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African Union (AU) and Dependency – A Critique of AU's Dependency Syndrome and Dawn of New Alternative Sources of Funding

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Abstract

As the African Union (AU) moves to implement its current development agenda as constituted in its ambitious Agenda 2063 there is increasing precedence to pay attention to the AU current progress so far in handling of mounting crises on the continent and executing its programmes efficiently and effectively. Across the continent, the AU is faced with crises that test its commitment and capability to fulfil its ambitious agenda.

Through desktop studies, this paper looks further at the major factors that remain troubling for the AU in implementing its programmes. The analysis, points out the AU's inability to run its programmes and implement its ambitious agenda as articulated in Article 4(k) of the Constitutive Act that calls for "promotion of self – reliance," Article 4(h) that calls for "non-indifference," as well as not living up to the much heralded principle of "African solutions for African problems." This is due to the AU's over-reliance on external donor funding for its programmes. The paper, therefore, adopts a quality approach and is descriptive in structure.

Coupled with poor institutional infrastructural capacities, the analysis also assesses the renewed drive of AU operational strategy to find alternative funding sources that open up new opportunities to free itself from over-dependence on external donor funding who often times end up hijacking the whole development agenda. In conclusion and recommendation remarks, the paper goes to offer additional non-public sector sources of funds that, if given more emphasis, could offer, reliable and effective means of funding and economic transformational modalities.

Key Words: Dependency, Developmentalism, Integration and Economic Transformation

I. Introduction

Regional integration remains a pivotal strategy that will propel African economies towards transformations of the most fragmented small economies, expand the markets through competitiveness and innovation, widen the continent's economic space, reap the benefits of economies of scan from increased production and trade, and thereby maximising the welfare of nations (McCarthy, 1994). Understanding that regional integration increases competition in global trade, improves access to foreign technology, investment and ideas, African leaders have in the past few decades, not shied away from considering regional integration as a central path to a broad – based development and a continental economic strategy through constitutions of treaties and protocols [i.e. Treaty Establishing The African Economic Community (1991) and The Constitutive Act of the African Union (2000)].

Despite considerable progress in economic growth, it is, to date, acknowledged that; African regional integration has yielded little fruits despite all the integration initiatives that have been put forward. Most African countries, since independence, continue to wrestle with seemingly intractable developmental challenges.[1] According to the work by Mzukisi (2007), earlier strategies including import substitution industrialization (ISI) and structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), failed to reverse Africa's declining economic fortunes. Against a background of precarious dependence on the international market and general developmental malaise, regional integration is widely accepted as the roadmap to Africa's development. In recent decades, the urgency for regional integration has been underscored by a conjuncture of external and internal factors (i.e. increasing levels of poverty, the need to lower the current high transaction costs for business in the continent, lower risks associated with investments, expansion of markets, pooling of regional resources, better utilisation of economies of scale in production, and more efficient allocation of resource, as well as gain cooperative common approach to compete in the global world market). In addition, the end of the cold war and the

[1] Indigenous Black Africans free from apartheid in South Africa. http://www.ipoaa.com/african_independence.htm

acceleration of the globalization process, along with Africa's risk of further marginalisation in a multi-polar world dominated by trading blocs in North America, Europe and South-East Asia, have presented regional cooperation as an imperative. These external pressures are augmented at the regional level by Africa's fragmentation, the ubiquity of poverty, the prevalence of conflicts and the disconcerting asymmetry in the economic power relations between Africa and its northern trading partners. On the global level, the multilateral trading system has been extended to new issues such as competition, intellectual property rights, non-tariff barriers, and investments that have been strengthened by the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Today, in its quest to economically, politically, and fully regionalize, Africa is faced with an unprecedented task relating to how; to finance its development agenda through the African Union (AU) and it's eight recognised Regional Economic Communities (RECs)[2]. With the slow gains of integration in Africa, it necessitates the following questions that the paper endeavors to answer: (a) What are the driving reasons behind Africa's need for regional integration? (b) Why deepening integration efforts by AU has been slow? (c) What operational strategic challenges does AU face in implementing its development agenda?, and lastly, (d) What complementary modalities of finance are available to help AU and Africa to sustainably address critical development finance needs? Answers to these questions are not only pertinent but also vital as the progress of regional and global integration is indispensable in addressing the key challenges of poverty and development in Africa.

