

and then by the newly independent governments, led to inadequate research and the use of wrong technologies. In fact, the refusal to perceive and appreciate the real difficulties and the real assets of the tropics is probably one of the worst hangovers of the cultural imperialism of the colonial era".

While the agriculture and food sector has contributed largely to the poor performance, industry, including energy and manufacturing, has not played that role which it has played in the development process of the developed countries by providing inputs to itself and to other sectors. The hope placed on industry to provide jobs has not been fulfilled. Industry has also failed to spearhead the initiation and sustenance of indigenous technology relevant to the development problems facing African countries. The fact that industrialization has been based on an import-substitution strategy, making Africa more dependent on external sources for real factor and financial inputs, has been one of the causes of the balance of payments problems.

This situation has resulted from the way development efforts were started. Instead of relating the goods to be produced to the raw materials available and their capacity to sustain the industrial process, the plan was to import-substitute final goods for which we had to import the raw material, capital services (such as those of technology, managerial, technical and marketing manpower), financial, insurance and shipping services. Some deleterious effects resulted from this approach; (i) payment for the raw materials and services required had to come out of the meagre earnings derived from the export of agricultural and mineral resources — whose prices in the nature of things are unstable; (ii) the available raw materials from the agricultural and mineral sectors were neglected; (iii) available cheap energy sources were not developed; and (iv) manpower and technology development was not related to available raw materials. The price being paid for this mistaken strategy is enormous. Consequently, African countries are littered with heterogeneous collections of high-cost industries, often of quite trivial significance. It is now recognized that linkages within the industrial sector are as important for its vitality as linkages between the industrial and other sectors.

### Perspectives for year 2000

Not only are the forecasts for the immediate future gloomy, but the perspectives of development and economic growth in Africa up to the end of this millennium are heart-rending and continue to give cause for increasing uneasiness. Very bleak prospects are foreseen for Africa in global projections of the world economy. Indeed, if these projections are to be believed, if the prognostications come true, the 1950s and the 1970s may by the end of the century appear in retrospect to have been a golden age for Africa! Ridiculous as this may sound, it is not far from the realm of possibility if the present mix of public policies persist. According to

the World Bank, much will depend on the policies pursued by industrialized countries, the capital-surplus oil exporters and the developing countries themselves. It is beyond doubt that adjustments by African countries to the energy and balance of payments problems will be difficult.

The OECD's *Facing the Future* study believes Sub-Saharan Africa, together with South Asia, are the areas of the Third World that present and will continue to present over the next two decades, the most acute problems of poverty. It goes further: "The probable acceleration in population growth, the weakness of its economic and political structures and the absence of any counterweight to foreign influence are the main obstacles to long-term development."

Projections by the ECA indicate that unless the orientation of the African economy changes, there is a danger that poverty and the attendant problems of political and social instability will become considerably worse in Africa in the next two decades.

Given these portentous prognostications, what can Africans and their governments do to avert the impending doom? Is Africa perpetually doomed to be the world's economic underdog with a backward and greatly underdeveloped economy operating on the periphery of the international economy? Africa has the capacity and the capability to change the tide of her economic fortune in her favour and to emerge from her present economic doldrums and lay the foundation of an internally-generated, self-sustaining and self-reliant process of development.

Today, there are 50 politically independent African States. While it is true that for some countries, independence has been won on a platter of gold and that a number of the new states were set up within a neo-colonial framework by the departing colonial power, it is also true that the whole independence movement constitutes one of the revolutions of our time.

The lesson of history is clear. Given the leadership of a few countries (in this case Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria and Kenya), the other countries were determined not to be left out. This is what in Schumpeterian terms one can call entrepreneurial innovations being followed by imitative swarm-like reactions — all leading to a higher level of development through a process of creative destruction. What has been lacking in socio-economic development is two or three African countries that have managed to achieve a breakthrough or are on the verge of achieving one.

The second lesson from our political experience is the involvement of the masses in the struggle. For many countries (such as in Zimbabwe) where a fight including armed struggle was needed to wrench independence from the colonialists, there was mass mobilization by the nationalist parties. The anticolonial struggle though long and bloody was waged with such unity of purpose and determination that the achievement of independence became a question of time as the