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Another Begging Bowl Strategy for Africa? The Politics of Clean Energy Development in African - Industrialized World Relations

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ABSTRACT Africa receives financial support from erstwhile colonial governments and the developed world. With the passage of time, the colonial compensation claims have become trite. African leaders seem to have found a new reason for begging in the calls by the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and other groups and countries concerned with climate change to develop clean energy. While the developed world has not shown any commitment to give aids to Africa, they also seem to have liked the idea, given that they are also not ready to have drastic cuts on their high carbon emissions. This paper questions whether the politics of clean energy is being merged with the colonial claims case to perpetuate Africa's begging to the industrialized world. Using a methodological desktop review, the paper also discusses how the industrialized world has responded to Africa's actions, especially claims for clean energy development, as well as adaptation and mitigation financing.

INTRODUCTION

The end of colonialism in Africa saw the creation of new African states, which were less developed as compared to their erstwhile colonizers. New relations were built with the former colonial masters in a bid to transform the African states to a development path given that during the colonial period, colonies were important for resource extraction and as a market for residual finished products. African leaders who took over power sought different forms of aid and restitution payments, which they viewed as a right for the suffering their states had gone through under colonial rule and as a duty of the colonial rulers for the 'unfair' benefits they had accrued due to colonialism (Ayittey 1992).

However, with the passage of time, especially by the turn of the new millennium, European countries that were the former colonial masters began to demand new relations according to new rules of aid disbursement, which were primarily based on the observance of human rights and democracy by the recipient African states. In the 1980s, the Bretton Woods Institutions laid down conditions for the extension of loans to African states under the Structural Adjustments Programs (SAPs) (Heidhues and Obare 2011: 57). Good governance, observance of human rights and democracy were some of the new rules for the extension of aid (Resnick 2013: 3-4). Even in cases where funds were seen as restitution and not as aid, rules were laid down that reduced financial flows. In 1997, for instance, the British government which had been obliged to pay for land acquisition for land reform and resettlement in Zimbabwe as a restitution of the colonial wrongs, informed the Zimbabwean Government that the New Labor government led by the then Prime Minister Tony Blair, did not recognize the colonial responsibilities of the previous government and was setting new rules for relations with the former British colonies. On the Zimbabwean land question, New Labor proposed to fund the land reform through the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP) contrary to the established tradition of bilateral funding (Short 1997). In recent years, European countries and the United States have also threatened to review their aid to African countries, specifically Ghana, Nigeria and Uganda due to their anti-gay policies and laws (Canning 2011; Purefoy and Karimi 2011; *BBC News* 2011a, b).

Some leaders were forced to comply with the new 'human rights and good governance' conditions (Resnick 2013: 4), while most could not and entrenched themselves in power against growing unpopularity. Given that most African leaders could not meet the conditions laid down for aid and the changing rules of restitutions due to the end of the Cold War era, African economies tumbled. Coupled with the fall of commodity prices on the international market, the dwindling of the economies resulted in poor service delivery, unsustainable ballooning debt and in some cases the rise of ethnic tensions due to animosity from the fall out of resource allocation.

The rise of the climate change phenomenon from the late 1980s brought about a new leaf in aid relations between former colonial rulers and African states. Climate change ideas spelt the perpetuation of aid relations between the developed world and Africa. Africa found the talks helpful in keeping the aid tape running. On the other hand, industrialized countries, reeling from competition from emerging economies like China and Brazil, could not commit themselves to cut down their carbon emissions to less than twenty percent below the 1990s' threshold. Such an action would reduce the industrialized countries' development levels and open ways to be overtaken by the emerging economies, especially India and China, which have been clear that they would not negotiate on deals that would retard their economic growth (Hoste and Anderson 2011: 5-6).

It is important to note that though "the year 2015 was an extraordinary one for renewable energy, with the largest global capacity additions seen to date, although challenges remain, particularly beyond the power sector" (REN21 2016). This is so against the background of the need to "reducing the risks of climate change (that) requires urgent action now" (Ban Ki-Moon 2016).

