration and regulation of labour unions paved the way for the emergence, growth and development of organised labour in the Gold Coast.

The invaluable role of organised labour in the independence struggles has been well documented.¹⁴⁷ Be it in Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Zimbabwe or elsewhere, organised labour played an active role in wresting independence from the colonial masters. In Ghana, for example, the role of the TUC in the late forties and early fifties - including the general strike of 1948 - were critical in getting the colonial government to rethink its overt and covert efforts to maintain colonial rule.

The post-independence period saw further development of the legal framework for organised labour. Like other Anglophone countries, independent Ghana saw the development of fairly unified and centralised trade union structures with single trade union centres, contrary to Francophone countries like Senegal, Burkina Faso and others which had several trade union centres. In Ghana, the Industrial Relations Act of 1958, (Act 56) gave a definite legal expression to the establishment of the Trades Union Congress and its affiliates; and saw further development of the same legislation with a new Industrial Relations Act of 1965, (Act 299).

The close relations between the Ghana TUC and the Convention People's Party Government, led by Dr Kwame Nkrumah, created favourable conditions that allowed trade union membership to be almost automatic for workers entering formal employments that had registered trade unions. This boosted the membership growth of the labour movement. On the other hand, the relationship with government created conditions for a certain amount of control of the top leadership of organised labour. Using collective bargaining as the main instrument, the Ghana TUC and its affiliates remained largely preoccupied with enterprise level conditions of work and employment, while engaging with employers and government through the emerging tripartite arrangement at the national level. Some of the other major organisations of working people that have co-existed and cooperated with the Ghana TUC to various degrees include the Ghana Registered Nurses' Association (GRNA), Civil Servants' Association of Ghana (CSAG), and the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT). Since the 1990s, the Ghana Federation of Labour (GFL)¹⁴⁸ has emerged as a second trade union centre, having

¹⁴⁷Agbesinyale, P., Democratic Workers' Participation for Economic and Social Development-the case of Ghana, (Accra; Hallows Ads Ltd,2000)

¹⁴⁸Some of the affiliates of the GFL are Food and Allied Workers Union (FAWU), Textiles, Garments and Leather Employees Union (TEGLEU), Private Teachers Staff Union of Ghana.

broken away from the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU), then an affiliate of the Ghana TUC.¹⁴⁹

Notwithstanding the varied forms of labour organisations, the Ghana TUC – the single largest trade union centre (is this in Ghana)- has remained the mouthpiece or lead representative of organised labour within the National Tripartite Committee and the ILO. The Ghana TUC has also played a lead role in intervening on policies. Some of these interventions have been on labour and employment related issues, while others touch on broader social, economic and political issues of interest to workers and their organisations.

Trade union effectiveness depends on the activism of members first and foremost. In the last decade, in particular, trade unionism has also thrived more on its collaboration with other civil society groups and associations within the country. The importance of alliances is even more critical with globalisation, when there is reduced density of workers in the formal sector - the traditional terrain of trade union organisation. In Ghana, for example, the trade union movement represents less than ten percent of the active labour force. Organised labour is, however, a huge source of pressure and influence as demonstrated by the responsiveness of the formal sector workforce to mobilisation when the need arises.¹⁵⁰ A mapping of organised labour in Ghana captures the Ghana TUC, the Ghana National Association of Teachers, Ghana Registered Nurses Association, Civil Servants Association, Judicial Services Staff of Ghana, Ghana Federation of Labour and the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union.¹⁵¹

Historically, organised labour has always had a strong tendency to collaborate beyond national borders and, indeed, this is an expression of the fundamental principle of solidarity. It is in this vein that the Ghana TUC, the single largest federation of labour unions in Ghana, has been in the forefront of developing various forms and levels of relations with organised labour at the sub-regional, regional and global levels. Concurrently, organised labour's concerns for democratisation and integration on the African continent and the challenges of globalisation have also given additional basis for deepening collaboration with other civil society organisations across borders, within the African region and beyond. At the continental and regional levels, the Ghana TUC, in particular, was active in the establishment of the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU) and the Organisation of Trade Union of West Africa (OTUWA). At the same time, the Ghana

¹⁴⁹Currently, the Ghana TUC has seventeen affiliate National Unions, including the Public Utility Workers Union (PUWU), Teachers and Educational Workers' Union (TEWU), Communication Workers Union (CWU), Health Services Workers Union (HSWU), Union of Industry, Commerce and Finance Workers (UNICOF).

¹⁵⁰Agbesinyale, P.: Democratic Workers' Participation for Economic and Social Development – the case of Ghana, (Accra; Hallow Ads Ltd. 2000).

¹⁵¹Ofei-Nkansah, K. : A Mapping of Organised Labour in Ghana, (Unpublished Paper prepared for the National Working Group on Trade and Development, Accra, November, 2007).

TUC has been affiliated to the erstwhile International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). Again, at the continental level, some affiliates of the Ghana TUC were active in forming the Democratic Organisation of African Workers Trade Union Unity (**DOAWTU**),¹⁵² an African regional affiliate of erstwhile World Confederation of Labour (**WCL**). Since 2007, and, more directly, in response to the challenges of globalisation, the Ghana TUC has been active in establishing the International Trade Union Confederation - Africa (**ITUC-Africa**), following a merger of the Regional affiliate structures of the International Confederation of Labour (**ICFTU**) and the **WCL**. All these groupings have been vehicles through which organised labour in Ghana has variously influenced the integration agenda. As discussed below, **the West African Trade Union Working Group on Trade and Development** has been more directly relevant for promoting the regional integration agenda in ECOWAS.

Regional Integration in Africa

After independence, many African leaders saw regional integration as a central element of their development strategy. This is reasonable and desirable in the light of the colonial fragmentation of Africa into many states with limited market.

Before the 1980s, African leaders¹⁵³ pursued regional integration schemes as part of the strategy of meeting the continent's daunting development challenges, especially during the cold war era. After the 1980s, African regional integration received renewed attention. The world trade liberalisation process, following the Uruguay round of trade negotiations and the establishment of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), gave additional historical impetus to advance regional integration. With the end of apartheid, another dimension to regionalism is emerging since the anti-colonial struggles are deemed completed and hence the need to focus on economic integration as a basis for social and economic development.

Integration, as such, has become a historical imperative for Africa in a globalised, more competitive global market. This imperative has been driving the establishment and development of various regional economic blocs, namely, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) 1975, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) 1982, East African Community (EAC) 1999, Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) 1989 and Southern African Development Community (SADC) 1992. All these blocs have been established against the backdrop of African

¹⁵²Ghana TUC affiliates, which were active in founding DOAWTU, included General Agricultural Workers Union (GAWU), Construction Building Materials Workers' Union (CMWU), Public Services Workers' Union (PSWU), etc.

¹⁵³Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Sekou Toure of Guinea were among prominent leaders who pursued the Pan African ideals.

regional integration initiatives that gave birth to the OAU as far back as 1963, with Ghana playing an active role.

ECOWAS as a regional economic bloc was created by the Authority of Heads of States and Governments of West Africa on 28 May 1975 in Lagos, again with Ghana playing an active role. Originally comprising 16 West African States, it has since 2000 been left with fifteen, following the withdrawal of Mauritania's membership.¹⁵⁴ With a total population of about 250million covering an area of 6.1million km² and comprising fifteen (15) countries, the main objective of ECOWAS is to promote integration of the national economies and accelerate the development of their States.

Notwithstanding the avowed commitment to regional integration in West Africa, successful implementation has been slow. Reasons given for the slow pace of implementation include political instability, weak democratic culture and governance and lack of political will. Associated to the political range of reasons are manifold cleavages that tend to work against integration: - ethnic violence that sometimes spills over into neighbouring countries; divisions arising from contesting positions in relation to changes in government; historically-determined Francophone, Anglophone and Lusophone linguistic and cultural heritage; the relatively older and stronger tradition of Francophone – Anglophone divide, in which the former have a relatively advanced integration project in the form of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU).¹⁵⁵

Beyond the cold war divisions, there have been the Lome Conventions and now the Cotonou Agreement which have definitely emphasised trade with the former colonial masters and diverted due attention from intra regional trade.¹⁵⁶ Some argue that part of the weakness and ineffectiveness of ECOWAS prior to the revision of the Treaty was due to a rather legalistic approach to regional integration.¹⁵⁷ Meanwhile there is the thinking that a big obstacle is the challenge of developing credible institutions that equitably share the gains of economic development, and establish compensatory mechanisms for losers.

Ghana indeed has been active in the Regional and sub-regional integration efforts, with various actors in the Ghanaian polity playing roles to push forward this integration agenda. Organised labour is one of those actors that have in more recent times demonstrated its interest in the African regional integration efforts.

¹⁵⁴The fifteen members of ECOWAS are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo; eight are Francophone, five Anglophone and two Lusophone.

¹⁵⁵It is also known as UEMOA from its name in French

¹⁵⁶Mangeni, F.: *Obstacles to Economic Integration in Africa*, (Nairobi, Action Aid International, 2004)

¹⁵⁷Jebuni, C., "The Role of ECOWAS in the Trade Liberalisation", in Zqbal and M.S and M.S. Khan (eds), **Trade Reform and Regional Integration in West Africa**, (Washington: IMF, 1998).

Ghana's Integration Agenda

An official of the Foreign Affairs Ministry¹⁵⁸ confirms the consistency of Ghana's Regional integration agenda with the content and direction of ECOWAS integration efforts. Specifically, Ghana's integration agenda may be discerned in the myriad of social, economic and political challenges that are being addressed through the regional integration efforts.

Politically, Ghana has been committed to promoting peace and security in the Sub-Region, and in particular with her immediate neighbours, La Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Togo. The management of conflict through supranational efforts is also a concern in the integration agenda. The experience of ECOMOG confirms this commitment. Socially, Ghana is committed to combating unemployment and a host of crimes such as drug and child trafficking, trade in arms, robberies and a host of others. Health concerns have a place in the agenda, especially in respect of health problems like HIV-AIDS, tuberculosis and other contagious diseases.

Economic concerns are paramount as Ghana sees economic benefits in regional integration that takes due cognisance of the diverse levels of development in West Africa. Being one of the more industrialised countries in the sub-region, Ghana is particularly interested in the market access opportunities that emerge with the free movement of goods, services and people. Concurrently, Ghana supports the development of mechanisms that ensure a balanced and more equitable distribution of costs and benefits, according to the Director of the Africa and AU Bureau, Foreign Affairs Ministry.

Ghana has been concerned about the slow pace of integration in West Africa and has demonstrated commitment to fast tracking regional integration. The efforts to develop a second currency zone among five Anglophone countries in the Sub region is one indication of such commitment. Ghana recognises the diversity of formal and informal interactions taking place across national borders and supports the removal of all barriers to the movement of goods and people, in accordance with established protocols of ECOWAS. There is increasing appreciation of the fact that business operators and civil society are active in cross border interaction. This recognition is lending strength to their inclusion in regional integration efforts that have hitherto been pursued by State institutions.

¹⁵⁸Interview with Mr. W. A. Awinador-Kanyirige, Director-Africa and AU, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Accra, May 7, 2009

Organised labour and Ghana's regional integration agenda

Organised labour has demonstrated its commitment to regional integration through the articulation of various positions in various forums and trade union frameworks in Ghana and beyond. These multi-level interventions have often times involved collaborations with various organisations, through its affiliations, partnerships and other episodic relationships.

What organised labour has been doing by itself in Ghana

Directly and more so through the General Agricultural Workers Union, one of the biggest affiliates of the Ghana TUC, there have been many interventions in relation to the negotiation of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). These have been strong in articulating the likely negative impact of the EPA on regional integration in the West African sub-region in particular. These have taken the form of direct government-citizen engagement, media and parliamentary capacity building, media interventions and popular demonstration. Through GAWU's representation in the Inter-Institutional Committee on Multilateral Trade, organised labour has mobilised participating Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). In Ghana, there have been collaborations with other civil society organisations like the Third World Network-Africa, ActionAid Ghana, Food Security Policy Advocacy Network (FOODSPAN), Ghana Trade and Livelihoods Coalition and Abantu for Development, as well as the Association of Ghana Industries (AGI). These have jointly organised media campaigns and other engagements to highlight regional integration as a necessary condition for development.

Beyond Ghana, there have been collaborations with trade unions and other civil society organisations (CSOs). Foremost among CSOs are the African Trade Network (ATN), Eurostep of Belgium, Enda Tiers Monde, ActionAid International, Oxfam international, Both Ends of Netherlands and others. The continental trade unions have continued to constitute a major advocacy framework for organised labour.

Since the formation of Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU) in 1973, the Ghana TUC has, apart from its own direct interventions, expressed through OATUU its commitment to the vision of African Unity. OATUU, right from the onset, declared its historic role in contributing to the realisation of African Unity, and, in more recent times, reiterated that position. "From OATUU's experience over the years, the best way of achieving development in Africa in a continuous and sustainable manner is the integration of Africa's economies. OATUU will use all the means available to it and African workers to push for the fast-tracking of Africa's economic integration."¹⁵⁹ This position on African integration agenda underscored

¹⁵⁹OATUU, Report of Activities of the Executive Committee, 2004 – 2008, (Accra, OATUU Secretariat, 2008),

the formation of regional trade union coordinating structures such as the Organisation of Trade Unions of West Africa (OTUWA).

OTUWA's commitment to regional integration is explicit in the Preamble of its Constitution, to wit, "The Trade Unions of ECOWAS member countries which are mobilised within the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity to work for the total liberation of the continent in order to ensure the true emancipation of the African workers and for the socio economic development of our continent."

It goes on to articulate the determination of organised labour to give concrete and effective support for the gigantic task of economic integration in West Africa, and to implement the decision of the 6th Summit of ECOWAS Heads of States and Governments, held in Conakry in 1983, on the mobilisation of organisations of the masses and the universities of the Sub-Region in integration process.¹⁶⁰ The founding instruments of OTUWA recognised the role of sub-regional organisations in the achievement of African unity, expressed its conviction for a permanent organisation to centralise and give impetus to the actions of ECOWAS workers at trade union, economic, social and cultural levels. Thus OTUWA was established "in accordance with the principles and programmes of ECOWAS."¹⁶¹ Beyond the regional and sub-regional trade union confederations, organised labour has variously collaborated with global unions.

Among trade unions, the Ghana TUC, directly or through affiliates like the General Agricultural Workers Union, has collaborated with the World Confederation of Labour (WCL) and International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) - the two global Confederations that merged in December 2007 to become the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). Ghana TUC affiliates, through their affiliation with various Global Union Federations (GUFs) such as International Union of Food (IUF), Building and Woodworkers International (BWI) and Education International (EI) use various opportunities to highlight global concerns that negatively implicate the fortunes of socio-economic development and regional integration in particular.

Ghana TUC also maintains bilateral relations with unions in Africa and Europe. They include Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Trade Union Solidarity Centre (SASK) of Finland, the Federation of Dutch Trade Unions (FNV) of The Netherlands and others. According to the General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation-Africa, these bilaterals hold the potential of strengthening the advocacy role of the continental union

¹⁶⁰ECOWAS, A/REC 1/5/83

¹⁶¹OTUWA Constitution, Preamble.

movement given the greater sense of labour union unity realised in the last two years. Beyond these, Ghana TUC participates actively in the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

In the post-Lome IV era, organised labour has been even more active in collaborating with others within the framework of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement (CPA) which agreement explicitly provides for non-state actors' participation. Though the CPA contains provisions for participation in relation to development cooperation, among others, it is the negotiation of a new trade regime between the EU and the regional groupings of the ACP which has been the issue of intense contestation, participation and collaboration of non-state actors. As indicated above, these collaborations have sought to build social forces in the campaign against the EPA, and consistently made a strong case against the EPA on the grounds that it would undermine the regional integration efforts and processes in West Africa, and undermine Ghana's integration agenda. The support of the Frederick Ebert Stiftung (FES), in the development of these social forces, has been significant.

