

DECRYPTING THE APPROACHES OF EASTERN AND WESTERN GEO-POLITICAL BLOCS IN AFRICA'S QUEST FOR DEVELOPMENT UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW*

Abstract

This article critically analyses the roles of the East and West towards the realization of the right of African States to development. It is axiomatic that most African states have been characteristically pillaged, plundered, and stripped by colonialism, and ravaged by poverty. This main objective of this article is to ascertain the framework for the promotion of the right to development under international law human rights law and to evaluate the dynamics of the East, as exemplified by China, and the Western approach to aid in Africa. The research employs the doctrinal research methodology for information. This article shows that the apparent glitch in the provision of aid is predicated on the fact that economic growth is not the donor's priority. The article also indicates that African countries are relegated to the margins of society as lethargic spectators rather than an actor as far as development is concerned. The article recommends that it is expedient for African countries to enact relevant laws aimed at creating a robust environment for the promotion of the right to development. The threshold of Africa's quest for sustainable development transcends the polemics of looking East or West for aid. It requires a strategic praxis which essentially focuses on looking inwards towards optimally harnessing the continent's latent potential for unprecedented growth and development.

Key words: *Right to development, International Human Rights Law, Africa, East, West*

1. Introduction

Millions of people around the World are egregiously stifled by the effects of global economic crisis, food crisis, energy crisis, poverty, and unfold hardship.¹ Running parallel with the foregoing backdrop is the general state of the affairs in the African Continent, which is poignantly beleaguered by poverty, hunger, malnutrition, inequality, suppression, decrepit, infrastructure, debilitating educational services, and socio- economic cum political turmoil. In retrospect, most African states have been characteristically pillaged, plundered, and stripped by colonialism. This view point is pungently substantiated by the President of the United Nations General Assembly as follows; '...throughout history, the African Continent has endured sacrifice, plunder, slaughter and finally, oblivion. Considering the irreparable injustices of history and the inherent ravages of colonization, in September 2000 we made a collective commitment to our African sisters and brothers.'² The debilitating effect of Africa's colonial past is further buttressed picturesquely hereunder:³

Africa's poor economic performance is one of the largest puzzles in growth and development economics. African historians have documented the detrimental effects that slave trade had on the institutions and structures of African societies. Historical evidence from case studies show how slave trade caused political instability, weakened states, promoted political and social fragmentation, and resulted in deterioration of domestic legal institutions.

Sequel to the harrowing experience of Africa's colonial past, the trajectory of African socio- economic development necessitates pragmatic policies and actions to address the historically bifurcated imbalances between the West and African states. This stance is congruent with the assertion that the

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¹ N Pillay, 'Declaration on the Right to Development at 25' <<http://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/development/pages/developmentindexasp>> accessed on 16 February, 2015.

²MD Brockmann, President of the 63rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly, 'Opening Statement of the High -Level Meeting on Africa's Development Needs held at the U.N Headquarters, New York, on the 23rd September, 2008 <<http://www.un.org/ga/president/63/statements/adstatements/220908.shtm>> accessed on 16 February, 2015.

³ N Nun, 'The Historical Origins of Africa's under Development ' In Economists View <<http://economistsviews.typepad.com/economistsvies/2007/12/the-historical.htm> > accessed on 16 February, 2015.

quest for a New International Economic Order tellingly resonates the wide gap in the living standards between the West (North America and Europe) and the South (Africa, Latin America, developing parts of Asia, and the middle East) and the burgeoning desire to redress the inequities of the international economic system in which the position of the East including African states is patently subordinate and weak.⁴ It is against the preceding backdrop that this article seeks to dispassionately analyze the roles of the East (with particular reference to China) and the West in Africa's quest for the realization of the right to development under the rubric of a New International Economic order and to appraise the International and regional legal regime for the promotion of the right to development of African States. The paper also aims to proffer definitive strategies to be taken by African countries beyond the current status quo of being prospectors or recipients of external economic aid to being active and self-reliant players in contemporary international relations.