Against this backdrop, this paper employs a desktop and descriptive approach using secondary data to analyse AU's operational strategies and capacity (both institutionally and financially) to tackle significant development challenges in light of its effectiveness in implementing numerous regional development initiatives. This entails a redoubling of efforts

[2] Although the AU recognises eight REC's, there are however more than ten RECs in Africa namely; Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL), Indian Ocean Community (IOC), Mano River Union (MRU), West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA/WAEMU), and Southern African Customs Union (SACU).

to harness potential and innovative sources of finance, as well as undertaking reforms at institutional levels of operations in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and sustainably transform the continent.

The basis of the paper's arguments departs from the theory of dependency to analyse how AU fare's in terms of its performance and capacity to execute and implement its regional development programmes for Africa's transformation. Linking the dependency theory and AU's performance and contemporary views of Developmentalism, the paper will highlight some dimensions in which so called dependency syndrome seriously hampers AU and Africa's development agenda through efforts of leverage acquisition, appropriation of economic agenda if not assimilation.

II. AU and Operational Strategic Programmes: Dependency Syndrome

The dependency theory, a critical concept in the argument, holds that "the condition of underdevelopment is precisely the result of the incorporation of the Third World economies into the capitalist world system which is dominated by the West and North America" (Randall and Theobald, 1998), hence in development studies, and framework to understand strategies in developmentalism discourse, especially in Africa, dependency implies a situation in which a particular country or region relies on another for support, "survival" and growth. The neo-colonial dependence theory, further views dependency on foreign aid as a form of political and economic control of poor developing countries by their rich developed counterparts, assisted by forces from within the poor countries whereby a condition of dependency is perpetuated in the poor developing countries, trapping them in more serious conditions of backwardness, and thus making them vulnerable to exploitation (Dos Santos, 1973).

To date, the AU, and its member States continue to increasingly rely on foreign aid[3] to implement their development programmes in the continent. However the recent rhetoric

[3] The World Bank categorises foreign aid to Africa, among others, as aids that in form of, debt cancellation, emergency relief assistance, outright grants, soft loans, and technical cooperation (World Development Indicators, 2006)

surrounding aid dependency is clear and an unwelcome and the unfortunate side effect of aid and its diminishment, is high on the aid policy agenda (Thomas et al., 2011). What is becoming increasingly clear is that there is an emerging type of aid-related dependency that refers to political factors as opposed to its original intentions of financial and or economic transformation.

In essence, particularly in Africa, with incremental inflow of aid, also came the development of more complex modes of donation, including direct programme funding, conditionalities, tied aid, and grants, which give donors more control over the direction and ultimate use of their funds. These conditionalities, has often meant that those providing aid become increasingly entwined in political processes. This, combined with aid uncertainty, questionable sustainability, and a tendency of top-down approaches to political involvement and decision making processes; create a situation where countries in need of aid are dependent upon foreign agendas.

This notion is supported by the fact that, Africa, through its regional and continental bodies such as the AU and RECs, is yet to make any significant advances to achieving these goals and the continent continues to virtually, by any measure, lag behind the rest of the developing world, demonstrating that aid to the continent has failed in its set goals and objectives (Carlsson, Somolekae and van de Walle, 1997). Most countries in Africa, especially the sub-Saharan countries, are still about as poor as they were when they became independent or even poorer. The worst performers are the so-called Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPCs), the majority with a steadily declining per capita income that continued into the 21st century (Lerrick, 2005), when other world regions were enjoying the benefits of globalisation.