West African Trade Union Working Group on Trade and Development

Motivated by the challenges emerging from multilateral and bilateral trading demands, twelve trade union representatives from six West African countries, formed the West African Trade Union Working Group on Trade and Development in May 2005 – with the support of the FES. The motivations for this group arise from the shared view that “West African trades unions have the obligation to ... work towards a better inclusion of trade unions in the elaboration, negotiation and implementation of any trade agreement, mainly EPAs; work towards the achievement of food security at the regional level engage on the impact of the agreements on the economy and employment in particular; work towards an effective regional integration; work towards the elaboration of a policy of promotion and protection of employment at national and regional levels; and work towards unity workers associations.”¹⁶²

Coming into being in May 2005, the Working Group was preceded by trade interventions, media engagements, lobby visits to Brussels and Berlin which enabled trade unions to draw attention to the negative implications of the EPA development in general, including regional integration. Also through the Lisbon process – the Africa-EU strategy – trade union functionaries from Ghana have actively engaged with various policy institutions within and outside the state to articulate the concerns of organised labour in the negotiation of free trade agreements with ECOWAS. These concerns have included the desire for the ECOWAS region to set its

¹⁶²West African Trade Union Working Group on Trade and Development, A Compilation of Work Done: 2005-2008, (Cotonou, FES, 2009).

own time-table and advance its own integration before entering into any free trade agreement with the European Union, especially since the latter is the most advanced regional integration and economic bloc.

The work dynamics of the Working Group has involved two focal points – Benin and Ghana. Each meeting, following the formal maiden meeting in Cotonou (May 2005), has taken place with an agenda developed by the two focal points, in consultation with other members of the Working Group. Thus the Group has held a number of meetings as follows: - in Dakar, in July 2005 to share knowledge and adopt a position on the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA); in Accra, October 2005 to focus on Food Security in West Africa; in Bamako in January 2006 to build capacity of the Group on regional integration and advocacy strategy development. Subsequently, the Group met with the Secretary-Generals of the Sub-Regions Trade Union Confederations, in Abuja in May 2006, to share information and develop perspectives on how to deal with the challenges.¹⁶³

Emerging out of the meeting with the Secretary – Generals were important decisions that were to help push the regional integration agenda by counteracting the European Union's push for completion of EPA by end 2007. The decisions taken included the expansion of the country-coverage of the working group beyond the initial six West African countries; a lobby visit to the ECOWAS Secretariat, in Abuja; meeting with West African trade unionists attending the International Labour Conference in Geneva, June 2006; and a three-person lobby delegation to Brussels and Berlin, in July 2006 to engage with policy makers and parliamentarians in anticipation of the German ascendancy of the EU Presidency – due for July – December 2006. In all these, organised labour representatives were strong in articulating their concerns for regional integration and the tendency for the EPA negotiations processes and outcomes to undermine regional integration, in Africa and indeed all the regional economic groupings.

Like all advocacy activities, particularly at the supra-national level, outcomes have been difficult to measure. Certain processes and developments, however, point to the growing recognition of organised labour as an important segment of civil society in Africa for the campaigns against the EPA and for regional integration. Some of these processes and developments include increased collaboration with wider network of trade unions and other civil society activists;¹⁶⁴ Official pronouncements from the EU Parliament and EU member states' Parliaments – Britain, France,

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ In the last quarter of 2006, the erstwhile ICFTU and OXFAM International put together a campaign of some eight trade union and other civil society elements to undertake a lobby tour of Belgium, Germany, Italy, France and other European Cities. In November 2007 again the ActionAid International and the then ICFTU in collaboration with a number of a number of European NGOs organised another EPA European Tour involving trade unionists from Ghana and the Caribbean, as well as other representatives from Civil society, private sector and indeed the Ugandan Parliament.

Netherlands, etc. - criticising the high-handedness of the European Commission in negotiating the EPAs; unprecedented public criticism of EPA by West African Government officials, including the President of Senegal as well as the receptivity of Ghanaian Parliamentarians to the CSO interventions on EPA, as evidenced by their readiness to participate in meetings and forums initiated by the CSOs. Again, West Africa's October 2007 decision, in Abidjan, that they could not conclude an EPA by end 2007 was significant even if Ghana and La Cote d'Ivoire were to break ranks in December and sign interim EPAs, following immense pressures from the European Commission and exporters whose principal export market was the EU.

The Trade Union Working Group also held strategic alliance meetings with private sector representatives in Saly, Senegal, and farmers and producer organisations in Accra, in December 2006 and June 2007 respectively. These meetings deepened organised labour's recognition of the imperative of strengthening the social base of the campaigns against the Economic Partnership Agreement and, in the process, pushing the regional integration agenda. Indeed the outcomes strengthened the resolve of the trade activists as these other social groupings demonstrated their shared commitment.

The strategic alliance meeting with the private sector demanded for the extension of the negotiation deadline from 2007 to 2010. Moreover, they identified some development benchmarks that should be realised before the completion of the EPA negotiations. Among these benchmarks are the deepening of regional integration and strengthening of intra-regional trade; the development of national policies on competition, investment and procurement and the harmonisation of regional policies on same; and the development and harmonisation of sub-regional strategies for agricultural and industrial development.

The meeting with farmers and rural producer organisations made conclusions and demands that were even more far reaching. These conclusions and demands included the creation of an effective regional customs union; the establishment of a common external tariff which facilitates the implementation of the Economic Community of West Africa Agricultural Policy and guarantees food sovereignty; the conclusion of the Doha Round with a multilateral framework that responds clearly to the expectations of the developing countries; the creation and protection of employment that respects international labour standards. What is more, the meeting also demanded the deepening of regional integration "in a manner that involves the people of West Africa and primarily serves their interests."¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁵West African Trade Union Working Group on Trade and Development, A Compilation of Work Done: 2005-2008, (Cotonou, FES, 2009)

Each of the position papers emerging out of the Working Group's meetings underscored organised labour's commitment to deepening regional integration. The position paper on EPA¹⁶⁶ underscored the importance of regional integration and suggested – at that stage in the evolution of the Working Group - that the EPA could stimulate regional integration. Apart from demanding trade union inclusion in the EPA negotiations, the trade union representatives demanded the strengthening of regional integration, acknowledged the need for the region to adopt its own trade and investment policies; demanded the adoption of sectoral policies especially in agriculture. Recognising the tendency for some countries to lose out in the creation of customs unions, the trade unions also expressed the need to create compensatory mechanisms at the national and regional levels, in keeping with the spirit and letter of the EPA. The position on Food Security also underscored the importance of regional integration.

It is however the working group's position on regional Integration which explicitly underscores the importance of integration and affirms that “integration is a necessary condition for the development of the sub-region which is plagued with abject poverty, under-development and conflicts”.¹⁶⁷ It also recalls African and West African regional initiatives and efforts to promote regional integration on the continent. Whilst recognising the establishment of ECOWAS as a major turning point in the integration efforts of the sub-region, it is quick to acknowledge the slow pace and seeming low level of commitment – particularly in relation to the ratification and operationalisation of ECOWAS protocols.

Far-reaching perspectives of trade union advocacy for regional integration have been agreed upon. These include

- The active participation of trade unions and the population in the regional integration processes and the reform of regional institutions so as to ensure their inclusion and participation.
- Strengthening the capacity of ECOWAS to ensure the effective implementation of common agreements.
- Empowering Community institutions through access to appropriate resources in order to promote peace and stability in the political and economic environment.
- Creating conditions that grant opportunity to the private sector and farmers to increase their productivity.
- Developing and implementing a common agricultural policy for ECOWAS so as to satisfy the demands of the common market and to increase competitiveness at the international level.

¹⁶⁶Subsequent to this July 2005 position, the Working Group has been more insistent that indeed the EPA was a threat to regional integration.

¹⁶⁷West African Trade Union's Working Group: Position Papers on International Economy and Regional Integration, (Cotonou, FES, May 2009).

- Develop a regional strategy for increased industrial growth directed towards the satisfaction of the common market.
- Implementation of appropriate trade policies, combining judiciously some selective protection measures for sensitive products and sectors.
- Establish structural funds and other mechanisms to help countries which have weaker industrial sector or higher unemployment rate.
- Empower women and the youth.
- Increase intra community, social, cultural, political and security cooperation.
- Establish mechanisms for cooperation at education and cultural levels within the community and trading logics must be protected in the framework of global agreements on trade and services.,
- Take efficient and collective measures to fight against trans-border issues like AIDS, child work and women slavery.
- The inclusion and effective implementation of the Core Conventions of the International Labour Organisation in all policies adopted at the community level.
- Promotion of social responsibility of enterprises at the community level.¹⁶⁸

Guided by the more elaborate campaign and advocacy strategy, the representatives of the National Centres of organised labour made various interventions to push forward the regional integration agenda, while campaigning against the EPA or at least aspects of the EPA. Thus, representatives of organised labour Ghana adopted strategies such as lobbying, media campaigns and interventions, popular manifestations like floats and demonstrations, some action-oriented research, capacity building for various actors – including policy makers, parliamentarians and other civil society activists.

Challenges

Regional integration in West Africa has been daunted with manifold challenges that have often-times slowed down the realisation of its objectives. As acknowledged by the West African Trade Union Working Group, integration efforts are confronted with various limitations including the varied size, natural resource endowment, development levels, and food security situation of the countries involved in the integration project. In addition, there are political and ideological splits between countries, based largely on their colonial heritage. Further, internal and trans-border conflicts have seriously affected the integration process and undermined the hope of a great number of the population. The economic crisis of the 70's and 80's created the conditions for the establishment of structural adjustment programmes

¹⁶⁸The ILO Core Labour Standards are obligatory for all member countries, whether they have been ratified or not: - these are Freedom of Association, Non-Discrimination, Freedom from Forced Labour, Freedom from Child Labour

by Brettons Wood institutions leaving in their trail very mixed results with daunting implications for the ongoing integration process.

Even though the ECOWAS revised Treaty has recently widened and deepened integration with a stronger commitment by member states, multilateral and bilateral trade demands, especially the EPA, are undermining the rate, sequence and levels of integration, apart from undermining the productive base of national enterprises and maintaining West Africa as a supplier of primary commodities. As noted by the Working Group "It is necessary to implement an integration that favours intra-regional trade, increases productive activities of national companies, food security for the population, improve living conditions in rural areas, poverty reduction and industrialisation."¹⁶⁹

These concerns have been shared by Jebuni and others who highlight the low level of commitment to the development of supranational authorities and how this is often attributed to the absence of a culture of power-sharing in the modern structures of politics in Africa.¹⁷⁰ Another explanation often given is weak domestic governance. The challenge of political commitment to the integration agenda is also highly articulated. This is manifest in the slow pace of ratification and implementation of ECOWAS protocols, and the low provisioning of resources for the integration project.

While addressing these objective challenges, organised labour is itself has to contend with some challenges from the internal environment. Extending the organisation of trade unions to informal sector workers in the urban and rural sectors is deemed historically necessary and desirable and organised labour is accordingly working in that direction. This presents internal challenges for enhanced advocacy work that depend on the mobilisation and internal cohesion of the membership. On the other hand protecting and promoting the interests of informal sector workers who are largely self-employed is best pursued through advocating for more favourable policies.

Role of the Private Sector and Civil Society:

There is the need for greater participation of the private sector and civil society groups in the decision-making process. To date, the integration process has been left to government alone, to the virtual exclusion of non-state actors to the extent that the private sector and civil society in general, which are expected to drive the process and make the generality of the people enjoy the benefit of such a process have been left out.

¹⁶⁹West African Trade Union's Working Group: Position Papers on International Economy and Regional Integration, (Cotonou, FES, May 2009).

¹⁷⁰Jebuni, C. *ibid*

What are the prospects?

The lessons from the on-going campaign against the EPA confirm the need for more vigilance on the part of civil society organisations and trade unions for that matter.¹⁷¹ The growing impetus of international working class solidarity for integration efforts is just warming up. The greater challenges relate to getting the people involved, creating the psychological pre-requisites for free movement of people, for harmonisation of labour policies and for harmonisation of other policies. There is also the need to deal with the danger of some losing out as a result of the development of the integration process through the institution of compensation mechanisms. Organised labour must contribute to promoting political democracy as a necessary condition for taking forward the integration agenda. The emerging unity of trade unions on the African continent following the merger of the ICFTU and the WCL and the emergence of the ITUC heightens the prospects further.

Meanwhile, OATUU continues to enjoy the recognition of the AU and ECOWAS as a trade union framework which is independent of trade unions outside the African continent and hence better placed to represent working people in structures of the regional and sub-regional institutions. For example, trade union leaders holding positions in OATUU are among those elected into the Pan-African Parliament and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOC). Again OATUU members continue to be very active in the Tripartite Labour and Social Affairs Commission of the African Union.¹⁷² It is significant that among the priority concerns of OATUU in the 2004 – 2008 Quadrennial are international trade and Africa's economic integration.

From the standpoint of organised labour, labour mobility should enable people to move from low productivity areas to areas where they will be more productive thus benefiting economic operators as well as the community as a whole. The prospect, however, can best be realised with the harmonisation of labour legislation, a process which trade unions are yet to begin driving.

Meanwhile, there are other regional integration programmes that suggest that integration could chalk more significant successes in the sub region. In this connection, there are emerging ECOWAS-wide programmes whose formulation and implementation civil society organisations and trade unions in particular should engage on and influence. These include common policies for agriculture, with the

¹⁷¹Ofei-Nkansah, K.: The West African Trade Union Organisations and the issue of regional integration – Challenges and Responsibilities, (Paper presented at the 10th Meeting of the Sub-Regional Working Group on Trade and Development, Accra, 2008)

¹⁷²OATUU: Report of Activities of the Executive Committee, 2004 – 2008, (Accra, OATUU Secretariat, 2008)

prime objective of attaining sustainable food security in the sub-region, and the promotion of safe and efficient use of agro-chemicals. In this connection, the Position paper of the Trade Union Working Group on Food Security Challenges in West Africa, adopted at its 11th meeting in Cotonou, 4-6 November, 2008, is very significant, as the trade unionists make demands for promoting food security through ECOWAS initiatives that draw strength from nationally coordinated activities. Also under discussion is the development of a Common Regional Policy for industrial and mineral resources development for the ECOWAS region.

Prospects are also discernible in the efforts to address challenges which individual countries find themselves unable to manage. For example, the challenges of HIV/AIDS and other health issues, desertification, child trafficking, trade in arms and drugs compel national and regional institutions to fast track and co-ordinate efforts. Meanwhile, there is increasing civil society involvement in promoting good governance and peace as necessary pre-conditions for integration.

CONCLUSION

The increasing recognition of the role of civil society, the prevailing architecture of civil society with trade unions occupying a central place and the challenges emerging specifically from the EPA negotiations are pushing trade unions to be more proactive and policy oriented in the march towards integration in West Africa in particular and Africa in general. Organised labour has demonstrated that, in spite of various limitations, it has a lead role to play in forging ahead with civil society participation in a wide range of development concerns. Especially in the last five to eight years, organised labour in Ghana has positioned itself to play its historic role for the advancement of the regional integration agenda. It has built its capacity through various relevant studies, training sessions and strategic alliances. It has also mobilised its membership as well as other sections of civil society, including the media, to step up citizens-government engagement in furtherance of regional integration.