2. The Polemics of Right to Development

The right to development refers to the inalienable entitlement of all human beings and peoples to enjoy social, economic, and political development in which all human right can be fully realized.⁵ The Right to development consists of three major attributes. The first is the holistic approach to development that integrates the realization of all human rights in the programme of development. The second attribute creates an enabling environment by establishing fairer terms for developing countries in international relations and the corresponding obligations by such states to respect principles of rule of law and good governance. The third is the principle of social justice and equity. This includes participatory development and equitable distribution of resources and benefits derived from development.⁶ The right to development is categorized under the taxonomy of 'third generation' human rights (This is distinguished from the first generation rights which consists of civil and political rights and the Second generation rights which consists of economic, social and cultural rights).⁷ It is pertinent to point out that the right to development is a subject of controversy among governments, the academia, and other public figures.⁸ Some scholars and fecund commentators contend affirmatively that the right to development exists under international law while other scholars and pundits categorically aver that such a right is skewed and devoid of foundation. An overview of the arguments against the right to development and those in favour of the right to development are presented, respectively, hereunder. It is commonly postulated that the right to development is not part of existing law but is 'emerging.'⁹ Some Western States and commentators have been ambivalent of such rights as human rights.¹⁰ A pungent criticism of the right to development as human rights is expressed as follows:

Apart from being new, what these rights have in common is that it is sometimes difficult to see how they can be vested in or exercised by individuals. According to the classical theory, only the rights of human individuals can be human rights; any rights belonging to entities of some other kind (such as states, churches, corporations, trade union, and so forth) may be highly desirable, accepted, valid, and even enforceable but whatever else they may be, they cannot be human rights.¹¹

⁴ See generally P. Malanczuk, . *Akehurt's Modern Introduction to International Law*, (7th Ed, New York: Rout ledge, 1997) p.233.

⁵ Article I, Declaration on the Right to Development 1986 G. A Resolution 4/1/128, G.A.O.R, 41st Sess, Supp. 531, P.186 (1986); See also MN Shaw, *International Law* (5th Ed, Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2003) p. 280.

⁶ SP Mark, "Poverty" In D Moeckli, S Shah, S Sivakumaran, *International Human Rights Law*. (Oxford: Oxford university Press, 2010) p.618.

⁷I Browlie, *Principles of Public International Law*. (6th Ed, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) pp.540 – 541.

⁸ HJ Steiner, and P Alston, *International Human Rights in Context*. (2nd Ed, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000,) p. 1319.

⁹ I Browlie, (n.7) p.541.

¹⁰ D Harris, *Cases and Material on International Law*. (7th Ed, London: Sweet and Maxwell, 2010) p. 623

¹¹ P Sieghert, *The Lawful Rights of Mankind; an Introduction to the International legal Code of Human Rights* (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 1985) p.161 cited in Harris, D. (n.10)p.623

Another lacerating assertion against the epistemology of right to development is prodigiously enunciated as follows:¹²

... If the right to development means the right of peoples freely to pursue their development, then it can be plausibly argued to be implied by the covenants' right to self-determination. However, such a right to development is without interest, it is already firmly established as the right to self-determination. A substantially broader right to development, however, cannot be extracted from the right to self-determination. The right to self-determination recognized in the covenants does not imply the right to live in a developing society; it is explicitly a right to pursue development. Neither does it imply an individual right to development, self-determination, again explicitly, is a right of peoples only. In no sense does it imply a right to be developed. Thus the claim that the right to development is simply the realization of the right to self-determination is not based on the covenants' understanding of self-determination. It might also be argued that because development is necessary for self-determination, development is itself a human right. Such an argument, however, is fallacious...A further problem with collective human rights (such as right to development) is determining who is to exercise the right; the right holder is not a physical person, and thus, an institutional 'person' must exercise it. In the case of a right held by a people, or by society as a whole, the most plausible 'person' to exercise the right is, unfortunately, the state. Again this represents a radical re-conceptualization of human rights- and an especially dangerous one.

