

Africa Free Trade Area foretold: A reflective analysis of Kwame Nkrumah's views for Africa in line with the benefits of the agreement establishing the African continental free trade area

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Abstract: Kwame Nkrumah was the Moses of Africa whose mission was to lead Africa into the promised land free of poverty through consolidation. During his reign as the President of Ghana, he advocated for African unity from a political and economic paradigm. Through his speeches and writings, he exuded this passion for Africa's integration, leaving his footprints on African history. Nkrumah's ideology sought to address the concerns of African emancipation, empowerment, economic freedom, identity, cultural norms, and patriotism. This paper reflects and analyzes how the ideas enunciated by the visionary Pan-Africanist Kwame Nkrumah are incorporated in the Agreement establishing African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The economic integration agreement came into effect on 30 May 2019, potentially bringing Nkrumah's ideas to fruition to the benefit of the African Continent.

Keywords: Africa, Free Trade, Kwame Nkrumah, Pan-Africa, AfCFTA-African Continental Free Trade Area

Introduction

A United Africa was Kwame Nkrumah's dream; a dream he passionately pursued during his reign as Ghana's President from 1958 to 1963 through several Pan-African congresses. The conferences gathered Pan-Africanists from across the continent. Along with his relentless pursuit of Pan-Africanism, Nkrumah intensely opposed "nuclear imperialism." His ideology was that "political union would provide the framework within which any plans for economic, social and cultural co-operation generates the best advantages to all. The African Union sprang from the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in which Kwame Nkrumah relentlessly worked to achieve. On 24 May 1963, as 32 independent African countries met in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital, Nkrumah gave one of the greatest speeches of his life; an address which has since become the definitive blueprint for African Union with economic integration highly amplified as a priority. Decades later in 2018, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) was launched and has already entered into force on 30 May 2019 for the 24 countries that had deposited their instruments of ratification with the chairperson of the African Union Commission. It aims to integrate Africa's markets by creating an expanded and secure demand for the goods and services of State Parties through the reduction or progressive elimination of tariffs and barriers to trade and investment. The primary mandate is to establish clear, transparent, predictable and mutually-advantageous rules to govern Trade in Goods and Services, Competition Policy, Investment, and Intellectual Property among States. Further, it intends to resolve the challenges of multiple and overlapping trade regimes to achieve policy coherence, including relations with third parties.

Materials and methods

This article is a secondary research paper in the form of a literature review. Kwame's books and many of his speeches have been the primary point of view in this analysis. These are Kwame's *Autobiography* (1957), *Africa Must Unite* (1963), *Consciencism* (1964), and *Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (1965). These reflect

his Pan - Africanism, and desire for a continental Africa. However, of paramount importance is his book "Africa must unite." According to Biney, "The writing and publication of Africa Must Unite (1963) needs to be appreciated within May 23, 1963, by the then 32 independent states of Africa" (Biney, Ama, 2011, p. 123). In this book, he appealed to history, the necessity for African countries to harness their human, technical, and economic resources to secure more considerable material and technological progress. More specifically, the proposal recapped the past conferences held on the continent since 1958. It then proceeded to outline the need for a:

- Common foreign policy and diplomacy;
- common continental planning for the economic and industrial development of Africa;
- common currency, a central bank, and monetary zone; and
- A common defense system.

Africa Must Unite is an elaborate explanation of the above measures and provides a vigorous historical and economical presentation of the facts. Underlying Nkrumah's demand for African unity was a conception of African society and the need for Africa to evolve its ideology and philosophy, which he characterized as "Conscience." This vision of "traditional" Africa is present in Nkrumah's book *Consciencism* (Biney, Ama, 2011, p. 174). In his controversial book *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism, published in 1965*, Nkrumah denounced the rampaging nature of multinational companies, Africa's dependency on aid, debt, and increasing poverty in the absence of greater continental economic and political integration. (Biney, Ama, 2011)

There many scholarly writings on Kwame Nkrumah, but the focus of this article is limited to how he contributed to the currently inaugurated AFCTA, which is an economic integration. Hence books and articles referred were those reflecting his economic and political endeavors for Africa as a whole. Especially, AmaBiney's narrative of the life of Kwame Nkrumah in his book- *The political and Social life Kwame Nkrumah* has also been very instrumental in analysis of this topic as he supports and capture the notion that Nkrumah continues to have a relevance to contemporary African political and social thought.