The quest for enhanced regional food security and industrial development calls for cooperation that has implications for labour, hence the critical necessity to begin addressing concerns for migration and the harmonisation of labour legislation. Organised labour should pressurise for the removal of governmental and institutional bottlenecks inhibiting the integration. The increasing mobilisation of larger sections of the informal sector and activation of women as well as the increasing collaboration of trade unions and other civil society organisations are reliable indicators helping to explain the prospects for enhanced trade union role in pushing regional integration.

CHAPTER NINE: FACILITATING REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN WEST AFRICA: THE ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN GHANA

Linda Darkwa*

ABSTRACT

Efforts at regional integration in the West African sub-region date back to the immediate post colonial days. Right after independence, countries in the sub-region experimented with different forms of collaboration aimed at fostering and enhancing sub-regional integration. However, sub-regional integration efforts in West Africa have since conception, been conceptualised through the lens of trade, with very little or no efforts at other areas of interaction in the sub-region. Yet, most of the trade in West Africa is between Member States and countries in the North. Thus, although some modest achievements have been made in the sub-regional integration efforts through the vehicle of trade, a lot remains undone. Provisions in the Protocols promoting integration and the reality in many Member States are often at variance because of a number of issues such as a lack of understanding of the Protocols and how they are expected to work; lack of a properly trained workforce at both the policy and implementation levels and the over-reliance on politicians rather than the citizens within Member States, to push the agenda. The chapter asserts that the regional integration project would fail to achieve its objectives if it continues in this way and submits that educational institutions in Ghana can play a pivotal role in steering the sub-regional integration agenda forward. It identifies a number of ways, some of which already exist but are not beneficial to the objectives of integration in the sub-region because of a lack of structure and coordination. It concludes that educational institutions in Ghana can make the ideals of sub-regional integration a part of the value system of the people through both formal and informal education by devising creative and innovative ways to meet the goals of sub-regional integration.

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BACKGROUND

Integration in West Africa has deep-seated roots that run into the period of its colonisation through the post colonial era into the present. Yet, despite this long-standing history, it was Ghana's first President, Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah who placed Ghana at the forefront of West African and ultimately the continents integration agenda. Nkrumah's clearly stated his quest for an integrated region when he stated in his first foreign policy statement that

“the independence of Ghana is meaningless unless it is linked with the total liberation of the entire African continent.”¹⁷³

Thus, the integration agenda played a vital role in his efforts at nation building and development. A scan of Ghana's successive foreign policies after Nkrumah suggests continuity in this direction. Irrespective of their ideological leanings, almost all of Ghana's political leaders have pursued regional integration as part of their foreign policy even if the compartmentalisation of the issues of integration has been somewhat different. Although there has been a vigorous and systematic effort at economic integration in the sub-region, other factors which can aid in the integration efforts have lagged behind and where present, it has been piecemeal.

This paper looks at the role of educational institutions in Ghana in the facilitation of the West African regional integration agenda. It seeks to ascertain whether educational institutions in Ghana have a role to play in the integration agenda; identify those roles, and collate the strategies which have been employed to undertake these roles. It also discusses the challenges encountered and the prospects for surmounting these challenges.

According to Lombarde and Van Langenhove regional integration is a: *worldwide phenomenon of territorial systems that increase the interactions between their components and create new forms of organisation, co-existing with traditional forms of state-led organisation at the national level.*¹⁷⁴

This means that integration requires interaction at all levels – political, economic, social and cultural. This need for interaction at all levels suggests the need for a multidimensional process which takes cognisance of the linkages and synergies between all the units of production. However, there has been a heavy emphasis on economic co-operation as the vehicle for integration, oftentimes leaving behind the other equally important segments required for effective integration. Asante

¹⁷³Nkrumah, Kwame 'Africa Must Unite' (London: Panaf Books Ltd, 1974) p.136

¹⁷⁴Philippe De Lombaerde, Luk Van Langenhove, "Indicators of Regional Integration: Methodological Issues", IIS Discussion Paper, No. 64, March 2005

surmises that the basic challenge confronting the region's integration efforts is the erroneous presupposition of the existence of a production capacity to meet a greater demand even though there is the need to rather increase its production base.¹⁷⁵ The interdependence of the factors of production - labour, land and capital requires that each of them be systematically developed to ensure a smooth fit, for the realisation of integration. There is no gainsaying the fact that Africa is endowed with vast tracts of arable land and resources. Yet, it also remains one of the least developed continents perhaps due to its low skilled human resource and closely related low level of capital.¹⁷⁶ Perhaps, the biggest challenge to the integration effort is the lack of political will on the part of West African leaders to institutionalise strategies aimed at the realisation of the objectives of the ECOWAS. This paper focuses on one such strategy, utilising educational institutions to facilitate regional integration, which it is believed can aid in refocusing the integration agenda and catalyse it to realise its aims and objectives.

The role of education in facilitating regional integration: The Framework

The role of education in facilitating regional integration is given prominence in the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) which devotes a chapter to "Human resource development and utilisation". Of the 26 articles within this section, seven are directly devoted to the need for educational curricula and policy aimed at transporting the integration agenda to its envisaged designation. Thus, the LPA calls for harmonisation of educational policies, development of relevant curricula and funding for education. Although its envisaged end date is past, the provisions in the LPA remain relevant even today. Thus, in 1993, when Member States decided to revise the 1975 ECOWAS Treaty, they deemed it prudent to reaffirm the role of education in realising the aims and objectives of the regional integration schema. Although the revised treaty does not have set thematic areas as the LPA, the need for training runs through the entire treaty and is consolidated in Article 3, paragraph 2(a) which states:

*the harmonisation and co-ordination of national policies and the promotion of integration programmes, projects and activities, particularly in food, agriculture and natural resources, industry, transport and communications, energy, trade, money and finance, taxation, economic reform policies, human resources, education, information, culture, science, technology, services, health, tourism, legal matters;*¹⁷⁷

It is explicitly clear that although trade and economics have been the main vehicles used in the transportation of regional integration in the sub region, education plays

¹⁷⁵Asante S. K.B., "ECOWAS Economic Integration: Challenges and prospects" in Regionalism and Integration in West Africa: The Way Forward (Accra: LECIA, 1999) p. 43

¹⁷⁶See The Lagos Plan of Action for the economic development of Africa 1980-2000.

¹⁷⁷Ibid

a vital role in the transformation and re-engineering of the values and ideals of the people to foster acceleration of a holistic integration in the sub-region.¹⁷⁸

As has been stated earlier, historically, Ghana has been at the vanguard of African economic cooperation and integration, which has its link to Pan-African Unity. The actions of all successive governments beginning from Nkrumah, have been reflective of this leadership position. Ghana has actively participated in ECOWAS meetings and other projects that aim at promoting the ideals of ECOWAS which has been tasked with the responsibility of promoting the integration process in the sub-region.¹⁷⁹ Such level of commitment and involvement by the Ghanaian government in integration efforts is undoubtedly healthy for the whole process of integration.

However, since integration involves more than the activities of leaders, the process requires much more than just the active participation of the political leadership.. It requires the development of appropriate strategies at the national level which take cognisance of the larger vision of the region and can serve as the conduit for the realisation of the aims and objectives of integration. In Adotevi's view, integration cannot be achieved without enlisting the feelings of community and cultural affinity that are so deeply rooted in Africa's history. The great challenge in promoting regional integration in Africa is, therefore how to find ways of fostering these feelings of community, which transcend national borders, without threatening the viability of the state.¹⁸⁰

As the process of integration requires that measures that address the dynamics involved in the face of such interactivity between societies be put in place, it is important for the relevant entities in Ghana to be involved in such processes. I posit that education which has been identified as critical for the success of integration can be one of such measures. Education is an important aspect of society, as it is a means through which knowledge is transmitted from one generation to another. Apart from this, through education, different societies learn about the ways and lives of each other. Although the word education is used in many parts of Africa to refer to formal instruction in European style schools, it involves more than just sitting through European modelled classroom sessions. It includes the sharing and transmission of knowledge and experiences through interaction between individuals in different contexts.¹⁸¹ Fostering a sense of community within the sub-region requires sharing and learning each other's cultural experiences and values. This would in turn, effect attitudinal change which would presumably influence policy development and implementation.

¹⁷⁸ See for example, Asante S.K.B., "Regionalism and Africa's Development: Expectations, Reality and Challenges", (London: MacMillan Press Ltd, 1997) p.1598

¹⁷⁹ Article 2(1), Revised Treaty of the Economic Community of West African States, 24th July 1993

¹⁸⁰ Adotevi, Stanislav. "Cultural Dimensions of Economic and Political Integration in Africa" Available at http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-68354-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html Accessed on 24/09/08

¹⁸¹ Graham, C.K "The History of Education In Ghana". (London: Frank & Cuss Co. Ltd, 1971)

In Ghana, formal education can be broken down into three main phases – Basic Education, Senior High and Tertiary. Basic Education provides the platform for the introduction of the fundamentals of literacy and numeracy, as well as the values and norms of the society such as patriotism, volunteerism and selflessness. It is at this level that pupils also take up roles of responsibility. It consists of two years of kindergarten, six years of primary education and three years of junior high school. The primary level is further divided into two – lower and upper primary. Class one to three are lower primary and class four to six are upper primary. In the lower primary, pupils are limited to literacy and numeracy only getting introduced to areas of general knowledge, history, geography, vocational and technical studies as well as social studies and life skills at the upper primary level. The Senior Secondary level which offers “further education to eligible Junior High School Pupils is a continuation of what is begun at the upper primary level and an introduction to newer courses which are also dealt with at the tertiary level. The objective is to help equip them with skills and knowledge either for direct entry into the world of work or for further education.”¹⁸²

According to the 1991 Government White Paper on the University Rationalisation Committee Report,

“tertiary education includes education at the universities, polytechnics and teacher training colleges, indeed all formal education beyond the Senior Secondary School.”

It is the last formal space for knowledge generation and transmission, and most graduates from tertiary institutions move from here into the labour market to take up different positions. It can therefore be concluded that it is in this last arena where their ideas are crystallised and consolidated as they receive the skills and tools to build and develop their capacities in their chosen careers and various fields of employment. Accelerated globalisation, coupled with an enabling environment occasioned by integration, has also resulted in a higher labour mobility within the sub region. Therefore, educational institutions in the country do not only provide manpower for national development but also, for the sub-region as a whole. So, whilst there is no doubt that efforts at educating the citizens must be in different forms and at different levels, the focus of this paper is on formal educational institutions as they serve as centres for knowledge and national manpower development at different levels.¹⁸³

The starting point for educational institutions to play a meaningful role in West Africa's integration efforts is at the upper primary level. This is because it is at this

¹⁸²Ghana's Education System available at http://www.ghana.gov.gh/ghanas_education_system accessed on January 26th 2009

¹⁸³For more on this, especially at the tertiary level, see for instance Amuwo Kunle, “Confronting the Crisis of the University in Africa- Nigerian Academics and Their Many Struggles” Occasional Paper Series, Vol. 3, Number 2, 1999 p.6

level that pupils get introduced to subject areas other than literacy, numeracy and social skills. A number of children do not continue after basic education going on to learn trades or getting into vocations. Due to the low retention rate of pupils moving from basic to secondary schools,¹⁸⁴ it is important for those children to be introduced to the concept and principles of regional integration at that level so that they can benefit from the provisions of regional integration in their chosen career fields. Apart from this, Social Studies, a core subject, which is taught from upper primary to Senior High School, can serve as a continuous channel for teaching regional integration at the various levels. As Senior High School prepares students for either the work force or the universities, it is essential to provide in-depth education on the principles of integration in the sub region to equip those who may not make it to the tertiary level, to benefit from the sub-regional integration project. According to Evans Klutse, the lack of understanding of some of the ECOWAS schemes by officials poses challenges to the implementation of the regional integration agenda.¹⁸⁵

Apart from providing manpower for national development, tertiary institutions in Ghana also play other roles such as the provision of theoretical foundations for the implementation of the various structures of integration, training of students and personnel from other countries in the sub-region, training of personnel for the various countries as well as upgrade/refresher training courses to help those already employed realign or develop new strategies to aid in the realisation of the region's integration.

Some institutions in Ghana are privileged because of their unique status within the larger tertiary body and can take advantage of their place to be the pace setters in creating a platform for discussing the roles above-mentioned which will be discussed into detail subsequently. For instance, the Legon Centre for International Affairs (LECIA), the training institute for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has the independence and freedom of an academic institution as well as the privilege of making inputs into foreign policy through the generation and presentations of various options available to government. In a similar vein, the Regional Maritime University situated in Ghana to serve the entire sub-region, can, because of its nature and character promote regional integration. Its student body is a conglomeration of people from all over the sub-region and beyond who bring their diverse cultures and experiences to bear in the university environment. These experiences provide the right atmosphere for the discussion and study of the principles and theories of integration and its practical application. Above all, upon completion, their areas of operations tend to be wider than their national jurisdictions as they serve an international clientele. It is noteworthy that a number of the issues to be discussed

¹⁸⁴According to the United Nations State of the World's Children 2008, primary school enrolment from 2000 – 2006, there was 69% enrolment of males, 70% female at the primary school level whilst there were 50% male and 43% female enrolment at the secondary school level.

¹⁸⁵Klutse Evans, (1999) "The Protocol on Free Movement of persons, Goods and Services – CEPS Perspective", p. 64 in Regionalism and Integration in West Africa: The Way Forward, Accra, Legon Centre for International Affairs, Legon

are already in existence albeit limited and certainly without clearly defined policy structures which is critical for direction, sustenance and continuity of such programs.

Although it is recommended that educational institutions should begin the facilitation of regional integration from the upper primary level, more emphasis is placed on the roles of tertiary institutions because they have a wider scope as they have the mandate to engage in activities that include training, research and publication as well as other creative works.. Out of these, a number of other roles, critical for the facilitation of regional integration emanate. These roles include: harmonisation of training curricula and learning objectives, mainstreaming the concept and objectives of regional integration into the syllabi of tertiary institution, organisation of study tours to give students a practical experience of some of the processes of integration, joint researches and the systematic dissemination of findings across the sub-region to avoid duplication and the generation of inputs into policy development. These roles are not all limited to tertiary institutions and where appropriate, reference would be made to other educational institutions.

Harmonisation of training curricula and learning objectives

Since the Basic and Senior High Schools already have standardised curricula, it should be possible to introduce a module on regional integration into the existing curricula. Tertiary institutions in Ghana,¹⁸⁶ especially the universities, offer different types of training to people from all over the region and indeed the world. However, but for a few exceptions, the nature of admissions into academic programmes have followed very much, the traditionally prescribed duration of study. This means that only a few people are able to obtain the experience of studying in Ghana's tertiary institutions since such an endeavor requires adequate funding for the entire period of study - three years as was the case in the past, or four years as it currently stands for undergraduate study and one or two years for a Master of Arts or Master of Philosophy degree. It must however be quickly stated that this situation is fast changing as the universities have Special Admission Students who are able to spend a lesser time studying in universities in Ghana. Despite this provision, the bulk of students from the West African sub-region coming to study under this arrangement in Universities in Ghana are comparatively low compared to students from other continents.¹⁸⁷ For the 2006/2007 academic year, out of the 334 students registered

¹⁸⁶ These include public and private universities, polytechnics, vocational and technical institutions as well as professional training bodies.

