EU-Africa trade relations: for better or for worse in African Development?

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Abstract
Institutionalised trade relations between the EU and Africa are traceable to the 1963 and 1969 Yaounde agreements. These were followed by the Lome Convention of 1975. The current trade agreement framework governing EU-Africa trade relations is the 2000 Cotonou agreement which is to expire in 2020. Featuring in all these agreements is trade, which the EU hoped would serve as a vehicle for Africa's development. While EU-African trade has been beneficial to the continent to some extent, especially in enabling Africa to access the European market, the overall impact of the trade relations has proved inhibitive to the continent's development. Among other things, EPAs undermine regional integration in Africa and its drive towards industrialisation by making the continent a perpetual producer of primary agricultural products. Moreover, EU agricultural subsidies to its farmers not only diminish Africa's revenue from the sale of agricultural products, but also undercut the continent's competiveness in both the domestic and the international market. The general asymmetry inherent in EU-Africa trade relations makes the continent an unequal partner in the partnership between the two regions. In the end, trade with the EU therefore hardly promotes genuine development in Africa.

Key words: Africa, EU, EPAs, development, trade

Introduction

One of the less controversial narratives on Africa is its lagging in development compared to other regions of the world. Since the continent's independence from the 1960s, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) – now the African Union (AU) – has sought to find creative ways to both promote and accelerate development. Along with regional integration, which has been widely taunted as Africa's best pathway to development, the continent has established trading links with extra-African actors as part of the project to revitalise the continent's faltering economies. The European Union (EU) has emerged as one of Africa's biggest trading partners. However, Africa's trade relations with Europe have historically been institutionalised through agreements, starting with the first framework agreement between Europe (EU) and African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries – the 1963 and 1969 Yaounde Agreements, the 1975 Lome Convention, to the most recent 2000 Cotonou Agreement. The stated and implicit rationales of these agreements were, especially in the case of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, to reduce poverty and promote development in the 77-member ACP countries. Without a doubt, these agreements did provide Africa with markets for its mainly agricultural products as well as aid and, to some extent, European investments. The critical question, however, is whether EU-African trade relations have engineered real development in the latter as envisioned in the partnership agreement. In other words, have EU-African trade relations improved the economic fortunes of the continent, a continent which by all indications, remains precariously on the margins of the world's economy?

This paper analyses the trade prescriptions between the EU and Africa. It argues that while Africa may have derived benefits from its trade relations with the EU, these have fallen short of dramatically developing the continent in ways that translates into an improvement in the quality of life of many Africans. On the contrary, Africa has suffered disadvantages in terms of the distribution of benefits from these relations. To be sure, EU-African relations have remained largely asymmetrical to the advantage of Brussels.[1] In placing this and related

[1] Akokpari, J. (2017) "The European Union and Africa: The Political Economy of an Asymmetrical Partnership" in Annita Montoute and Kudrat Virt (eds.) *The ACP Group and the EU Development Partnership: Beyond the North-South Debate* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan): 55-78.

arguments in context, the paper first provides a rather truncated conceptualisation of development, and indicates some of its deficits on the continent. Next, it looks at some elements of the Cotonou agreement, especially the highly trumpeted, yet infamous, economic partnership agreement between the EU and ACP countries. The next section analyses the implications of EU-African trade for the latter and shows how these are mainly inimical to African development. The conclusion summarises the main arguments raised in the paper.

Development in the African context

Development is a multi-faceted concept often explained in self-serving terms by analysts. It is, however, clear that earlier development thinking, such that espoused by the modernisation theory, presented free trade as its main engine. The modernisation theory assumed that the stage of high mass consumption, which represented the developed stage of society, could occur with the adoption of free trade.[2] Typically, development was seen in terms of macroeconomic indicators, such as growth in gross domestic product (GDP) and gross national product (GNP), reduction in inflation, and improvements in balance of payment (BoP) positions. For a long time, this orthodox perspective on development influenced the thinking of the dominant international financial institutions – The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). For example, in its 1991 report, the World Bank noted that "the industrial countries of today grew prosperous trough trade. No effort should be spared to ensure that developing countries can follow that same path to development."[3] Modernisation further assumed that developed countries should be the ideal to which developing societies should aspire and trade should be the vehicle for achieving this. Further, modernisation implicitly assumed that while international trade will initially generate more losers than winners, its positive impact would eventually trickle down to the masses and promote development in countries at large.