Wherefore, the false paradigm approach, according to Stiglitz (2002), sees underdevelopment, poverty and, by extension, the dependency syndrome in the poor countries, the result of an often misleading a single prescription fits all doctrine, usually adopted for poor developing countries by naïve and assuming international experts employed by own donor countries, multinational donor organisations, and intergovernmental institutions.

This fact is capitulated especially in times of crises in developing countries, whereby experts recommend outmoded and inappropriate policies based on strange, if not curious, mixture of ideology and poor economics that, at best, protect special interests but neglect the effects on the general population in the countries for which the policies are meant (Stiglitz, 2002). Therefore, projects undertaken by these poor countries (i.e. the AU in this context), end up failing because of, among others, wrong policies based on wrong doctrines and inappropriate models, which, in turn, exacerbate poor developing countries, aid dependency, deepening their debts and debt servicing problems (Todaro and Smith, 2006).

It is therefore, practical to submit that, aid dependency for AU, and Africa in general, has neither boosted capacities nor acted as a source of technology transfer to the continent, and AU as an organisation with the mandate to see to it that development goals and programmes are fully realised. The dependency has rather discouraged private sector initiative needed to promote productivity and industrial transformation for sustainable development in recipient countries (Ilorah, 2008).

It is probably why Grabowski (2006) and Baxter (2002), passionately posit that, " foreign aid is an unearned income for which the scramble in Africa, especially among its leaders, reflects the continent's lack of political and economic development, lack of proper institutions for revenue collection, and lack of services to the general populace. In other words, the work by Grabowski and Baxter, suggest that, Africa's dependency on foreign aid means that the majority of countries are unwilling to develop proper institutions for revenue collection in which, countries, directly or indirectly, shy away from commitments such as service deliveries to their citizens.

In principle, the involvement of donors, either foreign governments or international agencies, in recipient country political processes have been shown to reduce the quality of governance (Knack, 2001). Evidently, as both the AU and its member States continue to depend on donors, AU as a continental body, has seen reduced accountability, as such practices forced the organisation to serve two masters (i.e. the donors and its citizens) who often times have conflicting interests simultaneously (Hayman, 2008).

This relationship has, for a long time now, influenced the direction of accountability towards the current and highly contested relationship which lies between the AU and donors rather than the African common folk, risking the organisation legitimacy and delaying and form of political, economic and or development reforms (Bräutigam, 2000). This is particularly damaging in countries where the need for aid stems from political upheaval or civil unrest such as the Democratic Republic of Congo or Zimbabwe, which have a lengthy history of aid dependence (Moss et al., 2006). The risk here is that donors tend to maintain political leverage, thus decisions and planning become reliant on donor involvement whose motivation and values are largely neo-imperialistic and patrimonial in nature, which often times do not necessarily align with those of the public or government.

In relation to developmentalism discourse for Africa's economic transformation, the theoretical evidence, so far, points out the mismatch and or the indirect correlation between development aid, and development itself. Therefore, this compels the need to venture into other alternative means underpinning the AU's and its member States efforts in reducing the chronic aid dependency syndrome.

Such efforts to flee from aid dependency is echoed in Grabowski's work which encourages aid independency, for, countries that are less dependent on foreign aid are more likely to follow their own home grown development routes, both politically and economically (Grabowski, 2006), as such countries are not bound by donor-dictated conditionalities as expressed by Chabal and Deloz (1999) resulting to aid constraints. Such conditionalities or aid constraints, both political and or economic, can, and are still a heavy burden to recipient countries (Boyle, 2007).

III. AU and Strategic Regional Integration (RI) Programmes for Development

Regional integration occurs naturally, albeit very unevenly, during the course of the development of private markets. “Natural” market integration is a process characterized by progressive convergence of economic and social parameters between locals and regions and increasing degrees of interdependence. Regional integration can also be driven by policy-induced regional cooperation, or regionalism (Delvin & Catro, 2002).