¹⁸⁷ The International Programmes Office of the University of Ghana, Legon admits students under the category of both regular and special admissions. Students under the regular admissions category are admitted into full length study programmes and this occurs only in the first semester. Special admissions students are taken in during both semesters and undergo studies in particular courses for a shorter period. It is important to note that as at the 2006/2007 academic year, out of 458 African students admitted, only 1 was admitted under the special admissions category. Out of this 458, 428 were students from countries in West Africa. None of these students was admitted under the special admissions programme.

under the special admissions programme in the second semester, none was from West Africa and only one was from Africa.¹⁸⁸

This, it can be argued, is due to the lack of harmonisation of training curricula in the sub-region which makes it difficult for students to be able to leave their regular universities to join, Ghanaian universities for a semester or two (without interruption) as they may either be at different stages of the course thereby making it difficult to follow, or they may have different learning objectives. To enhance the role of tertiary institutions which already have facilities for foreign students, there is therefore the need to begin a process of harmonisation, at least, of those subjects considered core in the various fields of study.

Another reason for the near absence of West African students in the Special Admissions programmes is the lack of a framework for such exchanges. Without the appropriate agreements in place, it is almost impossible for students to leave their regular institutions to join another for a period. As several tertiary institutions in Ghana and other parts of the sub-region have organised frameworks in place for international students, it would be helpful to continue dialogue on the issue so as to make the Special Admissions programme beneficial to students in the sub-region.

Although harmonisation will enhance the opportunities for student exchanges in the sub region, there are other equally important hurdles that must be overcome for it to have a real impact in the region's integration. One of the major challenges facing universities in most of Africa but more importantly in West Africa has been the frequent strike actions by lecturers, staff and students alike. Citing from Colleen L. Morna, Amuwo states that in a spate of ten years, "there were at least 65 closures of Africa Universities."¹⁸⁹ Whilst the situation can be said to have drastically improved in Ghana, this cannot be said of other countries where long periods of closure remain characteristic of the educational system. Such closures disrupt the academic calendar as there are unanticipated interruptions which could mean (a) documents under process for such short term stays would be delayed; (b) the academic calendar would be derailed, delaying the delivery of courses and thereby rendering the objective for harmonisation no longer be useful.

Efforts at harmonisation must also take cognisance of private tertiary institutions in the country as they have also contributed to opening up academic opportunities for non-Ghanaians. According to Valley View University, the oldest private university in Ghana,¹⁹⁰ "admission to Valley View University (VUU) is available to any applicant who meets the academic and character requirements of the university . . ."¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁸University of Ghana Annual Report, 2008 pp. 328-329

¹⁸⁹A. Kunle, op cit, note 11 supra, p.9

¹⁹⁰Valley View University was granted a Charter on May 28, 2006 allowing it to award its own degrees and thereby making it the first private institution to award national degrees.

¹⁹¹Available at www.vvu.edu.gh accessed on 16th February 2009

As these private tertiary institutions serve people from Ghana and beyond, they also help in the preparation of personnel from within and outside of the country and must therefore orient their training as such. Ashesi University on its part provides the opportunity for special admissions ranging from spending a single semester, to spending the entire three to four years in the institution.

Mainstreaming the concept and objectives of regional integration into the syllabi of tertiary institutions.

The realisation of the objectives of regional integration is mostly dependent on the citizens in the sub region. Simply put, regional integration is brought alive through the activities of ordinary men and women in the course of their day to day activities. Yet, in a similar vein, integration can be stalled through mutual mistrust and misunderstanding of the purpose of integration – mistrust which can be generated through the daily interaction between citizens from the different countries in the sub-region. Perhaps, even more disturbing is the mistrust which can be generated through the perceptions citizens of the different countries have of one another. To ensure an appreciation of the objectives, purpose and goals of integration for success, it is imperative that the concept becomes part of the attitude and knowledge base of the people. This cannot be left to happen on its own. Rather, there is the need for a systematic strategy aimed at providing the rationale for integration and making it part and parcel of every citizen's daily life. This can be achieved through mainstreaming the concept and objectives into the syllabi of educational institutions with particular emphasis on tertiary institutions.

The need for mainstreaming cannot be delayed a day longer as it is the surest mechanism for the implementation of the ideals of integration. Whilst a lot of emphasis and efforts have been placed in the policy formulation of the sub-region's integration, little has been done, especially outside of economic integration to facilitate the implementation of the various policies. Thus, mainstreaming integration into the syllabi of tertiary institutions will hone down, the seemingly abstract ideals contained in various documents aimed at promoting integration.

Teaching in tertiary institutions in Ghana is guided by structured syllabus which spells out the methodology and content of what is to be taught. The development of syllabi is dependent on the nature of the course, within the framework of each particular institution. To place itself in a strategic position to promote the regional integration goals, the syllabus of tertiary institutions in Ghana must be guided by the objectives of the ECOWAS. Tertiary institutions in Ghana can play this role in several ways: develop more courses on regional integration for teaching as a specialised area in the tertiary institutions, provide Training-of Trainer courses on integration for lecturers in other West African countries, provide courses on area studies focused on the cultures and people within the sub region and finally infuse the objectives of integration into existing syllabi.

Infuse the concept and objectives of integration into existing syllabi

According to Asante, integration is multifaceted and needs to be approached from a variety of angles.¹⁹² This means that from the Presidency to the ordinary man and woman, everyone must recognise that they are uniquely integral to the system required to move the vehicle of integration forward. The importance of the interdependence required for the success of integration can therefore not be over-emphasised. Therefore, no matter which discipline a person finds him/herself in, it is imperative that they understand the rationale behind the sub region's integration efforts. For instance, ECOWAS has established an Early Response Team (ERT) to address disasters in the sub-region. This requires a constant exchange of information on the state of a country's disaster plan. Unless the persons in charge are aware of the extreme importance of feeding the information into the Situation Room, it will not receive the urgent attention required. In fact, the ERT has had challenges in this regard as due (in part) to their lack of understanding on the concept of integration, personnel of member states' delay in the relay of vital information. All tertiary institutions in Ghana have core courses which must be passed as a pre-requisite for certification irrespective of the chosen programme of study. In the University of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), University of Cape Coast and the University of Development Studies, all students have to study Communication Skills and with the exception of KNUST, students in the other three also have to study African Studies. In Ashesi University, a private liberal arts institution, African studies is compulsory for all students. The concept of a compulsory pre-requisite for certification extends to other tertiary institutions.. This means that there is an existing framework through which the concept and principles of regional integration could be introduced into these institutions guaranteeing that irrespective of the discipline, graduates from these institutions would at the minimum, be aware of the existence of the regional integration project. One of the basic challenges with realising the objectives of both the LPA and the Abuja Treaty has been how to marry practitioner aims and objectives with academic instruction. With the exception of a few academics who research and write in the area of regional integration, there is limited connection between the region's agenda and the education offered in its tertiary institutions. Yet, the universities remain the knowledge production unit out of which the skilled manpower required by institutions is generated. Thus, the needs of the consumer must be factored into the production process to ensure that the end result meets the requirements of the client (the sub region).

¹⁹²Asante S.K.B., "Regionalism and Africa's Development: Expectations, Reality and Challenges", (London: MacMillan Press Ltd, 1997) p.149

Develop more courses on regional integration for teaching as a specialised area in the tertiary institutions.

There is the need to have a core staff of specialised and dedicated persons who are well versed in regional integration. Again, a two track approach is envisaged. There must be a platform for those already engaged in areas of direct integration work not only in Ghana but in the sub-region, to be able to undertake some short courses to acquaint themselves with the tools and skills relevant for regional integration. This, it is envisaged, would have as its target group, staff from various countries engaged in undertaking activities related to regional integration in their countries of origin who will congregate in Ghana, for a very short period, to participate in the course.¹⁹³ The second option would be to mount advanced degrees in the area of regional integration. These can be undertaken within the framework of existing training activities such as sandwich programmes and long distance education in the country to reduce the high cost of starting afresh. For instance, the Legon Centre for International Affairs (LECIA), the training school for Ghana's Ministry of Foreign Affairs which already has a module on regional integration, can flesh it out into a specialised course to serve the latter purpose. The benefit of having an academic Centre such as LECIA which has research and publication on topical issues as part of its vision is that its research feeds into its other activities.. Thus, the course content on integration can be constantly updated to reflect the needs of the region's integration efforts as it goes through the various stages. Through its other extension activities such as the International Training Program on Peacebuilding and Good Governance for African Civilian Personnel (ITPPGG), LECIA, which has a proven track record of organising short courses can host the specialisation courses on regional integration as above-mentioned, to strengthen the capacities of those already working in the field.

Private tertiary institutions in Ghana could be very useful in this regard as they are young and many of them are still in the process of developing their faculties and have room for the introduction of specific courses leading to the award of degrees in regional integration.

Training-of Trainer Courses

One of the basic roles educational institutions can play in facilitating regional integration in the sub-region is the development of faculty for teaching regional integration in institutions which either do not have such courses or who may be interested in further development of their existing courses. This is critical for the realisation of the points above-mentioned as it will guarantee a steady stream of teachers for the various specialisation courses to be organised as well as provide

¹⁹³In July 2008, the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) mounted a two-week course on International Meteorology and Climate Science for people all over the world.

insights for those who will be engaged with infusing the concept of regional integration into their courses. In the long term, training –of- trainer modules can be incorporated into the curricula of these institutions to provide students with the technical skills to impart the knowledge gained in the future.

Curricula development

A basic requirement for teaching courses on regional integration is an appropriate curriculum. Curricula development is a technical activity which requires resources, expertise and experience. The cost involved in designing curriculum from scratch can be minimised if institutions in Ghana which are already involved in training on regional integration build upon their course structures to develop dynamic curricula in the subject area which can be modified and adapted throughout the sub-region. A flexible prototype curriculum will allow the different end-users to incorporate the peculiar characteristics of their country's situation to reflect the diversity of the sub region. As a first step to this, stakeholders in the sub region, which must also include practitioners in the field, could be assembled to either deliberate on the content for such a curriculum or meet to have it validated upon completion. This would make it much more appealing to a wider audience who would feel that their inputs were relevant to the process.

The Provision of platforms for ongoing discussions on regional integration

Another role for educational institutions in Ghana could be the provision of platforms for continued discussions on regional integration. There has been an increased interaction between academia and practitioners in recent times on a number of issues including regional integration in Ghana.¹⁹⁴ Academic institutions have provided the theoretical pivots upon which ideas for implementation have been generated for different purposes. However, these interactions have tended to focus on institutions within the country and consequently, the recommendations proffered have been limited to what can be done within. I submit that the same platforms can be used to facilitate regional integration in various ways.

For instance, the annual New Year school hosted by the Institute of Adult Education which discusses issues of national importance can be expanded to provide a two in one service which, whilst maintaining the focus of the annual New Year school on national issues, would bring together persons from the sub-region to discuss issues of integration. The first week could retain the character of the traditional New Year school while the second week which will bring together representatives from countries in the sub-region will focus on issues of importance to the regional integration agenda.

¹⁹⁴The Legon Centre for International Affairs has over the years, hosted workshops on Regionalism and Integration for Diplomats, Academics and Civil Society at large

Semi-autonomous centres and institutes within the various universities set up for specific purposes, usually host conferences and seminars to discuss topical issues in their areas of specialisation. The scope of such workshops and seminars can be broadened to include topics on regional integration and their participant base widened to include persons from the sub-region.

Exchange of Faculty & Experts

One of the benefits of regional integration is the mobility of labour. This can be harnessed by educational institutions to complement their faculty strength as well as provide practical comparative analysis for students of integration. Institutions starting new courses in regional integration as well as those seeking to expand on their existing courses can benefit immensely from those who have gained considerable experience in the field over the years.¹⁹⁵ For instance, faculty from the Regional Institute for Population Studies (RIPS) in the University of Ghana can be useful to other institutions both within and outside Ghana seeking to run courses on aspects of population studies or who may wish to start similar courses.

Faculty and experts from the various countries can also be utilised to facilitate comparative analysis during such workshops/seminars to provide useful insight into lessons learnt in the implementation of certain aspects of integration within their specific contexts. In addition to this, experts on the technical aspects of integration can be exchanged to provide insight into certain nominal areas.

Joint researches and the systematic dissemination of findings across the sub-region to avoid duplication

Article 3 (1) of the Revised ECOWAS Treaty provides that:

*The aims of the Community are to promote co-operation and integration, leading to the establishment of an economic union in West Africa in order to raise the living standards of its peoples, and to maintain and enhance economic stability, foster relations among Member States and contribute to the progress and development of the African Continent.*¹⁹⁶

Educational institutions, not only in Ghana but also throughout the sub-region can serve as watchdogs over the process of integration - assessing, redefining and re-engineering the methods of implementation through quality research and the systematic dissemination of such research findings. However, qualitative research is expensive and requires considerable resources. It is in this regard that many

¹⁹⁵Asante, S.K.B, "Regionalism and Africa's Development: Expectations, Reality and Challenges", (London: MacMillan Press Ltd, 1997) p.99

¹⁹⁶ECOWAS Revised Treaty, Op Cit

educational institutions have severe challenges. A cost-effective approach to addressing this challenge could be the commissioning of joint research, which pool together experts in a particular field to concentrate on different aspects of a research problem.

Closely linked and contributing to the problem is the dearth of literature on the various aspects of integration. Despite the availability of some literature on regional integration, most are skewed towards economic and political integration. Thus, innovative approaches to the implementation of the principles of integration using available resources are missing. A wide dissemination of the research findings would therefore serve as a source of literature for education as well as the generation of new ideas.

As politicians and policy makers remain fixated on the ideals of regionalism, it may be difficult for them to look at it from a perspective that is detached from the status quo. The findings of well conducted research, which provides fresh perspectives, could result in the adoption of different approaches which will provide the opportunity for an assessment of the integration project. Simply put, it will provide the opportunity to ask the questions of the three 'Ws' – Where have we come from, where are we now and where are we going? This will in turn result in knowledge based revitalisation and re-strategisation.

A number of reputable educational institutions in Ghana have long been involved in research aimed at identifying innovative ways to increase agricultural production. The Crop Research Institute (CRI) in Kumasi, the Oil Palm Research Institute (OPRI) in Kusi, the University Of Ghana College Of Agriculture and Consumer Sciences' Agricultural Research Centres in Kade, Kpong and Legon and the Bunso Agricultural College in Bunso specialise in different areas of agriculture. Using comparative advantage, each of these institutes maximises their outputs by focusing on their areas of specialisation to enhance agricultural production and minimise the reduction of losses in food production through research and the application of research.

Research from these institutions has in no doubt, been beneficial to the countries within the sub-region although there has not been a deliberate attempt to make the benefits available to the sub region at large.¹⁹⁷ The West Africa Centre for Crop Improvement (WACCI) established in 2007¹⁹⁸ is therefore well poised to facilitate the provision of Article 25 of the ECOWAS Treaty which provides for agricultural development and food security. It can serve as the pivot upon which all these

¹⁹⁷University of Ghana Annual Report, 2008 pp 1 – 35

¹⁹⁸The West African Centre for Crop Improvement (WACCI) which is a sub-regional centre, aims at producing graduate students at the Ph.D level in plant breeding. The first batch of students was admitted in February, 2008. The first phase of the programme will last for 8 years.

institutes can hinge for the purposes of providing a framework in line with the objectives of the region's integration plan.