Objective

The politics of climate change financing has become topical in the new millennium. Given that after having managed to claim colonial reparations from the former colonial masters for almost four decades in different forms of aid, African leaders found making the claims becoming tough due to counter claims by the former colonial masters. These claims ranged from issues of democracy and human rights to issues of opening up markets among others. The coming up of the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions for the developed states including India and China at a time when there is renewed industrial competition between the West and China and India among other upcoming economies has seen Africa having a new claims cheque in its hand against the developed states that are not keen on drastic reductions of greenhouse gas emissions that can impact negatively on their (developed states) growth. The paper sought to establish the reasons why African leaders have been keener on the financing of climate change mitigation and adaptation and not pushed hard on emissions reductions as has been the case with smaller ocean states. Using document analysis under the qualitative research methodology, from both traditional libraries and books to online documents and books, this paper argues that the question of climate change financing has become a new begging bowl by African states/leaders to the developed countries. The paper is presented in a format of continued data analysis and presentation in a prose format.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts the use of textual analysis simply "means analyzing the text for themes and patterns" (Bertram and Christiansen 2014: 97). This is effectively utilized from an interpretivist and constructivist research paradigm to make sense of preexisting data sets in order to make clearer a given situation or theme. As a general norm, the study of documents and secondary analysis "are often neglected" by some behavioral researchers (de Vos et al. 2006: 314). Unlike the behaviorist, the present research relies heavily on the broader context and environment of Africa in conducting this research. In doing the above, the researcher "sees for herself (or himself) the context and site of the research study" (Bertram and Christiansen 2014: 84).

OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

The Climate Change Debate

Climate change was first mentioned by a Swedish scientist Svante Arrhenius in 1896. However, it was not accepted as a reality by most Western leaders even though most scientists who reported on it were from the west (Bodansky 1996: 12). Climate change was only accepted as a theory and not a reality until there was immense work by scientists to sensitize politicians that the phenomenon was a reality and no longer a theory. World leaders began accepting the severity of climate change in the late 1980s when the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was established by the United Nations (UN).

The IPCC (1990: xii) reported that global warming, influenced through the enhanced greenhouse (GHG) effect caused by past and continuous emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, had resulted in a continuous increase in the temperature of the Earth's surface. The Panel explained that the continued emission of carbon dioxide, methane, chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and nitrous oxide, commonly known as greenhouse gases had resulted in increased global temperatures because the rate of their absorption was lower than the rate of emission (IPCC 1990: xi). It went on to warn the world that global warming was a reality as evidenced by increases in "global average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice and rising global average sea level" (IPCC 2007: 30). In 2007, IPCC reported that the years 1997-2006 were ranked the warmest years in the instrumental record of global surface temperature since 1850 (2007: 30).

The IPCC recommended that long-lived greenhouse gases required immediate reductions in emission from human activity of over sixty percent to stabilize their concentration (IPCC 1990: xii). Failure to reduce greenhouse gases would result in drastic changes in the world in the long run, with the major effects being negative. For instance, the Panel warned that if no meaningful mitigation was instituted by 2020, rain-fed agricultural yields in some African countries could be reduced by fifty percent (IPCC 2007: 50).

Taking heed from the warning by climate experts, the international community initiated result oriented talks to come up with mechanisms that would meet the IPCC recommendations. Under the auspices of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the international community held summits popularly known as Conference of the Parties (COP) like the ones in Kyoto, Japan, which resulted in the signing of the Kyoto Protocol (which expired in 2012), Bali, Copenhagen, Cancun and Durban. Discussions on carbon emissions reductions have not been smooth. Different countries and regions have fought for different positions and to gain from the talks. The talks are mostly tense, given that emissions reductions have a direct impact on the economic growth of countries taking the action. Countries have taken positions based on their economic development levels, envisaged loses and perceived benefits.