Practically, not only have orthodox thinking with its associated trickle-down economics evidently failed to deliver development to Africa, but its predominantly economistic focus has marginalised environmental protection, human security and human rights, among others, which have increasingly come to feature in the sustainable development debate. For this reasons, conceptualisation, focusing on human development, the establishment of processes that assist in raising the quality of life of people offer a better framework for understanding development in the African context. In fact, in recent past, the World Bank has been advocating for development policies that benefited entire populations. In this paper, therefore, Dudley Seers' people-centred notion of development, articulated nearly half a century ago, will be used. Seers surmised that

> "the [central] questions to ask about a country's development are: what has been happening to poverty …. to unemployment? [and] to inequality? If all three of these have declined from high levels, then beyond doubt, this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result 'development' even if per capita income doubled."[4]

The truism about Africa's developmental deficits is too obvious to be recounted here. Suffice it to mention that although six of the 10 fastest growing economies in the world today are in

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[2] Rostow, W. (1960) *The Stages of Economic Growth: A non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
[3] World Bank *World Development Report* (New York: Oxford University press), 1991, p. 108
[4] Seers, Dudley (1972) "The Meaning of Development" in Norman T. Uphoff and W.F. Ilchman (eds.) *The Political Economy of Development*, (Berkeley: University of California Press), pp.123-129.

Africa[5], the standard and quality of life on the continent place it near to, if not at, the bottom of the world's development rankings. Africa is experiencing what one observer has described as "growth without development."[6] Moreover, although among the most endowed regions with natural resources, nearly half of Africa's approximately 1.3 billion population lives below the poverty line. Youth unemployment is rife while social inequalities have deepened. Everywhere in Africa, a few swim in the lake of opulence while the majority drown in the sea of poverty. Africa ranks low in the World Bank's human development index (HDI). The critical question is: does Africa's trade with the EU help alleviate these obnoxious realities of the continent's development experience? This is a question to which we now turn.

EU-African trade: some benefits to Africa

Only few will dispute the claim that EU-African trade has been beneficial to Africa in terms of providing markets for the continent's agricultural products. Africa is subject to what Thomas Callaghy calls the "fallacy of agricultural composition", by which he referred to the production of similar commodities by countries.[7] In East Africa, for example, the main exports of Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia and Rwanda are coffee and tea. In West Africa, cocoa remains the chief agricultural commodity for export from Togo, Ivory Coast, and, until 2011, Ghana,[8] while the export of oil is the main source of foreign income for most of the countries in the Economic Community of Central African states (ECCAS). The fact that these countries produce similar commodities limits intra-regional trade. Accordingly, intra-African trade remained at a paltry 19.6% percent in 2016, up from an abysmal 10.3% in 2008. This figure pales in comparison to Europe, Asia and North America, with 59%, 51% and 37% respectively.[9] Accordingly, the bulk of Africa's trade is with extra-African actors, especially with the EU. According to 2018 statistics, EU accounts for 23% of ECOWAS exports, while it provides market for 70% of ECCAS' primary products, which are mainly oil. By 2017 the EU was a market for 25% of South Africa's agricultural products. This figure represented a 13% increase from the previous 5-year average. On the whole, the EU is second to Africa as South Africa's market for its agricultural products.[10] By simple logic Africa would have struggled to market its agricultural products without trade relations with the EU.

Related to access to EU market is the additional advantage in the earning of hard foreign currencies by African countries as a result of trade with the EU. Since primary agricultural products constitute the major source of foreign earnings, it can be safely inferred that trade with the EU has been beneficial to Africa. This is especially the case for non-oil exporting countries. As noted already, even for oil-exporting countries in ECCAS, the EU accounts for a large proportion of their foreign earnings. The importance of trade with the EU cannot be

[5] These countries are Ghana (8.3%), Ethiopia (8.2%), Côte d'Ivoire (7.2%), Djibouti (**7**%), Senegal (6.9%) and Tanzania (6.8%) (https://wisetoast.com/fastest-growing-economies-in-africa/ (Accessed 10 April 2019).

[6] Ayelazuno, Jasper Abembia (2014) "Neoliberalism and Growth without Development in Ghana: A Case for State-led Industrialization" *Journal of Asian & African Studies.* 49(1), pp80-99.