Fostering a sense of community through extra-curricular activities

Apart from conducting research and providing training for the purposes of facilitating Ghana's regional integration agenda, the various institutions can also act in the non-academic setting to promote the integration agenda. This is by way of extra-curricular activities that provide entertainment, such as sports and drama. With respect to sports, student games in most tertiary institutions are organised on each campus through the Amalgamated Sports Clubs which oversee the organisation of inter-hall games. Besides inter-hall games of athletics, soccer, hockey, and basketball, there are regular inter-university games in these disciplines nationally and within the West African sub-region. A window of opportunity here for the tertiary institutions in facilitating the integration process is to make concrete efforts to give some visibility through rationalisation to the integration agenda during the hosting of the West Africa University games. The University of Ghana, for instance, by constructing the multi-purpose sports complex places itself in a good position with respect to hosting such sporting events. The multi-complex sports facility under construction in the University of Ghana places the country in a better stead to be able to make bids to host many more games. It will however be under utilised if the complex only serves as a hosting centre for the sporting activities as the presence of students for the games can be exploited to spread the message of integration. For example, the themes of the games which are varied yearly can be developed to carry the message of integration within the host country as well as to the visiting countries. The relevance of such activities to the process of integration is that it provides individuals with the opportunity to come into direct contact with citizens from other West African countries. Ideas and cultural experiences are exchanged between students from participating universities during the period.

Study tours can also be organised for students in basic, secondary and tertiary institutions to help them gain experience of how regional integration works. Some educational institutions already organise excursions for their pupils and students and can, in a similar vein, introduce study tours through which their pupils/students could be taken to several West African countries to enable them obtain practical experiences of the procedures for travelling across the sub-region. Through such tours, they would also be brought into contact with the different people and diverse cultures and experience the similarities among the people of the sub-region. Sporting activities between institutions in the sub-region which already take place in some of the tertiary institutions could also be replicated at the basic and secondary school level to bring students in Ghana into contact with students from other parts of West Africa.

Beyond the Ivory Towers: Publicising and Popularising regional integration

If efforts of regional integration aim at improving the lives of the people in the sub region, then it is imperative that the people, the intended beneficiaries of the integration process, become aware of the process, its aims, objectives and intended benefits. However, a look at the path of the region's integration trajectory presents an interesting story as a lot of emphasis has been placed on economic and political integration by those persons who usually, do not need the benefits promised by integration. Presidents, Ministers of State and other such officers tend to be the ones with the privileged information and are privy to the workings of the various offices and processes for integration even if they hardly use these offices and processes themselves. Obviously, the majority of the intended beneficiaries of the processes and offices of integration are those men and women, who on a constant basis, interact with persons from other countries. Yet, they are the ones with little or no knowledge on the aims, objectives and provisions of the integration efforts. Consequently, despite the work being undertaken to guarantee that integration yield the promised results, these persons do not enjoy the benefits promised by greater integration because they are often unaware of these provisions.

Although attempts have been made to publicise the various efforts being made in the area of regional integration, these have been limited and to a large extent, the packages have remained quite elitist – seminars, symposia, research and publication, news items to mention but a few. Educational institutions in Ghana can therefore provide educational and awareness creation packages which would bridge this gap and publicise the integration efforts for those who are may not benefit from the usual methods of dissemination. Popular theatre, theatre for education, art, documentaries and films as well as music and dance are some of the media through which regional integration can be disseminated. Here, the University of Ghana's School of Performing Arts, Abibigromma, the Resident Theatre Group, the National Film and Television Institute (NAFTI), the College of Art in the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and the Department of Art Education in the University of Winneba can play varying roles in facilitating the regional integration agenda through a variety of ways.

Conclusion

Having discussed the role of tertiary institutions in Ghana to facilitate regional integration, I reiterate that the regional integration agenda cannot do without a strong education and training component aimed at providing the necessary skills to provide the human resource required to fill in the various positions. It is only when there are informed and knowledgeable personnel that we can be certain that the lofty ideals of regional integration can be honed down into reality for the benefit of the majority of people.

Educational institutions in Ghana can play a vital role in the facilitation of regional integration because most of them have developed infrastructure and the requisite mandates in place. What is therefore required to utilise these existing structures is therefore a systemic policy directive which would provide guiding principles for the educational institutions on facilitating regional integration to safeguard against duplication and provide some sort of monitoring and evaluation of the programs being organised by the educational institute.

A successful regional integration project transcends the grand venue of meeting places into the lives of ordinary men and women. Educational institutions in Ghana must therefore, whilst exploiting existing infrastructure, develop new cost effective strategies for public education and awareness creation in order to reach as many persons as possible. However, even as attempts are made to minimise the costs involved it is still important to bear in mind that training and education are not cheap. It requires the provision of funds and other resources to facilitate teaching and learning. However, many educational institutes are resource deprived which means that they may have some challenges with regards to playing the roles outlined herein for them. Governments, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders must be willing to help offset some of the burden.

Another challenge envisaged with the roles of the university would be the long bureaucratic delays that are characteristic of academic and faculty boards. Easy as it may appear, the introduction of new courses as well as mounting fresh courses is not an easy task in tertiary institutions. It may therefore be useful to have some consultative meetings at which all stakeholders are brought on board so that most persons who may later have to deal with some of the above-mentioned roles would have a fair idea of the need for training.

Beyond the challenges above-mentioned, is the bigger challenge of finance which has been the bane of many good ideas. Educational institutions in Ghana must therefore identify innovative ways to source funding for their activities. The central government through the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, must allocate funds for some of the activities aimed at facilitating regional integration in the country. Pupils and students could also be made to bear a part of the cost if a token fee is built into the fees they pay. At the basic and senior secondary school level, Parents Teachers Associations could be encouraged to devise innovative ways to help fund some of the extracurricular activities through for instance, special levies, fund raising activities such as dinner dances or luncheons. At the tertiary level, students can help raise funds for the extracurricular activities in a similar manner as they raise funds for hall week celebrations.

This would however not be enough and the various institutions have to obtain funding from other sources. Regional and sub-regional organisations whose

businesses stand to benefit from enhanced knowledge of the integration ideals can be approached for sponsorship of some programmes. For instance, the various financial institutions such as the African Development Bank (ADB), the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) and ECOBANK could be approached to fund some activities. For example, these financial institutions could be approached to sponsor the study tours. Again, multinational and transnational organisations could also be approached to finance some of the activities. Some of the activities such as the short courses and specialised courses could be self – financing as it could be offered as fee-paying courses. In any case foreign students pay fees to the university and so if the processes and procedures are made more encouraging, it could encourage more applicants and thus generate more fees.

Civil Society Organisations working in areas of regional integration such as the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) could be approached to fund the dialogue and consultative meetings to brainstorm on the most effective ways of mainstreaming the principles of integration into the syllabi of educational institutions and perhaps, even the development of the curricula for some of the modules.

Obtaining funding from these sources and others to be identified would mean presenting interesting proposals and realistic budgets clearly stating the benefits that would accrue to the sponsoring organisation. This means that educational institutions would have to invest time and some resources into the development of the proposals and their marketing.

The disconnect between educational institutions and the organs of integration must be repaired to create synergies between academics and practitioners. The dynamic nature of regional integration which has been occasioned by accelerated globalisation requires a symbiotic relationship between the policy formulators and implementers so as to ensure that there is agreement in the approaches used in the implementation of formulated policy. Educational institutions are in no doubt, very useful to the regional integration efforts. However, they can only be useful if they play their various roles to assist in the facilitation of the integration agenda. Ghana has been a trailblaser in the sub-region for a number of things. As an ardent believer of the regional integration project, its educational institutions can help her set the pace by facilitating, publicising and popularising the process through education at various levels and in various fora.

CHAPTER TEN: THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND DONORS IN COMPLEMENTING GHANA'S INTEGRATION AGENDA IN WESTAFRICA: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

E.Y Benneh*

ABSTRACT

This paper begins with a discussion of West African integration facing the new global context. From that perspective, it examines ECOWAS as the vehicle through which Member States including Ghana, seek to pursue their regional integration agenda. Integrated into the discussion are the challenges posed in the process of regional integration in West Africa with a view to finding what prospects there are. The paper then proceeds to examine the role that some donors and international organisations play in complementing the integration agenda in West Africa. The point here is that these organisations and donor agencies are well placed to support initiatives and policy changes favourable to regional integration and by so doing help Member States of ECOWAS meet their challenges—challenges that range from peace and security, economic marginalisation, weak infrastructure, to weak performance in macroeconomic policies. The paper concludes, among others, that with this complementary role on the part of these organisations and agencies, it is also of the utmost importance that Member States of ECOWAS deepen the integration process within the community by co-ordinating and harmonising effectively their economic, financial and security policies. Obviously, Ghana's integration agenda can only advance if its national policies converge with other Member States of the ECOWAS leading ultimately to the establishment of an economic union in West Africa as embodied in Article 3 of the ECOWAS Revised Treaty.

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INTRODUCTION

Regional integration has become the agenda for the economic and social development of countries of the West African sub-region, not least Ghana. This is so because these countries face numerous common challenges that can arguably be dealt with collectively. These problems include marginalisation of the region in the global economy, weak infrastructure, weak performance in macroeconomic policies as well as regional commons such as the environment and natural resources utilisation. In addition, these countries are commonly classified among the low-income countries in the world. Against this background, West African States have established the ECOWAS, of which Ghana is a Member State, as the vehicle through which they seek to pursue their regional integration agenda. Several questions arise. What are the aims and objectives of ECOWAS? What policies are there in the pursuit of regional co-operation and integration by ECOWAS Member States? Do international organisations and donor agencies play an important role in complementing this integration agenda in West Africa? To address these questions, this Paper will examine the role of ECOWAS, the African Union (AU), the European Union (EU), the United States Aid Agency (USAID) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the World Bank). It will highlight, *inter alia*, the following three strategic issues:

- a. West African integration in the new global context.
- b. ECOWAS and the integration agenda of its Member States.
- c. The Role of the above-named international organisations and donor agencies in complementing the regional integration process in West Africa.

The Paper will integrate the challenges posed in the process of regional integration in West Africa into the discussion with a view to finding its prospects.

2. WEST AFRICAN INTEGRATION FACING THE NEW GLOBAL CONTEXT

The last few decades have brought about a global structural evolution of a kind hitherto unknown in the history of mankind. The accompanying changes are many and varied, carrying with them opportunities and risks. One dominant trend of this process of globalisation, paradoxically, is regionalisation and reinforcement of economic groups.¹⁹⁹ In this context, there has been concluded the North-American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).²⁰⁰ So also Japan and some emergent countries are on the path to co-ordinating their strategy in the South-East Asia area.²⁰¹ The Gulf

¹⁹⁹For discussion, see Sajal Lahiri (ed.) *Regionalism and Globalisation: Theory and Practice* (Routledge), 2001.

²⁰⁰NAFTA was signed by Canada, Mexico and the United States of America on 17 September 1992. It entered into force on 1 January 1994.

²⁰¹See, e.g. the ASEAN Free Trade Area (FTA) Agreement signed on 28 January 1992.

countries are strengthening their co-operation in various fields especially economic. Economic co-operation at the regional and sub-regional levels has also been an important feature of the economic development policies of African States which face numerous common challenges that can arguably be best dealt with collectively. Thus, there have been established the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA),²⁰² East African Community (EAC),²⁰³ Arab Maghreb Union (UMA),²⁰⁴ Southern African Development Community (SADC),²⁰⁵ and in West Africa the imperative for regional integration has led to the establishment of the ECOWAS with a view, inter alia, to promoting economic co-operation and integration in the sub-region, and thus, collectively deal with the problems of weak performance in macroeconomic policies²⁰⁶ and marginalisation of the sub-region in the global economy.

3. ECOWAS AND THE INTEGRATION AGENDA OF ITS MEMBER-STATES

A. The Formation of the ECOWAS

ECOWAS was formed in 1975 with the signing of its Treaty by the Heads of State and Government/Representatives of the Member countries of West Africa.²⁰⁷ On 24 July, 1993, the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of ECOWAS at Cotonou, Benin, adopted a Revised Treaty of the ECOWAS.

B. Aims and objectives of the ECOWAS

The aims of the Community, as embodied in Article 3 of the Revised Treaty, are

“to promote cooperation and integration, leading to the establishment of an economic union in West Africa in order to raise the living standards of its peoples, and to maintain and enhance economic stability, foster relations among Member States and contribute to the progress and development of the African Continent”.

In order to achieve these aims, it is provided that the Community shall, by stages, ensure:

²⁰² See Treaty Establishing the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), signed on 5 November 1993; entry into force: December 1994.

²⁰³ See Treaty Establishing the East African Community, entry into force: July 2000.

²⁰⁴ See the Constitutive Act of the Arab Maghreb Union of 1989.

²⁰⁵ See Treaty Establishing the SADC, adopted on 17 August 1992. In 2008, SADC agreed to establish a free trade zone with the EAC and COMESA including all members of each of the organisations.

²⁰⁶ See S.K.B. Asante (ed.), *Regional Cooperation and Integration in West Africa: The Experience of ECOWAS*. (Nairobi: ACTS Press, 1991).

²⁰⁷ ECOWAS Member States are: Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, La Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Sierra-Leone, Guinea, Niger, Mali, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, and Cape-Verde. Mauritania was an original member of ECOWAS but has since ceased to be a member. For the ECOWAS Revised Treaty and other relevant documents, see www.ecowas.int

- (a) the harmonisation and coordination of national policies and the promotion of integration programmes, projects and activities, particularly in food, agriculture and natural resources, industry, transport and communications, energy, trade, money and finance, taxation, economic reform policies, human resources, education, information, culture, science, technology, services, health, tourism and legal matters;
- (b) the harmonisation and coordination of policies for the protection of the environment;
- (c) the promotion of the establishment of joint production enterprises;
- (d) the establishment of a common market through:
 - (i) the liberalisation of trade by the abolition, among Member States, of customs duties levied on imports and exports, and non-tariff barriers in order to establish a free trade area at the Community level;
 - (ii) the adoption of a common external tariff and a common trade policy vis-à-vis third countries;
 - (iii) the removal, between Member States, of obstacles to the free movement of persons, goods, service and capital, and to the right of residence and establishment.
- (e) the establishment of an economic union through the adoption of common policies in the economic, financial, social and cultural sectors, and the creation of a monetary Union;
- (f) the promotion of joint ventures by private sector enterprises and other economic operators, in particular through the adoption of a regional agreement on cross-border investments;
- (g) the adoption of measures for the integration of the private sectors, particularly the creation of an enabling environment to promote small and medium scale enterprises;
- (h) the establishment of an enabling legal environment;
- (i) the harmonisation of national investment codes leading to the adoption of a single Community investment code;
- (j) the harmonisation of standards and measures;
- (k) the promotion of balanced development of the region, paying attention to the special problems of each Member State particularly those of land-locked and small island Member States;
- (l) the encouragement and strengthening of relations and the promotion of the flow of information particularly among rural populations, women and youth organizations and socio-professional organisations such as associations of the media, business men and women, workers, and trade unions;
- (m) the adoption of a Community population policy which takes into account the need for a balance between demographic factors and socio-economic development;

- (n) the establishment of a fund for cooperation, compensation and development; and
- (o) any other activity that Member States may decide to undertake jointly with a view to attaining Community objectives.