There has been debate on the rate of emissions reduction between the developed, developing and emerging market countries. On one hand, emerging markets like Brazil, China and India who are battling to claim a greater share of the world market have shown little desire to reduce their emissions. On the other hand, developing countries called for developed and emerging market countries to cut their emissions for the betterment of the world economy (Hoste and Anderson 2011: 1). While pushing for the emerging market countries to cut back on their emissions, industrialized countries have shrugged off calls by both the developing and the emerging market countries to institute drastic cuts on their emissions, as proven by the bickering between them on how to reduce emissions, by the failure of the USA to be a party to the Kyoto Protocol and by the pressure by European powers to have their submissions adopted at the expense of the Africans' at the Copenhagen Summit (Hoste and Anderson 2011).

The Small Developing Islands, whose fear on being submerged by rising sea levels due to the melting polar ice is the greatest, have been pushing for drastic reductions in greenhouse gas emissions (Gray 2009). This has not been the case with Africa. The international community regards Africa as the poorest continent in climate change negotiations and this perception has seen Africa approaching the negotiations from a weaker stand point. It can therefore be argued that Africa, especially in negotiating the Kyoto Protocol, did not seek to negotiate a concrete agreement that would be centered on GHG reductions by the major polluters. Africa agreed to the funding mechanisms that were meant to keep it (and other developing regions) receiving adaptation and mitigation funding mostly through the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) (Wiedmer 2002: 16).

Climate Change and Africa

Climate change comes with different effects on different continents. It has, however, been agreed that the effects of climate change on all the continents will be mostly adverse (IPCC 2007: 31). The developing world is seen as being at the worst receiving end of climate change (Powers 2012: 152). The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) recognized in 1992 that Africa would be the continent most affected by climate change (Kabasa and Sage 2009: 22). UNFCCC also recognized that while Africa is the most affected, it is the producer of the least amount of the greenhouse gas emissions that are primarily responsible for climate change (Kabasa and Sage 2009: 22).

The effect of climate change on Africa ranges from social to economic to political. Socially, Africa faces a costly health challenge from the effects of climate change. Heavy rains and flooding that are already being experienced in West Africa (Lisk 2009: 9) have the capacity to reverse the gains made in eradicating tropical diseases like malaria. The threat of these diseases is not only in areas where they had been already eradicated, but they are also now being reported to have migrated to areas which are traditionally known not to be infested by them. Sewankambo (2009: 16) states, "The spread or resurgence of malaria to the highlands of East Africa is widely cited as an example of a vector-borne disease spreading to new geographical areas as a consequence of climate change."

Droughts and floods come with food shortages, which may increase to become a famine. Most African farmers are facing unpredictable weather conditions, which have made it difficult for them to follow their usual farming schedules (Mapimhidze 2015). Sewankambo (2009: 16) states, "In sub-Saharan Africa, rain fed agriculture provides food for roughly ninety percent of the poorest people. Therefore major reductions in the amount of rainfall or changes in its patterns would lead to population ill health."

The social impacts also translate to economic impacts on the continent. Health and food are basic rights, which different countries on the continent accept as such. The governments are forced to divert funds, which are sometimes meant for strategic development like infrastructure and education, to import food and medication. In some cases the African governments are assisted by intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like the World Food Program of the United Nations (WFP) to provide food and medication to vulnerable communities (Kandji et al 2006: 21). However, this assistance has not been enough. In some cases, a hostile relationship has developed between governments and NGOs. African governments view NGOs as Western proxies to topple African governments that do not subscribe to the Western agenda of dominance (Mahuku and Mbanje 2012). In June 2008, the Zimbabwean government issued a temporary ban on all NGOs, as they were accused of diverting from their humanitarian goals and becoming fronts for alleged Western sponsored opposition parties (*The Observer* 2012).

The political effects of climate change on the continent are still under-researched especially in relation to conflicts. Williams and Werner (2009: 26) are of the opinion that climate change has an effect on conflicts on the continent. The argument is based on the fact that reduced rainfall and water sources for pastoralists in eastern Africa and the Sahel region (like Darfur) have resulted in them migrating into farming regions occupied by sedentary farmers, thereby creating competition for land and water (Goulden and Few 2011). The climate-induced conflicts create complex conflicts that create ethnic fissures in African countries and divert government attention from development oriented policies to militaristic policies that divert development funds to purchasing military equipment.