[7] Callaghy, T.M (1994) "Civil Society, Democratisation and Economic Change: a dissenting opinion about resurgent societies" in John Harbeson, Donald Rothchild and Naomi Chazan (eds.) *Civil Society and the State in Africa* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner), 241.

[8] Oil overtook cocoa as Ghana chief foreign exchange earner with the exportation of oil from 2011.

[9] World Trade organisation –WATO (2018) *World Trade Statistical Review 2018*, p. 79. Online at https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/statis_e/wts2018_e/wts2018_e.pdf (Accessed: 12 April 2019)

[10] Wandile Sihlobo (2018) "South Africa's Agricultural Exports in One Chart" Online at http://www.farmingportal.co.za/index.php/all-agri-news/news-of-the-day/714-south-africa-s-agricultural-exports-in-one-chart (Accessed: 15 April 3029)

overemphasised by individual countries as far as the earning of foreign exchange is concerned. Until the intrusion of China in the last decade, the EU remained the main external market for Ghana's primary agricultural commodities, accounting for 47% of the country's exports. Within the EU, France, Germany, Netherlands and the United Kingdom (UK) are among Ghana's top five export destinations.[11] In 2010, for example, total exports from Ghana to the EU stood at $1.48bn with agricultural exports accounting for 92.4% of the figure. In 2012, export of agricultural products to the EU fetched Ghana $1.69bn.[12] Similarly, in 2016, the EU received 21.1% of Kenya's total exports, translating to nearly a quarter of Nairobi's foreign earnings.[13] On the whole, the EU market received 25.3% of all East African Community (EAC) agricultural exports, which amounted to €6.8 billion in 2014 and has continued to grow.[14]

The effect of trade relations and the associated financial benefits to Africa have helped to forge closer relations between the two regions. Closer relations with the EU have led to increased EU development aid and a deepening of general development cooperation between the two regions. Thus, EU-Africa's trade cooperation cannot be easily wished away. Without doubt, Africa has benefited, even if marginally, and in cases where countries depend heavily on the export of primary agricultural raw materials, the trade relations with the EU has helped to sustain those countries. This, however, is not to suggest that EU-Africa trade relations are all rosy. On the contrary, Africa derives the least benefits compared to what Europe gets. This view is advanced using the trade relations as set out in the Cotonou Agreement.

EU-African trade, the Cotonou Agreement and EPAs.

As noted already, Cotonou 2000, signed on 23 June, which was to remain effective until 2020, was the latest in the series of agreements governing EU trade relation with ACP countries. Although previous agreements focused on trade, investments, EU aid to, and cooperation with, these developing countries, this paper focuses heavily, though not exclusively, on the Cotonou agreement for at least five reasons: first, Cotonou is the latest and most comprehensive of all the trade agreements between Europe and Africa; second, it is credited with articulating the ubiquitous yet (in)famous economic partnership agreements (EPAs) with ACP countries, which sets out the framework for EU-Africa trade relations since 2000; and third, it is the single agreement that has elicited hesitation, even open opposition, from Africa countries before its eventual conclusion. Fourth, the Cotonou agreement is relevant in this discussion, moreover, because of its emphasis on promoting development in Africa and making the continent competitive in the global economy. Fifth, Cotonou is important for presenting the EPAs as the central instrument for promoting trade-led development in Africa. Article 19 of the agreement sets out the objectives of Cotonou as including "…. poverty reduction and ultimately its eradication; sustainable development; and progressive integration of the ACP countries into the world economy." Article 20 further sets out development, rapid growth, job and employment creation, private sector development and

[11] Osei-Assibey, Eric (2015) *Export Promotion in Ghana* (Accra: Africa Centre for Export Promotion), p.5
[12] Oxford Business Group *The Report: Ghana 2013* (London: Oxford University press), p. 40
[13] Delegation of the European Union to Kenya, 2016. On line at https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kenya/1377/kenya-and-eu_ga (Accessed: 10 April 2019.)
[14] The European Commission (2017) *The Economic Impact of the EU - East African Community Economic Partnership Agreement* . Online at http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2017/february/tradoc_155363.02%20Economic%20Impact%20of%20the%20EU%20-%20EAC%20EPA.pdf (Accessed: 2 April 2019).

the promotion of regional integration as leading objectives of the agreement.[15] What, then, were some of the important highlights of the Cotonou agreement and how were these detrimental to Africa's development?

