



The Future of the Atlantic and the Role of Africa in International Development

Summary of the 2014 Report of the US Association for the Club of Rome

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Abstract

The 2014 USACOR report forecasts that economic cooperation across the Atlantic will increase through the implementation of free trade agreements such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the development of free trade areas in the African continent. Such agreements shall be complemented by multilateral security cooperation to prevent conflicts, asymmetric warfare and also to guarantee food and water security. The report recommends that free trade agreements be supported by fair labor and antitrust laws to protect working and middle classes, common environmental regulations and multilateral mechanisms for dispute resolution.

The report underlines the vast availability of undiscovered mineral resources, especially in Africa, and the need for public-private partnerships to exploit such resources. It stresses the importance of environmental protection in the exploration and extraction of resources to preserve the fragile ecosystem.

The main priority for economic development in Africa is the improvement of the health condition of its population. The education is essential to promote religious tolerance and harmony in a diverse religious environment.

The report also recommends limiting factory fishing within territorial waters and reforestation through soil enhancement techniques. The use of genetically engineered photosynthesizing bacteria would increase the production of electricity. Many types of algae and bacteria can flourish in salt water, conserving fresh water for saline-adverse crops.

Vaccination and water sanitation are the two factors that would improve the health conditions in Africa. Investments from the private sector in conjunction with public institutions are

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necessary to implement such techniques and to foster sustainable economic development in Africa.

1. Legal and Political Issues

(a) The Development of Free Trade Agreements in the Atlantic Region

Francesco Stipo

Although the beginning of the third Millennium was characterized by a shift in the world's economic growth from the Atlantic to the Pacific region, the Atlantic is still the center of world's economic prosperity. In fact, as of 2012, the European Union and the United States had respectively the first and second highest GDP in the world, which contributed to 40% of the world's economic output.*

“The development of a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Agreement can boost the global economy and increase cooperation among countries with homogeneous political systems and economies.”

Strong international trade between America and Europe induced the countries in the Atlantic region to open their economic borders and launch in 2013 negotiations for a comprehensive trade and investment agreement called TTIP (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership).

The European Commission estimates that the TTIP could boost the European economy by 120 billion, the U.S. economy by 90 billion and the rest of the world by 100 billion euros.† The agreement covers several aspects of bilateral U.S.-EU trade such as “market access for agricultural and industrial goods, government procurement, investment, energy and raw materials, regulatory issues, sanitary measures, services, intellectual property rights, sustainable development, small- and medium-sized enterprises, dispute settlement, competition, customs/trade facilitation, and state-owned enterprises.”‡

The development of a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Agreement can boost the global economy and increase cooperation among countries with homogeneous political systems and economies. However, to develop sustainable economic growth, it is our recommendation that this agreement includes provisions for fair labor and antitrust laws to protect working and middle classes, common environmental regulations and multilateral mechanisms for dispute resolution. We also recommend that the TTIP not be restricted to the North Atlantic region

* See World Bank, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDPMKTP.CD>

† See European Commission, <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/in-focus/ttip/>

‡ See European Commission, <http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/press/index.cfm?id=941>

but also extended to countries in Latin America and Africa that share the same values as their North Atlantic counterparts.

(b) Security Cooperation across the Atlantic

Keith Butler

The major transatlantic political and security entities that currently exist include the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union (EU), and the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA). While NATO is the only defense treaty organization among countries in the North Atlantic, there exists the potential for expansion of defense and trade organizations into the South Atlantic countries, both in Western Africa and South America. The Organization of American States (OAS) and the African Union (AU) are the two major political treaty organizations in the South Atlantic that are involved in transatlantic relations with NATO, the EU, and NAFTA.