Kandji et al. (2006: 11) summarize the impact of climate change on the Sahel region as follows:

"The prolonged droughts further stretched the meager resources of these (Sahel) countries with devastating consequences such as hunger and malnutrition, deterioration of the soil and water resources, desertification and widespread misery. Many of the people migrated in search of relief. Additional burdens were placed on limited social services, and political instability intensified in many countries".

Due to its colonial background and where it has lagged in development, Africa lacks the adequate infrastructure to respond and adapt to climate change. African economies, with the exception of South Africa, Nigeria, and the Arab North, are agro-based. Any alteration in climate spells fatality to the economies. Destruction to the agricultural sector leads to negative impacts on industries that rely on agriculture for raw material and for the agricultural industry as a market. In short, destruction of the agricultural industry negatively impacts both the downward and upward industrial value chain. One of the major impacts is an increase in unemployment and underemployment rates, which creates a disgruntled youth pool with the potential to be recruited into inhumane activities like crime, drug abuse and militancy.

Due to the foregoing issues raised, climate changing pollution by the developed world is seen as a threat to the continent's peace and security. Mutyambizi and Paradzayi (2015) note that the Ugandan President, Yoweri Museveni once said that climate change is an act of aggression by the developed world on the developing world. While African countries bear the worst brunt of climate change, they are the smallest polluters of the atmosphere. According to the African Development Bank and the African Development Fund (2011: 2), Africa accounts for less than seven percent of carbon emissions, and thus among the smallest polluters of the atmosphere. Based on these arguments, African states negotiated for funding from the developed states. Climate change funding is divided into two categories namely, mitigation and adaptation funding.

Funding Claims: A New Aid Demanding Strategy

Climate change mitigation funding refers to aid extended to African states for reducing activities that exacerbate climate change. According to the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP), climate change mitigation "refers to efforts to reduce or prevent emission of greenhouse gases. Mitigation can mean using new technologies and renewable energies, making older equipment more energy efficient, or changing management practices or consumer behavior. It can be as complex as a plan for a new city or as a simple as improvements to a cook stove design". Climate change mitigation funding therefore refers to funds extended to developing countries, and in the case of this article, Africa, to develop programs or technologies that help limit damage to the climate. The funding is mostly targeted on reducing reliance on fossil fuels and promoting the use of clean energy. Climate change mitigation funding is disbursed coupled with adaptation funding.

FAO (2008: 3), borrowing from IPCC, defines adaptation "as adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities". Adaptation can be seen as practical steps taken by leaders, communities or ordinary people to protect communities from the likely disruption and damage that results from the effects of climate change (Levina and Tirpak 2006: 6). Climate change adaptation refers to behavioral and economic adjustments that are aimed at reducing the vulnerability of the society to major changes in the climatic systems.

Climate change adaptation funding, therefore, refers to the aid extended to 'poor' countries to create conditions that would make their communities less vulnerable to changes in the climate systems. Activities for adaptation vary. They include ambitious and high cost projects like building large solar parks that would cushion African countries from hydroelectricity deficits due to reduced river flows, and low cost small projects like the construction of small dams that would wean farmers from relying on rainfed agriculture.

The combination of the two types of climate change funds, namely adaptation and mitigation funding, creates what can be called climate change linked development aid. Climate change linked development aid is different from the traditional types of aid in the sense that it has little ties with colonialism. Colonialism was an active occupation and syphoning of resources, which created a moral claim by Africans for reparation payments due to the colonial damages. Climate change aid has its moral arguments in the sense that the developed world, working solely for its benefit had damaged the climate which is a public and international good, to the detriment of mostly those who have contributed little to the damage (Dervis and Milsom 2010: 38). The claim can therefore be seen as based on the notion that the developed world is morally bound to assist the developing world to cope with the climate damage they (the developed world) have caused.