In contradistinction, an astute proponent of the right to development unequivocally postulates that the right to development can be recognized as a collective right.¹³ His exposition is to the effect that the right to development can be regarded as the aggregate of the social, economic, and cultural rights, not of each individual, but of all the individuals constituting a collectivity.¹⁴ Abi-Saab further explains that the right to development can be viewed from a collective perspective by approaching it either as the economic dimension of the right of self-determination or as a parallel human right to self-determination, and therefore belonging to the same rubric of collective rights. He stated pointedly that the recognition of collective right is a condition – precedent for the realization of individual rights. In other words, without the acknowledgement of the collective human right to self-determination, it is impossible to completely realize civil and political rights of the individuals constituting the group or collectivity being considered. In the same vein, the right to development is a prerequisite for the satisfaction of the socio-economic rights of individuals. In articulating his carefully crafted argument, Abi-saab, asserts that 'without a tolerable degree of development, the society will not be materially in a position to grant and guarantee these rights to its members, for instance, providing positive services and securing the minimum economic standards which are required by these rights.'¹⁵ Another notable apologist of the right to development succinctly states that 'The right to development is fundamental right, the precondition of liberty, progress, justice, and creativity. It is the alpha and omega of human rights, the first and the last, the beginning and the end, the means and the goal of human rights, in short it is the core right from which all others stem'.¹⁶ Notwithstanding the polemics in respect of the authenticity of the concept of the right to development, it is submitted that the right to development is recognized under international law and African Regional Human Rights regime. The legal framework for the protection and promotion of the right to development under the auspices of the United Nations as well as the African Union would be ascertained in the ensuing exposition.

¹² J Donnelly, 'In Search of the Unicorn. The Jurisprudence and Politics of the Right to Development' 15. Calif. Western Int. L. J 473 (1985) at 482 cited in HJ Sterner & P Alston (n.8) pp. 1323 - 1325

¹³ G Abi Saab, 'The legal Formulation of a Right to Development' in Hague Academy of International Law, the Right to Development at the international Level (1980) p. 163 cited in HJ Steiner & P Alston, (n.8) pp. 1320 – 1321

¹⁴ G Abi Saab (n. 13)p.163.

¹⁵ G Abi Saab (n. 13)p.163.

¹⁶ M Bedjaoui, 'The Right to Development' in Bedjaoui (ed), International Law: Achievements and Prospects' (1991) at p.1182 cited in HJ Steiner & P Alston (n.8) pp.1320-1321.

3. The Frame Work of Right to Development under International Law

The United Nations (herein after referred to as UN) is mandated to develop friendly relations, among states on the basis of equal rights and self-determination of people.¹⁷ The UN is also obligated to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character and in promoting respect for human rights without discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, language, or religion.¹⁸ It is pertinent to note that in order to foster conditions of stability and well-being among nations based on the respect for the principles of equal rights and self-determination, the UN is legally obliged to promote high standards of living, full employment, and conditions that enables economic and social progress and development among nations.¹⁹ Furthermore, the Universal Declaration of Human rights provides that ‘Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in the Declaration can be fully realized’.²⁰

The right to development is specifically recognized and articulated under the Declaration on the Right to Development, 1986. Article 1 of the Declaration on the Right to Development unequivocally states that, ‘ The right to development is an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized.’²¹ The right to development is corollary of the right of people to self-determination, which includes the exercise of their right to full sovereignty over their natural wealth and resources.²² The Declaration on the Right to Development provides that the human person is the focal subject of development and should be an active player and beneficiary of the right to development.²³ States are vested with the critical responsibility for the creation of national and international conditions that would engender the realization of the right to development.²⁴ In a glaring threshold to galvanize the right to development, Article 10 of the Declaration on the Right to Development stipulates that ‘ steps should be taken to ensure the full exercise and progressive enhancement of the right to development, including the formulation, adoption and implementation of policy, legislative and other measures at the national and international levels.’²⁵ It is however observed that the Declaration on Right to Development 1986, being a General Assembly Resolution, is not binding on member nations, but generally recognized as having normative value in the international arena.²⁶ The right to development is also recognized in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development 1992, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action 1993, the Millennium Declaration 2000, the Monterrey Consensus 2002, the World Summit Outcome Document 2005, and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 2007.²⁷

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner (hereinafter referred to as OHCHR) is mandated to promote and protect human rights. The duties of the office includes, strengthening international human rights regimes, enhancing equality and integrating human rights in the development and economic aspects of human endeavour.²⁸ The High Commissioner for Human Rights heads the office and coordinates the United Nations’ activities toward the promotion and protection of Human

¹⁷ See Article 1 (2), The United Nations Charter 26th June, 1945, 59 Stat. 1031, T. S 993, 3 Bevans 1153

¹⁸ Article 1(3) (n.17).