There are a number of persistent security, political, and economic issues that have a direct impact upon transatlantic relations. Of particular note is the issue of food scarcity, which continues to be a major factor that has caused destabilization in North Africa, and could affect West Africa and South America in the future. Access to fresh water is another issue that affects almost all transatlantic nations, and may impact the future of agricultural production among both developed and developing countries among the transatlantic community. Economic growth has slowed down significantly among the developed countries in the region since 2008, and a general malaise in trade flows persists. The illicit trafficking in drugs, weapons, and people across transatlantic borders continues despite efforts by various governments to reduce illegal activity. While there are bi-lateral trade relations among a number of countries (such as that between NAFTA and the European Free Trade Association, or EFTA), most of the trade mechanisms among the transatlantic community exist within the larger World Trade Organization (WTO).

Overall, there are significant issues that affect the political, economic, and security relations of nations within the transatlantic region. While the North Atlantic countries have strong political, economic, and security treaty organizations, the South Atlantic countries have an opportunity to better integrate their regions with the larger Atlantic community. It is highly doubtful that the South Atlantic countries will integrate into, or promote the idea, of a transatlantic defense security and economic regime. However, as the regional blocks in South America and Africa develop, then perhaps a more comprehensive transatlantic community will emerge.

(c) Food Security and International Development in Africa

Roberta Gibb Welch Esq.

Agriculture has been a major area of development in Africa.

The complex interlocking patterns of land acquisition and ownership that are fundamental to development are global in scope and mutual and multifaceted in nature at one end of

the spectrum, with impoverished subsistence farmers operating at the other end. Africa possesses the largest reserve of undeveloped, agriculturally amenable, common lands in the world.

Worldwide, land is at a premium. As the price of food escalates, driven by demand and by commodities speculators, the contest for land intensifies. Both Africa and South America are relatively land rich, while China, India and Europe are relatively densely populated, so there is a North-South asymmetry as well as an East-West asymmetry. North American-based multinational corporations are buying up and leasing agricultural and forest lands in Africa and South America. European and Chinese corporations, both private and state owned, oil-rich Middle Eastern countries and South East Asian corporations are also scrambling to buy land in Africa, South America and to a lesser extent in the Middle East.

The cultivation of microorganisms as a source of fuel and food will serve to expand our food and energy resource technology and to provide a foundation for food production in the future. Bacteria and algae are potent sources of food for humans and for livestock. Genetically engineered photosynthesizing bacteria can also double as a means of producing electricity. Many types of algae and bacteria can flourish in salt water, thus conserving fresh water for saline-adverse crops. Moreover, advances in protein research have made it possible to grow animal protein in cats. This is a technology that can lend itself to development in Africa and will also attenuate the need for huge tracts of grazing land for livestock and grain production.

The future of food production and development in Africa will no doubt involve a mixture of large agribusinesses, small and medium sized farms, urban and suburban gardens, fishponds, fish farms, microorganism crops and vat protein production. The development of all of these technologies in Africa is a road to the future that will help Africa and Africans to flourish and also provide resources for the world.

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Perhaps the biggest threat to African development comes from Africa itself; first in the form of terrorists and terrorist organizations that disrupt governments and wreak havoc on civil societies; second in terms of tribal, religious and ethnic hatreds that burn out of control as over-population, poverty and the extremism born of fear, false beliefs, hunger, and mental, emotional and physical illness which drive massive acts of genocide; and third, in the untrammelled power of brutal dictatorships and corruption that are an anathema to democratic civil and human rights.