In relation to trade, the EPA obligated African countries to open up to 80% their markets to European goods including manufactured and agricultural (wheat, rice, vegetable oil, and milk powder, among others). This in turn called for the removal of import duties on EU exports to the continent. A region in dire need of foreign earnings to service existing debts and to promote development, Africa was going to suffer significant income loss in acceding to EPAs. One study estimated that with EPAs Africa's import revenues plummetted by between 10 and 30%.[16] This reality was dire for Africa's non-oil exporting countries, which depend heavily on revenues from primary agricultural products and on import duties. By extension, EPAs were going to worsen Africa's balance of payment position through paying more for imports and receiving less revenue from EU exports to the continent. A weak partner in the relations, moreover, African countries were subjected to intense pressure, sometimes threats, to sign the EPAs. In the process some African governments faced pressures from two fronts. On the one hand they were under pressure from Brussels to sign the agreement, while on the other hand they came under pressure from domestic constituencies, especially labour movements, to jettison it. Pliable and in desperate needs for market and hard foreign currency, African leaders acceded to the agreement, albeit reluctantly.

Opposition to and lack of consensus on EPAs among African states became palpable in the months preceding the eventual signing. The EU had imposed October 2014 as the deadline by which African countries should append their signatures to the agreement. In West Africa, two meetings of finance ministers in February 2014 in Dakar, Senegal, and another in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, in April the same year, to adopt a common position on EPAs ended without agreement. While Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire, heavily dependent on the exportation of cocoa and timber were in favour of the agreement, having already signed the interim EPA. Nigeria, the biggest economy in sub-region remained opposed to it. Similarly, Kenya, the biggest economy in the East African Community (EAC), remained opposed to the agreement. In the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Namibia became a leading opponent to EPAs, while Cameroon, the largest economy in the Economic community of Central African States (ECCAS) was disinclined to sign the agreement, although had acceded to the interim EPA and after having already made a concession to raise the liberalisation percentage from 60% to 70%.[17] Thus, almost across sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), there was a wave of opposition to EPAs.

However, running out of patience, the EU resorted to economic threats against countries deemed to be spearheading opposition to the trade negotiations. In addition to imposing a make-or-break deadline for countries to sign, Brussels punished recalcitrant states. For example, when Kenya showed open opposition to the EPAs, the EU imposed a ban on the country's cut flowers, whose exportation worldwide was fetching Nairobi a whopping €10 billion annually. During the three-month period when the EU imposed tariffs on Kenya's cut

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[15] See, Articles 19 and 20 of the Second Draft of the Cotonou Agreement on line at http://ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/repository/second_revision_cotonou_agreement_20100311.pdf (Accessed 3 November 2014)

[16] Matthew McQueen, "After Lomé IV: ACP-EU Trade Preferences in the 21st Century", *Intereconomics* 34, no. 5 (September/October 1999), p. 228.

[17] James Thuo Ghatii, "The Right to Development, Human Rights and Economic Partnership Agreements", *Albany Law School Legal Studies Research Series* no. 12, 2011-2012, p. 6.

flowers, the Kenya Flowers Council estimated that the country lost €3 million in revenue. Fearing further financial losses as the cut flower industry began to take a massive knock, Kenya signed the EPA.[18] The inherent pressure and threats of punishment used by Brussels in eliciting compliance from African states has led one observer to bemoan that the use of such unorthodox mechanisms rapidly "shifted the [EU-Africa] relationship from one of cooperation to one of coercion"[19] The ability of one party to successfully use coercion either covertly or overtly to elicit compliance from the other party in a supposed partnership arrangement underscores the reality of asymmetry in the relationship. Such asymmetry relation can only occur in a partnership of "unequal partners".

The EPA, trade and negative effects on African development

One of the reasons for the denunciation of EPAs is the negative impact on regional integration. Integration at both sub-regional and continental levels is considered as a pathway to Africa's development given the continent's fragmented market. Typically economic integration creates a common market space for the continent to which regional states maintain monopolistic access. This process in turn helps to insulate nascent industries from competition coming from the wider global environment. The eventual creation of a continental market for Africa was the vision of the 1991 Abuja Treaty. Opposition to EPAs was fuelled by the fear that the agreement would negate regional economic integration and development. Among other things, EPAs negotiations re-grouped Africa into new regions, often different from the AU's traditional five geographical regions – North, South, East, West and Central Africa. For example, Mauritania, which is located in North Africa, was made part of the West Africa EPA. Also, six SADC countries – Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, Tanzania and Zimbabwe – were not made part of the SADC EPA, but were rather distributed among three separate negotiating zones – the EAC, Eastern and Southern Africa, and Central Africa. As a result of the re-grouping, the traditional 15-member SADC countries could not negotiate as a single unit.[20] If multiple and overlapping membership in sub regional blocs poses a challenge to regional integration, then EPAs have come to compound this challenge even further. Moreover, the idea of breaking up existing regional blocs and creating new ones is seen as a crude divide and conquer tactic used by Brussels in the negotiations with Africa.