African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA) is a recent launch – it is very topical at the moment; hence, there is ongoing publication on it. Internet publications, comments, and current news have played a role. The Regional integration in I – IX papers which is a joint publication by UNECA, AUC, AfDB and most recently UNCTAD (IX) provides vital information to the integration process. AfCFTA is yet to be actualized, ex-ante econometric methods (especially Computable general equilibrium (CGE) and Market Equilibrium (PE)) are of use in the analyses. The main pitfall of these methodologies is the assumptions used in modelling. Also, the estimated benefits are likely to be underestimated as the informal sector, services sector or benefits from scale economies are not captured.

Background

Kwame was born in Ghana on 21 September 1909 and survived until 27 April 1972. He became the first president of independent Ghana from 1957-66. Having been exposed and actively involved in pan-Africanism when undergoing university studies in the United States of America (1935-1945) (Biney, Ama, 2011, p. 14), he was very intentional on what he wanted to achieve on African soil. The fulcrum of his return to West Africa in 1947 was his intention of using the Gold Coast (Ghana) as a starting point of African Independence and unity) (Nkrumah, Kwame, 1963, p. 13).

Upon assuming office as the president, Kwame declared in his independence speech that "the independence of Ghana is meaningless unless it is linked up with the total liberation of the African continent." He saw the emancipation of Ghana integral to that of the rest of Africa. Consequently, his foreign policy was fashioned to address African challenges. He resented the territorial balkanization juxtaposed to the African continent. "To us, Africa with its islands is just one Africa" (Nkrumah, Kwame, 1963, p. 217). Continental unity for him was a mechanism to avert foreign oppression, interference and intimidation. To him people of Africa had an obligation, to adopt concrete measures that could unite all - States and Territories of Africa - without necessarily involving changes in the territorial boundaries of the Independent African States or in their national sovereignty (Nkrumah, Kwame, 1963, p. 230).

Nkrumah sought to inspire the youth with a sense of service and adventure. "We must learn to love and serve Ghana and Africa. We must be imbued with a deep sense of patriotism for our country and inspired by an equally deep sense of mission to work for Africa's emancipation" (Nkrumah 1997a. 10). He also advocated for women

empowerment. He supported women education as he ascribed to the view that educating women meant the knowledge of a whole nation. He ensured this by introducing the Accelerated Development Plan for Education, which reflected this ambition (Biney, Ama, 2011, p. 100). Kwame Nkrumah acknowledged the part that was being played by African women in the struggle of African emancipation in the opening of the Conference of Women of Africa in July 1960.

The following paragraphs explains some of Kwame's key initiatives toward the integration of Africa which are found in his books especially "Africa must unite". In his bid to advance African unity and solidarity, he propagated significant conferences in 1958- the Conference of Independent African States (CIAS) and the All-African People's Conference (A-APC). In these conferences, he stressed the importance of the continent coming together 'in friendship and brotherhood to eradicate Africa's problems and bringing into being the aspirations, dreams and hopes of Africa". The Accra Conference of Independent African States was the first conference of its kind ever to be held, and it paved the way for a succession of other Pan-African conferences of various sorts. A process was begun of direct consultation between African states.

The first step towards unification was taken on November 23, 1958, when Ghana and the Republic of Guinea formed a nucleus or a Union of African States. The union was not primarily political but an economic, cultural and social organization designed to promote African unity. Membership to the Union of African States was left open for the admission of other African states to join in later dates. Of relevance is the group's Economic Committee signed agreements on the following joint organization:

- (i) Economic and Customs Union and an Economic Council
- (ii) African Common Market in which customs barriers and import quotas would be progressively ended within a five-year period.
- (iii) African Economic Development Bank with a capital of 30,000,000 dollars
- (iv) African Payments Union to facilitate the settling of accounts between member States
- (v) postal and telecommunications union
- (vi) joint shipping company.