2. Energy and Environment

(a) The Underlying Natural Resources & their Function within the South Atlantic

Anitra Thorhaug

The South Atlantic is one of the world's largest water bodies containing the second largest global ecosystem. The total Atlantic Ocean (106.4 million km²) covers approximately

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20% of the earth's surface and is second in size to the Pacific, but its terrestrial drainage is 4 times greater, creating a much greater effect of terrestrial activities (pollutants and soil loss) on Atlantic estuaries. The South Atlantic's deep waters and surface equatorial waters both affect the circulation and heat of the North Atlantic and its nations. The South Atlantic is the second youngest ocean existing since 130 million years ago when Africa's tectonic plate pulled away from South America's plate. The South Atlantic's surface circulation includes water moving westward from the Bight of Benin toward the South American coast where one portion circulates northwestward through the Caribbean Sea while a second portion flows westward to the Guyanese/Brazilian coasts turning southward toward Argentina. At the far south (below 60 degrees South), this water meets the Antarctic surface current, circulating around the Antarctic continent. A deep water current of far greater volume circulates from the North Atlantic Ocean sinking from surface waters near Iceland and Norway and flows to the South Atlantic, taking multiple centuries to pass from north to south Atlantic. The net surface heat transport northward replaces this sinking water from the northern Atlantic Ocean the heat of which keeps Europe temperate along with heat from the Gulf Stream current passing from mid-Atlantic through the Caribbean to Europe.¹

Enormous migrations of human populations are well-documented to presently be occurring on the East Atlantic side from Central Africa northward to Morocco and Europe and also southward toward South Africa. The migration takes place supposedly due to degrading natural resources which were previously sustaining these populations. The intense extraction of resources and industrial development in the African Atlantic nations do not appear to be adequately solving the needs of those in extreme poverty, despite the overall increase in GDP due to extractive resources.

(b) Recommendations

1. No factory fishing either inside or outside the territorially limited waters of the Central and Southern Atlantic region.
2. Forests must be sustained throughout the South Atlantic and Caribbean regions and reforestation must occur on marginal areas decimated previously. Ground cover plants must be placed on degraded areas (especially along river and creek edges where forests have been removed) to stem soil erosion and turbidity entering the estuaries from upland. A variety of soil enhancement techniques must be used to enrich and retain the soil.
3. Need for substantial national and local work on cleansing effluents of all types so that only clean water enters rivers and coasts. This is critical for regaining sustainability of marine fisheries and biodiversity of estuarine and marine ecosystems.
4. Excellent planning and assessment for sustainability with detailed calculations for both catching fisheries and breeding fish must be created nationally for introducing catch limits to national local fish industry and artisanal fisheries industries or for selling fishing rights to non-national corporations.

5. Industries and infrastructure developing shorelines and rivers for petroleum and other extractive products must respect the vegetation of habitat and fisheries.
6. Poverty, pervasive in the east and west south Atlantic, needs microenterprise rather than simple microfinance. Major efforts to train villagers should occur throughout these regions (excellent success story is Burkina Faso). Microenterprise poverty alleviation must work toward self-sufficiency and excess profit spread should assist others in poverty, replacing the present donor-dependent attitude. Forest industries must be facilitated by producing sustainable forest products and not turning forests into agricultural lands.
7. Fresh water security is required for agricultural and human consumption, especially in the eastern South Atlantic.

3. Health and Religion

(a) Religious Trends in the Atlantic Region

Marian Gh. Simion

In determining the particular role that Africa plays in the future of the Atlantic region, religion ought to be viewed in close relationship with socio-economic indicators such as human development, income, corruption, education, literacy, and access to the Internet. All these socio-economic indicators demonstrate that North America and Western Europe rank the highest, while the African continent ranks the lowest; it is mandatory that sustainable development in the South should be regarded by the North as an investment opportunity, particularly as North-South relations have become part of the everyday life of the globalized world.²

Today, on the African continent, religion is present in various forms, ranging from primitive forms of religious life such as animism, totemism, fetishism and ancestors' cultism, to religious syncretism, agnosticism and atheism, with a significant presence of transplanted Hinduism. Nevertheless, the dominant religions are Christianity and Islam.