Regional Cooperation between two or more countries can also take place without pretensions of regional integration[4]. Functional regional cooperation involves an adjustment of policies and activities between countries to achieve outcomes that the parties prefer to the status quo. Mutually beneficial functional regional cooperation is possible in practically any field of public policy, ranging from security matters to economic, environment, disaster management, epidemiological issues, etc. While functional regional cooperation can and does emerge independently of formal integration processes, it also can constitute a parallel track to a formal regional integration process, or through time contribute to the emergence of such a formal process.

Ostensibly, regionalism in Africa has always had a strong political motive with Pan-Africanism, as an expression of continental identity and coherence that distinguishes regional integration in Africa from other regions in the developing world (McCarthy, 1994).

Economic arguments for regional co-operation however, are also particularly strong given the importance of economic integration for accelerating growth and development, which potentially apply to Africa. These benefits include lower transaction costs for business, lower risks associated with investments, expansion of markets, pooling of regional resources, better utilisation of economies of scale in production, and more efficient allocation of resources.

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[4] Ibid at page 2 - 3

It is, however, indisputable that, in order to achieve some of these benefits, strong national economic policies will need to be put in place and mainstreamed to all facets of the economic system. Wherefore, regional cooperation offers a framework for coordinating policies and regulations and also help to resolve conflicts by strengthening economic ties between African countries as well as foster other cross – cutting non – economic outliers (Carbough, 2017). Fittingly to say, therefore, Africa's economic motives towards regional integration, suggest the growing awareness of the economic returns offered through regional cooperation (ACBF, 2014).

As a continental body, tasked with progress and well being of the continent, AU continues to struggle to maintain a central role in Africa's regional integration and whole economic agenda through RECs as its building blocks. The advent of AU's and REC's increasing commitment to realising the African Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) for example, echoes the changing realities that the continent is currently undergoing.

However, the push for deeper integration has in turn, today, led to what is termed today "spaghetti bowl" complex referring to the problems arising from multiple memberships of RECs and member states which makes the task of horizontal dexterity, difficult, since the same country will be progressing towards economic cooperation and integration at different swift in the different RECs to which it belongs. At the same time, the cost of membership and the management burdens has risen with the increase in the membership of multiple regional organizations (Biswaro, 2012, Rugumamu, 2004).

By the same token, suffice to say that, AU's strategic programmes such as the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA), Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) have minimally if not failed "in toto" to deliver on promises.

The CAADP programme, for example, which is essentially the most strategically and central programme taking into account the economic identities of almost all African economies "agricultural based economies", it is paradoxical and baffling that, with 60% of world's untilled land, food security remains a head scratching challenge for many African States. This notion continues to be evidenced by the frequent food shortages and famines like that of recent case in the Horn of Africa between 2011 and 2012 (FAO, 2012). Wherefore, CAADP has failed to meet its explicit goal to eliminate hunger and reduce poverty through agriculture.[5]

This however, is not to discount the progress that, such initiatives like PIDA, CAADP and the like have achieved. What is common, though, is there is a general consensus that, AU needs to change the status quo on how AU operationalize its programmes, which are almost externally funded and start to build sustainable linkages that will actively engage its citizens and internalize its programmes.

IV. AU and Challenges of Africa's Development Agenda

Policies and institutions constitute the backbone of any regional integration initiative. As Parks and Oakerson put it, regional institutions and policies are important in defining the issues, mobilizing resources, providing differential access, mediating interests and in implementing policies (Parks & Oakerson, 2000).