It was also decided that an agreement on economic and technical co-operation should be concluded between member states. To strengthen the African identity, the Union agreed that an Institute of African Studies should be established for this purpose. In an attempt to expand the basis of this nucleus, Guinea, Ghana and Liberia, met at Sanniquellie in 1959, where further advances were made in the concept of African Unity. Later, after the break-up of the Mali Federation, the Republic of Mali joined Guinea and Ghana to form a Union, which was reconstituted into the Union of African States (U A S) whose intention was to formulate a "United States of Africa".

The significant pursuit of unity is seen in 1963 when thirty-two representatives meet in Addis Ababa at the Conference of African Heads of State and Governments. Kwame had six months ahead of the Conference shared his proposal to all independent states for setting a unified political organization. He tabled all his ideas in his book "Africa Must Unite." His argument towards unification was hinged on the paradox that Africa was endowed with incredible agricultural, mineral and water-power resources though economically weak and politically unstable. His book Africa must unite documents Africa's resources as below;

"Western firms exported copper, rubber, cotton, and other goods to the value of 2,773 million dollars in the ten years between 1945 and 1955, and from South Africa, Western gold mining companies have drawn a profit, in the six years between 1947 to 1951, of 814 million dollars. Our continent certainly exceeds all the others in potential hydroelectric power, which some experts assess as 42 per cent of the world's total."
(237)

These tremendous resources were only to benefit Africa and African people if they were to be fully exploited within a Union Government of African States. He proposed an economic plan covering an Africa united on a continental basis. Thereby increasing total industrial and commercial power coordinating all existing economic, agricultural, mineral and financial resources and employ them methodically to improve the welfare of African people. This was meant at eliminating imbalances in identical forms of a complementary pattern of development which will give the fullest opportunity for a progressive continent. Also of essence was to quicken monetary transactions and financial activities between several States through maintenance of a common currency, a monetary zone and a central bank of issue.

Kwame Nkrumah envisaged a Common Market of three hundred million producers and consumers of Africa in control of productivity and purchasing power at par with any of those trading and currency blocks which now rule

the commerce of the world. The Common Market was to enable African states to compete with or contest mega-states like the USA, Soviet Union, or China ending the domination of Africa's economy by foreign multinational companies. He propounded that Africa should not be running to European Common Market but create its own 'United States of Africa'. For him, Africa needed to work on being self-reliant rather than looking outward for the development of its economy and transportation. Africa was to strive towards "development of large-scale industry, power, and transport networks; the removal of barriers to inter-African trade; the creation of a central bank; the formation of a unified policy on all aspects of export control, tariff, and quota arrangements on the premise that Africa was to be conceived as a viable, single, economic, and political unit."

However, the favourable vote on the charter of the OAU fell short of Nkrumah's vision (Biney, Ama, 2011, p. 108). His proposal was met with resistance, notwithstanding the rationality that backed it. Vehemently rejected was the notion of an African High Command and the African Union Government. In a compromise, Nkrumah endorsed the charter advanced by the OAU, albeit that he recognized it as a charter of positive 'intent' and not 'positive action' (Poe., 2003). The Charter of the OAU was signed on the 25th of May, 1963 by the Heads of State and Governments of the Independent African States in Addis Ababa. The Charter had many grandiloquent goals; the administration of the goals remained loose and lacked the resolve of an organically united body. It seriously undermined the authority of the OAU and caused a growing lack of confidence in its ability to achieve its underlying objectives. In times of crisis, it has failed to provide the dynamic leadership and decisive action expected of it (Biney, Ama, 2011, p. 240). By the second OAU summit, held in Cairo from 17–21 July 1964, the problems in Africa had become worse (Poe, 2003, p. 124). Nkrumah raised these problems during his address to the Conference stressing the benefits of a large population and landmass. In the subsequent OAU meetings in Cairo in 1964 and Accra in October 1965, Nkrumah reiterated his call for a continental African High Command stating the lucrative position of Africa in International Trade:

–"Can the industrialized nations do without our copper, our iron ore, our bauxite, our coffee, cocoa, cotton, groundnuts, palm oil or will they be running after us, as we have been running to them for trade on equal terms?"