In addition there are the **General Undertakings** of Member States by which:

- (a) Member States undertake to create favourable conditions for the attainment of the objectives of the Community, and particularly to take all necessary measures to harmonise their strategies and policies, and to refrain from any action that may hinder the attainment of the said objectives.
- (b) Each Member State shall, in accordance with its constitutional procedures, take all necessary measures to ensure the enactment and dissemination of such legislative and statutory texts as may be necessary for the implementation of the provisions of this [ECOWAS] Treaty.
- (c) Each Member State undertakes to honour its obligations under this [ECOWAS] Treaty and to abide by the decisions and regulations of the Community.

C. Institutional Architecture of the ECOWAS

Within the institutional architecture of the ECOWAS is established a number of organs.

Firstly the Authority of Heads of State and Government is the supreme institution of the Community and is charged, under Article 7, with the responsibility for the general direction and control of the Community and enjoined to take all measures to ensure progressive development and realisation of The Community's objectives. The functions of the Authority include the determination of the general policy and major guidelines of the Community, the giving of directives, the harmonisation and coordination of the economic, scientific, technical, cultural and social policies of the Member States.

The other organs of the Community are: the Council of Ministers, the Community Parliament, the Economic and Social Council, the Community Court of Justice, the Executive Secretariat, and the Fund for Cooperation, Compensation and Development.

In addition, there are the specialised agencies which, include: the West African Health Organisation (WAHO), the West African Monetary Agency (WAMA), the West African Monetary Institute (WAMI), ECOWAS Youth and Sports Development Centre (EYSDC), ECOWAS Gender Development Centre (EGDC), Water Resources Co-ordination Unit (WRCU), ECOWAS Brown Card, and the West African Power Pool (WAPP). These agencies have been created to better adapt to the international

environment and to play a more effective role in the integration and development process in the West Africa sub-region.

D. ECOWAS Cooperation Policies

The Revised Treaty makes provisions on a number of areas of cooperation of the Member States. This aspect is of critical importance given that numerous benefits are inherent in the pursuit of co-operation and integration. Indeed, national markets, including Ghana's, cannot support industry and at the same time adjust sufficiently rapidly to compete efficiently in world markets. The adoption of a regional market approach through regional integration could therefore provide a useful alternative. Within a regional context, local industries can be restructured, rationalised and merged with fewer overall costs and better long-run prospects of achieving international competitiveness. These assumptions are carried through the Revised Treaty which underline co-operation policies in the following fields: Food and Agriculture (Article 25); Industry, Science and Technology and Energy (Articles 26-28); Environment and Natural Resources (Articles 29-31); Transport, Communications and Tourism (Article 32-34); Trade, Customs, Taxation, Statistics, Money and Payment (Articles 35-53); Establishment and Completion of an Economic and Monetary Union (Articles 55-56); Political, Judicial and Legal Affairs, Regional Security and Immigration (Articles 56-59); Human Resources, Information, Social and Cultural Affairs (Articles 60-66).²⁰⁸

ECOWAS policy on Food and Agriculture hinges on the promotion of co-operation among Member States in the development of agriculture, forestry, livestock and

²⁰⁸In order to ensure implementation of the ECOWAS Treaty, a number of Protocols which span a wide spectrum of areas of co-operation among ECOWAS Member-States have been concluded, including Economic, Trade and Industrial Policy (e.g. Protocol Relating to the Definition of the Concept of Products originating from Member States of the ECOWAS, Protocol relating to the Re-exportation within the ECOWAS of Goods Imported from Third Countries, Protocol on the Assessment of Loss Revenue by Member States, Protocol Relating to the Fund for Co-operation, Compensation and Development of the ECOWAS, Protocol Relating to the Application of Compensation Procedures for Loss of Revenue Incurred by ECOWAS Member States as a Result of the Trade Liberalisation Scheme, Protocol Relating to the Contributions by Member States to the Budget of the ECOWAS, Protocol on Conditions Covering Application of the Community Levy, Protocol Relating to Community Enterprises), Free Movement, Right of Residence and Establishment (e.g. Protocol Relating to the Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment, Protocol Relating to the Definition of Community Citizen), Prevention and Management of Conflicts (e.g. Protocol on Non-Aggression, Protocol on Mutual Assistance on Defence, Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-Keeping and Security), Legal and Political Co-operation (e.g. Protocol on the Community Court of Justice, ECOWAS Conventions on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters and on Extradition, Convention for Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters, Protocol Relating to the General Convention on Privileges and Immunities of ECOWAS, Protocol Regarding the Fight against the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Munitions and Other Related Materials), Governance (e.g. Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the ECOWAS Parliament, Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance Supplementary to the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-Keeping and Security), Infrastructure and Services (e.g. ECOWAS Energy Protocol, Protocol on the Establishment of an ECOWAS Brown Card Relating to Motor Vehicle Third Party Liability Insurance, Convention Regulating Inter-State Road Transportation between ECOWAS Member States, Convention Relating to inter-State Road Transit of Goods, Supplementary Convention Establishing a Community Guarantee Mechanism for Inter-State Road Transit of Goods), Social and Human Development (e.g. Protocol on the Establishment of a West African Health Organisation, Cultural Framework Agreement for the ECOWAS).

fisheries. The main objectives are to ensure food security, increased productivity, improved conditions for farmers and the protection of export commodities on the international market. The policy also aims to promote the integration of production structures for which Member States are required to co-operate in a number of critical areas, including: the harmonisation of agricultural development strategies and policies particularly pricing and price support policies on the production, trade, and marketing of major agricultural products and inputs, the harmonisation of food security policies and the adoption of a common agricultural policy in the fields of research, training, production, preservation, processing and marketing of the products of agriculture, forestry, livestock and fisheries.

In the field of Industry, Science and Technology and Energy, Member States are similarly called upon to harmonise their policies, paying attention to strengthening the industrial base of the Community, ensuring the promotion of medium and small-scale industries, strengthening their national scientific and technological capabilities, harmonising their national policies on scientific and technological research and their policies and programmes in the field of energy.

In the field of environment and natural resources, Member States are required to undertake to protect, preserve and enhance the natural environment of the region by adopting policies, strategies and programmes at national and regional levels. They are required also to harmonise and co-ordinate their policies in the field of natural resources.

The policy of Co-operation in Transport, Communications and Tourism articulates the desire of ensuring the harmonious integration of the physical infrastructure of Member States and the promotion and facilitation of the movement of persons, goods and services within the Community.

ECOWAS Trade Policy hinges on the following: removal of all tariff barriers to trade; establishment of a common customs union; establishment of a common external tariff; and abolition of all custom duties and taxes of similar effect. Article 51 of the Revised Treaty, in articulating the policy on Money, Finance and Payments, calls for the promotion of monetary and financial integration, the facilitation of intra-Community trade in goods and services and the realisation of the Community's objective of establishing a monetary Union.

E. Some Challenges

Though ECOWAS as an organisation affords a good chance in harmonising integration policies among Member States and thus furthering the integration agenda of these States, several problems and challenges are encountered.

Key among these are the lack of integration of markets and non-implementation of macro-economic convergence criteria, un-integrated production patterns, the lack of implementation of ECOWAS Protocols, lack of harmonisation of national laws and policies, inadequate infrastructural facilities hindering effective movement of persons, goods and services, different levels of development of the Member States, multiplicity of regional organisations, political instability and civil strife in some Member States, and lack of political will of leaders.

i. Lack of Integration of markets and non-implementation of macro-economic convergence criteria.

In accordance with the Revised Treaty, a common market is to be established through the liberalization of trade. Meanwhile, within the revised timeframe for liberalisation of trade, ECOWAS was to become a free trade area with effect from 2000 leading to the establishment of an economic union.²⁰⁹ Among the measures envisaged are the removal of all physical and non-physical barriers to free movement of persons, goods and services, total eradication of all rigid border formalities the application of prescribed ECOWAS Customs and Immigration procedures, the implementation of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme including the provision for compensation for loss of revenue, increased intra-regional trade by 50% and the adoption of a Common External Tariff for all imports into the sub-region.

However, the Trade Liberalisation Scheme has faced obstacles and challenges that have hampered its effective implementation.²¹⁰ Among these are the complex rules of origin, and cumbersome approval procedures for industrial goods, ineffective compensation schemes, unilateral anti-trade decisions and the existence of the two liberalisation schemes in the region, namely, the ECOWAS and Union Economique et Monetaire Ouest Africaine (UEMOA).²¹¹

The UEMOA, which metamorphosed from the West African Monetary Union (UMOA), essentially envisages the creation of an economic union among the Member States, including the eventual establishment of a customs union.²¹² To that end, in 2000, UEMOA adopted a four-tier (0%, 5%, 10% and 20%) rate Common External Tariff (CET) applicable to third countries including non-UEMOA Member States of ECOWAS, thus rendering UEMOA a customs union. The response has been that by a December 2000 Decision of Authority of Heads of State ECOWAS

²⁰⁹See Decision of the Authority, A/DEC.1/9/83 of 20 May 1983.

²¹⁰See Yilma Gebremariam, "Obstacles to Trade and Economic Development among West African States", *Journal of International Development*, Vol. 5, Issue 5, pp. 79-92.

²¹¹Formed in 1994, it envisages the creation of an economic union among the members, including the eventual establishment of a customs union. The Member States are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo.

²¹²Article IV, par. 2.

requested the immediate implementation of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme and decided that non-UEMOA Member States should adopt the UEMOA CET as a vital component for the creation of the ECOWAS customs union.²¹³ By this Decision, there appears to be better prospects for harmonising the programmes of ECOWAS and UEMOA in connection with the acceleration of the process of integration in West Africa. The question, however, is why two separate regional economic organisations pursuing the same agenda?²¹⁴

ii. Un-Integrated Production Pattern

West African States, including Ghana, are predominantly primary producers this fact creates challenge for them in the global economy. Even more challenging, such trade in commodities as exists is mainly with the developed economies rather than among themselves. The legacy of colonialism, the workings of the international economic system and the lack of imagination on the part of leaders are contributory factors to this state of affairs. In effect, there is excessive dependence of West African States on the developed States and any attempt to reverse this must hinge on priority being given to production and the integration of production patterns in the sub-region.

iii. The Lack of Implementation of ECOWAS Protocols

Ratification of ECOWAS Protocols is a vital first step in the implementation of the policies of co-operation and integration. By ratification, the Protocols enter into law at the municipal level and become of direct application in the Member States. But that is not to suggest that mere ratification is enough; the challenge is to ensure the effective application and implementation of these Protocols and this requires a series of legislative, regulatory and practical measures which Ghana, as with other Member States of the ECOWAS, is obliged to take at the national level in order to ensure that the commitments they have made are correctly put into practice. The challenge also involves identification of institutional weaknesses at both national and supranational levels as well as issues arising from cultural characteristics of implementing agents and the imperfect monitoring of implementation.

iv. Free Movement of Persons, Goods and Services

The subject of free movement of persons, goods and services has been high on the

²¹³ UEMOA's CET has been adopted to be applied in all ECOWAS Member States by January 2008 after a country-by-country impact assessment and transitional period of three years (2005-2008).

²¹⁴ It is also to be noted that ECOWAS has created a second monetary zone with the ultimate aim of merging with UEMOA. ECOWAS move is to facilitate the implementation of the "convergence criteria" based on consumer price stability of single-digit inflation, sustainability of fiscal deficit (5% of GDP), limiting of deficit financing by central banks, etc.

agenda of the ECOWAS and has indeed become a prominent theme in debates on the co-operation and integration of the Member States.²¹⁵ The policy has been to promote the relaxation of immigration control measures to facilitate population movements among countries of the sub-region. To this end, the ECOWAS Treaty, which was adopted in 1975, provided in Article 27 that “Member States shall by agreements with each other, exempt Community Citizens from holding visitors’ visas and residence permits and allow them to work and undertake commercial and industrial activities within their territories”. The Revised ECOWAS Treaty of 1997 in order to achieve the aims of the Community, also provides in Article 3 (1) for “[t]he removal, between Member States, of obstacles to the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital, and to the right of residence and establishment”. There then follows the substantive provisions on “Immigration” under Article 59:

1. Citizens of the Community shall have the right of entry, residence and establishment and Member States undertake to recognise these rights of Community citizens in their territories in accordance with the provisions of the Protocols relating thereto.
2. Member States undertake to adopt all appropriate measures to ensure that Community citizens enjoy fully the rights referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article.
3. Member States undertake to adopt, at national level, all measures necessary for the effective implementation of the provisions of this Article.

These provisions reflect the three-pronged approach to the migration policy of the ECOWAS as contained in the 1979 Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Establishment.²¹⁶ The policy is to be implemented in three phases, each comprising approximately five years. Firstly, is the Right of Entry which became effective in 1980 guaranteeing to community citizens in possession of valid travel documents or international peace certificates () admission to enter other Member States without any visa requirements provided their length of stay did not exceed 90 days. The second phase, which started in 1986, granted the right of residence to

²¹⁵See Adepoju, Aderanti, “International Migration in Africa, South of the Sahara”, in Reginald Appleyard (ed.) *International Migration Today*, Vol. 1, Trends and Prospects.(1988); by same author “Fostering Free Movement of Persons in West Africa: Achievements, Constraints, and Prospects for Intraregional Migration”, *International Migration*, Vol. 40, Issue 2, p.3, June 2002;

²¹⁶See Protocol A/P1/5/79 on free movement of persons, the right of residence and the right of establishment. For the other relevant instruments, see Protocol A/P3/5/82 relating to the definition of Community citizenship; Supplementary Protocol A/SP1/7/85 on the Code of Conduct for the implementation of the Protocol on free movement of persons, the right of residence and the right of establishment; Supplementary Protocol A/SP1/7/86 on the Second Phase (right of residence) of the Protocol on free movement of persons, the right of residence and the right of establishment; Supplementary Protocol A/SP1/6/89 amending and complementing provisions of Article 7 of the Protocol on free movement of persons, the right of residence and the right of establishment; Supplementary Protocol A/SP2/5/90 on the implementation of the Third Phase (right of establishment) of the Protocol on free movement of persons, the right of residence and the right of establishment. See also Decision A/DEC.8/5/82 amending the provisions of Article 27 of the Treaty of ECOWAS; Decision A/DEC.210/5/82 relating to the application of the Protocol relating to the free movement of persons and the public enlightenment programme; Decision A/DEC.2/7/85 of the Authority of Heads of State and Government relating to establishment of ECOWAS Travel Certificate for Member States; Decision A/DEC.2/5/90 establishing a residence card in ECOWAS Member States; Resolution A/RES.2/11/84 of the Authority of Heads of State and Government on the First Phase of the Protocol on free movement of persons, the right of residence and the right of establishment.

community citizens in a Member State and to be employed in accordance with the municipal laws of the country of residence. This phase provided for the abolition of any form of discrimination based on nationality among Member States as regards employment, remuneration and other conditions of work. Thus, Community Citizens could apply for employment in every Member State and have the right to travel freely for this purpose in the territories of Member States. The Third phase, which was to have started in 1991, provided for the right of establishment of business ventures by community citizens in Member States other than their own. It also included, in fulfilment of the need to attain regional integration, the gradual elimination of restrictions on the establishment of commercial or industrial enterprises or any other production units by ECOWAS citizens in Member States. Due to concerns about unauthorised migration, neither the second nor the third phases of implementation of the Protocol have led to unfettered rights of residence or establishment.²¹⁷ These concerns hinge on the absence of adequate mechanisms for controlling the entry of illegal immigrants into Member States, lack of harmonisation of national laws and policies on migration and inadequate infrastructure to facilitate realisation of borderless West Africa.²¹⁸

v. Conflict and Insecurity

Economic decline in the West African sub-region has been accompanied by political instability and civil strife in a host of countries, including La Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Togo and Guinea. The net result of this insecurity is the time and effort expended by leaders in the sub-region to tackle conflicts to the detriment of the regional integration agenda.²¹⁹

F. Prospects

Integration among the Member States of the ECOWAS, despite the lessons from the European Union model is still low. Attempts have however been made to achieve co-operation in a number of sectors.

i. Movement of Persons

In the area of movement of persons, the interdependence of migration issues and the challenges of globalisation have led to the adoption, at the 33rd Summit of the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government on January 18 2008, of a Common

²¹⁷See Zlotnik, Hanik, 2003 "Migrants' Rights, Forced Migration and Migration Policy in Africa", available in pumprinceton.edu/pumconference/papers/6-zlotnik.pdf

²¹⁸See John Agyei and Ezekiel Clottey, "Operationalizing ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of People among the Member States: Issues of Convergence, Divergence and Prospects for Sub-Regional Integration" available at www.imi.ov.ac.uk/pds/CLOTTEY%and%AGYEI.pdf

²¹⁹See infra for efforts by ECOWAS Member States to tackle this problem.