On the other hand, impressive economic growth, the emergence and continuing expansion of a middle class, gains in labor productivity, increases in trade and foreign direct investment (FDI), and improved political and macroeconomic stability all have been part of the "Africa rising" narrative in the last few years (Medhora & and Samy, 2013). This fact, while it is encouraging, it however comes with numerous challenges that still remain particularly in the continent's capacity, through its institutions (AU and RECs) to liberate its people from extreme

[5] http://www.nepad-caadp.net/about-caadp.php

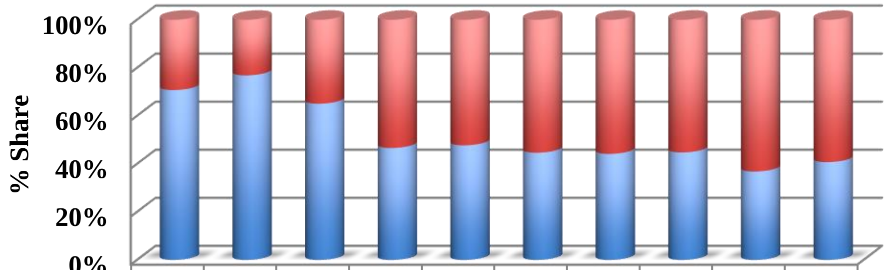
poverty, and maintain sustainable development. The share of the African population in extreme poverty, for example, did decline from 56 per cent in 1990, to 43 per cent in 2012. But this trend also saw the continent's progressive population growth, as a result of which, the number of people living in extreme poverty still increased by more than 100 million (WB, 2016).

It is no surprise, for example that Africa, and Sub Saharan Africa (SSA) in particular remains as the worst performer in the world in terms of yield-enhancing practices and techniques, and thus fails to seize the innovative and entrepreneurial strategic opportunities of mechanization and technologies to transform its agriculture base economies.

Not withstanding the staggering nature of the numbers, the AU, as a continental organisation, continues to struggle to cope with increasing mandate and the multifaceted social, economic and political problems that have particularly heightened in the past few decades and triggered paradigm shifts that have resource implications. Insufficient and unreliable contributions from member states as well as internal reliance on a few countries (i.e. South Africa, Egypt, Algeria, Nigeria, Angola and previously Libya before its political crisis) who pay close to 66 per cent of the budget has undermined implementation of key programmes of the Union and led to AU's increasing dependency on external donor sources to fund its development programmes.

The AU budgetary handbooks show that, between 2009 and 2010 for example, 66.36% of the total AU budget was financed by only five countries (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Nigeria, and South Africa) and as recent internal and external challenges in these countries continue to limit their capacities to meet their financial commitments to the AU, external donors have gained more ground and leverage by bailing the organisation out through funding the programmes (i.e. from 45 per cent of the budget in 2010, to over 70 per cent today) and thus, dictate the narrative as well as development path. European Union remains a major bearer of the financial external donor chunk to AU and its payments have increased from €91 million in 2010 to €330 million in 2015, of which almost 90% was for peace and security (Miyandazi, 2016)

Figure: AU Annual Budget in US $ Millions



	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
External Donors	36.3	32.4	57.4	133.7	134.2	151.7	155.4	170.1	225.5	247
Member States	87.8	107.6	106.9	116.8	122.6	122.4	122.9	137.9	131.5	169.8

Source: AU Handbook, 2007 - 2016

While external donor funding continues to play a pivotal role in enabling AU to implement parts of its development agenda, cover some of the operational costs (including non-permanent staff), and has contribute to get particular policy issues or projects on the agenda, the volume and quality of donor funding has however raised concerns particularly in the form of reducing a sense of ownership with member States, and in the form of transparency and existing information gaps in the budget processes that have made it difficult for African stakeholders including member States, RECs and non-State actors to assess whether the donor funds agreed serve AU priorities or donor preferences. The latter has been more so the concern of many AU stakeholders (Vanheukelom, 2016).

Wherefore, ‘earmarking’ is a strategy favoured by many international donors who fear corruption in recipient governments, therefore ‘earmark’ direct sector or programme funding rather than general budget support (Foster and Leavy, 2001). This not only shifts the agenda-making power to donors who have the authority to set priorities and direct funds accordingly, but also creates patchy and unsustainable development where some sectors outperform others. Clearly stated, such strategies by donors, are not only counter developmentalism and pro neo-imperialism in Africa but also in line with Sunkel (1969) demonstration of dependency as an explanation of the economic development of a State in terms of the external influences in all facets of the economy (i.e. political, economic and cultural) on national development policies.