Again, his Pan-African vision, in terms of self-determination and independent course of action by Africans, fell on deaf ears. A few weeks after the conference, he is said to have confided in a friend that he was willing to give up his presidency to fully commit to African Unity (Rooney 321) (David, 2007). However, his disappointment with the OAU grew. Toward the end of his life, he characterized the institution as "a puppet organization" (Biney, Ama, 2011, p. 174)

After Kwame's death, we see his ghost coming to haunt the African leaders as they sought to proceed with integration. The plight of the continent had not improved much. In 1997, President Nyerere in a speech at Accra to mark the fortieth anniversary of Ghana's independence professed "Kwame Nkrumah was the state crusader for African unity" (Biney, Ama, 2011, p. 179). Though he had opposed Kwame's ideas in 1965 in favour of regionalization, he lamented this in his book, *Uhurunaumoja, Freedom and socialism, (1968)*. Nyerere regretted to the error of solidifying state identities at the expense of Pan-African identity in his article titled, "The dilemma of the Pan-Africanist." (Poe, 2003, p. 126). Relaying the vision, we see Obasanjo, and Gaddafi precipitating the rapid transformation of the OAU into the AU (Biney, Ama, 2011, p. 179).

In this endeavor, we see the second phase of regional integration occurring between the early 1980s and 1990s. The Lagos Charter was launched in 1975, followed by the Lagos Plan of Action in 1980. The Lagos Plan of Action that called for the integration of the continent based on "self-reliance, endogenous development and industrialization" of Africa. However, the noted shortcoming of the Lagos Plan of Action has been the lack of detailed implementation strategy (Ismail, 2016).

In addressing this, OAU adopted the Abuja Treaty in 1991 whose objective was to establish a continental economic community through coordination, harmonization, and progressive integration of the regional economic communities (RECs) — followed by the Sirte Declaration of 1999 that led to the creation of the African Union (AU) in 2002. However, Abuja Treaty, clearly laid out the how the African Economic Community (AEC) was to be implemented in 6 phases over 34 years with the first 3 phases focusing on the creation and strengthening of regional economic communities (RECs). The first step in this pathway was the creation of Free Trade Areas (FTAs) in each region, followed by customs unions, common markets, and monetary unions. In an endeavor to achieve this by 2000s eight significant RECs were advancing the process of regional integration: SADC (Southern African Development Community); EAC (East African Community); COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa); ECOWAS (Economic Commission of Western African States); ECCAS (Economic Community of Central African

States); IGAD (Inter-Governmental Authority on Development); AMU (Arab Maghreb Union); and CENSAD (Community of Sahel-Saharan States) (Ismail, 2016).

However, by the early 2000s, we the emergence of the "spaghetti bowl" as Africa's RECs were beginning to overlap. Some countries were members of more than one REC and had committed to joining more than one Customs Union. In addressing this discrepancies, Ministers of Trade and Industry of the three RECs (SADC, EAC, and COMESA) led the process of building an FTA between all three RECs (Bach, 2016; Davies, 2011). In June 2011 Heads of State of the SADC, EAC and COMESA launched the Tri-Partite Free Trade Agreement (TFTA) negotiations at a Summit in Johannesburg (Luke and Mabuza, 2016 in (Ismail, 2016)). Ministers of the three RECs had been preparing for this Tri-Partite arrangement since 2008.

The Tri-Partite Free Trade Agreement between SADC, COMESA and the EAC was signed at Sharm el-sheik, Egypt on 10 June 2015 by representatives of most of the 26 member states, representing a combined population of over 600 million people and GDP of US\$1 trillion dollars (Luke and Mabuza, 2016 in (Ismail, 2016)). The Sharm el-sheik Declaration launching the TFTA reaffirmed the "developmental integration approach built on the three pillars of industrial development, infrastructure development and market integration" (Luke, and Mabuza, 2016 in (Ismail, 2016)). The signing of the TFTA agreement encouraged the AU Heads of State to be more ambitious and launch African Continental Free Trade Area agreement which was behind schedule (AfCFTA).

