

colonial powers could not break the spirit of the nationalist movements and the unflinching support it had received from the masses. Finally, the international climate of opinion was generally favourable — anticolonial and pro-self determination.

The extreme vulnerability of the African economies, the deepening economic crisis or series of crises and the disenchantment with the international economic system including the growing belief that it is colonial and exploitative are all factors which are making an increasing number of people wonder whether the struggle for economic emancipation must adopt and adapt some of the strategies and tactics of the nationalist movements. Consequently, there is increasingly widespread acceptance by African leaders that the continent has no choice but to adopt a development strategy based on achieving an increasing measure of self-reliant and self-sustaining development (or what the OECD Interfutures study termed 'self-centred' development) based on the internalization of development, distribution and consumption.

There is also a growing awareness that this kind of development can only take place if the following conditions are satisfied: (i) the democratization of the development process; (ii) the initiation of a process of de-alienation, (iii) the creation of the right political and social environment; (iv) the recovery of self-confidence by the peoples of Africa in themselves; and, (v) the willingness to achieve effective and meaningful intra-African cooperation. In order to bring about the socio-economic transformation of Africa, the governments need to mobilize the entire population, release the latent energies of the people and galvanize such energies by interaction with material resources through the application of technology.

Plan of Action

As the ECA Conference of Ministers responsible for Economic Development put it in the *Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Monrovia Strategy for the Economic Development of Africa* submitted to the Economic Summit of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government at the Organization of African Unity (OAU) held in Lagos in April 1980:

The first point the Conference wishes to emphasize is that the region is not resource poor either in respect of minerals or of arable land, of forest or of fishery resources, of animal or of energy resources and that it is fully capable of feeding its own population even if it exploits only the potentialities of its enormous river and lake basin systems. Its rural populations have proven themselves highly adaptable to innovation in crops, cultivation practices, the use of improved seeds and other inputs, new marketing systems and so on. It has, however, had fastened upon it an economic system which inhibits the range of natural resources it utilizes, which puts it in the strait-jacket of producing what it does not consume and

consuming what it does not produce and of exporting raw materials at low and in most cases declining prices in order to import semi-finished and finished products at high and rising prices. No program of economic liberation can succeed which does not strike at the heart of this system of subjugation and exploitation. The region's resources must be applied first and foremost, to meet its own needs and purposes.

As far as African countries are concerned, they have to go back to first principles of development and economic growth: knowledge of natural resources which underlie all development efforts; knowledge of the population and its dynamics as the basis for factors of production; distribution and consumption; development of technologies appropriate to the use of these resources; establishment and management of relevant institutions for organizing production and distribution and providing the necessary factors of production and distribution; and acceptance of the relevance of political and social stability.

These ideas form the basis of the Strategy for the Development of Africa in the Third United Nations Development Decade. They were formulated and adopted by the Conference of African Ministers of Development and Planning at its meeting in Rabat, Morocco in March 1979, and subsequently named the *Monrovia Strategy for the Development of Africa* by the Organization of African Unity at its meeting in Monrovia, Liberia in July 1979. After adopting the Strategy, the Heads of State and Government directed that their Ministers of Development and Planning should translate the strategy into practical terms in the form of an implementable *Plan of Action*. At their meeting in Addis Ababa in April 1980 the Ministers recommended the *Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Monrovia Strategy for Africa to the Heads of State and Government* for approval at their extraordinary meeting devoted to the discussion of economic problems of Africa in Lagos, Nigeria the same month. The *Plan of Action* was adopted as the Lagos Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Monrovia Strategy for the Economic Development of Africa.

Some have called the Strategy and Plan unrealistic and overambitious. Others have tried to interpret them to suit their own interest and have invariably distorted them. Nevertheless, both the Strategy and Plan, if used consistently as the general framework for action at the national, sub-regional and regional levels, will enable Africa to lay the foundation of a sound and dynamic genuinely African economy.

The objectives and programmes contained in the Strategy and the Lagos *Plan of Action* can be achieved. There undoubtedly are difficulties and costs involved, especially when the task is the orientation of the concept of development and economic growth in the face of widespread poverty and rising expectations with re-