¹⁹ Articles 55(n.17).

²⁰ Article 28, Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 G.A Resolution 217 A (III), G.A .O.R, 3rd Sess, Part 1 Resns, P. 71

²¹ G. A resolution 41/128, G.A O.R 41st Sess, supp 53, P. 186 (1986)

²² I.d Article 1 (2) (n.20).

²³ Article 2(1).

²⁴ Article 3 (1).

²⁵ Article 10.

²⁶ The Advisory Opinion on the Legality of the Threat or use of Nuclear Weapons case I. L.M 35 (1990) 809at 826 para 70 where the international Court of Justice observed, inter alia, that General Assembly Resolutions, even if they are binding, may sometimes have normative value. They can in certain circumstances, provide evidence important for establishing the existence of a rule or the emergence of a rule of opinio Juris.

²⁷ The United Nations, ‘The Right to Development at a glance <[http://www.un.org/en/events/right to development/pdf/rtd-at-a-glancepdf](http://www.un.org/en/events/right%20to%20development/pdf/rtd-at-a-glancepdf) > accessed on 4 March 2015 .

²⁸ United Nations Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner for Human rights, ‘Who we are’ <[http://www.ohcr.org/UN/about us/pages/whoweare.aspx](http://www.ohcr.org/UN/about%20us/pages/whoweare.aspx)> accessed on 4 March 2015.

Rights.²⁹ She is charged with the responsibility of promoting the realization of the right to development and is also duty-bound to facilitate support from relevant agencies of the UN to accomplish this objective³⁰. In 1998, the intergovernmental open-ended working Group on Right to Development was established. The working Group meets once annually and reports to the Human Rights Council and General Assembly. The mandate of the working Group includes to monitor and review progress made in the promotion and implementation of the right to development at the national and international level; analyzing obstacles to its fulfillment and making appropriate recommendations.³¹ The Working group is also obligated to review reports and any other information submitted by states, United Nations bodies, and other nongovernmental and international organizations on the relationship between their activities and right to development, and to present a report for the evaluation of the Human Rights Council. It is also mandated to advise the OHCHR in respect of implementation of the right to development, and recommending possible schemes of technical assistance at the request of interested states with the goal of promoting the realization of right to development.³²

4. The Framework of Right to Development under African Regional Human Rights Law

The cardinal objectives of the African Union include the promotion of sustainable development at the economic, social, and cultural levels; the integration of African economies and the promotion of cooperation in all fields of human activity so as to raise the living standards of Africans.³³ The right to development is unequivocally recognized under the African Charter on Human and People's Rights.³⁴ Article 22 of the Charter specifically provides that 'All peoples shall have the right to their economic, social and cultural development with due regard to their freedom and identity and in the equal enjoyment of the common heritage of mankind.'³⁵ The Charter further obligates African State parties to individually or collectively, ensure the exercise of right to Development.³⁶ The African Commission on People's Rights is a significant institutional mechanism mandated to promote and protect human and people's rights including the right to development enshrined in the African Charter.³⁷ Another institution operating under the auspices of the African Union is the Economic, Social and Cultural Council, (ECOSOCC). It is charged with the responsibility of promoting the culture of good governance, democratic principles, social justice, and human rights, such as the critical right to development.³⁸

5. The Dynamics of the Chinese Approach versus the Western Approach to Aid in Africa

The approach to aid in Africa resonates marked differences between the East and the West. The West, on the one hand, gives financial aid to Africa on the basis of selectivity and conditionality.³⁹ The effectiveness of Western approach to aid is attenuated by the tendency of some African states to finance consumption rather than investment, misappropriation, and inefficient macroeconomic management. Conditionality presumes that aid is effective in well governed countries where corruption is not a major challenge.⁴⁰ Western donors emphasize the need for African countries to promote development by

²⁹ General Assembly Resolution 48/141 authorized the establishment of the post of High commissioner for Human Rights (n.28).