AfCFTA is a baby of "Agenda 2063" which was launched in 2015 by the African Union which is a 50-year vision and action plan called "The Africa We Want". It advocates for "a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development" as the first of seven aspirations. Its second aspiration calls for an "integrated continent, politically united, based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance," and expresses its vision that "Africa shall be a continent where the free movement of people, capital, goods and services will result in significant increases in trade and investments amongst African countries...". It also visualizes a continent that will have underpinned its development by investing in world-class infrastructure and developing its manufacturing sector.

Benefits of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

The agreement is the most massive trade pact to take effect since the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) as it will cover over a billion people in terms of several participating countries. According to Article 4 of the AfCFTA, for purposes of fulfilling and realizing the objectives of the agreement, Member States shall:

- Progressively eliminate tariffs and non-tariff barriers (NTBs) to trade in goods;
- Liberalise gradually trade in services;
- Cooperate on investment, intellectual property rights and competition policies;
- Cooperate on all trade-related areas between State Parties;
- Cooperate on customs matters and the implementation of trade facilitation measures;
- Design a mechanism for the settlement of disputes concerning their rights and obligations; and
- Establish and maintain an institutional framework for the implementation and administration of the Continental Free Trade Area.

AfCFTA is founded on the backdrop of changing the economic and social welfare of Africa. Although more considerable progress has been made from the time of Kwame Nkrumah in some African state, Africa remains the least developed continent. Poverty is still a heavy burden in Sub-Saharan Africa, with 35.2 per cent of the population living on less than US\$1.90 a day in 2015. (ICTSD, 2016). Kwame lamented the poverty in Africa, and he was at pains to address this on African soil. The larger population of African youths remains unemployed. The people of Africa is projected to reach 2.5 billion by 2050, at which point it will include 26 per cent of what is expected to be the world's working-age population. Every year, 10 to 12 million young people enter the workforce, while only three million formal jobs are created (AfDB, 2016). Gender inequalities remain wide.

The larger population of the African market lack the buying power and are incapacitated to contribute to the growth of the economies of Africa. Although the African market remains very diversely endowed with vast arable land for agriculture and rich in all sorts of minerals, to the rest of the world. However, manufactured goods dominate intra-African trade (shows there is capacity for value addition). Also, one of the challenges firms in Africa are currently facing is capacity underutilization. The patterns of Aid for Trade to Africa have remained largely unchanged. Africa continues to be one of the largest recipients, with US\$15.2 billion in Aid for Trade disbursed in 2017 (Mo-Ibrahim

Foundation, 2014). Currently, the movement of people between African countries remains largely restricted by visas and expensive airfares.

AfCFTA intends to be a key driver of productivity, growth by facilitation of trade creation, economic trade diversion and more significant economies of scale. It seeks to promote labour-intensive trade, thereby dealing with the elephant of the continent of youth unemployment. In support of women empowerment, the preamble of AfCFTA incorporates the importance of gender equality for the development of international trade and economic cooperation. Also, in Article 3(e) of the Agreement, promoting gender equality features as a general objective. Most of the African women are found in informal –cross border trading and small scale farming. According to Uneca, women are estimated to account for around 70 per cent of informal cross-border. In an address of this, AfCFTA seeks to aid the informal cross border traders through a Simplified Trading Regime (STR) for small traders, which provides simplified clearing procedure and reduced import duties such as the Simplified Trade Regime (Uneca 2018). Also, article 27 on technical assistance, capacity-building and cooperation call for the improvement of the export capacity of formal and informal service suppliers, with particular attention to micro-entities. In this way, AfCFTA seeks to promote women and youth through economic empowerment so that they can productively contribute to the economy.