Considering the protracted ideological attrition between Islam and Christianity, religion and religious identity become a strong factor for discrimination and conflict. The strongest clashes between Muslims and Christians took place in the Republic of Sudan, which led to the 2011 independence of the Christian-dominated Republic of South Sudan, from the Muslim North. Nevertheless, these regional clashes in Sudan predate the arrival of Christianity and Islam, as North African Arabs have maintained close ties with Saharan and Sub-Saharan Africans through religion, trade, war and diplomacy. While the expansion of Islam in West Africa was largely peaceful, it was only later that Sudan became a theater for a "scramble for souls" between the indigenous religionists, colonizing Christian missionaries, and the hegemonic Muslims.^{3,4}

As the current projections of religious demographics indicate, over the next 40 years Muslims are expected to increase significantly, and the Christian population will see a slight

increase as well.⁵ Therefore, fear of poverty and destitution can only lead to further competition for resources, where, in addition to ethnic identity, religious identity can become a source for further discrimination and human rights abuses. North Africa is strongly subjected to the unpredictable results of the Arab Spring, along with a series of jihad movements and rebellions of nomadic tribesmen in West Africa. So, it becomes vital for the Global North to increase its involvement in Africa through sustainable development, both for humanitarian reasons, as well as for reasons of security.^{6,*}

(b) Health Issues in Africa

Jack Allison and Ryan Jackson

Ignorance, poverty and disease are intertwined in keeping Africa from emerging more rapidly as a third world continent. Poor health prevents one from working to full capacity and from receiving an adequate education; furthermore, improved education is associated with enhanced income and bolstered health status, so the vicious cycle in Africa is indeed ominous.

According to a WHO report in 2006, Africa's health problems are actually getting worse: "Although Africa has 11% of the global population it has 60% of the world's HIV/AIDS cases and 90% of the world malaria cases, mainly in children under 5."[†]

A major issue is that African governments do not deem healthcare expenditures a priority in terms of annual GDP. Another distressing concern is that malaria, HIV/AIDS, and many other health problems in Africa are preventable!

Two other pervasive public health issues are access to clean drinking water and availability of proper sanitation. Unsafe water and lack of basic sanitation kill more people annually than most forms of violence, including war.[‡]

Worldwide, 800 million people do not have access to clean water, the majority of whom are impoverished..., and 84% of water-deprived Africans live in rural areas.[§]

Sanitation is a tougher problem because universally it is discussed far less than access to clean water – it tends to be a taboo subject although all of us are naturally required to go to the toilet. It is estimated that 40% of the world's population (~3 billion people) do not have access to toilets.[¶] And although both concerns of water and sanitation are approached separately, they are actually one enmeshed global issue – it is difficult to have one sans the other for optimal health. Unfortunately, funding for improving access to clean drinking water is easier to acquire than for sanitation-related initiatives.

* See also Joshua S. Goldstein and Jon C. Pevehouse, *International Relations* (Ninth Edition) (New York, Longman, 2010).

† See www.news-medical.net/news/2006/11/20/21060.aspx

‡ See WHO, "Global Burden of Disease 2004."

§ See WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) for Water Supply and Sanitation (2112) and Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC), 2010.

¶ WHO/UNICEF, "Diarrhoea: Why children are dying and what can be done," 2009.

In summary, Allison et al., provide cogent suggestions for improving health of Africans throughout the continent:

“Perhaps the awarding of the first ever Nobel Prize in Global Health awaits the prescient researcher who succeeds in bringing both camps [Western medicine and African traditional medicine] together to foster meaningful, focused, validated health education, i.e., the best educational vaccine, for the prevention of HIV/AIDS [and other preventable diseases], through utilizing music, dance, drama, poetry, painting, videos, and/or story-telling in combination with a titrated tincture of medicinal magic. Until that august time, hope does indeed continue to spring eternal.”⁷

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Notes

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7. E J Allison Jr., L H Brown III and S E Wilson, “Using Music to Combat AIDS and Other Public Health Issues in Malawi” in G. Barz and J M Cohen (eds.), *The Culture of AIDS in Africa: Hope and Healing Through Music and the Arts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 92-93.