While EU-Africa trade is desirable in the short term, it is destructive to Africa's quest for industrialisation in the long term. To be sure, EU-Africa trade relation reinforces the old and disconcerting international division of labour in which Africa is made to produce and export agricultural raw materials which have no added value, in exchange for value-added and subsidised agricultural products from the EU. EPAs in their current formulation neither make provisions for, nor encourage industrialisation in Africa. Rather, provision is only made for Africa to sell specific agricultural products, including cocoa, cotton, coffee, tea, timber, etc, in the EU market. Under the Cotonou agreement, Africa therefore has diminished prospects for industrialisation. The Cotonou agreement appeared to have been so well crafted to keep Africa perpetually as a producer and exporter of agricultural raw materials, while the EU

[18] Josephine Moulds (2015) "EU trade agreements threaten to crush Kenya's blooming flower trade" *The Guardian*, 16 January. Online at https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2015/jan/16/kenya-flower-trade-eu-pressure (Accessed: 12 April 2019).

[19] Hurt, Stephen (2003: 161) "Cooperation or Coercion? The Cotonou Agreement between the European Union and ACP States at the end of Lome Convention" *Third World Quarterly* 24(1): 161-176.

[20] Carim, Xavier (2017) "South Africa, the EU and the SADC Group Economic Partnership Agreement: Through the negotiating Lens" in " in Annita Montoute and Kudrat Virt (eds.) *The ACP Group and the EU Development Partnership: Beyond the North-South Debate* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan): 161-180.

retains the unchallenged status as a producer and exporter of industrial goods and subsidised agricultural products to Africa. In many ways the Cotonou agreement reveals EU perfidy and the inherent contradictions in Brussel's claims to help Africa's development. As a general rule, a region could not develop by relying on only primary production. Industrialisation is required to complement agricultural development. In fact, both the agricultural and industrial sectors need to complement each other to generate development. But, alas, the EU is inclined to promote one, and not the two sectors.

Yet, even in the production of agricultural goods, Africa's farmers remain at a massive disadvantage because of EU governments' subsidies to their farmers. Africa is already disadvantaged as majority of its farmers produce at subsistence level and using less mechanised methods of production. In contrast to EU farmers who are subsidised, Africa's unsubsidised farmers produce at a high cost and consequently with a truncated ability to compete with their EU counterparts. Andrew Mold, a UN Economic analyst for East Africa, told the Belgian Euractiv Foundation that "African economies cannot compete. As a result, free trade and EU imports endanger existing industries, and future industries do not even materialise because they are exposed to competition from the EU."[21] The fact of exporting raw agricultural products places Africa at a further disadvantage. Generally, unprocessed agricultural products attract less revenue and tend to perpetuate an unbalanced trade between those exporting processed goods and those relying on the exportation of unprocessed agricultural commodities. Calestous Juma, a professor of International Development at Harvard University, observed that agricultural raw food that could not be grown in Europe, such as coffee, enjoyed exemption from tariffs. However, roasted beans attracted a 7.5% surcharge. As a result of this arrangement, in 2014, Germany earned a whopping $3.8 billion through the roasting and re-exporting of coffee beans, while Africa, which grows and exports the green coffee beans, earned only $2.4 billion.[22]

Inability to be competitive means African farmers suffer losses in income. One study noted in 2004 that EU subsidy on cotton alone cost West and Central African farmers 38% loss in income each year.[23] In addition to loses in income, most Africa's agricultural farmers, especially those in the cultivation of rice, have literally gone out of employment as a result of the high cost of production and the consequent inability to compete in the continent's domestic market. Africa's markets are consequently flooded with cheaper imported rice, compounding the already growing unemployment situation on the continent. Equally worrying, the Cotonou Agreement has been followed by a massive dumping of EU poultry into African markets. Frozen chickens sell well below the cost of production in Africa, creating massive problems for the indigenous poultry industry. One observer noted in late 2017 that EU export of poultry to Africa left devastating impact on the latter. In Senegal, 70% of broiler operations collapsed, 120,000 jobs were lost in Cameroon, a once thriving poultry processing industry in Ghana was reduced to 25% capacity, while the operation of mills plummeted to 42% capacity.[24] Chris Ward, a Canadian health policy and international development consultant, could not have been apt in noting that "the EU promotes agricultural