One of the significant benefits of AfCFTA is the result of a common market which will emanate from the combination the 55 member states of the African Union of a gross domestic product (GDP) of \$2.2 trillion and the anticipated benefits are a complementary and diversity. Landry Signé (year) has estimated that under a successfully implemented AfCFTA, Africa will have a combined consumer and business spending of \$6.7 trillion in 2030. Of course, this will be achieved by progressive and consistent elimination of customs duty, non-tariff barriers, other charges on goods produced and barriers in movement of people in member countries. The African Union Member States have agreed to remove 90 per cent of their tariffs on goods over a period of between 5 and 15 years, depending on whether a country is classified as developing or least developed, with special and differentiated treatment for the group of six countries. Discussions on tariff schedules are underway and individual countries, as well as customs unions, are finalizing the tariff offers for negotiation with other AU Members.

This single economic space will promote mobility of factors of production such as labour, capital, and entrepreneurship across national borders, enhancing the African Market through diversification and complementarities. Consequently, collective exploitation of Africa's abundant reservoir of land and natural endowments to create larger, more viable internal economic spaces enabling Africa's markets to work more efficiently. Also diversifying Africa's trade and encouraging a move away from extractive commodities, such as oil and minerals, which have traditionally accounted for most of Africa's exports, towards a more balanced and sustainable export base. Over 75 per cent of Africa's exports outside the continent were extractives from 2012 to 2014, while less than 40 per cent of intra-African trade were extractives in the same period (UNECA, 2018).

Countries with substantial agricultural production and potential will be particularly well placed to tap into new opportunities provided in the agro-industry and agro-processing sectors, helping to satisfy Africa's food security requirements. Reduces Africa's food import bill to make the continent more food self-sufficient (ECA, AfDB, AU, 2017). As market forces dictate production based on the comparative advantage, the marginal welfare of people in the common market will increase. The cost of being landlocked includes higher costs of freight and unpredictable transit times (UNECA & ATPC, 2018).AfCFTA provides particular benefits to these countries: in addition to reducing tariffs, the AfCFTA is set to include provisions on trade facilitation, transit and customs cooperation. Less-industrialized countries can benefit from the implementation of the programme for the Accelerated Industrial Development of Africa. Domestic investments in education and training can ensure the necessary complementary skills (ECA, AfDB, AU, 2017).

AfCFTA seeks to enhance the African brand both internally and externally, promoting inward growth. At the moment, the made in Africa brands have not been able to compete well in and out the continent because of inner trade barriers and outside high standards. Small and medium-sized enterprises are crucial to growth in Africa. They account for around 80 per cent of the region's businesses (UNECA & ATPC, 2018). These businesses usually struggle to penetrate more advanced overseas markets, but are well-positioned to tap into regional export destinations and can use local markets as stepping stones for expanding into foreign markets at a later point (UNECA & ATPC, 2018).

At the moment it seems almost certain that when other continents "sneezes", Africa catches a cold. With the current trade wars between the United States of America and China; and Brexit, one wonders the implications of these on

Africa given the fact that Africa exports quite a lot to China and the UK. African currencies are easily affected by the fluctuations in rates. Inwardly the share of intraregional trade in Africa was 16.7 per cent, lower than in most other regions of the world with other regions at 68.1 per cent of trade in Europe, 59.4 per cent in Asia and 55.0 per cent in the Americas (UNECA, 2019). These statistics clearly show that the African brand has not fared well in the continent. The fact that African countries still export raw materials has not changed in time. Value of African minerals is greatly affected by the International markets. It is difficult and expensive to trade or do business internally. Scaling business in the African Continent is hindered by high import duties, infrastructure problems, corruption and regulatory discrepancies. For example, at the Mombasa port, delays in clearing goods are four times more than the global average (Business Daily, 2019). All this makes the African economies volatile.

In strengthening the African brand, AfCFTA strategy is to promote intra-regional trade and to remove roadblocks in business. Through tariff preferences, producers in the free trade area will have cost advantages over producers of similar goods from non-member countries. They are enabling producers in the free trade area to offer more competitive prices. In turn, intensifies competition in the free trade area, leads to the rationalization of production and promotes efficiency through economies of scale. As production structures are diversified away from primary products, the long-term dependence of African countries on the developed market economies for manufactures is expected to weaken (UNECA, 2012).