Approach on Migration. The ECOWAS objective here “is to establish a link between migration and development, define its negative impact and give priority to the following questions:

- a. How the gains of intra-regional mobility can be promoted and how free movement within the ECOWAS zone can be guaranteed
- b. How mobility can be supported and local development in departure zones and other potential host areas be encouraged
- c. How regular migration to third countries can be optimised notably in Africa, Europe and North America?
- d. How irregular migration can be effectively brought under control.
- e. How to protect migrants and asylum seekers rights.
- f. How to include the gender dimension in migration policies given the growing number of women migrants.”

The approach of ECOWAS in tackling the issues raised is to lay down six principles. These include Member States harmonising their policies at three levels, namely; bilateral agreements linking different ECOWAS Member States and third countries, with ECOWAS community texts and protocols; including agreements involving free movement as well as harmonising economic, trade and development aid policies of the North with migratory policies of said countries and national migration management policies with sector development policies. Several action plans are also enumerated which include the commitment of ECOWAS Member States to take the necessary measures to remove all obstacles to the free movement of persons. Among these are ensuring the issuance and security of ECOWAS travel documents; organising technical and administrative training programmes as well as awareness building and educational campaigns on the rights and obligations of the community's citizens among officials in charge of migration and populations; harmonising labour laws related to professional occupations, in accordance with the Protocol's clauses on the right of establishment for professional purposes; and removing all forms of harassment along the road.

Clearly, the ECOWAS Common Approach on Migration and the action plans detailed thereunder, represent a comprehensive and balanced approach to address the interdependence of migration issues and the need to deepen dialogue on those issues. Here again, identifying action plans is not enough; what is required is that there should be greater commitment by governments to enshrine in national law and to enforce the policy objectives of ECOWAS. Implementing the objectives and action plans will constitute positive steps in the direction of creating a framework for both regional and international co-operation.

ii. Delay in implementation of trade liberalisation policies

The lack of economic performance on the part of virtually all West African States necessitated in the period between mid-1980s to early 1990s, the implementation of unilateral trade liberalisation programmes by these States under various Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) supported by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).²²⁰ Today, these programmes have been supplemented by the adoption of the ECOWAS of the Common External Tariff (CET) of the UEMOA as an essential component of the creation of the ECOWAS Customs Union in 2008. However, as outlined above, the trade liberalisation scheme of ECOWAS has faced obstacles and challenges that have hampered its effective implementation, not least the existence of the two liberalisation schemes in the region.²²¹

iii. Infrastructural Facilities

Inadequate infrastructural facilities have tendered to hinder effective movement of persons, goods and services in the West African sub-region. To address this problem, Member States of the ECOWAS have looked in the direction of achieving an integrated transport and communication infrastructure within the community. Action taken in the road transport sector includes the construction of the West African Trans-Coastal highway (from Lagos to Nouakchott) and the Trans-Sahelian Highway (from Dakar to N'djamena) stretching to some 90,000 kilometres. These two highways are based on the Pan-African Highway Plan.²²² Added to these is the construction of interconnecting roads to open up the land-locked countries. A common Regional Road Transport and Transit Facilitation Programme to improve the competitiveness of the economies of ECOWAS Member States, facilitate free movement of persons, goods and services, create employment and promote trade is also being implemented within the framework of the Short-Term Plan of NEPAD and the Sub-Saharan African Transport Programme.²²³

In the telecommunications sector, action taken by ECOWAS Member States includes linking the 15 States with telephone, telex and fax facilities under the INTELCOM 1 programme. INTELCOM 1 is to be updated by INTELCOM 11 to expand the existing network and ensure interconnectivity with the telecommunications highways.²²⁴ Finally, improvement in the energy sector is to be brought about by sustainable power in the form of the envisaged West African Power Pool.²²⁵

²²⁰See Leith, J. C. and M. Lofchie (1993) "The Political Economy of Structural Adjustment in Ghana", in R. H. Bates and A. G. Krueger (eds.) *Political and Economic Interactions in Economic Reform*, Oxford, Blackwell.

²²¹See *supra*.

²²²See Bonaventure Adjavor, *Regional Integration in Africa*, p. 19, Paper Prepared for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Cooperation and NEPAD, Accra, Ghana. Writer has copy on file.

²²³*Ibid.*

²²⁴*Ibid.*

²²⁵*Ibid.* On the West African Power Pool, see *intra* p. 20.

iv. Conflict and Insecurity

As already suggested, the conflict situation and accompanying political instability in West Africa are other major challenges that have faced ECOWAS since its inception. Conflicts in Liberia, Sierra-Leone and Cote d'Ivoire have created a high level of insecurity in the sub-region. A major response on the part of ECOWAS has been the adoption in 1999 of the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security. The Protocol appears to be a comprehensive document, the objectives of which are stated in Article 3 to include the desire of ECOWAS to: prevent, manage and resolve internal and inter-State conflicts; implement the relevant provisions of the Protocols on Non-Aggression, Mutual Assistance in Defence; strengthen co-operation in the areas of conflict prevention, early warning, peacekeeping operations; maintain and consolidate peace, security and stability within the Community; promote close co-operation between Member-States in the areas of preventive diplomacy and peacekeeping; and constitute and deploy a civilian and military force to maintain or restore peace within the sub-region whenever the need arises.. The conditions to trigger the application of the Mechanism are provided for in Article 25 and include: cases of aggression or conflict in any Member State; conflict between two or several Member States; internal conflicts which threaten to trigger a humanitarian disaster; events that pose a serious threat to peace and security in the sub-region; situations of serious and massive violation of human rights and the rule of law in the event of an overthrow or attempted overthrow of a democratically elected government and any other situation to be decided by the Mediation and Security Council.

Of the institutions created under the Mechanism, the Authority of Heads of State and Government of Member States functions as the highest decision-making body and is empowered under Article 6 "to act on all matters concerning conflict prevention, management and resolution, peacekeeping, security, humanitarian support, peace building, control of cross-border crime, proliferation of small arms, as well as all other matters covered by the provisions of the Mechanism" By Article 7, the Authority mandates the Mediation and Security Council, another institution created under the Mechanism, "to take, on its behalf, appropriate decisions for the implementation of the provisions of the Mechanism". Article 10 provides that the Mediation and Security Council "shall take decisions on issues of peace and security in the sub-region of the Authority".

Other important provisions of the Mechanism are the supporting organs, including: the Defence and Security Commission, the Council of Elders, and ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). ECOMOG, under Article 21, is to be composed of "several stand-by multi-purpose modules (civilian and military) in their countries of origin and ready for immediate deployment". ECOMOG is charged among other

things with conflict management missions, including: observation and monitoring; peacekeeping and restoration of peace; humanitarian intervention in support of humanitarian disaster; enforcement of sanctions, including embargo; preventive deployment; peace-building, disarmament and demobilisation,

In sum, the adoption of the Protocol Relating to the Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution by ECOWAS, appears to give this Regional Economic Community (REC) a new impetus from within to tackle the region's conflicts.²²⁶ From that point of view, a key issue is how the responsibilities assumed by ECOWAS cohere and link to the AU's overarching framework for peace and security. ECOWAS, in Article 52 of the Protocol Relating to the Mechanisms provides for the cooperation of that regional body with the AU, the UN and other relevant international organisations. The AU, of course, has been keenly aware of this issue and as such adopted the Peace and Security Protocol setting out its relationships with RECs for conflict prevention, management and resolution.²²⁷

4. THE ROLE OF SOME INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND DONOR AGENCIES IN COMPLEMENTING THE INTEGRATION AGENDA OF WEST AFRICAN STATES

International Organisations as well as donor agencies also have a special role to play in complementing the integration agenda in West Africa. This is obviously the case since these organisations and agencies are well placed to support initiatives and policy changes favourable to regional integration and by so doing help Member States to meet their challenges—challenges that range from peace and security, economic marginalisation, weak infrastructure, and weak performance in macroeconomic policies. In what follows, an attempt will be made to highlight the different roles of the African Union (peace and security), the European Union, USAID and the IBRD (financial and economic support).

A. The African Union

The African Union is essentially a regional arrangement endowed with several organs, powers and functions for the promotion of accelerated socio-economic integration of the Continent. The Constitutive Act establishing the Union does not set out to create a super-state in the sense that Member States have subordinated their sovereignty to the Organisation. The AU still upholds the principle of sovereign equality and independence of its Member States. That principle is retained in the Objectives of the AU. Member States merely envisage a fundamental re-ordering of

²²⁶ See Gebe, Boniface Yao, "ECOWAS Security Protocols and Conflict Management in West Africa" Lessons and the Way Forward" in Vol. 1, Legon Journal of International Affairs, December 2004, pp. 1-25.

²²⁷ See, *infra*.

the economic, political, social and cultural environment of the Continent through the development of programmes at the level of Member States.

The AU, as the case also with other international organisations, is animated by a set core of principles. Here again, the Principles enshrined in the Act do not discard the principle of sovereignty. That principle is retained in Article 4 of the Act which proclaims the other Principles of the Union to include the following: sovereign equality and independence among Member States; establishment of a common defence policy for the Continent; prohibition of the use of force or threat to use force among Member States; non-interference by any Member State in the internal affairs of another; the right of the Union to intervene in a Member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances; namely, war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity and the right of Member States to request intervention from the Union in order to restore peace and security..

An important element of the AU today is the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)²²⁸ which has its primary objectives the eradication of poverty, the placement of African countries both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development, halting the marginalisation of Africa in the globalisation process and enhancing its full and beneficial integration into the global economy and the acceleration and empowerment of women. The priorities of NEPAD include;

- establishing the conditions for sustainable development by ensuring peace and security, democracy and good political, economic and corporate governance, regional co-operation and integration and capacity building;
- policy reforms and increased investment in the priority sectors of agriculture, human development with a focus on health, education, science and technology and skills development, building and improving infrastructure, including Information and Communication Technology (ICT), energy, transport, water and sanitation, promoting diversification of production and exports, particularly with respect to agro-industries, manufacturing, mining, mineral beneficiation and tourism and
- mobilising resources by increasing domestic savings and investments, improving management of public revenue and expenditure, improving Africa's share in global trade, attracting foreign direct investment and increasing capital flows through further debt reduction and increase overseas development agency flows.

²²⁸The NEPAD strategic framework document arose from a mandate given to the 5 initiating Heads of State (Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa) by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to develop an integrated socio-economic development framework for Africa. The 37th Summit of the OAU in July 2001 formally adopted the strategic framework document. For relevant NEPAD documents, see <http://www.nepad.org>

All in all, NEPAD seeks to create the conditions conducive for investment, growth and development and the targets set are in line with the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, i.e. to reduce by half the number of people living in extreme poverty by 2015, reduce infant and child mortality rates, enrol all children of school-going age in primary schools by 2015, eliminate gender disparities in enrolment in primary and secondary education by 2005 and reduce maternal mortality ratios by two-thirds by 2015.

Now, within the peace and security architecture of the AU is established the Peace and Security Council whose functions include the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa, engaging in early-warning and preventive diplomacy, peace support operations and interventions in Member States in defined grave circumstances, peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction. The problem, however, is how complementary this architecture is to that of the ECOWAS Regional Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, given that there appears to exist no structural relationship between the two organisations. The question is whether ECOWAS, and for that matter other Regional Mechanisms, will continue to exist as autonomous entities, or be integrated into the AU's structure. The answer appears to be given by the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union^{229,230} which in Article 16 provides:

1. The Regional Mechanisms are part of the overall security architecture of the Union, which has the primary responsibility for promoting peace, security and stability in Africa. In this respect, the Peace and Security Council and the Chairperson of the Commission shall:
 - a. harmonise and coordinate the activities of Regional Mechanisms in the field of peace, security and stability to ensure that these activities are consistent with the objectives and principles of the Union;
 - b. work closely with Regional Mechanisms to ensure effective partnership between them and the Peace and Security Council in the promotion and maintenance of peace, security and stability. The modalities of such partnership shall be determined by the comparative advantage of each and prevailing circumstances.
2. The Peace and Security Council shall in consultation with Regional Mechanisms promote initiatives aimed at anticipating and preventing conflicts and, in circumstances where conflicts have occurred, peace-making and peace-building functions.
3. In undertaking these efforts, the Regional Mechanisms concerned shall, through the Chairperson of the Commission, keep the Peace and Security Council fully and continuously informed of their activities and ensure that these

^{229,230}Adopted on 10 July 2000; entered into force on 26 December 2003.

activities are closely harmonised and coordinated with the activities of the Peace and Security Council. The Peace and Security Council shall, through the Chairperson of the Commission, also keep the Regional Mechanisms fully and continuously informed of its activities.

4. In order to ensure close harmonisation and coordination and facilitate regular exchange of information, the Chairperson of the Commission shall convene periodic meetings, but at least once a year, with the Chief Executives and/or the officials in charge of peace and security within the Regional Mechanisms.
5. The Chairperson of the Commission shall take the necessary measures, where appropriate, to ensure the full involvement of Regional Mechanisms in the establishment and effective functioning of the Early Warning system and the African Standby Force.
6. Regional Mechanisms shall be invited to participate in the discussion of any question brought before the Peace and Security Council whenever that question being addressed by the Regional Mechanism is of special interest.
7. The Chairperson of the Commission shall be invited to participate in meetings and deliberations of Regional Mechanisms.
8. In order to strengthen coordination and cooperation, the Commission shall establish liaison offices to the Regional Mechanisms. The Regional Mechanisms shall be encouraged to establish liaison offices to the Commission.
9. On the basis of the above provisions, a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation shall be concluded between the Commission and the Regional Mechanisms.

