

to the OAU, are minimal although, in Rwanda's case, Tanzania and Uganda have taken a particular interest in its internal events.

*But not too broad*

Clearly, as the unimpressive performance of trade projects grouping large numbers of African countries such as the Preferential Trade Area shows, too wide an approach is unlikely to succeed soon in Africa. At the political level, the OAU is similarly lacking. Failure to achieve great strides at the continental level is unsurprising, however, given the weakness of links among immediate African neighbours (not to mention among the more distant) and the continued strength of ties to distant export markets, often the former colonial power. There are simply too few natural links tying together Africa east-west and north-south on which continental approaches can build.

On the other hand, there are real economic and, to some degree, political regions within Africa which offer promise. The South Africans have recognized this and are strengthening their natural economic region (based on SADC) before turning their attention to other areas of the continent. Unfortunately, there has been little international interest in recent regional integration projects in Africa. It is time to examine, as part of a realistic and lasting solution to central Africa's problems, serious international support for regional integration in this area.

*Start economically*

Rwanda and Burundi would benefit greatly if they could be more regionally integrated. The economic gains would enlarge the very limited pie now being fought over by Tutsis and Hutus. In anticipation of static or diminishing aid levels in future, more economic gains must be generated locally, a goal which integration could further. Moreover, both countries are, even by African standards, unusually isolated, lacking any rail links outside, and located hundreds of kilometres from the nearest seaports.

There is a natural economic or trading region in this area which comprises Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, eastern Zaire and these two countries (a total population and potential market of at least 85 million people). Building on this de facto region, the international community through ODA and other measures should strive to enhance the informal links already in place and strengthen the existing or incipient formal links (the moribund Great Lakes Cooperation Agreement and the 1993 Treaty of East African Cooperation for example).