African leaders, facing dwindling development aid from the former colonial masters, argued that industrialized countries should extend climate change linked development aid given that industrialized countries are the major emitters of greenhouse gases (African Development Bank and African Development Fund 2011: 2). Africa bases its claim on the argument that industrialized countries have earned their development at the expense of African development. As in the argument that Europe developed by under-developing Africa through slave trade and colonialism, it can be argued that African leaders and some scholars view the industrialized countries' high emissions from their industrial development as under-developing the continent. Africa can no longer follow the development path similar to that the developed world took, to achieve sustainable development while attempts to use alternative clean energy are more expensive and can be a clog in the wheels of development in Africa and hence the need for aid.

The first major treaty that sought to deal decisively with climate change, the Kyoto Protocol, signed in 1997 in Japan, recognized the moral need to fund African countries, among other developing countries, to cope with the impacts of climate change (Article 12). The funding was also agreed on in order to create energy sources in developing countries that would be more environmentally friendly. Funding for climate change was under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), which encouraged industrialized countries to invest emission reductions in developing countries and deduct the reductions credits from their national targets (Scholz 2008: 44; Dervis and Milsom 2010: 40).

The argument that industrialized countries have continued to under develop Africa through climate change is based on the notion that the impact of climate change would be mostly felt in Africa and other developing regions. As noted earlier on, a number of scholars and leaders like Goulden and Few, Burke and Ban Ki Moon argued that climate change has been an impacting factor on conflicts in the Sahel and parts of Western and Central Africa. These conflicts have also led to the underdevelopment of the continent. Another point is that climate change has altered rainfall patterns in major regions of Africa. Some regions have received excessive rains while others have received very low rainfall. Lisk (2009: 9) notes, "There are prolonged and intensified droughts in eastern Africa, unprecedented floods in western Africa, depletion of rain forests in equatorial Africa, and an increase in ocean acidity around Africa's southern coast". These changes have resulted in droughts and famines leading to the diversion of development funds to food (Kabasa and Sage 2009). Because of the above arguments, African leaders have called for development funding against climate change.

It is estimated that African economies will be affected by increasing cost of medical and food supply due to climate change. African leaders have received these estimations with enthusiasm as they had found ideal ammunition to claim aid from the industrialized countries. Various amounts of funds, methods and justifications of funding have been put forward by African leaders to the developed world. During the Copenhagen Summit, African leaders (and other leaders of the developing world) demanded USD 200 billion to enable them to cope with the effects of climate change (Gray 2009). Hoste and Anderson (2011) opine that African negotiators put an emphasis on the right to develop and on limiting the impact of climate change on development. "The idea behind this right to develop is the fact that Africa is still underdeveloped and their contribution to climate change is marginal" (2011: 1).

Coupled with financial demands, Africa and its developing world counterparts pushed for the developed world to undertake to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least forty percent below their 1990 thresholds by 2020 and at least eighty percent to ninety-five percent by 2050 (Hoste and Anderson 2011: 1). However, there are major differences between the developing countries groups that are influenced by their primary interests in the negotiations. On one hand, oil producing countries, including those in Africa like Angola, Nigeria and Sudan, do not emphatically support carbon reductions as this will affect the market for oil (Tlhagale B 2011), which translates to reduced financial gains for their economies. On the other hand, the small islands vehemently push for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions as a matter of survival. The small islands fear that the continued rise of the sea level due to increased precipitation in some areas and the melting of the glaciers will result in them being submerged (Davenport 2014). As noted by Gray (2009), the islands, specifically Tuvalu, put up a spirited protest against any deal that did not restrict warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Unlike the island nations, sub-Saharan African countries have been more willing to compromise on any conditions if given financial assurances to cater for the problems that accrue from climate change (Hoste and Anderson 2011:

2). Even if one is to relook at the CDM of the Kyoto Protocol, the agreement by the developing countries that industrialized countries would fund emission reduction projects whose credits they would deduct from their national emission reduction targets, was simply acceding to the notion that the developed world can continue to pollute and grow their economies as long as they could pay for their 'crimes' to the developing world. Hence, the differences that arose during the Copenhagen Summit in 2009 that nearly paralyzed the summit, were seen by some Western analysts and journalists as driven more by the refusal by the developed world to meet its financial demands than other conditions (*BBC News* 2009; Gray 2009; Hoste and Anderson 2011).