In this way, the African brand will be able to compete with other regions. It also enables self-sustainability whereby the continent through its diversity will trade internally without being affected by the international market fluctuations. However, it is critical that the adopting and enforcing of regional competition rules throughout an FTA would generate and enhance an atmosphere of free competition, supporting an efficient industrial structure (UNECA, 2012). Through the promotion of intraregional trade, African countries could diversify their economies and trade, and accelerate their structural transformation process. In this way, the African brand would be able to compete internationally with other regional blocks.

In addition to the removal of tariff barriers, AfCFTA seeks through negotiation to create clear and transparent rules of origin. This is because the simple removal of tariff barriers would not bring about the above-stated gains from regional integration unless they are pursued by policy measures aimed at reducing costs of the trade from rent-seeking practices, the lack of adequate infrastructure, lengthy border administration and duplication of procedures. Regional efforts towards developing infrastructure and reducing the NTBs are, therefore, imperative to successful integration (UNECA, 2012).

It is estimated that CFTA has the potential to increase intra-African trade by as much as \$35 billion per year, or 52 per cent above the baseline by 2022 and decreasing imports from outside the continent by \$10 billion per year (UNECA, 2012). In the long run, it is also predicted that intra-African trade will increase by 15 to 25 per cent, or \$50 billion to \$70 billion, by 2040, compared to an Africa without the AfCFTA.

Through CFTA Africa will have one voice in words of Kwame;

"For too long in our history, Africa has spoken through the voices of others. Now, what I have called an African Personality in international affairs will have a chance of making its proper impact and will let the world know it through the voices of Africa's own sons."

The argument is Africa seems to be just the recipient in the international arena without it putting forward a unified voice of what works for the continent. There have been a lot of deals that have been concluded between Africa and other Nations. The China – Africa, Russia – Africa and France – Africa, and economic partnership agreements (EPAs). What is then Baffling is that even if Africa goes to these some of these Summits (i.e. Russia-Africa Summit/Beijing Summit of Forum on China- Africa cooperation) as a group representing Africa, they enter into separate deals with these countries. Africa, at the moment, sits on huge debts (East African debt has exceeded hundred billion United States Dollars (The EastAfrican, 2019) because of some of these closed doors investment deals. Through AfCFTA Africa will harmonize Investment policies and taxes. It is thereby favouring the distribution and coordination of investment opportunities within the continent. Also not be separate to review and harmonisation of Labour, patent, property rights laws. The planned investment protocol to the AfCFTA should avoid creating loopholes for multinational tax avoidance (ECA, AfDB, AU or UNCTAD, 2019)

Since, Foreign direct investment (FDI) and cross border regional investment activities and opportunities expected from an FTA can only be enhanced if trade facilitation measures reducing barriers to trade, a stable and predictable trade policy environment and the removal of restrictions on competition among firms within the region are in place

(UNECA, 2012). Complete consolidation of the RECS through AfCFTA will also help in the elimination of separate deals that has emanated from there and regulatory mishaps.

Discussion

In analyzing the background, one can agree that the AfCFTA seeks to advance the yearnings of Kwame Nkrumah. The question that remains standing is - why has it taken that long for the continent to achieve this lucrative union? In answering this, Kwame was clear on the progressive nature of achieving this, although for him, it was imminent. Thus there should be political will first before any economic integration can be achieved. Therefore, he advocated for political union first before the economic union. This because he envisaged the challenges that can emanate where there is lack of political will in attaining economic integration. However, he underestimated that African leaders were still recovering from colonialisation; hence, they wanted to hold on to power at all costs. A union government seemed less attractive at the moment. However, during his time, he achieved a milestone through the formation of OAU in 1963.

This process has never ceased since and resulted in the signing of AfCFTA by 55 African leaders who showed their willingness to rally towards this goal. It is clear that there is still more work to be done to achieve the benefits of the agreement and African leaders should be willing to give up some of their sovereignty and support good governance to ensure effective implementation for the benefit of all. Squabbles remain in the continent in the form of closing of borders (Nigeria, Sudan, Rwanda, Kenya & Eritrea (africanews, 2019). It should, however, be noted that the journey of Europe started back in 1958 to where it is now and even now the cracks can be seen with the ongoing Brexit. It was initiated in 1958, it took 35 years to get from the European Economic Custom to the EU (Mo-Ibrahim Foundation, 2014, p. 7).