V. Dawn of AU's New Strategies for Alternative Sources of Funding

The dwindling and unreliable external financial sources that have for some time now, constrained AU's capacity to implement its programmes, has been the epicentre of AU's agenda to find alternative strategies of funding, mainly from internal sources. These initiatives, however, have been met with obstacles in form of rejection from member States. One particular measure for alternative source of funding is that of 2013 whereby, levies on a) US$2.00 hospitality levy per stay in a hotel; and b) US$10.00 levy on flight tickets for flights originating from Africa or with destinations in Africa, and c) US$0.005 levy per SMS, were to be charged in all member States for AU's budget. If realised, these two options were to generate US$728 Million for the AU by 2017 and US$1.6 billion (only from levy on SMS) if applied by 2017 (Miyandazi, 2016).

These measures, while promising, were later scrapped by the African finance ministers citing concerns on the potential increasing tax burden of citizens in Africa, financial implications of the flight levy charges for the countries that depend heavily on tourism, as well as the concern on the potential trickle down effect of SMS levy charge. These state of affairs, discouragingly, continue to echo the reluctant nature of the leadership of AU's African member States to implement and meet their commitments to regional integration initiatives under the umbrella of national interests and or sovereignty (United Nations, 2002).

Notwithstanding the aforementioned obstacles, with AU's current development agenda being anchored on the implementation of two key initiatives; Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 agenda, its worth to say, the financing for development based on these key agendas for Africa is hinged almost entirely on the AU's ability to mobilise financial resources within the continent, as opposed to outside. For instance, to implement the SDGs alone, the required investment to finance the Goals in Africa, could amount to between

US$600 billion and US$1.2 trillion annually (United Nations, 2016; Chinzana et al., 2015; Schmidt – Traub, 2015; United Nations, 2016; UNCTAD, 2014).

With the current AU's operational capacity and economic and political realities in the continent as whole, Africa's public budgetary resources are inadequate to address this need, and thus, it remains hard to see how AU and its African stakeholders can become self reliant from external donor funding from development partners who are increasingly becoming a buffer in sharing the financial burden.

And so, as the AU continue to face a litmus test in its quest to be self-reliant, the new self financing model which requires member States to surrender 0.2 per cent levy on all African eligible imports to fund operations of the organisation with a hope of making its funding sustainable and predictable, heralds a renewed commitment of all AU African stakeholders in regaining ownership of the African – AU development agenda. The 0.2 per cent levy on imports was approved during the 27th Heads of States AU Summit in Kigali and if it becomes fully operational, the model is expected to raise approximately US $1.2 billion annually for AU[6]. This is estimated to cover 100 per cent of AU's operating budget, 75 per cent of programmes budget and 25 per cent of peace and support operations budget (Miyandazi, 2016, Namata, 2016).

Considering the fact that, the new alternative financing model offers new opportunities for AU to upgrade its capacity to effect its development agenda, through learning from best practices in the European Union (EU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) where the model has proven successful, it is the lack of or poor institutional reforms at the AU including lack of accountability, greater value for money, priority setting and rigorous management of funds that still pose stubborn bottlenecks. Therefore, it is such unresolved issues and questions around modalities of implementation, transparency and

[6] Ghana, Kenya and Rwanda have already operationalized the levy charges within their respective economies

compliance by countries and the overly ambitious plan to have the 0.2 levy working before end of AU's 2017 budget year, that are likely to be the core factors that decide whether the model will actually work, or revert to the already and largely accepted status quo.

Cognizance of the scarce availability of public sector funds, leveraging existing resources with those of the private sector [Public – Private Partnerships (PPPs)], offers another opportunistic and pragmatic strategy for AU to rally behind as an alternative model of financing in the continent. As a strategy, this approach has received a fair amount of scholarship, particularly in the last decade, which witnessed a considerable increase in the amount of resources invested in such partnership programmes in developing countries (Romero, 2015).