³⁰ United Nations, 'Right to Development at a glance' < [www.un.org/en/events/right to development/pdf/rtd at-a-glance.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/events/right%20to%20development/pdf/rtd-at-a-glance.pdf) > accessed 24 February 2017.

³¹ United Nations (n.30).

³² United Nations (n.30).

³³ Article 3 (j) and (k) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union (Entry into force in 2001). The Constitutive Act of the African Union was adopted in the year 2000 at the Lomme summit in the Togolese Republic and entered into force in 2001.

³⁴ The African (Banjul) Charter on Human and People's Rights (Entry into force in 1986) was adopted on the 27th June, 1981, AOU Doc. CAB/LEG/67/3rev.5, 21 I.L.M 58 (1982).

³⁵ Article 22(1) (n.34).

³⁶ Article 22(2).

³⁷ Article 30 and 45.

³⁸ The African Union, 'ECOSOCC Mandate' < <http://pages.au.int/ECOSOCC/mandate> > accessed on the 11 March 2015.

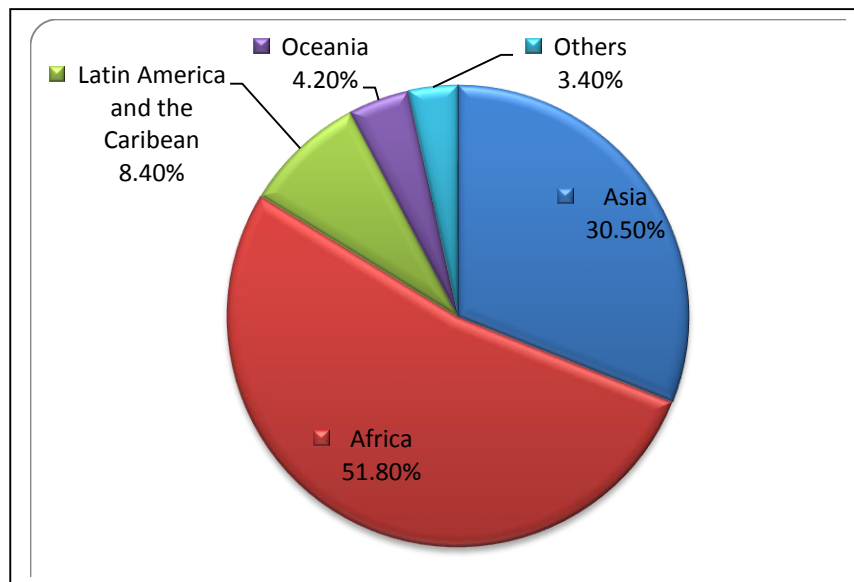
³⁹ X Wang & A Ozanne, 'Two approaches to Aid to Africa: China and the West' < http://www.chronicpoverty.org/uploads/assets/files/ten_years_ppts/wag_ozanne_aid_in_africa.pdf > accessed on the 12 March 2015.

⁴⁰ X Wang & A Ozanne (n.39).

simultaneously bolstering respect for human rights and protection of the environment.⁴¹ They also insist that poorly governed states beleaguered by corruption should not be given aid. It is, however, tellingly indicated that these are frequently the countries in dire need of aid. At the expense of prolixity, Western aid conditionality is convoluted in the sense that states least likely to fulfill the requisite good governance and anti-corruption parameters are often the ones most desirous and in need of Western aid. Thus the eventuation of western conditionality is benighted by the denial of aid to poor African countries otherwise entitled to aid and the realization of the right to development.⁴²

On the other hand, the Eastern approach to aid, as exemplified by china, is devoid of Western conditions of good governance and macroeconomic management. Chinese aid is essentially focused on development of infrastructure such as roads, power generation, railways, hospitals, schools, and the like. The flip side of Chinese aid is that it is tied to infrastructural development being under taken by Chinese companies, usually with Chinese labour and fund transfers are not made to the beneficiary country but from Chinese government to Chinese companies made to work in any given African State.⁴³ China has been providing aid to Africa since 1956.⁴⁴ Chinese aid to Africa include, the construction of buildings, roads and mines. African countries such as Ghana, Nigeria, and Sudan are the leading recipients of Chinese aid. Most of the projects focus on infrastructure such as oil pipe lines. Unlike the West, the Chinese often provide foreign direct investment without involvement of the recipient government.⁴⁵ Chinese official records indicate that from 2010 to 2012, China provided assistance to 121 countries including 51 in Africa, 30 in Asia, nine in Oceania, 19 in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 12 in Europe. China has also provided assistance to regional organizations such as African Union.⁴⁶ The geographical distribution of China’s foreign aid funds, from 2010 to 2012, is portrayed in the pie chart here under.⁴⁷

Figure 1: Chart reflecting the geographical distribution of China’s foreign Aid in 2010 – 2012.