Notwithstanding that most African countries are struggling economically, African leaders, business people, organization and the rest of the people must rally behind AfCFTA. Much work still needs to be done in the form of countries' schedules of tariff concessions and services commitments, rules of origin, investment, intellectual property, competition, etc. African countries should channel resources and strategies towards the effective and efficient implementation. Kwame, through the building of OAU, was exemplary in this. More significant and stable economies of Africa like Nigeria and South Africa should volunteer to contribute more towards this cause. Currently, Kenya has started building the railway line connecting EAC countries. This is because establishing a continental agreement requires substantial financial resources to facilitate the development of competent institutions and complementary infrastructure. Capacity-building and developing the necessary knowledge bases are required to run the institutions of integration at national, regional and continental levels. By ensuring the availability of the skills and capacities necessary for effective implementation.

Another way of fast-tracking implementation of AfCFTA is through African countries rising above issues that affect economic considerations and sovereignty as these have always been resisted from Kwame's time. For example, the protocol of movement of people can be challenging to implement, especially now when most African countries are battling with issues of security and employment. The few countries that are doing well have also not been very receptive to this given to the xenophobic attacks in South Africa. Then as for the tariff relaxation, there is a need to adhere to the rules of origins (ROOs) which can be very complicated at the technical level. ROOs are like a passport for a product to enter an FTA and circulate without being imposed a duty (UNCTAD, 2016). We see the conflict that emanated in EAC because of sugar (allafrica, 2018). Just raising awareness of the benefits of AfCFTA will help fast track implementation as the Leaders will be held accountable to masses on their failure to facilitate implementation.

Facilitation of digitalizing of Africa could be a significant driver to realize the benefits of AfCFTA. Public and private sectors are increasingly adopting e-commerce platforms for governments to deliver services through them, electronic marketplaces aggregate consumer and producer demand as well as trade-related services, traditional businesses have incorporated e-commerce into their business models and operations and individual entrepreneurs and small businesses use social media platforms to engage with market opportunities. (ECA, AfDB, AU or UNCTAD, 2019)

Energy is vital for international trade competitiveness and regional integration, and African economies are unlikely to expand production or improve their global competitiveness if they continue to lack adequate energy supplies. Across Africa and within the regional economic communities' energy generation is weak, and distribution remains highly uneven. Many countries experience frequent brownouts and blackouts. Even though the continent is blessed

with ample energy resources, less than 30% of the population has access to electricity. Regional integration and cooperation can help address the continent's undersupply of electric energy. Countries recognize this and are increasingly exploring, though not systematically, a regional approach to addressing the energy problem.

In conclusion, Kwame saw the metropolis of Africa becoming the headquarters of science, technology, and medicine. Although controversial, there is consensus on his passion for African union and solidarity. Kwame Nkrumah was a true pioneer of Pan Africanism. To him, Africa was a giant hypnotized, made dormant by years of foreign tutelage and needed to be awakened. According to Adamafo, Nkrumah regarded himself as African first and therefore disliked the idea of treating affairs about African nations as foreign affairs (Nkrumah, Kwame, 1963). The unification that Kwame envisaged was that one going to the grassroots of poverty in the continent. Hence implementation should ensure equitable distribution of the benefits and coordination in dealing with challenges that emanate from that place. Africa needs to appreciate and develop its brand to ensure sustainable development in the continent. It is putting its voice forward in advocating and facilitating its growth. This can only be achieved by proper implementation of AFTA amongst all its benefits. Though Nkrumah did not succeed in achieving his desired political unification of Africa, he broke the hard ground for the others to pursue. All that Africa has to do is to ensure proper implementation of the AfCFTA. For this reason, Nkrumah pointed to three choices available to Africa: "first, to unite and save our continent; secondly, to disunite and disintegrate; or thirdly to 'sell-out' to foreign powers" (Esebede, 1994).

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