From the above provisions, there appears to be a significant and broadened scope for concerted efforts at conflict prevention and for harmonised and coordinated strategies between the AU and Regional Mechanisms to curb conflicts on the African Continent. This marks a shift from the non-interventionist principle of the OAU and brings to the fore growing opportunities to promote conflict prevention within an integrated institutional framework. To this end, a Policy Framework for the Establishment of the African Standby Force (ASF) and the Military Staff Commission was approved by African leaders in 2004 coupled with the appeal to “international cooperating partners” of the AU, including the G8, the EU and the UN as well as bilateral partners to provide the support required to facilitate the establishment of the ASF.²³¹ The Policy Framework outlines the various conflict scenarios that the AU would have to respond to either through regional monitoring, peace-keeping or peace enforcement (intervention) mission; the mandating authority which requires that the AU will seek UN Security Council authorisation of its enforcement actions, and regional mechanisms, AU authorisation of their interventions. A key concept adopted in the Framework is that the ASF will consist of five standby brigades, one in

²³¹ See [http://www.africa-union.org/root/AU/AU/Departments/PSC/PSC/CD.Meeting the Challenge of Conflict.....sourced 1 March 2009](http://www.africa-union.org/root/AU/AU/Departments/PSC/PSC/CD.Meeting%20the%20Challenge%20of%20Conflict....sourced%201%20March%202009).

each of Africa's regions, supported by civilian police (CIVPOL) and other capacities.²³²

B. EUROPEAN UNION (EU)

The European Union's role in complementing the regional integration agenda in West Africa is largely governed by the premise that the national economies in West African States, including Ghana's, but excluding from Nigeria's, are too small to achieve significant levels of economic growth on their own; rather the disparate economies need to spur growth through increased trade and investment. Indeed the EU has been a long-standing advocate of regional integration in Africa and an important source of financing and technical support for regional schemes.

The EU's policy toward regional integration was first revealed in the Lome IV Agreement (1991-95) with the allocation of 10% of the European Development Fund to regional activities, and ECU 228 million for regional co-operation and integration activities in West Africa.²³³ EU's development co-operation policy was carried further in the Cotonou Partnership Agreement (CPA) signed on 23 June 2000 between the Members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) (which includes West African States) and the European Community and its Member States. As provided in the Agreement, the partnership is based on three complementary pillars, namely, development co-operation, economic and trade co-operation and the political dimension. The partnership is centred on the objective of reducing and eventually eradicating poverty consistent with the objectives of sustainable development and the gradual integration of the ACP countries in the world economy (Article 1 of the Agreement).

Even more important in the present context, it is under the CPA that negotiations have commenced with a view to the new arrangement titled "Economic Partnership Agreement" (EPA). The EPA seeks to establish a new framework on which the relationship between the ACP countries and the EU shall be based.²³⁴ In particular, one key opportunity the negotiating structure of the EPA provides for the ECOWAS, it has been observed "is the deepening of its integration process, which the sub-regional group has struggled to perfect in the past year".²³⁵ The importance of the EPA to West African States may also be gauged from the fact that trade within the ECOWAS remains very low and that the agreements to be concluded open

²³²For discussion of the ASF, Gen. Marko d. Chiziko, "The Responsibility to Protect: Does the African Stand-By Force Need a Doctrine for Protection of Civilians". www.americanstudents.us/IJHRL2/Articles/Journal_IJHRL_2007_Chiziko_online.pdf

²³³See Real Lavergne and Cyril Daddieh, "Donor Perspectives", sourced: http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-68357-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html 10/1/2008.

²³⁴See Stevens C, and J. Keenan (March 2005), Preparing for Economic Partnership Agreements: Institute of Development Studies. See also the various articles in The European Development Fund and the Economic Partnership Agreements, Commonwealth Secretariat, November 2006.

²³⁵Olumuyiwa B. Alaba, "EU_ECOWAS EPA: Regional Integration, Trade Facilitation and Development in West Africa", available <http://www.gtap.agecon.purdue.edu/resources/download/2599.pdf> sourced 2 March 2009.

opportunities to Member States of the ECOWAS to access larger import markets.²³⁶ Equally very crucial in addressing the development needs of those States and propelling the process of regional integration is aid in the form of technical and financial assistance from the EU to ECOWAS Member States to improve infrastructure as well as capacity-building.

C. THE WORLD BANK

As suggested earlier, the countries of West Africa, as with those of other parts of Africa are faced with a multiplicity of challenges that prevent them from participating in the global economy and thus reaping the benefits of increased globalisation. The World Bank's involvement in regional integration is premised upon the belief that regional approaches offer the possibility for countries to make more headway in overcoming development constraints (such as poor infrastructure, small and fragmented markets, undeveloped financial markets, weak systems to facilitate trade), than on their own.²³⁷ To that end, the objectives of the World Bank's Regional Integration Assistance Strategy (RIAS)²³⁸ for West Africa focuses on "the creation of open, unified, regional economic space, as a means of creating an environment for a more competitive and efficient private sector".²³⁹ They also aim to "help remove formal and informal barriers to intra-regional trade and contribute to increased trade within the sub-region, and between the sub-region and the rest of the world".²⁴⁰

The Bank's projects consistent with the objectives of the RIAS include financial support to improve transport infrastructure and facilitate trade,²⁴¹ energy, water, telecommunications, the financial sector and agriculture.²⁴²

²³⁶Estimates suggest that intra-Community trade in ECOWAS is less than 15% compared to 70% within the EU. Ibid. p. 4.

²³⁷"World Bank supports transport improvements in West Africa" sourced: <http://www.myjoyonline.com/tools/print/printnews.asp?contentid=17502; 9/22/2008>

²³⁸The RIAS is established as a framework to complement the Bank's country-specific assistance strategies.

²³⁹Ibid.

²⁴⁰Ibid.

²⁴¹The Bank has approved a US\$ 190 million to finance transport and transit improvements in Burkina Faso, Ghana and Mali. The financing package consists of three International Development Association (IDA) credits of US\$ 70 million to Burkina Faso, a US\$80 million to Ghana and a US\$40 million to Mali for a West Africa Transport and Transit Facilitation Project. The three-country project supports the NEPAD transport agenda of trade corridors without borders and barriers, which aims to facilitate trade and promote economic integration in the sub-region. Ibid. See also Daily Graphic, Thursday, March 12, 2009, World Bank advertisement captioned: "Ghana's Concerns: The World Bank's Priorities", p.15 at p.16 4) "Support for private sector and regional integration...." In order to grow, Ghana's economy needs to nurture private businesses as well as increase trade with neighbouring countries and penetrate global markets.The Bank is also helping to promote the role of Ghana in regional integration and trade facilitation, infrastructure through regional roads projects from Tema to Bamako and from Abidjan through Tema to Lagos, as well as a Trade Insurance Project. The West African Transport and Transit Facilitation Project with a \$190-million IDA support, seeks to improve the Burkina-Faso, Mali and Niger access to the Ghanaian ports of Tema and Takoradi, to reduce general transport costs and promote economic activity and private sector development by facilitating the efficient movement of transit traffic along the Tema-Ouagadougou-Bamako transport corridor. The World Bank has also been supporting the Trade and Investment Gateway Project with a US\$ 50.5 million facility. This has contributed in various ways in promoting Ghana as the gateway to West Africa. It has helped to improve the quality and standards of service delivery".

²⁴²Among which are projects such as the West Africa Power Pool and the Programme for the implementation of the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme in West Africa.

The Bank also provides capacity development programmes to Regional Economic Communities (RECs) including ECOWAS which has been mandated to implement The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) programmes. This support is in the form of grants that finance technical assistance in priority areas, as defined by NEPAD and the regional bodies themselves. These areas include expenditure tracking in the agricultural sector (NEPAD) and strategic planning for effective implementation of ECOWAS priority regional and NEPAD programmes.

Of its non-lending activities, the Bank carries out regional diagnostic studies which include: a review of the implementation of customs unions, analyses of gaps in the regional infrastructure (especially trade corridors, regional power systems and international telecommunications links) and regional assessments of financial sector integration.²⁴³

In addition, the Bank's involvement in support of regional integration has been facilitated by the establishment in 2005 of a Regional Integration Department, charged to work with Bank staff, donors and clients to incorporate regional approaches into country programmes and to support regional bodies.

D. USAID

USAID has a Regional Economic Integration Programme that is geared towards contributing "to the development of a prosperous West Africa through supporting economic activities that transcend national boundaries".²⁴⁴ USAID's Programme is predicated upon the belief that "West Africa's overall economic growth is stunted by the limited economic activity and trade between West African States and the rest of the world", and that "increasing the economic integration among West African countries can contribute to the economic growth and prosperity of all countries by expanding the size of potential markets, reducing the cost of doing business, and promoting economic stability".²⁴⁵

The principal programme activities supported by the Regional Economic Integration Program include: the West Africa International Business Linkages Program (WAIBL), West African Trade Hub (WATH), ECOTRADE, Growth through Engendering Enterprise in ECOWAS Countries (ECOGEE), Strengthening Networks of Market Information Systems and Traders' Organisations in West Africa (MISTOWA), West Africa Monetary Institute (WAMI) and Regional Energy Initiatives (WAPP & WAGP).

²⁴³See, e.g. "Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Financial Market Integration Report", June 2006.

²⁴⁴"USAID West Africa: Regional Economic Integration PROGRAM", sourced: <http://www.usaid.gov/missions/westafrika/ecintegration/overview/index.htm> 9/23/2008.

²⁴⁵Ibid.

The WAIBL project provides match-making services between West African and North American businesses. The project also facilitates the financing of business opportunities by connecting West African businesses to commercial banks and relevant U.S. Government entities such as the Export-Import Bank. The WAIBL project began in 1998 and has supported over \$145 million of transactions to date in the agriculture, shea butter, textile, infrastructure, information technology, jewellery and finance sectors.

The West African Trade Hub opened in 2003 covering 20 countries in the region. The objective of WATH, headquartered in Accra, Ghana, is to encourage West African businesses to take advantage of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA),²⁴⁶ and to develop capacity for better engagement in the multilateral trading system as embodied by the World Trade Organisation. The Hub also provides assistance to regional inter-governmental organisations and national ministries on a variety of trade-related issues.

The ECOTRADE project assists the ECOWAS complete its Common External Tariff (CET). A Common External Tariff, as we have already described, implies that all goods entering into the customs territory of any ECOWAS country will be assessed at the same rate of customs duty thereby facilitating closer economic integration and increased trade.

The ECOGEE project supports West African women's efforts to overcome barriers to business development and regional trade. Established in September 2002, ECOGEE is a partnership among programs such as the West African International Business Linkages program (WAIBL) and the West African Businesswomen's Network (WABNET). WABNET is a network of businesswomen who collaborate to promote regional trade and the growth of their enterprises that was created in 2001 at an USAID/WARP-sponsored workshop. WARP supports WABNET through organisational development assistance provided by the ECOGEE project.

The MISTOWA project aims to increase regional agricultural trade and food security by improving and linking the existing regional efforts to generate, disseminate, and make commercial use of market information. It also seeks to help regional market information systems (MIS) and trade partners to address other constraints, so that strong and dynamic commodity chains emerge. These will use the information to enhance production, handling, credit, trade and value-added services such as processing, packaging, and quality control. Effective MIS and Trades' Organisations will also heighten farmer awareness of opportunities and technologies to increase

²⁴⁶See the U.S Trade and Development Act of 2000 by which beneficiary countries (countries of Sub-Saharan Africa) receive preferential access to the U.S. market. Necessary conditions for accessing these benefits are that the country has established (or is making progress toward) a market-based economy, the rule of law and political pluralism, economic policies to reduce poverty, a system to combat corruption and bribery, protection of internationally recognized workers' rights, and elimination of barriers to trade and investment.

production, and will facilitate the demand-pull for higher value and quality agricultural products.

The Regional Economic Integration Program supports the West African Monetary Institute (WAMI) with technical assistance and training in order to strengthen the institution's capacity so it can fully participate in the development of a second common currency in the ECOWAS region. Technical assistance provided to WAMI under this project includes developing a transfer payment system to facilitate monetary exchanges, designing data collection and dissemination standards, harmonising statistics and analysing financial flows in the region.

The importance of the role of USAID in supporting the above-mentioned institutions and their programme activities cannot be overemphasised as the projects involved are also top-priority infrastructure projects of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). The absence of a reliable and affordable source of electric power has long been identified as an obstacle to the region's economic development. USAID/WARP provides technical assistance to the West African Power Pool and West African Gas Pipeline Projects to help create the legal, regulatory, and institutional frameworks needed for the supply of cheaper and more reliable sources of electricity.

5. CONCLUSION

The issues and challenges presented in the discussion above relating to the integration in the West African sub-region show the importance of the role of international organisations and donor agencies in complementing the integration agenda of Ghana and other West African States. , It is therefore of the utmost importance that Member States of ECOWAS, in playing this complementary role, deepen the integration process within the community by co-ordinating and harmonising effectively their economic, financial and security policies. Obviously, Ghana's integration agenda can only advance if its national policies converge with other Member States of the ECOWAS leading ultimately to the establishment of an economic union in West Africa as embodied in Article 3 of the ECOWAS Revised Treaty.

Also of critical importance is the need for harmonisation, alignment and managing of donor support and other complementary programmes to avoid waste and duplication. To this end, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness endorsed by over one hundred donor and developing countries at the High level Forum on 2 March 2005²⁴⁷ provides a practical blueprint for donors and developing countries to monitor each other's progress based upon the five key principles: ownership, alignment,

²⁴⁷ Available at <http://www.oecd.org/documents>.

harmonisation, managing for results and mutual accountability. In short, under the Declaration, donors agree to base any conditions on aid to developing countries on that country's own Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS).²⁴⁸ In turn, developing countries with the assistance of donors agree to reform national systems wherever necessary to improve their capacity to manage development resources.²⁴⁹

Motivation to Pursue and Executive Masters in Leadership and Governance at the GIMPA School of Governance, Leadership and Public Administration.

In an era of global competition, effective leadership and good corporate governance is critical for the success of private as well as public organisations. As a business executive, training in leadership and corporate governance will enable me to provide the right kind of leadership for organisational development, efficiency, effectiveness and profitability. It has now been established that the most important assets of an organisation is its human resource base but to derive the maximum benefit from this resource, today's managers need to understand policies and procedures which ensure that highly comparative advantage for the organisation.

In order to achieve the above corporate and personal goals, it is my desire to pursue an Executive Masters Programme in Governance and Leadership at Public the GIMPA School of Governance, Leadership and Public Administration. My choice of GIMPA over other institutions has been motivated by several factors. These include;

- The School of Governance has created a culture of openness that embraces exchange of knowledge and experiences between lecturers and students.
- It offers an excellent teaching and learning environment, with the right flexibility to enable me pursue the programme in addition to my work schedule.
- Highly qualified and competent teaching staff, including the opportunity to learn from practicing business executives.

²⁴⁸This is a policy framework for supporting growth and poverty reduction in the short term. See, e.g. Republic of Ghana, 2003. The Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy, 2003-2005: An Agenda for Growth and Prosperity, Accra.

²⁴⁹For other relevant instruments setting out the commitments of developing countries and donor agencies and countries, see the 2003 Rome Declaration on Harmonization, available at <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd> and the Accra Agenda for Action on Aid, available at <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/ACCRAEXT/Resources>.

the 1990s, the number of people in the world who are living in poverty has increased from 1.2 billion to 1.6 billion (World Bank 2000).

There are a number of reasons for this increase. First, the population of the world has increased from 5 billion in 1987 to 6 billion in 2000. Second, the number of people in the world who are living in poverty has increased from 1.2 billion in 1987 to 1.6 billion in 2000. Third, the number of people in the world who are living in poverty has increased from 1.2 billion in 1987 to 1.6 billion in 2000. Fourth, the number of people in the world who are living in poverty has increased from 1.2 billion in 1987 to 1.6 billion in 2000. Fifth, the number of people in the world who are living in poverty has increased from 1.2 billion in 1987 to 1.6 billion in 2000.

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Seventh, the number of people in the world who are living in poverty has increased from 1.2 billion in 1987 to 1.6 billion in 2000.

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