Source: Xinhuanet, 2014

⁴¹ Cassage, A. *International Law* (2nd Ed Oxford. Oxford University Press, 2005)p.26

⁴²X Wang & A Ozanne (n.39).

⁴³ X Wang & A Ozanne (n.39).

⁴⁴ M Gharib, ‘6 Suprising Facts About Chinese Aid to Africa’ <http://www.one.org/us/2013/04/30/6-suprising>. Accessed on the 12th March, 2015.

⁴⁵ M Gharib (n.44).

⁴⁶ Xinhuanet, ‘Full text: China’s foreign Aid’ Information office of the State Council, Beijing, The people’s Republic of China, July, 2014. <http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2014-07/10/c_13347011.htm> accessed on 12 March 2015.

⁴⁷ Xinhuanet (n.46).

Notwithstanding the enormity of Chinese aid to Africa, its approach to assistance has been criticized for its propensity to indirectly support unsavory African governments and facilitate corruption. The Chinese praxis of direct infrastructural development has also been demurred for its inability to create palpable employment opportunities in beneficiary states and the epiphenomenal indebtedness of African States. It has also been crassly pointed out that China's primary interest is to exploit Africa's natural resources.⁴⁸ Conversely, it has been argued that China's investment in Infrastructure in Africa is salutary in the sense that it removes obstacles to development.⁴⁹ Furthermore, some writers have pointedly observed that there is no evidence that Chinese aid is occasioning African indebtedness.⁵⁰ Apologists of Chinese approach to aid have also stated that tied aid minimizes corruption as funds do not pass through recipient governments. Whilst it is perhaps true that China employs the grant of aid to access Africa's natural resources, such a symbiotic relationship could bolster Chinese effort to sustain long term investment required for Africa's economic development.⁵¹

In contradistinction, while Chinese aid has comparative advantage in respect of the provision of infrastructure, the phenomenal benefit of Western aid is patently epitomized in the much needed services rendered by its financial institutions which provide loans and financial aid to African countries. To all intents and purposes, while the Chinese approach is focused on the provision of infrastructure, the Western approach to aid broadly extends to issues of social development.⁵² Against the foregoing backdrop, albeit most African countries are in dire need of infrastructural development, which is the epicenter of Chinese aid, issues of good governance and social development offered by the western epistemology of aid remains critical in Africa's pursuit of development. However, taking into consideration the pitfalls of Eastern and Western aid, it is imperative to explore other viable options.

6. The Quest for Self Determination and the Right to Development: Towards A Paradigm Shift from the Trajectory of Spectators to Actors

The right to self-determination connotes the right of a people living in a state to determine the political and legal status of their territory.⁵³ The Friendly Relations Declaration of 1970⁵⁴ provides that the principle of equal right and self-determination of states includes the right of all peoples 'freely to determine, without external interference, their political status and to pursue their economic, social, and cultural development.'⁵⁵ Furthermore, Article 1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights,⁵⁶ expressly states that 'All peoples have the right to self-determination. By Virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development'.⁵⁷ It is reiterated that the right to development is a corollary of the right of people's to self-determination.⁵⁸ The quest for a New International Economic Order (NIECO) is predicted on the huge disparity in the living standards between the North and South and the determination of developing countries, such as African States, to redress the inequality in the international economic system in which the position of most African States is rather puerile.⁵⁹ According to Peter Malanczuk, the scheme of New International Economic Order includes a complex variety of claims which also manifested themselves in the controversy on the deep sea bed mining regime in the Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982 or the Common Heritage of Mankind Principles in general, as well as the discussion on the control of multinational enterprises, and in the call for the transfer of

⁴⁸ X Wang and A Ozanne (n.39).