Africa's prioritization of financial compensation by the industrialized world for the climate damage has given the developed world an upper hand in climate negotiations by simply dangling the financing 'carrot'. While there have been different funding mechanisms that have been put forward and funded by the developed world, it uses these mechanisms to push for their desired results in climate change negotiations (Hoste and Anderson 2011: 2). These mechanisms include multilateral funding through organizations like the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and bilateral funding between different states. Industrialized countries have not only used climate funding to force African leaders to accept climate change outcomes that suit them (the industrialized countries), but have also gone to the extent of even attaching a condition to development aid of accepting the climate talks conclusions in favor of them (Hoste and Anderson 2011: 2).

African states, as was in the case of the post-colonial aid, have found themselves between a rock and a hard place. While African leaders are fighting for non-interference in their economic and political affairs, the need for aid injections to keep their governments afloat has seen them accepting the conditional aid. The politics of climate change aid has seen African countries being used as pawns in the battle between the traditionally industrialized countries, mostly Europe, North America and Japan, and the emerging economies, popularly known as the BRICS countries. The industrialized countries fear that a cut in carbon emissions may translate to retarding their economic growth because a cut in carbon emissions means the reduced burning of fossil fuels that drive the heavy and strategic industries. This will lead to them being overtaken by emerging economies, who as earlier on stated, are not willing to cut their emissions. While some members of the BRICS block, like Brazil and South Africa, have shown a willingness to compromise (Hoste and Anderson 2011: 5-6), others like China and India, have shown that they are not willing to make major compromises on cutting their carbon emissions due the ties between greenhouse gas emissions and economic development (Scholz 2008: 47, 50). Industrialized countries that have traditionally extended different forms of aid to African countries are now using their financial muscle on Africans to buttress their positions (Hoste and Anderson 2011: 2).

As in the case of development aid at the end of colonialism, the funding system has remained skewed in favor of the developed states. The funding process in parts buttresses Western control on African states. The funding has meant that industrialized countries can continue with their high carbon emission processes. This includes also the emerging economies of China, Russia and India. Sustaining the process means that African states have remained beggars who look up to the developed states for aid while they continue to drift into underdevelopment due to the cost of climate change, which is never met fully by development funding.

CONCLUSION

The climate change debate, which started as an abstract theory by scientists, has proved to be a reality that is affecting the world. Established facts indicate that industrial actions and the consumption of fossil fuels led to the depletion of the ozone layer that is adversely affecting the climate in form of global warming. The impact of climate change is felt more in developing countries, which have less capacity to adapt or reduce the impact of changes in the climate. The most affected continent is Africa. Climate change has led to increased rainfall patterns on the west coast of Africa leading to floods, and to reduced rainfall in the east leading to droughts. In both cases, these changes have resulted in famines and an increase or exacerbation of ethnic conflicts. The sum result has been loss of development gains, retarded growth or stagnation.

Africa entered the international climate change negotiations in order to change the situation obtaining on the continent due to the phenomenon. However, its standpoint was weakened by the fact that it was regarded as the poorest region. Africa, unlike other developing regions, specifically the Small Developing Islands whose primary push was for GHG emission reductions, accepted development funding related to mitigation and adaption to climate change.

This article argued that the standpoint of Africa is reminiscent of the early to middle post-colonial period when Africa pushed the industrialized countries to give it aid as pay back for under developing it through slavery and colonialism. The article argued that with changes in the international arena that saw the developing world now standing against calls for colonial aid tied into development oriented multilateral aid, and the changing perception to the effect that Africa should not always lay the blame for its failed development on colonialism, African leaders found climate change negotiations as another avenue to access funding.

This situation proved workable for both the industrialized countries and Africa especially on the CDM framework. Industrialized countries found it as a way of escaping reduction commitments at home by gaining Certified Emission Reductions (CER), while Africa (and other developing countries) gained access to international financing for their projects. However, the projected funds are small and cannot meet Africa's high industrial and domestic energy needs to attract international investment. Additionally, the funds do not cater for high cost infrastructural development projects such as communication infrastructure like road, rail and telecoms, and offices and industrial parks.

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