[21] Cited in Kristen Palitza (2007) "EU food exports hinder African agricultural development" Online at https://fairplaymovement.org/eu-food-exports-hinder-african-agricultural-development/ (Accessed: 14 April 2019)

[22] Palitza, "EU food exports hinder African agricultural development"

[23] Ian Gillson, Colin Poulton, Kelvin Balcombe, and Sheila Page, "Understanding the Impact of Cotton Subsidies on Developing Countries", working paper, Overseas Development Institute, London, 2004, http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/details.asp?id=3608&title=cotton-subsidies-development (Accessed 17 February 2015), p. 63.

[24] Ward, Chris (2017) "EU chicken dumping starves Africa" *Mail & Guardian* 10 November.

development in countries where, at the same time, its exporters are killing agricultural industries and adding to misery and poverty in areas of high unemployment."[25] Africa's agricultural system has not been helped by the industry's heavy reliance on rain, with only a paltry six percent of its arable lands, representing 13 million hectares, being irrigated. Worse yet, most of these meagre irrigated lands are concentrated in just five countries – Egypt, Madagascar, Morocco, South Africa and Sudan. This is in sharp contrast to Asia with 40% of its arable lands being irrigated.[26]

Moreover, in a bid to take advantage of international trade with EU and thereby earn foreign exchange, the cultivation of exportable crops (export agriculture) is increasingly replacing the cultivation of food crops (food agriculture). More lands previously devoted to the production of food are now being converted to the production of exportable agricultural products like cocoa, coffee, tea and, in the process contributing to the continent's occasional food shortages. In years of poor harvest, Africa paradoxically relies on the importation of grains from the EU either as aid or as purchased food. It is estimated that Africa spends about $70 billion each ear on the importation of food such as wheat, rice, soya and milk.[27]

Conclusion

The institutionalisation of trade relations between Africa and the EU dates back to the 1963 and 1969 Yaounde Agreement. This was followed by the 1975 Lome conventions, which remained in place until the signing of the Cotonou agreement in 2000. The Cotonou agreement was to remain in place until 2020. The Cotonou agreement is significant in current EU-African trade because of its espousal of the EPAs, which spelt out the modalities of trade between the two regions. In retrospect, EU-Africa trade agreement, according to Brussels, is to promote development, reduce poverty and make Africa competitive in the global economy. However, as argued in the paper, while trade relations with the EU did spawn some positive benefits, including grating Africa access to the former's market for its agricultural products, the overall impact has been negative on the continent's development. It was noted that agricultural subsidies enjoyed by EU farmers made them more competitive than their African counterparts.

Moreover, EPAs are inimical to Africa's development in various ways, including undermining regional and continental integration, which Africa' considers as a key entry point to mitigating its seemingly intractable developmental challenges. In addition, trade with Europe seems to reinforce the old and discredited international division of labour in which through EPAs, Africa would produce and export only primary agricultural goods into the EU market. This arrangement condemned Africa into a perpetual producer of primary agricultural products. EPAs further undermined integration by balkanising Africa into new negotiating groups and ultimately depriving regions and the continent the opportunity to speak with one voice. In addition, this development compounded the already troubling challenge posed by multiple and overlapping membership of states in sub-regional organisations.

To be beneficial to Africa's development, the current EU-Africa trade must go beyond rhetoric to address the practical defects in the current evidently asymmetrical relations. The partnership between the two regions should be more symbiotic than asymmetrical. On the

[25] ibid.

[26] NEPAD (2013) *Agriculture in Africa, transformation and outlook* . Online at file:///C:/Users/01375493/Desktop/Agriculture%20in%20Africa_%20Transformation%20and%20outlook%20_English.pdf (Accessed: 10 April 2019), p. 19

[27] Kristen Palitza, "EU food imports hinder African development."

balance of evidence, the current EU-Africa trade relations hardly deliver development in the latter.