⁴⁹ X Wang and A Ozanne (n.39).

⁵⁰ Woods, (2001) cited in X Wang and A Ozanne (n.39).

⁵¹ X Wang and A Ozanne (n.39).

⁵² X Wang and A Ozanne (n.39).

⁵³ See Thure, D. Self Determination EPIL 8 (1988) 470 – 80 cited in P Malanczuk (n.4),

⁵⁴ Resolution 1514(XV) of 14th December, 1960, UNYb1960, 49 cited in P Malanczuk,(n.4)

⁵⁵ P Malanczuk (n.4).

⁵⁶ U.N.T .S 3 ;61.I. L. M (1967) 30

⁵⁷ U.N.T .S 3 ;61.I. L. M (1967) 30

⁵⁸ M Bedjoau, "The Right to Development in Bedjoau, M (ed) International Law; Achievements and Prospects (1991), at 1182 cited in HJ steiner, and P Alston (n.8) p.1322.

⁵⁹ P Malanczuk (n.4). p.233

technology as well as for ‘New World Information and Communication Order’⁶⁰ It is widely acknowledged that there is need to increase aid to developing states, particularly to states beleaguered by heavy debt, low income, and poverty.⁶¹ According to metrics presented by the World Bank in 1994, on the average, an individual residing in a poor country earned a little more than one dollar (\$1) a day. The challenge of poverty is egregious in Africa which has been described in a most pejorative term, ‘The lost Continent’⁶²

Over the years, it has been observed that wealthy nations have given over one trillion dollars in aid to poor nations including African countries. These huge donors have, however, failed to improve the general well-being of beneficiaries. Countless studies have failed to establish a link between aid and accelerated economic growth. The poignant question is why has the Eastern and Western aid failed to engender development? This apparent failure has been pointedly attributed to the fact that economic growth is not the donor’s priority.⁶³ It would appear that ostensible considerations often outweigh charitable or developmental ones.⁶⁴ This calls for sobriety and introspection on the part of African countries, the supposed beneficiaries of foreign largess.

7. Conclusion

The interface of African states, on the one hand, and the East, as well as the West, on the other hand, in terms of the provision of economic aid, and anticipated development is convoluted. It is contended, in principle, that while the geopolitical calculus of the East and the West continue to record exponential economic growth and development, African countries and indeed African people are relegated to the margins of society as far as the sphere of development is concerned. It is therefore incumbent on African countries to explore proactive measures that would transmute the trajectory of African continent towards the realization of the right to development. It is expedient for African countries to enact relevant laws and establish institutional mechanisms aimed at creating an enabling environment for the promotion of the right to development. Viable and effective institutions should be established in countries where non-exists, while existing institutions should be strengthened so as eradicate all forms of corruption and mismanagement of public funds particularly resources allocated for socio- economic development. African countries should recalibrate their relationship with the East and West through bland diplomacy and translucent foreign policy so as to promote economic, scientific, technological, social, educational, and infrastructural development. Accordingly, African leaders in negotiating terms of foreign aid with donor countries, such as China, should implore them to include African companies and employ African labour and human resources in the provision of direct aid, especially the provision of infrastructural development in Africa. Beyond the current status quo of prospecting for external economic aid from the East or West, it is imperative for Africa to look inwards. In doing so, robust policies and actions should be crafted towards promoting fair and equitable trade and investment; exploring and harnessing the continent’s vast natural resources, encouraging educational, scientific, and technological development; and promoting effective and palpable macroeconomic management. In a nutshell, the threshold of Africa’s quest for sustainable development transcends looking East or West for economic aid. It requires a strategic approach which essentially looks inwards at Africa’s latent potential for unbridled growth and development.

⁶⁰P Malanczuk (n.4). p.233

⁶¹P Malanczuk (n.4). p.233

⁶² See The World Bank Report, Adjustment in Africa, Reforms, Results and the Road Ahead, 1994.

⁶³ *The Economist*, 26th June, 1999 at 23 cited in HJ Steiner & P Alston (n.8) p. 1331

⁶⁴ *The Economist* (n.63).