As public–private partnerships are being used increasingly as an alternative financing model, especially in infrastructure, PPPs initiatives stand in line with AU – Africa's infrastructural development priorities as contained in Agenda 2063 which is ambitious and aspire to have a world class, integrative infrastructure that criss-crosses Africa covering transport, energy and information and communications technology sectors (African Union, 2015).

It is fair, at this juncture, to commend the recent joint regional standard gauge railway project in Kenya-Phase one that will connect Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and South Sudan.[7] The construction of the 609 km line, which began in 2012, was inaugurated in May 30 2017 and now connects the port of Mombasa to Nairobi and the rest of EAC regions whilst cutting transit times significantly. As a flagship project under Kenya's vision 2030 development strategy, the SGR project is proposed to connect Mombasa to Malaba on the border with Uganda and continue onward to Kampala, Uganda's capital city and will further run to Kigali in Rwanda with a branch line to Juba in South Sudan.[8] These projects, among others, present promising prospects for East African countries in terms of opening up the region's markets and trade,

[7] Government of Kenya, Good news Kenya, www.brandkenya.go.ke/news-and-events2 (2015)
[8] http://www.railway-technology.com/projects/mombasa-nairobi-standard-gauge-railway-project/

which for now is reliant on road transport, as well as offer opportunities for like best practices to be ameliorated across the continent.

VI. Conclusions

Undoubtedly, concluding that the shortcomings to AU's performance however, is not due to shortage of policies, rather it is the lack of implementation of its programmes resulting from weak capacity both at institutional and financial levels, is not a far fetched fact. The AU's lack of transparency and flexibility in managing funds, capacity to effectively remunerate and staff its already understaffed departments to oversee the organisation's increasing and diverse mandate, also, seriously hampers its ability to meet its commitments made to stakeholders and Africans in general.

Furthermore, AU's poor financial capacity and over reliance on external donor funding, risks the organisation's implementation timeliness of the programmes due to the unpredictability, reliability of such external sources, that often times come with strings attached and conflicting interests with those of the AU.

The renewed initiatives that AU is currently embarking on, offers to significantly trigger a paradigm shift through which it can finally commence to realize its long last aspiration to free itself from external financing, and build its own capacity both institutionally and financially to propel its own development programmes that solve Africa's problems. The over ambitious programmes pegged on the AU – Africa Agenda 2063, and MDGs, outlines additional challenges, particularly in the financing department.

VII. Recommendations

Understanding that, funding regional integration programs requires major retooling and skills building for RECs, governments, sub-regional organizations and donors, it is the responsibility of the AU to devise strategies that will regain ownership of the AU's and continents development agenda through developing new and innovative ways of mobilizing local capital. This aspiration can build on the already in the motion the AU's recent model for alternative financing as well as further push for more private sector involvement through PPPs with the continent's vibrant private sector in implementation of programmes, rather than merely funding.

Cognizant of the Africa's economic identity "Agriculture Based Economies", introduction of far reaching reforms models in programmes such as CAADP, will better position the so far, subsistence, unmechanized and underfinanced agricultural sector, to unlock the continent's potential once and for all rip the benefits of its resource abundance. Concurrent with Marshallian cluster theory[9], such reforms ought, therefore to bridge gaps and foster linkages between the farmers, fishermen, universities, training centres, governments, and private sectors whilst nurturing structures that create and disseminate critical best practices and home grown technological breakthroughs and entrepreneurial initiatives.

By the same token, the regional integration agenda must be Africa-driven and Africa-led, and multilateral and development partners, though important, should do more to bring what they have in a more coordinated and harmonized manner. Africans must stay in the driver's seat. The AU also has a major role to play in this regard and should work hard to operationalize initiatives such as the planned African Investment Bank and African Monetary Fund.

[9] The book is found electronically from Liberty Online Library: http://eet.pixel-online.org/files/etranslation/original/Marshall,%20Principles%20of%20Economics.pdf

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